



THE GOSPEL

Sharing the Good News

When we're hoping to understand what a word means, a dictionary is often a great place to start. But certain words require us to do more than simply read and memorize a definition. We shouldn't be surprised, then, that when we read the dictionary definition of the Gospel--"The message concerning Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation"--we're left with more questions. Who is this Christ? Where is His kingdom? What is salvation? A quick search on the internet tells us *Gospel* comes from a Greek work that means "good news"--but what exactly *is* this good news?

Seeing a word used in context can often help us put the pieces together. To understand what the Gospel is (and is not), we first need to turn to the opening pages of the Bible. Why both with the Bible? Because it's the only sure way to hear God's voice! And within its pages, we see the following four themes, each of which helps us answer the questions "What is the Gospel?"

1

THE GOOD

“In the beginning, God created...” (See Gen. 1-2.) He created light and darkness, earth and sky, fish and birds, man and woman. He created everything, and HE did so out of nothing. God looked at all of these things and saw that they were good. There was beauty, peace, and what seemed like perfection for Adam and Eve. But then they made a choice that brought about a great divide.

(Gen. 1:31) “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good...”

(Gen. 2:15-17) “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Key Points

- God created the world, it was *GOOD*. He is the ruler of all things. (Gen. 1:31)
- God created man (Adam) and gave him a unique place in this world to submit to Him (Gen. 2:15-17)

2

THE BAD

In Genesis 3, something called sin entered the world. Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent—also known as the devil or Satan (Rev. 12:9)—and chose to act in direct opposition to God’s command. This act of disobedience began a cycle of life, disobedience, and death that continues to this day. Adam’s fallen, sinful nature has been passed along from one generation to the next. The good has been tainted. Sin abounds. And the Bible tells us that there is a great cost for our disobedience: death (Rom. 6:23).

So what can be done to bridge this divide, to fix what’s clearly broken?

Key Point:

- Man did not want God to be his ruler and chose to disobey (Gen. 3:6)
- Sin entered the world, and death through sin (Rom. 5:12)
- Everyone now born of ordinary generation from that man (Adam) has inherited his sin nature (Rom. 5:12-18)
- Our world is broken because of sin and we stand guilty before a holy and righteous God (Rom. 1:13)

3

THE NEW

When we look around, we certainly see many great things in the world. Beauty still exists, and peace can still be enjoyed--to a certain degree. But day after day, we are left yearning for something more. Good news seems to be outweighed by bad news. Harmony seems to be silenced by division. The joy of life is often drowned out by the guarantee of death.

But if we look closer at Romans 6:23, we see that sin and death do not have the final say: "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." We have a hope, and His name is Jesus. Even though death entered the world because of Adam's sin, we can find everlasting comfort because of the work that was accomplished by Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:17).

God came and paid the price to rescue us from our sin. He came to earth in the person of His Son, Jesus (John 1:14) He did what we could never do by living a life of perfect obedience to God the Father (Phil. 2:8; Rom. 5:19). And although He was crucified on a cross for our sins and was buried, He rose from the grave and ascended to heaven (1 Cor. 15:3-4; Acts 1:9-11)

Later on in Romans, the apostle Paul reminds us of this great truth: God has done what we could never do (Rom. 8:2-4). Through His unfolding plan and purposes, He made a way for us to have new life, eternal life. John 3:16-17 says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

When we read these truths in the Bible, we can't stop at intellectual assent. It's one thing to comprehend the meaning of words and phrases. But the belief we read of in John 3:16--indeed, that we read of all throughout the Bible--involves a choice. Saving faith requires trusting God and committing one's life to Him alone. Has that struck you? Are you ready to make that choice? If so, there are a few simple steps you can take in response.

We first have to acknowledge that there's something to admit--that you and I have sinned against God and could never make up for our wrongdoing. Second, we must believe that Jesus has taken on the penalty for our sins and conquered death once and for all. Finally, we must consider the implications of placing our faith in God. Admitting and believing has to be followed by obedience and repentance. The rest of our days will be spent turning away from sin and towards God, by the help of His Spirit (John 14:15-17). This is a transformation that touches every facet of life.

The good that was once known is gone. The bad now lingers and toils in vain. The new has come,

offering us redemption. Yet still we await something better than we can fathom...

Key Points:

- God in his goodness and mercy sent forth his Son, not born of ordinary generation, but conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin.
- Jesus is truly God/man and keeps God's law perfectly—what we could never do.
- Jesus took our sin, died for sin, raised on the 3rd day and Christ's righteousness is imputed to us.
- All those who come to Christ, believing he is the only way, and put their faith in Christ, will be saved.

4

THE PERFECT

Imagine a world with no more tears, death, pain, or mourning. That's exactly what we read about in Revelation 21. God has promised to restore the broken world in which we live. It will be nothing less than perfection. Adam and Eve once experienced the goodness of life in God's presence. So too will all who place their faith in the Lord Jesus, for the dwelling place of God once again will be with man (Rev. 21:1-4). For now, though, we wait patiently, eagerly anticipating eternal life with Christ as we joyfully obey all that He has commanded in His Word.

So, what is the Gospel? It's the good news that even though mankind rebelled against a holy, loving God, He still chose to send His Son to bear our sins on the cross so that by trusting in Him, we might turn from our sinful ways and enjoy the gift of eternal life in His presence. It's God's free gift to us, given out of His abundant love. Have you accepted it?

Key Points:

- Christ will return in glory and judgement. (Rev. 22:12, 13)
- We will be glorified and there will be no more sin.
- We will be in His presence forever. (Rev. 21)