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Doctrinal Outlines

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GOSPEL

I. Introduction

- A. Ask any professing Christian whether he believes the Gospel, and he will immediately respond with a resounding "Yes!"
- B. But press that same person to explain just what that Gospel is and, if he is able to reply at all, he will almost surely give an answer that is false!
- C. This is frightening. For Jesus Christ commanded that true Christians repent and believe the Gospel (Mark 1:14-15). How can one believe if he doesn't even know what the Gospel is? And Jesus commanded His true disciples to preach the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15). How can they unless they understand the Gospel message?
- D. Further, God inspired the apostle Paul to pronounce a double curse on all who would pervert, twist or teach another gospel than the true message Jesus brought (Galatians 1:8-9).
- E. How many of this world's churches are unwittingly bringing such curses on themselves and their followers simply because they don't know what the true Gospel is?

II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. The Gospel is the good news Jesus Christ brought and announced of the Kingdom of God.
- B. And for those few God is calling now, that message includes the knowledge of how we may enter that promised Kingdom.

III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. This is decidedly not what is being taught by most churches today. As strange as it seems, today's churches have lost, changed, twisted and perverted the true Gospel. Some groups have actually changed the

title of the Gospel to the "social gospel" or the "gospel of wisdom" or some other nonbiblical title.

- B. But by far the most common mistake has been to take the words gospel of God and apply them to a different (false) message than the one brought by our Savior Jesus Christ. Usually they preach a message about Jesus Christ -- about His birth, life and death -- even though writers admit that the Bible does not provide a complete account of Jesus' life because that is not its purpose.
- C. Or they preach the subject of law and grace -- usually stressing that "we don't have to keep the law anymore" -- as the Gospel message.
- D. But these subjects, although important and necessary when rightly understood, are not the message Jesus brought. They are not the Gospel!

IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. Actually, although it has been forgotten by this world, the true Gospel message is plain and easy to explain.
- B. Just what, then, is the Gospel?
 1. To start, the word gospel is translated from a Greek word that means "a good message," that is, "good news." This, of course, is commonly understood even by the churches of this world. But, the Gospel is the good news of what?
 2. No clearer verse can be found to answer that question than Mark 1:14. Read it in your own Bible: "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God."
 3. There it is: The Gospel is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God!
 4. This Gospel -- the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God -- has not been preached by this world's churches, and hence they have not understood the truth about that Kingdom.
 5. Yet that Kingdom is spoken of in both Old and New Testaments.
 - a. Daniel, for example, spoke of this Kingdom in Daniel 2:44-45: "And in the days of these

kings [i.e., a prophesied end-time empire of united kings] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these [other] kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

- b. Isaiah also speaks of it: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder.... Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice" (Isaiah 9:6-7).
 - c. Many other verses could be cited. But it is quite clear that what the prophets speak of here is indeed a literal kingdom -- with laws, rulers, domain and subjects -- not merely a spiritual or ethereal kingdom set up in "men's hearts."
 - d. The Kingdom of God is a literal kingdom to be set up here on earth during the Millennium after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
 - e. It will break in pieces the kingdoms of this world and rule the physical nations of this world, with Jesus Christ as the head.
 - f. It will be a time of peace, prosperity and tranquility, when all God's perfect laws and ways will be administered (Isaiah 11:1-10, Micah 4:1-5).
- C. Further, as the New Testament emphasizes, those who are saved in this age will rule with Jesus Christ over these nations as kings themselves, but with eternal life as spirit beings (Revelation 3:21).
 - D. And, astoundingly, these spirit beings, the saved, will not be mere angels, but members of God's own Family, on His own plane of existence, and hence very God themselves under the Father and the Son (I John 3:1-3, I Corinthians 15:35-58, Romans 8:12-17).
 - E. Therefore, the Kingdom of God is, in its spiritual sense, the Family of God, its members on the God-plane. And when the time comes in God's plan that all physical humans who will qualify for that Kingdom have qualified and have been born into that

Family, then that Kingdom will be only spirit beings who are literal children of God.

- F. Now that truly is breathtaking good news! And it is the very same good news ("Gospel") that Jesus Christ brought!
- G. Jesus' coming and His role as the announcer of the Gospel were precisely told by Malachi: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me [this role was fulfilled by John the Baptist]. And the Lord [Christ], whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant [i.e., the bringer of the Gospel -- the good news], in whom you delight" (Malachi 3:1).
- H. Jesus Christ was the messenger who brought -- announced -- the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. No wonder He is called "the Word," for He is the communicator of God's great plan to humanity. Yet, the message was not His message, but the Father's (John 12:49-50, 14:24).
- I. And Jesus had no doubts what that message was, for He preached it -- the Gospel of the Kingdom -- everywhere He went (Mark 1:14-15, Matthew 9:35, 24:14).
- J. And the apostles also were not confused about the message. They knew that they must at first preach to the crowds who Jesus Christ was, for in the first century Jesus' identity was not taken for granted as it is today. They therefore prefaced their preaching with explanation that Jesus Christ was the Messiah -- the "Messenger of the covenant" who was expected (Malachi 3:1-3) -- and they used the unanswerable reality of the resurrection to prove it.
- K. But they knew the Gospel was not merely who Christ was, but what He said. It was the Gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 9:1-2, 10:1-2, 9, Acts 8:12, 20:25, 28:30-31, Matthew 24:14), and it was preached to Jews and gentiles alike (Acts 10:34-38).
- L. To be sure, for the relatively few whom God is calling now, the Gospel message of course includes not merely the announcement of the Kingdom of God, but the details of salvation and of how one can enter and be born into that glorious Kingdom.

- M. But the churches of this world have erred in thinking that God is trying to save the whole world now, and have for this and other reasons fallen into the teaching of a false gospel -- the emphasis of a wrong focus -- ignorance of the Kingdom of God.
- N. What a pity! And what a curse has been the ignoring of the true Gospel by the preachers of this world.
- O. Yet God's Church has not forgotten it, but has been preaching it for the first time in 1,900 years, through the printed word and over the airwaves in accordance with Jesus' command in Mark 16:15. And, in Matthew 24:14, Jesus explicitly stated that this Gospel of the Kingdom was to be preached in all the world for a witness.

V. Key Verses

Since it helps in personal study to remember key verses, here are some on this subject:

- A. Mark 1:14 -- the Gospel is the message of the Kingdom of God.
- B. Malachi 3:1 -- Jesus was the prophesied messenger of that good news.
- C. John 12:49-50 -- Jesus was not the originator of the message, but merely repeated what the Father told Him to say.
- D. Luke 9:1-2, Acts 10:34-39 -- the apostles also taught the same Gospel.
- E. Galatians 1:8-9 -- a curse is pronounced on any who would teach another gospel.
- F. Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16 -- the Church is commissioned to preach this Gospel to the whole world.
- G. Matthew 24:14 -- a prophecy that the Gospel will be preached to the world before the end of this age.

VI. Conclusion

Yes, the Gospel message is plain. It is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God and includes, for the few

now called of God, the way of entering into that Kingdom.

This world's temporary ignorance of the meaning of the true Gospel may sadden us who patiently wait for God's Kingdom. Yet we may rest assured in the knowledge that, nonetheless, the Kingdom is every day one step closer to being here!