



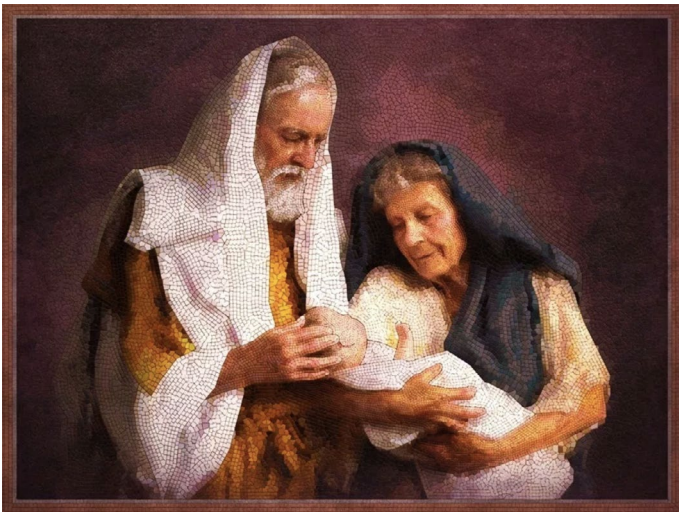
ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

Volume 7, Issue 43

The obvious difference that few have noted.

The most illuminating question concerning the gospel to Israel and the gospel to the nations is: *How is each group saved?*



THE GOSPEL GIVEN TO ABRAHAM

The gospel of the Circumcision is the good news given to Abraham by God that, through Abraham's seed, all the nations of the Earth would be blessed. This was the beginning of the nation of Israel. Abraham's grandson, Jacob, was re-named "Israel," and his twelve sons became the famous nation (it's frequently in the news) to whom God revealed Himself and His plan for the future political dominion of Earth.

The promise God made to Abraham was later known as the gospel of the Circumcision because God introduced the rite of circumcision (removing the foreskin of the male reproductive organ) among Israel males as a see-it-every-

day reminder that baby-making is ultimately of God. Abraham received a double dose of this reality at the birth of his son Isaac, who was miraculously conceived after both Abraham and his wife Sarah had become sexually decrepit.

When Jesus Christ walked the Earth, He not only declared Himself to be the Son of God, but the One divinely anointed to permanently remove Israel's corporate sin and to lead her into the promised kingdom. He was to be their chief Prophet, King and Priest. His whole purpose, while on Earth, was to confirm the promises that God made to Abraham. Paul writes in Romans 15:8—

For I am saying that Christ has become the Servant of the Circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the patriarchal promises.

This was so thoroughly Jesus Christ's earthly purpose that He Himself said—

I was not commissioned except for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matthew 15:24).

It should be obvious to all that, at the second coming of Christ, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will rise from the dead and enter the millennial kingdom as rulers and reigners. But let's not take anything for granted. Here are the words of Jesus Himself in Matthew 8:11—

Now I am saying to you that many from the east and the west shall be arriving and reclining with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

In light of this truth, my question is: What does an Israelite have to believe in order to be a part of this fabled enterprise? Simply that Jesus Christ is the One

appointed by God to be the Messiah of Israel. But what about before Christ? Before Christ's advent, a Jew—to be saved—would have to heed Moses and look *forward*, in faith, to the coming One of whom Moses spoke. (This would also require accompanying works, i.e. lawkeeping.) *After* the coming of Christ, saving faith required an acknowledgment that Jesus was the Christ prophesied by Moses—with works to follow. Along this line, here are Moses' words as he looks forward to the coming Messiah. Deuteronomy 18: 15-20—

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him...The Lord said to me, "They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die."

Sure enough, Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophecy when speaking to His disciples in Matthew 16:13-18—



Now Jesus, coming into parts of Caesarea Philippi, asked His disciples, saying, "Who are men saying the Son of Mankind is?" Now they say, "These, indeed, John the baptist; yet others Elijah; yet others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He is saying to them, "Now you, who are you saying that I am?" Now answering, Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Now, answering, Jesus said to him, "Happy are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood does not reveal it to you, but My Father Who is in the heavens. Now I, also, am saying to you that you are Peter, and on this rock will I be building My ecclesia, and the gates of the unseen shall not be prevailing against it.

What was "the rock" upon which Jesus would build His Jewish ecclesia? It was the confession that He was the Christ, the One appointed by God and prophesied of by Moses to be the chief Prophet, King and Priest of Israel, Who would lead His people into the kingdom.

