

The Gospel Of The Grace Of God

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The apostle Paul, when speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus; spoke of the gospel of the grace of God before he departed for Jerusalem and then to Rome, and he said, "**And now, behold, I go bound in spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.**" (Acts 20:22-24).

As we have often times said before, we believe the Bible to be the infallible, inspired, inerrant word of God. Because the Bible IS the Inspired word of God, we use it as our only guide in faith and in practice; We see no need to rely upon man made devices to teach what God has said, nor do we need man imagined instructions. Therefore, we use no literature of human origin or design to teach from, in our assemblies.

If the omniscient God is not able to say what He means to say, then how can mortal man improve upon His language? We must remember that God knows all; and never has He been required to learn anything. He has declared that He knows all things, and that He has always known all things.

It is the height of human conceit to imagine that a mere creature can teach God anything, or that man is in any manner qualified to be God's advisor or counselor. Yet, man insists upon telling God what He can, or what He cannot do. Man demands that he be allowed to instruct God in the matter of salvation. Man insists upon exercising his own so-called free will, when his will is not free at all. Rather, man's will is depraved and mis-directed. Man's will is depraved because of sin, and the accompanying curse that follows sin. Depraved of any right will, or of any capacity to think right, or to do right.

When the precious doctrines of grace are presented to fallen man, many say that they believe in God's elective grace, and that only the blood of Jesus Christ is a suitable atoning element. They even go so far as to say that it is God, the Holy Spirit that calls and quickens sinners, and secures for them eternal standing before God.

Generally speaking, however, when these precious truths are presented, man will say, "I believe all that, BUT, you must also do this, or that in order for God to save you". And as soon as man interjects himself into the saving process, he is declaring that God is not sufficient to do the job. And it is not the doctrine of electing grace that gives man his problems. What is really behind all the do-it-yourselfism is that man has never yet been brought to see himself as being totally depraved, and dead in sin.

When man is convicted of his guilt, and sees himself as totally unable to do anything to save himself, he then is led to cast himself upon the mercy of God, and it is there, upon the mercy of God that he finds the answer to his depravity. Now, the Lord willing, I want to speak to you on the subject, "**The Gospel of the Grace of God**", which message is that which God has been pleased to have preached to men and to be used by the Holy Spirit in saving sinners.

Just what is the gospel? Everyone says that they preach the gospel. But, do they? If all that is preached in this day is the gospel, then there are a multitude of gospels. But that cannot be. There is only one gospel, and it declares what God has done in behalf of His elect among fallen men.

The gospel is defined, clearly defined by the Lord Himself when He caused the inspired penman to write, **"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."** (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Beloved reader, these four verses of Scripture have clearly set forth what the gospel is. Have you heard that something else is the gospel? Have you been told that there is another gospel? There isn't. There is just one gospel of the grace of God, and this is it! There isn't another, although there are many who pervert the gospel and try to make it appear that there is another. But there isn't another gospel, there isn't another.

A careful and prayerful study of the Bible will show that all of God's blessed word is in harmony, and in perfect accord with this gospel. All that God has declared is in Divine order, and matchless perfection is seen throughout His word and work. It is only in the warped, depraved mind of sinful man that discord is found.

It is when man's perverted, depraved mind contests this clear declaration that the issue becomes cloudy and murky in those same depraved minds. There is darkness throughout the world of lost mankind on this subject. There is confusion on every hand. There is turmoil and anguish among the religious, yet misdirected men. There are as many versions of the gospel as there are religious bodies to propagate them. If you doubt this statement, just listen to your radio, and watch your television sets. Just read in the many publications of every sort. You must surely confess that there is much variation among so-called religious men. One group says this, while another group says that. But what saith God? This is really all that matters. What saith God?

If you are able to do so, I would ask you today to lay aside your preconceived notions. For a little while pretend that you have never heard any preaching of "so-called" gospels, and just read and prayerfully consider this message. Not because we say, but because God says so. What saith God?

