

THE GOSPEL IS TRUTH

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Would you not agree that there is a high disregard for the gospel today? If you were to go out into the streets and byways today and take a survey a high percentage of people would say that they believe the gospel to be factual. If you were to ask the same people this question; “Have you obeyed the gospel’s plan of salvation” the majority would answer “No”. That is disregard for the gospel.

Some would probably not even know what the gospel’s plan of salvation is [which includes some of my brethren]. While you would be given several answers as to what must be done to obtain salvation which indicates that they don’t really know what is required to receive salvation. You no doubt will find many who would say; “Friend, all you have to do to receive salvation is to believe”. There are multitudes that believe this; but they will be turned away at the Day of Judgment. A popular notion of a few years ago was; “Just lay your hand on the radio and you will be saved”. You will find some who believe that the only thing the church is after is their money; they are not aware that Christians are ONLY concerned about the eternal welfare of their souls. It is very difficult for those whom only love themselves to realize that anybody would be concerned about their souls. Jesus Christ was so concerned about the souls of us that he shed his blood in a very violent death so that we might have eternal salvation.

Brethren we need to get the message out that “God is love”: (1 John 4:8) “*He that loveth not knoweth not God; **for God is love.***” We must tell the world that God’s love for us caused Him to send His Son to this earth so that we might have “ever lasting life”: (John 3:16) “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” We need to be telling a lost and dying world that just believing is not enough; that God’s plan of salvation also requires repentance, confessing the name of Jesus and being buried with Christ in baptism for the remission of our sins; and that we must remain faithful until death to receive a crown of glory: (Revelation 2:10) “*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*”

Jesus charged his apostles to “go into all the world and preach the gospel”: (Mark 16:15) “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*” I am aware that this command was given directly to the apostles but the apostles are all dead and gone. If you and I don’t have the authority to “go” and “preach the gospel” would not the church that Jesus purchased eventually fade away and just die? Jesus intended for his church to remain until the end of time: (Matthew 16:18) “*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” Satan himself will not be able to destroy the church, but you and I can if we don’t go and preach the gospel.

My efforts in this book are to write only that which the Bible says concerning the gospel. I do so desiring that we will have a higher respect of the gospel and my prayer is

that we may all be encouraged to “go into the entire world and preach the gospel” to everyone who will listen to us. We cannot expect to convert everyone but we won’t convert anyone if we don’t put forth any effort to do that which the Lord Jesus has commanded us to do. Not everyone listened to Jesus! Not everyone listened to the apostles! Did that stop them from going? We must answer in the negative; neither should it stop us from going. I have had doors slammed in my face, I have knocked on doors with televisions that could be heard indicating that there was someone at home and people would not even come to the doors. Discouraging, yes; but when you lead someone to Christ through the gospel all the discouragements are forgotten.

CHAPTER 1

THE GOSPEL IS CALLED

I begin by stating the many different terms the Bible uses to describe the word “gospel”. First the “gospel” is called “the dispensation of the grace of God: (Ephesians 3:2) *“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:”* The Greek does not imply any doubt that they had heard about the grace of God. Paul had been given the responsibility of spreading the gospel to the Gentiles; a responsibility that he was very diligent in carrying out. Paul suffered many hardships in his efforts to preach the gospel but even beatings, stoning nor did ship wrecks slow him down. Paul declares that God’s grace is given; inferring that God’s grace is a gift, it can not be bought nor earned; it is a gift from God. How did the Ephesians learn about God’s grace? Paul preached the gospel to them is how they learned the good news about God’s grace.

The gospel is called “the gospel of peace”(Ephesians 6:15) *“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”* In this context Paul is writing about the Christian’s armour: (Ephesians 6:13) *“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”* What is the purpose of “armour”? We all know that ‘armour’ is for protection. God has supplied the ‘armour’ that we need; it is up to you and me to put it on. Satan is said to “stand up against us”: (1 Chronicles 21:1) *“And Satan stood up against Israel,”* We must be prepared to stand up and fight back; God has provided us with the necessary protection by giving us the “gospel of peace”. The “peace of the gospel” is a wonderful instrument when it is put to use; it gives us peace with ourselves, with our loved ones, with our neighbors and above all else it gives us peace with God. Let us use the protection of the “gospel of peace” given to us by God.

