

Fact Sheet for **“One Day, One Person”**

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Those of us who have been Christians a long time sometimes forget what it was like to have been a child who doesn't understand everything about being a Christian, or even what it's like to be on the outside of Christianity looking in.

I was asked by a child this week, “What does ‘gospel’ mean?” Perhaps this is as good a place to start as anywhere. The word “gospel” is the translation of a word found in the original language of the New Testament (**eu-ang-gel'-i-on**).

As with many words in the New Testament it is actually a combination of two words (**eu + ang'-gel-os**, “good” + “message” or “good news”).

You may notice that the second word sounds a little like “angel”. This is because an angel is a “messenger” from God.

The gospel, the good news is that Jesus died and has risen from the dead to pay the full punishment for our sins. And you can be saved from having to pay for your sins yourself after you die if you believe in Him.

ESV John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Here's another little piece. The Romans spoke Latin, and that language originally did not have a “u”. The “u” in the New Testament word translated “gospel” then was written with the Latin letter “v”. So the Greek word for “gospel” was written in Latin as follows (**e-van-gel-li'-um**).

We get our word “evangelism” from this. Evangelism just means sharing the gospel with others.

The four books that begin the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) all record the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, these four books are called “The Gospels”. And you may even see these four men referred to as “the four evangelists”.

Well, that's the meaning of the word “gospel”.

Now let's take a look at what we are celebrating today, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Let's begin with this question. **What is the most important Christian holiday of the year?** It's not Christmas! You may think it is because of all the time and money we put into that holiday. But we aren't even sure of the day of the year when Jesus was born. God saw fit not to have that recorded in the Bible.

Think of the answer to this question. **What is the most important day of history recorded in the Bible?** It is the day Jesus rose from the dead. The Old Testament clearly points to this day. The New Testament flows from it. It was a day that changed everything for both the Jewish people and everyone else who would ever live.

Since the days of Moses the Torah, the Jewish Law, the first five books of the Bible called for nothing short of absolute perfect lifelong obedience to all of its 613 commands. This is why Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, spoke of perfection (Matt. 5:48). Anything short of perfection would render a person eternally guilty before God. And the Mosaic Law included no sacrifice that could be offered to forgive deliberate, willful sin. Instead, that Law included the Day of Atonement when the sins of the Jewish people would be atoned for (or literally “covered”), suggesting they would be paid for at a later date. The corresponding New Testament word does not mean “covered”. Instead it means “full payment.” When Jesus died on the cross and rose again on the third day He did not “cover” our sins, He completely paid for them. And His full payment for our sins required both His death and His resurrection.

ESV 1 Corinthians 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

This is true for both the Jewish people and for everyone else. But everyone has the choice to accept that payment, or to reject it. On the night of the Passover, the Last Supper, Jesus said this.

ESV John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Later, the Apostle Paul would write about this salvation in Ephesians 2:8-9.

Now, for someone on the outside of Christianity looking in these things may sound like good Christian religious thoughts... but are they really true? Consider this. There are hundreds of very specific prophetic statements in the Old Testament, many of these about the Messiah, or the Christ. Every one of these prophetic statements that should have been fulfilled by now have been fulfilled, exactly as they were written. The exact day of Palm Sunday was prophesied over 500 years before Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, fulfilling one prophecy in Daniel and another in Zechariah. The people who threw palm branches down in front of Him quoted a Psalm, written centuries before, that identified Jesus as the Messiah. On that very day the lamb that was to be killed for the Passover was to be chosen. The time of this was set down in the days of Moses. And Jesus was being pictured (1 Corinthians 5:7). Isaiah 53, written some 700 years earlier has multiple references to Jesus' crucifixion (He was silent before His accusers, He was pierced for our transgressions, He would be buried in a rich man's tomb). Both Exodus and Psalms point to the fact that none of His bones would be broken. His legs weren't because He had already died. And He rose on the Jewish feast of First Fruits, with its day of celebration very specifically chosen in the time of Joshua (1 Corinthians 15:20-21). And add to this Jesus' own multiple times when He said He would rise on the third day. The chance that all of these prophetic predictions and hundreds of others would have all come true without fail is absolutely impossible if God had not guaranteed the accuracy of the Bible. No other religion has fulfilled prophecy anything close to this. This is what makes Christianity far more than just a certain brand of religious thought among many.

But, here's the downside. The Bible is clear that when Christ returns to this earth the day of choice will be over. The time of judgment will have come. And it may come for people earlier if they pass from this life before Jesus returns.

If God has been working with you to accept Christ, take that step of belief today. You will never regret it.