

THE LIVING GOD MINISTRIES

A Ministry of Reconciliation

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

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WHAT IS THE TRUE GOSPEL?

By Bill Glover

Exactly what is the gospel of Jesus Christ? What did He actually teach? Why are there so many different Christian denominations all teaching different *gospels* about Jesus?

We first need to understand the meaning of the word *gospel*. The literal meaning of the word “gospel” is **GOOD TIDINGS** or **GOOD NEWS** or **GLAD TIDINGS**. The English word comes from the Old English expression “good tidings” or “glad tidings.” In Isaiah 61:1 God prophesied that the Messiah would preach “good tidings” or “good news.” In Mark 1:14 we find that Jesus came preaching the “gospel.” The word “gospel” here is from the Greek word *euaggelion* which means “good news” or “good tidings.”

Mark 1:14-15 [in the King James translation] states: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee preaching the good news (or “gospel”) of the kingdom of God and saying “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe gospel (*the good news*).” Here we find that there is a specific *gospel of Jesus Christ* with a *specific* message. But what is that *gospel* [this “good news”] or, what is the *message [this “good news”]* that Jesus preached?

Do you know what that gospel (message) is? Are you sure? Let us see if you do! To evaluate this, let us first evaluate what Mark 1:14-15 actually says. First note the time setting. It was *after* John (the Baptist) was put in prison (John’s work had been finished). Where did Jesus begin preaching the gospel? It was in Galilee. What then did Jesus preach? It was ***the gospel* - - the “good news” about SOMETHING. But what is this “something?”** These are all key words in understanding this subject as we proceed with this study.

Let us pause long enough here to note that there are two themes (or messages) mentioned in this passage. The first message is to REPENT and the second is to BELIEVE. These two PIVOTAL points provoke two specific questions. One is to “Repent of *WHAT?*” and the other is to “Believe *WHAT?*” Later in this article we will fully understand what we are to repent of and why. But we find here that we are to “BELIEVE THE GOSPEL” - - ***BELIEVE THIS GOOD NEWS***. But, once again, **WHAT IS THE GOSPEL** (the good news) **JESUS PREACHED** that we are to believe? Why is this “good news” critical to us today?

Several years ago I selected 14 leading church members (7 married couples) and asked them to join me in a Bible study. This endeavor came about when some members began to claim that “the church no longer has a specific gospel. What I wanted to learn was if these people actually knew what the *gospel* of Jesus Christ really is. I even drafted an outline for the Bible study covering most of the scriptures related to this subject and allowing the bible to show what this “good news” really is. I gave each of these seven couples a copy of this outline at least two weeks before the actual study and assigned different sections to each couple. Even though they were given two weeks to study the subject

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Why don't we go back and read Mark 1:14-15 again and see what it does NOT say. It does not say that Jesus came preaching "A Monday (or Sunday) Pentecost!" It does not say He came preaching the weekly or annual Sabbaths OR A Sunday Sabbath, for that matter. Please do not misunderstand what I am saying. I am not teaching against obedience to God through His laws. What I am doing is laying the foundation for the correct understanding of what the gospel of Jesus Christ really is. As for "obedience" to the laws of God, let us consider the following.

In Matthew 19:17 Jesus Christ plainly preached "**IF YOU WOULD ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.**" These are the clear words of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul [whom many claim did away with obedience to the law] clearly said the following in Romans 3. Verse 31 states clearly "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the CONTRARY, we ESTABLISH the law!" Then verse 20 reads: "Therefore, by the deeds of the law (by merely obeying the law) NO FLESH WILL BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT, for **BY THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN!**" And as verse 28 states, "Therefore we conclude that a man is JUSTIFIED BY FAITH APART FROM THE DEEDS OF THE LAW!" And as Romans 7:1 states The LAW of God has DOMINION over humans so long as they live. Thus humans are OBLIGATED to OBEY GOD THROUGH HIS LAWS for as long as they live - - so says the Bible!