The gospel is called the “gospel of God: (Romans 1:1) *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,”* The gospel is God’s good news of salvation in Christ. Paul refers to it as belonging to God because God is the author of the gospel: (1 Thessalonians 2:2) *“But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.”* (1 Thessalonians 2:8-9) *“So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. (9) For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be*

chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.” (1 Peter 4:17) “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” Let us not be mistaken the “gospel” is God’s good news to us about the salvation that is in Christ.

The gospel is also called the “gospel of Christ”:(Romans 1:9) *“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;”* I don’t think I need to remind you that God’s Son is Jesus Christ; but here is a verse that makes it clearer: (Romans 1:16) *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* There can be no mistake here; Paul wrote that the gospel is Christ’s. Paul preached Christ’s gospel: (2 Corinthians 2:12) *“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,”* Why was Paul so adamant in preaching Christ’s gospel? Because he knew it was “the power of God unto salvation [Romans 1:16]! Paul and others labored in preaching “Christ’s gospel”: (1 Thessalonians 3:2) *“And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:”* The earliest manuscripts reads “fellow worker with God”. Paul wrote similar words to the Corinthians: (1 Corinthians 3:9) *“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”* (2 Corinthians 6:1) *“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”* The thought that I would like to stress is that they were “workers” for the sake of spreading the gospel; they were not just traveling from place to place as if it were a holiday!

To the elders of Miletus Paul called the gospel “the gospel of the grace of God”: (Acts 20:24) *“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”* Although Paul was fully aware that danger awaited him he was still determined to spread the gospel [I.e. good news] about the grace of God. This is the determination that the Lord’s church possessed fifty years ago but is lacking today; and we wonder why the Lord’s church is not growing today.

CHAPTER 2

PREACH THE GOSPEL

Jesus said the gospel is to be “preached in all the world”: (Matthew 24:14) *“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”* To preach the gospel to the entire world was a big undertaking for that day and time; it is no smaller task today. We have our work cut out for us and we must be about it. Jesus did not just tell them to preach the gospel of the kingdom and leave his message there; he gave them a reason for doing so. Here Jesus

places emphasis on preaching the “gospel of the kingdom”; it must be preached because it reveals the kingdom of grace which leads to the kingdom of glory. How long are we to do this preaching Jesus? Jesus tells us to continue to do this preaching unto “the end” [Matthew 24:14]. We must continue to preach the gospel until Jesus comes again.

Why is it so important and urgent that we preach and teach the gospel? Answer; “because it contains the message of salvation: (Ephesians 1:13) *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”* Salvation should be of great concern to everyone who has reached the age of accountability because the wages of sin is something that we must earnestly try to avoid: (Romans 6:23) *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* The death that Paul writes of here is not a physical death; but a spiritual death, eternal separation from God. Let us remember that Paul is writing to the Gentiles in this epistle and he is telling them that they had received the word, the doctrine of truth which is in the gospel and it is able to save your souls. The gospel of Christ contains the same message today when the truth is preached and it will have the same results today that it had then; it is still “the gospel of salvation”.

No doubt the apostle Paul took great delight in preaching the gospel because he called it the “glorious gospel of Jesus Christ: (2 Corinthians 4:4) *“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”* The one thing that we should remember is that light comes from those who are already enlightened. If you are enlightened through the preaching of the gospel it is your responsibility to shine your light on those who are still in darkness. (Matthew 5:16) *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”* What is it that makes the gospel so “glorious”? One and perhaps the most important point of the gospel is that through obedience to the commands of the gospel you will receive salvation. But another point and perhaps of no less importance is the fact that through the gospel we learn about the power, wisdom and love of God. Should we not have delight in spreading this “glorious” good news?

CHAPTER 3

WHAT DOES THE GOSPEL REVEAL?

