

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

There were two main components in the earthly work of Jesus Christ. Obviously, He came as the sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the world. Another purpose was to preach the gospel, which began shortly after He was tempted by Satan:

**MARK 1:14-15** Now after John was put in prison, **Jesus came** to 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, and **believe in the gospel.**”

His sacrifice for the sins of the world was paramount to everything. Without it, the gospel would be rendered moot because “all have sinned”<sup>1</sup> and the “wages of sin is death.”<sup>2</sup> But His victory over sin meant that the gospel must then be proclaimed and Jesus ended His time on earth with this command to the disciples:

**MARK 16:15-16** And He said to them, “**Go into all the world and preach the gospel** to every creature. 16 “**He who believes** and is baptized **will be saved**; but **he who does not believe will be condemned [sentenced]**.”

That set in motion the preaching of a gospel that has continued for thousands of years. Before this digitally connected world, many were inspired to spread that message, enduring great hardships as they traveled the world.

The word *gospel* comes from the Greek word *euaggelion* (*evangelion* in English), which simply means *good message*. An *evangelist* is someone who proclaims the ‘evangelion’ or good message. As discussed in the Sabbath Thought “[Commission of Light](#)” a few weeks ago, *gospel* combines the Old English words ‘God’s spel’, or ‘God’s Story’ in modern terms.

Today, evangelism is considered to be the purview of ministers. Few give this a second thought but is that biblical? Do the saints have a responsibility for preaching the gospel? The word *gospel* is entrenched in the vocabulary of believers, but how many know *what* the gospel message is or *why* it is proclaimed or *who* is responsible for proclaiming it? Answers to these questions are important to us personally. To begin, what exactly is the gospel?

**MARK 1:14** Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God**

**ROMANS 14:17** for **the kingdom of God is** not eating and drinking, but **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**

**ISAIAH 52:7** ... **who brings good news [‘gospel’], who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”**

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 3:23.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 6:23.

The gospel is a message of the Kingdom of God ... and more. It includes "salvation," which, as Paul said, "we **preach Christ crucified**" (1 Cor. 1:23). That is vital because the Kingdom is only for those who repent of sin and obey God. The gospel is also a message of an eternal life of peace and joy. It is a simple message but one will have the greatest impact on mankind ... ever.

The GOSPEL is a *message* of salvation through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ to life in an eternal Kingdom of peace and joy ruled by the God Most High!

Why is the gospel preached? There are two reasons, the first being:

MATTHEW 24:14 "And **this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness [testimony]** to all the nations, and then the end will come.

REVELATION 14:6-7 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having **the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth**—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— 7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for **the hour of His judgment has come**; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

*Witness* is better translated *testimony* in modern terms. A witness is someone who formally TESTIFIES of evidence. Preaching the gospel is done as a witness or testimony of a judgment against those who reject God because "there shall by no means enter it [*the Kingdom*] anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." (Rev. 21:27). So, one reason for preaching the gospel is to warn the world of the judgment to come. The other reason for preaching the gospel is:

1 CORINTHIANS 1:17-18, 21-24 For Christ did not send me [*Paul*] to baptize, but **to preach the gospel**, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ... 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of **the message [of the gospel] preached to save those who believe**. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but **we preach Christ crucified**, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but **to those who are called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The gospel is preached to those who are CALLED<sup>3</sup> so they can be SAVED (vv. 21, 24) or it is given as a warning. The fact is that "**no one can come to Me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent Me draws him**." (John 6:44). God draws those who are called to hear the gospel but it does not profit unbelievers. Who are those called by God?<sup>4</sup>

MATTHEW 11:4-6 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5 "*The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed*

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<sup>3</sup> Also 1 Cor. 1:26-31.

<sup>4</sup> Also Luke 4:18; 7:22.

and *the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and **the poor [beggar, distressed] have the gospel preached to them.*** <sup>6</sup> “And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”

Why are those to whom the gospel is preached called “poor?” The poor are humble and meek; they are not offended upon hearing they have sinned and must repent; they earnestly desire to obey God; and they “hunger and thirst for righteousness.”<sup>5</sup> Simply put, the poor zealously “seek first the Kingdom”<sup>6</sup>—the gospel message.

Who is responsible for preaching the gospel? Is it ministers with the resources? Is there a role for individuals within the Body of Christ? Imagine being called today and God put it in your heart to seek Him. Now you have big questions and an urgent need for answers. Do you find them on a website? There are thousands so how does anyone choose one? Will their search lead them to false doctrines? Is Google able to distinguish truth and falsehoods? Where does one find the answer to the big question, “What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?”

The reality is, and has been for a very long time, that those who are called and begin seeking God usually find the answers from converted PEOPLE, not through websites or sermons. But that requires something on the part of the saints:

1 PETER 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **always be ready to give a defense [answer, plea] to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you,** with meekness and fear;

Peter is talking to the SAINTS in general. What is the source of their hope? The fulfillment of the Kingdom of God! How did they come to have that hope? Through the preaching of the GOSPEL! Was that through a sermon or found on a website? Or did it come from a true believer?

