

Sunday, March 25, 2018—I Corinthians 15:1-2 IF Ye Keep in Memory: Is I Cor. 15:3-4 Paul's Gospel?

I Corinthians 15:1

- **Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;**
- Paul begins the chapter by addressing the Corinthians as “brethren.” Why would he do that? Because the Corinthians were already saved. They had already trusted in the finished work of Christ as the only total complete payment for their sins.
 - I Corinthians 1:2
 - I Corinthians 6:11—the Corinthians have already been washed, sanctified, and justified
- In addition, the verb “declare” is in the present tense. Paul is making a present tense declaration of the that gospel that he had previously preached unto the Corinthians.
- Also note the past tense on the verbs “preached” and “received.” Had Paul already preached the gospel unto them? Had the Corinthians already “received” Paul’s gospel? Yes. Therefore, the Corinthians possessed a present tense standing in the truth of Paul’s gospel.

I Corinthians 15:2

- **By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.**
- The expression “by which ye are saved” is in the present tense. So, the Corinthians are saved in the present “if” they keep in memory what Paul preached unto them.
- *if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you*—here we encounter the condition causing a lot of fuss for some saints. Is the function of this condition to call into question whether the Corinthians are justified based upon whether they keep Paul’s gospel in memory? Or, is this verse saying that one must keep Paul’s gospel in memory in order to be justified or saved from their sins?
- The use of the condition “if” is causing some to say the I Corinthians 15:3-4 is not Paul’s gospel because they are no conditions attached to justification during the dispensation of grace.
- In order to get to the bottom of we must spend a bit of time reviewing how conditions work.

How Do Conditional Statement Work

- First, anytime you see the English word “if” you are dealing with a condition. The question one must ask is what TYPE of condition am I dealing with?

- The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* offers the following basic definition for the English word “if.”
 - “Introducing a **clause of condition or supposition** (the protasis of a conditional sentence). On condition that; given or granted that; in (the) case that; supposing that; on the supposition that.”
- So according to the basic definition, the English word “if” can either introduce a “clause of condition” or introduce a “supposition” i.e., a logical assertion.
- The dictionary uses the technical term *protasis*. The word *protasis* is a word of English grammar.
 - “a proposition, the major premise of a hypothetical clause”
- In other words, it deals with the portion of a conditional sentence containing the “if” statement. In philosophy and logic a *protasis* is also known as an *antecedent*.
 - *protasis* = *antecedent*—i.e., they are the same thing.
- Please identify the *protasis/antecedent* in the following statement.
 - “If your my son, then act like it.”
- “If your my son” = the *apodosis/antecedent*. So then what do we call the “then act like it” portion of the statement?
 - *apodosis* = *consequent*—i.e., they are the same thing.
- In English grammar the second part of the statement is known as an *apodosis* or *consequent* in philosophy and logic. The *OED* defines *apodosis* as, “The concluding clause of a sentence as constructed with the introductory clause, or *protasis*, now usually constricted to the **consequent clause** in a conditional sentence.”
 - *apodosis* = *consequent*—i.e., they are the same thing.
- So, the “then act like it” portion would be the *consequent* or main result of the statement “If your my son, than act like it.”
- In this example, what is the function of the condition?
 - To call into question or raise doubt as to whether or not the child is my son.
 - OR
 - Establish the FACTUAL relationship between both parts of the statement.

- Sometimes the condition “if” means to establish the absolute FACTUAL relationship between two things; whereas other times it seeks raise a question or introduce doubt.
- The determining factor in which function a particular condition is serving is the mood on the verb following the condition. According to the *OED* conditions followed by the *indicative mood* are FACT stating.
 - “With the conditional clause or *protasis* in the indicative. **The indicative after if implies that the speaker expresses no adverse opinion as to the truth of the statement in the clause; it is consistent with his acceptance of it.**”
- The entry for the word “*indicative*” reads as follows:
 - “Gram. That points out, states, or declares: applied to that mood of a verb of which the essential function is **to state a relation of objective fact between the subject and predicate** (as opposed to a relation merely conceived, thought of, or wished, by the speaker).” (*OED*)
 - “Of a form of statement: Having the verb in the indicative mood; **assertive of objective fact.**” (*OED*)
- Conditions of this TYPE are known as indicative conditional statements and are FACT stating, i.e., IF AND ITS TRUE.
- In contrast, a condition with a verb in the *subjunctive mood* following “if” serves a completely different function. The *OED* entry for “if” identified these TYPES of conditions as well.
 - “The subjunctive after if implies that the speaker guards himself from endorsing the truth or realization of the statement; it is consistent with his doubt of it.”
- Likewise, the *OED* defines *subjunctive* as:
 - “That is subjoined or dependent. “
 - “Designating a mood the forms of which are employed to denote an action or a state as conceived (**and not as a fact**) and therefore used to express a wish, command, exhortation, or a contingent, hypothetical, or prospective event.”
- So, a subjunctive conditional statement means to express DOUBT and can be summarized as, IF MAYBE IT IS MAYBE IT ISN'T.

