

What is the gospel?

For many, the gospel is seen as a blend of restored truths and divine commandments, conveyed through prophets (past and present) and centered on a plan for eternal progression. This view encompasses a journey towards becoming more like Heavenly Father, emphasizing personal transformation and purpose achieved through faith, repentance, baptism, and adherence to church teachings.

However, the biblical gospel reveals a markedly different focus. Echoing values of love, transformation, and hope, it shifts from human efforts to the divine action in Jesus Christ. The biblical narrative is not about what we must do but what God has done through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

This article explores the gospel as the transformative power of God's grace—his unconditional love—rather than a mere doctrine or moral guideline. We aim to understand it as God's profound gift of love and redemption, offering forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life independent of our deeds. As we delve into this message, we find that the gospel transcends a narrative; instead, it is an invitation to a life-changing relationship with God, anchored in the truth of his word.

What does the narrative of the Bible show us about the gospel?



In the ancient Greek world, the term “gospel” (from the Greek word “euangelion”) was often used for significant announcements, such as the birth of a new king, military victories, or the ascension of a ruler to the throne. In this context, the gospel carried a sense of joy and celebration as it conveyed glad tidings— “good news” that held the promise of positive change or prosperity. This proclamation wasn’t a casual piece of information; instead, it was the heralding of a transformative event that had the potential to shape the destiny of a kingdom.

The significance of the term “gospel” in the early Greek world underscores its potency as a vehicle for communicating transformative, entire, life-changing good news. When we apply this understanding to the biblical concept of the gospel, we see a parallel that deepens our appreciation for its message.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the ultimate “good news,” heralding the birth of a king beyond earthly kingdoms, the proclamation of a Savior who brings about an eternal change in the spiritual order of humanity. In both contexts, whether in the early Greek world or the biblical narrative, the gospel is more than just information—it’s an announcement of transformation.

The roots of the biblical gospel stretch back to humanity’s very origins. In the Garden of Eden, the tragic fall of Adam and Eve cast a shadow of sin and separation from God. Yet, in this darkness, God’s first gospel promise shines—a glimmer of hope that the offspring of Eve would one day crush the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15). God didn’t give them a plan to perform, but the promise of redemption, an announcement that transformation was on the horizon.

Centuries later, a choir of Christmas angels delivered another divine announcement—declaring the birth of the one promised to Eve, who would bring about this transformative change. “I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). The “good news” was not just tidings of joy but a proclamation of divine deliverance, a response to humanity’s desperate need.

The narrative of the gospel continued to unfold with breathtaking beauty. Its crescendo was a hilltop where Jesus cried out, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). This was Jesus’ triumphant declaration that the work was done, that redemption and rescue were achieved.

The cross, stained with blood and love, connected humanity to God. But the gospel doesn’t end there. With the dawn of Easter morning, the stone was rolled away, and Jesus’ tomb stood empty—a jubilant declaration that “He is alive! The resurrection speaks of triumph over sin and death, a victory that echoes throughout eternity.

Yet, the gospel’s narrative doesn’t conclude with a resurrection—it also prophesies a return. Once more, bearing a message of good news, the ascension angels announced, “He will come back again” (Acts 1:11). This cosmic promise heralds the final act of transformation—the culmination of the gospel’s message. The king who was born, died, and rose again will return in glory, finalizing the transformation of all things and ushering in the new heaven and earth era.

Just as the early Greeks heralded significant changes with the term “gospel,” the biblical gospel announces an extreme and life-altering shift in the human narrative.

At its core, the biblical gospel is a triumphant declaration, not a checklist for human action. It echoes through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection—an all-encompassing proclamation that “the work is done” (John 19:30). Jesus’ sinless life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection transform humanity’s standing before God.

Understanding the gospel’s narrative reframes the biblical concept of “obeying the gospel.” It’s not about human effort for eternal life through the keeping of commandments or promises, but embracing grace by solely trusting in Jesus (John 6:29, 1 John 3:23). The gospel assures believers of complete and comprehensive salvation (Romans 1:16), dispelling the myth of human striving for forgiveness and eternal standing.

God’s grace masterpiece, the gospel, extends hope, reconciliation, and joy (Titus 2:11-14).