Then as Romans 4:1-4 states: "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to faith? For if Abraham was justified BY WORKS, he has something of which to boast, BUT NOT BEFORE GOD. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham BELIEVED God and it [that BELIEF] was accounted to him for righteousness.' Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as a debt." Abraham clearly did NOT *earn* his salvation through human endeavor but by the grace of God. Abraham could NOT pay for his own sins - - Christ had to do that through His blood. You cannot pay for your own sins - - Christ must do that for you! You then must demonstrate YOUR FAITH IN GOD by your repentance and your personal acceptance of that sacrifice that was made for you by Christ.

Paul also pointed out other most important factors in the book of Romans. In Romans 3:23 we find that ALL HUMANS HAVE SINNED AND FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD. 1 John 3:4 states emphatically that he who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness and that SIN IS THE BREAKING OF THE LAW OF GOD. And in Romans 6:23 we find that the wages (penalty) for these sins is DEATH - - cessation from life. And, as we have already seen, we use the law to determine what sin is (Romans 3:20). Paul further explained in Romans 7:7 that he would not have known what sin is EXCEPT THE LAW. He also states (under inspiration from God) that the LAW IS HOLY, JUST AND GOOD (Romans 7:12). He also said in Romans 7:25 "with the mind I SERVE THE LAW OF GOD but with the flesh the law of sin" [the law of sinful human nature every human has].

Abraham did not "earn" the right to be the father of the faithful by his works, as these passages show. Abraham obeyed God, as we clearly find in James 2:19-26. However, it was his BELIEF and TRUST in God that God used to grant him righteousness [meaning being right with God]. The clinching scripture regarding whether we are to keep God's commandments is 1 John 2:3-4 which read: "Now by this we know we know Him, IF WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. He who says 'I know Him' [professing to be a Christian] and does NOT keep His commandments IS A LIAR AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN HIM!" If anyone claims to "know" Christ and claims to be a follower of Christ and yet refuses to obey the commandments of God, God says such a person is a liar! These are the words of God - - NOT something I made up!

Clearly then God EXPECTS obedience from His people. But such “obedience” is NOT what God uses to accord righteousness to us. God Himself shows which humans He will hear and answer in Isaiah 66:2. Only those who have a poor and contrite [repentant] heart and those who TREMBLE at His word will be heard by God.

Let us return to the subject of the gospel of Jesus. Does Mark 1:14-15 say Jesus came preaching “the Ten Commandments?” or “the holy days? Or the Sabbath or any point of the law? Does it say He came preaching “Sunday observance, Christmas and Easter observances, and Halloween?” No, it shows He came preaching THE GOSPEL. Then He said we are to REPENT and BELIEVE His **MESSAGE**. The question is “WHAT WAS THAT MESSAGE THAT JESUS PREACHED that we are to believe?”

Most people overlook the fact that “THE GOSPEL” was preached to Abraham (Galatians 3:6-9 & John 8:64). It is obvious that the “gospel” preached to Abraham was the same “gospel” preached by Jesus the Christ. It is imperative that we remember what God inspired Zacharias to say concerning John the Baptist as found in Luke 1:76-80. John was to go before Jesus and prepare the way for His life, message, death and resurrection (verse 76). Jesus was to give the KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION AND THE REMISSION OF SINS (verse 77). He was to bring light (understanding) to those in darkness and under the shadow of death and to guide people to the way of peace (verse 79). Remember that Jesus was to bring the KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION to the people (verse 77). And as Acts 4:12 states clearly it is only through Jesus the Christ that any human obtains salvation. Jesus was predestined to preach the message (gospel) of salvation.

Thus, it becomes clear that the “gospel” Jesus preached was about the Messiah - - who was Jesus Christ Himself. Paul preached the same “gospel” that Jesus preached. What was the gospel that Paul preached? Paul said: “We PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED” (1 Corinthians 1:23). To back this up Paul said: “I determined to know nothing among you except Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). Jesus Himself preached “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me!” (John 14:6 & 6:44).

