

SEVEN TITLES OF THE GOSPEL

The Euangelion of Theos



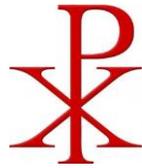
Romans 1:16

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ "

B r o o k y R S t o c k t o n

Seven Titles of the Gospel

Version 1.0



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December 2025

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Preface

In search of power?

Major on the majors and minors on the minors.

The gospel is the major message of the New Testament. Feel the fire of the gospel and you will be like a candle in the dark to friends and neighbors.

Brooky Stockton, ret. pastor / professor of NT Theology.

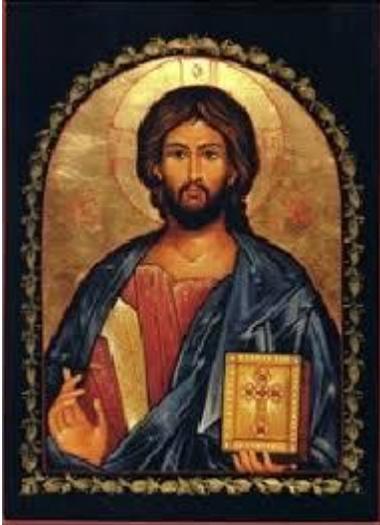


The Seven Titles of the Gospel



“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ “ Romans 1:16

INTRODUCTION



How do you become a Christian? The correct answer is by believing the gospel.

But, if you do not know the gospel, how can you believe it? If you do not believe the gospel, how can you be saved from the judgment to come (Hebrews 9:27)?

This is written so that you might know and believe the gospel, and thus, become a true child of God. The gospel is not a country song. The gospel is not the Bible. The gospel is not about how “we should love one another.”

The noun *gospel* (εὐαγγέλιον euangelion) means “good news.” Think of it as the essential content of the early Christian message. It can be defined and identified in the New Testament.

The verb *euangelizo* is used 55 times in the New Testament and it means “to bring good news” or “to announce glad tidings.”

The noun *evangelist* is used 33 times and it describes the one who preaches the message of the gospel.

Today the gospel competes with many wild and extreme forms of thought. Have you have heard the term, “dumbing down of the church?” This refers to simplistic sermons in the pulpit, which produce feel-goody Christians.

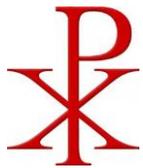
Have you heard of the “psychologization of the church?” This refers to the integration of psychology with the gospel. Have you heard of the word “cult?” This term refers to those who distort the gospel by focusing on some tangential subject. Our culture is tossed about by the

crosscurrent of ideas, and it is essential that we sail our ship into the harbor of the gospel on a clear day.

James Stewart, a gospel preacher, recognized **Seven Scriptural Titles** associated with the Greek word *euangelion* that are worth recording.

1. THE EUANGELION OF GOD

Romans 1:1



◆ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel (euangelion) of God. . .

The word *euangelion* is a message from God that has its roots in the history of His Son.

The title “gospel of God” addresses **the origin of the message**. It is not from man. Early Christians did not make it up. It is not a myth, and it did not evolve from early Christian folklore. The gospel is the unveiling of truth from God the Father. It is His revelation, and it is here because of His sovereign decree.

Have you heard about the dial-a-prayer for atheists? You dial the number and nobody answers. The Bible tells us something different. He has a telephone number and it is **JER 333**. “Call unto me, and I will answer thee . . .” (Jeremiah 33:3).

The title “gospel of God” not only tells us the *genesis* of the message, but it announces **the good news of God’s existence**. He is! It tells us that there is *one, personal, infinite, virtuous, triune Spirit* who acted to become a redemptive Father, and Who has sent His one and only Son to be the Savior for sinners (Matthew 1:21).

There is no greater heresy than the notion that men are free to follow their own self-made god and choose the law whom they will serve. The Scripture teaches there is one God and one absolute law (Deuteronomy 6:4)

That there are many roads to enlightenment or many roads to God (omnism) is sheer foolishness — a mirror reflecting a mirror — naked men

taking a bath in a puddle on a public sidewalk — a bird building her nest in a chimney – making a paper umbrella for protection in a hailstorm.

