

The Gospels Project:

Accurately Identifying the Different Gospels



A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF COLUMBUS BIBLE CHURCH AND GRACE LIFE BIBLE CHURCH

The purpose of this project is to accurately identify the different gospels in Scripture. All of the notes in this booklet were presented at Grace Life Bible Church in Grand Rapids, MI over the weekend of October 18-20, 2013.

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All truth is God's; all errors are the responsibility of the authors.

The Gospels Project—Lesson 1
Introduction: What Does the Word Gospel Mean?

Why This Project?

- There is a common misconception that whenever the word “baptism” appears in scripture it refers to water. This is a serious misunderstanding because there are many baptisms in scripture that have nothing to do with water. A few examples include:
 - baptism with the Holy Ghost (Matthew 3:11)
 - baptism with fire (Matthew 3:11)
 - baptism into Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3)
 - baptism into one body (1Corinthians 12:13)
- Just as there is a common failure to understand the many different baptisms described in the scriptures, there is a similar common failure to understand the different gospels revealed in the scriptures.
- As originally conceived, the scope of this project was to include all of the different named gospels in the New Testament, including some gospels mentioned infrequently, such as the everlasting gospel and the gospel of peace. However, it became apparent in the course of preparation that it would be most profitable to focus on the three major gospels of the New Testament: (1) the gospel of the kingdom, (2) the gospel of God, and (3) the gospel of Christ.

What The Word Gospel Means

- The word “gospel” appears 104 times in the scriptures, all of which are found in the New Testament.
- The clearest scriptural definition of what the word gospel means is good tidings or glad tidings, i.e. good news or glad news.

<p>Isa 61:1 KJV - The Spirit of the Lord GOD [is] upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach <u>good tidings</u> unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to [them that are] bound;</p>	<p>Luk 4:18 KJV - The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the <u>gospel</u> to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,</p>
<p>Mat 9:35 KJV - And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the <u>gospel of the kingdom</u>, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.</p>	<p>Luk 8:1 KJV - And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the <u>glad tidings of the kingdom of God</u>: and the twelve [were] with him,</p>

- **tidings**, n. plu. News; advice; information; intelligence; account of what has taken place, and was not before known. (Webster's 1828 Dictionary)
- The dictionary definition of the word "gospel" indicates that it can be used in multiple different ways. It does not always refer to a plan of salvation and can refer to the Lord Jesus Christ's entire earthly life or God's word or any general doctrine.
 - GOS'PEL, n. [L. evangelium, a good or joyful message.]
The history of the birth, life, actions, death, resurrection, ascension and doctrines of Jesus Christ; or a revelation of the grace of God to fallen man through a mediator, including the character, actions, and doctrines of Christ, with the whole scheme of salvation, as revealed by Christ and his apostles. This gospel is said to have been preached to Abraham, by the promise, "in thee shall all nations be blessed." Ga.3.8.

It is called the gospel of God. Rom.1.1.
It is called the gospel of Christ. Rom.1.16.
It is called the gospel of salvation. Eph. 1.13.
1. God's word.
2. Divinity; theology.
3. Any general doctrine. (Webster's 1828 Dictionary)
- Contrary to widely-held myth, there is more than one gospel in the scriptures (e.g., the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of God, the gospel of Christ).
 - These different terms are not all synonyms.
 - When the word "gospel" appears without a specifying phrase, it sometimes has a broad application to more than one gospel. Other times it is necessary to examine the context and cross-references to determine which particular gospel is intended.
- While there are multiple gospels in the scripture, a sinner cannot simply pick any gospel of his choice to believe. He is obligated to believe the gospel or gospels that God intends for him to believe (Galatians 1:6-9).
- Not all good tidings / gospel pertain to salvation. Some are simply just new information that is good (1Thessalonians 3:6).
- Some uses of the term gospel pertain simply to information that is part of the account of the Lord Jesus Christ's earthly life.
 - The gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God is an account of the details of the Lord's earthly life (Mark 1:1-2)
 - When a certain gospel is preached, the account of the woman who anointed the Lord Jesus Christ with spikenard is told in memorial of her (Matthew 26:13, Mark 14:9).

- Knowing of or believing this incident is not something that is necessary for salvation. Rather, this incident is part of the Lord Jesus Christ's earthly life that God has chosen to memorialize in the scriptures.
- Review summary of the major gospels chart (Exhibit A)

The Gospels Project—Lesson 2

The Gospel of the Kingdom

The Initial Content of the Gospel of the Kingdom is that the Kingdom is at Hand

- The phrase “gospel of the kingdom” appears only four times in scripture (Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 24:14, Mark 1:14).
- The initial content of the gospel of the kingdom is that the kingdom is at hand.
 - The initial content of the gospel of the kingdom is explicitly said to be that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel (Mark 1:14-15).
 - In saying that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom is at hand, what John the Baptist was saying was prepare the way of the Lord (Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 3:1-3).
 - John was preaching that people should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus (Acts 19:4).