Now let us go to Luke 4:16-21 where Jesus PREACHED ABOUT HIMSELF AND HIS COMING INTO THIS WORLD TO PREACH THE “GOSPEL,” TO HEAL, TO GIVE DELIVERANCE, HEAL THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE OPPRESSED AND TO PREACH THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD. Clearly this was the “gospel” Jesus preached and the gospel we are to believe once we have “repented” so that we can also “believe.”

To fully understand what this gospel that Jesus preached is, we need to concentrate on two key words found in Mark 1:14-15. These two key words are “REPENT” and “BELIEVE.” Clearly the word “repent” refers to repenting of our sins (changing) which is the breaking of God’s laws, as we have seen by scriptures already quoted. Then Jesus said to BELIEVE THE GOSPEL. The “gospel” (or “good news”) that we are to BELIEVE is that JESUS IS OUR SAVIOUR - - the one who came to reconcile us to the Father by paying for the penalty of our sins - - reconciliation with the Almighty God!

The word “gospel” means “good news.” Jesus preached the good news of FORGIVENESS OF SIN THROUGH HIS SACRIFICE and our *reconciliation* to God. It is interesting to note that the words “the kingdom of God” are *not* in the original text of Mark 1:14. This passage should read “Jesus came to Galilee PREACHING THE GOSPEL.” Many translations insert the words “of the Kingdom of God” because verse 15 says “the kingdom of God is at hand.” The Kingdom of God was at hand in the presence of the COMING KING of that Kingdom - - Jesus Christ Himself - - - the One who makes salvation possible (Acts 4:12). The expression “kingdom of God” should have been translated “*reign of God*” for Christ is to *reign in His* people *through the Holy Spirit!*

Many, including the Jews, have misunderstood many Bible passages. To this very day, Jews and many calling themselves “Christians” preach about the coming KINGDOM of God as their MAIN THEME OR MESSAGE. Please do not misunderstand. The Kingdom of God is real and WILL COME to this earth. But the KING of that kingdom has not yet been CROWNED in that He has not yet finished the work assigned to Him - - the work of bringing sons and daughters to God (Romans 8:14-17).

The truly sad part of this subject is that both the Jews and the “Christians” have latched onto the part about the “kingdom” and failed or refused to consider the KING THAT MAKES THE KINGDOM POSSIBLE. They overlook or reject the WORK OF THE KING [JESUS CHRIST] AND HOW HIS MISSION MAKES THE KINGDOM POSSIBLE. Jesus came to bring many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10) so as to use them as kings and priests when He returns to earth and establishes His kingdom (Revelation 20:4-6 & 5:8-10).

To fully understand what this involves and THE WORK THAT JESUS CHRIST HAD TO PERFORM, we must go to the very first chapter of the Bible. In Genesis 1:26 God says that He made man IN HIS OWN IMAGE - - AFTER HIS OWN LIKENESS. However, humans were made from the elements (dust) of the earth (temporary existence) whereas God is spirit and eternal. However, as we will see as we reveal from the Bible the gospel Jesus preached, humans were made with the POTENTIAL of becoming spirit and thereby becoming a member of the very family of God. As God inspired the apostle Paul to write in 1 Corinthians 15:49, “And as we have borne the image of the man of dust (Adam), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man (Christ).” Thus, humans have the **POTENTIAL** of becoming spirit beings in the very family of God as we are about to see - - we are about to see what the gospel Jesus preached really is!

Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood (humans) CANNOT inherit the kingdom of God (in human flesh); nor does corruption (flesh) inherit incorruption (spirit). Behold I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep (die) but WE SHALL BE CHANGED - - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, AT THE LAST TRUMP. For the trumpet will sound AND THE DEAD IN CHRIST will be raised (from the dead) incorruptible, and we (who are alive when Christ returns) will be changed. For this corruptible (human body) must PUT ON incorruption, and this mortal (body) must PUT ON immortality. So WHEN this corruptible (body) has PUT ON incorruption, and this mortal (body) has PUT ON immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’” (Paul quoted Isaiah 25:8-9). Thus, the “gospel” that Christ and all the true ministers of God preached involves the time when mortal humans become members of the God family - - BECOMING LITERAL SONS OF GOD. This is accomplished THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AND THE SACRIFICE HE MADE FOR ALL MANKIND AND IT OCCURS AT HIS RETURN TO EARTH! Thus, the “gospel” is the “good news” that only THROUGH JESUS CHRIST we have access to salvation and God’s family!