There is only one way to boil water and that is through the application of heat.

Naaman, the Syrian leper, learned there was only one river that heals lepers and that was the muddy Jordan in the land of the LORD (2 Kings 5). God provided the snake bitten Israelites only one way to be healed, and that was through the bronze serpent (John 3:14); there was only one door into the tabernacle; one door into the temple; there was only one Lawgiver on Mt. Sinai.

Likewise, the progress of history shows us there is only one God and one way to access Him and that is through His Son. He is the Bridge over troubled waters; the candle in the midst of darkness; the compass that points to Heaven (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5).

Like there are many rivers that flow into the sea, there are many roads to hell. The God of the Bible is not inclusive, but exclusive; that is, He rejects spurious faith, misdirected faith, false faith, and frivolous faith (John 3:36). Just as there is a Sun that outshines all stars, there is a Father in heaven Who outshines all of man's crafty, papercut doll-gods.

There are only two religions in the world: one true, one false; the religion of do, and the religion of done; the religion of Cain, and the religion of Abel; the religion of beets and vegetables; and the religion of blood and the vicarious suffering of Christ. Only one meets the needs of man.

The good news is that there is one, true God who hears and cares. He is the Elohim of the Old Testament. His name is YHWH, the Great "I AM THAT I AM," the covenant keeping God who is, was, and shall be – the God of the gospel Who loves us so much He sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins.

A man who can't see the cross, will never see the Father.

The proof argument for the existence of God is the irreducible complexity of the universe. Men's bodies have around 40 trillion cells with each performing a unique, essential function; that is, certain biological systems like the bacterial flagellum or the human eye are said too complex to evolve step by step over billions of years by any process other than special creation. There is no known scientific principle that can explain how life came from non-life; or how non-living matter became self-replicating life. That man is the product of one, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present Creator makes more sense and is more rational than man is the product of Time + Chance.

The title "gospel of God" not only announces the origin of the gospel and the good news of God's existence. **The gospel proclaims the sovereign rule of God.** He has a throne and He rules over the nations today. The gospel declares that God is sovereign and is acting in history to establish His kingdom on earth. He is King over the nations with justice and mercy.

He reigns now over the affairs of men is the gospel of the Old Testament (Psalm 97:1; 99:1)!

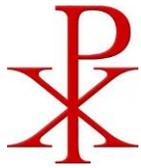
The objectors stated, "We will not have this man reign over us" (Luke 19:14)

The question rises, "Will you let this man reign over you?"

Will government officials submit themselves to His rule and His law-order?

2. THE EUANGELION OF CHRIST

Romans 1:16



◆ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes.

The title “gospel of Christ” addresses *the theme of the gospel message*.

The Person of Christ

The gospel is about the *person of Christ*. It is good news that Jesus is the promised Christ of prophecy; God’s Son, fully God and fully man — Theos in the flesh, one in person and co-equal with the Father — a diamond on a sandy shore.

Many have lost sight of who Christ really is. Living in an educational system of broken mirrors, ideas like “Jesus was a good man,” or that “Jesus was created,” or that “He is one of many religious teachers,” or that “He was an inspiring religious leader” or that “he is just one of many religious teachers” injures the truth about Christ.

In the early church, heretics tended to deny the humanity of Christ (1 John 4:1-4). Today, cults tend to deny the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His miracles, and His resurrection. Radical secularists even deny His existence (mythicisim) – unfounded doubt that clouds the sunlight of hope.

Christians understand Jesus to be the God-man, truly God and truly man. John reveals Him as the “Word” (Logos) — the visible, tangible representation of the Creator in human form — the “Word made flesh” — a diamond hidden in a common glove — a candle in coal-black darkness (John 1:14).

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with Theos, and the Logos was Theos.

