

Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT

MISSIONARY

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

ORGANIZED 1786

VOL. 15, NO. 12
SEPTEMBER, 1984

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

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

By: C. D. Cole

Romans 1:16, "For 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."

I Corinthians 15:3 and 4, "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."

My theme is interrogatively stated: What is the gospel? A good way to study the Bible is to bring questions about spiritual and eternal truths to it, for its infallible answer. What a rich supply of information the Bible has for every question relating to eternal needs of the human soul. The value of the Bible lies in its practicability. It is perfectly adapted to human needs. Every doctrine is adapted to every age and to every individual. It is indeed the loving word: "Forever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm

119:89). Do we need knowledge on vital and eternal issues? Then we read, "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" (Psalm 119:130). Do our souls need sweet statements? Then it is written: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psalm 119:103). Do we need our path lit through this sin-darkened world? Then we read in Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Do we stand in need of comfort? Then hear Paul in Romans 15:4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Do ministers of Christ need assurance that they are not giving their labour for naught? Then God has caused to be written in I Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." And in Isaiah 55:10 and 11, "For as the rain cometh down, and the

snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

But back to our first question: What is the Gospel? This is a very elementary question and yet one that needs to be continually expounded and scripturally answered, for man is ever prone to pervert the gospel of Christ. The importance of the question may be seen in the fact that Paul pronounces a curse upon men or angels who preach any other gospel than that which he preached. Galatians 1:8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Our text doesn't answer our question but speaks of its value: it is the power of God unto salvation. It does not tell us what the gospel is but what it is able

to do. He speaks of its value to believers. He is not saying that the gospel has power to make believers--he is not speaking of the power of his preaching but the power of what he preached. The gospel is the means of faith (Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."), but the Holy Spirit is the power that makes believers. The gospel is foolishness to the natural man (I Corinthians 1:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."). (I Corinthians 2:14, "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.")

NEGATIVELY:

I. ALL TRUTH IS NOT GOSPEL TRUTH. One may know and believe much truth without knowing the gospel. People have a way of saying "that's the gospel truth" when they emphasize the certainty of something. But just because a thing is true does not necessarily make it the gospel. The gospel is truth but all truth is not the gospel.

II. ALL BIBLE TRUTH IS NOT THE GOSPEL. One may know much of the Bible without knowing the gospel. One may preach nothing but the Bible and yet not preach the gospel. The gospel is Bible truth but all Bible truth is not gospel truth. The Bible is the word of God and contains the gospel. But the Bible contains much truth that is not gospel truth, such as truth about sin and heaven and hell.

III. GOOD ADVICE IS NOT

THE GOSPEL. Good advice is good, but the gospel is far better. It is good to advise men to give up certain sins such as lying and stealing and swearing, drinking, gambling, etc. The gospel is not about sin; it is about the Son, as Saviour.

IV. BAPTISM IS NOT THE GOSPEL. Baptism is the first duty of a believer or saved person, but it does not produce salvation. Baptism is putting on Christ, but putting on Christ does not make one a Christian anymore than putting on a uniform makes one a soldier. Baptism is the answer of a good conscience towards God, but it is the blood of Christ sprinkled on the conscience that makes it good. Baptism washes away sin figuratively and pictorially, but the blood of Christ washes it away actually. Baptism does not prepare us for the blood of Christ; the blood trusted in prepares us for baptism.

Two false positions about baptism: one is that it saves, the other that it is not necessary. It is essential to obedience, but sinners are not saved by their own obedience, but by the obedience of Christ. Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Baptism is a work of righteousness (Matthew 3:15), but we are not saved by works of righteousness (Titus 3:5).

Paul distinguishes between baptism and the Gospel: Christ sent me not to baptize, etc. He thanked God he had baptized only a few at Corinth: Crispus Gaius and household of Stephanas. And writing to the whole church he said, "I have begotten you through the gospel.."

Christ commanded us to make disciples and then baptize them; not make disciples by baptizing them.

V. THE NEW BIRTH IS NOT THE GOSPEL. The new birth is essential to repentance and faith and therefore essential to salvation. New birth gives us a spiritual experience, it is the work of the Holy Spirit in us; the gospel is about the work of Christ in death and resurrection.