The gospel reveals “the mystery” (Romans 16:25) *“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,”* Here in the closing chapter of Romans Paul is still referring to the power of God; just as he did in the beginning chapter: (Romans 1:16) *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to*

the Greek.” He also stresses God’s power in (Romans 14:4) *“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or faileth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.”* I’m afraid in our teaching and preaching today we underestimate or neglect to stress the power of God! We cannot fully comprehend God’s power in creation; nor can we understand why God enacted His power in the saving of our souls. Surely God’s love was involved in His effort of salvation.

(Ephesians 6:19) *“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,”* Here we find Paul pleading with God to grant him strength and wisdom so that he might make known the “mystery of the gospel. Paul did not rely on his own speaking ability; he is asking his brethren to pray for him that he might be “bold” to speak forth the “mystery of the gospel”. We know that this mystery that was a secret for many years was made known by the revelation of God. (Ephesians 3:2-6) *“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: (3) How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, (4) Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (5) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (6) That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:”* This “mystery” of the gospel was unknown in former dispensation but it has now been revealed by the Holy Spirit [verse 5]. It was through revelation of the Holy Spirit that Paul received his knowledge and thusly he passed his knowledge on to all who would hear him.

Some understand the “mystery” of the calling of the Gentiles through the gospel; but in reality God’s entire plan of salvation was a mystery [unknown] until it was revealed on the day of Pentecost.

When the gospel is preached “the word of God is revealed: (1 Thessalonians 2:13) *“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”* Paul declares that they had “received the word of God”; when was it they heard “the word of God? It was when he preached the good news or the gospel to them! When the apostles preached the word of God they were preaching the truth and they have left us their recorded message that that we may also preach the same truth; that is the word of God. The “word of God” was faithfully revealed to the first century Christians and we today must be just as faithful in revealing the gospel. Those who preach their own fancies instead of teaching “the word of God” are to be blamed and shall receive their just condemnation on the Day of Judgment.

When the gospel is being taught the “word of Christ is being revealed; we even do this as we sing: (Colossians 3:16) *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”* “The word of Christ” can be the words that Christ proclaimed himself; or it can also be the words that the apostles and teachers

and preachers proclaim about Jesus. Of course the gospel is the word of Christ; it has been received by countless numbers but it is not enough just to have received it, “the word of Christ” must “dwell in us”. For “the word of Christ” to dwell in us means that we are under his control and Jesus does have the right to be our master. Are you influenced by “the word of Christ”? If you are you will allow him to direct your every step in life?

When you hear the gospel proclaimed you are hearing and learning about “the word of grace”: (Acts 14:3) *“Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.”* Disregarding any opposition that came their way they stayed there a long time and spoke “boldly in the Lord” because there continued to be those who believed and obeyed their message. Now if everyone who heard them believed the first time they heard about God’s grace obeyed there would have been no need for them to stay a “long time”. I feel that it is a mistake for a church to hire a preacher and after a year or so replace him with another preacher. Friends, it takes time for any preacher to get to know the community and the people of the community. As long as a preacher is teaching and preaching the truth he should be allowed to continue his work. The gospel is a message of God’s grace and the assurance of God’s good will toward us.

(Acts 20:32) *“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”* Paul in preparing to depart tells them that now that you have heard what I have to say “I commend you to God”; or I leave you in the hands of God. He informs them that they can rest assured because of “the word of His grace”. In the gospel God has provided all that we need and He will take care of us. Do you trust God to take care of you? You should: (1 Peter 4:19) *“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”* So often we are troubled when all we have to do is to turn to “the word of grace”.

To hear the gospel is to hear “the word of salvation”: (Acts 13:26) *“Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.”* “The word of this salvation” is simply the doctrine that has brought them and us salvation which must include Jesus Christ and the good news concerning Jesus. The doctrine that they had heard was the means by which they had received salvation.

