

The Good News Gospel

Consider carefully some facts stated about this gospel. "It is the gospel of God concerning His Son" (Romans 1:1, 2). It was made known to the Apostle Paul through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:6-12). "In it the righteousness of God is revealed" (Rom. 1:17). "It is the POWER of God unto SALVATION" (Rom. 1:16); the POWER that saves the irreverent and unrighteousness from the condemnation and wrath of God (Rom. 3:21-5:19); the POWER that saves true believers from the reign of Sin in their lives (Rom. 6:1-23). But specifically, what is this gospel about which so many wonderful things are declared?

The word "gospel" means simply "good news." What good news concerning God's Son reveals the righteousness of God and is the power of God unto salvation?

In its simplest form this gospel is stated in 1 Corinthians 15:1-7 as follows: "Now I AM MAKING KNOWN to you, brethren, THE GOSPEL which I bring to you, which YOU ACCEPTED also, in which YOU STAND also, through which YOU ARE SAVED...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been raised the third day...and that He was seen by Cephas, thereupon by the Twelve, thereupon He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once."

This gospel is the Good News that Christ died for our sins, was entombed, and has been raised

from among the dead. This gospel is not one fact, but three. It is not only that Christ died for our sins; it is also that He was entombed, AND that He has been raised. The resurrection is indispensable! Apart from His resurrection, His death would have no saving value. "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain--you are still in your sins" is the inspired statement found in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. His resurrection distinguishes Him from all other spiritual leaders. Others have lived, taught, performed miracles and died. Jesus Christ is the only One Who died for our sins, has been raised, and now lives as the Saviour of the world.

In its fullest sense this gospel includes the meaning of the death, the meaning of the entombment, and the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This includes all that the Son of God accomplishes for the entire creation in His death, in His entombment, and in His resurrection life. To grasp the meaning of this gospel in its fullest sense, it is necessary that we understand the revelation God has given through the Apostle Paul as set forth in the Sacred Scriptures.

The Gospel Reveals God's Righteousness

First, it is revealed in the way God dealt with Jesus Christ when He became sin for us. In the death of Christ on the cross we see God dealing righteously with sin. What a dreadful thing sin is to call forth such a severe penalty! What great sinners we are that we should justly deserve all that Jesus Christ endured! He did not die

because of any wrong He had done. "He knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). He did not submit to death because He could not help Himself. "No one is taking my soul from me, but I am laying it down of Myself" (John 10:17, 18). "Christ died for the sake of the irreverent" (Rom 5:6-9). "He was given up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justifying" (Rom. 4:25).

Whatever the penalty of sin is, Jesus Christ endured it to the full in order to become our Saviour. If the penalty of sin is either annihilation or endless punishment, Jesus Christ could not be the Saviour of anyone for He was neither annihilated nor endlessly tormented. "Christ DIED for our sins!" If it were not for the death, the resurrection, and the present life of Jesus Christ, the final end of every human being would be death.

Second, the gospel reveals the righteousness which God Himself provides for mankind. Man cannot attain to righteousness by his own efforts because of the devitalizing power of the mortality, or death, which is operating in him. Note carefully the positive and clear statement of Scripture: "Through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin DEATH, and thus DEATH passed through into all mankind, ON WHICH all sinned...Sin reigns in DEATH" (Rom. 5:12-21). Because sin "reigns in death," man is as helpless to cure himself of his sinfulness as he is to cure himself of the death that is working in him.

God's cure for death and His remedy for unrighteousness is the life and the righteousness

of Jesus Christ. "For if, by the offense of the one, DEATH REIGNS through the one, MUCH RATHER, those obtaining the superabundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall be reigning IN LIFE through the One, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:16, 17; 6:1-23).

A righteousness of God is manifest...through the faith of Jesus Christ, for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God. Being justified gratuitously by His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus...toward the display of His righteousness in the present season, for Him to be just and a Justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus" (See Rom. 3:19-28). "Now to the worker, the wage is not reckoned as a favour, but as a debt. Yet to him who is not working, yet is believing on Him who is JUSTIFYING THE IRREVERENT, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (Rom. 4:4, 5). "Having been now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation through Him. For if, being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son, much more, being conciliated, we shall be saved in His life" (Rom. 5:9-11).

To those who believe in what Jesus Christ has accomplished in their behalf, the Scriptures declare: "Yet you, OF GOD, are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance, that, according as it is written, He who is boasting, let him be boasting in the Lord" (See 1 Cor. 1:18-31).

Third, the gospel reveals the righteous basis upon which God assures the ultimate salvation of all mankind. (See 1 Tim. 4:9-11 and 2:3-7; Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:20-28; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-20).

Because of what Jesus Christ has done, and will yet do in behalf of all mankind, the righteousness of God assures the salvation of all in due time. The "sacrificial work" of the Son of God has been finished on the cross (John 19:28-30). The "saving work" of the risen Son of God has only just begun and will continue until ALL have been delivered from sin and death. Note carefully the clear statements of Scripture: "Christ died for the sake of all, consequently all died...God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them" (2 Cor. 5:14-21). "Who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:1-7). "For even as in Adam, all are dying also, in Christ, shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:20-28). "For even as, through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners, thus also, through the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted righteous" (See Rom. 5:18, 19).

Those who believe the gospel in this life, are saved for the eons or ages. They are justified by God's grace (Rom. 3:24). They are reconciled to God (Col. 1:21). They receive the Spirit of God, and are set free from the dominion of sin in their lives (Rom. 8:9-11 and 6:1-23). They will experience the deliverance of their bodies when Jesus Christ returns (1 Cor. 15:50-58). They will share the glory and the labor of their

Saviour during the coming eons (Eph. 2:1-10 and 3:8-11).

Those who do not believe in this life will be resurrected and judged at the time of the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). God will deal with them justly according to their deeds (Rom. 2:1-16). Then those whose names are not in the book of life will suffer the second death (Rev. 20:15). This, however, is not their final end, for they will be MADE ALIVE at the conclusion of the eons when Jesus Christ abolishes the LAST ENEMY WHICH IS DEATH (1 Cor. 15:25, 26). Then, they too will be justified (Rom. 5:18, 19), reconciled to God (Col. 1:13-20), and be made immortal (1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 8:18-23; 2 Tim. 1:9-11). Then ALL will be subjected to God the Father and God will be ALL IN ALL (1 Cor. 15:27, 28).

Some believe and teach that Jesus Christ either cannot or will not save all. It is a source of sadness that so many who profess to know Him and to love Him should slander Him in this manner. Surely He does not lack the ability; He has already saved the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). Neither does He lack the love; "He died for all." What He has promised in His Word He will certainly do. "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for for this are we toiling and being reproached), that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers. THESE THINGS BE CHARGING AND TEACHING" (1 Tim. 4:9-11).