Once Jesus Was Identified As the Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom Included the Information That Jesus Was the Christ

- John the Baptist proclaimed that the kingdom was at hand but he did not know Christ until he saw the Spirit descending and remaining on him (John 1:29-33).
- After seeing this, John the Baptist bare record that Jesus was the Christ (John 1:34).
 - Christ = Messiah (John 1:41, 4:25).
 - Christ = the Son of God (Matthew 26:63, John 6:69, 20:31).
- Under the gospel of the kingdom, it is necessary to believe that Jesus is the Christ (John 11:25-27, 9:35-38, 6:67-69)
 - “if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24-25)
- Note that once it is time for Jesus to go to the cross, he instructs his disciples not to declare that he is the Christ (Matthew 16:20, Mark 8:27-30, Luke 9:18-21).
- The gospel of the kingdom does not include the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - During the Lord’s earthly ministry, the twelve did not understand the scriptures that the Lord was to be crucified and rise from the dead (Matthew 16:21-22, Mark 9:31-32, Luke 9:44-45, Luke 18:31-34, John 2:19-22, John 20:9).

Manifestation of Faith in the Gospel of the Kingdom Required Works

- A soul is saved under the gospel of the kingdom by taking action to follow Jesus Christ (Mark 8:35).
 - Endurance is required for salvation under the kingdom gospel (Matthew 10:22, 24:13, Mark 13:13).
 - The suggestion that the salvation spoken of in these verses is a man's physical life is disproven by the fact that many of these believers are delivered up unto death (Matthew 10:21, Mark 13:12).
- John the Baptist preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3).
 - Baptism was central to John's preaching (Matthew 21:25, Mark 11:30, Luke 20:4).
 - The refusal to be water baptized was the rejection of the counsel of God (Luke 7:29-30).
 - Water baptism as an expression of faith was thus required for salvation under the gospel of the kingdom.

The Purpose of the Gospel of the Kingdom

- The gospel of the kingdom is repeatedly linked to healing (Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 11:5, Luke 4:18, 7:22, 9:1-2, 6).
- The kingdom described in the gospel of the kingdom is the kingdom of priests that God intends to form.
 - God will form a kingdom of priests, a holy nation out of Israel (Exodus 19:6).
 - This kingdom is similarly described as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1Peter 2:9).
 - The gospel of the kingdom is God's invitation to become part of the earthly kingdom of priests that God will form.

Installation into the Levitical Priesthood Required Perfect Physical Specimens Who Were Washed With Water and Anointed

- To be inducted into the Levitical priesthood, a man had to be a perfect physical specimen (Leviticus 21:16-21).
 - This Levitical requirement explains why healing is inseparably connected to the gospel of the kingdom.

- To form a kingdom of priests, there must of necessity be a healing program to address the nation of Israel's physical infirmities.
- To hallow a man into the priest's office, he was washed with water and then anointed with oil (Exodus 29:1-4, 7).
 - This requirement of the law explains why water baptism is an integral part of the gospel of the kingdom.
 - Water baptism is the ceremonial cleansing of the nation of Israel symbolic of its installation into the office of a priest.
 - The anointing with oil corresponds to the anointing of the Holy Ghost that teaches kingdom saints the truth (John 14:26, 1John 2:27).

Who Preached the Gospel of the Kingdom

- The gospel of the kingdom was first preached by John the Baptist (Luke 16:16, Matthew 11:13). Prior to that, the law and the prophets were in effect.
 - The preaching of the kingdom is not the destruction of the law and the prophets but the fulfillment of them (Matthew 5:17).
- The Lord Jesus Christ preached the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23, Matthew 9:35).
- The Twelve preached the gospel of the kingdom (Luke 9:1-2, 6).
- The gospel of the kingdom with its emphasis on water baptism is the gospel message that is the subject of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16).
- The gospel of the kingdom will be preached during the tribulation (Matthew 24:14, Mark 13:10).
 - The gospel of the kingdom is first preached by John the Baptist and is thereafter preached up to and including the tribulation, excluding the dispensation of grace.

The Gospels Project—Lesson 3

The Gospel of God

The Gospel of God

- The phrase “gospel of God” appears seven times in scripture (Romans 1:1, 15:16, 2Corinthians 11:7, 1Thessalonians 2:2, 2:8, 2:9, 1Peter 4:17).
- The gospel of God is both a Pauline and a Petrine term (Romans 15:16, 1Peter 4:17).
 - Paul describes himself as being “put in trust” with the gospel of God (1Thessalonians 2:2, 2:4).
- The gospel of God consists of two elements: (1) that Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and (2) that he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:1-4).
 - The gospel of God does not contain a call to action, such as repent and be baptized.
 - Thus, believing the gospel of God, by itself, will not produce salvation. There must also be faith in another gospel – either the gospel of the kingdom or the gospel of Christ depending upon the point in time.
- The gospel of God was a prophesied gospel in that it was promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures (Romans 1:1-2). All of the following items were foretold by Old Testament prophecy:
 - That the Lord would “raise unto David a righteous Branch . . . he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jeremiah 23:5-6, 33:15).
 - That a child would be born who would be the mighty God and who would sit upon the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7).
 - That God would establish forever the kingdom of David’s seed (2Samuel 7:8, 12, 13).
 - That God would not suffer his Holy One to see corruption, i.e. the Holy One would be resurrected (Psalm 16:10).