The human birth of Jesus was the arrival of “the second Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). It is imperative that each of you carefully study the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 15 so as to fully understand the true meaning of the “gospel” Jesus preached.

Jesus came to this earth in human form to qualify where the “first Adam” failed. [Ultimately the risen and glorified Christ will replace Lucifer as the “god” of this world.] As we have seen, He came to die for the sins of the world and make salvation possible for human beings. He came to make it possible for us to SHARE HIS KINGDOM with him - - true followers of Christ are SONS OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST (Romans 8:14-17). Jesus came to bring us the “good news” that we TOO can become SONS OF GOD and inherit the glory that Christ has. He also came so as to die and be RESSURRECTED FROM THE DEAD so that we could grasp and understand our ultimate future and HOW it is to be accomplished.

At this point we need to consider what Paul further taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. God inspired Paul to write “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep (died), lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we BELIEVE [**TRUST IN AND RESPOND TO GOD AS DID ABRAHAM - - Galatians 3:6**] that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus (those who have died in Christ). For we say to you BY THE WORD OF THE LORD, that we who are alive and remain (until Christ returns) until the coming of the Lord will by no means PRECEDE those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and the TRUMPET OF GOD. And the *dead* in Christ will rise first.” Now go back and read I Corinthians 15:50-54 again.

We must also cite Revelation 20:4-6 which reads “And they (the dead in Christ) lived (were resurrected) and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the REST OF THE DEAD (those who have NOT known Christ) DID NOT LIVE AGAIN (were not resurrected) UNTIL THE THOUSAND YEARS WERE FINISHED. This is the first resurrection (referring to the resurrection of the dead in Christ). Blessed and holy is he who has part in this FIRST RESURRECTION. Over such the second death (eternal death) has no power, but they shall be priests of God and reign with Him a thousand years.” [SPECIAL NOTE: All of you reading this fit into one of these TWO CATEGORIES. Thus, the “dead in Christ” and those still living in Christ when Jesus returns to earth are those who have REPENTED OF THEIR SINS AND BELIEVED THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. Either you are one of those whom Christ recognizes as His people by the way you are living your life OR you will miss out on being among God’s firstborn and miss out on ruling with Christ during His millennial reign. You will either be IN or your will be LEFT OUT.] This then is the “gospel of Jesus Christ” - - THAT HUMANS CAN BECOME THE LITERAL SONS OF GOD IN THE VERY FAMILY OF GOD! This is what Jesus taught and that for which the Jews hated Him - - He was teaching that humans can become literal sons of God and be glorified with Christ (Romans 8:17). This was blasphemy to the Jews but this is exactly what Jesus taught as well as the original apostles.

Let us now get into specifics concerning THE GOSPEL JESUS PREACHED. Remember that Mark 1:15 says we are to REPENT (of our sins) and that we must BELIEVE the gospel Jesus preached. Again the apostle Paul gets very specific in explaining what this gospel really is. Romans 8:6 states “For to be carnally (fleshly) minded is (leads to) death, but to be spiritually minded is life.” And “If anyone does NOT have the Spirit of Christ HE IS NOT HIS (Christ’s)” [see verse 9]. And “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, THESE ARE THE SONS OF GOD” (verse 14). “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” (verse 16). “And, if children then HEIRS - - HEIRS OF GOD and JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST” (verse 17).

