

The
Gospel of
Jesus Christ

By
Moody Roberts

Mountain State Baptist Schools
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--Foreword

"...I am set for the defence of the gospel." – Philippians 1:17b

This book presents to the reader a definition for the "GOSPEL" that truly presents its meaning: "glad tidings." In the Christian (?) world today there is present an emphasis foreign to the glad tidings defined in the Word of God. This strange message is found in its admonition, "Repeat this prayer after me and God will saved you." This practice is followed by multitudes in soul-winning campaigns seeking nothing more than numbers and statistics to enhance the evangelist's resume or the church's glory in its own numbers.

This book addresses a fundamental point that needs real consideration. The gimmick gospel results in numbers of professions but a fruit that leaves a church with thousands of members yet only hundreds of attendees. This book by Pastor Moody Roberts devotes to the reader an area of emphasis that calls for the saint's to be active and busy in the Master's business of reaching the lost. It draws from verses from the Word of God the essence of the gospel, its fruit, its evidence, and its meaning. The book does not miss the mark in exhorting the members of a local church to carry out this duty of faithful witnessing to our generation of sinners the world over.

The context of this responsibility and the excellent treatment of revealing the gospel message relative to the Old and New Testaments is plain and to the point. Pastor Roberts goes to great lengths to address verses to relate the work and content of the gospel. Saints of the Old Testament and saints of the New Testament were redeemed by the same Savior. They experienced the same salvation. This lesson is brought to the front in a manner that displays the sinners experience of salvation is "...by grace through faith. Pastor Roberts uses the acronym **G R A C E** to illustrate the facts of salvation:

Gracious election

Ruined sinners

Absolute atonement

Compelling love

Everlasting life

He extensively covers the area of the kingdom in verses that involve the gospel. The direction of meaning includes the area touching Christ and God as sovereign. The sinner is seen as responsible and God is seen as the one who saves.

It is refreshing to find the gospel treated as a message that is effective in the work of God. Paul declares it is the "...power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16) and manifests the same gospel and its power in Acts 20:21 and Philippians 1:29. In acts 20:21 Paul is quoted as saying to the Ephesians elders, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks,

repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” In Philippians 1:29 Paul addresses the subject and reveals it is given to the sinner to believe on Christ and also to suffer as a testimony of this grace: “For unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” The preposition “εἰς” (eis) is used in both verses (Acts 20:21 – “...faith **toward** our Lord Jesus Christ” and Philippians 1:29 – “...it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe **on** him, but also to suffer for his sake.) This preposition is a dative and displays “direction.” The sinner is touched by the word of God in the new birth that shows faith flows toward Christ receiving him. This is the power of the gospel that is “according to the Scripture” and soundly identified by Pastor Moody.

This book will prove to be a ready help to those who wish to glorify their Savior in witnessing to others the GOSPEL. Getting the message of Christ to the lost world in obedience to His command is the message of the New Testament Church. It is the responsibility of the members to correctly represent it and express it as the message of God.

Ken Johnson, Pastor

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Preface

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

In the Great Commission, the Lord Jesus Christ commanded His New Testament church to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. In order to be obedient to this command of Christ, the New Testament church must do the following two things: First, it must to the best of its ability by God's grace engage in world-wide missions work. Secondly, it must boldly proclaim the true Biblical gospel to every possible human creature. The question that naturally arises in relation to this twofold task is, *what is the Biblical gospel?*

On the basis of what is stated by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, it has become all-too-common for conservative, Bible-believing Christians to define the Biblical gospel simply as *the good news that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures*. It is often added that human beings are saved, or justified before God, by believing in this good news. Is this popular definition of the Biblical gospel accurate and adequate? Did God in the beginning, the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus Himself, and the new Testament apostles all preach this exact message whenever and wherever they proclaimed the

Biblical gospel? Anyone who would answer these questions in the affirmative certainly would be hard-pressed to prove these points from the Holy Scriptures alone, but the very opposite can be established on the basis of God's holy word. Consequently, there is now a strong need for Bible-believing Christians and pastors to gain a better understanding of and speak out against this widely-held tradition of men—a tradition that is inconsistent with and clearly contrary to the truth of God.

Elder Moody Roberts is one Bible-believing pastor who has recognized the error of this tradition, and he has thoughtfully and thoroughly written against it in this timely treatise entitled *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*. As a **most** experienced minister of the Biblical gospel and present-day pastor of the Rupert Missionary Baptist Church in Rupert, West Virginia, Elder Roberts approaches this delicate subject with love and respect for those fellow Christians and pastors who might happen to disagree with his conclusions about it and with a sincere and honest desire to be a blessing, help, and friend to all who read this work. In a day of endless religious controversy, it is not at all his intention to be another controversialist, but instead to be a faithful man of God who properly interprets and applies the sacred text. It is his goal to present a broader, more comprehensive definition of the true Biblical gospel—a definition that does justice to the testimony of the entirety of the Holy Scriptures instead of being based upon 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 alone. His words are worthy of careful consideration by everyone who loves

God's word and is concerned about the true meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. One important caveat needs to be added about the thesis behind this work by Elder Roberts. He is not for one moment denying the fact that all of God's people are saved on the rock-solid foundation of the substitutionary atoning death, actual burial, and bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He emphatically affirms this vital truth, but he makes it abundantly clear as well that the gospel of Jesus Christ includes much more than just His death, burial, and resurrection. He shows that the gospel takes in all of the good news about God's Saviour-Messiah.

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The Gospel – Definition

The Gospel, what is that? I suppose that everyone who has heard any preaching in his lifetime will think that he knows that the gospel is, but do we? Two people are talking together and one of them says, "This world is surely going down hill morally." The other then responds, "That's the gospel truth!" Well is it? I doubt that one would get too much argument about the truth of the statement that the world is surely going down hill morally. Yet there is no gospel in that statement.

