

God's Eternal Plan

Lesson 4: The Gospel



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

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Learn about the good news of salvation and why it is important to your life

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Study Number: DGW27

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About the author: My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Lesson 4:

The Gospel

is “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16)!

This fourth lesson will focus on the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the gospel (the new covenant God would make with mankind) – and how to apply the message of the gospel to your life.

The Gospel In Old Testament Prophecy

Prophecies concerning the gospel

In our last three studies we have established the foundational principles involved in God's eternal plan and we are beginning to see its fulfillment. We have seen that God did have a plan in place from eternity to redeem mankind from his sin. Then, we have discovered that God would use His chosen people (the nation of Israel) to bring this Savior into the world. This promise of the Messiah has been fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ – who came to earth and offered Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the world.

After Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose from the dead, He lived on the earth for a short period of time before ascending back into Heaven. Just prior to His ascension into Heaven, Christ gave some final instructions to His disciples. “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned’” (Mark 16:15-16; also read Matthew 28:18-20). Clearly, the preaching of the gospel was of extreme importance to Jesus. Again, remember that these are some of His last words to His disciples. Jesus wanted others to learn the gospel's message! But, why would Jesus so eagerly desire others to learn the gospel? What is this thing called the “gospel” all about? Why is it so important?

This story of salvation is the theme of the gospel's message! Your salvation hinges upon learning and obeying the gospel's message! As we will discuss later in this lesson, the gospel of Christ

Although there are far fewer prophecies made in the Old Testament concerning the gospel than was true about the prophecies concerning the Messiah, the Bible story still points to the fact that a new covenant would be established in the “last days.” At this point, it is important to remember that the Law of Moses was intended only to be a temporary covenant that God established with His people (Galatians 3:19-25), as we discussed in lesson 2.

Genesis 12:3

“I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

This was one of the prophecies we focused on during our previous study concerning the Messiah. Specifically, God promised Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through his Seed. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the fulfillment of this prophecy – since Christ provided everyone with the opportunity of salvation. But, notice what Paul writes concerning this promise in Galatians 3:7-9: “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” Therefore, not only does Genesis 12:3 (the verse quoted in Galatians 3) prophecy concerning the

Messiah; but, also concerning the message of the gospel! This can be understood through the fact that the gospel offers all nations the opportunity to partake of the blessings provided through Jesus Christ!

Jeremiah 31:31-34

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

In the book of Hebrews, the prophecy in Jeremiah 31 is quoted to prove that a new covenant had been prophesied (see Hebrews 8:8-12). Specifically, the passage begins by emphasizing the fact that if the first covenant (the Law of Moses) had been faultless, then there would have been no need for a new covenant (Hebrews 8:7). Yet, the Law of Moses was designed as a temporary covenant – to lead the Jews to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:19-25)! This new covenant would not be based on fleshly laws or physical lineage (as much of the Law of Moses was). Instead, this new covenant would be based upon a willful decision to serve the Lord. It follows, then, that there would be no need for one to tell another to “know the Lord” – because all who would follow the gospel would know the Lord! Furthermore, God would be merciful to the unrighteousness of those who submitted themselves to the new covenant, forgiving their unrighteousness and lawless deeds!

Joel 2:28-32

“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls.”

This passage is a significant one concerning the establishment of the church (which we’ll discuss in our next study). However, this passage also identifies the message of the gospel! You should observe the fact that Peter quotes from this passage on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 (Acts 2:16-21). The significance of this is seen in the fact that the gospel of Christ is first proclaimed on this day – and the church of Christ is established! The things that were transpiring on this day in Acts 2 were the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. Included in Joel’s prophecy is the fact that whoever would call upon the name of the Lord would be saved. Thus, when the gospel’s message was proclaimed and folks desired to know how they needed to respond to this message (Acts 2:37), Peter gave them instructions concerning what they must do in order to be saved (Acts 2:38). In being obedient to these instructions (repenting and being baptized), about 3,000 individuals successfully called on the name of the Lord that day and were added to Christ’s church (Acts 2:41, 47)!

The gospel fulfilled all of the prophecies!

Every prophecy that has been made in the Old Testament concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ has been fulfilled. The Old Law, having served its purpose and having been fulfilled, has been taken out of the way – and has now been replaced by the new covenant (the gospel of Jesus Christ)!

The Gospel: God's Good News

“Gospel” = “good news”

The Greek word that is translated “gospel” simply means “good news.” While there are many different types of “good news” that mankind could receive, there is no better news than the “good news” of Jesus Christ! But, what makes the “good news” about Jesus Christ so good? Let’s investigate.