Paul continues in verse 29 “For whom He (God) foreknew, He also PREDESTINED TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON (Jesus Christ), that He might be the FIRSTBORN among many brethren.” [Remember that God created humans in His own image but in a physical state]. And verse 30, “moreover whom He predestined, these He also called: whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified He also glorified” (will glorify when Christ returns as we have seen previously - - see verse 30). Thus, clearly the “gospel” Jesus preached is the good news of HOW Jesus the Christ made it possible for us to be transformed from this flesh into the spirit bodies of the sons of God. If one carefully reads the entire New Testament FOR WHAT IT ACTUALLY SAYS then one sees the “good news” that Jesus preached.

Those who are truly converted and are known by God becomes A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST - - becoming literal spiritual sons of God (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). Since God lists Abraham as the father of the faithful, let us review what Jesus taught about Abraham as found in John 8:56 which states “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see MY DAY, and he SAW IT and was glad.” Thus, we see that Abraham,

who truly BELIEVED GOD and was reckoned as being RIGHTEOUS because of this belief, actually was privileged to ENVISION Christ as the coming Savior. Paul said that God “preached the GOSPEL (of salvation) to Abraham beforehand” (see Galatians 3:8). Clearly this verse states that this GOSPEL preached to Abraham [as well as many Old Testament saints] was that of grace, mercy and forgiveness that comes through Jesus Christ. It is evident then that the GOSPEL that Jesus preached was the process by which humans can be redeemed and enter the God family. That same message (gospel) was preached to Abraham and other Old Testament people who “saw” these promises “from afar” and BELIEVED Hebrews 11:13) You should carefully study all of Hebrews 11. You should also carefully study 1 Peter 1:9-12. The gospel (good news) of salvation through the Messiah was preached to the ancients (Galatians 3:8).

A REVIEW OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

The “gospel” or “good news” of the message Jesus preached was clearly foretold in many Old Testament prophecies. Following is a brief summary of many:

Jesus was to be born of the house of David: 11 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 89:3-4, 110:1-4, 132:11-14, Isaiah 9:6-7 and 11:1-5.

Jesus was to be born of a virgin: Isaiah 7:14 [His human lineage]

Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem: Micah 5:2

Jesus would sojourn in Egypt: Hosea 11:1

Jesus was to be in Galilee: Isaiah 9:2 and 6-7

Jesus came to “preach the good news of SALVATION: Isaiah 61:1-3

Jesus came to make salvation available to the gentiles: Isaiah 42:1-4 (The good news of RECONCILIATION (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Notice that the “gospel” (good news) of reconciliation has been given to His true church)

Jesus came to bear our sicknesses and diseases: Isaiah 53:1-8

Jesus was to speak in parables: Isaiah 6:8-10 [see also Matthew 13:14, 15 and 35

Jesus was to be reproached and rejected: Psalm 69:4 and 7-9; 118:22 and Isaiah 6:9-10 and 53:1-12

Jesus was to have a triumphant entry into Jerusalem: Zechariah 9:9, Isaiah 62:11 compared With Matthew 21:1-11

Jesus was to be smitten and pierced: Zechariah :13:7; 12:10 and Psalm 22:16 (see also 1 Peter 2:22)

Jesus was to be betrayed: Zechariah 11:12-13; Psalm 41:9 compared with Matthew 27:3-10

Jesus would die with the wicked (sinners): Isaiah 53:9

Jesus was given gall and vinegar to drink: Psalm 69:21

Jesus had lots cast for His clothing: Psalm 22:18

Jesus dying words foretold: Psalm 22:1

Jesus was not to suffer one broken bone: Psalm 34:20 and Numbers 9:12 (the Passover lamb pictured the coming Christ as the true Passover lamb that was not to suffer a broken bone)

Jesus was beaten so viciously He looked like hamburger meat: Isaiah 52:14; Psalm 22:7-8 and Isaiah 53:4-10 showing the terrible price for sin He paid

These are only a few of the Old Testament scriptures that speak of Jesus and the work He was to do to bring salvation (SONSHIP) to mankind. These are the things that all the Old Testament writers wondered about as they were inspired to write down these specific points (compare with Matthew 13:16-17, 1 Peter 1:10 and Hebrews 11:13).