Someone says that the whole Bible is the gospel. Well the whole Bible is surely the Word of God, but is that the gospel? How about the commandments? God thundered forth on Mt. Sinai and wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone. Thou shalt not kill! Thou shalt not steal! Thou shalt not bear false witness! Thou shalt not covet! Thou shalt not commit adultery Is that the gospel? Well they are surely good laws, but one would be hard pressed to find the gospel in those laws.

Another says, the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Well the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is certainly the gospel, but is that all of it? Paul tells us in Galatians that the gospel was preached to Abraham. That was many years before Jesus died and rose again.

Another may say, "The gospel is all of the New Testament." Again the New Testament does certainly contain the gospel, but the Acts of the Apostles is a history of what the gospel accomplished. The Revelation is almost entirely prophetic of what is going to happen after this age is over in which the gospel is preached to the Gentiles. So what then is the gospel? That is what this book is all about.

Let's look at the derivation of the word. This word gospel comes from a Greek word *evangelion*, which is defined as follows.

- "1. *A reward for good tidings*
2. *good tidings*
 - a. *the glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus the messiah, the founder of this kingdom. after the death of Christ, the term comprises also the preaching of [concerning] Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to procure eternal salvation for the men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life and exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty to*

consummate the kingdom of God.

b. the glad tidings of salvation through Christ

*c. the proclamation of the grace of God manifest
and pledged in Christ*

d. the gospel

*e. as the messianic rank of Jesus was proved by his
words, his deeds, and his death, the narrative of the
sayings, deeds, and death of Jesus Christ came to be
called the gospel or glad tidings” American On-line
Bible/Strong’s Concordance*

So we can see that the main root of the word’s meaning is glad tidings, but again that simple definition is not enough. Then we note it is the glad tidings concerning Jesus Christ. Now the question then is the gospel in the Old Testament? My answer is do we find Jesus Christ in the Old Testament?

In THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST we find a reference to the everlasting gospel. Just how old is the gospel? We are told that Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Jesus is the eternal sacrifice. Then the gospel is also everlasting. Most of the commentators that I am familiar with call the everlasting a special gospel different from ours, which is to be preached during the Great Tribulation. By the very nature of the word everlasting, I submit, it must be more than that. How

can something be reserved to the last days of God's program and yet be called everlasting?

We are even told that the gospel is not limited to the New Testament.

See Gal. 3:8:

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

I believe that the pages to follow will show that a good definition of the gospel is: the good news in both the Old and New Testaments of all that Jesus planned, prophesied, and effected in order to bring about His purpose of saving His people from their sins. That is not to say that one must believe everything just as it is written herein to be saved, for that would mean the sinner must believe all the doctrine which has never been the requirement. He learns the doctrine after he is saved. To be saved one must believe that Jesus is Who He claimed to be and commit to Him.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

Let us consider the beginning of the gospel. From one standpoint we must say it does not have a beginning, because it is everlasting. On the other hand twice we read in the scriptures of the beginning of the gospel. Strangely enough beginning can refer to different times. In Genesis 1:1 the Bible says,

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

This can't be the beginning of eternity, because eternity has no beginning. It has to be the beginning of time. Again in John 1:1 the Bible says.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

In this verse the eternal existence of Jesus, Who is the Word, is established. What is meant by the beginning? The context with verse 3 naming the Word as the creator would indicate that the beginning here is the same beginning as is mentioned in Gen. 1:1, a beginning before there was a beginning of time.

Then Mark 1:1 spoke of the beginning.

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

He did not speak of the beginning of time though. He spoke of the beginning of the gospel.

Clearly Paul was not talking about the same thing Mark was. While Mark spoke of the beginning of the gospel as related to the good tidings of Jesus Christ and His earthly biography, Paul surely spoke of the beginning of the gospel as related to his preaching of that gospel to the Philippian people. As we think then of the beginning of the gospel, we are thinking about the same thing Mark spoke of.

Many people make the gospel begin with the death of Christ. This comes from Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 15:1-4.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"

Surely we must not limit the gospel to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Matthew has two chapters on the death, burial, and resurrection with two more on the betrayal and trial leading up to the death. Mark has two chapters on the death, burial, and resurrection with one on the betrayal and trial leading up to the death. Likewise Luke has two chapters dealing with the death, burial, and resurrection. He too has one chapter dealing with the betrayal and leading up to the death. John is the same: It has two chapters on death, burial, and resurrection with one chapters on betrayal and leading up to the death. Counting the betrayal and events leading to the death along with the death, burial, and resurrection, the four Gospels tell the story in 13 chapters. Those Gospels together have 89 chapters. If the gospel is limited to the death, burial, and resurrection, then what are the other 76 chapters in those four gospels?

Mark makes it clear as to when or where the gospel begins. Many will not accept this stated truth because it goes against their teaching, but surely we must let God be true and every man a liar. Mark would say that the gospel begins with John the Baptist. Many there are that teach that John

was of the dispensation of law and of the Old Testament. Our Lord's own commentary on that would refute it. In Matt. 11:13 He said

"For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John."

Notice He said until John. He did not say through or past John. That would indicate then that the prophets and the law were up to John, and there they stopped.

Others say that John was not of the law dispensation and the Old Testament but that he was of an Intertestamental Period between the Old and New Testaments. Our Lord's words again refute this too for He said the prophets and law were until John. People who say this surely must not think of what they are saying. If John was of an Intertestamental period or of the Old Testament, then we would have to put Jesus in that same period. Why? Because Jesus was baptized of John, and it is the only baptism our Lord ever had. Tell me how can John be in one period and baptize Jesus in another period?

Then let's look at what Mark said. In Mark 1:1-4 we are told:

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

Now Mark does not say the beginning of a gospel. He says the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So where then does

this gospel of Jesus Christ, God's Son begin? The very next verse begins two quotations from the Old Testament – one from Isaiah and the other from Malachi. Both of them are clearly prophetic of John the Baptist. Then the next verse begins the story of John the Baptist and his work as the forerunner of Jesus Christ in fulfillment of these prophecies.