In the Greek language, Christ's deity is very clear (καὶ θεο). The Greek letter "ο`" (ho) is a definite article indicating the subject (nominative) of the sentence. It should be read this way: "The Word was God." The word "θεὸς" does not have an article because it is the predicate nominative.

The official title of the Savior is "The Lord Jesus Christ." His name "Jesus" is his human name and it is used 608 times before His ascension, but only 62 times after His ascension. He is not "the man upstairs," or a good example. He is the God-man. His official title is, "the Lord Jesus Christ."

The appellation, "The Lord Jesus Christ" is never mentioned before he ascended, but it is used 81 times after His ascension — a title used 19 times in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians alone.

Notice He is never called "Yeshua" in the New Testament nor is the Father ever called "Yahweh." These appellations are of Jewish origin designed to Judaize the church with the intent of blurring distinctions between Christians and Zionists.

When first century men recognized the supreme state of Christ's exaltation, they were cut to the heart and surrendered to Him as Lord and Master. The title "Lord" (*kurios*) is used around 475 times in Apostolic letters (Acts-Revelation). He is Lord, not autonomous man. He is Lord, not Caesar. He is Lord, not the state! He is Lord, not Congress. He is Lord, not SOTUS.

This truth gave the NT Christians the power to resist Rome and its arrogance in claiming that Augustus was some type of god. Thus, when Peter declared that Jesus is Lord and that there was no other Name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved, he declared war on the Roman Empire (Acts 4:12). It was this gospel that our Lord was King

that turned the world upside down and breaks stone-hard hearts of autonomous man (Acts 17:6-7).

The issue is not whether Jesus is Lord, but will men recognize Him as such! When was the last time you heard his official title in the media, “The Lord Jesus Christ?” Oh, that men should repent of their blasphemy and shriveled views of Christ and begin confessing him as Lord.

The History of Christ

Furthermore, the gospel is not only about the person of Christ, **it is about the marvelous *history of Christ*** — His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and session of Christ at the right hand of God (1 Corinthians 15).

Religion is about man’s fundamental problem. Man’s fundamental problem is death – a closing of the eyes into nothingness; the shadow that slips beneath the door of every home; an eerie frost that settles on the hearts of all men; a clock that forgets to tick; an eternity without light, laughter, or love. Men die.

Religion, therefore, is any philosophy or belief about what happens at death.

Q: Can death be overcome? This is the question of the ages.

The “good news” is that Christ died, was buried, and rose again — that the Seed of Life broke through the boulders of death bringing hope to men (1 Corinthians 15:1-12).

The gospel declares the good news that Christ died!

It is **not** good news when someone dies, but in the case of Christ, it is gospel. If he had not truly died, he could not have risen from the dead to demonstrate His victory and power over death. Facts remain: Jesus died. His body was placed in a grave. Over the next few weeks, over 500 witnesses saw him alive — what “we have heard, which we have seen with

our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you” (1 John 1:1-3).

He literally, tangibly, physically, bodily rose from the grave in history (33 A.D.). This is good news! Christ defeated death; and broke its chilling grip on the hearts of men. **He solved man’s fundamental problem!**

When a person dies, their death has little historical significance other than they are deceased. Christ’s death was different. His death thunders with meaning and echoes through history that He is Lord over death — that He is King, Master, and the Savior; that He can save men from their ultimate problem — death.

Since Christ has power over death, He has power to resolve our fundamental problem regarding death. Why go to Mohammed or Buddha or to the Dali Lama? They are still in the grave. Why run to psychologists or some new age guru — mirages in a desert? They can’t give the water to a thirsty soul. Only a living spring — only the resurrected Christ has the water of life.

Following His resurrection our Lord ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God. This is called “His session” – His rule and reign; that is, He sits as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe over the affairs of man.

Colossians 2:8-10 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

The danger of course is thinking less of Christ; of having midget views of Him; of seeing Him as a “little Jesus.” — a telescope turned backward; a candle under a can; a map drawn on a napkin; a marble beside religious boulders; a little bird in a cage; a tiny fish in a bowl; or a garden planted in a thimble.