Do you realize that THE WHOLE CREATION (all human beings who have ever lived on earth) is waiting for the revealing of the SONS OF GOD made possible by Jesus' life and death (Romans 8:19-23 - - please study these five verses very carefully to grasp the fact that the whole creation has been anxiously awaiting the ACTUAL FULFILLMENT of the “good news” Jesus preached. (Study 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 to see WHEN and HOW these events take place.) The vast majority of humans, who have ever lived, must wait UNTIL the few God the Father calls and qualifies for His family are brought into that family as spirit beings - -as we have already seen. If you are one of those whom the Father has called (see John 6:44), then all of creation is waiting for you to get your act together and enter the God family. If you are one of the many that are NOT called by God ***at this time***, then you will have to wait until a later time for your chance for salvation. This will be a shock to many but MOST humans on earth are not being allowed to come to Christ during this present age because the Father has NOT called and chosen them,. Thus, all the evangelistic efforts of Billy Graham and other “evangelists” are wasted. No human being can just “choose” to accept Christ. Christ made this crystal clear in John 6:44 (see John 12:40, Romans 11:7, 2 Corinthians 3”14 and 2 Corinthians 4:4).

If you have not submitted yourself to God, AS DID ABRAHAM, if you have not come to a condition of REPENTANCE as did Job (Job 42:5-6), if you have not come to ABHOR your carnal human nature as did the apostle Paul (Romans 7:24) and if you are not obeying the laws of God (1 John 3:4) then you do not have God’s Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32) and will not be prepared to meet Christ when He returns to rule this earth Hebrews 5:9. You will not enter into eternal life when Christ returns but you will die and remain dead for the thousand years. If you refuse to REPENT and BELIEVE the gospel Jesus preached once given that chance, you will perish forever. The gospel of Jesus is just that simple.

The GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST is the message (good news) that humans can live beyond this human life and enter the very FAMILY of God [which will occur when Christ returns to earth] as spirit beings. God gives His Spirit only to those who OBEY Him (Acts 5:32). If you are not obeying God through His commandments then you do not belong to God and will not be in His family. Every person reading this is still in the flesh. There is only one way you can pass from this flesh into life everlasting into the family of God. That is through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). This means that you must TOTALLY surrender yourself to God and demonstrate your TRUST and BELIEF in the “gospel” THAT JESUS PREACHED by the way you live your life - - the way of obedience to the laws of God. If you claim to know Christ and yet you are not obeying God through His laws then you are cut off from God and not eligible for salvation. As Jesus said, “If you would [DESIRE] to enter into life you will keep the commandments (Matthew 19:16-17). The question each person must ask himself is “Do I want salvation GOD’S WAY or do I want to merely choose to go my own way and cease to exist for all eternity by going the way that seems right to me and my church leaders? (see Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25). This is the GOSPEL that

Jesus brought to this earth. We either conform to this gospel message or we lose out on salvation. It is just that simple. What decision will you make?

In summary then, the gospel Jesus preached is the GOOD NEWS message of how Jesus Christ came in the flesh to sacrifice Himself for the salvation of human beings. In doing this He also made it possible for humans to become eligible for salvation - - to be TRANSFORMED from human to divine - - THROUGH HIM. In other words, through His coming in the flesh, dying, being buried and being resurrected from the dead He made it possible for us humans [made in the image of God but in physical form - - Genesis 1:26-27] to become SPIRIT BEING SONS OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST AND GLORIFIED WITH CHRIST (Romans 8:17). Yet the entire “Christian” world has rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ and substituted its own beliefs, customs and traditions. The apostle Paul warned that the apostasy had already begun even before he died (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). Paul predicted that a great and powerful FALSE [*apostate*] religious leader would arise that would apostatize the truths of God and deceive the whole world. This has happened through the Pope and the Catholic church and all its protesting daughters as it is the MOTHER OF HARLOTS (Revelation 17:5-6). False religious leaders [claiming to be “Christians”] formed an alliance with the Roman Empire and persecuted the true followers of Christ. The Roman Empire is the power that established the Roman Catholic Church. However, as the book of Revelation shows, there will be one final resurrection of this “HOLY” Roman Empire with the papacy as its “spiritual” head. As head of this empire, the papal position will conspire to rule the entire earth. It is during the reign of these first popes that the up and coming Catholic religion [beginning to gain some momentum in about 100 AD] changed the day on which it originally worshipped from the seventh day to the first day of the week in honor of Sol the “sun” god. During that time period God actually gave Satan the devil and this apostate church leader power over the very lives of God’s true saints who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD (COMPARE Revelation 12:10-17). Pay careful attention to verse 17 which states clearly that God’s true people KEEP THE COMANDMENTS OF GOD AND HAVE THE TESTIMONY [THE GOSPEL] OF JESUS CHRIST.