Peter’s Preaching of the Gospel of God

- As previously demonstrated, the gospel of the kingdom was preached during the Lord’s earthly ministry without any reference to the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:21-22, Mark 9:31-32, Luke 9:44-45, Luke 18:31-34, John 2:19-22, John 20:9).
- However, after the resurrection, the Lord appeared to Peter and the rest of the eleven to open their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, particularly the fact

- that it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day (Luke 24:33, 36, 45-47). The scriptures foretold:
- That the Lord's righteous servant would justify many, that he would bear their iniquities, and that his soul would be an offering for sin, poured out unto death (Isaiah 53:10-12, 5, 6, 8).
 - That the resurrection of the Lord would occur after three days (Jonah 1:17, Matthew 12:39-40, 16:4, Luke 11:29-30).
- Subsequently, Peter proclaimed the gospel of God, which includes the Lord's resurrection (1Peter 4:17).
 - In Acts 2, Peter preached the gospel of God in that he preached (1) that Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (Acts 2:29-30) and (2) that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:30-31, 2:24, 2:27, 2:32, 2:36).
 - While Peter preached the cross, he did not preach to his audience that Christ died for their sins (Acts 2:23, 2:36). Peter holds Israel responsible for the death of Christ and instructs them to repent (Acts 2:23, 2:38).
 - The reason Peter does not preach that Christ died for their sins is that those under the kingdom program cannot look at the cross as already having accomplished payment for their sins as they must wait for them to be blotted out at the Second Coming (Acts 3:19).
 - Thus, the gospel of God does not include the information that Christ died for sins.
 - Another example of Peter preaching the gospel of God is found in Acts 10. Peter makes explicit reference to the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the fact that God ordained Jesus to be the judge of the quick and the dead (Acts 10:38-40).
 - Scripture states that the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son (John 5:22).
 - Thus, when Peter states in Acts 10 that Jesus Christ was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and the dead, it is equivalent to a declaration that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 10:42).

Paul's Preaching of the Gospel of God

- Paul preached the gospel of God in Damascus after he returned from Arabia (Acts 9:19-20, Galatians 1:16-17).
 - The gospel of God preached by Paul in Acts 9 is the same gospel preached by Phillip in Acts 8 (Acts 9:20, 8:37).

- Paul's preaching of the gospel of God, which had earlier been preached by Peter and others under the kingdom program, explains how Paul can state that he "now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (Galatians 1:23).
- Paul ministered the gospel of God to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 17:1-3, Romans 15:16).
- Paul preached the gospel of God to the Thessalonians in Acts 17 and the Corinthians in Acts 18 (1Thessalonians 2:2, 2:8, 2:9, 2Corinthians 11:4, 7).
 - In Acts 17 in Thessalonica, Paul preached in a synagogue, obviously to Jews, and reasoned out of the scriptures (Acts 17:1-2).
 - What Paul preached in Thessalonica was that Christ suffered and rose from the dead and that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 17:1-3).
 - In Acts 18 in Corinth, Paul preached to the Jews in a synagogue that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:4-5).

The Gospels Project—Lesson 4

The Gospel of Christ, Part I

Introduction

- Both the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of God are part of the prophetic program and can be found in the prophetic scriptures. Thus, aside from certain parts of the first lesson, all of the studies to date have focused on what was prophetically revealed.
- This lesson and certain lessons following will focus on the gospel of Christ, which is distinctly Pauline.
- The gospel of Christ: (1) is a particular dispensation of the gospel committed to Paul that (2) contains the content that Christ died for our sins, (3) is equivalent to the grace of Christ, (4) is the clearest manifestation of grace in history, and (5) reveals the salvation of Gentiles apart from Israel.

The Gospel of Christ is a Particular Dispensation of the Gospel Committed to Paul

- The phrase “gospel of Christ” appears eleven times in scripture (Romans 1:16, 15:19, 15:29, 1Corinthians 9:12, 9:18, 2Corinthians 4:4, 9:13, 10:14, Galatians 1:7, Philippians 1:27, 1Thessalonians 3:2).
- The “gospel of Christ” is an exclusively Pauline term.
- The gospel of God and the gospel of Christ are not the same thing called by different names.
 - The gospel of God is a prophesied gospel (Romans 1:1-2).
 - The gospel of Christ is the particular dispensation of the gospel committed to Paul (1Corinthians 9:17-18).
- Paul was an ambassador in bonds because of the mystery of the gospel, i.e. the portion of Paul’s gospel that was new information (Ephesians 6:19-20).
 - Therefore, Paul was imprisoned because of the gospel of Christ, the dispensation of the gospel committed to Paul, and not the gospel of God, which was prophesied.

The Content of the Gospel of Christ Is That Christ Died For Our Sins

- In 1Corinthians 15, Paul specifically declares the content of his gospel as three components: (1) that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, (2) that he was buried, and (3) that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1Corinthians 15:1-4).
- Components 2 and 3, Christ’s burial and resurrection, are part of the gospel of God (Romans 1:1-4).

- It is component 1, Christ's death for our sins, that is the core content of the gospel of Christ. Peter never preached that Christ died for our sins as a past tense completed act. On the contrary, Peter preached a future blotting out of sins.
 - "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).
- Paul refers to the preaching of the gospel of Christ as the "preaching of the cross" (1Corinthians 1:17-18).
 - The gospel in 1Corinthians 1:17 must be the gospel of Christ since it must be a gospel that is inconsistent with water baptism – "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."
- Since the content of the gospel of Christ is that Christ died for our sins, belief in the gospel of Christ can be simply summarized as faith in his blood (Romans 3:25).

