

1 Corinthians 5:7). But the gospel message is also found in the very law of God. Right in the context of the Ten Commandments, in the book of Exodus, is the gospel of God's deliverance from sin through the blood of the Lamb:

"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:1-2).

How did God bring them out of Egyptian bondage?

"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13).

God brought the Israelites out of bondage through the blood of the Lamb. This is the same means by which He brings us out of bondage today.

Consider another question relating to the gospel. Why did God bring them out of bondage? Did God bring them out of Egypt because they were righteous? No, indeed. Just as our salvation from sin-slavery is based on God's mercy and not our righteousness, so it was in the Old Testament. Moses stated the facts of their condition in these words:

"Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you. Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the Lord had said he would destroy you. I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not Thy people and Thine inheritance, which Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness, which Thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand" (Deuteronomy 9:24-26).

Then Isaiah picks up the character of God and His dealing with sinners throughout the Old Testament with this wonderful statement of gospel truth:

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah 63:9).

It is through His love and pity that God has ransomed the world from sin. The blood of the Lamb represents the life of Jesus Christ freely given for the world on Calvary. This is the message of the Old as well as the New Testaments. This is the message Jesus brought to the sinner. It is a message of God's uncondemning love that empowers sinners to be converted, to turn from their lives of sin and follow Jesus.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared to a woman caught in the very act of adultery. "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11, NIV). Before God calls us out of sin, He empowers us to turn from it. Before God points us to His law, He points us to His grace. Before He shows us what He wants for us, He shows us what He has

done for us, in spite of us. The gospel, therefore, becomes the means by which God establishes His Covenant promise to put His laws into our hearts.

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:16-17; see also Jeremiah 31:33-34).

The gospel message is to be taken to every nation, kindred, tongue and people because it embraces all of humanity. Jesus Christ has paid the price for the sins of the entire world.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'" (John 1:29).

The text does not say that Jesus might take away the sin of the world. Neither does it say that Jesus has taken away the sin of Christians. Jesus has taken away the sin of the world! That is the gospel! Will you accept the gift and allow this love to win your heart to Him for all eternity?

Summary

The "wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). We deserve nothing but death. But Jesus took that sentence upon Himself. He died our death. He died in our place, for us, as us, that we might be free from the slavery of sin and its wages of death. It is a full and complete salvation that God has provided. It awaits us as we come into the world. And we do not relieve God of any burden by rejecting it, nor do we add to His labor by accepting it. Actually, the opposite is true: by accepting salvation, we lighten God's burden and by rejecting salvation, we add to His burden. In other words, to give Christ our load of sin and sorrow brings great joy to Him and all of heaven. Christ has already taken to Himself the sin of the world. He has done so in faith, believing that when we see this great love, we will choose to accept it. This is the wonderful news of the everlasting gospel message for the entire world to hear before Christ returns. Don't live another second without personally embracing the gift of Christ's death for your sin. Amen.

STUDY 1 OF 13

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GOD'S LAST MESSAGE TO THE WORLD 1

In Revelation 14 we find a message called the "everlasting gospel." Under this heading a series of announcements, given by three angels, follows: fear God, give glory to Him, the hour of His judgment is come, worship Him, Babylon is fallen, do not worship the beast or receive his mark in the forehead or in the hand (see Revelation 14:7-9). The first angel is pictured as announcing the everlasting gospel, while the second and third angels offer further developments of the first message.

The importance of the message is evident by the fact that it is to be given to every nation, kindred, tongue and people with a "loud" or distinct voice. It is a testing message, bringing every person in the world to a decision concerning the salvation wrought out for them by Jesus Christ. It produces a people who keep God's commandments while they keep the faith of Jesus for salvation. It also brings to a final decision all who would refuse to embrace the gift of salvation.

As the messages of the three angels close, the apostle John sees Jesus returning to harvest the earth. John sees a distinction made between those who have accepted salvation and those who have persistently chosen to reject it (see Revelation 14:14-20). What we are about to consider, therefore, can truly be called, *God's last message to the world.*

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14:6-7).

The Gospel: What is it?

The word *gospel* in the Greek means "good news" or "glad tidings." What is the good news or glad tidings that God wants us to take

The Everlasting Gospel

Revelation 14 Study Guides

The good news or glad tidings, the everlasting gospel, declares to the world that we have a Savior in Jesus Christ.

to every “nation and kindred and tongue and people”? The apostle Paul offers a concise, yet powerful, answer in one of his letters to the church at Corinth:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you. . . . For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins . . . according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1-3).

The gospel is good news which brings to all people a message of hope: “that Christ died for our sins. . . .” This is the first truth of the gospel declared by Paul to the Corinthians. In Revelation 14 this gospel message is to be declared to the world. We must conclude, therefore, that while Paul is speaking to the church in Corinth, he is also declaring a fact that applies to all people. The good news or glad tidings, the everlasting gospel, declares to the world that we have a Savior in Jesus Christ.

