

THE GOSPEL – HOW TO SHARE IT WITH SINNERS AND BE A SOUL-WINNER FOR CHRIST

Scriptures teach that it is incumbent upon every Christian in the professing Church to share the Gospel with sinners and be a soul-winner for Christ (CP Isa 52:7-8 with Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lu 24:44-49; Ac 1:6-8; 10:42-43; Ro 10:13-17; 1Cor 9:16; 2Cor 5:18-19). We will examine those Scriptures in more detail shortly, but first it needs to be established from Scripture exactly what the Gospel is, and what it is not. We will deal with what it is not first. It is not that sinners will burn in Hell – Jesus did not come into the world to condemn it, but that through Him the world might be saved (CP Jn 3:17; Ro 5:18-20). The Gospel is not that one must keep the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments underpinned the Old Covenant which was fulfilled in Christ and completely abolished (CP Mt 5:17-18; Ro 10:4; He 7:18-28; 9:14-15). Furthermore only nine of the Ten Commandments have been integrated into the New Covenant; the fourth Commandment to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, only applied to the Jews. It commemorates their deliverance by God from captivity in Egypt (CP De 5:12-15). The Gospel also is not so-called “Lifestyle Evangelism”, which advocates that sinners can be won to Christ by letting them observe the exemplary lifestyle of Christians. No one lived a more exemplary lifestyle than Jesus, yet nobody got saved as a result. They got saved because Jesus confronted them with the Gospel (CP Mk 1:14-15), and it is the same throughout Scripture (CP Col 1:1-7). Finally, neither is the Gospel centred on baptismal regeneration as some also teach (CP 1Pe 3:18-21).

(See also author’s comments on Mt 5:17-19, Ro 6:3-5, 10:4, 1Cor 1:14-17, Eph 2:15-16, He 7:18-19, 9:14, 9:15, and 1Pe 3:20-21 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his studies *Water Baptism* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith, Romans 6 – A Study on God’s Empowering of Believers through Jesus Christ to Overcome Sin; The Sabbath and the New Testament Church**, and *The Old Covenant – Fulfilled in Christ and Completely Abolished* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**).

Now let us establish from Scripture exactly what the Gospel is. The word *Gospel*, from the Greek word **Euangelion**, means *Good News* (CP Isa 52:7; Ro 10:15). The message of the Gospel that Christians are to share with sinners is the Good News that God has provided salvation – everlasting life – for whoever believes in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (CP Jn 3:16; Ro 1:16). Jn 3:16 is doubtless the best known verse in the Bible. Here Jesus clearly and simply states the Gospel he wants Christians to share with sinners. It summarises what Jesus had been teaching Nicodemus up to that point concerning how salvation is received (CP Jn 3:1-15). The Gospel Jesus wants Christians to share with sinners is the Gospel of salvation – a Gospel of love, and mercy, and grace (CP Eph 2:1-9, 13). The extent of God’s love for the human race is shown by the fact that while they were yet His enemies, God gave His only begotten Son up to die for their sins, that they might be made the righteousness of God in Christ (CP Isa 53:1-12; Ro 1:16-17; 5:1-21; 2Cor 5:17-21; Ga 3:13; Eph 1:4-7; Php 2:8; Col 1:22-23; 1Pe 1:18-21, 23-25).

Those Scriptures all teach essentially the same thing: Jesus, who knew no sin, in His sacrificial death was made the Sin-bearer for all mankind, that those who accept Him as their Saviour might be made the righteousness of God in Him. God’s righteousness in Christ is defined as the gracious gift of God to man whereby all who receive Christ as Saviour are brought into a right relationship with God. This righteousness is unattainable by any merit of man’s own, or on any other condition than that of faith in Jesus as their Saviour (CP Jn 1:12; Ro 3:24-26; 4:4-8; 1Cor 1:30-31; Ga 3:26; Eph 2:8-9; He 9:14; 1Pe 2:18-23; 1Jn 4:9-10). *Propitiation* in Ro 3:25 and 1Jn 4:10 means that Jesus took on Himself the punishment for mankind’s sins and satisfied God’s righteous judgement against sin. The supreme expression of God’s love for the Human Race is the death of Christ on their behalf. Salvation results from the fact that their sins are paid for and God’s justice has been satisfied by Christ’s death on the Cross.

