

From the West Meadow
Pastor Wes Higgins

What is the Gospel? I think we are aware that the word “gospel” means “good news”, but what good news? What was it that Jesus Christ came preaching? It might surprise you, but the good news Jesus preached was not about His death and resurrection. It was not until late into His ministry, perhaps in the third year, that Jesus Christ started to teach the disciples about His death and resurrection on the third day (see Matthew 16:21). The disciples really had no understanding of what a tragic event Jesus’ death was going to be, or even when it would be. At what is known as the Last Supper, they were arguing over their own importance (Luke 22:24), totally missing until later the significance of what was happening.

So what was the good news that Jesus came preaching? Mark 1:14-15 says, “...Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’”

What is the kingdom of God? First, we need to understand what a kingdom is. A kingdom needs area: in this case, the area is the Earth. “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...” (Daniel 2:44). A kingdom needs laws: “...after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts...” (Hebrews 8:10). And a kingdom needs a King or ruler: “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord...” (Revelation 11:15).

Jesus Christ came preaching the good news of a regenerated world—a world at peace, with liberty and justice. A world free from corruption and from the influence of Satan, the present ruler of this age (Romans 8:18-23; Ephesians 2:2).

The gospel, then, essentially comes in two parts. The gospel of Christ as He came preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God prepared for mankind from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34). And the gospel about Christ—the good news that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8), freeing us from the corruption and bondage of this world.

It would be a mistake to think that we could have one gospel without the other. The good news that Jesus Christ’s death covers our sins is great news, but that is not salvation: it opened the door for salvation. Salvation doesn’t come until Christ’s second coming at the setting up of the kingdom of God. “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin (sin was dealt with the first time), for salvation.” (Hebrews 9:27-28).

I submit that the kingdom of God is a literal kingdom, here on earth, ruled over by Jesus Christ and His saints in a time yet future. We as Christians, set free by a loving God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, are ambassadors to that kingdom, living our lives in subjection to all the rules and edicts of that kingdom, receiving the blessings provided by that kingdom here and now, and in the future, eternal life (Mark 10:29-30). Now that’s good news.

Pastor Wes Higgins
West Meadow Ministries
Celebration Church of God
celebrationchurchofGod.org