Do you know that the gospel contains the “word of reconciliation”? It does: (2 Corinthians 5:19) *“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”* “Reconciliation is a word that we seldom use in our everyday language; Easton’s Bible Dictionary defines “reconciliation” as ‘a change from enmity to friendship, it is mutual, it is a change wrought in both parties who have been at enmity’. Paul makes reference to a change wrought in the personal character of the sinner who stops being an enemy to God by wicked works: (Colossians 1:22-23) *“In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: (23) 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;” Please notice the connection of the gospel and “reconciliation” in verse twenty three. Paul also urged the Corinthians to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20) *“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”* As we know sin separates us from God: (Isaiah 59:1-2) *“Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: (2) But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* This being the case we need something to bring us back into fellowship with God; the gospel is the perfect and the only tool available to us to accomplish this!

The gospel can accomplish our “reconciliation” because it contains the “word of truth”: (Ephesians 1:13) *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”* As Jesus said the “truth” is very important: (John 8:32) *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* The inspired writer James also wrote of the importance of the “word of truth”: (James 1:18) *“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”* The “word of truth” that James writes of is the gospel; and it is through the gospel that we have “reconciliation” to God. That is why it is so important that we teach and preach the gospel!

What is it that you hear from the gospel? When you hear the gospel you are hearing “the word of faith”: (Romans 10:8) *“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;”* What was it that Paul and others preached? They preached the gospel and by such preaching the hearers received and believed the “word of faith” in their “hearts”. Just how did they come to receive faith? Faith comes by hearing: (Romans 10:17) *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Therefore, when the gospel is preached the results are faith in the hearts and obedience to the call to obedience.

I believe it is correct to say that most of us love life and desire to live a long life. But what about eternal life; do we desire it as much as we desire physical life? If we do we should know that the gospel contains the “word of life”: (Philippians 2:16) *“Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”* What was it that gave Paul reason to rejoice? He was happy because he had preached the gospel that contained “the word of life”. Why was Paul so certain that he had not “run in vain”? He was certain because he had preached the gospel which contained “the word of truth” that reconciled sinners to God and would make it possible for them to have eternal life which they were so desperately seeking.

Finally let us be assured that the gospel contains “sound words”: (2 Timothy 1:13) *“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which*

is in Christ Jesus.” Paul is encouraging Timothy to keep or hold on to the “sound words” he had heard from Paul. When we hear “sound words” we are hearing words that we can trust and rely upon. When you “hold fast” to these “sound words” you remember them, you retain them and you obey them! If when we hear the gospel we “hold fast the form of sound words” we can be sure that we have been reconciled to God and if we remain faithful we will be given eternal life in heaven [Revelation 2:10].

CHAPTER 4

REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL FORETOLD

Isaiah foretold that there would be many who would reject the gospel: (Isaiah 53:1) *“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?”* In the closing of the former chapter Isaiah foretold the kind of reception the gospel of Christ would receive. If Isaiah had been alive as Jesus was hanging on the cross he would have been extremely disappointed that there were so many who did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. The unbelief of the Jews is said to be the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy: (John 12:38) *“That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?”*

The Jews of Jesus’ days should have believed because of the prophets’ reports and because of what Jesus did to fulfill these prophecies while he was here on this earth. Of the many who hear the gospel today there are few, very few who believe; to say the least, “There are very few who allow their beliefs to direct their actions.

Sometimes when we preach the gospel knowing that there are those in the audience who need to obey and don’t; we preachers get very discouraged. We wonder what we could have said that would convince them of the need to make things right with God. It seems as though Paul may have had these same thoughts: (Romans 10:15-16) *“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?”* The scriptures prepare us for this rejection of the gospel; yet it is hard to understand why anyone would reject the good news of the gospel. The Jews were angry because the gospel was being preached to the Gentiles; verse 14 tells why it was necessary to preach the gospel to the Gentiles: (Romans 10:14) *“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”* It was impossible for them “to call on him” if they never heard the gospel they could not believe. Everyone who comes to God must believe: (Hebrews 11:6) *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* In Romans chapter 10 verses 15 and 16 Paul speaks of preaching which would certainly suggest that they heard what Esaias had written even if they had not read it for themselves.

We cannot overlook the benefit of reading the Bible for ourselves: (John 20:31) *“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”* The results of reading can have the same results as hearing. Don’t let your Bible get dusty.