The Gospel of Christ is Equivalent to the Grace of Christ

- The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes during the dispensation of grace (Romans 1:16).
 - What saves the believer is grace (Ephesians 2:5, 8-9, Titus 2:11).
- The phrase gospel of Christ is used interchangeably with the grace of Christ.
 - The Galatians were removed from "the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Galatians 1:6).
 - Thus, the "grace of Christ" must be some sort of gospel in order to be removed from it unto "another" gospel.
 - Verse 7 reveals that the name for the gospel described in verse 6 as the grace of Christ is the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6-7).
 - It is thus proper to use gospel of Christ interchangeably with grace of Christ.
- Paul uses other terms to describe the gospel committed unto him by the Lord, but the common theme is grace.
 - "the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24)
 - "the word of the truth of the gospel . . . the grace of God in truth" (Colossians 1:5-6)

The Gospel of Christ is Not the Revelation of Grace but Instead the Clearest Manifestation of Grace

- The gospel of Christ is not the first time that grace was revealed as grace clearly existed in time past.
 - In time past, God showed grace to those with faith (Genesis 6:8, Exodus 34:6, Jonah 4:2).
 - Righteousness without the law is a truth that was witnessed by the law and the prophets (Romans 3:21).
 - Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Romans 4:3, Genesis 15:6).
 - David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works (Romans 4:6).
- While grace existed under the Old Testament law, grace was obscured.
 - Grace is the opposite of the law (Romans 6:14).
 - Grace is the opposite of works (Romans 11:6).
 - Thus, while grace existed under the Old Testament law, grace was obscured by the heavy emphasis of the Old Testament law on two things that are the opposite of grace: (1) the hundreds of points of the law and (2) the law's focus on works as required evidence of faith.
 - “And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.” (Galatians 3:12).
 - Abel had to offer a sacrifice; Noah had to build an ark (Hebrews 11:4, 7).
- Peter's gospel of the circumcision is an advancement in understanding from the Old Testament law, but it still required works and offered only a future blotting out of sins.
 - Peter's gospel of the circumcision required water baptism and endurance (Acts 2:38, Matthew 24:13).
 - When Peter preached the gospel of the circumcision after the cross, he preached both the cross and the resurrection, but he preached a future blotting out of sins (Acts 3:19).
- The gospel of Christ is the clearest manifestation in history of God's grace.
 - The gospel of Christ simply requires faith in what Christ has already accomplished, and therefore, the gospel of Christ can stand alone without any required works to evidence faith.

- Paul's gospel of Christ emphasizes justification by faith alone without the performance of any works, which makes grace manifest (Romans 3:21).

The Gospels Project—Lesson 5
The Gospel of Christ, Part II

The Gospel of Christ Reveals the Salvation of Gentiles Apart from Israel

- Paul could state in 1Corinthians 15 that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures because Isaiah prophesied that:
 - “he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5)
 - “the LORD hath laid on him iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6)
 - “thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin” (Isaiah 53:10)
 - “for he shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53:11)
 - “he hath poured out his soul unto death” (Isaiah 53:12)
 - “he bare the sin of many” (Isaiah 53:12)
- While Paul could describe his gospel as according to the scriptures based on Isaiah, it is nonetheless clear that the gospel of Christ is a revelation beyond what Isaiah foretold, which was limited to Israel.
 - “for the transgression of my people was he stricken” (Isaiah 53:8)
 - “and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21)
- As a general matter, Gentiles have no hope under the kingdom program (Ephesians 2:11-12).
 - However, a Gentile can become a Jew (Esther 8:17).
 - A Gentile can also first bless Israel and then receive blessing (Genesis 12:3, Luke 7:1-5).
 - Under the kingdom program, there is no blessing for Gentiles apart from Israel.
- The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to the Gentile directly rather than through Israel (Romans 1:16, 11:11, 11:30, Ephesians 2:13).
- The poor kingdom saints in Jerusalem glorify God for the Corinthians’ professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and their liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men (2Corinthians 9:12-13).

- 2Corinthians 9 references the gospel of Christ rather than the gospel of God because the gospel of Christ is part of the dispensational change that occurs in the middle of Acts.
- It is the interruption of the prophetic program by the dispensation of grace that (1) causes the kingdom saints to be poor and (2) places a moral obligation on mystery saints to assist the kingdom saints (Romans 15:19, 20, 22, 25-27).
- In Antioch some walked not uprightly according to the truth of the “gospel” because they drew a distinction between Jew and Gentile (Galatians 2:11-14).
 - The gospel that must be in view in Galatians 2:11-14 is the gospel of Christ because a distinction between Jew and Gentile is completely compatible with the gospel of God.
 - The gospel of Christ draws no distinction between Jew and Gentile and enables Gentiles to be saved apart from Israel.

