

## The Gospel of Jesus Christ

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."* (Romans 1:16) From these very simple words by the apostle Paul to the saints in Rome, we find ourselves swallowed up in a sea of opinions that differ from each other as the people who render the opinion. Some would have us believe that the gospel of Christ is a gospel of social justice and equality, where the principles of the beatitudes, giving to the poor, and feeding the hungry are the responsibility of the government through a political system of forced redistribution of wealth. Others view the gospel as merely a guide to enhance a person's self-esteem. Still others see the gospel of Christ as one of many paths to heaven, who embrace it together with other religions, or incorporating the teachings of other religions into its practice, such as what the Jews did in Old Testament times.

So then, the question before us in this article is really, "What is the gospel of Christ to which the apostle Paul referred in the verse above?" Once we understand from God's Word what the gospel of Christ is, then we will be able to distinguish between what is the true gospel, and one that is false. And so, let us go to source of where we would find solid ground upon which to stand in our understanding of the gospel of Christ, the Bible. The word gospel means "good news." But before we consider what the "good news" is, we must understand what makes it so good; what is the reason it is such good news for you and I.

We learn from the Bible that every person since the fall man in the Garden of Eden is born a sinner and is condemned under the righteous judgment of God from the moment of conception. We come to this understanding from several passages and verses from Scripture. For example, we read in Psalm 51:5 David's acknowledgement of being a sinner from conception when he says, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me"* (Psalm 51:5 NKJ). And in the New Testament, we read in Romans Chapter 3, an Old Testament quote, which tells us that

all mankind has been corrupted with sin, so much so that it says that no one is righteous, everyone's understanding has been corrupted by sin, none seek God, nor does anyone do good, and so much more (see Romans 3:9-18). Elsewhere, the sinfulness of man is so much a part of his nature that he is described as a "*son of disobedience*," and a "*child of God's wrath*," being "*dead in his sins and trespasses*" (Ephesians 2:1-3). Mankind is so under the control of sin, he is described as being a slave to sin, unwilling and incapable of doing anything that is right and pleasing to God, especially to justify himself before a holy God (Romans 6:16; cf. Isaiah 64:6). So it is that because man is born a sinner he is helpless to save himself, and hopelessly lost and under the condemnation of sin, which is death, or eternal damnation (Romans 6:23; 3:19-20; John 3:18). This is the "bad news," and it is really bad for all mankind; but there is good news; the Gospel of hope and salvation, which is really "Good News."

The apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians refers to the gospel of Christ as the message of the cross. The gospel is the message of the good news of Christ's atoning work on the cross on behalf of sinners like you and I. It is that work on the cross that is the good news for sinners, because it a work that the sinner could never do for himself, nor want to do (Romans 3:9-18); that is, satisfy the justice of God and appease the wrath of God against the sins of His people. Christ bore in body and soul on the cross the anguish and torment of hell, so that all who put their trust in this work alone, will be saved from the eternal anguish and torment of hell. This is the good news of Jesus Christ. And the Gospel is the power of God to salvation for all who believe in Christ, coming to Him alone in true faith and in repentance of sin – turning from seeking salvation in any other way, whether it be the government, or his own good works, or some religious activity. So that, according to 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, those who are in Christ Jesus by faith alone, rest in the certain knowledge that Jesus Christ is his or her "*wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.'*" This is the "good news" for all who are being saved, who come to Christ by true faith in true

repentance of sin. But to those reject this Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is an *"aroma of death unto death,"* as it is described in 2 Corinthians 2:15-16.

Are you tired of all the bad news and all the burdens that the world puts on you? - embrace with a believing heart the good news of Christ, and you will be saved, bringing you out of condemnation and into eternal life, and giving you true comfort and hope that is found only in Christ beginning now. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*(John 3:16-18)

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