VI. REPENTANCE IS NOT THE GOSPEL. Repentance is essential to salvation, for except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Mark 1:15, "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Repentance is what the sinner does to be saved; the gospel is what Christ did to save us. In repentance the sinner is prepared for the gospel.

VII. FAITH IS NOT THE GOSPEL. Faith is the act of believing or trusting, the gospel is the object of faith or trust. The act of believing and the thing to be believed cannot be the same. Saving faith is faith in the

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death--another's life, I cast my soul eternally."

THE BLESSING OF PRAYER

Prayer is one of the most tremendous privileges of the child of God. We can come directly to Him and know that He will hear us. Hebrews 4:16 says that we may boldly come before His throne of grace, because Jesus Christ our Savior made the way open for us who are covered by His blood.

In Psalm 66:20, the Psalmist writes of finding God's mercy through prayer. Mercy is kindness and compassion to someone who does not deserve it. God is truly merciful to allow us as redeemed sinners to come before His presence. He has given us His Holy Spirit, who knows our every need and tenderly intercedes for us.

No concern of ours is too small to discuss with our Lord. So many times we only come to Him with the "big" decisions of life, the ones we can't make on our own. God cares about even the smallest details of our lives and wants us to go to Him about even our smallest concern.

Let us be thankful for the opportunity we have to come before such a merciful and loving God. Let us use the privilege that has been so freely given to us, and let us love the Lord because He hears our voice and our supplications.

--Copied

Love Is

- Slow to suspect--quick to trust.
- Slow to condemn--quick to justify.
- Slow to offend--quick to defend.
- Slow to reprimand--quick to forbear.
- Slow to belittle--quick to appreciate.
- Slow to demand--quick to give.
- Slow to provoke--quick to conciliate.
- Slow to hinder--quick to help.
- Slow to resent--quick to forgive.

The Baptist Challenge

1. When you grow bolder with sin, or with more temptations to sin than when you were in your more watchful state -- then be sure something is wrong.
2. When you make a small matter of those sins and infirmities which once seemed grievous to you and almost intolerable.
3. When you settle down to a course of religion that gives you but little labor, and leave out the hard and costly part.
4. When your God and Saviour grows a little strange to you, and your religion consists in conversion with men and their books and not with God and His Book.
5. When you delight more in hearing and talking, than in secret prayer and the Word.
6. When you use the means of grace more as a matter of duty, than as food in which your soul delights.
7. When you grow harsh and bitter towards those who differ from you, instead of feeling tenderly towards all who love Christ.
8. When you make light of preparing for the Lord's Day and the Lord's Table, and think more of outward ordinances than you do of heart work.
9. When the hopes of Heaven and the love of God do not interest you, but you are thirsting after some worldly enjoyment and grow eager for it.
10. When the world grows sweeter to you and death and eternity are distasteful subjects.



"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

MATT. 28:19-20

gospel. One might have much faith in himself as did the Pharisee and not be saved. Faith in the wrong object is of no value for salvation.

POSITIVELY:

I. THE GOSPEL IS GOOD NEWS FROM GOD. The word gospel means good news. Man has a fondness for news. There are many agencies for gathering and disseminating news, but most of the news we get about human affairs is bad news: full of human failure to keep the peace; news about war and murders and sex crimes, etc.

II. THE GOSPEL IS GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S SON. Paul says he was separated unto the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, the Lord. We must preach Christ if we preach the gospel. When Christ is left out of the message, it is not the gospel.

The gospel is good news about what Jesus Christ did in His death and resurrection. In I Corinthians 15:3 and 4, we have an infallible definition of the gospel.

The gospel is made up of three facts: (1) Christ died; (2) he was buried; and (3) he rose from the dead. But these facts must be rightly interpreted. One must hold to the correct theory of these facts. Christ did all this for our sins. He did this to make us right with God by bearing our sins--by being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God. He died to redeem us from our curse, by being made a curse for us. His death was in our room and place.

The gospel is good news because it reveals God's way of making an unrighteous person righteous. "Upon a life I did not live; Upon a death I did not die: Another's