The apostle Paul, in **I Corinthians 15**, where we have just read, is speaking to brethren. Who are brethren? Is it the world in general that Paul is writing to? Or, is it those whom he calls brethren? If it is brethren that he is writing to, then the language has become very restrictive. Paul is writing to somebody. But who? Why, he is writing to brethren, and he is writing to none besides.

Now brethren are those who are of the same family, Were these men of the city of Corinth Paul's brethren after the flesh? Of course they were not. Paul was a Jew. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, of the stock of Abraham. Surely, he was not a fleshly kinsman to those Gentiles of Corinth.

Then why would he address them as brethren? Because they were brethren indeed! They were of the same family. They were children of the same Father. They were all children of God. But how did they get to be children of God? The same way that all children become children. By being begotten of the same Father. Hear now further testimony on this matter. **"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."** (James 1:18). **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead".** (I Peter 1:3).

There is a myriad of additional testimony, but this is sufficient for faith to lay hold of to confirm that the brethren are indeed begotten of the same Father.

Since Paul addresses the Corinthians as brethren, how does that bring you and I into the picture? If we go back to chapter 1 of this epistle, we read, as this same Paul salutes not only these particular saints at Corinth, but also includes "**all that are called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours**" (I Corinthians 1:2). That's saints of God in every age. BUT IT IS ONLY TO SAINTS OF GOD. So, the language is still most restrictive. Since Paul is writing to brethren, it becomes equally clear that he is not writing to those who are not his brethren.

Paul says further that he declares unto these brethren, the gospel. The gospel which he preached unto them is the gospel which they had received, and wherein they presently, and in all future times stand. What did these brethren receive? Paul says that they received the gospel. How did they receive the gospel? Did they receive it with their natural minds? Did their human intellect receive and accept the gospel?

They did not receive any spiritual thing with their natural mind and neither can you, nor can I. The natural mind is incapable of receiving anything in the spiritual realm, no matter how many men may tell you to just accept with the mind the things of God. Now if we insist upon a "**thus saith God**", then we ought to be able to provide one for our positions. If others must provide one, then we must also provide one.

Now, so that you may know that we're not speaking merely as a man would speak, here is God's word declaring this great truth. "**But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**" (I Corinthians 2:14).

Remember that Paul had said that these brethren had received the gospel. Is the gospel of God? Is it spiritual? Since it is of God, and since it is spiritual, then those brethren could not have received it with their natural minds only. How did they receive the gospel if they could not receive it naturally? It is obvious that they must have received it spiritually. If this is so, then these brethren must be spiritual brethren. They must be those who have been begotten of the same Spiritual Father, and not of the same natural father. And that they were not of the same natural father has already been proven, for Paul was a Jew, and his brethren were Gentiles.

Then it must follow that before you, or I, or anyone can receive anything, we must first be begotten of our father. To be born, or begotten in the flesh enables us to receive natural things. Receiving is the effect of being begotten, and not the cause of it. No one receives anything natural until he is born naturally.

Universally, men will acknowledge this obvious fact: that natural life must precede, or come before any activities of natural life are manifested. But, universally, lost men will rebel at the same truth when applied to the spiritual realm. Lost men insist that a man can indeed receive spiritual things, even before he is a spiritual being. Even to the point of claiming that he has spiritual life because of, or as the result of, his receiving something. This is putting the cart before the horse. This is to make cause and effect to be reversed. Listen! Life comes before any activity of life. One is alive, then one receives.

Hear Jesus Christ Himself on the matter. **"Jesus answered him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."** (John 3:3). Did you hear Him? Then why dispute with the Mighty God, the Sovereign of the universe? Do you not see that you are calling Him a liar when you claim that you received the gospel in order that you may have life? He said that you must be born, and then you can see. Is that what **John 3:3** teaches? Then why contend further? It is settled. God causes the gospel to be preached. He quickens unto life, grants repentance, and gives faith to receive it, all as though it were an instantaneous transaction, which it is.