It was only the sacrificial death of Christ and the shedding of His blood alone as full payment for the sins of all mankind that made it possible for God to justify sinners and vindicate His righteousness (CP Mt 1:21; 26:26-28; Lu 1:68-75; Jn 1:29; Ac 17:30-31; Ro 3:23-25; 5:12-19; Ga 3:22; Tit 3:3-7; He 9:11-15; 1Jn 2:2). By giving His life as a perfect Sacrifice Christ opened up the way for repentant sinners into the very presence of God Himself to receive from the Throne of Grace all of God’s blessings (CP Eph 1:3; He 4:16; 10:19-22; 1Pe 1:3-9). It needs to be noted here that Christ’s sacrificial death was sufficient for the sins of all mankind, but efficient only for those who believe on Him and walk in the way He has prescribed they should walk (CP Mt 11:28-30; Mk 16:15-16; Jn 3:16-18, 36; Jn 7:37-38; Rev 22:17). The word *believeth* in those Scriptures means “chooses to obey”. It does not mean to simply place mere credence upon. *Believeth not* means “chooses not to obey”. Thus we also learn that salvation is a free will choice of the individual.

(See also author’s comments on Mt 1:18-21, 11:28-30, 26:17-19, 26:26-29; Jn 1:12-13, 3:3, 3:5, 3:8, 3:9-12, 3:14-15, 3:36, 7:37-39; Ro 1:16-17, 3:19-23, 3:24-26(A) and (B), 5:1, 5:9-10, 5:12-14, 5:15, 10:14-17; 1Cor 1:26-28, 2:4-5; 2Cor 5:18-19, 5:21(A) and (B); Ga 3:13(A) and (B), 3:29; Eph 1:3-6, 2:5, 2:8-10; Col 1:20; Tit 3:5; He 4:14-16, 9:15, 9:16-17, 10:17-18, 10:19-20, 10:22; 1Pe 1:18-21, 1:23-25, 2:24; 1Jn 1:10, 4:7-21; Rev 22:17 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his studies *What Being Born Again Means* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith, Salvation – A Free will Choice or Predestinated? and Chosen by God? in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)** and *The Doctrine of Grace* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**).**

In Scripture the Gospel is also referred to as *The Gospel of Christ* (CP Mk 1:1; Ro 1:16; 15:19); *The Gospel of God* (CP Ro 1:1; 1Th 2:2, 9); *The Gospel of the Grace of God* (CP Ac 20:24); *The Glorious Gospel* (CP 2Cor 4:4); *The Gospel of Your Salvation* (CP Eph 1:13) and *The Gospel of Peace* (CP Eph 6:15). Now let us go back to the opening Scriptures in

this study and find out to whom exactly God has committed the Gospel He wants shared with sinners (CP Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lu 24:44-49; Ac 1:6-8; 10:42-43; Ro 10:13-17; 1Cor 9:16; 2Cor 5:18-19). As stated at the outset of this study, Scriptures clearly teach that it is incumbent upon every Christian in the professing Church to preach the Gospel and win as many souls to Christ as they possibly can. That is the Christian calling. It is not an option for believers, but a command that has to be obeyed, which both Peter and Paul understood it to be as Ac 10:42, 1Cor 9:16 and 2Cor 5:18 all plainly teach. Yet the majority of Christians today refer to Christ's command to preach the Gospel as "The Great Commission", which is a misnomer, and as such do not see themselves as duty-bound personally to do so. But it has been commanded by Christ and if we love Him as we say, then we will do as He says if we want to ensure our place in His Eternal Kingdom (CP Jn 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:10). See also author's comments on Mt 28:19-20(A) and (B) and Mk 16:15-16 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his studies *The Christian Calling – Winning Souls to Christ* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith**, and *Redeeming the Time – Winning Souls to Christ* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**.

Notwithstanding that the message of the Gospel centres on God's love, and mercy, and grace toward sinners, it must be stressed that salvation must never be represented to sinners as something that requires no commitment on their part because Jesus has done it all for them and all they have to do is merely believe in Him to be saved. That is not what Scriptures teach. Nor does this study either. Every candidate for salvation and every new convert to Christ must be made aware of what Christ expects of them regarding obedience to His word (CP Ps 119:9, 16, 24, 47, 77, 174; Pr 4:4; Mt 7:21-27; Mk 3:31-35; Lu 11:27-28; Ro 2:13; Jas 1:22-25; Rev 1:3). See also author's comments on Mt 7:21; Mk 3:31-35; Ro 2:11-13; 1Cor 10:1-5 and Jas 1:22-25 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his studies *Lordship of Jesus* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith** and *Psalms 119 – A Study on Salvation by the Word of God* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**.

