

What is the gospel message?

By

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The word ‘gospel’ actually means ‘good news’. But before the good news, there was the bad news of Adam and Eve sinning by disobeying God (Genesis 3:1-24). Sin can be defined as any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude and nature. Since all members of the human race are represented by Adam and Eve, it follows that every human being has inherited their sinful nature. Additionally, like Adam and Eve we too sin ourselves (Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-3).

Sin has to be punished

God is holy and righteous so He can have nothing to do with sin, and because He is just, sin has to be punished. Thus, because of sin, not only are we eternally separated from God, we are also faced with eternal punishment of an infinite length of time in hell, beginning with the sting of death (Romans 6:23a).

Sinners need to be rescued

Only someone who is sinless can rescue the whole human race that is drowning in the sea of sin. The good news is that there is someone who can do it and has done it. His name is Jesus Christ. The reason God sent Jesus to save us from our sin is because of His love for us (John 3:16). However, since God is a God of justice, the sin that separates us from Him has to be dealt with for us to be forgiven and reconciled to Him. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. Jesus, who is both God (Colossians 2:9) and man (John 1:14) and who lived a sinless life (1 Peter 2:22) is the only one who could die in our place for our sins to be forgiven.

Forgiveness of sins and victory over death

While Jesus' death on the cross ensures forgiveness of sins, His resurrection from the dead confirms His victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:54-55) and promises that His followers will also rise from the dead and will inherit the kingdom as God's children (John 1:12). Already in this life, they are born again, cleansed and sanctified by the Holy

Spirit. They now live as children of God, and are longing for the day when Jesus will return to judge humanity and to create new heavens and a new earth. Then God's Kingdom will be fulfilled, and believers will live eternally in a loving relationship with their Creator. In his teachings and miracles, Jesus has offered us a glimpse of what this Kingdom life will be like.

A free gift

This salvation that Jesus has obtained for us is offered to us as a free gift (Romans 5:16, 6:23). We can either accept it or reject it. We cannot work for it and can only receive it by faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). The apostle Paul tells us, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

The essential elements of the gospel

To summarize, the essential elements of the gospel are:

All of humankind has sinned and deserves God's punishment

Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay for those sins

Jesus Christ arose from the dead to provide everlasting life for those who believe in Him

Salvation and eternal life are offered as a free gift to all

How to respond

How should we respond to this good news? The New Testament calls us to “repent and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). This means that we must turn from our rebellion against God and submit to him (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10) and that we must also trust that Christ has provided the rescue we need from sin.

If this is true of you, you’ll find yourself in agreement with the following prayer, which is a wonderful way to respond to the good news of the gospel message:

“Lord Jesus. I come to you and confess that I am a sinner. Please forgive me. I trust in what you have done on the cross. I believe that you have died on the cross, were buried, and rose from the dead for my sins. Please cleanse me of my sin and be the Lord of my life. Thank

you for receiving me into your kingdom. I pray this in Your Name. Amen.”

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