John the Baptist is an essential part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Malachi had prophesied that God would send His messenger before to prepare the way for him. Likewise Isaiah prophesied of a voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. Now for someone to jump up and declare he was the promised one before this preparation came would be completely out of order, for every word of Scripture must be fulfilled. It was therefore necessary for John to perform his ministry so as to show Jesus as really being the Christ. Jesus Himself said in John 10:2,3:

“But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.”

He had just said that anyone who entered the sheepfold other than by the door was a thief and a robber. What did Jesus mean when at His baptism He told John to suffer it to be so for He must fulfill all righteousness? Is not John the porter? And is not his baptism the door to the sheepfold? Anyone who would attempt to be the shepherd of the Lord's sheep without being ushered in by the porter opening the door was a thief. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness and fully qualified as He came through the

door that God had ordained and prophesied He would. Can anyone fail then to see the absolute necessity for John's ministry and baptism to introduce our Lord and His gospel? This was so important that when the church would elect an apostle to take the place of Judas after his fall and death, the stipulation was put on the selection that he must have been with them from the baptism of John. Everything then from that baptism until the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was preparatory to the same. All that was in between was not incidental; all of it was setting His credentials to be our Priest and our Sacrifice and thus part of the good tidings, the gospel.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

How does the Gospel of the Kingdom relate to the gospel that began with John's Baptism? We saw in the last chapter that the Gospel of Jesus Christ began with John and his baptism. It was John also who introduced the Gospel of the Kingdom in the New Testament.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." – Matthew 3:1,2

The question at this point is, "Is this the same gospel as that called the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Mark 1:1?" Mark identified the Gospel of Jesus Christ and said it began with John the Baptist. John came on the scene preaching "the Gospel of the Kingdom." In Matt. 3:1,2 Jesus had not yet begun His ministry; does that mean John's gospel was not the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Now let it be noted here that many do teach that we have two preached a baptism of repentance and the Gospel of the Kingdom which they say was of the Old Testament Economy. It is interesting to note, however, that the Gospel of the Kingdom is only mentioned by name four times in the Bible. Not one of those references names John the Baptist as the preacher. Three of the four times name Jesus as the preacher, Matt. 4:23, Matt. 9:35, Mark 1:14. The only other reference to The Gospel of the Kingdom by that name is in Matt, 24:14 where it is said that this gospel shall be preached in all the world **different gospels here.** It is maintained that John (until the end comes)

...and then shall the end come. That is not to say that John did not preach the Kingdom. I shall show later that he did, for he preached exactly what Jesus preached. I am only seeking to show here that to relegate the Gospel of the Kingdom to John as if he preached some other gospel is not proper exegesis.

Many also say that this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached again during the Great Tribulation period but not for now. If that be true, (of course I do not believe that) then consistency demands that we say the same thing about Jesus. Note the following two quotations.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 3:1, 2

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 4:17

In Matt. 3: John's message is recorded; in the very next chapter the message of Jesus is recorded. What is the difference between the two? Note the big difference of one little two letter word - "ye". John is recorded as saying , "Repent ye." Jesus is recorded as saying, "Repent." Now would anyone dare to say that the difference of that one little word would make the gospel of Jesus different from that of John? Certainly the word "ye" is implicit in our Lord's command too.

The timing is not limited to just the place it is recorded either. Granted something could be recorded in one chapter and something that happened three

years later be recorded in the next chapter. That is not the case here though. John came preaching his gospel and baptized Jesus. After His baptism Jesus was led into the wilderness and was tempted forty days of the devil. Mark tells us that was straightway after His baptism. The priests and Levites probably came to John while Jesus was in the wilderness. It does not seem reasonable that they would have waited 40 days. After those 40 days Jesus came back into Galilee. Then John tells us it was the next day that John saw Jesus coming and identified Him as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. The next day two of John's disciples came to Jesus one of whom was Andrew who went and found his brother Peter and brought him to Jesus. John also tells us it was on the third day that Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding in Cana of Galilee.

Then when Jesus heard that John had been imprisoned He came into Galilee according to Matthew chapter 4 and Mark 1:14. According to Mark He came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. It is on this trip to Galilee that we read of His preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom in verse 17. So the preaching of Jesus would have probably started less than two months after the preaching of John began.

Why this seeming insignificant argument? It is to show that the Gospel of the Kingdom that John preached and the Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus preached are identical. It is also to show that John was not in an Old Testament period preaching one gospel, and that Jesus was in the New Testament preaching another gospel. No. If Jesus is New Testament, then John must be too. To say it the other way if John is of the Old Testament, then Jesus has to be too.

What is the Gospel of the Kingdom? Was it present or future? Was it visible or invisible? Who was, is, or shall be in the Kingdom? Is it the same thing as the Church? Let's again go to the Word of God for our answers.

Our Lord appointed seventy men out of His church and sent them forth two by two. He told them that in whatever city they went they were to heal the sick and tell them that the kingdom of God had come nigh to them. Luke 10:9. Even if their message was not received, they were to affirm that the kingdom had come nigh to them, Luke 10:11.

"And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

He coupled the preaching of this Gospel of the Kingdom with the healing of the sick, Matt. 9:35.

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

It seems these were His credentials to show He was the One Who should come. So our Lord's gospel affirmed a kingdom "at hand" or nigh in the beginning of His ministry.

Was it visible or invisible? The Pharisees wanted to know about this. They demanded that Jesus tell them when the kingdom would come. Jesus

affirmed that it was invisibly present. Let us be reminded that he is talking to religion that does not accept Who He is. Note Luke 17:20,21.

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

To these men then it was invisible. It seems that the meaning here is that the kingdom was in their midst. It was right in front of them, and they could not see it.

In another sense it remains invisible. When Nicodemus came to Jesus that night, Jesus told him that except a man be born again he could not see the kingdom of God. It is then invisible to infidels or to religion until the new birth is experienced. Nicodemus did not understand this matter of the new birth and asked how he could go back into his mother's womb and be born. Jesus then explained further that this was invisible – a spiritual experience. Jesus told him that except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he could not enter the kingdom of God. Note John 3:3-6.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

He also told him that the new birth was like the wind.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." – John 3:8.

