

## THE GOSPEL DECLARATION

### **1 Corinthians 15:1–4 (NKJV)**

**1** Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,

**2** by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

**3** For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

**4** and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

Paul here reiterates the gospel and affirms that we are saved by believing the gospel. As he reviews the key components of the gospel, he then says, “so we preach and so you believed.” (1 Cor. 15:11)

The word gospel means “good news”. It is the good news about Christ, and when we believe it, we are saved (cf. Rom. 1:16).

A true saving faith perseveres. It continues (cf. Mt. 13:1-23; Mk. 4:1-20; Lk. 8:4-15; Col. 1:23; Heb. 3:6, 14, 1 Jn. 2:19; 2 Jn. 9). Paul here in 1 Corinthians 15 emphasizes that we are saved by believing the gospel and if we have believed in a saving way we will “hold fast” to it, otherwise we have believed in vain.

There is such a thing as a “vain faith” that doesn’t continue to hold to the truth of the gospel. This proves the person never truly had a saving faith.

The substance of the gospel message is about Christ and His dying for sins, burial, and resurrection. In effect, Paul here summarizes the GOSPEL message. In 1 Corinthians 2:2, Paul explains that when he came to Corinth, he determined not to know anything among them, “except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” For Paul, the gospel message was all about the PERSON and the WORK of Christ.

The message is about Christ! The word Christ literally means “anointed one” and is the equivalent to the Hebrew word “Messiah” (cf. Jn. 1:41). The word “Christ” is actually a title rich with meaning. It is grounded in the Old Testament Scriptures. As noted here, Christ died, was buried, and rose again “according to the Scriptures” – meaning the prophetic Old Testament Scriptures.

In the Old Testament, those chosen by God for a special role were often anointed, signifying that they were ordained by God for a special purpose.

Prophets, priests, and kings were thus anointed. But there was to be a special coming One Who would be THE ANOINTED ONE (cf. Ps. 2:2; 45:7; Isa. 42:1; 61:1-3). He would be both God and man in one person (Isa. 9:6-7). He would come as a deliverer and a ruler.

The Scriptures link the idea of “Christ” to that of “Deity”. Peter confessed Jesus to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt. 16:16). John wrote so we might believe “that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (Jn. 20:31).

In saying “Christ died for our sins,” the text assumes the Lordship of Christ is understood in the word “Christ”. Paul started the book on this footing, saying that the Church of God at Corinth was “with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Cor. 1:2).

At the end of 1 Corinthians 15 Paul says, “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57). Believing on Christ as “Lord” is not a “works salvation” concept because Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:3 says, “no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” This is the result of the work of God in the heart. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 it is “God who gives the increase.” All glory to Him!

It wasn't just anybody who died for our sins, it was the Christ of the prophetic Old Testament Scriptures. He did this in fulfillment of prophecy. The KEY chapter in the Old Testament that prophetically shows Christ dying for our sins is Isaiah 53. Actually, the progression of thought in Isaiah 53 begins with Isaiah 52:13 and continues into chapter 53. Chapter divisions are not inspired and sometimes interrupt the flow of thought. Isaiah 52:13-15 gives an overview of God's servant, emphasizing first and foremost that He would be “high and lifted up, and greatly exalted” (Isa. 52:13).

The text then goes on to emphasize how He would be greatly marred and have the iniquity of us all laid upon Him. Isaiah 53 concludes with language portraying the resurrected Christ having His day prolonged and prospering, which is ultimately realized in the resurrection.

The point is that the Old Testament consistently interweaves the deity of the Christ with the truth of His humanity involving His death and resurrection, which is then shown to be fulfilled in Jesus as seen in the New Testament Scriptures (cf. Psalm 22; Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6).

The gospel as summarized by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:3-4 shows it is all about Jesus. As the Christ, He died for our sins; as the Christ, He was buried; as the Christ, He rose again – all in fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. But Jesus DID IT ALL! We make no contribution to the gospel.

This is all about what Jesus has done for us. No one was with Jesus on the cross. He alone is the Savior! No one came with Him out of the grave. Jesus alone is Lord over death! The glory belongs to Him ALONE for our salvation. All we do is BELIEVE, and that by the grace of God.

Never forget THE GOSPEL is THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST! He owns it! It's all about Him and what He did! We simply believe it!