The rejection of Jesus and his gospel is actually good for those of us who are Gentiles: (Romans 11:28) *“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.”* By rejecting the gospel the Jews became enemies of God; and because of this God’s grace became abundant to the Gentiles. Even though the Jews were beloved when they rejected the gospel they became enemies of God. Even the Jews whom Paul calls “enemies of God” can reverse that position by believing; repenting and obeying the gospel’s commands; they can once again become friends of God.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?’

I could write several hundred pages about the gospel; but if I did not include stating what the gospel is it would all be to no avail. Therefore, this chapter will be devoted to writing what God’s Word says about the Gospel. I will also note the benefits of the gospel.

First, the Bible declares the gospel to be “good tidings of great joy for all people”: (Luke 2:10-11) *“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”* In the Greek the words “I bring you good tidings of great joy” can be translated “I preach the gospel to you”. This term carries the idea of good news or a good message. On this occasion the shepherds were afraid and the angel speaks words that will bring them comfort and peace of mind. This good news is to bring “joy to all people”; not just to the Jews. Jesus is a Savior only to those who accept him as their Lord. The Savior was born that day and he was born in the place where it was foretold that he would be born [I.e. in the city of David]. They might have expected him to have been dressed up in the finest of robes of royal colors; instead they would find him lying in a manger of a stable. He was not dressed in fine robes; rather he would be found wrapped in swaddling clothes; this was a cloth that new born babies were traditionally wrapped in. To continue the theme of “all people” Luke writes verse 32: (Luke 2:32) *“A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”* Isaiah had prophesized that such a savior would be born: (Isaiah 52:7) *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”* (Isaiah 61:1-3) *“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are*

bound; (2) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; (3) To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. Mark wrote that Isaiah's prophecies had been fulfilled: (Mark 1:15) *"And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."* It was now time to repent and believe the gospel because the "kingdom of God" was not too far away.

CHAPTER 6

PREACHED TO THE JEWS FIRST

This "good tidings of great joy" was preached to the Jews first: (Luke 24:47) *"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* Jesus instructed the apostles to begin preaching the gospel at Jerusalem; thereby proclaiming the good news to the Jews first. Paul knew that the gospel must first be given to the Jews: (Acts 13:46) *"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."* This was necessary because of the commandment of Jesus in Luke 24:47. All men must be called by the gospel and commanded to believe and repent; since the Jews rejected the gospel Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles.

The gospel is preached to Gentiles: (Mark 13:10) *"And the gospel must first be published among all nations."* Here Jesus broadens the scope of preaching the gospel to "all nations". Paul wrote that he communicated the gospel to the Gentiles: (Galatians 2:2) *"And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."* We should notice that this was NOT something that Paul decided to do on his own; he was directed by "revelation" of the Holy Spirit to communicate the gospel to the Gentiles. Because it was of utmost importance that everyone hears the gospel we might say that the apostles divided the preaching responsibilities:

(Galatians 2:9) *"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."* Paul and Barnabas had the ministry to the Gentiles and the apostles from Jerusalem had the ministry to the Jews. The "heathen" refers to the Gentiles as the Jews considered anyone who was not a Jew to be heathen. To those who argue that Paul was not an apostle it appears as though the other apostles accepted his doctrine when they gave their "right

hands of fellowship”. Did they not accept Paul apostleship? If these inspired men accepted Paul as an apostle shouldn't everyone else also accept his apostleship?

When the gospel was preached to “all nations or to everyone it would have included the “poor”: (Matthew 11:5) *“The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”* Taking the gospel to the poor was something that Jesus himself did. Think about this; sinners are blinded by the allurements and temptations of sin. Sinners are lame in that they either don't know how or choose not to walk in the path of righteousness.

Sinners are leprous because their souls are defiled with sin and like all lepers they infect others. They are deaf to the Word of God and sinners are dead in trespasses and sin. It is through Jesus Christ that all of the spiritual illnesses can be cured; that is why it is so urgent that the gospel be preached. We are not able to perform miracles such as Jesus performed today but by taking the gospel to all who are blind, lame, lepers, deaf and dead in sin Jesus can still cure them of their spiritual illnesses. We should note that it is Jesus who does the healing and not the person who teaches or preaches the gospel.