Thus we see that not only is the kingdom spiritual and invisible to an unsaved world, but is so also with us Christians. It is important to note that this kingdom is entered by a spiritual birth. Jesus was saying to Nicodemus that he must have more than his natural birth by water. He must have a birth by the Spirit making of him a new man in the Lord's new kingdom. Let me just say here that He did not say he must be born again into an invisible church. He indicated our new birth gives us entrance into our Lord's invisible kingdom.

It is important to take a minute on Luke 17:21 quoted above. Our Lord told those Pharisees that the kingdom of God was within them. Now these men were Christ rejecters. How could He say the kingdom of God was within them? He really was saying that it was within their midst. It was among them. He said much the same thing in Mark 1:15:

"And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Now this opens up a completely new line of thought. If it was invisible and spiritual, in what manner was it among those Christ rejecting Pharisees? The King was in their midst. The King and his band of followers, who were His present kingdom, was in their midst.

Was Jesus a king? It would seem so from what Jesus said in Luke 22:30.

"That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

He refers to "my kingdom." Would anyone possess a kingdom if He was not a king? Then He gives us more light in John 18:35-37.

"Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

This certainly leaves no doubt as to whether He considered Himself a king or not. When Pilate asked Him, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered him, "Thou sayest that I am a king." Now Jesus was not just saying that's what you said. It was an idiom like one we often use when for emphasis we say, "You said it, Bud!" He was asserting definitely that He was a king.

He declared that His kingdom was not of this world. He was not just saying that His kingdom was not of this age. He went on to say His kingdom was not from hence meaning not from here. Then where was it from? Daniel prophesied that the God of Heaven would set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed. Has He done so? Some will put that off until

Jesus comes back. I submit that He has already done so. I look for His kingdom to come also, but He set up the Kingdom of Heaven here during His earthly sojourn. When teaching His disciples to pray, He taught them to pray,

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." – Matthew 6:10.

For this we still pray. We look forward to a time when Jesus will sit upon the throne of His father David as announced by the angel to Mary before His birth. In the same prayer, however, He taught us to pray,

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." – Matthew 6:13.

He didn't say thine will be the kingdom; He said, thine is the kingdom. Let's say it this way. He was King. He established His kingdom. It was and is invisible present among us, but His coronation day has not yet come. He will come back to this earth in all His glory to sit upon David's throne. Oh for that coronation day!

Our Lord also told His disciples that this Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached as a witness to all nations before the end could come. Note Matt. 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."

Thus we see the Gospel of the Kingdom preached in the beginning of His ministry; and when the end of the world comes, it will still be being preached.

Let us not confuse this with the church. We have said that the kingdom is invisible. We have also said that it is entered through the new birth. We may also say it is universal. It is made up of all the Lord's people on the earth at one time. Neither of these are true of the Lord's Church. The Lord's Church is entered in covenant relationship, not by birth (physical or spiritual), but by baptism. His church is visible and local, not invisible and universal. Only those who have been properly baptized into His local assembly are in His church.

Does the church have no relation to the kingdom? Yes it does. The churches in His kingdom are the administrators of the kingdom. The kingdom was given no authority or guide to discipline its subjects, but the church was given authority, responsibility, and guide to discipline her members. Just as there may be multiple states within a kingdom, likewise the churches within His Kingdom are multiple. This is another reason for not relegating the kingdom to some future dispensation. John and Jesus both came preaching the Kingdom. Jesus had not at that time established (or organized) His church, so they did not preach His church. When He established (or organized) His church in His kingdom, there was no need to stop preaching His kingdom.

Are we off our subject, the gospel? No! It may appear that we have left it and are writing about the kingdom instead. Not so. We are seeking to find out what the gospel is. Need I say any more to establish that the gospel of the kingdom that John preached is the same as the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus preached? Do we have authority to preach any other gospel from that which our Lord and Commissioner preached? I say no.

THE GOSPEL OF GOD

Under this heading let us discuss what is referred to as the gospel of God, the gospel of Christ, the gospel of grace, and the gospel of peace. Are they separate gospels, or are they the same gospel? Let us look first at those passages where reference is made to the gospel of God.

Paul and Peter both used this terminology. It is only Pauline though except for one time that Peter used it. In the first epistle that Paul wrote, he is reminding the Thessalonians of his ministry among them and he said,

"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." -- 1 Thessalonians 2:8.

He does not elaborate on what that gospel is. He merely refers to it as the gospel he imparted to them when he was with them. Again in verse 2 of the same chapter he said,

"...we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."

We learn here that he not only imparted this gospel to them, but that he did so with much contention. Were they formal debates? We don't know, but there must have been much opposition to the gospel he preached. So for now we just know that he preached the Gospel of God, that he did it in the midst of great opposition, and that according to verse 9 he did it so as to not be accountable to them for not having preached it.

In Romans he twice mentioned the Gospel of God.

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,...That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Romans 1:1 and 15:16.

Here he speaks of his apostleship and how God had called him to be an apostle. He relates then that he separated himself to the Gospel of God. It is important to remember that he was separated to that gospel. He affirms that it was his duty to minister that gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul refers to the Gospel of God again as he defends his apostleship to the Corinthians.

"Have I committed an offense in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God freely?" – 2 Corinthians 11:7.

He affirmed that his speech to them had been rude or simple, but it was not lacking in knowledge and he was equal to the chief of apostles. What did he mean then about committing an offense in abasing himself? He had made tents rather than taking money from them. That's what he meant by preaching to them freely. By taking the place of a laborer he had humbled himself so as to exalt them. He did this in order to get the Gospel of God to them.

Peter used this term one time in 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?"

Peter simply warns of judgment which all must face. In doing so he stresses the added peril that the ungodly face in that judgment. He refers to them as them that obey not the Gospel of God.