- Colossians 3:1—what is the function this condition? Is Paul calling into question whether or not the Colossians are risen with Christ? No, he is telling them on the basis of the FACT that they are risen with him to seek those things which are above.
 - Colossians 2:12—established the FACT that the Colossians ARE RISEN WITH HIM.
- Colossians 3:1—takes the established FACT from chapter 2 and informs the Colossian how to live in light of it.
 - The function of the condition here is IF AND ITS TRUE.
- Romans 7:2—so the wife being bound by the law to her husband is subject to whether or not he is alive. So if the husband is alive is the wife subject to the law of the husband? Yes. The only way the wife is loosed from the law of the husband is if the husband is dead.
- In this example its subjunctive. In other words, the satisfaction of the condition is subject to the circumstances. As long as the husband is alive is the wife bound to the husband? Yes. If the husband is dead is the wife loosed from the law of the husband? Yes.
 - The function of the condition here is MAYBE IT IS MAYBE IT ISN'T.
- Helpful Hint—when dealing with a conditional statement always ask yourself the following question, “what type of condition am I dealing with?” Does the condition calling anything into question or establish the absolute connection between two things?
 - If—and it’s true?
 - OR
 - If—maybe it is maybe it isn’t?

1 Corinthians 15:2

- So, is verse 2 saying that one must keep Paul’s gospel in memory in order to be justified or saved from their sins?
- I believe the answer is NO. First, the verb “keep” is in the indicative mood meaning that this is the TYPE of condition designed to establish the FACTUAL connection between two things i.e., it is serving the logical function.
- If one reads this condition as the TYPE that introduces doubt or contingency into the situation than the justification of the Corinthians would indeed be conditioned upon them keeping Paul’s gospel in memory.

- Not only does this reading confuse the condition it also assumes that the word “saved” is only used to refer to justification or initial salvation from sin. Let’s consider the context.
 - I Corinthians 15:3-4—was the resurrection of Christ part of the gospel that Paul preached to the Corinthians? Yes.
 - I Corinthians 15:12—despite the contents of Paul’s gospel some in Corinth were saying that “there is no resurrection of the dead.”
 - I Corinthians 15:13-19—set forth the implications for the no resurrection position that had been embraced by “some” of the Corinthians. If one denied the reality of resurrection the following would be the case:
 - Verse 13—Christ would not have raised from the dead.
 - Verse 14—if Christ had not risen, than Paul’s preaching would be vain along with the faith of the Corinthians.
 - Verse 15—Paul and the Corinthians would be “false witnesses of God” for having testified that God raised up Christ from the dead.
 - Verse 17—if Christ didn’t raise from the dead the Corinthians are still in their sins.
 - Verse 18—if Christ didn’t rise from the dead departed believers have “perished.”
 - Verse 19—if Christ didn’t rise from the dead humanity is in a truly miserable state.
 - I Corinthians 15:20—Christ is raised from the dead. Therefore; we are not of all men most miserable (v. 19), departed believers are not perished (v. 18), the Corinthians are not still in their sins (v. 17), Paul and the Corinthians are not “false witnesses of God” (v. 15), and Paul’s preaching and the Corinthians faith is not in vain (v. 14).
- I Corinthians 15:2—in the context, what are the Corinthians saved from by keeping the contents of Paul’s gospel in memory? They are saved from the hopelessness, misery, and despair that would follow the belief “there is no resurrection of the dead,” which some of them had embraced.
- Does the condition in verse 2 call into question the nature of the Corinthians justification? No, it is part of the logical argument that Paul is making throughout the chapter regarding the reality of resurrection. It is the “if” of logical argumentation.
- Is I Corinthians 15:3-4 the gospel? Yes, it is the gospel in a nutshell. It is Paul’s gospel boiled down to its most basic expression.

- Do you see how a failure to properly understand the condition makes a mess out of the text?