

Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT ESTABLISHED 1786 MISSIONARY

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

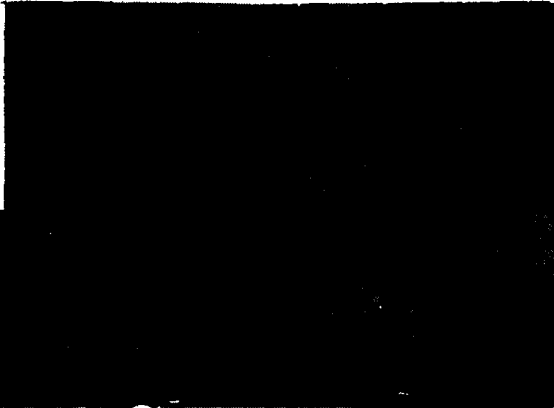
August, 1973

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

BY: C. D. COLE

The gospel is good news. The acid test of a gospel message: is it good news to bad men? The gospel is for sinners; it is the revelation of the righteousness God has provided through Christ for the unrighteous, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

The gospel is good news about a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Men are not saved by doing this or that, or going here and there; they are saved by coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has so graciously said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37b). Salvation is not a matter of geography. There is not a safe spot from the wrath of God anywhere. Salvation is not in bodily flight; it is in heart trust in Him Who is our passover, sacrificed for us.



Location: 3.3 miles out Bryan Station Road. Right on Briar Hill Road.

- Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
- Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
- Evening Service 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Air-Conditioned

Nursery Provided

The gospel consists of cer-

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tain historical facts with a certain and particular theory or explanation of those facts. The facts are given us in I Cor. 15:3, 4: "...Christ died for our sins...; was buried, and...rose again..." Or as Paul puts it in Rom. 4:25: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins. What does that mean? Some claim that it merely means that Christ died on our behalf, but not as our Substitute. They insist that we should have no theory of the atonement, but with a little investigation we find that such people do have a theory of the atonement. Let them tell us how Christ could die on our behalf--how His death could save us--unless He died as our Substitute to render satisfaction to Divine justice for our sins. For His death to save us, it must cancel our guilt before the law of God, and how could it cancel our guilt unless He suffered for the guilt that was ours? He suffered, the Just for the unjust, and how could this be unless He suffered in our room and stead? Christ dying as a martyr for a good cause, or as a mere example of faithfulness unto death, or as a gesture of love to conquer the human heart, would in no sense redeem sinners from the curse of the law. Divine justice calls for Divine punishment, and the only way the sinner can escape judgment is for Christ to bear the punishment due the sinner. Those who deny blood atonement worship a god different to that of the Bible, and practice a religion different to that of the Bible.

What does the gospel do? In a word, it saves all who trust it. And the gospel to be trusted is what Christ, the Son of God, did in laying down His life for our sins and taking it up again for our justification. John says that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. That which is shameful and foolish to the masses is the very thing God uses to save sinners. What Christ did in death and resurrection has power to cancel the sin-debt. The gospel was provided by God; it was not a human expedient. God put His Son to death: He laid on Christ our iniquity. We are not saved because men killed Jesus; that was murder. We are saved because He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. God sacrificed His own Son for our safety. Amazing and sensational? Yes! But we must remember that sin is terrible in its nature and effects, and nothing but a sensational remedy will avail.

The following is an illustration: Here is a man who has committed murder for which the penalty is death by hanging. The murderer was acting as the tool of another man who, himself, was under sentence of death, with no provision for pardon. But the law allows a substitute for the murderer. The substitute is found and is hanged in the murderer's place out of love for the doomed man. Now the death of the substitute cancels the guilt of the murderer and sets him free. It is the power of the court and also power with the court. The court is satisfied with the death of the substitute and the guilty man goes free. To interpret this parable: man becomes a sinner against God as a dupe of the devil, who was already a sinner against God, under sentence, with no provision for pardon. The Divine law allowed a substitute for the human sinner. The Son of God gladly gave Himself as the sinner's substitute, suffering, the Just for the unjust, that the sinner might not perish in his sins.

Beneficiaries of the gospel. Paul says, "To everyone that believeth." The death of Christ does nobody any good who scorns it and refuses to trust it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

There is so much that passes for faith, that we must be on our guard lest we mistake what saving faith is. Saving faith is something more than the mere assent of the mind to a proposition, however true; it is heart trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith is not being satisfied with self; it is being satisfied with what Christ did on the cross for our salvation. One who is once satisfied with Christ will never be satisfied with anything else.

The value of faith depends upon the worth of its object. If I trust an object or a person that cannot or is not willing to save me, then my faith has no value--it is vain faith, however strong. Faith itself may be dangerous, as well as saving. It is safe to trust the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is both willing and able to save. He is able to save because He is alive. No dead person can be a real Saviour, and must not be an object of faith. It is the office of a priest to make sinners right with God. Old Testament priests could not make sinners right with God because of two things; they

could not continue forever as priests because of death, and they did not have saving sacrifices to offer--the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. These offerings were only a type of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who someday would die for the sins of all those who would put their faith and trust in Him. Christ continues forever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood: "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Here is ground for saving faith, and a challenge to strong faith. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

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This message is an excerpt from a book written by the late C. D. Cole entitled "Definitions of Doctrine" (Volume II). The Bryan Station Baptist Church has printed several of Brother Cole's writings. Anyone interested in obtaining these books may do so by contacting the pastor, Brother Al Gormley, at the address shown on the front of this paper.