

What is the gospel?



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The gospel means “ good news”. But good news of what? The key Old Testament word with reference to the gospel is the verb “ basar” which generally means “ proclaiming good news”. The good news may be news of the death of an enemy or the birth of a son. In the New Testament words with reference to the gospel denote “ good tidings” or technically it is a term for “ news of victory”. Most people understood the gospel as about giving hope and salvation to sinful sinners through the work of grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This paper will discuss the content of the gospel, the fallacies in the presentation of the gospel and the fallacies in stating the content of the gospel. II. The Gospel The message of the gospel is the heart of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His church. Jesus is not only the author and messenger of the gospel but that in fact, He is the subject of it. Paul, after Christ ascension to heaven aggressively preached the gospel. Although Paul does not provide a single complete detailed statement of the tenets of the gospel, nevertheless there are many New Testament passages that when put together indicate what it includes.

In Romans 1: 3-4 he speaks of the gospel “ concerning God’s Son who was descended from David and resurrected from the dead”. In I Corinthians 15, Paul stated that he delivered a message “ that Christ died for our sins...that he was buried and raised on the third day. ” Other New Testament passages clearly indicates that Paul viewed the gospel as centering upon Jesus Christ and what God has done through Him that resulted in the salvation of man. To summarize, the essential elements of the gospel are the divine Sonship of

Jesus Christ, his humanity, his death in the cross for man's sins, his burial, resurrection and future coming.

II. Fallacies in the Presentation of the Gospel A. The Fallacy that the Gospel primarily concerns Other than sin The good news or the gospel concerns itself with the solution of man's basic problem: sin. However, a person may not sense that he needed this good news unless he is aware of the presence of sin in his own life. More often than not, he only feels the lack of peace or joy in his life or the overwhelming problems that confronted him, which are symptoms of his condition of being alienated from God as a result of sin.

Unfortunately, some presentations of the gospel may focus on these three areas. But man does not need the gospel just so he can be happy or have peace or find solutions to his problems, he needed it in order to be forgiven of his sin. B. The Fallacy That There Are Different Gospels for Different Age-Groups It is wrong to advocate to the idea that the gospel is not the same for all people. That is, there is a separate gospel for the children, young people, adults, unchurched people or those who go to church.

The truth is, there is only one gospel for all, though its ways of explaining may not be the same for all age groups, nevertheless the content should be the same. C. The Fallacy that the Truth is in Other than the Word of God Obviously, this means that truth can be found not only in the word of God. Experience, archeology or fulfilled prophecy may be pointed out as other sources of truth. However, though these three may be a valuable source of denying or confirming truth, it does not create infallible truth.

Only the word of God provides absolute truth and all reasoning should be based on it. D. The Fallacy that cleverness will convict In presenting the gospel others may falsely rely on one's own cleverness of presentation in order to convict a person regarding the truth of the gospel. However, well prepared and well presented gospel presentation does not guarantee salvation or understanding of truth for the Bible clearly states that conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is only the Holy Spirit who can bring successful conviction to acknowledge the truth whether or not a man chooses to believe it. E. The Fallacy that charm will assure results The Bible clearly warned that as bearers of good news, a person should see to it that he does not offend anyone with regards to his manner of dressing, speech or culture especially in view of the fact that the message of the gospel in itself is already an offense or stumbling block for most people (Gal. : 11). But even if man takes this warning to heart, his charming disposition still does not guarantee that the gospel will be accepted. F. The Fallacy that Procedures produce Conversions There is no argument that procedures do produce results such as the hypnotizing effect of music, the intoxicating effect of setting and the moving effect of stories. However, these results cannot be appropriately equated to resulting to conversions.

What is important in the presentation of the gospel message is that whether the people were given words that they can believe in and not only to give them something to do. III. Fallacies in Stating the Content of the Gospel A. The Fallacy of adding baptism Some may wrongfully think that in order to be saved one should be baptized. However, baptism is not part of the gospel for <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-the-gospel/>

if it is then work is added to the gospel of grace. The beliefs that baptism is required for salvation are usually taken from the following verses: . Mark 16: 16. Bible Scholars debated on the original ending of the gospel of Mark so in this basis it is unwise to make verses 9-20 as an absolute guideline. But just in case these verses are originally part of the gospel of Mark, it is more safer to assume that Christ may have referred here to the baptism of the Spirit for it is most likely that these words were spoken at the same time that He was talking in Acts 1: 5 about the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit. 2. Acts 2: 38.

Baptism regenerationists hold on to the belief that this verse means that both repentance and baptism leads to salvation. However, it must be understood that in Bible times the act of baptism is a public sign of one' sincere conversion may it be to Judaism, Christianity or other sects.

Therefore, this verse clearly shows that Peter told the people to repent and to follow the tradition of baptism as a proof of one's sincerity of conversion, so that no one will doubt it.

On the other hand, this verse can be also interpreted to mean that baptism follows as a result of the forgiveness of sin and not in order to be forgiven of sin. 3. Acts 22: 16. This verse may be analyzed by connecting a particular participle to its imperative like the participle (a) " arise" (which is a participle, arising) with (b) " be baptized" (an imperative); and (c) " wash away your sin" (imperative) with (d) " calling on the name of the Lord" (participle).

To make baptism a requirement of salvation, it would require connecting (b) and (c) which could then be read as “ be baptized and wash away your sins”. But this is not to be so, for as shown, both imperatives are in fact connected to each of their own participle, therefore, it means “ to arise from baptism” and to “ call upon the name of the Lord to wash away your sins”. Calling on the name of the Lord would then necessitate forgiveness of sin and not baptism.

B. The Fallacy of misunderstanding Repentance

In Christianity, to acquire salvation means to repent. Repentance means one should not only be sorrowful about specific sins being committed and stop doing it (as most understood about repentance) but it must involve a change of mind about Jesus Christ and trust (have faith) and acknowledge Him as savior.

C. The Fallacy of making surrender of life a part of the gospel

Many Bible scholars argue that in order to be saved one should surrender one’s life or make a commitment to the Lordship of Christ.

Arthur Pink further stressed that it is a lie of the devil to think that one is saved unless he makes Christ Lord of his life. However, the Bible provided many examples of person who were saved but do not show any commitment such as Lot and the believers of Ephesus. Lot was declared in the new testament as a righteous man even though his life does not show as such. The believers in Ephesus were still regarded as born again even though it took them two years after accepting Christ to burn their magic arts and forsake their superstitious practices.

The Lordship problem lies in the failure to “ distinguish salvation from discipleship and makes requirement for discipleship prerequisites for

salvation". Christ in his discourse with the Samaritan woman does not ask her to put her sinful life in order for her to be saved nor does He lecture on her the changes that is expected of her in case she believed but that He simply inform her that she needed to know who He is and ask for His gift of eternal life.

It may look so easy to be saved just by believing, but in a much closer introspection , it is not so, for it is hard to believe in someone that is only known through the Bible much more stake one's own eternal destiny based on that knowledge. II. Conclusion A. The gospel is the good news of man's forgiveness from sins through faith in the complete work of grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is therefore of necessity that man hear and understand this message. However, as with other works of man, the presentation of the gospel and stating its content may be flawed with fallacies.

In the fallacy of presentation, it includes the fallacy that the Gospel primarily concerns other than sin, the fallacy that there are different gospels for different Age-Groups , the fallacy that the Truth is in Other than the Word of God , the fallacy that cleverness will convict , the fallacy that charm will assure results, the fallacy that procedures produce conversions. In the fallacy of stating its content, it includes the fallacy of adding baptism, the fallacy of misunderstanding repentance, the fallacy of making surrender of life a part of the gospel.