Jesus said he was anointed by the spirit of the Lord to preach the gospel to the poor: (Luke 4:18) *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,”* Jesus possessed the Spirit without measure: (John 3:34) *“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.”* Jesus had been “anointed” or set aside to preach the gospel to the poor; this was his mission while he was on this earth. Of course this certainly would include those who are physically poor but it would also include those who are in spiritual poverty. Jesus did not ask his apostles to do anything that he did not do himself; he set the example for them and for us also.

The gospel was taken to “every creature”: (Mark 16:15) *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”* This was a tremendous task that was given to the apostles. When Jesus said “every creature” he said exactly what he meant. As we consider their mode of transportation we can more fully appreciate the task that was given to these men. Although their world did not include all the territory that our world includes today consider they did not have automobiles, airplanes like we have today; they either walked or rode on a donkey; it is seldom that we read of them even riding in a ship and the ships of that day did not have the power or speed that our ships have. They didn't have the radio, television or the telephone; in our world nearly everyone walks about with a telephone with them at all times. To our shame there is probably less gospel being spread today than what the brethren of the first century spread the gospel.

Paul said that the great commission had been accomplished: (Colossians 1:23) *“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;” Who heard the gospel in your day Paul? “Every creature which is under heaven” says Paul. If these brethren were able to take the gospel to “every creature” so can we! In writing this Paul is referring to the two main divisions of mankind; both the Jew and Gentile. “Every creature had been told about the salvation that is available in Christ Jesus. Some commentators contend that it cannot be taken literally that every single person had heard the gospel; as for me I prefer to believe the inspired writer over any commentator, I cannot believe that the Holy Spirit would inspire Paul to write that which in actuality would be a lie.

CHAPTER 7

WHAT THE GOSPEL WILL DO

Before going into this subject let me first state that the gospel must be believed: (Mark 1:15) *“And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”* Jesus did not say that the gospel should be believed; he said it “must be believed”. This is the only way the gospel can accomplish its intended purpose. The Hebrews writer confirms this idea: (Hebrews 4:2) *“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”* Not having “faith” in the gospel is the same as saying they did not believe the gospel that was preached to them. Even today many hear the Word of God and profit nothing from what they have heard; but this is not an excuse to stop preaching the gospel. The gospel must be taught and not just by teachers; it is the responsibility of everybody to spread the glad tidings of the gospel.

Now let us consider the blessings that can be gained by believing and obeying the gospel. The good news and glad tidings of the gospel brings peace: (Luke 2:10) *“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”* (Luke 2:14) *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”* The angel’s message of verse 14 means that peace in the highest sense has come to man as a favor from God. To a lost and dying world peace with God is what the sinner so desperately needs. The angel says “Let God have the honor” when he says “Glory to God in the highest”. God’s good will in sending us the Messiah introduced peace to mankind on this earth. If you desire God to be at peace with you, you must seek to make peace with God. When man becomes reconciled to God they have peace with God and with themselves. We should like the angels make an announcement to all the world that our Savior has been born; died for our sins and was resurrected from the grave and now sits at the right hand of God: (Mark 16:19) *“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.”* The good news and glad tidings of the gospel has been made possible through the love and grace of God: (John 3:16) *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

Paul declared the gospel to be the “gospel of peace”: (Ephesians 6:15) *“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”* Paul repeated this statement in his epistle to the Christians at Rome: (Romans 10:15) *“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”* The gospel will guide our feet in the way of peace: (Luke 1:79) *“To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”* In ancient times the word for “gospel” was used in connection with a runner [messenger] returning from battle with news of victory: (Isaiah 52:7) *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”* I am sure that this was used by Paul when he wrote Romans 10:15. If we have our feet shod with the gospel we are able to walk in the paths of righteousness: (Psalms 23:3) *“He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”* If you desire to be at peace with God then you must obey the gospel!