The good news originates with God

The good news that we are about to investigate does not originate from a fallible human source. Instead, this good news originates with God! This is the God who is said to be incapable of lying (Titus 1:2) and who is entirely trustworthy/faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:13). Therefore, whenever God speaks this good news (through the inspired writers), you can be assured of the fact that this good news is absolutely true! In John 17:17, Jesus said to His Father, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” In fact, this good news is being provided by God (through His grace and mercy) to mankind (who was hopelessly lost in his sin)!

Good news about salvation

Mankind was hopelessly lost in his sin. There was nothing that man could do in order to justify Himself! Man was separated from His Creator (Isaiah 59:1-2) with no way to reconcile himself to God (as we discussed in lesson 1)! If God would not have provided a Savior, man would have been eternally condemned to suffer in Hell fire as the consequence for sinning (Romans 6:23)! Carefully read Romans 5:6-11 (a passage quoted at the end of lesson 3) to see that it is only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we have the opportunity to be saved from the wrath of God (which He will show to those who die in their sins) and to be reconciled to God! Therefore, the gospel of Christ is identified as being “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

Also consider how 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 demonstrates that God has reconciled us to Himself by providing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ! It says, “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

The gospel, then, is the “word of reconciliation”! The gospel details the love of God that provided His grace and mercy through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (as discussed in lesson 3 of this course). The gospel explains how the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to your eternal salvation. Furthermore, the gospel of Christ explains the responsibility that you have in being obedient to its teachings (which we’ll consider a bit later in this study)!

Good news about a new covenant

The Law of Moses (as introduced in lesson 2 of this study) was not faultless (Hebrews 8:7). Now, this does not mean that there was some error or oversight made by God when He gave Moses the Law. Instead, the Scriptures teach us that the law was perfect (Romans 7:12; Psalm 19:7). It was designed in the way that God desired – to fulfill the temporary purpose for which it was designed (Galatians 3:23-25). However, the Law of Moses was based on many fleshly ordinances which were to be obeyed and contained an earthly priesthood. Then, when an individual would violate any one of these ordinances, that individual was trapped in sin (see Galatians 3:10-12). The only way that was designed to forgive their sins was through animal sacrifices, which would be performed by those in the priesthood. Yet, Hebrews 10:1-4 tells us that the blood of bulls and goats was insufficient in taking away sin!

Now, was God lying whenever He told those under the Law of Moses their sins would be forgiven when they offered the animal sacrifices (i.e. Leviticus 5:10, 13, 16, 18-19)? No, not at all. In fact, their sins could be forgiven when they complied with the Law God had given them – but, only because God knew that He would offer His only begotten Son as the sacrifice for the sins of the world – who would

become our new and better High Priest (Hebrews 9:11-15)! Therefore, the components of the Law of Moses served as a shadow of better things that were to come in Jesus Christ that were based upon faith (Hebrews 10:1-4; Galatians 3:23-25)!

The new covenant was established by Jesus Christ – upon fulfilling the Law of Moses (Matthew 5:17-18). The blood that He shed was the blood of the covenant – and the instructions and promises contained in this new covenant serve as Christ’s testament He has given for people to follow today (Hebrews 9:16-22). This new covenant, having now been established, means that the old covenant has been taken away (in fact, the Scriptures teach that it has been nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ, Colossians 2:14)!

This new covenant is not based on physical promises (like God had made to the Israelites under the old covenant) or composed of a physical priesthood (like the tribe of Levi composed under the old covenant). Instead, this new covenant is based upon the better promises (Hebrews 8:6) of partaking of all spiritual blessings in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3-7) – such as the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Heaven to those who will give their lives entirely to the Lord, faithfully serving Him in the ways He instructs (i.e. Hebrews 10:19-23)! In addition, all who are Christians are considered to be part of God’s royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), with Christ Jesus serving as the High Priest (Hebrews 9). Our acceptable service to God, then, is to offer our lives as living sacrifices to Him (Romans 12:1-2) – and our acceptable worship is offered to God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24)!

This new covenant contains a new law that must be obeyed, that is revealed throughout the pages of the New Testament! Consider that Paul says his writings contained the “commandments of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37). Paul also wrote that God will judge “the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (Romans 2:16). So, the “gospel” is not limited to the words Jesus spoke while He was on the earth. Instead, it is the totality of God’s revelation in the New Testament!

