



## How Important Is The Gospel?

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Years ago I wrote software for a company in the Akron area whose owner was an attorney and over the time we established a relationship. One day he invited me to his home to show me how he made custom stained-glass windows and we talked about the Bible. He, being raised Catholic, was taught that meager men wrote the Bible and it was no more significant for faith than any other writing. When I mentioned fulfilled Messianic prophecy he immediately interrupted saying, the prophecy of Jesus was written at the time of Jesus, thus is not valid. I then explained that the Old Testament was written over a 1500 year period, ending in about 450 B.C. and that by 250 B.C the entire Old Testament was translated into the Greek language, “the Septuagint”, which clearly proves that there was at least 250 years between the Messianic prophecies and their fulfillment.

Those prophecies from the Old Testament pointed to the coming Messiah and are tremendous. They were clear and specific, foretelling the coming of Jesus. Well over 300 distinct predictions were literally fulfilled in Christ, and below are just a few examples:

- The Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, and He was (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1).
- There would be the killing of children in Bethlehem, and it happened (Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:18).
- The Messiah was to be preceded by a messenger, and he came (Isa. 40:3; John 1:23).
- The Messiah was to enter Jerusalem riding a donkey, and He did (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:7).
- The Messiah was to be betrayed by a friend who ate with him (Psa. 41:9; Matt.26:25).
- The Messiah was to be sold for 30 pieces of silver, and it was so (Zech. 11:12; Matt. 26:15).
- The money will be used for a potter's field, and so it was (Zech.11:13; Matt. 27:9-10).
- Messiah will stand silent before His accusers, and He did (Isa. 53:7; Matt. 27:12; 1Pet. 2:23).
- The Messiah was to die by crucifixion and He did (Psa. 22:16; Matt. 27:35; Acts 2:23).

Jesus would be born of a virgin, called Emmanuel, born in Bethlehem, great persons would come to adore Him, there would be the killing of children in Bethlehem, He would be called out of Egypt and He would be preceded by a forerunner. He would be anointed with the Holy Spirit, would live in poverty and meekness, tenderness, and compassion. He would be without the deceit, but full of zeal, preaching with parables, working miracles and still He would be rejected by His own Jewish brethren. Betrayed by a friend for thirty pieces of silver, forsaken by His disciples. All these things happened, so how could you believe the Bible to be a mere work of man. What man can predict tomorrow's weather with this kind of accuracy, let alone 300 years before it rains. Yet there is more about Him that was foretold: He would die with intense suffering yet be silent under that suffering, He would be struck on the cheek, He would be spit upon, His hands and His feet would be nailed to the cross, forsaken by God, He would cry out, “*My God My God, why have You forsaken Me?*” His garments would be parted lots would be cast for them, He would be numbered among the transgressors, die but not a bone of His body would be broken. He would be pierced, crucified, buried with the rich, and He would be raised from the dead, and ascend back to the right hand of God the Father. All this and more recorded hundreds of years before Jesus ever entered this world. **Many of these prophecies are fulfilled not by His friends but by His enemies who stand to lose the most with their fulfillment.**

So, why read the Gospel as it is from God? Because no mere man could have compiled such an accurate list of fulfilled events, the Bible is from God's own breath (2Tim. 3:16) and it provides the only way to heaven, to God the Father, and eternal life!

So, we ask and answer, how important is the Gospel? One of the last earthly concerns of Jesus, before ascending to the Father, was that the gospel was preached. He commissioned His apostles, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15), and the Lord's disciples did just that. Acts 8:4, "*Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word*", and Acts 8:25 records, "*So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.*" (See also: Acts 14:27; Acts 14:21).

Now since the Gospel is to be preached it must have an audience, therefore, hearing it is a necessary predecessor to believing it. At the Jerusalem discussion, recorded in Acts 15, Peter mentioned how by his mouth, "...*the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe*" (v. 7). Once heard, the Gospel is God's saving power. Now because "*All have sinned...*" (Rom. 3:23) and "...*the wages of sin is death...*" (Rom. 6:23), we need to be saved and salvation is not possible apart from the gospel of Christ. Paul said, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...*" (Rom. 1:16).

Important also because we will be judged according to the Gospel. Those in Rome were informed, "*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*" (John 12:48). See also: (Rom. 2:16). If I am going to be judged one day by the Gospel, I need to hear it! What about you?

You cannot "*call on the name of the Lord*" unless you hear the Gospel first. That makes it very important. Paul wrote, "*13 For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" But then asked, "*14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who [a]preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report? With all the fulfilled prophecy before you, will you believe the report? Only by faith can you believe as Paul continues, "17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom. 10:13-17).

One great benefit of the Gospel is that it brings blessings to us. Paul said, "...*But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*" (Rom. 15:29). All spiritual blessing are in Christ as Paul also wrote, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*" (Eph. 1:3), and salvation is in Christ, which comes only through the scriptures (2Tim. 2:10, 3:15). Now reason this out! If blessings are in Christ, and salvation is in Christ: Isn't it rather important to know how you can get into Christ? Certainly, it is for the Gospel has establishing power.

**ONE IS ESTABLISHED THROUGH THE GOSPEL:** Romans 16:25 teaches, "*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began.*"

**ONE IS BEGOTTEN THROUGH THE GOSPEL:** Being born again is essential to kingdom entrance (John 3:3-7). Did you know the gospel is the begetting seed? "...*in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel*" (1 Cor. 4:15). (Read also: Luke 8:4-15)

**HEARING THE GOSPEL BRINGS ONE HOPE:** "*because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel*" (Col. 1:5). In verse 23, the Colossians were admonished, "...*if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven...*"

According to the Gospel the only way to "Get into Christ", which is where salvation is, is to believe and be baptized (Mark 16:16). You see baptism puts you into His church (Acts 2:47), which is His body (Col. 1:18,

24). Romans chapter 6 verses 3 and 4 describe baptism as a death and burial with Christ, and after which by "*the glory of the Father*" one is raised up to begin a new life in Christ. We invite you to come, hear the gospel preached and to obey it.

God Bless you

In Love

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