

# What Was Christ's Gospel Message?

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There are many assumptions about the gospel, or good news message, that Jesus Christ taught, but most are incorrect or only partially accurate. In order to properly understand this central message of Christ's ministry, it is essential to know why Christ freely offered himself as a sacrifice to reconcile sinners to their heavenly Father. This decision was made prior to the sin of Adam and Eve, as revealed in the following sequence of scriptures,

And all who dwell on the earth will worship him (Satan; cf. Rev. 13:4), whose names have not been written in **the Book of Life of the Lamb** (symbol of Christ; cf. Jn. 1:29; 1Pet. 1:19) **slain from the foundation** (SGD 2602) **of the world** (Rev. 13:8; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

According to the next scripture, "the foundation of the world" refers to the time following the sin of Adam and Eve because their son, Abel, was the first martyr,

That the blood of all the prophets which was shed from **the foundation of the world** may be required of this generation, <sup>51</sup>**from the blood of Abel** to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple.... (Lk. 11:50-51a; emphasis added).

The Apostle Peter stated that the decision to provide a sinless sacrifice was made before Adam broke God's command, therefore prior to the foundation of the world. Because Almighty God granted all His subjects freedom of choice, He knew that someone at some point would eventually break one of His commands, which would result in the death of that individual (1Jn. 3:4; Eze. 28:15). Therefore, He created a means of reconciling sinful individuals to Himself without comprising His law (Rom. 6:23), In order to do this, a sinless person would forfeit their life instead of the sinner or sinners who should have died, both in a physical as well as an everlasting sense (Eze. 18:4, 20),

**He** (the one who became known as Jesus Christ) **indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest (revealed) in these last times to you (1Pet. 1:20; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Jesus Christ revealed his pre-existence in the spirit realm when he declared the close relationship he had with his heavenly Father before any human being existed,

Father, I (Christ) desire that they also whom You gave me (Jn. 6:44, 65) may be with me where I am (going), that they may behold my glory (Mt. 17:1-5) which You have given me; for **You loved me before the foundation of the world** (Jn. 17:24; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Almighty God's monumental decision, allowing a son that He dearly loved to become a substitute for the death of every sinner, was foreshadowed when Abraham was prepared to offer up his son Isaac. Abraham's act of trust and obedience, as well as

what it foreshadowed, is lost on both Christianity and Judaism, which will be explained later in this study,

And He (God) said, 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you (Gen. 22:2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In this incident, Abraham was a type of Almighty God while Isaac pictured God's son, Jesus Christ, who would be begotten as a human being for the purpose of becoming a sacrifice to atone for, or cover, all the sins that have been committed. As mentioned previously, the decision to reconcile sinners through this sacrifice was made before any sin was committed. The being who decided to give up his position in the spirit realm was also known as Almighty God's "spokesman", the Angel of the Lord (Gen. 22:11-12), and later became known as Jesus Christ,

No one has seen God (Almighty) at any time. The only **born god** (Gr. monogeneses theos; i.e. Jesus Christ) who is in the bosom of the Father, **spoke** (Jn. 1:18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

If the spirit-being that became known as Jesus Christ did not exist prior to his birth as a human being, Almighty God could not have sent him. However, many scriptures attest to the fact that Christ was sent into this world, and therefore he did pre-exist as one of Almighty God's spiritual sons,

For God (Almighty) did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved (Jn. 3:17; Ed. note in parenthesis).

But I (Christ) have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given me to finish – the very works that I do – bear witness of me, that **the Father has sent me** (Jn. 5:36; cf. 5:37; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

For to which of the (other) angels did He (Almighty God) ever say: 'You are My son, today I have begotten you'? And again: 'I (Almighty God) will be to him (Christ) a Father, and he shall be to Me a son' (Heb. 1:5; Ed. notes in parentheses)?

The horrendous act, that Abraham was prevented from carrying out, was fulfilled by Almighty God and Jesus Christ when Christ was born a man. Because sin is such a serious matter, they were both of one mind regarding how it had to be dealt with (Heb. 9:22). If Almighty God and Jesus Christ regarded sin as a trivial matter, they would not have suffered as any parent and their child would in a life and death situation like this,

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends (Jn. 15:13).