The need of the hour is to think higher and bigger about Jesus. Let your mind sail past the horizon; to turn the small windows in your mind into doors; to light a fire on what ashes have burned.

Inference on Politics

Furthermore, since religion is about man’s fundamental problem; there is no such thing as separation of religion (church) and state because all men, even atheists are religious because every man has a set of propositions about what happens at death. To give rights and preferences to secularists and deny speech rights to Christians in public debates is discriminatory, bias, prejudicial, and clearly jaundiced.

Thus, the phrase “separation of church and state” is perhaps the most deadly Botulinum Toxin every dumped on the American mind.

It is not possible to separate “religion” from politics any more than it is possible to separate eagles from the wind that causes them to soar in the sky.

Every political idea is plucked from the soil of some religion just as the wind helps every bird to fly.

The Meaning of His Story

Not only does the gospel tell us about the person of Christ and his victorious history, it tells us *the meaning of that history*; that is, He is the key that unlocks the doors of understanding.

The text says,

. . . the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes.

The text informs us that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation – a hand of steel in a velvet glove; a throne built on thunder, living-roots cracking stones of death, dynamite breaking through the boulders of personal sin.

Not only can He save men from death, He can save men from sin. His resurrection and ascension into heaven are seeds that break through hardened soil. Terms like “redemption,” “grace,” “propitiation,” and “justification” are a few of the NT words that tell us how the death of Christ is to be interpreted.

Take the word “redemption” for example: His death is redemptive. The word “redemption” (*apolutrosis*) means “to set free” or “to release.” Christ died as a substitute for sinners. Because He paid the penalty for your sins, you can be “set free” from the guilt, shame, and penalty of sin. His salvation is the power of God at work in the human heart cleansing souls, planting tender shoot of life, and breaking megaliths of bad habits.

Response to His History

The gospel is also about our response to Christ. It is good news we know how to respond to Him. He is not asking for contrition, penance, or personal floggings. He simply wants faith and trust – a gift of God: whosoever believes in Him “shall not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16, 36).

All this is good news – sunlight breaking through the darkness, a letter carried on the wings of dawn, spring waking from its winter siege, dew on a desert landscape, a melody echoing above the thunder of the silent grave.

3. THE GLORIOUS EUANGELION OF CHRIST

2 Corinthians 4:3, 4



◆ The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The title “glorious gospel” refers to **the intrinsic worth of the message** — a pearl hidden in the sand. What brilliance is to a diamond and light is to a glow-worm, glory is to Christ. He is the star in a moonless sky; the sunbeam striking fresh snow; the lighthouse on a rocky shore.

It is glorious because it presents the majesty and radiance of the Redeemer. Glory is to Christ what a light is to a lamp; what the brightness, clarity, and sparkle is to a sapphire-blue gem. His glory is the brilliance and beauty of His person — a contrast to the ashes of a fire and rust eating through silver.

The glorious gospel reveals the pre-existent Son who shared the glowing majesty of the Father and laid aside his radiance, not his deity, to become a man — a huge step downward. He is the star stitched into the night.

The glorious Son became a man — a common stone buried in dust, but not only so, He became a humble servant to men — the most modest, unassuming, courteous man among us — a star smothered by the ashes from industrial smoke stacks; a candle hidden under a jar; a diamond cloaked by a glove (John 17:5; Philippians 2:6ff).

The glorious gospel reveals the hidden, royal glory of Christ disclosed while He was on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1). It displays the brilliance and radiance of the ascended Christ in his official capacity as sovereign Lord with a golden crown forged from the stars; like a

phoenix rising from ashes; like a mirror polished to perfection (Revelations 1:12ff).