The gospel “produces hope”: (Colossians 1:23) *“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;”* The gospel results with us being blessed with “hope”. The definition that I often use for “hope” is: “desire plus expectation”. Do you hope or desire to go to heaven? You can expect to go to heaven if you obey the gospel. Look at (Ephesians 1:18) *“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”* If the eyes of your understanding have been enlightened by hearing the gospel and you have obeyed you are then made aware and come to knowledge; along with hope of glory and an inheritance with the saints. The “hope” of the gospel is the glorification of the soul; whereby our souls can spend eternity in heaven with God.

A blessing of the gospel that must not be overlooked is saints have “fellowship” in the gospel: (Philippians 1:5) *“For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;”* In the context we find Paul informs them of his prayer on their behalf: (Philippians 1:3) *“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,”* He was thankful for their “fellowship in the gospel”. To paraphrase this Paul was thankful for their participation in spreading the gospel. We could also say that Paul was thankful for their acceptance and obedience to the gospel. We should never come to the conclusion that spreading the gospel is the work of the elders and preachers; everyone is to be involved in this work; thereby having fellowship with the elders and preacher in telling others the good news and glad tidings. The Philippians’ gift to Paul showed their eagerness to have “fellowship” with him in the gospel: (Philippians 4:10) *“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.”* When we consider the Philippians “fellowship” in the gospel we must think beyond their eagerness to participate in spreading the gospel and

think about their willingness to continue to live according to the gospel. If we are not willing to live by the gospel it will be impossible to have any “fellowship in the gospel”.

Lastly, we find that it is in the gospel that we have “fulness of blessings”: (Romans 15:29) *“And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.”* The words “of the gospel” do not appear in many ancient manuscripts. Paul hoped to come to them in the fullness of the blessings in Christ. When Paul went to Rome he went there with intentions of preaching the gospel. When he did go to Rome he went there in bonds; but he was allowed to preach the gospel: (Acts 28:30-31) *“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, (31) Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”* God may not allow us to always do things as we have planned to do; but if we are serious in doing God’s will God will provide us a way. Paul was serious in going to Rome and preaching the gospel and God provided a way for him to preach the gospel without any hindrance from anyone. All preachers should be as anxious as Paul was to tell others the good news and glad tidings. Neither should Christians fail to have fellowship in the efforts of preachers.

CHAPTER 8

WHAT SHOULD THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE GOSPEL DO”

This is a question that everyone must consider. What must I do with what I have heard about Jesus? Too many just ignore what they hear when they should be adhering to the truth: (Galatians 1:6) *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:”* Paul wrote “I marvel” or “I wonder”; Paul could have used a much stronger rebuke than he did. The words “so soon” indicate that it had not been very long since they first heard the gospel that is why he was so surprised that they had turned to another gospel. Today we see that many who have heard the gospel in truth turn “unto another gospel”. Most of these are seeking to be entertained; I say with boldness; “The church is not in the entertainment business; the church is in proclaiming the truth business and giving all the glory to God”! If you go to church services to be entertained you are going for the wrong reason and you might as well stay at home. We also find that some are turned “unto another gospel” because they had their toes stomped on. The church is not in the business of tickling ears. The church is in the business of condemning sin; not condoning sin. If what you hear from the pulpit condemns some of your life styles accept it and repent and get down on your knees and pray. That is what Simon the sorcerer was told to do and so should you. (Acts 8:21-22) *“Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. (22) Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”*

Paul’s next statement to those who had turned to another gospel is found in (Galatians 1:7) *“Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would per-*

vert the gospel of Christ.” This other gospel was one that taught an entirely different way to be justified before God. It hurts but we must admit that there are different gospels today being taught; one that comes to mind is that you don’t have to be baptized to be saved all you have to do is believe. Another false doctrine is that one church is as good as another when the Bible teaches that there is but one church. Why do people turn to another gospel? Because we still have those in the world who are troubling people and have no regrets in perverting the gospel. I see this as a power struggle, men desiring to have others follow them instead of following the Lord. If you hear the gospel and believe it; stick to the word of truth.