The gospel is a very personal message from and about God, best delivered IN PERSON by a believer, not through a sermon or website. That is why ALL saints need to “be ready” to pass along that hope for the Kingdom of God. The gospel is a foundational part of EVERY begotten child of God:

EPHESIANS 6:11, 15 Put on the whole **armor of God,** that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ... 15 and **having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel** of peace;

Paul used the analogy of armor to emphasize our battle against spiritual wickedness in this life. What, then, does “**having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel**” have to do with it? Armor is a means of *defense* against evil so what purpose does the GOSPEL serve?

ROMANS 10:14-15 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 preach the gospel**”

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<sup>5</sup> Matt. 5:6.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 6:33; Luke 12:31. Also, the parables in Matt. 13:44-52.

**[Gk. euaggelizo = evangelize]** of peace, Who **bring glad tidings [Gk. euaggelizo = evangelize]** of good things!"

*NOTE: When Paul mentions a "preacher," he is not referring to everyone who is ordained—anyone can be a preacher. Take, for example, Apollos (Acts 18: 25-28). He was not ordained when Aquila and Priscilla heard him.*

Paul quotes Isaiah 52: 7 when he says those who "preach the gospel" have beautiful feet. Armor is protection for those fighting a battle. "**Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel**" is not for defense, but for the purpose of preaching the gospel to those God *calls*. They may be enemies or, perhaps, they were 'innocents' in this war. Regardless, God uses *soldiers* (saints) to 'enlist' others into His 'army'.

What does it mean to personally preach the gospel? Does it involve standing on a street corner proclaiming the Kingdom of God? Is it awaiting the happenstance of a stranger stopping to talk? Is it through friendships or relationships with people in our community? When Jesus first sent the disciples out to preach the gospel He said, "I send you out as **sheep in the midst of wolves**. Therefore **be wise as serpents and harmless as doves**." (Matt. 10: 16). While God can and does protect His people, the saints are sheep among ravening wolves so they are to be both wise and harmless in whatever manner or situation the gospel is preached.

There are many potential opportunities for preaching the gospel but not all of them are necessarily wise choices. For example, I was recently asked whether we have a responsibility to proclaim the gospel to a woman going into an abortion clinic. She is likely *not* called because the woman is obviously living a life contrary to God. The gospel is for those God calls but it is "foolishness"<sup>7</sup> to all others:

HEBREWS 4:2 For indeed **the gospel was preached** to us as well as **to them [unbelievers]**; but **the word which they heard did not profit them**, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*.

Also, an abortion clinic is not necessarily the best place to have a serious discussion about the gospel. Today, just praying in front of one can even result in a prison term. Proclaiming the gospel in the midst of an angry, hateful, or malicious mob at an abortion clinic is being likely neither wise nor harmless.

On the other hand, Paul talks of "the **light** of the glorious **gospel** of Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 4). What did Jesus say about the saints?

MATTHEW 5:14-16 "**You are the light of the world**. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. 16 "**Let your light so shine before men**, that they may see your **good works** and glorify your Father in heaven.

If the gospel is light and the saints are the light of the world, then the saints must have a part in preaching the gospel. That can be as simple as exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit when around friends, neighbors, or strangers. It might involve time

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<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 1:18.

and effort in doing good works without expecting a return. Finally, the greatest preaching of the gospel as a light in this world might entail having meaningful and humble conversations about God with someone who is sincere. Many times, that requires patience and commitment. There are brethren who spent years on and off talking with someone before they awakened to the gospel and were converted.

Should the saints also preach the gospel as a warning? Interestingly, none of the apostles focused on warning the world; they went about converting people. Today, some might think they are warning the world but it is NOT listening. Jesus commanded the gospel to be preached to "**every** creature" (Mark 16: 15), not just leaders. What about in these latter times? Are the saints expected to preach the gospel as a warning?

MATTHEW 10:7, 11-19, 23 "And as you go, **preach**, saying, '**The kingdom of heaven** is at hand.' ... 11 "Now **whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy [they did not preach to the entire city or town]**, and stay there till you go out. 12 "And when you go into **a household**, greet it. 13 "If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from **that house** or city, shake off the dust from your feet. ... 16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 "But **beware [be cautious]** of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 "**You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.** 19 "But **when they deliver you up**, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; ... 23 "**When they persecute you in this city, flee to another.** For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Did you notice what Jesus said? He said these saints "**will be brought**" and **delivered up** before the leaders. Not of their own volition or voluntarily but as *prisoners*. Jesus, in fact, warns them to "beware of men" and "flee to another city" when persecution arises. Does that sound like the saints are to preach a warning regardless of the consequences? The disciples were told to preach the gospel to individuals or a "**household**" but they walked away from those who rejected it.

Still, the fact remains, God expects His people today to have "**shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel.**" They ARE the light of the world and must be ready to preach the gospel to all who are called by God. Perhaps *you* will be given an opportunity, if you have not already, to proclaim the gospel—God's Story—the greatest message the world has rarely heard! Be prepared to be that *preacher*!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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