Moreover, when believers receive eternal life (John 3:16), they are given the glory of God to shine in their hearts to change and beautify the inner man — a melody breaking through the cacophony of gongs and clangs (2 Corinthians 4:6; John. 17:22; Revelation 22:16). One day believer's bodies will be changed and made like His glorious body when the Morning Star rises at the end of history (1 Corinthians. 6:20; 15:51; 1 John 3:2, 3).

For these reasons it is called a "glorious gospel!" — starlight breaking through the dark clouds of human arrogance.

4. THE EUANGELION OF THE GRACE OF GOD

Acts 20:24



◆ I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

The title “gospel of grace” describes **the character of the gospel**. It is the gospel of mercy and undeserved kindness. While it is good to respond correctly to mercy, the benefits of grace are not grounded on man’s performance but upon the character of God.

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Two aged saints were sitting in a rest home when a gentleman wandered by and asked them to describe salvation. One replied, “Something for nothing.” “Yes,” replied the other, “but it is even better than that. **It is everything for nothing.**”

Salvation is a gift of God

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

“**grace**” is compared to a gift. In Greek, the term is a noun, dative, *feminine* singular, and it is in the emphatic position of the sentence. One’s personal salvation is owed to the unearned, undeserved grace of God.

Grace is **not** referring to God's work in our hearts as the Catholics suppose, but to the work of God outside of us at Calvary; that is, the cross, not the heart, is the locus of salvation. Grace includes God giving His Son to be our Savior and the faith necessary to trust Him. God's

election as well as all spiritual blessing are included in this gift (Ephesians 1:3-5, 10-11; 2:1-3).

"**saved**" is a perfect, passive, participle, nominative, *masculine*, 2nd person plural participle.

The "perfect" tense informs us that salvation began at one's conversion and continues as saving power in present time. The "passive" informs us that salvation is something received; not something accomplished by men. "Saved" refers to the blessings of salvation: election, forgiveness, justification, regeneration, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life.

Note the triple replication of the positive term "blessing" in chapter one verse three – the means of declaring the importance of a matter.

"**faith**" (*pistis*) is a neuter *femine* referring to where one looks for salvation and the response God requires of those that hear the gospel. Faith is a gift of God along with all the blessings of justification and regeneration. The faith that God requires for salvation is not a merit or an action of men that deserves praise; it is declared a gift from Him.

Faith does not look inside self for reasons why God should love them, but at Calvary for hope; not at one's good deeds, but at the goodness of Christ; not at one's own accomplishments, but at the accomplishment of Christ on behalf of believing men. He is the Serpent lifted up in the wilderness to which men must look for healing (John 3:14).

The contrast in this passage is between faith and man's works; **not** faith and grace. Faith is the fruit of grace, not the root of salvation.

Further Observations on Ephesians 2:9-9

"**that**" (*touto*) is an adjective, nominative, *neuter*, singular referring not just to grace or faith but to the whole process of salvation; that is, grace and faith are golden kernels on the stock of salvation.

"it" is not in the text but is added to clarify the sense of the translation.

"**gift**" (doron) is a nominative, *neuter*, singular; that is the "gift" (neuter) is not "grace" (feminine) or "faith" (feminine) but **part of the whole package** of salvation; that is, the "gift" includes grace and faith as essentials necessary to be saved. All that is involved in salvation can be found substantively in Christ via the cross; that is, salvation is the main benefit of redemption whereas grace and faith are attractive pedals on the flower of salvation.

"**not of works**" — works is a genitive neuter referring to "our good works"; that is, we are not saved by the good that we do, the choices we make, or the being the best we can be, but by the love of God in giving to us grace and faith to believe in Christ.

Contrast the gospel with the Mormon religion which teaches "you must do your part;" that "you are saved by grace after you've done all you can do."

"According to Mormon doctrine, people *must do their part to achieve salvation*, but they are also saved by the grace of God. Mormons believe that people are saved by grace *after they have done all they can do*" (Google).

Thus, the emphasis in Mormonism is **not** upon "faith" in "Christ" and what He accomplished at the cross for us, but upon making sure you "do your part." It is a performance based, works-grounded religion.

