

**Spring 2021 Newsletter**  
**Detroit Bible Students**  
P.O. Box 51, Southfield, MI 48037-0051  
Biblenewsletter.org



## THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

***“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.”***  
***Romans 1:16***

Oftentimes, a sign on a church lawn proclaims, “we teach the full gospel,” or calls itself “The Full Gospel Church.” According to Strong’s *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, the word “gospel” means “to announce good news.” Professor Thayer’s Lexicon agrees on the use of the word defining it, “to announce glad tidings.” The word in the Greek is *euangelizo*, from which we get “evangelize,” which means the good news, glad tidings, or joy that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Tim. 1:15) It is the word the angels used when announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds; “behold, I bring you good tidings (*euangelizo*) of great joy, which shall be to all people.” So, to hold up the banner of the Gospel should mean the good news of God’s love and gracious plan of salvation in Christ as taught by Jesus himself when he walked the earth. “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of good news of the kingdom.” (Matt 4:23)

However, in some unaccountable manner, a “full gospel” sermon has come to be almost universally understood to mean the minister’s figuratively shaking the congregation over an abyss of everlasting torture in an effort to intimidate them into a reform of life so that they might escape so awful an eternity. Is this what the Apostle meant when he said, “I

am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ?”

When our first parents disobeyed God, the penalty pronounced upon them was **death**—not life in some other reality. God told them, “cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ...By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for **you are dust, and to dust you shall return.**” (Gen. 3:18,19; 2:7,17)

The Hebrew scriptures give no hint of any other expectation in death than that of unconsciousness. That death was the cessation of life and that there is no consciousness in death was clearly evidenced by the use of the word “**sleep.**” Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, “there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” Thus, throughout the Old Testament the dead are spoken of as “sleeping,” as in a dreamless sleep. (Deut.31:16; 2 Sam. 7:12; 1 Kings 1:21; 14:20; 11:43; Psa. 13:3; Job 3:13; 14:13; Dan. 12:2; Psa.6:5)

Jesus, who asserted that he alone had come from heaven and no one else had yet ascended to heaven, (John 3:13; Matt 11:11; Luke 7:28; Matt. 6:10) used the same figure of

sleep when Lazarus died, told his disciples “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” When the disciples misunderstood him to mean the restorative sleep after a fever has broken, Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died.” (John 11:11,14; see also, Acts 13:36; 1 Cor. 15:57; and 1 Thess. 4:14))

However, when Jesus and his Apostles were no longer on the scene, Satan saw his chance to promote “his other gospel,” consistent with his lie in Eden. Therefore, before examining the gospel of which Paul was “not ashamed,” we should take a look at some of the alternate “gospels” offered by the various life-after-death creeds of Christendom.

During the two thousand years of the Christian era, three main “gospels” rose to the forefront of orthodoxy. Although quite different in practice and concept, they are all predicated on Satan’s lie, “thou shalt not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4) Jesus said of Satan that, “He was a murderer from the beginning [for bringing death upon Adam’s race]...for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44)

According to Roman Catholicism, the teaching is that all mankind have fallen into sin and are under the sentence of eternal torment. However, Christ accomplished a redemptive work which, supplemented by the sacrifices of the mass and by prayers and penances, permits all Roman Catholic believers to escape that eternal torment which will be the sure portion of all heretics, regardless of their good works or morals. As for its own people, it holds that refinement is needed at death even for its highest officials, including bishops and Popes. They all, therefore, must spend some time in a place called Purgatory for purification by fire in preparation for heaven. Meanwhile, all Protestants and non-Catholics have but one fate—to suffer endless torment in hell. It does not seem to be very good news, not even for those who get the very best it has to offer, and it certainly holds only very **bad** tidings for all out of harmony with Papacy.

The Protestant doctrine of the election of the church and the reprobation of all others, generally known as Calvinism after its originator, claims that belief in Christ is essential to salvation. However, it requires more than a mere knowledge of Christ and belief in him as a good and exemplary man who died a martyr’s death, but it also demands faith in Christ’s death as a sacrifice for man’s sin along with some manifestation of righteousness of life in the believer. Consequently, according to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the heathen of past ages and any of present times who

have never heard “the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12) have been “passed by” by God as non-elect.

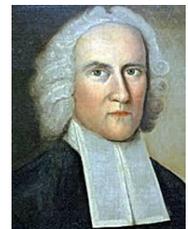
What does this mean – “passed by” or “non-elect?” It means,



according to Calvinism, that God, who knew the end from the beginning, before creating this world and mankind upon it, determined that he would predestine the vast majority of them to an eternity of torture. Carrying out this diabolical plan, he also prepared a place large enough to hold the seven billion non-elect with fuel sufficient to produce the necessary combustion to roast them there to all eternity.