James calls this new covenant the “perfect law of liberty” in James 1:25. It is a law of liberty in

that there is freedom from sin offered through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. However, this is *not* license to do whatever you desire to do – regardless of what God says (read Romans 6). Instead, James says that you must be a doer of the word and not be a hearer only (James 1:22-25). This new covenant contains new commandments that are perfectly aligned with God’s purpose for His new covenant (to draw a people to Himself who will be devoted to giving Him glory, honor, and praise throughout their lives). We’ll talk more about obedience to this law as we continue this study.

For now, consider Hebrews 2:1-4, as the author discusses the great attention we must pay to the faith of the gospel (which produces salvation), lest we drift away from it: “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”

There Is Only One Gospel

The faith of the gospel

How many gospels are there? If you listen to all of the different doctrines that are taught in the name of “Christianity” today, you might start to believe that there are many different gospels. In fact, there are many different gospels in the world today (every one of the thousands of different churches teach and practice a different gospel)! However, the Bible only approves *one* gospel!

The phrase “the faith of the gospel” occurs in Philippians 1:27 and Jude 1:3. The faith of the gospel is something that is to be pursued in unity and earnestly contended for! Philippians 1:27 says, “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am

absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” Jude 1:3 says, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

But, what does this phrase (“the faith of the gospel”) really mean? When the word “faith” is used in this sense, it does *not* have reference to someone’s personal convictions (this idea would make no sense in those passages, see also Acts 6:7). Instead, it has reference to the religious belief, teaching, and practice that has been designed and instructed by God. It is in this way that the Bible teaches there is only “one faith” (Ephesians 4:5). So, there is only one form of acceptable religious belief, teaching, and practice that is outlined in the one message of the gospel of Christ.

Hold fast the pattern!

2 Timothy 1:13 instructs, “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” The message that is contained within the gospel of Christ, then, forms the “blueprint” for what is acceptable and what is unacceptable to God. There is a blueprint regarding what God requires for salvation, the church, worship, Christian living, and every other matter that is related to living in a way that is pleasing to God (2 Timothy 3:16-17)! If, therefore, we decide not to obey this blueprint, we are guilty of sin (1 John 3:4; 2 John 1:9-11). In addition, man does not have the freedom to make changes to this blueprint. Revelation 22:18-19 says, “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Beware of false gospels

Consider what Paul said in Galatians 1:6-9: “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a

different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

Paul makes some very important points in this passage. (1) There is only one true gospel. (2) There are many who pervert/change this gospel message and form different gospels (which are really false gospels). (3) False gospels must be rejected – no matter who teaches them. (4) Many are deceived by false gospels. That this passage contains some important warnings for us today concerning false gospels is plain to see. However, this is not the only passage that contains this sort warning about false gospels and false teachers! Also read Matthew 7:15-20; Acts 20:28-31; Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; and 2 Peter 2:1-3. Each of these passages demonstrates the truth that there are those who are deceiving individuals into following a false gospel – instead of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, even though these individuals are religious, they are not obeying the faith of the gospel of Christ – and are in great spiritual danger (Matthew 7:21-23)!

What The Gospel Does

Only the gospel accomplishes the following

As you consider the presence of many false gospels that are taught and practiced in this world, you must understand that only the one true gospel accomplishes the things that we will highlight in this section! False gospels may make the same promises as the true gospel (i.e. the promise of eternal life in Heaven), however, they are empty promises!

Calls sinners to God

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 tells us that God calls us to Himself through the message of the gospel. “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for

salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This is the only way in which God calls people to come to Him today! Therefore, if you ignore the message of the gospel, you ignore God’s call! He is calling you to come to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins – so that you can spend eternity with Him in Heaven! Through the message of the gospel, God is calling you to partake of the spiritual blessings He has made available through Jesus Christ!

Converts sinners to God

The message of the gospel tells us what we must do in order to be saved from our sins. We’ll talk about what those instructions are in a few moments. For now, simply appreciate the fact that sinners are turned away from their sin and dedicate themselves to live for God through the message of the gospel! Perhaps there is no better example than the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 says, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” Clearly, these individuals were involved in many different sinful activities. However, when they obeyed the gospel of Christ (Acts 18:8), they turned from those sinful ways and were forgiven!

Saves sinners from spiritual death

Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16). Those who hear and obey the saving message of the gospel will be saved from the spiritual consequence of their sins – eternal spiritual death in Hell fire (Romans 6:23;

Revelation 21:8). This salvation is given to everyone who will truly believe (which includes obedience) – regardless of race, ethnicity, or any other factors!

The Gospel Must Be Obeyed

The faith of the gospel must be obeyed

The faith of the gospel is not something that must merely be heard or understood; but, it must also be obeyed. Acts 6:7 makes reference to the fact that a “great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Romans 1:5 makes reference to the “obedience to the faith.” Romans 16:26 also makes reference to the “obedience to the faith.”

So, all of the doctrines and instructions God has given in the gospel, He has given to be obeyed! In fact, His gospel is powerless to save sinners from spiritual death if they will not believe and obey it – as He has required!

Faith without works is dead

That faith is essential for salvation cannot be disputed (i.e. John 3:16; John 8:24; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 11:6). In addition, we know that we cannot earn our salvation by our own good works (Ephesians 2:8-9). However, the Bible also plainly teaches that we are not saved by faith only! James 1:22-25 teaches that we must be doers (i.e. obedient) of the word and not hearers only. James 2:14-26 teaches that faith without works of obedience is a dead faith (especially notice verse 24).

Furthermore, consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:21-23: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” Clearly, the gospel demands faith; but, not faith only – for Jesus has said that some who believe in and profess allegiance to Him will be lost because they have not been obedient to the Father’s will!

In fact, the Bible teaches that true faith cannot be separated from works of obedience! This is seen from James 2:14-26 and Hebrews 11. These works that are required, then, are not meritorious works (like those that are said to be unable to save us in Ephesians 2:8-9). Instead, these works are simply works of faith and obedience!

Jesus Christ, the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him

Hebrews 5:9 says (concerning Jesus Christ), “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” This is plainly seen from the passage in Matthew 7:21-23. Jesus will not save all those who merely profess faith in Him and call Him “Lord” of their lives. Instead, He will save those who are obedient to God (through obeying the message of the gospel)! In fact, Jesus said that obedience is required in order to truly love Him: “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

Those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ will be everlastingly punished in their sins. Remember, Jesus will tell those who do not obey God: “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matthew 7:23). 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 also makes this very clear. When Jesus Christ returns in final Judgment, He will take vengeance on those who “do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” and do not know God. These individuals (who were disobedient to the gospel’s message) will be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”

What The Gospel Requires

Die with Christ

Jesus Christ willingly gave His life on the cross for you – so that you could be saved from the eternal consequence of your sins. However, He did *not* do so in order for you to continue living in your sins! Instead, the Scriptures teach that Jesus Christ gave His life for you in order that you would give

your life to Him! Thus, the Scriptures discuss the importance of those who follow Christ to have been crucified with Christ.

- 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”
- Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”
- 2 Timothy 2:11 says, “This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.”
- Colossians 3:3 says, “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”
- Colossians 3:5 says, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”
- Romans 6:2 says, “...How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”
- Romans 6:8 says, “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.”

Now, as you reflect on these passages, you should be impressed with the frequent usage of this language in the writings of the apostle Paul (as he was writing to those who were Christians). Clearly, God expects individuals to give their lives entirely to Him. But, this is not unique to Paul’s writings. Jesus Christ, Himself, taught that those who desire to be His disciples must be entirely devoted to living for Him (see Luke 9:23-26; Luke 14:25-33).

But, how do we die with Christ and live for Him? The answer to this is found through obeying the gospel’s plan of salvation (what you must do in order to be saved from your sins and have everlasting life in Heaven).

The gospel’s plan of salvation

Although mankind answers the question, “What must I do to be saved?” in many different ways, let’s consider what God says (as He will be the

one who will judge us on the Last Day)! What does the gospel require of you in order to be saved?

(1) Hear His word. “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Hearing God’s message and instructions, necessarily, comes before an individual can believe and obey them (Acts 18:8)!

(2) Believe. Faith/belief in God and Christ is essential for salvation. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). The Bible consistently points to the essential nature of faith (John 3:16; John 8:24; Romans 10:9-10; etc.). However, the Bible also teaches that faith without works of obedience will not save us (James 2:14-26)!

(3) Repent. God now “commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30-31). Repentance involves a change in mindset regarding past sin (to view past sin with abhorrence and to determine to live differently in the future). Repentance is commanded often in Scriptures (i.e. Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19).

(4) Confess Christ. Romans 10:9-10 says, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” The confession that is commanded in this passage is not a confession of sin; but, is the confession with the mouth of the Lord Jesus. A good example of this confession is found in Acts 8:37.