To understand grace we must understand the doctrine of depravity.

Man's depravity makes grace necessary. Man is not merely wounded by sin, he is grey-dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1-4). Like a man heading toward a waterfall in a canoe without a paddle, the sinner lacks faith necessary to secure his own salvation. Consequently, God's grace provides the faith necessary to believe and be saved — rescued from the penalty of sin.

Sin is like dandruff, we all have it. Like a leopard that can't change his spots, the sinner can't change his nature. God calls us sheep who have

gone astray. And, like sheep with parasites, we must all be dipped and cleansed. Cleansing comes by the blood of Christ; and by the washing of the water by the Word. Moreover, God chooses which sheep are plunged in order to be delivered from parasites.

Man cannot save himself, nor can his salvation be bought or earned. Man cannot be redeemed with silver and gold. The price of redemption is blood. Blood is the currency of the spirit world, and our Lord graciously paid the price so we could be delivered from the penalty of sin (1 Peter 1:18-19).

The gospel is not about what we need to do for God, but about what God has done for us through Christ.

God sent His Son to pay for our sin. Because He died as our substitute we can be cleansed and forgiven; clothed and vested with the fine linen of righteousness. This salvation is a gift of grace to believing men – a treasure chest of Divine blessing with its capital in the kingdom of God – true riches not counted in coins but in spiritual blessings: love, acceptance, justification, forgiveness, regeneration, eternal life, reconciliation, and the gift of the Spirit.

An Illustration of Grace

In Exodus 20:24, right after the LORD gave the Ten Commandments, He described the altar on which Israel was to offer sacrifices to Him. The altar could **not** be made from cut stones, **nor** could it have steps ascending up to it lest God see man's nakedness. The steps act like a mirror not only revealing a man's flaws but his embarrassing secrets. Shame is the shadow cast when purity meets defilement.

The lesson is clear! The sinner is dressed in rags of unrighteousness. Flawed man and his frail efforts to approach God on his own merits are **not** acceptable on God's altar. Man must be clothed in the white robes of righteousness to be approved by Him – and those vestments are a gift of God. By grace, He has done it all that is necessary to clothe us with the

garments of salvation by offering Christ as our sacrificial Lamb on Calvary's altar — a salvation that comes with robes of light sparkling with sunbeams from the dawn's proud appearance over the horizon.

Matthew 22:12-13 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Harry Ironside was once asked how he could know the truth with so many religions on earth. He responded that there were only two religions: **Do** and **Done**. Which one do you follow?

5. THE EUANGELION OF YOUR SALVATION

Ephesians 1:13



◆ **And you were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.**

The title “gospel of your salvation” speaks of **the effects of the gospel upon individual believes**. This gospel saves souls from condemnation and judgment. It redeems, justifies, and reconciles men to God.

The word “salvation” is used 164 times in the Bible. The first time the word “salvation” is used is in Genesis 49:18 which awkwardly appears in Jacob’s prophecy regarding his sons. In giving his farewell speech, Jacob blesses his sons. When Jacob comes to Dan, he predicts Dan’s victory over his enemies through craft rather than sheer might. In comparing Dan to the cunning of a deadly serpent it appears his mind travels back to the original temptation. As Jacob considers the promise of God to crush the snake by the coming Seed, He blurts out, “I have waited for thy **salvation, O LORD**” – a statement which functions as a confession of faith that he, along with all the Patriarchs, wait for the salvation of the Lord to usher in Paradise Restored.

The last time the word “salvation” is mentioned in the Old Testament is in Zechariah 9:9 where the prophet predicts the coming of the anointed King riding humbly into Jerusalem on the back of an ass.

The first time the word salvation is used is in Zechariah’s prophecy about God raising up a “horn of salvation” in the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:79).

When Joseph and Mary brought baby Jesus to be circumcised, Simeon blurted out, “My eyes have seen Thy Salvation” (Luke 2:30); that is, that salvation is a person — the Lord Jesus Christ — “He shall save His people

from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). In Peter's sermon in Jerusalem, the apostle declared that salvation was attached to Christ and that salvation could be found in no other (Acts 4:12).