Paul Received and Preached the Gospel of Christ Before He Wrote His First Epistle

- Paul preached the gospel of Christ from early on in his ministry as he preached it in Galatia before he wrote his first epistle (Galatians 1:7).
- The Acts 15 conference in Jerusalem was prompted by certain men from Judaea teaching the brethren in Antioch that they cannot be saved without being circumcised after the manner of Moses and keeping the law (Acts 15:1, 15:24).
 - Under the gospel of the kingdom, keeping the commandments of the law is required (Matthew 19:16-17).
 - Even after the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15, the kingdom church continued to observe the law (Acts 21:17-20).
 - It is thus obvious that neither the gospel of the kingdom nor the gospel of God is inconsistent with the keeping of the law.
 - In Acts 13, Paul preached forgiveness of sins and justification apart from the law of Moses (Acts 13:37-39).
 - Paul was thus preaching the gospel of Christ before Acts 15.

What Paul Knew and When He Knew It: Understanding the Chronology of Acts 9

- As stated above, that Paul preached the gospel of Christ in Galatia before he wrote his first epistle is beyond dispute. However, identifying the first time that Paul preached the gospel of Christ is more difficult.
- An important related question is when did Paul receive the revelation of the gospel of Christ. We know from the fact that Paul preached the gospel of Christ in Antioch of Pisidia in Acts 13:37-39 that he must have known it prior to that time.

- Understanding the order of events in Acts 9 provides clarity to the questions at hand (Exhibit B).
- Acts 9:1-9—Saul encountered Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:1-10, Acts 26:9-19). What was Saul told, i.e., what did he know at that point?
 - Arise and go into the city where he will be told what to do next (Acts 9:6, 22:10).
 - The account in Acts 26 provides additional details about what took place on the road to Damascus:
 - Saul was to be a minister both of the things which he had seen (Christ on the road) and the things that would appear unto him (Acts 26:16).
 - Saul was sent to the Gentiles to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God that they might receive the forgiveness of sins (Acts 26:17-18).
 - It was on the road to Damascus that Paul’s apostleship of the Gentiles began as that was the point in time he was told that he was sent to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17, Romans 11:13).
- Acts 9:7-9—Saul’s travel companions heard a voice but saw no man.
 - Saul was blinded and led by the hand into the city (Acts 22:11).
 - For three days, Saul was blind and ate no food (Acts 9:9).
- Acts 9:10-16—The Lord appeared to Ananias and told him to lay hands on Saul.
 - Ananias was a kingdom saint. There is no further record of this exchange. The Lord told Ananias that Saul was a chosen vessel to bear his name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15).
- Acts 9:17-18—Ananias visited Saul, restored his sight, and baptized him (Acts 22:12-16).
 - Ananias instructed Saul to “be baptized, and wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16).
 - Based upon what is contained in the text of the scriptures, there appears to have been no way that Saul knew his unique gospel at that point in time. It appears that Ananias dealt with Saul in a manner that was consistent with the gospel of the circumcision, which is all that Ananias or any other human being would have known at that point.
- Acts 9:19a—Saul received meat prior to leaving the city for Arabia.
 - After Saul ate and was strengthened, he left Damascus for Arabia (Galatians 1:16-18).

- Halfway through Acts 9:19 is the only sensible place to locate the events of Galatians 1:16-18 because Paul explicitly states that “immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” Thus, Paul had to depart Damascus for Arabia shortly after his arrival in Damascus.
- It seems to follow then that Paul did not know the content of his unique gospel, the gospel of Christ, until half way through Acts 9:19 at the earliest (Galatians 1:7, 11-12, 17).
- Acts 9:19b-23—Saul was many days in Damascus.
 - Upon returning from Arabia, Saul spent time with the disciples in Damascus (Galatians 1:17). The many days of Acts 9:23 are the three years spoken of in Galatians 1:18.
 - During Paul’s time in Damascus, he preached the gospel of God (Acts 9:20, 22).
- Acts 9:23-25—Paul was run out of Damascus by the Jews for preaching the gospel of God in verses 20 and 22. The “disciples of the Lord” that Saul originally came to the city to destroy (Acts 9:1) helped him escape the “Jews” of the city who were angered over Saul’s preaching that Jesus was the Christ.
- There is no evidence in the text of scriptures that Paul preached the gospel of Christ in Damascus. This absence of evidence does not mean that Paul did not know the gospel of Christ but simply that there is no evidence that he preached it at that time in Damascus.
- In summation, The Gospels Project believes that Paul received the revelation of the gospel of Christ in Acts 9. The first RECORDED instance of it being preached is found in Acts 13. This does not mean that Paul did not preach the gospel of Christ prior to Acts 13 but simply that no such preaching of the gospel of Christ is recorded in the scriptures. Acknowledging these facts and limitations in no way threatens the mid-Acts view but aids it by not stating more than can be clearly supported by scripture.

