What is the Gospel?*

Romans 1:14-16 (14) I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.
(15) So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.
(16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God. And the word was made flesh full of grace and truth. Jesus has the words of everlasting life and I believe He is the Son of God, and that I am saved by grace through faith in Him. John had this to say; But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12).
POWER given to them that believe in His name. What will you do with that power? Any belief that does not terminate in personal confidence in Jesus and induce trustful submission to Him and His word, is not faith unfeigned; but is a dead faith that cannot save the soul. Just believe is where the devils abide, and they tremble. Will you, by faith move with fear, plug your life-line into the power given to you and become sons of God? That's where the redeemed are. Both the grace that saves and the truth that maintains life came by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The word reveals there are two types of people on earth, those who by faith obey the gospel and those who do not. Faith cometh by hearing the word of God, and therein is the gospel of Jesus Christ, first one must believe, then by faith repent, confess Christ is the Son of God and be baptized into Him for remission of sins. God's power is unlimited, He could have saved mankind by any method He chose. But having selected this method, and having announced it, man has no choice but to reject it and be lost, or accept it and be saved. Let's turn to;

Matthew 28:18-20 (18) And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
(19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
(20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The grace of God entails baptizing them, that seems foreign in todays religious world, against it's modern doctrine that when one first believes he/she is saved by grace that can never be reversed. When the Apostle says this grace brings salvation unto all, he does not say that all receive the salvation which is brought to them. Nay, the chief rulers that believed, but did not confess Christ failed to receive the grace of God preferring the praise of this world (John 12:42). Seeing the rulers at that time believed, but lacking faith did not receive the grace of God, shall it be any different today? Had the chief rulers had faith, they would have moved with fear and confessed Christ, not caring if they were kicked out of the synagogue, but they loved the praise of this world more than God's. To bad, this world and its flattery, its praise, and its pride will vanish away. Isn't this reason enough to believe and obey the gospel? Isn't this reason enough to have as your banner, obedient faith? To believe is good, but the word "faith" implies an action to that which is heard and believed. Listen, by faith Noah moved with fear, by faith Abraham obeyed.
Turn with me to;

Hebrews 11:7-8 (7) By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved with fear**, **prepared an ark** to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.
(8) By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, **obeyed**; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Isn't it amazing what faith can accomplish, but contrary wise

"just believe" cannot. The devils believe and tremble! And yet in spite of the written word of God, some insist on "faith only", without works as an eternal guide. However, "faith only" without action does not produce results. There is one place in scripture containing the phrase, "faith only." It's found in James 2:24, *it says,* Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. *The truly faithful perceive that faith is the effect of belief. Noah's ark did not appear by conformity to "faith only." " Faith only" without works of Ark construction would have resulted in death. Compare to;*
Colossians 2:12-13 (12) Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him for the dead.
(13) And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him having forgiven you all trespasses;
Much modern teaching would have one believe he/she were saved the moment the gospel was received, but the mere believing the gospel will not save. To stand upon the gospel requires faith that is inherit of obedience to the gospel. The Bible reveals, that upon obedience to God's instructive faith, the saved are then added to the blood purchased Church of Christ. The bible clearly tells us that on the day of Pentecost there were about 3000 obedient souls added to the Church that day alone. None added that were disobedient! Let's turn to;
Acts 2:36-38,41 (36) Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.
(37) Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?
(38) Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

(41) Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

There are two types of people, those who believe and are baptized for remission of sins, and those who are not. My first and utmost concern is that people have opportunity to obey the undiluted pure gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore I have questions about the doctrine, "just believe." If that were the case, then why were the 3000 on the day of Pentecost not saved when they first believed? Why did they say unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, "what must we do?" Why would Peter say "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" had they already been saved? Why is it recorded that baptized believers were added to the blood purchased Church and no others. Paul believed, but why was he advised to go to Damascus and there he would be told what to do? Why was Paul told to be baptized and wash away his sins, had he already been saved when he first believed? Actually when the entire account of Paul's conversion in the Bible is considered, it enhances and justifies the meaning of belief, faith, repentance, confession and baptism. One cannot get around the fact that Paul was told to be baptized and wash away his sins, seeing that is what the undiluted word of God said. Actually what Paul did was to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel is the good news proclaiming that now on earth there can be forgiveness of sin to anyone who is willing to pick up his cross and follow Christ to His death, the gospel tells one what to do and how to accomplish this feat. Turn with me to;

Romans 6:1-10 (1) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

(2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

(3) Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

(4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
(5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
(6) Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
(7) For he that is dead is freed from sin.
(8) Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:
(9) Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.
(10) For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Faith in Christ is the effect of belief*; The things done for us by Christ will truly be to us as though they were not, unless they are believed. Christ said;* he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, Do you have faith that is the effect of belief? Belief is the cause, trust, confidence. Faith in Christ, the effect.*

Repentance is the effect of faith; *Repentance is a sorrow for sins committed, but it is more. It is a resolution to forsake them, but it is more. It is actual ceasing to do evil, and in it's place learning to do well. It is not merely sorrow for what you have done wrong; resolve to do better, try to amend your ways. True repentance is, then, always consummated in actual reformation of life.*

The Christian confession of faith*; We have already discussed the proposition that faith is the effect of belief. The only apostolic and divine confession of faith which God has laid for the Church, and on which Jesus said He would build it, is the sublime and supreme proposition:* That Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. *This confession of faith is construed as the effect of belief in the word of God, turn to;*