THE GOSPEL OF PAUL

We all know that the majority of Jews in Jesus' day rejected Him as the chief Prophet, King and Priest of Israel. (They based their appraisal of Christ on style rather than substance; this is the continual national sin of Israel: judging things by sight rather than spirit.) And so it happened to them as Moses predicted: they died and will not be resurrected at the second coming of Christ; no kingdom for them. They perished just as their ancestors died in the wilderness due to faithlessness, and were thus denied entry into the Promised Land.

Because of this colossal national mistake, God temporarily set Israel aside in order to introduce a new gospel to non-Israelites, having nothing to do with the promises God made to Abraham. The new gospel had nothing to do with being Jewish. It had nothing to do with observing Mosaic law. It had nothing to do with rites or ceremonies. It had nothing to do with attempting a sinless life or striving to be worthy. It had everything to do with the delight of God's will in demonstrating to humanity and to a heavenly citizenry the depths of His grace in granting unworthies of disreputable genealogy a destiny higher even than Earth, namely, heaven. The inaugural recipient of this gospel and its chief spokesman was the apostle Paul. His gospel became known as "the gospel of the Uncircumcision" (Galatians 2:7) to contrast it with the gospel that had been given to Abraham. This gospel would have nothing to do with reproductive prowess. Thus, adherence to it left penises as God made them.

PROFOUND DIFFERENCE

Each gospel has beliefs belonging to it. What will those called to the Uncircumcision gospel (Paul's gospel) be believing? Will they be required to confess that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel? No. Why? Because this gospel has nothing to do with Israel. Herein, then, lies a profound difference between the Israel Gospel and the Gentile gospel that careless expositors speed past without even rolling down the windows: *each gospel has its own particular beliefs*.

And this is consistent throughout the New Testament, as I will show you.

THE BELIEF OF PAUL PEOPLE

Here is what Paul people will be believing, the details of which were announced by Paul himself in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4—

Now I am making known to you, brethren, the evangel which I bring to you, which also you accepted, in which

to a Person appointed by God for a task. This belief involves not only *Who* such a Person is, but what such a Person *did*.

Christ Jesus died for our sins.

As astounding as this might seem (because we are so used to the Uncircumcision evangel), Jews need not believe that Jesus Christ died for their sins. The death of Christ is *not* a centerpiece of the Jewish gospel. Thus, neither is a grasp of the manner of His death critical; i.e. crucifixion. The death of Christ, however, *is* vital to Paul's gospel, and the manner of His death important. Why? Because the death of Christ eliminates the old humanity, tying Christ to Adam, through whom the entire race became mortal. Thus, the death of Christ undoes human failure at its root. It is not my intention to detail the Last Adam aspect of Christ's death here, for I have done so exhaustively elsewhere. (Paul details it in Romans, chapter 6.) My purpose now is to highlight a critical difference between what Jews believe and what non-Jews believe, beliefs which correspond to their respective gospels.



also you stand, through which also you are saved, if you are retaining what I said in bringing the evangel to you, outside and except you believe feignedly. For I give over to you among the first what also I accepted, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures.

Do you read anything here about Jesus Christ being the Messiah of Israel? No. The belief here is much more detailed and deeper than a mere recognition of and assent

CRUCIFIXION

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 2:2—

For I decide not to perceive anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Not a hint here about Jesus Christ being the Messiah of Israel. Contrast this reference to crucifixion, please, with what Peter said about it during his famous speech in Jerusalem at Pentecost—

Let all the house of Israel know certainly, then, that God makes Him Lord as well as Christ—this Jesus Whom you crucify!” Now, hearing this, their heart was pricked with compunction. Besides, they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “What should we be doing, men, brethren?” Now Peter is averring to them, “Repent and be baptized each of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the pardon of your sins, and you shall be obtaining the gratuity of the holy spirit” (Acts 2:36-38).

Did Peter herald Christ Jesus crucified as the means of the salvation of Israel? Quite the opposite. Peter announced Christ Jesus crucified as a regrettable crime requiring national repentance.

PAUL: The cross saves us.

PETER: You can't be saved unless you repent of the cross.

Could any difference be more profound? Should anyone ignore this?

ONLY ONE GOSPEL?

We have been told—most recently by Alan Hess—that there is only one gospel in the New Testament. We have been told that there is no difference between what Peter heralded to Israel and what Paul heralded to the nations. We have been told that Peter's epistles are as relevant to the body of Christ as Paul's. If this is true of Peter's epistles, why not of Jude's epistle? Of John's writings? Of the letter of James?

