

1 Corinthians 15:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

Analysis

By which also ye are saved (δι' οὗ καὶ σώζεσθε, di' hou kai sōzesthe)—The present tense verb indicates ongoing salvation, not merely a past event. Paul connects salvation directly to **keeping in memory** (κατέχετε, katechete), meaning to hold fast, retain firmly. This is not mere intellectual recall but active, persevering faith.

The phrase **unless ye have believed in vain** (εἰκῇ ἐπιστεύσατε, eikē episteusate) uses eikē ("without purpose, groundlessly") to indicate belief without foundation. Paul is not questioning the genuineness of their initial faith but warning that denying resurrection empties that faith of meaning. If resurrection is false, belief itself becomes eikē—purposeless.

Historical Context

The concept of 'vain faith' would have been shocking to Corinthian believers who prided themselves on spiritual gifts (chapters 12-14). Paul argues that spectacular gifts mean nothing if the resurrection is denied—the entire Christian edifice collapses without it.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What distinguishes 'keeping in memory' from mere mental assent to doctrinal propositions?
2. How might Christians today 'believe in vain' by affirming resurrection intellectually while living as functional materialists?
3. What does it mean that salvation is an ongoing present reality, not merely a past decision?

Interlinear Text

δι'	οὗ	καὶ	σώζεσθε	τίνι	λόγῳ	εὐηγγελισάμην	ὑμῖν
By	which	also	ye are saved	G5100	G3056	I preached	unto you
G1223	G3739	G2532	G4982			G2097	G5213
εἰ	κατέχετε	ἐκτὸς	εἰ	μὴ	εἰκῇ	ἐπιστεύσατε	
if	ye keep	unless	if	G3361	in vain	ye have believed	
G1487	G2722	G1622	G1487		G1500	G4100	

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 3:6 (Parallel theme): But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Hebrews 2:1 (Parallel theme): Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Hebrews 3:14 (Parallel theme): For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

Colossians 1:23 (Faith): If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Ephesians 2:8 (Salvation): For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

1 Corinthians 1:18 (Salvation): For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

2 Timothy 1:9 (Salvation): Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Hebrews 10:23 (Faith): Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

James 2:14 (Salvation): What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

James 2:26 (Faith): For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.