It is ridiculous to think, or teach, that Jesus Christ suffered and died so that people could continue to break his Father's law and commandments. Instead, Christ died so that everyone's past sins could be forgiven allowing them to begin living a new life of obedience to every word of God (Mt. 4:4) assisted by the power of God's holy spirit (Ac. 1:8),

What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin that grace** (unmerited forgiveness) **may abound?** <sup>2</sup> **Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin** (symbolically at baptism) **live any longer in it** (Rom. 6:1-2; Ed. notes in parentheses)?

Therefore we were buried with him (Christ) through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also** (who have repented of our sins) **should walk in newness of life** (Rom. 6:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Christ's gospel message announced freedom from the source of much of mankind's sin, with its associated problems. This source is "the god of this present evil age" who keeps his prisoners in darkness and deception, which leads to sin and death (2Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4; Rom. 6:23),

And he (Christ) was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel (good news) to the poor (in spirit; cf. Mt. 5:3). He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives (of Satan's lies and deceptions; cf. Jn. 8:44; Rev. 12:9) and recovery of sight to the blind (spiritually speaking; cf. Mt. 15:14; 23:16-17, 19, 24, 26), **to set at liberty those who are oppressed**, <sup>19</sup> to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' <sup>20</sup> Then he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> And he began to say to them, '**Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing**' (Lk. 4:17-21; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis).

It is no coincidence that Christ made this gospel announcement following his temptation in the wilderness (Lk. 4:1-13). Satan's attempt to deceive Christ, and lead him to sin, failed because Christ overcame the Adversary by correctly applying the word of God (Heb. 4:12). As a result, Satan was judged and found guilty of lawlessness (1Jn. 3:4). Had Christ submitted to any of Satan's temptations, he would have sinned and could not have offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29). If this scenario occurred, every sinner would remain in their sins with no hope of everlasting life (1Cor. 15:17). Thankfully, Christ did not sin and this is why he proclaimed the good news that it is just a matter of time before mankind's main oppressor is removed. The removal of Satan will occur at Christ's return,

Of judgment, because **the ruler of this world** (Satan; cf. 2Cor. 4:4) **is judged** (Jn. 16:11; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

I (Christ) will deliver you (Paul) from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you. <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes in order **to turn them from darkness** (symbol of Satan's deceptions) to light (symbol of God's law; cf. Prov. 6:23), **and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins** and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith (trust) in me (Ac. 26:17-18; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Then I (John) saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> **He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;** <sup>3</sup> and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while (Rev. 20:1-3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Satan's deceptions, that have led mankind to sin, are the primary reason for the woes that have plagued mankind since Adam's rebellion. Christ's victory over the Adversary made it possible for Satan's veil of deception to be removed progressively as Almighty God calls individuals to repentance (Jn. 6:44, 65). Isaiah prophesied about this,

And He (God) will destroy on this mountain (symbol of government) the surface of the covering cast over all people, and **the veil that is spread over all nations...** (Isa. 25:7a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So Christ's gospel, or good news, is that Satan has been defeated because Christ overcame him by the word of God. Now Satan, who is the god of this present evil age (2Cor. 4:4), will be replaced by the King of kings, and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ (Rev. 17:14; 19:16). When this occurs, mankind will begin receiving the benefits associated with following God's law and commandments (Isa. 2:1-3), and there will be one world religion with all nations being grafted, spiritually speaking, into the house of Israel (Rom. 11:17, 19, 24). When this occurs, rebellion against God's way of living will become a thing of the past,

But this is the covenant that I (God) will make with the house of Israel after those days (after Christ's return), says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts (inward attitude); and I will be their God (as opposed to Satan; Jn. 8:44), and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup>No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jer. 31:33-34; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Christ's gospel message is mentioned, in a summary form, in the following section of scripture,

And he (Christ) was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts (symbolic language referring to the fallen host); and the angels ministered to him. <sup>14</sup>Now after John was put in prison, **Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel** <sup>15</sup>and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God is at hand** (has drawn near). **Repent** (of sin; 1Jn. 3:4), and believe in the gospel (good news)' (Lk. 1:13-15; emphasis added).