Now in all these verses where Paul and Peter used this term there is nothing to indicate that the Gospel of God is any other than any gospel in the book of God. In other words at this point, there is absolutely nothing to indicate that the Gospel of God is anything different from the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Now let us examine those passages that speak of the Gospel of Christ under this same heading, the Gospel of God. After all Christ is God. Will the Gospel of Christ then be the same as the Gospel of God? In his first epistle, 1 Thess. 3:2 Paul speaks of Timothy and calls him their fellow laborer in the Gospel of Christ. He uses the term in the same manner as he did the Gospel of God – just to say that they labor in the gospel. Note the rest of the verses in which the term is used.

"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." Romans 1:16.

"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." Romans 15:19.

"And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Romans 15:29.

"If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." 1 Corinthians 9:12.

"What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel." 1 Corinthians 9:18.

"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." 2 Corinthians 4:4.

"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;" 2 Corinthians 9:13.

"For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ:" 2 Corinthians 10:14.

"Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." Galatians 1:7.

"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;" Philippians 1:27.

This is the gospel Paul preached. In Rom. 15:19 and 2 Cor. 10:14 he is speaking of how far he had gone with his preaching. In 2 Cor. 10:16 he expresses his desire to press the preaching of that gospel on beyond. Paul surely had a world wide mission vision. In Romans it was unto Illyricum; in 2 Cor. It was unto Corinth. In Romans 1:16 he is not ashamed of the Gospel

of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, and in 1 Cor. 9:18 he boasts that he has not abused his rights, but has preached the Gospel of Christ to them without charge. In 2 Cor. He marvels at how that gospel can shine upon a blinded sinner and that sinner see and turn to Christ. He was blessed by the gospel and he rejoices of the blessing he hopes to bring to the Romans in 15:29 thru the Gospel of Christ. In 2 Cor. He glories in their professed subjection unto that gospel, and in Phil. 1:27 he challenges his readers to live a good life. Conversation here means behavior or manner of life. He said, let your conversation be becoming to the Gospel of Christ. That means a Christian's behavior or manner of life should be such as to make the gospel look good. In 1 Cor. He is speaking of sacrifices he has made rather than hinder that gospel. In all of this he has made no distinction between the Gospel of God, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel of Grace, or the Gospel of Peace. Instead his statement in Gal. 1:7 would indicate all of these as being a unity. He speaks of another gospel, but then he declares it is not another but rather a perversion of the true. Should we not conclude then that each of these terms is a term speaking of the same Gospel? Paul puts them together in Ephesians 5:5.

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

Is not the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of God the same? They are referred to as one it seems in the verse above. Christ is God; does not that show them to be the same? Is His kingdom not the fulfillment of Daniel 2:44 where it is said that the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom? If the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of God are the same, wouldn't we conclude that the gospel of Christ and gospel of God are also the same? We are so often told that John the Baptist preached the Gospel of the Kingdom, but Paul preached the Gospel of the Grace of God. They are thus considered different gospels. Paul mentions the "gospel of the grace of God" one time in 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."

This is the only time the term is mentioned in the Bible. At least 18 times the New Testament records Paul preaching the Kingdom or some word about him preaching the Kingdom. If Paul's gospel is the Grace of God and not the Kingdom of God, Why such difference in the number of times the term is uses?

Likewise the Gospel of peace is used two times. See Romans 10:15 and Ephesians 6:15.

"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!"

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;"

Again there is nothing in these two verses to indicate the Gospel of Peace is anything other than the gospel in either of the terms previously used. I believe we have already sufficiently shown that the Gospel of the Kingdom which John preached was the same as the Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus preached. Now we must surely conclude that the Gospel of the Kingdom is also the Gospel of God and of Jesus Christ. That one gospel is also characterized as the Gospel of Grace and Peace.

Just a note about another gospel. We have already noted that Paul spoke of another gospel which he affirmed was not another but a perversion of the true gospel. We have also noted already that many people say John preached the Gospel of the Kingdom and Paul preached the Gospel of the Grace of God. Note two or three points of logic. Stipulated as already seen:

1. John preached the Gospel of the Kingdom.
2. Jesus was baptized of John and then began to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.
3. Therefore John and Jesus both preached the same gospel

Note two verses in Acts 28.

"And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening."

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and

teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.” :30,31

Also note Gal. 1:6-8.

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

Then stipulate further:

1. John and Jesus both preached the same Gospel of the Kingdom.
2. Paul preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. (We have seen that already in 18 or more verses Especially note the three verses quoted above from Acts 28.)
3. Paul pronounced a curse on anyone (even an angel) that would preach a gospel different from his.
4. Paul surely would not mean to pronounce a curse on Jesus and John.
5. Therefore Paul’s gospel of grace and peace was the same as the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and Christ that John and Jesus preached.

THE GOSPEL

As we have been showing the gospel is one. The very term **the** gospel would indicate the same. We are not considering **a** gospel, but **the** gospel. We have also alluded to it before, but the term in Rev. 14:6 also corroborates the idea of one gospel.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,"

As we have already said, the term everlasting here would indicate one gospel. If it is everlasting, it is without beginning or ending and must therefore embrace all that is involved in the gospel.

Our Lord's own statement would seem to corroborate that is one also. We have seen already how his healing the sick and cleansing the lepers coupled with the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom was a sort of credentials to show Him as the One Who was to come.

Well, again in Matt. 11:5 He says:

"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."

Is this not the same gospel that He had preached before and showed Who He was? This time He just says "the gospel." This would seem to say the Gospel of the Kingdom is the Gospel.

He also spoke of a gospel that would cost the ones who proclaimed it.

Note a couple of passages here:

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. -- Mark 8:35.

And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. – Mark 10:29-30.

Our Lord this points up the price for believing and proclaiming this gospel. What gospel? This would again seem to point up the oneness of the gospel – that is that there is only one gospel.

If there must be a division to show the separate gospels we have alluded to, we then find ourselves in a dilemma not knowing which gospel is preached in many references of Scripture.

