

Have You Believed And Obeyed the Gospel?

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TEXT

*(Mark 1:14-15 KJV) Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.***

(Rom 1:16 KJV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

INTRODUCTION

There's an old saying that says, "The devil is in the details", and it is often used to point out that if we don't pay attention to all the details, we'll have the devil to pay! There are multitudes of preachers in pulpits, and on radio and television, and internet sites that don't seem to have much of a passion for details, and as a result they serve up a salvation message that I call Piccadilly style: You know how that goes, "I'll take some of this, but I don't like that!" It's as though they want to make the "Plan of Salvation" even simpler than it really is. They've boiled it down to a concise statement: "All it takes is simple faith plus nothing and minus nothing!"

What I want to demonstrate through scripture is that when it comes to salvation "God is in the details" and if we ignore them, we won't have the devil to pay, we'll have a Holy God to answer to.

Have You Believed And Obeyed the Gospel?

First of all, what is the gospel? It literally means: "Good News", but Paul explains it fully in 1 Cor 15:1- 4:

1 Cor 15:1- 4 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

(That is the gospel in a nutshell)!

So the first thing we must do is to obey what Jesus told us to do: "...**repent ye, and believe the gospel.**" According to what we just read, that means we must believe that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and was resurrected from the dead on the third day.

Paul explains that the full Gospel message had to be fulfilled, i.e. the death, burial, AND resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ:

1 Cor 15:12-22 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: 14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. 15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

These scriptures tell us that if Christ were not resurrected from the dead we could believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as much as we want, but we wouldn't be saved.

As Paul adds, "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." This means also that if Christ wasn't resurrected, even the precious blood of the Lamb of God couldn't atone for our sins, and those who had "fallen asleep" in Christ had perished. Verse 19 says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." "In this life only" means "on this side of the grave"

As I said a few moments ago, it takes all three elements of the gospel: the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ to procure our salvation; not just the shedding of His blood and His death.

Rom 4:20-25 (Speaking of Abraham) He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered (unto His executioners) for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

And before we can be justified in the sight of God, we must first believe in the fact that God raised the man Christ Jesus from the dead.

(Rom 5:9-11 KJV) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. (Restoration to God's favor).

The question arises, "How do we access the atonement, the sanctification and the justification that Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection procured for us?"

This is where obeying the gospel comes in

Obeying the Gospel

(Phil 2:5-7 KJV) 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Paul gives us the key to understanding how we are to follow His example by humbling ourselves and being obedient to the doctrine he describes in Romans Chapter 6:

(Rom 6:1-5 KJV) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness* of his death, we shall be also in the likeness* of his resurrection:

*homoionoma, hom-oy'-o-mah; from G3666; a form; abstr. resemblance:--made like to, likeness, shape, similitude.

IMPORTANT*** - Paul is telling us that Just as the man Christ Jesus had to experience all three elements of the gospel: the death, the burial, and the resurrection in order to complete what was required by God to purchase the salvation of mankind, so we too have to experience the likeness or similitude of dying, being buried, and being resurrected to walk in newness of life. Then in Romans 6 verse 17 Paul summarizes by expressing his thanks that we obeyed the doctrine that was delivered to us:

Rom 6:17 KJV) But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Now we can look at the “details” of the doctrine which we “obeyed from the heart” or should obey. (These are important “details”, and remember “God is in the details”).

1 Cor 6:9-11 (NIV) Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

**628. apolouo, ap-ol-oo'-o; from G575 and G3068; to wash fully, i.e. (fig.) have remitted (reflex.):--wash (away).

What do you suppose Paul is referring to when he says, you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God?

He's referring to baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ AND receiving the Spirit of our God, just as Peter preached in Acts 2:38 on the day of Pentecost!

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38)

In Titus 3:5, Paul clarifies some “details” concerning how God saved us:

(Titus 3:5 KJV) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by (means of) the washing* of regeneration (new birth), and renewing of the Holy Ghost;**

***3067. loutron, loo-tron'; from G3068; a bath, i.e. (fig.) baptism:--washing.

Obviously Paul taught exactly the same doctrine as Peter since Acts 2:38, 1 Cor 6:11, and Titus 3:5 are all describing the same process!

Titus 3:5 makes it clear that when we obey the command to be buried with Jesus in baptism, this is not considered a work of righteousness!!

Next let's look at the story of Peter preaching the gospel to the first gentiles and see what happened. (Imagine if you can, listening to the words of the Apostle Peter as he preaches to these people):

Acts 10:42- 46 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. 44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Jesus). (Just as he commanded the people on the day of Pentecost)!

Now let's see to whom God will give the Holy Ghost: (Fill in the blank)

Acts 5:32 KJV And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

What does the Bible have to say about those who don't obey the gospel?

(1 Pet 4:17 NIV) For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

(2 Th 1:7-8 KJV) And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

CONCLUSION

What does the Bible really mean when it says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved? The fact is, that to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" means to believe He is who He says He is, accomplished what the gospel message says he accomplished, AND that we should obey whatever He commands us to do!

The renowned Greek scholar Joseph Henry Thayer in his Greek Lexicon defines Bible faith as "a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah - the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined (joined together) with obedience to Christ."

Genuine Bible faith **always** inspires obedience to God's plan and purpose!