It is important to note that Christ connected the gospel message to the kingdom of God coming to this earth (Mt. 6:10). Christ also mentioned in a number of scriptures that Satan has his kingdom and method of governing, which is contrary to that of Almighty God's. Consequently, the kingdom of Satan will soon be replaced by the kingdom of God.

And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. **How then will his kingdom stand?** (Mt. 12:26; emphasis added).

Any kingdom has subjects, territory, and rules of conduct. It is no different in Satan's kingdom. Satan's subjects are referred to as demons, or sons of his kingdom. Christ pointed out that these sons of Satan's kingdom will be cast out upon Christ's return. This figurative language means that Satan and his "sons" will no longer be able to influence mankind to disobey the word of God,

But **the sons of the kingdom** (of Satan) **will be cast out into outer darkness**. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 8:12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

It is interesting to note that Satan offered rulership of his kingdom to Christ, providing Christ bow down and recognize Satan's authority,

And he (Satan) said to him (Christ), 'All these things (governments of this present world system; cf. Mt. 4:8) I (Satan) will give you if you (Christ) will fall down and worship me (Mt. 4:9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

If Satan did not have the authority to make this offer, Christ would have said so. Instead, Christ pointed out that Satan has been granted limited authority which will be removed soon (Jn. 16:11). As Almighty God views time, Christ's death and resurrection occurred about two days ago, and Satan can be removed at any moment,

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that **with the Lord one day is as a thousand years** (as human beings view time), and a thousand years as one day (2Pet. 3:8; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The removal of Satan, and his method of governing, is tied to Christ fulfilling the commission he was given. Because Christ overcame the Adversary, the gospel, or good news, of the kingdom of God could be announced. It is a message of hope describing a major change in the way this earth has been ruled since the time of Adam's rebellion. In reality, it is a tale of two kingdoms. This earth has experienced heartache for thousands of years living under the values of Satan's kingdom, which will soon come to an end. When it does, mankind will enjoy the many benefits of living under God's kingdom. This major change in governing the earth is described in numerous prophecies, and Christ admonished those who have this understanding to pray that God's kingdom come soon,

Your (Almighty God's) kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The Apostle Paul described the establishment of God's kingdom on earth as a "rest." By this he meant a rest from the toil and pain associated with living under the kingdom of Satan,

For if Joshua (Gr. Jesus, same as Heb. Joshua) had given them (ancient Israelites) rest, then He (God) would not afterward have spoken of another day (ref. future rule of Jesus Christ).<sup>9</sup> There remains therefore a rest (Gr. Sabbatismos; i.e. Sabbath rest) for the people of God (Heb. 4:8-9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Paul went on to explain that entering this "rest" in the kingdom of God would be based on the same conditions that were given to ancient Israel; namely obedience to God,

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall (short) **after the same example of disobedience** (Heb. 4:11; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

When Jesus Christ returns to rule the earth, he will restore the law and commandments of his heavenly Father. This truth is central to the gospel message that Christ brought

and because Christianity today believes they no longer have to live by every word of God, they have embraced a different gospel. This different gospel was already starting to infiltrate the early church and Paul was very concerned about it,

I (Paul) **marvel that you** (the early church) **are turning away so soon from Him** (Almighty God) who called you (cf. Jn. 6:44, 65) in the grace of Christ, **to a different gospel** (Gal. 1:6; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

But I (Paul) fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. <sup>4</sup>For **if he who comes preaches another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, **or a different gospel** which you have not (previously) accepted, you may well put up with it (2Cor. 11:3-4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Much of Christianity today preaches about a different Jesus. Their Jesus came to do away with his Father's law and commandments. Their gospel message is limited to just believing that Christ came and died for them. By accepting this narrow view of Christ's gospel message, adherents believe they are entitled to go to heaven when they die. As Paul pointed out, the serpent has deceived them (Gen. 3:4).

As far as another major religion is concerned the prophetic message, associated with Abraham's obedience to God's command regarding the sacrifice of his only son Isaac, is lost on the majority of those who practice Judaism. Abraham had faith in the future sacrifice of a lamb that Almighty God would provide, and that lamb was Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:29). In Judaism, Christ may be recognized as a prophet but not as a sacrifice from Almighty God to cover their sins,

And Abraham said, 'My son, **God will provide for Himself the lamb** for a burnt offering... (Gen. 22:8a; cf. Jn. 1:29; emphasis added).