For the sake of space I only list the references that my readers may check for themselves. Please note: Matt. 26:13; Mark 13:10; 14:9; 16:15; Luke 9:6; 20:1; Acts 8:25; 14:7,21; 15:7; 16:10; Rom 1:15; 10:16; 11:28; 15:10; 1 Cor. 1:17; 4:15; 9:14, 16, 23; 15:1, 2 Cor. 8:18; 10:16; Gal. 1:11; 2:5, 14; 4:13; Eph 3:6; 6:19; Phil. 2:22; 4:3; 1 Thess 2:4; Philemon :13; Heb. 4:2; and 1 Pet. 1:12,25; and 4:6.

Let's take a look at the passage which is often called the gospel. Let me say to start with, that this passage may surely be called a summary of the gospel.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" -- 1 Cor. 15:1-4.

Now even this passage is often taken to be very much less than what it is. Does it not speak of the death of Christ? It surely does! It is more though than just a simple statement that Jesus died. It is that ". . . *Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.*" That means that the Gospel includes that Christ died for our sins according to all that God had planned and prophesied. According to the scriptures takes in an awful lot of reference. In reality then the gospel must go all the way back to Gen. 3:15.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

God is here talking to the devil in the Garden of Eden. It is just after Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit. Adam had blamed God and the woman He gave him for his sin in partaking of that tree. Eve had followed by blaming the serpent (devil), saying that he had beguiled her and this caused her to eat. Then God turns to curse the devil. In doing that he also made this first promise of the Redeemer. The promised Redeemer would be the son of the woman. This in itself is out of the ordinary. Scripture almost always refers to a man as the son of his father.

That Redeemer was not only to bruise the head of the serpent (devil), but the devil was to bruise His heel. That is exactly what happened on the cross. To preach the gospel then is not just preaching our Lord's death but His person and work as well.

Here the doctrine of the virgin birth is introduced. The Redeemer is to be the seed of the woman. Many years later Isaiah, the prophet, made that prediction most clear.

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." – Isaiah 7:14.

After Jesus was born and Matthew was made a disciple, he wrote concerning the Lord's genealogy and birth. He affirmed that all these things happened that Isaiah's prophecy should be fulfilled. He then quoted Isaiah as follows:

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." -- Matt. 1:23.

Is this part of the gospel? Of course it is! Jesus died according to the scriptures. The scriptures declare Him to be the sacrifice for our sins. The sacrifice for our sins of necessity must be pure and without the taint of sin. The virgin birth was therefore absolutely necessary to keep Him from that taint. It is also necessary to fulfill the prophecy that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head.

His death is also the fulfillment of all the Old Testament Types. The Book of Leviticus, for instance tells us about the various sacrifices. It tells us of the requirements for the sacrifices and how they were to be done. There is the burnt offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, etc. All of them are different, but they all picture the sacrifice that Jesus made. So the preach the Gospel is also to preach Leviticus.

The Gospel is also not just the death of Jesus. It includes the burial. Why is it necessary to include the burial? Isn't it a foregone conclusion that if one dies, he will be buried? The burial is the seal that our Lord was really dead. The story was told that His disciples came and stole Him away, this He was not really dead. Some said, He just swooned, and in the dampness of the tomb He revived. How foolish! Doesn't one know that had He not been dead, after being sealed in that tomb for 3 days He would have been dead from suffocation? No the burial is a proof that he was actually dead.

The gospel also includes his resurrection. Again it is not just any resurrection. It is that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. The Modernist will preach the resurrection of Jesus, but he does not preach the Gospel. He will say that Jesus is alive; you can see Him in the leaves on the tree and the birds that fly in the air. That is not the gospel. We even sing a song we like so well, but it is not the gospel. It goes like this: "You ask me how I know he lives, he lives within my heart." That is not the gospel. All of this is a sort of "spiritual" resurrection. The Gospel

proclaims that He rose the third day according to the Scriptures. That is He literally came alive in the same body in which he suffered. He came forth with the print of the nails in His hand and feet and the hole in His side.

The Gospel does not stop there. The Gospel that declares Him crucified, buried, and risen again must also proclaim him King. Note 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," -- Luke 4:18.

All the mighty miracles that he performed are part of His gospel. It is the good news of His power to accomplish what he came into this world to accomplish. He says much the same thing again in Luke 7:22.

"Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

To preach the gospel thus is to preach King Jesus Sovereign over all His creation.

There is still another place that shows the gospel is more than just the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Please note Gal. 3:8.

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

This was over two thousand years before Jesus was born. Yet God is said to have preached the gospel to Abraham. Gal. 3:8 even tells us what that gospel was. I am quite sure that Abraham did not understand that Jesus would be born, grow to manhood, be crucified, be buried, and rise again from the dead. That gospel told him that somehow in him the world would be blessed. I am not even sure whether he understood it was to be by One of his descendants or by himself. I rather think he had no understanding of what was involved in that statement. Nevertheless, he believed God.

With the aid of the New Testament that we have today, we can understand that God was speaking about Jesus, who is a descendant of Abraham. We also understand now that the way He would bless the nations is primarily in His atoning sacrifice for sin along with the sealing of His death in burial, and the victory over death with His bodily resurrection from the dead.

Needless to say we must preach all the truth of the Bible and not just confine our preaching to three statements of our faith.

SOME VARIED DESCRIPTIONS OF THE GOSPEL

Paul referred to this Gospel as "my gospel." See Rom. 2:16.

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

What did he mean by that? He had earlier declared that he served in the Gospel of God's Son. Note Rom. 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;"

Now did he serve in the gospel of His Son or in "my gospel" as he called it? It was both! The Gospel of His Son of course is the Gospel of Christ. That again is the one gospel at which we have been looking. How then is that "my gospel?" It is simply because it is the one gospel that Paul had made his own and preached it faithfully.