The gospel that Paul had preached to these Corinthian brethren, and that they had received was also that grand doctrine upon which they now stand. They are saved. The only way they are not saved is if they have believed in vain, as verse **2** of **I Corinthians 15** plainly states. And what is it to believe in vain? Hear Paul again as he speaks to these same folks in verses **12-17**. Read them. Hear them. Put your finger on them and read what God says. What is said here is the only way one can believe in vain and be not saved. **"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection from the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."**

Those who preach a false gospel say that the resurrection of Christ did not occur. They say that man has no hope of resurrection, for he trusts in a crucified, buried, and un-risen saviour. What kind of a gospel is that? Do you believe that kind of gospel? If you maintain that man must work works of righteousness, when he is yet in a dead and unrighteous state, then you declare that man's hope is not in a risen Saviour, that his hope is in his own works of self righteousness. What a terrible, blasphemous statement that men make.

Can you truly believe in vain, and be lost? **ONLY IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED**. If God has begotten you, you are His spiritual child, and you are forever secured in the glorious risen Saviour, Jesus Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for the saints.

Now, just what is this gospel that Paul had preached; that these Corinthians had received, and in which they stand? **"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"**. (I Corinthians 15:3,4).

The gospel, then, is **HOW** Christ died for our sins **ACCORDING** to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day **ACCORDING** to the Scriptures.

What Scriptures? Those of the New Testament? No. The New Testament was not given when Christ died **ACCORDING** to the Scriptures. It must have been the Old Testament Scriptures then that Christ died **ACCORDING** to, was buried and rose again the third day **ACCORDING** to, seeing there were no other Scriptures then given.

Hear me clearly. The New Testament Scriptures which were given by God, to men inspired, so that they were recorded for our learning are a definite account of what God did. They are God's testimony of how He has dealt with our sins in Christ Jesus, our Substitute. They are the record that God has given concerning His Son.

But, when Christ died, they were not yet given. Then Christ must have died ACCORDING to the Scriptures that were then in existence. To see how Christ died in accordance with the Scriptures, we must center our attention upon the Scriptures that told of HOW HE WOULD DIE. The prophecy of God declares how He will satisfy Himself about the sins of His elect people. How He will cause His Son to be sacrificed upon the altar of the tree in order that our sins might be punished, and God's divine justice be met. How that His Holy Law is to be vindicated and the guilty sinner yet go free.

In **Genesis 3:15**, God, for the first time in Scripture makes a definite promise of salvation, which is to be centered in a substitute. Listen carefully as God makes a pronouncement of HOW He will deal with sin. God is speaking, and He is speaking to the Devil. The subject is sin's payment, and God's mercy to sinners in light of Christ's finished work, and He says: "**And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**"

The "Seed of the woman" is clearly Christ. He, who in due time, is to be virgin born, hence declared to be the "seed of the woman". He is not referred to as Adam's seed, but as the seed of the woman. The virgin was to be overshadowed by the Holy Ghost. She was to conceive and bring forth a son. This Son is the Incarnate God who came to "**save His people from their sins**". (**Matthew 1:21**).

The promised Redeemer, who is God's Christ, would, ACCORDING to the Scriptures, come to save His people. In doing so, He, according to Scriptures, would bruise the head of the serpent; that is, He would defeat and destroy him by becoming victorious over him and putting down his power, which is spoken of as the headquarters of rebellion, or the center of his governmental activity.

In bruising, or defeating the Devil, His own heel was to be bruised. This speaks of His being required to die. To die as a man meant that He must become man. And become Man He did. He became Man according to the Scriptures. Just as God had said He would, as the seed of the woman. Just as God caused Isaiah to prophesy of "the virgin which shall conceive." (**Isaiah 7:14 & 9:6**).

How did Christ die? Was it according to the Scriptures? Look to **Exodus**, chapter **12** where God gives a detailed account of His purposed deliverance of His people from the bondage of Egypt. Here we see how God instructed Moses to cause the children of Israel to separate a lamb from the flock of the 10th day of Nisan, and to keep it separated until the 14th day. It had to be a lamb. It had to be a male of the first year. It had to be a lamb without spot or blemish. This meant it must be a suitable, and acceptable lamb which would be offered as a substitute sin offering for the people for whom it was to be slain.