The Gospels Project—Lesson 6
The Gospel of the Circumcision and the Gospel of the Uncircumcision

Gospel of the Circumcision and Gospel of the Uncircumcision

- The terms “gospel of the circumcision” and “gospel of the uncircumcision” appear in only one verse (Galatians 2:7). Peter preached the gospel of the circumcision, and Paul preached the gospel of the uncircumcision.
- It is clear from Galatians 2 as a whole that Paul is not identifying the gospel of the uncircumcision as a different body of information from what he elsewhere refers to as “my gospel.” Instead, the gospel of the uncircumcision is simply “that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles” (Galatians 2:2). It is the same thing that Paul elsewhere calls “my gospel” or “our gospel.”
- Since the gospel of the uncircumcision is “that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles” (Galatians 2:2) and since Paul preached among the Gentiles both (1) the gospel of God (Romans 15:16) and (2) the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19), it is clear that the gospel of the uncircumcision includes both the gospel of God and the gospel of Christ.
- Since the gospel of the circumcision is what Peter preached unto the circumcision, it is clear that the gospel of the circumcision consists of (1) the gospel of the kingdom (Luke 9:1-2) and (2) the gospel of God (1Peter 4:17).

Peter’s Preaching of the Gospel of the Circumcision in Acts 2

- As shown above, the gospel of the circumcision consists of (1) the gospel of the kingdom and (2) the gospel of God. In Acts 2, Peter preaches both gospels.
- Peter preached the gospel of the kingdom in Acts 2 in that he instructed his listeners to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- Peter preached the gospel of God in Acts 2 in that he preached (1) that Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (Acts 2:29-30) and (2) that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:30-31, 2:24, 2:27, 2:32, 2:36).
- Review the pie illustration (Exhibit D)

Paul’s My Gospel and Our Gospel

- Paul uses the term “my gospel” three times (Romans 2:16, 16:25, 2Timothy 2:8) and the term “our gospel” three times (2Corinthians 4:3, 1Thessalonians 1:5, 2Thessalonians 2:14). He also refers to the “glorious gospel of the blessed God” that was committed to “my trust” (1Timothy 1:11).

My Gospel

- Paul’s gospel was received by him through direct revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-12).

- While Paul's my gospel was received directly from the Lord Jesus Christ, it contains elements that were according to the Old Testament scriptures (1Corinthians 15:1-4).
- This is why Paul can say that from a child Timothy had known the holy scriptures, obviously the Old Testament, which were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2Timothy 3:15).
- The term "my gospel" includes the gospel of God.
 - My gospel includes Jesus Christ of the seed of David being raised from the dead (2Timothy 2:8, Romans 1:1-4).
- The term "my gospel" includes the gospel of Christ.
 - Paul declared that "a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me" and that it was called the gospel of Christ (1Corinthians 9:17-18).
- The judgment of men's secrets at the great white throne judgment is according to Paul's "my gospel" (Romans 2:11-16).
 - Just as the Lord Jesus Christ being of the seed of David is specifically said to be part of Paul's "my gospel" (2Timothy 2:8) even though it was previously revealed as part of the prophetic program, the great white throne judgment is also according to Paul's "my gospel."
 - It makes sense that the great white judgment would be according to "my gospel" as those who reject Paul's gospel during the dispensation of grace end up at the great white throne.
 - Paul's gospel is the clearest manifestation of grace and thus an appropriate basis on which to judge all men throughout time, irrespective of what particular program they happened to live under. Although the details of the particular instructions given to men differed over time, all of God's different instructions required men to have faith in order to access God's grace, which truth is most clearly expressed by Paul's "my gospel" (Hebrews 11:6).

Our Gospel

- The term "our gospel" includes the gospel of God.
 - "Our gospel" came to the Thessalonians, and what Paul preached to them was the gospel of God (1Thessalonians 1:5, 2:2).
- The term "our gospel" includes the gospel of Christ (2Corinthians 4:3-4).
- Paul's "our gospel" is how people are called during the dispensation of grace (2Thessalonians 2:13-14).

- “My gospel” and “our gospel” appear to be identical. “Our gospel” seems to be a reference to the gospel that Paul and his fellowlabourers preached.

The Gospels Project—Lesson 7 Overview and Conclusion

A Summary of the Major Gospels in the Scriptures

- Review the Summary of the Major Gospels in the Scriptures (Exhibit A)
- The gospel of the kingdom
 - The initial content of the gospel of the kingdom is explicitly said to be that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel (Mark 1:14-15).
 - After the Lord's baptism, John the Baptist bare record that Jesus was the Christ (John 1:34).
 - John the Baptist preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3).
 - To be inducted into the Levitical priesthood, a man had to be a perfect physical specimen (Leviticus 21:16-21).
 - To hallow a man into the priest's office, he was washed and then anointed with oil (Exodus 29:1-4, 7).
- The gospel of God
 - The gospel of God consists of two elements: (1) that Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and (2) that he was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:1-4).
 - In Acts 2, Peter preached the gospel of God in that he preached (1) that Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (Acts 2:29-30) and (2) that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:30-31, 2:24, 2:27, 2:32, 2:36).
- The gospel of Christ
 - In 1Corinthians 15, Paul specifically declared the content of his gospel as three components: (1) that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, (2) that he was buried, and (3) that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1Corinthians 15:1-4).
 - The phrase gospel of Christ is used interchangeably with the grace of Christ (Galatians 1:6-7).
- The gospel of God is foundational information for the gospel of Christ since a man must first understand who Jesus is, i.e. the Son of God, in order to understand why believing that he died for our sins would accomplish anything.