Paul declares that this gospel is “according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3). Since there was no New Testament in Paul’s day, his most likely source for this good news is found in Isaiah 53.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

This truth became the central theme of Paul’s writings and teachings and is seen in many of his epistles like the one he wrote to Timothy:

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

This wonderful news was also John’s theme as seen in his earlier letters:

“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2, NKJV).

It is no surprise, then, that we find the everlasting gospel becoming the central theme of the final message to earth just before Jesus returns. The gospel is the message of God’s changeless love for the entire world. Jesus is the Savior of all (see 1 Timothy 4:10). He is your Savior, as well as mine.

“But,” one may say, “I do not believe; I have no faith in Jesus.” That may be so; but He believes in you. He has faith in you.

And yet another will reason, “I want nothing to do with this Jesus.” Nevertheless, His love remains. He wants everything to do with you.

His heart of love can be heard reaching out to the sinner, “You would not come, but I have come to you” (see Genesis 3:8-9). “You would not be gathered to Me, but how can I give you up!” (see Matthew 23:37; Hosea 11:8). He has loved you with an everlasting love, a love that is not based on how you feel or what you think about Him. It is unmerited love. In what sense is it unmerited? In the sense that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,” before we believed, in order

that we might believe (see John 3:16). There are no ifs, no contracts. God did not say, “If you repent and promise to accept, I will give My Son for your sins.” God gave His Son for the sins of the world, period. He knew many would not accept this love; but He poured it out upon us anyway. His foreknowledge of our ingratitude did not destroy His love for humanity.

The Bible describes God’s love for us in various ways:

Matchless love (see Romans 5:6-8).

Boundless love (see Ephesians 3:19).

Infinite love (see Luke 23:34).

Unmerited love (see Luke 15:20).

Everlasting love (see Jeremiah 31:3).

Changeless love (see Malachi 3:6).

We could call this love *The Divine Initiative*—an initiative being “the action of taking the first step or move” (*Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*).

God has taken the first step toward us in giving His Son to die for our sins. Now God asks us to believe the good news of His love and benevolence. He asks us to embrace this gift of freedom, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). He has given Himself. He asks us to give ourselves.

The Emancipation Proclamation

An illustration of this can be seen in the history of slavery in the United States. In 1863 Abraham Lincoln, then President of the United States, signed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing all slaves in those states which were seceding from the Union:

“Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States in the time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States...on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, . . . do ordain and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons” (Abraham Lincoln).

With the signing of this document, the slaves in these states were legally free. No one had any legal right to hold them. They had only to hear the good news and believe it, that is, to take hold of it and act upon it. Then the legal fact of their freedom, which was established by Lincoln’s proclamation, would become their actual experience. Yet without Lincoln’s proclamation, without the legal declaration that first made the slaves free, they had no way of breaking the chains that bound them.

In a similar way, the blood of the Son of God sealed the emancipation of the human race. Through Jesus Christ all of humanity has been legally

set free from sin, its guilt, power and wages. The way has been opened for the message of hope and mercy to be carried to the ends of the earth. Deliverance is ours. We have been set free. We are now called to believe it and act upon it. Christ came “to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (Isaiah 42:7). As Christ began His ministry, He quoted this verse from the book of Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound” (Isaiah 61:1, NKJV). Accordingly, the gospel cries out to the captives, “Liberty!” To those who are bound in sin, it proclaims that the prison doors are “open.” To all the prisoners, the gospel says, “Go forth” (Isaiah 49:9).

The Bible teaches that, through the gospel, mankind has been:

Ransomed (see 1 Timothy 2:6).

Redeemed (see Galatians 3:13).

Bought (see 1 Corinthians 6:20).

Set Free (see John 8:32, 36).

Released (see Isaiah 42:7).

The Everlasting Gospel

You may have noticed that Revelation 14 calls this message the “everlasting gospel.” This means that this good news of God’s unconditional love is not just a New Testament theme. It is also the message of the Old Testament. Christ was set apart to be our Savior from Day One. In the Old Testament we look forward to the cross by interpreting the symbolism of the lamb and the sacrificial service. In the New Testament we look back to the cross by reflecting on Christ’s heavenly ministry of mediation (1 John 1:7, 2:1-2).

This is important because many people today think the Old Testament offers salvation through the law. They say, “In the New Testament we have God’s grace, His unmerited love, and the gospel; but the Old Testament is all about God’s law.” But is this what the Bible teaches?

“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Hebrews 4:2).

“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8).

So where is the gospel in the Old Testament? First of all, it is in the sacrificial system set up for Adam and Eve from the very inception of sin and then given to Israel in the sanctuary service. Every sacrifice pointed to Jesus, the Lamb of God who “taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29;