This pascal lamb to be slain is a type of Christ. It must die in order that God's people could be delivered from condemnation and promised death. It must shed it's blood in order that the sins of God's people would be atoned for.

When the lamb was slain in the evening of the 14th day of Nisan, the Passover of God was typified, and the passover observance was instituted. The passover was then observed on this same day until Christ died on the tree of calvary more than 1500 years later. When Christ died, His blood was shed in perfect fulfillment of this Old Testament type. His perfect blood He carried into heaven, and acting as our High Priest, He made application of the Blood upon the Mercy Seat. There it was accepted by the Father as the perfect atoning covering for our sins.

Now, in Egypt, when the pascal lamb died, the blood was applied to the side posts and to the upper part of the door of the houses where Israel dwelt. When God passed through Egypt at midnight, He saw the blood and passed over His people and did not smite their firstborn. Why? Because the blood of the innocent substitute lamb had been shed and applied. And this indicated that God's judgment had already fallen upon that house, for the substitute had already died in the stead of the sinners who dwelt therein.

Did Christ die for our sins ACCORDING to these Scriptures? Surely He did, and His blood has been applied, and God is satisfied with that Perfect Offering of Perfect Sinless Blood. Our Substitute has died, and therefore, we go free.

Search as you may, and you will not find any instruction in Scripture where God told Egypt to apply blood as a token of the substitutionary death of a lamb for their firstborn. This fact is sufficient to prove that God acted purposefully and discriminatorily in His choice of a people. His choice was Israel. It was not Egypt. This truth nullifies all claims of a universal atonement, as most people teach and affirm. It rather proves a particular atonement. And this is How Christ died. He died for some particular people. Who? Why, His people, and none besides.

After God had delivered His people from Pharaoh's claim, they came to the shores of the Red Sea. Pharaoh's heart having been again hardened, he pursued them. But he was restrained by God's protection, the Pillar of Fire.

Then God opened the Red Sea and caused His people to pass safely to the other shore, as upon dry land. But when the Egyptians sought to pass through, God caused the waters to descend upon them and they were drowned. Think about this very seriously. God drowned them! Will you still contend with God about His choice of a people, and of His rejection of a people?

Did God have sufficient power to open the Red Sea to begin with? Was He able to keep the waters open until His people were safely over? Was He able to hold back the Egyptians while Israel passed over? Did He suddenly lose His power when the Egyptians attempted to pass over? God acted purposefully here, as He does in all circumstances. He did what He chose to do. Then He must have intended to drown the Egyptians, for that is precisely what He did.

Now, did Christ die for our sins ACCORDING to the Scriptures. All that He did He did in harmony with the Scriptures. Then He must not have died to deliver the Egyptians. If He had intended to deliver them, He would have done so. But He did not.

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. All the Scriptures that foretold of His death were properly fulfilled. He was to die the Just for the unjust; the Innocent for the guilty. And He did so.

In **John**, chapter **19**, we hear Him say, "**It is finished**". As He hangs upon the cursed tree, we hear Him declare that all that is written of Him is now accomplished, and THEN He said, "**It is finished**". And THEN He dismisses His Spirit. He dies, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.

His body is taken down from this awful place of death and is laid in a borrowed tomb. After three days and three nights (72 hours), He is not found among the dead, but has risen, as He said. Is this resurrection from the dead according to the Scriptures? Most assuredly, it is according to the Scriptures.

Do you remember Jonah? Remember how Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish? Remember also that Jesus had said that no other sign would be given, but this sign, "**As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**" Christ not only died for our sins according to the Scriptures, He was buried and He rose again according to the Scriptures.

Marvelous proof of this fact is stated as we read, "**But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruit of them that slept.**" (I Corinthians 15:20).

Is this message the Gospel of the Grace of God? Did you hear of what a lost, depraved sinner must do? Or did you hear of what God has done for lost, depraved sinners?

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