The gospel is not burdensome; it’s embracing Christ’s finished work and basking in God’s love. It transcends self-improvement found in all religions. The divine proclamation is based on Christ’s work, liberating from judgment (1 Peter 3:18, Romans 5:8) and transforming all creation (Colossians 1:19-20).

Parallels between the Greek and biblical gospels reveal the truth—the gospel is divine transformation, not just a message. It’s not a to-do list but a declaration of Christ’s work, inviting a new life of faith, hope, and joy. That’s good news.

What is a simple definition of the gospel?

The gospel reveals two truths: first, we are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe (Romans 3:23, Isaiah 64:6), yet, at the same time, in Jesus Christ, we find that we are more loved and accepted than we could ever hope (Romans 5:8, John 15:13). This good news is that God has provided a way for us to be reconciled to him through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). By trusting in Jesus and his atoning sacrifice, we receive forgiveness of our sins (Psalm 103:12, Acts 10:43) and the gift of eternal life (John 3:16, Romans 6:23), not through our own merit, but as a gracious gift of God's love (Titus 3:5-7, Romans 3:24).

What is the purpose of the gospel?

The ultimate purpose is the glory of God. His grace is magnified in the gospel, displayed for all to see (Ephesians 1:3-10). The saving purpose is to deliver the comfort and assurance of eternal life with God to all who trust in Jesus. The gospel is not a plan or a checklist to earn happiness, but rather it freely gives justification, redemption, and reconciliation with God (Romans 3:21-24).

What is the power of the gospel?

The gospel alone contains the power to save lost sinners giving them justification, redemption, and eternal life with God. (Romans 1:16-17, 1 Corinthians 1:18). While the law's purpose is to condemn and expose our inadequacy, the gospel freely gives spiritual life, restoration, and the ability to praise God with good works. (Ephesians 2:1-10). The good news of Christ crucified and risen for sinners brings deep assurance, confidence, hope, and freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17).

What am I supposed to do with the gospel?

First, we simply receive the gift of the gospel by faith, trusting and resting in Jesus Christ's finished redemptive work rather than our own merits or efforts (John 3:16-18, Ephesians 2:8-9). Through the gospel, the Holy Spirit grants the justifying faith that clings to Christ alone for forgiveness, eternal life, and full salvation. Then, we follow the great commission and share the gospel with all nations (Matthew 28:19-20).

What is the gospel's continued role in a believer's life?

For Christians, the gospel is not only the power of initial conversion but of ongoing renewal and spiritual life (Romans 1:16-17). The gospel reminder that believers stand righteous in Christ alone through his perfect life and atoning sacrifice motivates and empowers our joyful obedience out of love for God (Galatians 2:20-21). Believers continue living under the gospel every day, never moving beyond it. The gospel remains our comfort, strength, and assurance forever.

What does it mean to obey the gospel?

To obey the gospel means to trust wholeheartedly in the good news of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. This trust, the gift of faith from the Holy Spirit,

involves acknowledging one's sinfulness, turning away from sin toward our Savior, and relying solely on Christ's righteousness for salvation. While good works follow as a fruit of faith, they are not the means to earn God's favor but an expression of gratitude for the grace received. Essentially, obeying the gospel is about receiving in faith what God has graciously done for us in Christ, rather than what we can do for ourselves.

Where does the ability to obey the gospel come from?

The ability to embrace the gospel isn't something we achieve ourselves but a gift God gives us. The Holy Spirit works in our hearts, enabling us to believe and trust in Jesus Christ. This belief holds that our efforts or willpower aren't enough to bring us to faith; instead, God's action in us opens our hearts to his message of grace, forgiveness, and the gift of eternal life.

A Closer Look: Gospel

Before encountering the gospel, Paul, then known as Saul, was a zealous Pharisee who ardently persecuted early Christians, considering them a threat to Judaism. He believed that his strict adherence to the law and his persecution of Christians was a way of serving God. Saul was a man of doing—a man of the law.

However, on the road to Damascus, everything changed for Paul. In a blinding moment, he was struck by a heavenly light, and the voice of Jesus himself asked, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" This divine encounter transformed Paul forever, igniting a deep and pervasive understanding of the gospel.