Moreover, Calvinism also asserts the belief that God’s favor toward the elect is not because of any worthiness on their part, nor because of any works which they have done. But it is “of his own sovereign grace” that God saves them from all the horrible conditions which he has predestined shall be upon the others. Now if the salvation of the elect is not because of their works or worthiness but because of God’s sovereign grace only, the simplest mind can see that God might without any violation of principle have extended that sovereign grace to others – to all, since it is merely of his own volition that any are saved.

An example of the thinking resulting from so hideous a doctrine was expressed by the celebrated Congregationalist preacher Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), who, after picturing the awful torments awaiting the non-elect, was asked, “Would not the thought of the anguish of the lost mar the bliss of God’s people in glory?” His answer in substance was, “No; such matters will not affect you; you will look over the battlements of heaven and see in torment your neighbors and friends, yea, your own parents and children, brothers and sisters, and turning round will praise God the louder because his **justice(?)** is made manifest.”



God’s standard of justice is “an eye for an eye.” (Deut. 19:21; Exod. 21:24) What sin or crime could equal an eternity of torment? Paul would assuredly have been ashamed of such a Gospel, and so are all true Christians, who have the godly spirit of love and justice. Thankfully, this “gospel of damnation” is not so widely preached as it once was because

more enlightened minds today repudiate it, but it remains a part of orthodox theology and is still heard in some "revival" meetings and wherever the Salvation Army is at work.

In reaction to the extremes of Calvinism, a view equally insupportable by the scriptures is that God loves everybody and is doing all that he can to save everybody. On the surface this seems much more loving than Calvinism, but it will also be found defective, very far from being either a reasonable or a Scriptural Gospel.

The Scripture says, "God is love" (1 John 4:16; John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:3-6) and he sent Jesus because he loved the world, but is he doing all that he can to save the whole world at this time? If Calvinism strips the world's Creator of love and justice, this doctrine denies his power and wisdom. If all the past ages have shown no better result in winning the world to God, does it mean that he is incapable of doing the work he undertook to do? Is God engaged in a contest with Satan, each seeking to capture the human family? If so, to the discredit of this doctrine, Satan appears to be the victor thus far!

Let us now proceed to examine the true Gospel, presented to us in the Word of God. The word "gospel" itself should be the clue. -It should save the intelligent Christian from being misled by the various theories of bad tidings of great misery for nearly all people, mis-called "gospel." He who thinks it *good news* that billions of the human family are to be eternally tormented at God's behest is either not a Christian at all, or is decidedly undeveloped in Christian character, and is at most only a "babe in Christ," unlearned in "the love of God which passeth all understanding." (Eph. 3:18,19) Jesus said to be children of our Father in heaven, the standard required is to "love our enemies." (Matt. 5:43-48)

The Apostle clearly stated the "gospel" when in Galatians he wrote: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.'" (Gal. 3:8) Some may think this been fulfilled by "teaching all nations" (Matt. 28:19,20) as missionaries took the gospel into far off lands. The Apostle explains; "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his seed [Israel after the flesh was Abraham's natural "seed" but the Apostle Paul refers his spiritual "seed"] ...who is Christ.... And **if you are Christ's**, then **you** [Christians] are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise." (Gal. 3:16,26-29) Those who are part of Christ by baptism into Christ are **not the blessed**, they are part of **the "seed" that will do the blessing** of all the families of the earth—everyone else. (Rev. 20:4,6)

Note this carefully: it does not say, In thy seed shall one out of a million of the families of the earth be blessed, and the remainder doomed to an indescribably horrible eternity. The whole Gospel is a Gospel of blessing.

But someone might ask, didn't Christ die only for the sins of the Church and not for the sins of the world, and consequently the sins of the world cannot be forgiven them. We answer, No, "Jesus ... was made a little inferior to the angels in order that through God's grace **He might taste death for every human being...**" (Heb. 2:9, *Weymouth*) "He is a propitiation [satisfaction] for our [the Church's] sins, and **not for ours only**, but also for the **sins of the whole world.**" (1 John 2:2) What could be plainer than this? God is following an established plan by which he will eventually bless all the families of the earth. (Acts 15:14-18)

God cannot lie or be false. (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18) Therefore, his works must be true to his own character. God told Adam disobedience would result in death, extinction. The lie that he and his race would continue to exist after death came from Satan, not God! (Gen. 2:17) God knows our weaknesses and makes provision for us. (Psa. 103) "Let the wicked forsake his way, ... let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him ... **for he will abundantly pardon.** For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (Isa 55:7,8) "I am merciful, saith the LORD, and **I will not keep anger forever.**" (Jer. 3:12) Therefore, God has made a provision for a resurrection of all who have died and the restitution of all that was lost in his kingdom. (John 5:28,29; 11:23-25; 1 Cor. 15:13,14,17,18,20-22; Heb. 11:35; Acts 3:19-21)

*Doctrines of eternal torment are of man's creation.  
God's plan is for blessing.*

Please send me the following FREE booklet  
**AFTER ARMAGEDDON, GOD'S KINGDOM**

Mail your request to:  
Detroit Bible Students Ecclesia  
PO Box 51  
Southfield, MI 48037-0051

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