A second witness, for those of Judaism, was the entire animal sacrificial system which pointed to the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is no coincidence that forty years after Christ's death and resurrection this system of animal sacrifice ended. Christ stated that part of his commission was to fulfill what the animal sacrifices could not,

Do not think that I (Christ) came to destroy the Law (inclusive of animal sacrifices) or the Prophets. **I did not come to destroy but to fulfill** (Mt. 5:17; Ed. note in parentheses; emphasis added).

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. <sup>12</sup> Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood he entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (for sinners). <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit (of Almighty God) offered himself without spot (blemish; i.e. sin), purge (cleanse) your conscience from dead works (i.e. sins) to serve the living God (Heb. 9:11-14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So Christ's gospel message offered the hope of a new way of living in accordance with his Father's commands. This new way will become a reality because Christ overcame the

ruler of this present evil age and then offered himself up as a sinless sacrifice to atone for, or cover, all the sins that have been committed, providing sinners willingly repent and begin living this new way of life. When Jesus Christ begins administering his Father's law and commandments, the earth and its inhabitants will experience happiness rather than heartache,

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain (symbol of God's kingdom), for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9; Ed. note in parenthesis).

This is the same gospel message that God's patriarchs and prophets preached during the entire period of the Old Testament. The early church continued teaching this message and the following scripture explains this continuity,

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>**having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-20; emphasis added).

Any religious organization or individual that is not teaching the truth, about Christ's gospel message, is compared to an evil servant,

**Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master** (i.e. Christ) **made ruler over his household, to give them food at the right time?** <sup>46</sup>Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing (Mt. 24:45-46; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

But **if that evil servant** says in his heart, 'my master is delaying his coming,' (i.e. Christ's return) <sup>49</sup>and **begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards** ( i.e. involved with practices contrary to God's word; cf. Rev. 17:2, 6; 18:3) ), <sup>50</sup>the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, <sup>51</sup>and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites... (Mt. 24:48-51a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The gospel message that the prophets, the apostles, and Jesus Christ taught will continue after Christ's return,

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life (that Adam forfeited through his disobedience; cf. Gen. 2:17), and may enter through the gates into the city (New Jerusalem). <sup>15</sup>But outside are dogs (symbol of those who are spiritually unclean through disobedience to God) and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie (cf. Jn. 8:44) (Rev. 22:14-15; Ed. notes in parentheses).

To summarize so far, Christ's gospel message was the same as that of the prophets and apostles. It was the good news that a sinless human being would come and offer himself, out of love for his fellowman, so that every sinner could be forgiven and begin living a new life of trust and obedience toward Almighty God. Ancient Israel heard this same gospel but they rejected it because they were not willing to trust and obey God's word. Instead, they wanted to do what they felt was right in their own opinion and it resulted in their death. It is the same today because choosing the values of Satan's kingdom still trumps recognizing the authority of the kingdom of God,

There is a way (of living; cf. Gen. 3:6) that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (Rom. 3:23) (Prov. 14:12; cf. 16:25; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because the carnal mind (i.e. human nature) is enmity (hostile) against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be (Rom. 8:7; cf. Isa. 30:9; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Every time someone chooses to disobey God's word, whether it is done in ignorance or on purpose, that person has submitted to the kingdom of Satan. Because the majority of mankind has chosen to follow Satan's rebellious reasoning since the time of Adam, his kingdom can claim legitimacy (Rev. 12:9). Those who correctly understand Christ's gospel message will reject Satan's kingdom,

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world (influenced by Satan; cf. Gal. 1:4) is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (Jas. 4:4; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (Jas. 4:7).

The good news, or gospel message, is that Christ's sacrifice made it possible for sinners to repent, be forgiven, and then resist the devil as they begin to live a new life in accordance with God's word. This is not a popular message in either Christianity or Judaism. Nonetheless, God's kingdom will come and everyone will eventually come to appreciate that God's love for mankind has always been expressed in His law and commandments, which were created for everyone's benefit.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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