

# The Bible Definition of Gospel

In no instance does the word 'gospel' convey any thought of a mere 'free-offer of grace'.

Added: Aug 30, 2008 | Category: Theology

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Like so many Bible terms, the word "gospel" has been given various definitions contrary to its original and proper meaning. The word has its origin "in Christ before the foundation of the world." This was contained in the "promise" God made before the foundation of the world. (Titus 1:2) The "gospel", the "good news" or "good tidings" is the declared fulfilment of that promise.

In Isaiah 61:1-3 is found the outstanding proclamation made by the Son and Substance of the good tidings, Jesus Christ Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek, He has sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn. To appoint to them that mourn in Zion, to give to them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." The Redeemer repeated this same proclamation of Himself in the synagogue.

While this prophetic statement is often quoted, its full significance is rarely understood. In this one sweeping declaration, there is encompassed – not the beginning of the gospel, not a part of its fulfilment – the grand total of what the Son of Man declared on the cross: "It is finished"!

The Greek word "evangelion" is translated "gospel" in the King James Version. This word, together with its rendering of "good tidings", "glad tidings" and "preach the gospel" occurs some one hundred and eight times in the New Testament, none of which intimate anything less than "finished redemption" in Christ.

In no instance does the word convey any thought of a mere "free-offer of grace".

When Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," He no more invited the thirsty, than He invited the light when He said, Let there be light. In the first place there is not a soul on the earth that

does or can thirst for the living waters which flow from Him, until He quickens it, and makes it thirst, and when made to feel its thirst, and even when the tongue faileth for thirst, it can no more approach the living fountain than it can make a world, until Jesus applies, not the invitation, but the word, "Come unto me." His words are spirit and they are life; and His sheep hear them, and they know His voice, and they follow Him; because they have no power or even disposition to resist their Shepherd's voice. The calling of the saints is nowhere in the scriptures denominated an invitation. He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. If he only invited them they would have to get out themselves, or stay behind. But when He calls, the dead hear His voice, (not His invitation) and they that hear shall live. How would it suit the condition of a poor, lost, helpless soul, one that feels his poverty, inability and impotence, to read the word thus: The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall be invited to live, and they who accept the invitation shall live. And when He inviteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them, provided they accept the invitation. It is perfectly in keeping with every feature of Arminianism for workmongers to talk of invitations of the gospel, because the very term implies the willing and the doing power to be in the creature. But it is neither in harmony with the doctrine of experience of the saints of God to so speak of His communications to them as to imply that He has yielded up the government to them; that He has hinged the effect and result of His communications on their will instead of His own will. It is derogatory to His character, it reflects on His wisdom, power, and grace.

Gilbert Beebe

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