The Catholic Encyclopedia records that it was the Catholic church [NOT GOD], by “authority” of the “pope,” that changed the official day of worship from the seventh day to Sunday. Nowhere does the Bible authorize such a change. In fact, those who attempt to worship the God of the Bible on Sunday are in defiance of the true God and promulgating a “false” gospel that God condemns. Christ is LORD OF THE SABBATH DAY - - NOT SUNDAY (Mark 2:27-28). God says that those who preach such false gospels are accursed from God (see Galatians 1:8-9).

Let us then summarize the *gospel* that Jesus preached - - the “good news” or “glad tidings” that Christ brought to this earth. Let us use the words God inspired Peter to preserve as found in 1 Peter, 1 which reads as follows: [using the New American Standard translation]

“I, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout PONTUS, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are CHOSEN.

“According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, THAT YOU MAY OBEY JESUS AND BE SPRINKLED WITH HIS BLOOD: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

“Blessed be the God and Father of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born anew TO A LIVING HOPE THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD.

“To obtain AN INHERITANCE which is IMPERISHABLE and UNDEFILED and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

“[You] who are PROTECTED BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH FOR A SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED *IN THE LAST TIME [days]*.

“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.

“That the PROOF OF YOUR FAITH, *BEING MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD* which is perishable, even though tested by fire [trials], may be found to result in praise and glory AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST [the revelation of His “gospel” to you].

“And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but BELIEVE in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

“OBTAINING THE OUTCOME OF YOUR FAITH, THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS.

“As to this SALVATION, the prophets who prophesied OF THIS GRACE [THROUGH JESUS CHRIST] that would come to you through careful search [of the scriptures] and inquiry [or questioning]. (These prophets) seeking to know what manner of person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He [THE SPIRIT WITHIN THEM] predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow.

“It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you THROUGH THOSE [including Jesus Himself] WHO PREACHED THE *GOSPEL* [“GOOD NEWS”] to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven - - things into which angels long (desire) to look

Verse 18: “Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver and gold from your FUTILE WAY OF LIFE inherited from your (human) forefathers, BUT WITH PRECIOUS BLOOD, as of a Lamb UNBLEMISHED and SPOTLESS, *THE BLOOD OF JESUS*.

“For He was FOREKNOWN before the foundation of the world, *but has appeared in these last days for the sake of you, who through Him (you) are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

“Since you have in obedience to the truth PURIFIED YOUR SOULS [through Christ] for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another FROM THE HEART. [Note: some translations state “From a CLEAN HEART]. For you have been born anew not of seed which is perishable but IMPERISHABLE, that is, by the ABIDING WORD OF GOD [the “WORD of God is none other than Jesus Christ Himself].

“For, ‘*all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER.*’ *And this is the word which was preached to you* [by Jesus and all the apostles].”

The gospel that Jesus preached is the good news that humans can go from this temporary physical existence into immortality as a spirit being in the very family of God. The Jews of Christ’s day KNEW what He was teaching. They accused Him of blasphemy because He taught that humans can become members of the very God family. God inspired Paul to make it crystal clear that humans are

PREDESTINED to become SONS OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST (see Romans 8:17 and 29-30).