Through this encounter, Paul understood that he had been persecuting none other than the very Son of God. His relentless pursuit of righteousness through the law now appeared futile. He realized that his justification didn't come from works but from faith in Jesus Christ alone. This awakening plunged Paul into a sea of humility and repentance as he recognized his dire need for God's grace and forgiveness. Having received that grace and forgiveness, Paul spent the rest of his life sharing the gospel's good news on his missionary journeys and in his letters.

Paul's reflection on the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 mirrors his transformation. He passionately spoke of the gospel's essence—the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These components became the bedrock of his faith, forming the basis for his understanding of salvation. Paul came to rejoice that the resurrection was evidence, a paid-in-full receipt, of the restoration and reconciliation between humanity and God through Christ.

In Galatians 1:6-9, Paul's enthusiasm for the gospel shines brightly. He vigorously warns against distorting the true gospel message, revealing his deep concern for its purity. The genuine gospel, the unadulterated good news of Christ's redemptive work, was at the core of his ministry. Any deviation from this message was unacceptable, underscoring the transformative power that the gospel held.

Paul's unashamed stance towards the gospel is evident in Romans 1:16, where he declares it as a divine force that brings complete salvation to believers. This proclamation mirrors Paul's

unwavering conviction that the gospel was not just information but a powerful catalyst for actual spiritual change.

In Philippians 3:4-11, Paul explains how the gospel message granted profound significance to his life, shifting his focus from religious accolades to his identity in Christ. His worth was no longer tied to the world's validation, as he fully embraced the truth that God unconditionally justified and cherished him. Paul once prided himself in his religious achievements but now considers them a loss compared to the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ. Paul now expressed his desire to be found in Christ, to know him intimately, and to share in the power of Christ's resurrection and sufferings.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul captures the freedom he found in the gospel. He relishes liberation from the burden of earning God's favor. This freedom manifested in his identity as a new creation in Christ, not in bondage to past misdeeds.

The gospel radically reshaped Paul's life. He grew from a vehement persecutor of Christians into a fervent apostle and evangelist. His preaching radiated the essence of the gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ—repeatedly asserting that the forgiveness of sins and eternal life was not earned but obtained through faith in Christ's atonement.

What does the gospel mean for you?

Just as the term “gospel” once heralded seismic societal shifts in the Greek world, the biblical gospel reveals the most potent spiritual shift in human history.

Let the gospel resonate in your life. It's not a goal you must achieve but a divine accomplishment already done for you. Much like the apostle Paul, you too can grasp the richness of the gospel and find rest, contentment, and satisfaction in Jesus Christ's all-sufficient grace.

Within the gospel's message lies compelling truths about yourself. You'll realize your flaws and imperfections more deeply than ever before, yet simultaneously, you'll experience love and acceptance through Jesus that surpasses all understanding. His grace envelopes you, and his love fills every corner of your being (1 John 4:9-10).

In the gospel, discover the sufficiency of Jesus. His finished work on the cross is the wellspring of your salvation and fulfillment (John 19:30). No longer seek validation from achievements; in Christ, you're justified and approved (Romans 5:1). Your significance and worth are anchored in being God's beloved child (1 John 3:1). Secure in Christ, you're free from the burden of earning salvation (Galatians 5:1).

The gospel unveils the depths of God's love. Embrace the truth that everything you need is already fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Your deepest longings are met in him alone. He suffices to fill every void (Colossians 2:3). In Jesus, you find righteousness as his sacrifice covers your sins (2 Corinthians 5:21). He is your rescuer, delivering you into eternal life with God (John 3:16).

The gospel invites you to live the abundant life in Christ – a life of freedom, purpose, and limitless love. May the gospel's truth anchor your soul, and may you find rest and fulfillment in Jesus Christ's all-sufficient merit. Jesus is enough for you. That's the heart of the gospel. That's good

news you can receive with immense joy and share with unbridled enthusiasm, just as the Christmas angels and Paul did.

Bible Verses about the Gospel

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-9
- John 19:30
- Romans 1:17
- Romans 1:16

Songs about the Gospel

- **The Gospel Song** by Sovereign Grace Music succinctly summarizes the gospel message, declaring the work of Christ in redeeming sinners.
- **There Is One Gospel** by CityAlight is based on Galatians 1:6-9, where the Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of staying true to the one true gospel and not being led astray by false teachings, affirming the exclusivity and sufficiency of the gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation.