

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

(Galatians 1:6)



The One True Gospel

When we consider the message of Galatians, (chapter one) we learn that it is very important to maintain the one true gospel in its original form as spoken by Christ and the Apostles.

We are told that even the same gospel, if it is perverted, is no longer acceptable. The matter is so serious that Paul pronounced a curse on any that changed the gospel, or attempted to replace it with a new message.

The gospel is the power of God for salvation to those that believe, (even as we have seen in our cover article from Romans 1:16).

It should be obvious that this power to save is only available when the gospel message is still pure.

Half-Truths

How can we determine if the gospel message that we are being taught is true? They say that the most deceptive words are those that have an element of truth. Outright lies are usually easy to detect, but when someone mixes the truth with error, the difference may be difficult to discern.

Test the Teachings

We must be alert to false teachings. They can deceive us into a hope for salvation that may be worthless. We are told in the Epistles of John that

many false teachers are in the world. John tells us not to believe every thing that we hear that sounds religious, but to test or try the influence of these teachers to see if they are from God. (see 1 John 4:1-3)

Search the Scriptures

Another method that we can use to determine the truth of any teaching is to compare it with God's word. The Bereans were commended because they " received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17: 11)

Prove all Things

Do not accept the word of any preacher. They may be very sincere, but may be deceived themselves by a false idea.

The Thessalonians were told not to despise the words of the prophets, "but test everything, hold fast to what is good." (1 Thes. 5:21 NRSV)

The Bible predicts that there will be a falling away in the last days and that many will believe in fables. Make sure that the gospel that you believe is one that truly offers salvation.

Things Concerning

The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ

" 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."

THE POWER OF GOD

The gospel of Christ has been provided through the power of God, (His Holy Spirit) so that all men would have the opportunity to be saved. This wonderful hope that is available to us is evident in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, as quoted above. (Romans 1:16)

UNTO SALVATION

Salvation is something that all men desire. Many however, do not always think about and strive for this hope. It may only be when the fact of our mortality becomes apparent that we are seriously concerned with a future life.

The death of a loved one, or our own impending fate is likely to stir our thoughts on the potential for being saved from dying. It is certain that if we do nothing to change our condition, we are all destined to return to the dust of the ground, forever.

THE GOSPEL

The Apostle taught us that the key to a change in our destiny is the "gospel of Christ." It is both the message of the gospel, and the name of Jesus Christ that are important.

The gospel is therefore described as "the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." (See Acts 8:12)

CHRIST

THE NAME OF Jesus Christ is more than just a name. Jesus actually means savior, and the word Christ is the English term for the Hebrew word Messiah, which means anointed.

Salvation therefore is only possible through an anointed savior. We are told in Acts 4:12 just how significant the connection to the name of Christ is. " Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

BELIEVETH

It is important to recognize that there are other key elements in the process of being saved. The "power of God unto salvation" mentioned above, is "for everyone that believeth."

Without faith it is impossible to please God. (see Hebrews 11:6) We must believe in God, and believe in the gospel of salvation that he has provided, and in the name of Jesus.

BAPTISM

In the verse mentioned earlier from Acts 8:12, there is another critical matter. Our belief in the gospel and the name must lead to action. Those who believed Philip's preaching of the gospel, were baptized.

Our baptism should begin a life of obedience so that through the grace of God, we may find His salvation.

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“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.”

The Gospel of ?

It the gospel is referred to in many ways. It is called the “gospel of Christ”. It is also referred to as the “gospel of the Kingdom of God”. (as shown in the verse above).

The word gospel means “good news.” In the 101 times that the word occurs in the New Testament the definitions of the gospel include:

- Gospel of God
- Gospel of the blessed God
- Gospel of the Kingdom
- Gospel of Christ
- Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Gospel of the Son
- Gospel of grace
- Gospel of peace
- Gospel of your salvation

There is only one gospel, and none of these qualifiers of the term change that fact. It is all of those things and more, and the words that are written to amplify it simply add understanding to its scope.

Gospel of the Kingdom

One of the definitions of the gospel is that it is the gospel of the kingdom of God. The gospel then, is the good news about the kingdom of God that is coming.

It is in this aspect that the perversions of the gospel seem the most obvious. If you examine most of the current “Christian” teachings on the kingdom, you will see a false hope.

it is commonly believed that the kingdom is either in heaven or in your heart. These concepts are completely foreign to the gospel taught in the Bible. We owe it to ourselves to “test” the teachings about the kingdom using God’s word as our guide.

Gospel preached to Abraham

One way that we can test the teachings is to look at one of the earliest examples of the gospel message as it was preached to Abraham, 2000 years before Christ. This is referred to in Galatians 3:8, where we can read what was involved:

“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.”

A simple message but one thing is clear. The gospel hope had to do with the blessing of all nations on the earth.

Thy Kingdom Come

The location of the kingdom is further clarified in the “Lord’s prayer”, when the Master said: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt 6:10)

Daniel the Prophet revealed a similar theme. “The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” (Dan. 7:27)

Jesus also taught: “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matt. 5:5)

The scriptural teaching is consistent regarding this hope for the kingdom to be on this earth. The Psalmist declares:

“The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.” (Psalm 115:16)

THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION...IF IT IS NOT PERVERTED.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15-16)

Believe **AND** be Baptized

The gospel message is the power of God unto salvation. This salvation requires that those who hear the pure gospel must believe that it is true. They must then demonstrate their obedience to the command to be baptized.

The quotation from Mark at the head of this page is very clear. It leaves little room for confusion.

There are many perversions of the true gospel teaching of the Bible. One of these distortions of the gospel would have you believe that faith alone will save. James has left us with a definite qualification on this teaching. “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (James 2:17)

Children of God

Paul told the Galatians that there was a combination of factors in the process of becoming children of God. He writes:

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3: 27-29)

Our baptism through faith seals our covenant, and we become children of God and heirs of the precious promises made to Abraham.

Buried with Christ

When we are baptized, we are symbolically putting to death our former lives and being buried in the water. (This ceremony is accomplished when we are literally covered by the water.)

When we come out of the water, it is typical of a resurrection to our new lives in Christ Jesus. This process is described in the letter to the Romans, (chapter 6: 3-6):

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

The case for being baptized is well made through the use of the little word IF in verse 5. IF we have been planted in the likeness of his death, we will also be resurrected as he was. If we should die before Christ returns, we certainly all want to be eligible for a resurrection from the dead. Baptism is a must if we want to be saved when Jesus comes.

Born Again

All of this is consistent with the Master’s teaching in John, chapter 3, that we must be born again. Jesus clarified his message by adding:

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (verse 3)

“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.”

We are born of the water at our baptism. Hopefully, through the grace of our Lord, we will be born of the Spirit, as his faithful servants, when he comes in his Kingdom.