Indeed, we have now finally learned through Alan Hess' latest video titled, “Believers Are Not Considered Sinners,” that Alan considers the letters of Peter, the letter of James and the epistles of John to be as applicable to us as the thirteen letters of Paul. It appears that Alan considers James as relevant to the body of Christ as Paul. Paul's teachings, we are told, are merely an elaboration on the teachings of Peter, James and John. Things like “faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:26) and “we are reckoning a man to be saved by faith apart from works” (Romans 3:28) are said by Alan Hess to be “terminology issues,” and “a different approach” to the same gospel.

In “Believers Are Not Considered Sinners,” Alan isolates one passage from 1 John, finds a self-concocted similarity between that and one of Paul's statements in Romans, and claims there to be no difference between Paul and John. At the same time, however, Alan ignores a circus elephant stomping through the room, namely,

1 John 2:3-4—

And in this we know that we know Him, if we should be keeping His precepts. He who is saying that “I know Him” and is not keeping His precepts, is a liar, and the truth of God is not in this one.

What are the precepts referred to here? Let's let Jesus Himself answer that in Matthew 5:18-19—

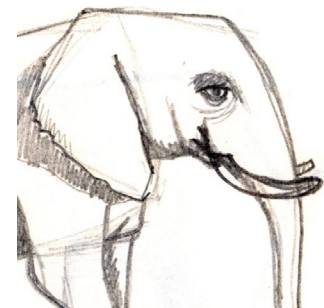
For verily, I am saying to you, Till heaven and earth should be passing by, one iota or one serif may by no means be passing by from the law till all should be occurring. Whosoever, then, should be annulling one of the least of these precepts, and should be teaching men thus, the least in the kingdom of the heavens shall he be called. Yet whoever should be doing and teaching them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens.

The precepts are none other than the law of Moses, and Jesus' exhortation is nothing less than an insistence on keeping that law. Is this enough to convince you that Alan invites a faith-damaging distortion of Paul's gospel?

Alan's allowance of Circumcision/law epistles—such as 1 John—into Paul's message of grace more than justifies Paul's anathema upon him (Galatians 1:6-9; I pointed this out two weeks ago), for surely Alan opens the door for a distortion of the evangel of Christ by allowing foreign, Jewish elements into it. This censure has nothing whatsoever to do with my fondness for Alan. It has everything to do with Alan's fitness as a teacher to the body of Christ. For how is he fit when he imports 1 John into body of Christ teaching?

In his video titled, “This Is Not About Men,” Alan said, “I have never been a self-proclaimed scholar”—and then goes out and proves it. The definition of “scholar” is “a specialist in a particular branch of study; a person who has done advanced study in a special field.”

Alan himself admits his deficiency here. So why are we listening to him on the topic of the two evangels? Because he's a nice guy with a folksy delivery? Alan teaches well on Jesus Christ as the Savior of all humanity (for which I am thankful), but Jesus Christ as the Savior of all humanity is not the gospel; it's a result *of* the gospel. I know many who believe



in the salvation of all but who are not in the body of Christ because they don't believe the essentials of Paul's gospel—if ever they've heard of them—namely, the death of Christ for our sins, His entombment and His resurrection.

Because Alan boldly and unapologetically mixes Paul with James, John and Peter (and seems bent on continuing), I can no longer send anyone to Alan's website. It pains me to say this. I can send people individual videos in which Alan bravely and accurately defends the truth of the salvation of all, but how can I send them to a website where they might happen upon Alan's mixing of Jewish, law-keeping letters (such as 1 John) with the letters of Paul? I can't.

I know a man who had given his sister my book, *The First Idiot in Heaven*, after which he sent her to Alan's website (as well as mine) for more information about the two gospels. This man became mortified to learn that Alan was now teaching that the epistles of Peter, James and John were equally as applicable to us as the epistles of Paul, thus distorting and destroying Paul's distinct message. This man's sister became confused (naturally) and her brother had to start her from scratch.

Scholarship matters. We ought not care about delivery methods or oratory, but we better care about scholarship. The opposite of "advanced study" is superficial study. Our apostle said in 2 Corinthians 11:6—

But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge.

Paul was a scholar, you better believe it. We want to learn from scholars, not dabblers. While Alan is thoroughly versed in the truths of the salvation of all, the topic of the two gospels seems but a hobby to him.