Acts 8:29-37 (29) Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.
(30) And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?
(31) And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.
(32) The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:
(33) In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.
(34) And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?
(35) Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.
(36) And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
(37) And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
Baptism is the effect of faith; *it's design and purpose is to introduce the subjects of it into the participation of blessings that are contained within the death and resurrection of Christ; who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. To the believing penitent soul it is the means of receiving a formal, distinct, and specific absolution, or release from guilt. Therefore, it is those who have first believed the testimony of God, by faith repent of their sins, by faith confess Jesus with their mouth, and by faith are baptized into Him for remission of sins that have the full and explicit testimony of God assuring them of pardon. It is hardly necessary here to remark, that as the disciples of Christ are declared to be in a*

pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved state, they are the only persons in such a state. And that all others are in an unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost state. Saved or lost are the only options available. So, when are persons in Christ? This is an honest question that has eternal consequences. To be in Christ, then, is to stand in these afore mentioned relations to God, to believe in and put on Christ by the authority within the ordinance of baptism as ordianed by Christ. To be out of Christ, then, is to be in Adam only. It is called the state of nature, unbaptized, unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, and an alien from the family of God, lost in trespasses and sins. To be in Christ is to be introduced into Him. The scripture style is the most and only religiously accurate. In the scriptures are the words "in Christ" and the words "into Christ," but in no place can the one be substituted for the other. In all places where any person is said to be "in Christ," it refers not to his conversion, regeneration, or putting on Christ, but it refers to a state of rest or privilege following conversion, regeneration, or putting on Christ. The phrase "into Christ" is always connected with conversion, regeneration, immersion or putting on Christ. "Into Christ", then, is deliverance from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son, and submission to His government. The gospel of Christ has a command and it must be obeyed if its desired results are to be obtained. And here I need only to ask, Who are they that will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God? Paul's answer, They who know not God, and that obey not the gospel of Christ (2Thess 1:8). *What is the gospel? Turn with me to;*
1Corinthians 15:1-4 (1) Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
(2) By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

(3) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;
(4) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:
The apostle Peter, when first publishing the gospel to the Jews,
taught them that they were not saved by "faith only," but by an act of faith, by a believing immersion into Christ for the remission of sins. Now some man may say "for" means "because of", but let scripture have its say. Colossians 1:14 *says;* In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins:. *A person is saved by an act of faith when he is baptized for the remission of sins, not before.* Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) *is the item of belief, faith is the effect of belief that is consummated when the command is obeyed by the repentant believer. On the day of Pentecost, Peter--now holding the keys of the Kingdom, and speaking under the commission for converting the world, and by the authority of the Lord Jesus; guided, inspired, and accompanied by the Spirit- and expected to speak the truth, the whole truth, plainly and intelligibly, to his brethren the Jews. He had that day declared the gospel facts, and proved the resurrection and ascension of Jesus to the conviction of thousands. They believed his message that Jesus was the Messiah, had died as a sin-offering, was risen from the dead, and crowned Lord of all. Being full of this belief, they inquired of Peter and the other apostles what they ought to do to obtain remission. They were informed that, though they now believed, they were not pardoned, but must repent and be immersed for the remission of sins. And with other words were told to save themselves from the present generation. This act of faith was presented as that act by which a change in their state could be affected; or, in other words, by which they could be pardoned. They who gladly*

received this truth were that day baptized, were converted, or regenerated, they obeyed the gospel. These were the people who were added to the Church by the Lord. They were saved, the words of the lord said so; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). *The commission of converting the world teaches that immersion is necessary to discipleship; for Jesus said;* Convert the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you (Matt 28:19-20). *All these testimonies concur with each other in presenting the act of faith-Christian immersion, frequently called conversion-as that act is inseparably connected with remission of sins; or that change of state from sinner to saved. A disciple, then, according to the commission, is one who has heard the gospel, believed it, and has been baptized. A disciple, in-deed, is one that continues in keeping the commands of Jesus, expanding their faith.*

On occasion an inaccurate phrase is repeated by well meaning Christians - "I hope I am saved." There is no scripture available to support this proposition. There are two scriptures where hope and saved are used together. Acts 27:20 describes the trouble Paul and his shipmates were having when they lost hope they would be saved from the tempest. The other is;

Romans 8:23-25 (23) And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

(24) For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

(25) But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Hope differs from faith, only that it looks forward to future things. It does not look back, nor does it contemplate the present. Hope is an earnest expectation, not a doubtful, but a confident expectation of good things to come. However it is

not all those who wish to be saved, who will be saved. Only those who admit their need of salvation and accept God's grace on His terms. God is not willing that any should be lost, but there is coming a time when the door will be shut and no one shall enter in - despite their crying Lord, Lord. The devil is a relentless adversary. He will use any means possible to deceive people, even adjustments to God's word. Consequently there has been ***no more error*** *taught in the supposed name of Christianity, than error concerning baptism. This is one subject that the Devil has adjusted to advance his own protocol more than any other, for it is through baptism that a person is saved and added to the Church of Christ. It has been said that "Baptism has become the Devil's workshop" and that saying is well justified! For if he can divert one to accept, "baptism is not necessary," the devil has won, however he can be defeated by faith. What faith? Faith that is the effect of belief, and baptism that is the effect of faith; only those who first believe the testimony of God, and by faith repent of their sins, and by faith confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and by faith are baptized into His death for remission of sins, have the full and explicit testimony of pardon. This is the gospel. It's invitation is always open, also prayer requests for other reasons, in either case come while we persuade with song.*

This message approved by
Jack Warford
a minister for Christ

Study Aids; The Christian System by Alexander Campbell
Bible Commentary by E.M. Zerr
The message 'Gospel' Revised; 01242020

This message presented to; LostSheepOk-Feb,2015/
PineMt.Ar-Feb,2015/WestvilleOk-Mar,2015
PleasentViewOk-Sep2016/