

The Gospel

By Ron Crisp

When Adoniram Judson returned to America from Burma, the people were anxious to hear from the great missionary the exciting story of his suffering, labors and harvest. They complained when he preached a simple gospel sermon. His response was, "The gospel is the best story I know."

What is the gospel? We will draw our answer from 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve."

I. THE GOSPEL IS GOD'S REMEDY FOR A TRAGIC SITUATION.

The gospel is God's remedy for our sins (v. 3). Sin towers above all other problems. Our problems are, in fact, the result of our sins. Sin is the breaking of God's law. All have sinned and are by it condemned, defiled and headed to eternal perdition. The gospel alone tells of mercy, cleansing, acceptance and life eternal. Romans 3:23; 3:10-20; 1 John 5:19; Isaiah 1:2-6.

II. THE GOSPEL INFORMS US OF THAT WHICH HAS HAD HISTORIC REALIZATION.

The gospel is alone and unique among the cross-currents of religious dogma. The religions of the world offer philosophy, explanations of reality and rules by which mankind should live. The gospel, however, speaks of a divine intervention in human history. It tells us "how that Christ died...and that he rose again the third day" (v. 3-4). God did not give us a philosophy,

he gave us a Savior! Philo, the ancient Jew, spoke of a "logos" (Word) as a philosophical concept, but John could say, "we have seen with our eyes... we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life". (1 John 1:1). Luke 2:1-20; John 3:17; Galatians 4:4-5; 1 John 4:1-3.

III. THE GOSPEL INCLUDES A DOCTRINAL EXPLANATION.

That Christ died was a historic fact known to all at Jerusalem. However, this does not become gospel (good news) until we read the explanation given for his death: for our sins (v.3). Jesus died to save us from our sins. Romans 5:6-9; Isaiah 53:4-10; 1 Corinthians 5:7.

IV. THE GOSPEL IS BUILT ON A PROPHETIC FOUNDATION.

"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (v. 3-4). 'The gospel is not just the story of the "Christ event", but includes the fact that, for four thousand years, God had given prophecies and prophetic types that would allow Christ to be identified and understood. Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 35:5-6; 52:13-53:12; Micah 5:2; Romans 1:1-2.

V. THE GOSPEL IS BACKED BY APOSTOLIC CONFIRMATION.

Paul mentions that Christ was "seen of Cephas, then of the twelve" (v. 5). The apostles were witnesses of the gospel record. They also acted as Christ's historians, commentators and publicists. Hebrews 2:3-4; Acts 1:15-26; 2:14; John 17:11-20; 1 John 1:1-3; Acts 2:42.

VI. THE GOSPEL HAS UNIVERSAL APPLICATION.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you" (v. 1). Saul the Rabbi had no message for the Greeks, but Paul the servant of Christ endeavored to "teach all nations and preach the gospel to every creature." You cannot take the gospel to the wrong address. You cannot take the "go" out of the gospel! Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8; 17:30; Revelation 22:17.

VII. THE GOSPEL DEMANDS A PERSONAL ACCEPTATION.

The gospel Paul preached was to be received (v. 1) and believed (v. 2). In Galatia the story of Christ was told; but when faith was replaced with circumcision, the message became another gospel. Where men are not called upon to repent and believe the gospel, no gospel has been preached. The gospel invites, implores and demands a response. Acts 17:30; 20:21; John 16:8-9; Proverbs 1:24-26; Luke 24:46-47.

Dear reader, what is your response to the gospel? It is God's message to you. *"Hear and your soul shall live" (Isa. 55:3). "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins"(Acts 10:43).*

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