(5) Be immersed in water (baptized). Jesus said, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but, he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). Baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16). Paul wrote that we are “baptized into Christ” (Galatians 3:27) – that is, baptism brings us into union with Jesus Christ. Peter wrote that baptism “now saves us” – just as water saved Noah and his family (1 Peter 3:20-21). Clearly, the Bible teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation. Baptism is the point at which an individual becomes a Christian and is forgiven of his/her sins. It is at this point that the sinner is

washed, justified, and sanctified through the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)! It is also important to understand that the Bible teaches the action involved in being baptized is immersion in water (not sprinkling or pouring – and not Holy Spirit baptism). In fact, baptism is described as being a “burial” in Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12. Therefore, that old man of sin we put to death is buried with Christ in baptism and we are raised to walk in newness of life!

(6) Remain faithful. When you hear God’s word, believe, repent of your sins, confess Christ, and are immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins, you have become a Christian – and are added to Christ’s church (Acts 2:41, 47)! However, this does not mean that you are “once saved, always saved”! Instead, the Bible teaches that you must be faithful to the Lord unto death in order to receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). This will involve doing all of the things God has commanded you to do as a Christian (i.e. teach the gospel to others, do good to all as you have opportunity, be transformed in your character, live a holy life, etc.).

This plan has often been perverted!

The gospel’s plan of salvation (as we’ve just discussed) is not difficult – and can be obeyed by anyone who is willing! However, most (so-called) “Christian” churches, pastors, preachers, etc. have perverted this plan of salvation. Instead of teaching this God-given plan of salvation, most churches teach a (so-called) “plan of salvation” that involves “faith only,” the “Sinner’s Prayer,” infant “baptism,” etc. Furthermore, most have said that baptism is not necessary for salvation – or that baptism can be accomplished through sprinkling or pouring instead of being exclusively by immersion. Do not listen to these false gospels – as they will lead to your eternal condemnation (remember Galatians 1:6-9 and 2 Peter 2:1-3)!

Conclusion

This gospel which was prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures has now been fully revealed

Study Questions

(once for all time). Romans 1:1-5 records that this “gospel of God” was “promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all the nations for His name.”

Romans 16:25-26 says that the gospel Paul preached and the preaching of Jesus Christ was “according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began” but has now been “made manifest” and “by the prophetic Scriptures” has been “made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith.”

Therefore, God has revealed the mystery of the gospel through the Holy Spirit by making it known to the apostles and the prophets – so that we can understand this mystery when we read the things that have been written (Ephesians 3:3-5)! This is the great message of salvation that reveals the eternal plan of God and calls upon mankind to be obedient to Him so that he can be saved eternally!

Those who obey the gospel of Jesus Christ are forgiven of their sins (Acts 2:38). They are “born again” (John 3:3-6) and are new creatures in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). They are no longer slaves of Satan and sin; but, are slaves of God and righteousness (Romans 6). As a result, they are now walking on a path that leads to everlasting life in Heaven instead of one that leads to everlasting punishment in Hell (Romans 6:20-23)!

Those who obey the gospel are also part of Christ’s church (His kingdom). In Acts 2 (the day the gospel was first proclaimed and the new covenant had been established), those who responded to the gospel in obedience (in verses 36-41) were those who were added to Christ’s church (verses 41 and 47). This one church of Jesus Christ is the collection of God’s people who will be saved eternally – and will be the focus of the next lesson in this study!

Review what you’ve learned thus far.

1. The Gospel In Old Testament Prophecy

Review the following Old Testament prophecies that were made concerning the gospel.

*Genesis 12:3 –

*Jeremiah 31:31-34 –

*Joel 2:28-32 –

Did the gospel fulfill these prophecies?

2. The Gospel: God’s Good News

What does the word “gospel” mean?

What is the origin of the gospel?

How is the gospel good news about salvation?

How is the gospel good news about a new covenant?

3. There Is Only One Gospel

How many gospels are there? What does the phrase, “the faith of the gospel” really mean?

What is the gospel’s plan of salvation?

What is the instruction in 2 Timothy 1:13? What is the significance of obeying this blueprint?

Has this plan of salvation been perverted?

Are there any false gospels? List some passages that demonstrate your answer.

4. What The Gospel Does

List and explain some things the gospel does:

5. The Gospel Must Be Obeyed

Must the faith of the gospel be obeyed?

Is “faith only” acceptable to God? What is true faith?

Is obedience to the gospel of Christ essential to salvation?

6. What The Gospel Requires

What kind of commitment does Jesus Christ require of you?