Salvation is the spiritual rescue and liberation of a person's soul from sin, judgment, and spiritual death. It is an eschatological gift that leads to eternal life and union with the Creator by His grace and the exercise of God-given faith (Romans 5:1ff).

Paul saw salvation as a man being rescued from darkness and being transferred into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13). The Book of Romans is a legal explanation of the gospel which has the power of salvation (1:16). Peter applied it the salvation of individual souls (1 Peter 1:9); that is, there is a day of salvation (Luke 19:9) for those who heed the call.

The gospel also addresses *the response* required. It is the gospel of your salvation. No man is born a Christian. Even though a person may be taught about Christ as a child, there is a point in time when the man must personally receive Christ as his Lord and Savior. Conversion is **not** a process . . . a series of actions . . . growth toward being a better person or a gradual slide into Heaven. It involves a violent, radical decision to depart from sin and to embrace the Savior (Matthew 11:12)

Like birth, there is a day of salvation (John 3:3).

Prayer does not convert a soul. Faith in Christ saves the man (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Salvation happens when one hears the facts of the gospel and believes the message (Romans 10:17).

It is not something one has to earn (Titus 3:5) or an organization one has to join. It is a gift that is received by faith (Acts 20:21) — an inalienable gift that will not be taken away (Romans 11:29). When one places his faith in (en) into (eis) or (epi) upon Christ, he receives forgiveness of sins. His

debt is discharged because of his faith in the doing and dying of Christ. This is good news (Acts 13:38).

Spurgeon use to say, “Never put a question mark where God has put a period.” Have we come to a place in our life where we have placed our faith in Christ, and accepted His work on our behalf?

This is personal possession of the gospel – the key in the pocket that leads to salvation.

6. THE EUANGELION OF PEACE

Ephesians 6:15

P ◆ Stand . . . with you feet shod. . . with the gospel of peace.

Peace is a *fruit of the gospel*. One receives peace with God at the cross: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; that is, when one repents of his sin and believes in the Savior, he has “peace with God” (Romans 5:1)

“has” in Romans 5:1 is a present tense verb in the mood of reality meaning that one can have peace with God now due to his faith in the accomplishments of Christ on his behalf.

Double peace (“Shalom, shalom”) — is offered to those who trust God for salvation (Isaiah 26:3).

Faith in the doing and dying of Christ justifies the man; that is, clothes him in garments of righteousness acceptable to His Majesty.

To appreciate peace one must understand the war.

When Henry Thoreau, the naturalist, was near death, a friend asked him, “Henry, have you made peace with God?” His arrogant reply was, “I didn’t know that we had ever quarreled.”

Man’s war with the Creator is just as profound as the CIA’s war with the Colombian drug bosses.

Mankind is at war with God, His law, and His ways. Isaiah described this conflict as sheep going astray, “each going his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). Frank Sinatra’s song, “I Did It My Way” expresses man’s hostilities against the Creator.

Other religions teach that man is good . . . but in need of being better. Religion, therefore, is the means of improvement.

The gospel does not improve the man to make him acceptable; he is accepted by faith in Christ (justified) and then improved (regenerated).

Christianity teaches that man is “fallen;” that “none seek after God;” that none are good in His sight; that man is a slave to sin, and depraved putting his own sensual desires before the law of the LORD-God. Man is lost and like sheep needs to be found, rescued, and saved (Luke 15).

There is peace available in the gospel. But it has to be on God’s terms, not man’s terms. God’s judgment on sin at Calvary makes it possible for Him to extend to men a treaty of peace, but each man, an enemy, must embrace the Son . . . must accept the offer . . . and when he does, he gains peace with God (Psalm 2:12; Romans 5:1).

