

***Lifeline* Will Be More Frequent**

Many have asked if *Lifeline* might come more often. Good news; it will (pardon the pun on the title of page 2's exposition). We plan a number of articles and updates for this year.

Israel Trip

John will be on a study tour of Israel (September 14-25). Diane may go to California to see our granddaughter. The cost is \$5,950.00. John may also do library research in England. Donations designated for the *Israel Trip* are tax deductible. We welcome your partnership in this. The mailing address for Message of Life is: PO Box 366, Bennett, CO 80102. Thank you.

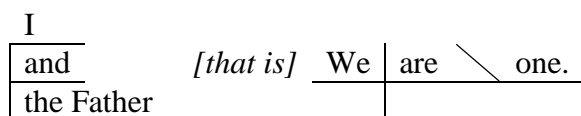
If you also would like to join John in Israel, a few seats are available. Dr. Dix Winston, Pastor of Crosspoint Community Church, Centennial, CO, will lead the trip. Details and registration forms are on the church website (www.crosspointco.org). Being in Israel with others embracing the grace-period message of life is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Pray about it.

Water of Life Bible Class

The current series on Thursday evenings is 1 John. Last fall we worked through the first two chapters. We switched to specials before Christmas. We are again in 1 John.

Projects

We continue diagramming and translating the NT afresh. How does diagramming help with translation? John 10:30 offers a simple illustration: "I and the Father are one." The subject of *are* might seem to be *I and the Father*, but not so in Greek. A diagram clarifies:



Our translation is: "We (I and the Father) are one." The presence of *We* clarifies what He asserts and what He does not. Jesus does not affirm that He and the Father are one-and-the-same person (like Clark Kent being Superman himself, but disguised as a newspaperman). Rather, Jesus and the Father are distinct persons (within one triune Godhead). Diagramming causes a translator to slow down and observe the text carefully. We aim for an English rendering of the Majority Text that strives for faithful preservation of the very nuances of the original.

Prayer Items

- | | |
|---|--|
| For opportunities in ministry. | For continued good health. |
| For boldness to take those opportunities. | For ongoing provision for Message of Life. |
| For timely completion of projects. | For the Lord's hand upon the Israel trip. |

Travel

Our son George accompanied us to California for Christmas with Joseph, Missy, and our granddaughter Sophia. John spoke at Ben David Messianic Congregation in Santa Ana, CA, and at Grace Chapel in Orange. Upcoming Message of Life events include:

Conference speaker (five sessions) at Jansen (NE) Bible Church: March 18-20.

Pulpit supply: Vista Ridge Bible Fellowship, Coppell, TX: Sunday, April 24.

Free Grace Bible Church, Garland, TX: Wednesday evening, April 27.

Speaking at GES National Conference in Fort Worth, TX: April 25-28.

Does *Gospel* Equal Jesus Christ's Death and Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15?

1 Corinthians 15's definition of gospel is important.¹ For brevity's sake, we will assume the common view of *saved* in 15:2, that it speaks of believers receiving everlasting life.²

Our goal is modest: Where in 1 Corinthians 15 does Paul *begin* defining gospel? Most start it in 15:3, but the definition actually begins a verse earlier.

All perceive the centrality of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection here, but some add burial as a third point.³ Unfortunately, most limit the definition to the verses discussing these two (or three) elements, 15:3-8. However, Paul uses the word *gospel* (*euangelion*) in 15:1, amplifying upon it in 15:2. Why would anyone exclude verse 2 from Paul's definition? Though it is true that v 3 begins a new sentence, verse 2 is where Paul explains why the good news is good news. That is, 1 Corinthians 15:2 applies His death and resurrection to the original readers: *by which [gospel] you are saved*. Salvation is great news for believers.⁴

If Jesus' death and resurrection did not extend benefits to others, would it be good news? Or would it merely be news? Salvation for people is what makes His death and resurrection good news. If Jesus died *only for Himself* and rose *only for Himself*, it would not be good news *for us*.

Paul's gospel in 1 Corinthians 15 is that believers are saved by Jesus Christ's death (which Scripture and His burial prove) and resurrection (that Scripture and many eyewitnesses verify). Gospel reaches beyond His death and resurrection to how these events allow Jesus to give believers everlasting life. Verse 2 is what makes 15:3-8 good news, not just news. Salvation (granting of everlasting life to believers) is the crux of why Jesus was crucified and rose. The good news of the cross and resurrection is that believers in Jesus Christ receive everlasting life.

¹ Gospel is not a NT technical term. It does not always refer to the message for unbelievers.

² I am open to either option. Treating the passive ("you are saved") in 15:2 as a stative passive ("you are saved-people"), would focus on their possession of everlasting life through faith. Treating it as a process passive ("you are being saved"), would say that faith in Christ placed them within the progressive-sanctification process.

³ However, verses 3-8 make two points: death and resurrection, not three. The following outline clarifies:

1. Jesus died for our sins (15:3)
 - A. The first proof of His death is that it was according to the Scriptures (15:3)
 - B. The second proof of His death is that He was buried (15:4a)
2. Jesus rose on the third day (15:4b)
 - A. The first proof of His resurrection is that it was according to the Scriptures (15:4c)
 - B. The second proof is that many witnesses saw Him afterwards (15:5-8).

Burial was a second proof of His death, not the second of three points (death, burial, and resurrection). Yes, Isaiah 53:9 predicts His burial, but Paul does not cite Scripture to prove burial. He cites burial as a second proof of death.

⁴ "If you grasp it" means: Believing Paul's message saves, if one has grasped his point and believed it. The phrase "unless you believed in vain [*eikē*]" means "unless you believed in a vain [message]." Vain is a dative of direct object, referring to a content of faith devoid of truth. What believing in a vain message means is that if Paul's gospel message were untrue, believing such a *vain* message would not save. Cf. 15:14, "If Christ were not raised, then our preaching is empty [*kenos*] and your faith is also empty [*kenos*]." *Eikē* and *kenos* are equivalents.