He uses that term again in Rom. 16:25. He is giving salutations to different people in the Roman Church. Doing so He said,

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,

There are several things we might notice in reference to his "my gospel" here. It is the standard by which he expected the Roman Christians to be established. Yet it does not stand alone. It is in cooperation with the preaching of Jesus Christ. Is that because they are different? No, his gospel

was the good news about Jesus Christ. That establishing of which he spoke is also said to be according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began. Here we need to know something about what is this mystery kept secret since the foundation of the world. The word mystery means something hidden or the secret purpose of God in the Gospel which had not before been totally revealed. Paul told us what that secret purpose was in the 8th chapter of this same book, Romans. See Rom. 8:28-30.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

That purpose or mystery is here revealed. Our effectual calling is according to His Purpose. That effectual calling involves our being predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, our justification, and our final glorification. Does that not include the five points of the doctrines of grace? What are they?

1. **Gracious Election** out from among
2. **Ruined Sinners.**
3. An **Absolute Atonement** for the sins of those graciously chosen in Christ.

4. A **Compelling Love** that makes His people willing in the day of His power and

5. **Everlasting Life** for those effectually drawn by His compelling love.

Now this has always been the truth, but it is not fully revealed in the Old Testament. It is revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is what it means in Rom. 16:25 by "*according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.*" That is part of the good news of all that Christ planned, prophesied, purposed, and accomplished to effect salvation of His people and bring about His glory. All that which he gave us before in types and shadows, He has now brought to light in the gospel. Those two goats in Leviticus 16 were not idle tales. They were types of the Lord Jesus. One was slain as a type of our Lord's sacrificial death. The other was taken away into the wilderness and let go never to be seen again. This was not done until the sins of the people had been confessed on his head. Thus he pictures our Lord taking away our sins never to be remembered against us again.

Once more he speaks of "my gospel" in 2 Tim. 2:8. Again it is not his from the standpoint of origination, but it is the gospel which he preached. This does not put the resurrection in dependence upon Paul's gospel. It is not that the resurrection is a tenet of Paul's gospel but might not be true. What does this mean then? It is simply this. The gospel Paul preached held

forth our Lord's heritage (His Person) as well as His Work in dying for our sins and rising again. Our Lord's death and resurrection were the central issues of that gospel. Paul would thus identify himself with those issues.

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: -- 2 Timothy 2:8.

Then Paul also spoke of that gospel as being "our gospel." Again it is not another gospel or one exclusive to Paul and his companions. It is rather His identifying himself and his companions with that one gospel. It is the one gospel that is powerful and by which we were called unto the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. See 2 Cor. 4:3; 1 Thess. 1:5; and 2 Thess. 2:14.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

Preaching the gospel is a wondrous thing. Perhaps we should ask, "Why preach the gospel?" That is one good answer. We are to preach the gospel because we are commanded to preach it. This is very plain in Mark 16:15.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

This command is to the church. Preaching the gospel is not to be limited to the preacher in the pulpit. The church is to go preaching the gospel to every creature. To do that every believer as a member of his own local church should go forth preaching the gospel. I am not here referring to the baptism. Baptism is under the authority of the church. Converts should be brought to the church where the pastor authorized by God and the church may baptize them. I do not believe in free lance baptisms.

Nevertheless, I say every member of the church should go into whatever areas he may be able to go, so that it may be said they went everywhere preaching (heralding forth) the gospel. How far do we go? It is the responsibility of the Lord's church to preach this gospel to every person in all the wide world. Worldwide Missions is not the responsibility of any one individual. It is the responsibility of the Church of our Lord Jesus to evangelize the world

Our Lord's command to preach the gospel is authoritative. It is not that He Who has all authority given unto Him is sharing that authority with us. Rather it is upon the authority of His command we are responsible to go preaching. We are not going freelance. Rather we go as part of the church having been sent by our Lord's own command. This preaching is to be done for our Lord's own glory. We are not to show off with world wisdom, but we are to stay the course and simply preach the gospel. Note 1 Cor. 1:17.

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

Paul made it very clear that he got his message, (the gospel) directly from God. He did not receive it from man. Nevertheless he voluntarily went up to Jerusalem and put himself under the authority of the church. Note his statement in Gal. 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.

This preaching is also done under the sense of a Divine call. Some do not even know what that means at all. This writer was once in his college days riding with an acquaintance of his, and the subject of what one would do with his life came up. My friend said that he thought he would enter the ministry. I responded, "Wonderful, when were you called?" His reply was

that he didn't know what I means by being called. He said he had explored the different professions that were his options and that he found the ministry to be a wide open field so he thought he would go in. That is no reason to preach the gospel. If all one has is a sense of a wide open field, and he has no sense of divine call; he will do well to seek another profession.

The apostle magnified his call. He had a vision of a man in Macedonia calling him to come over and help them. He took that to be from the Lord and immediately endeavored to obey his call. Note Acts 16:10.

And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Here was an open door to preach the Gospel. Paul considered this open door as a call from God. This he stated also in 2 Cor. 2:12.

Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,

Under the sense of that divine call, he was always ready to preach. He said to the Romans in Rom. 1:15:

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

He did not have to be begged. He stood ready because of his sense that God had called him. It was a compelling force in his life. Because of

this divine call, he strove to preach the gospel where no one else had preached.

Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: -- Romans 15:20.

Numerous passages show that the preaching of the gospel is to be a worldwide endeavor. Just to note a few see: Matt 24:14; 26:13; Mark 16:15. It was not something to be held by the Jerusalem Church in that city only. It was to be preached in all the world. Isn't that our same commission? I believe it is. I heard one missionary say that he was responsible to God to preach the gospel to the entire world. I do not believe that. God has not laid that responsibility on any one man. I do not believe it is the responsibility of our Lord's churches to preach that gospel to the entire world. Each church is responsible to preach it in its own locale. It is also responsible to extend that preaching to as much of the world as it possibly can.

BELIEVING THE GOSPEL

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. -- Mark 1:15.

I want to just say a few words about "believing the gospel." What does this mean? What must one believe? What does the word believe mean? There are a couple of places in God's word that refer to "obeying" the gospel. They are given here below.

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: -- 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

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? – 1 Peter 4:17.

