



What is the Gospel?

The Gospel – The central theme of the Bible

God's first proclamation of a coming redeemer – Genesis 3:15

To truly understand the good news of the Bible, we must grasp the bad news of the Bible first

Incompatibility Problem:

➤ The Person of God

God is a holy God – righteous and separate from sin
Because of who He is, He cannot dwell with sinful man
God's perfect justice demands that He punish sin and disobedience



➤ Man's Condition

- All have sinned – Romans 3:23
- The wages of sin is death – Romans 6:23a
- Spiritually dead – Ephesians 2:1
- Helpless to help himself – Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5; Galatians 2:16
- Under God's just penalty and destined for an eternity in hell – Revelation 20:14



In the death of Christ, we see the justice of God satisfied and the love of God demonstrated – Romans 5:8

The Essential Elements of the Gospel – 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Vs. 1 - *"The gospel"* – Good News

Vs. 2a - *"By which also ye are saved"*

Vs. 3a - *"I delivered unto you first of all"* – Of first importance

Vs. 3b-4 **3 Essential Elements (Essence) of the Gospel:**

- *"Christ died for our sins"*
- *"He was buried"*
- *"He rose again"*



John 3:16; Acts 16:30, 31; Acts 20:26, 27; Romans 10:9, 10
The gospel is not one way among many – John 14:6; Acts 4:12
Jesus is the only way



Jesus alone qualifies to be the Savior for the following reasons:

- Christ alone was conceived by the Holy Spirit – Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:20, 21; Luke 1:31-35
- Christ alone was God incarnate – John 1:1, 14
- Christ alone lived a sinless life – 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15
- Christ alone died a substitutionary death – Isaiah 53:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Christ alone arose from the dead – 1 Corinthians 15:3-8



Brief Historical Background:

- The Christian church was conceived with Jesus and His disciples and born on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
- Eventually Christianity spread to other areas of the Roman Empire, but wherever it spread Christians were persecuted
For the first two centuries, Christians were persecuted and killed - Regardless, the gospel spread and the blood of the martyrs seemed to validate the message
- In A.D. 313 the Roman Emperor Constantine claimed to see a blazing cross in the sky and the words "In this sign conquer"
- As a result, he converted to Christianity, and made Christianity the state religion (Christians were no longer persecuted)
- Because of Christianity's popularity, many unsaved people entered the church, bring with them pagan Roman practices
- Emperor Constantine gave church leaders religious and political power
- The Word of God was kept away from the majority of the common people

Freedom and Peace Results in Compromise

- Between AD 300 and 400 Christians gained earthly peace and power
- Churches grew rapidly (not all growth is good)
- Many joined the church to gain the good will of one more deity, others joined for social status
- Church members began to identify themselves with earthly institutions and the institutional aspects of the church became overly important
- The gospel became diluted
- Some resisted the church's new status and spent their lives in exile or fled to communities in the desert

Throughout the centuries, segments of the church began to include doctrines and practices that were not found in the Bible nor were part of the early church:

- "Baptismal Regeneration"
- "Infant baptism" (Became compulsory Law AD 416)

During the period of the dark ages (1,200 years), over 50,000,000 Christians died a martyr's death mainly because of their reaction to these two errors

- Special authority of the pope

- **The concept of purgatory** (A place of intermediate state between heaven and hell, at which all must stop to be cleansed from all sins less than damning sins)
- **The immaculate conception of Mary** the mother of Jesus was conceived without sin and that she was sinless.
- **The doctrine of transubstantiation** (The intended turning of the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper into the actual and real body and blood of Christ after a prayer by the priest)
- The general belief that one's good works had to outweigh the bad in order to attain eternal life
- **The Sale of Indulgences** (A new form of penance call indulgences were created in order to raise huge sums of money - The Roman Catholic Church told people that indulgences completely erased one's temporary punishment in purgatory - Indulgences could be purchased for yourself or for someone else)
- **No salvation outside the church (the Catholic Church)** – Be Catholic or be lost

During this period there was an absence of truth – The Word of God was rare. Scripture had taken a lesser importance to the traditions of men.

While the true gospel had been corrupted by officials in the church, God always preserved a remnant who believed the truth of His Word

The Reformation:

The Reformation tried at first to reform the Roman Church

As this proved impossible, the Reformation produced a new wave of Protestant churches

With the beginning of the Reformation, churches “protested” the wrong theology of the Roman Catholic Church and its abusive structure

Reformation Beliefs included:

- Rejection of Papal authority and misuses by the Roman Church
- A return to the Gospel and Biblical authority (No longer led by what the Pope said, but by what the Bible said)
- Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ

In every period of history there have been a few who have been faithful to God and His Word

- **John Wycliffe** – Claimed that there was no need for professional priesthood
- **John Huss** – (1370-1415) Delivered passionate messages against the condition of Romanism
- **Martin Luther** - (Sixteenth Century) As a result of his study of the book of Romans, he was convinced that salvation was by faith alone and his bold proclamation of these truths led to the Protestant Reformation

Many churches today are distorting the Word of God and compromising with the world:

- **Prosperity preaching** (that God wants all to be healthy and wealthy)
- **Secular psychology counseling**
- **Universalism** (Anyone can get to heaven – just be sincere in what you believe)
- **Theistic Evolution** (God created all things through the process of evolution)
- **Acceptance of Homosexuality**