BACK TO THE CROSS

Is it true that Peter and Paul taught the same gospel—that is, the same way to be saved for eonian life—during the so-called apostolic era? We can find out by analyzing the details of the message brought to Cornelius by Peter in Acts, chapter 10. Here is our brother Aaron Welch in an article titled "Peter, Cornelius and the Jerusalem Conference: A Study on Acts 15:1-17 (Part One)"—

What is (conveniently) overlooked by those who believe that only one evangel was being heralded during the apostolic era is the fact that, in the message heralded by Peter to Cornelius and his house (as recorded in Acts 10:34-43), there is no mention whatsoever of one of the essential elements of Paul's "evangel of the Uncircumcision" (i.e.,

the fact that "Christ died for our sins"). Just as with the messages Peter had previously heralded to Israelites (as recorded in Acts 2 and 3), this truth is completely absent from what Peter declared to Cornelius and his house:

"Of the word He dispatches to the sons of Israel, bringing the evangel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you are aware, the declaration coming to be down the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John heralds: Jesus from Nazareth, as God anoints Him with holy spirit and power, Who passed through as a benefactor and healer of all those who are tyrannized over by the Adversary, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all that He does, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem; Whom they assassinate also, hanging Him on a pole. This One God rouses the third day, and gives Him to become disclosed, not to the entire people, but to witnesses who have been selected before by God, to us who ate and drank together with Him after His rising from among the dead. And he [God] charges us to herald to the people and to certify that this One is he who is specified by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To this One are all the prophets testifying: Everyone who is believing in Him is to obtain the pardon of sins through His name" (Acts 10:36-43).

Peter's declaring that Jesus of Nazareth had been anointed by God "with holy spirit and power" is simply another way of identifying Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (see Matt. 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34). Everything Peter said—including the facts concerning Jesus' "assassination" and subsequent resurrection—served to support and further validate this central truth. To say that Jesus is "...he who is specified by God to be judge of the living and the dead" (which, again, was the truth that Peter said he and his



co-laborers had been charged by God to herald) was simply another way of saying that Jesus is the Christ, for no other man had been, or would be, given this great authority from God (cf. John 5:21-29).

Peter's omission of the fact that Christ died for the sins of those to whom he spoke means that it's impossible that "the word of the evangel" he heralded to Cornelius and his house (as referred to in Acts 15:7) was the same evangel that was entrusted to Paul to herald among the nations. Logically, the evangel that Peter heralded to Cornelius and his house and the evangel which Paul heralded among the nations must be different. And if that's the case, then we can reasonably conclude that the evangel heard and believed by Cornelius and his house (who, again, were the "nations" referred to by Peter in Acts 15:7) was the evangel of the Circumcision.

Consider the following argument:

- ▶ The gospel that Paul heralded among the nations is the only gospel through which people are called to become members of the body of Christ, and this gospel essentially involves the truth that Christ died for our sins.
- ▶ Since the truth of Christ's death for our sins is absent from the gospel that Peter heralded to Cornelius and his house, it cannot be the same gospel that Paul heralded among the nations.
- ▶ Cornelius and his house believed a different gospel than that which was entrusted to Paul to herald among the nations, and did not become members of the body of Christ when they believed this gospel.



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TIMING IS EVERYTHING

That the gospel of the Circumcision has nothing to do with the death of Christ for sin is evidenced by the fact that those living before Christ could believe this gospel. I am talking about believers such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and so forth. How could their gospel be based on the death of Christ for sin when Christ had not yet died for sin—and indeed had not yet come to Earth? Yet are not Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David raised from the dead and set in high places in the kingdom at the second coming of Christ? Certainly.

What about the Lord's disciples? They walked with Jesus Himself, but not even *they* could believe in the death of Christ for sins, for even *then* the death of Christ for sins had not yet occurred. What, then, counted as saving belief for *them*? This: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Having considered that, I now ask you to consider this: There is no such thing as anyone being called into membership of an organization known as the body of Christ *until* Christ dies for sin. This is because body-of-Christ truth is *based* on this event. The death of Christ for sin is the founding truth of this unique evangel given exclusively to Paul.

Since we are discussing the timing of Christ's death, it is natural then to ask: Since Peter spoke to Cornelius subsequent to the death of Christ for sin, does Peter then herald the death of Christ for sin to Cornelius? He does not. He heralds the same message that consistently belongs to the gospel of the Circumcision: "This One is He Who is specified by God."

Before the coming of Christ, faithful Israelites looked forward to the coming One as they obeyed the teachings of Moses. After the coming of Christ, they believed that the One prophesied by Moses stood in their midst. This, accompanied by works, counted as saving faith, yes, even before the death of Christ for sin. How? Because the death of Christ for sin has no part in the proclamation of the gospel of the Circumcision, entrusted to Peter. The death of Christ for sin *is*, however, the centerpiece of our evangel. Apart from it, we are nothing. That Jesus Christ is also the Messiah of Israel is incidental (rather than indispensable) to our message.

Let us distinguish things that differ. —MZ

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