Are these two verses talking about something that is synonymous with believing the gospel, or are they talking about something in addition to believing the gospel? This writer believes it is synonymous with believing the gospel. Let's examine them then for what they are saying.

The passage in 1 Pet. is set in the time of the apostles. Peter was saying that the time had already come when judgment must begin at the house of God. That is Christians are to first of all judge themselves. More than that they must also be judged by the church. It is very important that our churches be disciplinary units. We speak of people coming into our churches as coming under the watch care of the church? It is certainly a fact that our churches should minister to all the needs of her people. One of

those needs is to correct a member when they are in error. This may be done in teaching and counseling, but it may come to a place when the church may have to exercise excisive discipline. That is a member may have to be excommunicated or turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved. This is not a matter of vengeance against a brother than someone does not like. It is a matter of loving discipline done in the hopes it will cause the erring brother to see his error and return to the house of God in repentance over his error God then acts with the church to discipline his own. Peter thus is saying that the time has come for judgment to be done in the house of God. He is then warning that if judgment must begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

Paul, in the 2 Thess. Passage is referring to a future time. He speaks of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. He says He will return in flaming vengeance. Now he is certainly not talking about the judgment of Christians here. God does not act in vengeance toward His people. He says this vengeance is to be on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who then are those who obey not the gospel? Can there be any doubt tht these are they who are unsaved? Why are they unsaved and under His vengeance? The answer is given that they did not obey the gospel. Now returning to what is claimed by many to be the gospel; that is the death,

burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, let me just ask how one can obey or disobey the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Let me not be misunderstood here. I am in no way making light of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is vitally important that Jesus was crucified according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again according to the scriptures. I am merely saying that there is nothing there to obey. Thus there must be more to the matter of salvation than just believing that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again.

There is therefore before us two things. Men are lost because they obeyed not the gospel and we are commanded to repent and believe the gospel. It is extremely important then that we understand what these things mean. Let me also say in the way of warning that the Devil believes that Jesus Died, and that He was buried, and that He rose again from the grave. Does that make the Devil a Christian? Does that mean he is changed from being the Devil into being a saint? Of course the answer is no. You see the Devil believes these facts because they are facts. They are also Christian Doctrines and most precious Christian Doctrines. The fact remains that man is not saved by believing certain doctrines. Those doctrines are the basis on which all the gospel truth rest, but one is not saved by believing doctrine.

Isn't salvation by faith? If one is not saved by believing these doctrines, what must one believe to be saved? To believe the gospel is to

believe the good news of all that God has planned, prophesied, and effected for the salvation of His people. Let's take Abraham then who is the father of the faithful. The scripture says that Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Paul told us in Galatians that the gospel was preached to Abraham saying that in thee (Abraham) shall all nations be blessed. What then was it that Abraham believed? In Gen. 15:6 where it is said that he believed in the Lord and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, God had just promised him a multiplicity of seed or children. How much Abraham understood is not recorded for us. All men from Adam, however, had the promise of a coming Redeemer. God promised that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head and that the serpent would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. When God then told Abraham that in him the nations of the earth would be blessed, He was not speaking of Abraham himself but of his Seed. In Galatians Paul identifies for us who that Seed is. He said that it was not of seeds many but of One, and he told us that Seed was Christ. From Adam on then we have a picture of the Redeemer as a suffering One, and from Abraham we know that that suffering Redeemer is from the loins of Abraham. That much Abraham must have believed. Then comes the test of Gen. 22 where God called on Abraham to offer his son Isaac on the altar as a sacrifice unto God. How did Abraham respond? The next day he took Isaac and left for the mountain where he was to sacrifice him. At the foot of the mountain,

Abraham said to the men who were with him that they should remain there and that the lad and he would go and worship and return unto them. He did not say, "The lad and I will go yonder and worship, and I will return unto you." He said, "The lad and I will go yonder and worship and return unto you." Thus Abraham was believing God's promise of the suffering Redeemer who would come from his sons. Thus he believed God must raise Isaac from the dead. How do I know that Abraham believe God would raise Isaac from the dead? It is because it is written in the book of the Hebrews chapter 11 and verses 18 and 19.

"Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

Now I believe Abraham is a wonderful example of one believing the gospel and obeying the gospel. Abraham believed the promise of God, but it was more than an intellectual assent to a doctrine. He so much believed the promise God had made to him that he also obeyed God even to taking Isaac to the place of sacrifice. It is clear that he would have actually sacrificed his son, Isaac, in obedience to God if God had not stopped him. He was that much committed to the God, Whom he believed, that he acted in faith and obedience to God's command. Believing the gospel is absolutely impossible apart from repentance. Our text says, repent and believe the gospel.

Was Abraham saved then because he believed in the Lord, or was he saved because he obeyed God's command? Well, let's see. Paul in Romans 4:2,3 affirms that he was saved through faith.

"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

James, however, is just as affirmative in James 2:21,22 where ye says:

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

Were these two apostles writing conflicting ideas? I say no. Paul who affirmed the justification by faith alone also said,

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Paul then was teaching Lordship salvation. It would say to us that easy believism is not enough. For those who say, "Jut believe, that is all you have to do, just believe. If you just believe that Jesus died for you and was buried and rose again you are saved." I say hogwash. Am I then holding out for works salvation? A thousand times no. For by the works of the law shall not flesh be justified in His sight. What I am saying is that the faith by which one is justified is a faith that is given to us from God, and it is is a

faith that is so committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ that we not only believe the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ but we also live in obedience to Him recognizing Him, not just as "Saviour" but also as Lord of our Lives. It is a faith like Abraham's that not only believed the promise but also would sacrifice his son in obedience to the One he believed. Thus we are justified by faith that works, and Paul and James both are right.

May I just ask my reader: Are you a believer? I challenge you dear reader to not just believe a doctrine. While you believe that Jesus died for your sins according to the scripture, and that He was buried, and that He rose again according to the scripture, can you believe on Him and commit your life to the Lordship of Christ repenting of all your sins and determining to live for him? I pray that is or will be true of you.