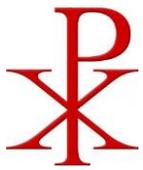
Don Richardson brought to life a vivid illustration of this in his book *Peace Child*. Peace could only be attained between warring Sawi Tribes if the head of the tribe would give his son to the enemy to raise. When the son was given, the opposition tribe knew the chief meant business. Each tribe member was required to touch the child. This was their way of confirming a commitment to a *covenant of peace*. If you want peace with God, you must touch the Son by faith (Matthew 11:28, 29; John 6:53).

There is, however, a difference between “peace with God,” and possessing the “peace of God.” The first is a fact resting on the finished work of Christ; the second is experienced by faith in the fact. Justification results in peace with God; sanctification rest on appropriating the peace of God. Resting in the fact one has peace with God and experiencing the peace of God is the key to victory over Satan and the key to holiness.

Peace in the orchestra is the key to a beautiful symphony — a golden composition conducted by faith (Romans 16:20; 2 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrew 13:20)

7. MY EUANGELION

Romans 2:16



◆ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Did you notice the phrase, "my gospel"? The term refers to one's *personal ownership of the gospel*.

It is not until *God's gospel* becomes *my gospel* that the world will know of the Savior. Not only must we take possession of the gospel for our own salvation, we must embrace it as our life message for the salvation of the world. We guard it as stewards as well as dispense it as its ministers.

Paul termed it "my gospel;" that is, the gospel was infused into the lifeblood of Paul as a personal trust; it fueled the fire of Paul's soul so he he could be God's light in the dark Roman world of the first-century.

His message was not about his personal experiences, but about the accomplishment of Christ on Calvary.

His message was not about how to keep the law in order to a better human being, but how to be saved from the penalty of breaking God's law.

Moreover, his message was not about how to improve the Roman government, but how the risen Christ can save men.

He did not preach religion, but the Lord Jesus Christ and His accomplishment for men at Calvary.

His gospel was about another king, King Jesus – a word that turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6-7).

Paul's sermons – what were they?

Paul, greater than his sermons, lives forever, in full form, feature and stature, with his molding hand on the Church. His preaching is but a voice. The voice in silence dies, the text is forgotten, the sermon fades from memory; the preacher lives (EM Bounds).

Back in the old days of small business, the word “sons” was stenciled on storefronts: “Fleming & Sons;” “Johnson & Sons;” “Blackwell & Sons.” When sons entered their father’s business and assumed responsibility, they shared the title.

Can you say with the apostle Paul that you are “God’s fellow worker” (2 Corinthians 6:1)? Do you have the sense you are in business with Christ? Paul did!

In his book, *Angola Beloved*, T. Earnest Wilson tells of a Chilonda Elder who as a young convert tried for months to tell the elders the gospel story every evening at the camp fire. But night after night the tribal leaders rebuffed him. One night the opportunity came, and he told this story.

There was a drought in the land and all the animals came together to discuss where they could find water. The turtle came forward and said he knew, but the lion cuffed the turtle with his paw and said that he knew a place from which he used to drink as a cub. They all followed the lion, but when they arrived there was no water. But the turtle stepped forward again and said, “I know where there is water.” This time, the elephant rebuked him, and they all followed the elephant to his ancient water hole. But when they arrived it was a cracked dry riverbed. One after another, from the monkey to the rabbit, they all had their turn to try and lead the animals to water. Lastly, the turtle stepped forward and said, “I know where there is water.” Very thirsty, they followed the turtle. He led them to a rock and nearby was an artesian spring.

Sanji ended his illustration with the obvious application: “We have been following you elders for a long time among

the dark paths of witchcraft and fear and death and we are thirsty still, but I know where there is living water!”

Sanji told them the gospel story.

The gospel of Christ is living water. Will you drink deeply from the well of the gospel? It is the water of life that can save your soul. Believe the gospel. However, it is not until His gospel is your gospel that you can sing the songs of the kingdom for others to enjoy.

Every song is a road to the heart. If others travel that road, where will they end up?

Source: Stockton, *Five Pillars of the Gospel*

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