- The gospel of the circumcision
 - Since the gospel of the circumcision is what Peter preached unto the circumcision, it is clear that the gospel of the circumcision consists of (1) the gospel of the kingdom (Luke 9:1-2) and (2) the gospel of God (1Peter 4:17).
 - As shown above, Peter preached the gospel of God in Acts 2.
 - Peter also preached the gospel of the kingdom in Acts 2 in that he instructed his listeners to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
- The gospel of the uncircumcision
 - Since the gospel of the uncircumcision is “that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles” (Galatians 2:2) and since Paul preached among the Gentiles both (1) the gospel of God (Romans 15:16) and (2) the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19), it is clear that the gospel of the uncircumcision includes both the gospel of God and the gospel of Christ.

The Timeline of the Gospels

- Review the timeline of the gospels (Exhibit C)

Paul’s Preaching of Multiple Gospels Does Not Support the Acts 28 Position but Disproves It

- Some may perceive the fact that Paul preached multiple gospels (e.g., the gospel of God, the gospel of Christ) as providing support to the Acts 28 position. On the contrary, an accurate understanding of the timing of when Paul began to preach his different gospels shows the untenability of the Acts 28 position.
- The Acts 28 position views the body of Christ as not beginning until Acts 28 or later and draws a dividing line between Paul’s Acts period ministry and his post-Acts period ministry. Accordingly, Acts 28 proponents typically claim that Paul’s Acts period epistles (Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1&2 Thessalonians) are not intended for the body of Christ.
- However, as demonstrated above, Paul preached the gospel of Christ, also known as the gospel of the grace of God, prior to Acts 15 and prior to writing his first epistle, Galatians.
 - Paul knew the gospel of Christ, his particular dispensation of the gospel, before he wrote his first epistle (1Corinthians 9:17-18, Galatians 1:7).
 - Every gospel that Paul preached – the gospel of God, the gospel of Christ, the gospel of the grace of God, was preached before Acts 28. Moreover, there is no new gospel referenced in any of Paul’s post Acts epistles.

- Thus, clarity about the fact that Paul received and preached both the gospel of God and the gospel of Christ before he wrote his first epistle is a compelling reason to reject the Acts 28 position.
- Supporters of the Acts 28 position have used the fact that portions of Paul's teaching are said to be "promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures" or "according to the scriptures" (Romans 1:2, 1Corinthians 15:3-4) as supposed proof of a difference between Paul's Acts period and post-Acts period ministries. Understanding that the gospel of God is foundational to the preaching of the gospel of Christ helps dispel this confusion and supports the mid-Acts origin of the body of Christ.

EXHIBIT A

A Summary of the Major Gospels in the Scriptures

Gospel	Who preached first	Others who preached	Key components
Gospel of the kingdom	John the Baptist	Jesus Christ, The Twelve, Tribulation saints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially: The kingdom at hand • Added after Christ's baptism: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God
Gospel of God	Peter	Paul, kingdom saints, the body of Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus of the seed of David • Jesus declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection
Gospel of Christ	Paul	The body of Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day • The grace of Christ • Gentile salvation apart from Israel
Gospel of the circumcision	Peter	Kingdom saints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gospel of God + Gospel of the Kingdom
Gospel of the uncircumcision ("my gospel," "our gospel")	Paul	The body of Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gospel of God + Gospel of Christ

EXHIBIT B

Acts 9 Timeline

Acts 9:1-6 Saul encounters Christ on the road to Damascus Acts 22:1-10 Acts 26:9-19	Acts 9:7-9 Saul's travel companions hear a voice but see no man. Acts 22:11	Acts 9:10-16 Lord appears to Ananias and tells him lay hands on Saul.	Acts 9:17-18 Ananias visits Saul restores his sight and baptizes him. Acts 22:12-16	Acts 9:19a Saul receives meat prior to leaving the city for Arabia Gal. 1:17-18	Acts 9:19b-22 Saul is many days in Damascus Gal. 1:17-18
<p>What is Saul told, i.e., what does he know at this point?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Arise and go into the city where he will be told what to do next (Acts 9:6, 22:10). Acts 26:16-18 gives more details about what Paul is told at this point: •Saul was to a minister of the things which he had seen (Christ on the road) and things that would appear unto him (v. 16). •Sent to the Gentiles to open their eyes, turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God that they might receive forgiveness of sins (v. 17-18). •This is when the apostleship of the Gentiles begins (v. 17, Rom. 11:13) 	<p>Saul is blinded and led by the hand into the city. For 3 days Saul is blind and eats no food. Acts 22:11—Saul is blinded and led by the hand into the city.</p>	<p>Ananias is a kingdom saint. There is no further record of this exchange. The Lord tells Ananias that Saul is a chosen vessel to bear his name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (v. 15)</p>	<p>According to Acts 22:16, Ananias tells Saul to “be baptized, and wash away thy sins.”</p> <p>According to the chronology there appears to have been no way that Saul knew his unique gospel at this point. It appears that Ananias deals with Saul in a manner consistent with the gospel of the circumcision. That is all that Ananias or any other human being would have known at this point.</p>	<p>After Saul ate and was strengthened he left Damascus for Arabia, according to Gal. 1:17-18. Half way through Acts 9:19 is the only sensible located to place the events of Gal. 1:16-18 because Paul explicitly states that “immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”</p> <p>It seems to follow then that Paul did not know the content of his unique gospel described in Gal. 1 until half way through Acts 9:19 at the earliest.</p>	<p>Upon returning from Arabia, Saul spent time with the disciples in Damascus. The many days of Acts 9:23 are the three years spoken of in Gal. 1:18.</p> <p>During Paul's time in Damascus he preached the gospel of God in the city (Acts 9:20, 22).</p>