Thus, if you are one of those whom God the Father has CALLED (see John 6:44) then you are predestined to become a very son of God in the very family of God provided you yield to God and serve Him faithfully through His laws. As Christ said, "If you would enter into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS!" That then is the good news ("gospel") that Jesus brought to this earth and preached and the same gospel the original apostles and the prophets of old preached! Each person then must decide whether he will accept the true teachings of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible or accept and follow the false teachings of their religious organization which God says has been deceived and blinded by Satan the devil (see 2 Corinthians 4:4 and Revelation 12:9).

The Jews and many "Christian" organizations have rejected the actual GOSPEL that Jesus taught and substituted a message about the COMING KINGDOM OF GOD. It must be remembered that Christ (by His ministry and what He is doing with His true followers) is AT THIS VERY MOMENT preparing for the time when His kingdom will be established on earth. Christ will be the King over that Kingdom. He has already QUALIFIED to be that king. But, the THRUST OF His "gospel" [good news] message is that HUMANS ARE PREDESTINED TO BECOME SPIRIT BEINGS IN THAT KINGDOM. ***HIS "GOSPEL" THEN IS THAT WE HUMANS BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR THAT COMING REIGN OF CHRIST AS HIS RECONCILED SONS (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).*** The point is most simple. Those whom the Father calls (John 6:44) must be trained and equipped for positions in that kingdom THAT IS YET TO COME. All the prophecies deal with CHRIST COMING IN THE FLESH TO CALL OUT AND TRAIN AND EQUIP A NUCLEUS WHO WILL THEN BE GIVEN POSITIONS IN HIS COMING KINGDOM (Revelation 20:6, see also verses 4-5 and Revelation 5:8-10 and 1 Corinthians 6:3).

The Jews and many others BYPASS JESUS CHRIST AND HIS PURPOSE IN COMING IN THE FLESH and try to jump all the way into the kingdom which is yet in the future. The "gospel" Jesus taught DEALS WITH HUMANS PRESENTLY IN THE FLESH AND TELLS US HOW WE ARE TO MAKE THAT TRANSITION FROM FLESH TO SPIRIT. The "gospel" of Jesus then is a specific message that we humans must REPENT OF OUR SINS and then BELIEVE THE GOSPEL MESSAGE JESUS BROUGHT AS TO HOW WE CAN PASS FROM THIS HUMAN LIFE INTO THE VERY FAMILY OF GOD AS SONS OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST. That, in a nutshell, is the "gospel" Jesus preached. We hope you can BELIEVE that GOOD NEWS!

With the foregoing in mind, it is evident that a companion article needs to be written concerning the Kingdom of God and how the Jews and many "Christians" BYPASSED CHRIST AND HIS MISSION AS SAVIOR. and jumped into the future when the literal kingdom will be established. Please take note: ***JUST BELIEVING THAT GOD'S KINGDOM IS COMING TO THIS EARTH WILL NOT SAVE YOU. RATHER, YOU GAIN SALVATION ONLY THROUGH YOUR PERSONAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST WHO LIVED, DIED AND WAS RESURRECTED AND GLORIFIED SO THAT YOU AND I CAN BE SAVED AND HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.***

In summary then we need to realize that the "Good News" Jesus preached is that THROUGH GOD'S GRACE [undeserved pardon of past sins] we humans will be given immortality and enter the very family of God. We cannot EARN salvation. It is available ONLY THROUGH GRACE!

May the God of grace enable you to grasp the truth of this message - - the truth about the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

CONCLUSION

You have now been exposed to the very gospel that Jesus Christ preached - - the same gospel the Old Testament prophets foretold. You have now had this gospel (the “good news”) preached to you. We have now done our part by making this knowledge available to you. As Paul said in Acts 20:24-27, “I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the **WHOLE WILL OF GOD.**” I am now innocent of your blood (vs. 26). What you do with this knowledge is between you and your Maker - - the Almighty God.

My job is to **POINT YOU** toward the true God of the Bible. God sets before each of us **LIFE ON THE ONE HAND** and **DEATH ON THE OTHER.** But He directs us to make the choice - - then we must live with the choice we make!