

The Gospel(s)¹

This article will attempt to show that the word Gospel is generic and can apply to the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel of the Grace of God, or the Everlasting Gospel.

The English word, gospel, is only found in the New Testament of our Bibles. It is translated from the Greek noun, *euaggelion*: gospel and the verb, *eauggelizo*: declare glad. Essentially, it is the good news of mankind being able to obtain salvation from God. There has been much confusion, over the centuries, about the concept of salvation and therefore, much confusion about the word: gospel.

Let's begin by looking at the various provisions, over time, God has made in order to offer salvation to mankind. In the Garden of Eden at the first temptation, provided by the serpent, Adam and Eve sinned, and God promised to send the "Seed" that would bruise the serpent's head. (Genesis 3:15) We now know that this was Christ when He made the full payment for the sins of mankind with His death on the cross. In the meantime God shed blood to cover the sin of Adam and Eve until the fulfillment of the promise of the "Seed." (Genesis 3:21) There were offerings brought to God, also, at this time. (Genesis 4:3-5) Later, after the flood and after the Tower of Babel, altars were built and men called on the name of the Lord. (Genesis 12:8)

Next, through Abraham, God began a people with whom He could have dealings. These became known as the nation Israel. God gave them the Law through Moses, which consisted of more than 600 commandments, regulations, and ordinances. God also instituted a priesthood with a blood sacrificial system and water cleansing ceremony of atoning (covering) for the sins of the nation Israel. (Exodus 29:1-4,10,11) This system lasted for 1,500 years until the time of the Messiah.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

At this time the Gospel of the Kingdom was preached to the nation Israel. It consisted of repentance and a water cleansing ceremony, known as baptism. The declaration in this gospel was that the kingdom of (from) heaven was at hand. The nation Israel had been given a conditional promise, by God at the giving of the Law, that they all could become a kingdom of priests. (Exodus 19:5,6) For 1,500 years only specific members of the tribe of Levi could serve in the Priesthood and now if the nation Israel repented of her broken covenant relationship and submitted to the water cleansing ceremony, baptism, they all could become that kingdom of priests.

After the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Gospel of the Kingdom continued with a change to acknowledge that the final blood sacrifice had been offered by Him for all who would believe. Now the nation Israel was to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38) It's apparent that the Apostle Peter and his hearers didn't fully understand the significance of the blood sacrifice of our Lord, since Peter preached the bad news of the cross. (Acts 2:23,36) Things were looking good, at this point, as 3,000 souls responded to the Gospel of the Kingdom and in Peter's next sermon/address he lessened the charge of murder, by acknowledging their ignorance, and literally offered the kingdom to the nation Israel. (Acts 3:17-21) This kingdom would consist of Jesus

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Christ returning to earth to establish the long-awaited time about which the Old Testament writers had written from the time of Moses through Malachi.

It is at this point that we start to see a change in the proceedings. The leaders, in Israel, began to fear the rise of this new teaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom and started persecuting the apostles who were preaching this gospel. Despite this persecution God allowed the program to go unchanged until the stoning of Stephen. It is at that time that the nation Israel resisted or blasphemed the Holy Spirit. This was their third and last chance to be reconciled to God. They had rejected God by demanding a king under Samuel, Christ at the cross, and now the Holy Spirit at the stoning of Stephen. (Acts 7:51-60)

The Gospel of the Grace of God

At this point God changed the program of His dealings with mankind and ushered in the Gospel of the Grace of God through the Apostle Paul. The terms of salvation in this Gospel are believing in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and that He died for our sins. God also temporarily set aside His dealings with the nation Israel, exclusively, and offered this Gospel to the Jew and Gentile alike. (Ephesians 2:16)

The difference in this Gospel is that Christ's blood and His blood alone is sufficient payment for all past, present, and future sins of those who believe this Gospel of God's grace. The entire body of truth for this new program was revealed to the Apostle Paul, in a series of direct revelations from the Lord Jesus Christ, over a period of about thirty years. Paul calls it the Mystery and progressively explains it to us in his thirteen epistles, Romans through Philemon. The books of Acts and Hebrews are transitional to go from the Gospel of the Kingdom to the Gospel of the Grace of God and back again. (See this author's work: *A Mid-Acts Dispensational Trip through the Bible* for more detail on this and the other major points in this article.)

The Everlasting Gospel

The Everlasting Gospel will be preached, by angels, just prior to the Battle of Armageddon and will most likely consist of the good news that Christ has overcome sin with His blood sacrifice on the cross and is about to overcome His enemies in the upcoming battle. (Revelation 14:6,7)

We still have the privilege of declaring the good news of the Gospel of the Grace of God to anyone who will listen, because God has thrown open wide the gates of heaven to all during this program of His grace. You'll want to arm yourselves with Scripture like the following: Romans 10:9-13, I Corinthians 15:1-4, Ephesians 2:8,9.