Prepared by Bryan C. Ross and David W. Reid –September 2013

EXHIBIT C

Timeline of the Gospels

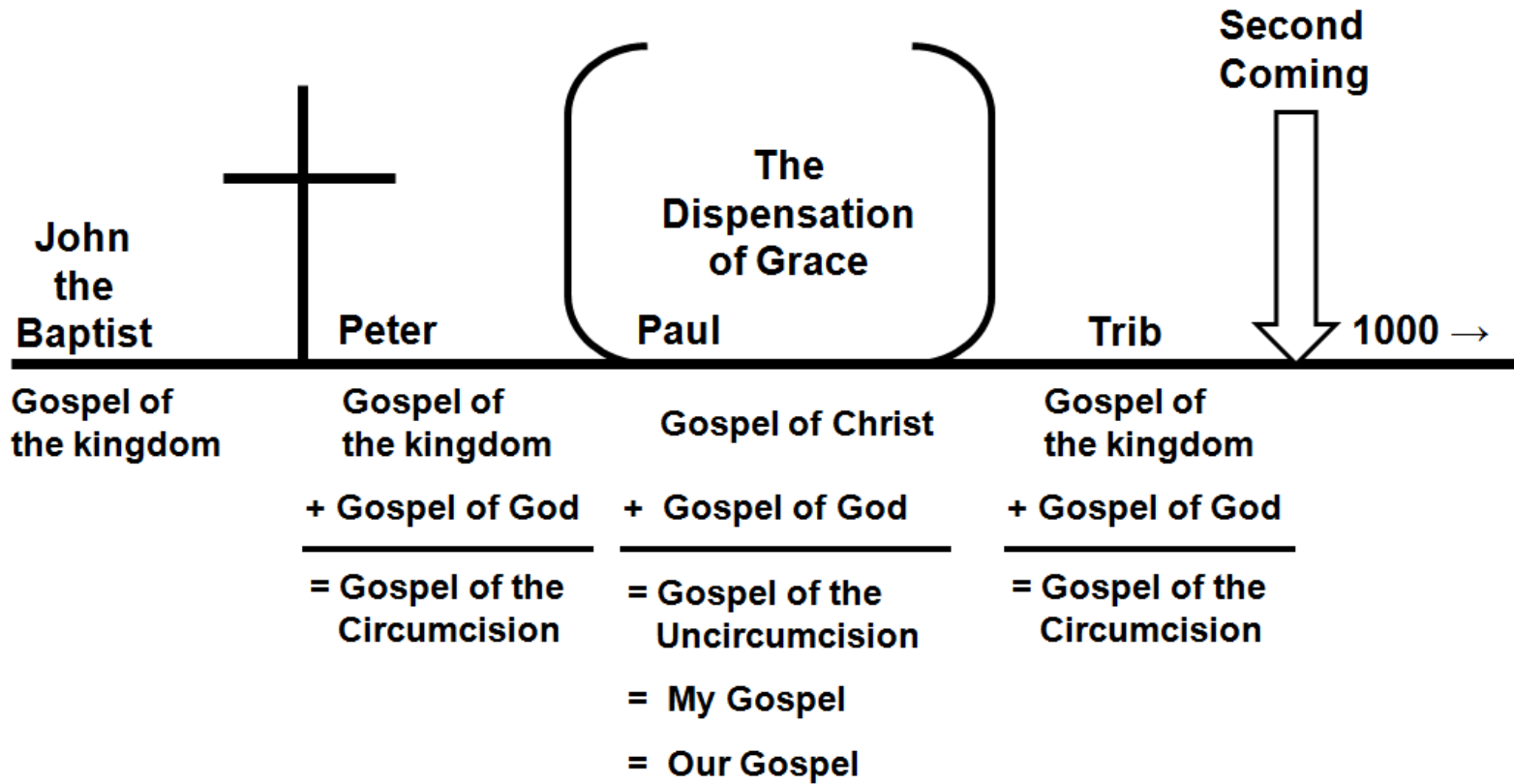


EXHIBIT D

Crust



- **Foundation**
- **The logical place to start building a pie**
- **Necessary for a good pie**
- **Can be used with any filling.**

- **Gospel of God**
- **Peter & Paul use the same crust**



Filling

- More than one type.
- What makes the pie distinct.
- Cherries=Gospel of the Kingdom
- Apples=Gospel of Christ
- Contents of the filling is what saves.

**Perspective of the Pie
Workman
Gospel of the
Circumcision**

- Gospel of God (Crust)
- Gospel of Kingdom
(Cherries)

**Gospel of the
Uncircumcision**

- Gospel of God (Crust)
- Gospel of Christ
(Apples)
- A good pie workman
understands the parts





Perspective of the Pie Recipient

- **A good presentation of a pie presents the crust and filling as a single package.**
- **The recipient sees the totality of the pie, crust and filling, at the same time.**



Boxed Pie

- One can present a perfectly proper pie without understanding how a pie is made.

