

## **WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?**

The word “gospel” means “good news” or “glad tidings.” The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. However, the gospel is more than this – it is the revelation, not only of the facts of the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, but also of how one may receive the benefits of those facts.

The gospel is not limited to the first four books of the New Testament. The good news doesn’t stop with the fact that Jesus shed His precious blood, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Read Matthew 28:18-19 and consider the following: Jesus parting command to His disciples was, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations....” But, what then? What is to be done by those who have heard and believed the facts of the gospel? “Baptizing them....” Then what? What is to be done for those who have believed the facts and obeyed the Lord’s command to be baptized? “Teaching them to observe ALL THINGS that I have commanded you.”

As the time for His death drew near our Lord promised His apostles that the Holy Spirit would be sent to guide them “into all truth” (John 16:7-14). This truth, which the Holy Spirit would take from Jesus and reveal to His apostles, would not be given them until after Jesus had gone away. That promise began to be fulfilled on the first Jewish Pentecost after Jesus resurrection and ascension into heaven (Acts 2). It had its fulfillment when the last word of the New Testament was penned by inspired men. Today that truth – all truth – has been revealed (2 Peter 1:3). We have it before us today. It is the gospel of Christ in its completeness. Not only the facts of the gospel, but the commands, promises and spiritual blessings revealed in the entirety of the New Testament – from Matthew to Revelation.

The gospel is that body of truth revealed in the pages of the New Testament. It is described as “the doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2), the “apostle’s doctrine” (Acts 2:42), the “good doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:6), “sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1), the “doctrine of God” (Titus 2:10), and “the doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9-11). It is also called “the faith” (Galatians 1:23), “the common faith” (Titus 1:14), and “the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27). It is called “the word” (2 Timothy 4:2). Preaching the word is the same as preaching the gospel. (Acts 4:2, 8:12, 14).

Why is this important? Some want to separate the gospel from the doctrine of Christ. They say “doctrine” is not as important as the gospel. Their view is that if one accepts that Jesus is the Christ then “doctrine” makes little if any difference. However, the New Testament does not make such a distinction. The gospel, the faith, and the doctrine are all one and the same thing and therefore vital to one’s salvation. One cannot believe the gospel while rejecting the doctrine of Christ.