Paul had more to write on the subject: (Galatians 2:14) *“But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”* Paul saw that their conduct or deportment was not honest; they were not walking according to what they had been taught. Paul regulated his life according to the gospel and the gospel is what he taught and required of others. There were those who were attempting to impose Jewish laws and traditions upon Christians and Paul confronted them. This should be the attitude found in the church today. The integrity of the church is at stake. If you have heard and obeyed the gospel adhere to it; stick to it like when you get “crazy glue” on your fingers.

CHAPTER 9

HOW SHOULD THE GOSPEL AFFECT YOU:

First of all we should never be ashamed of the gospel: (Romans 1:16) *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* Think about what results preaching the gospel had on Paul. The Jews looked upon him as an apostate; he was persecuted by the Gentiles and there were those who doubted that he was an apostle. Did this stop him from continuing to preach the gospel? Not in the least; he still proclaimed the truth and was not ashamed to do it any place. There are some who claim to be Christians who are ashamed to give thanks for their food at restaurants; they might do so if they are with other Christians but if alone they appear to be ashamed of their profession. Paul was so far from being ashamed of the gospel that he declared that the gospel “is the power of God unto salvation”. Let the world see and hear that you are not ashamed of the gospel.

Paul exhorted Timothy not to be ashamed: (2 Timothy 1:8) *“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;”* Paul is telling Timothy not to be ashamed of his testimonies of the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ. Some think that Paul may have recognized that Timothy was ashamed of the gospel; but I think that Paul was simply encouraging Timothy to be as he was; not ashamed of the gospel. If that should be what Paul was writing we can apply this same encouragement to ourselves today.

We should live “in subjection to the gospel”: (2 Corinthians 9:13) *“Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;”* We should so live our lives so as to prove Christian values. It has been said; “The only sermon some will hear is the life that you live”. We may not realize it but the salvation of others may depend on what they see from you. We are to be in subjection to the gospel at all times. If we have professed our belief in the gospel let us be true to our profession by working and living for the cause of Christ.

What about our conversation? Does our “conversation” indicate that we are Christians? (Philippians 1:27) *“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”* Today we apply our oral language to the word “conversation” but that is not what was meant by Paul. Paul is referring to our conduct or our manner of life; this would include our oral language but is not limited to what we say, our manner of life is also included. The word “conversation” would include our business transactions, our dress, style of living, even our entertainment; in fact it is inclusive of everything we do and say!

Jude tells us by inspiration to “earnestly contend for the faith”: (Jude 3) *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”* We are to put forth an honest effort to maintain the truth; to do so we have to debate those in error and of course it would include living our lives according to the truth. Paul was always ready to defend the gospel: (Philippians 1:17) *“But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.”* Paul was in prison when he wrote these words. No one knew any better than Paul himself knew that he had been appointed by God to defend the gospel and he was willing and ready to do so even while he was in bonds. Are we as ready as Paul was to defend the gospel? In our great nation we have “freedom to worship” but that does not give anyone the right to worship as they please; all worship must be according to “spirit and truth”: (John 4:24) *“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”* Brethren, this is what we must “earnestly contend” for!

CONCLUSION

Search the world over and you will never find anything more truthful than the gospel. Search the world over and you will never find a truer friend than Jesus Christ. Search throughout the entire world and you will never find another plan of salvation that was given by God. I believe the gospel to be the truth and I have placed my faith in the gospel; have you?

Indeed the gospel is good news of glad tidings. You may hear a lot of good news in your life time but you will never hear any greater news than what has been revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. No one else can offer you salvation and eternal life. Eternal life is extended to everyone; regardless of whether you are a Jew or a Gentile. If that is not good

news I have no idea what good news is. The only thing that I find sad about the gospel is that not everyone will accept it. Also there are some who accept it as truth but have never obeyed it. If you are among the latter consider your condition, your eternal destination. As long as you have a breath of air left in your body it is not too late to obey. Won't you obey the gospel?

is too late to do so? You should make this move because the gospel is TRUTH!

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