

Evangelion: Essentials of the Gospel

The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. Rom. 1:16

Introduction

The word *gospel* is derived from the Old English *godspell* (good spell, or morally excellent words having magical power). *Gospel* represents the translation of the Greek *euangelion*, a word that originally meant a reward given a messenger for delivering good news, but later became the Good News itself. It is used more than 75 times in the New Testament with the specific connotation of “good news.” This word is the root of our *evangelical*.

The gospel is often taken to mean the first four books of the New Testament, but this tradition did not develop until the time of the apostolic fathers. In the Biblical context it represents the Good News of the kingdom of God and salvation through Christ. Jesus preached the gospel of God, saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:15; cf. Matt. 4:17, 10:7, Lk. 4:43) This is similar to gospel preached by John the Baptist, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 3:2) This gospel of the kingdom of heaven (also referred to as the gospel of God and the gospel of the kingdom of God) was to be preached to the world prior to the consummation of the age: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matt. 24:14) The primary importance of the gospel was emphasized by Jesus when He said, “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.” (Mk. 8:35)

Following His crucifixion, Jesus gave us our great commission: “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” (Lk. 24:46-47) Paul’s gospel included the basic facts of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection: “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15:3-4) The gospel of Paul proclaims the redemptive activity of God through the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is the gospel of salvation (Eph. 1:13), peace (Eph. 6:15), hope (Col. 1:23), life and immortality (2 Tim. 1:10). The gospel is the word of truth (Col. 1:5) that is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. (Rom. 1:16) The gospel, as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, has the power to convict (1 Thess. 1:5) and to convert (Col. 1:5-6). Though the gospel must be taught with simplicity (1 Cor. 1:17), reducing the core of its message to two or three elements would be at the expense of other essentials.

The Gospel

1. **Christ is Lord** (Rom. 10:9). Jesus Christ is truly God, and yet is a Person distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1:1, 14, 5:18, 8:24; Mat. 28:19).
2. **All have sinned** against God and fall short of His glory (Rom. 3:23). We are dead in our sins (Eph. 2:1-3).
3. **God loves us** while we are yet sinners (Jn. 3:16, Rom. 5:8).
4. **Christ died for our sins** (1 Cor. 15:3, 1 Jn. 4:14). He assumed a human nature (Jn. 1:14, Rom. 8:3, Phil. 2:6-11) and lived a sinless life (2 Cor. 5:21, Heb. 4:15, 5:9, 7:26, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, 1 Jn. 3:5). At the cross, He provided:
 - a) Atonement (propitiation, reconciliation), a penal substitution, an offering of sacrifice, a price paid (Rom. 5:8-11). The atonement secured the application of:
 - b) Redemption, the payment of a ransom (Mk. 10:45, Heb. 9:15), “buying back” from the bondage of sin (1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23, Gal. 1:4).
5. **Christ was raised** on the third day (Rom. 6:4-7, 1 Cor. 15:4, 20-22), and ascended into heaven after forty days (Acts 1:2-3, 9-11, 2:33, 1 Tim. 3:16), and was enthroned at the right hand of God (Mk. 16:9, Eph. 1:20, Heb. 1:3) where He constantly makes intercession for His people (Rom. 8:34, Heb. 9:24, 1 Jn. 2:1) until He returns as Judge (Mat. 24:30-31, 25:31-32, Jn. 5:22, 27, Acts 10:42, 17:31).
6. **Regeneration**, a new birth (Jn. 3:3, Tit. 3:5) that makes us new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) through the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:5-8).
7. **Faith** (Rom. 3:25, 4:5, 10:9). Saving faith consists not merely of knowledge and belief (Mat. 13:20-21, Ja. 2:19-20) but of trust (2 Cor. 1:9-10), self-surrender (Lk. 9:23, Gal. 2:20), and obedience (Rom. 6:17, 16:25-26). Faith is not a result of our own endeavor, but is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8). Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation (Jn. 14:6, Acts 4:12).
 - a) We are saved by grace, not by works: Faith alone (Rom. 3:28, 4:5 Gal. 2:16).
 - b) Confess with the tongue Christ as Lord (Rom. 10:9).
8. **Repentance** (Mat. 4:17, 10:7; Lk. 4:43, 24:46-47, 13:3, 5). True repentance represents a turning to God, a turning from evil, and an intent to serve God (1 Thess. 1:9). It involves the intellectual recognition of sin (Rom. 3:20), an emotional change of feeling for sin committed against a holy and just God (2 Cor. 7:9-10), and a willful turning away from sin (Acts 26:18, 20, 1 Pet. 3:11).

9. **Justification**, a forensic (i.e. legal) declaration of acquittal that excludes all possibility of condemnation (Rom. 5:1, 19, 8:33-34), providing salvation from the wrath of God (Rom. 5:9). We are justified by grace through faith (Rom. 3:24-25). Justification is by the imputation of Christ's righteousness: As our sins were reckoned to Christ, so Christ's righteousness is reckoned to us (Phil. 3:9).
10. **Adoption** into the family of God (Jn. 1:12, Gal 4:4-7, Eph. 1:13-14, Heb. 9:15), into a union with Christ (Rom. 6:5, 7:4) where we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and eternal life (Jn. 3:15).
11. **Sanctification** [positional], to be set apart, to be made holy. A status conferred not by moral transformation but by the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10:10).
12. **Progressive sanctification**, an ongoing process that conforms us to the image of Christ (Phil. 2:13, 2 Cor. 3:18, Heb. 12:14, 2 Pet. 3:18).
13. **Perseverance** through divine preservation. God, through the Spirit, secures the final salvation of all true believers (Jn. 6:37-40, 10:28-29, Rom. 8:39-39, Phil. 1:6, 1 Pet. 1:5).
14. **Glorification**, redemption of the physical body. (Rom. 8:23, 1 Cor. 15:53, 2 Cor. 3:18, Phil. 3:20-21). We will be like Christ (1 Jn. 3:2) and will dwell with Him (Rev. 21:3-4) for eternity (Mat. 25:46).

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