In presenting the Gospel sinners need to be shown that they are not sinners because they sin – they sin because they are sinners. Every human being is born into sin, with the sin nature of Adam (CP Ps 51:5; Isa 53:6; Ro 3:10-12, 22-26; 5:6-12, 15-21). We are all doomed without God's grace and damned without His mercy, and Christians must never be afraid to confront sinners with the Gospel for fear of driving them further away from God. We cannot drive them away any further than they are now. They are already dead in their trespasses and sin and sharing the Good News of the salvation that is theirs in Christ can only improve their situation. The Gospel transforms dead sinners into living Saints (CP Eph 2:1-8, 12-13, 19). Jesus Christ is the sinners' only hope of everlasting life (CP Ro 6:23). This brings us now to what sinners must do to be saved (CP Ac 2:22-41). After Peter preached the Gospel to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost they asked him what they had to do to be saved. Peter's response was that they had to

repent and be baptised. To repent means to change direction; to change one's mind and purpose (CP also Mt 3:1-2; 4:17; 9:13; Mk 1:14-15; 6:12; Lu 13:1-9; Ac 3:13-20; 17:30). Repentance involves a complete turnaround in one's lifestyle (CP Ac 2:37-38). Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son is a perfect picture of a truly repentant sinner (CP Lu 15:11-24). This parable of the Lost Son proclaims the Good News of the Gospel. The father's compassion toward the Prodigal Son in the Parable portrays God's infinite love and forgiveness toward every sinner who repents, and as the father joyfully celebrated the Prodigal Son's return and restored him to his position of sonship in the family, so too God rejoices over every sinner who repents, and restores them to sonship with Him (CP Lu 15:2-10; Jn 1:12).

The second part of Peter's response to the Jews in Ac 2:38, "... and be baptised ... for the remission of sins", refers to water baptism. It means "because your sins have been forgiven". They were forgiven when Christ died sacrificially as the Sin-bearer for all mankind on the Cross at Calvary. It does not mean as we learned earlier, that salvation is dependant upon being baptised. Peter is simply commanding the Jews to be baptised in obedience to Christ's command to the Church (CP Mt 28:19-20). Being baptised is the repentant sinner's first act of obedience to God's Word and it should not be delayed wherever water is available and the new convert is physically capable of being baptised (CP Ac 2:41; 8:26-40). Being baptised is also the sinner's outward expression of their inward commitment – their testimony to the world that they have repented and turned to Christ as their Saviour (see also author's comments on Jn 1:12-13, 3:9, 3:10-14; Lu 15:1-7; Ac 2:37-38; 2:41(A) and (B); Eph 2:5 and 2:8-10 in his book **A Question and answer Study of the New Testament**, and his studies *The Christian Calling – Winning Souls to Christ* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith**, *The Parables of Jesus* (particularly *Lost Sheep*, *Lost Coin*, *Lost Son*), in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**, and *Redeeming the Time – Winning Souls to Christ* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**).

In closing here Christians are reminded that it is of the utmost importance that sinners won to Christ are followed up. They cannot be left to their own devices and expected to grow in Grace (CP Lu 11:24-26). If the Christians who witnessed to them to get them saved in the first place are personally unable to properly disciple them after their conversion to Christ they must arrange a suitable alternative for their future Spiritual wellbeing and nurturing in God's Word in a local Bible-believing Church or home Bible study group or suchlike. The new converts cannot grow in the knowledge of God otherwise ((N.B) While Lu 11:24-26 applies to the state of the Jews after rejecting Jesus Christ as the Messiah of God, it can be legitimately used in this context also to illustrate the point being made here).

The third and last part of Peter's response to the Jews in Ac 2:38 "... and you will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," is a teaching on its own. (Ref author's studies *Baptism in the Spirit* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith**, *Signs and Wonders in God's Redemptive Plan* in his book **Advanced**

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Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1), *The Work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Church* and *The Doctrine of the Trinity* in his book **Advanced**

Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2), and all cross reference scriptures and studies contained therein).