

“If” Is A Big Word

by
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Introduction:

There are just a little over 783,000 words in the King James Version of the Bible. Some of which are extremely long like the name found in Isaiah 8:1, "Maher-shalal-hash-baz" and, of course, some are small like the single-letter word "a".

There is a great deal of time spent in researching and understanding the words of the Bible. One might think that only the longer words carry importance. Because the Bible is the word of God, all the words are important even down to the "a's" and the "of's".

There is one short word that really packs a lot of power. It is one that needs our attention because it is directly connected to our hope. Perhaps, it should be said, that it "directly connects us with our hope".

The word "if" is the hinge pin of our hope. Our every hope depends on: If we "hold fast" the word; if we continue in the faith; and if we stand fast in the Lord. Let's use those three points for our lesson, to explain the importance of the word "if".

1 Corinthians 15:1-2 says, "If"

The passage reads, "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.

The gospel of Jesus is our only hope of salvation; that is clear from several passages: In John 14:1-6, we are told, "No man comes to the Father except through Me..." In Acts 4:12, it is declared, "...there is no other name

under heaven given among men by which we must be saved". Then also we consider what we are told in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation..." We soon learn that our hope is all rolled up into this one gospel hope through Jesus Christ.

This is hope is for all people, who want it (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). There are, however, things that we must do to have this hope. According to 1 Corinthians 15:1 we must "receive" the gospel. This means we listen to it and completely apply its instructions. The prime example of this is found in Acts 2, where it is recorded that Peter preached the gospel (vs. 22-36). The people believed and were moved by what was taught (v. 37). They were further instructed in proper obedience (vs. 38-40). They gladly received it—they obeyed the gospel (v. 41).

1 Corinthians 15:1 also says we must "stand in it". Think of this in the way we might say, "He has taken a stand". The gospel must be our confidence and our hope (Hebrews 6:13-20). Then, in 1 Corinthians 15:2, we are told that we are "saved" by the gospel "IF". "If" we hold fast the word which was preached—the word of the gospel. There is only one gospel; that provides one hope (Ephesians 4:4-6). We must fasten our hold on this one hope and not let go, in order to be saved.

Colossians 1:23 says, "If"

The passage reads, "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight — if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Jesus Christ provided what we could never provide for ourselves. Romans 5:6, describes our place, before Christ came to provide our hope, as

"without strength", meaning without the possibility of freeing ourselves; the original term actually indicates "devoid of power". Jesus provided a way in which we could be reunited with God, the Father, and no longer be without hope. He provided this opportunity for us through the giving of His life on the cross (Colossians 1:20-22a; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19). His sacrifice provides us with the opportunity to become holy, blameless, and above reproach in God's sight (Colossians 1:22). There are, however, things that we must do to gain and maintain this place in God's sight. In Colossians 1:23, we are told that "if" indeed we continue in the faith. Abiding in the word of Christ (John 8:31-32); in the Doctrine of Christ (2 John 9); and giving ourselves to its doing (James 1:17-25)

In Colossians 1:23, we are told that "if" indeed we are grounded and steadfast: Grounded means educated in the word, understanding what it means and what it means to your life (2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:12-14). Steadfast means persistent in our study and growth of knowledge (1 Peter 2:1-2).

In Colossians 1:23, we are told that we will be holy and blameless in His sight "if" indeed we are not moved away. There are many things wanting to pull us away from our hope—temptations (James 1:13-15; 1 John 2:15-17). Our salvation is dependent on "if" we do not move away from the hope of the gospel that Jesus provides. We must continue strong and not quit, in order to be saved.

Conclusion:

According to truth of God's word we know we will not lose our salvation "IF" we holdfast the word of truth (1 Corinthians 15:1-2); if we continue in the faith (Colossians 1:23); if we do not neglect our great salvation (Hebrews 2:1-3). There is a lot of power in that little word "if".