

Philippians Series

Lesson #024

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Dean Bible Ministries

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Philippians

What is the Gospel?

Philippians 1:12–14



REVIEW

- **Overview of Php. 1:12–26**
- **The expansion of the gospel**
- **Defining the gospel**
- **All things work together for good**

What is the Gospel?

“I never realized stating what the gospel is could be so difficult until I read these three articles. Macquarrie and Davies never did get around to stating what the gospel is. They spent their entire articles explaining what the gospel is not and why it is not what it is not.”

~John A. Witmer

“Review of What is the Gospel?—I by John Macquarrie, What is the Gospel?—II by J. G. Davies and What is the Gospel?—III by David H. C. Read,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 128 (1971): 70.

Concerning the article by David H. C. Read, Witmer quotes the author:

“ ‘The Gospel, as I understand it, is thus a unique spiritual force operating on the thoughts and lives of men in every age. It is based on the specific past event of Christ’s life, death and resurrection. It is recognized in the notes of liberation, joy and hope in the lives of those who live by it today, and it points to a future where Christ is Lord. It is not primarily a philosophy to be conveyed by argument or an ideology to be accepted on authority but a revelation that evokes the response of faith.’ His concluding statement is: ‘I see the future hope in a recovery of the New Testament Gospel as “saving power,” and its application, individually and socially, to the needs of our disturbed and fractured world.’ ”

“In the opening chapter, the author addressed the heart of the matter by presenting the New Testament’s teaching with regard to the Good News. According to Gilbert, the Gospel can be enveloped around four words: God, man, Christ, response. In other words, man is accountable to God; his real problem is rejection and rebellion against God; God’s solution is found in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and, humanity is responsible to respond to this message in repentance and faith (pp. 28–31). Said another way, Gilbert believes the Gospel answers four crucial questions: who made man, what is the problem of humanity, what is God’s solution, and what makes all of this Good News (p. 31)?^[1]”

[1] Gary E. Gilley, “Review of What is the Gospel? By Greg Gilbert,” *Journal of Dispensational Theology* Volume 14 14, no. 42 (2010): 81

In his review Gilley also writes:

“Gilbert stated the response to the Gospel message as the act of faith alone as understood through the inseparable acts of repentance and belief. He wrote, ‘A Christian is one who turns away from sin and trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ—and nothing else—to save him from sin and the coming judgment’ (p. 73). He defined repentance as ‘turning away from sin, hating it, and resolving by God’s grace to forsake it, even as we turn to Him in faith’ (p. 74). Furthermore, ‘if we understand repentance rightly, we’ll see that the idea that you can accept Jesus as Savior but not Lord is nonsense’ (p. 80)^[1] The real change, produced by salvation, will by necessity bear real fruit (p. 82)^[2]

Phil. 1:12, “But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the progress of the gospel,

Phil. 1:13, “so that it has become evident to the whole Praetorian guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;

Phil. 1:14, “and most of the brothers and sisters in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”

Phil. 1:12, “But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the progress of the gospel,” ~RD

What the Bible Teaches About the “Gospel”



1. The Greek word *evangelion* (εὐαγγέλιον *euaggelion* good news, gospel)

BDAG: ① God's good news to humans, good news as proclamation^[1] ② details relating to the life and ministry of Jesus, good news of Jesus (Mark 1:1)

William Arndt et al., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 402.

2. In the New Testament *evangelion* is used 76 times in 73 verses. [Greek New Testament (Accordance search)].

3. There are several key phrases used in the New Testament related to a “good news proclamation.” The term is used in the four Gospels only by Matthew and Mark, in these it is used 12 times.

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Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14).

The gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 4:1).

Mark 1:1, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

Gospel of God

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

Mark 1:15, “and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’ ”

**Mark 1:14, “Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of * God,
~NASB**

The Gospel of the Grace of God

Acts 20:24, “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

The Gospel of Your Salvation

Eph. 1:13, “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,”

The Gospel of Peace

Eph. 6:15, “and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”

4. In Acts the word is used two times.

Acts 15:7, “And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: ‘Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.’ ”

Acts 20:24, “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

5. Paul uses “gospel” 60 times; Peter uses it one time. John, James, Jude, and the writer of Hebrews do not use the word at all, with the exception of John in Rev. 14:6.

1 Pet. 4:17, “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Pet. 1:25 uses the verb form.)

Rev. 14:6, “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—”

6. The verb form *evangelizo* is used 54 times in 52 verses and is often translated “having the gospel preached,” “preaching the gospel” (Matt. 11:5; Luke 20:1; Acts 8:25; 14:7, 15, 21; 16:10; Rom. 1:15; 15:20; 1 Cor. 9:16; Gal. 5:13); “glad tidings” (Luke 1:19; 8:1; Acts 13:32); “good tidings” (Luke 2:10); “gospel” (Luke 4:18); “preached” (Luke 4:43; 16:6; Acts 8:40); “preaching [the Lord] Jesus [or Him]” (Acts 5:42; 8:35; 11:20; Gal. 1:16); “preaching the word [of the Lord]” (Acts 8:4; 15:35); “preaching peace” (Acts 10:36); “preaches the faith” (Gal. 1:23); “preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8).

Acts 8:35, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.”

Acts 17:18, “Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, ‘What does this babbler want to say?’ Others said, ‘He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,’ because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

1 Cor. 9:16, “For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”

**1 Cor. 9:18, “What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.”
(cf., 2 Cor. 11:7)**

1 Cor. 15:1, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,

1 Cor. 15:2, “by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.”

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1 Cor. 15:2, “by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.”

1 Cor. 15:13, “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

1 Cor. 15:14, “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is also in vain.” ~RD

**1 Cor. 15:17, “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile;
you are still in your sins!”**

2 Cor. 11:7, “Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge?”

Gal. 1:8, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Gal. 1:9, “As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

Gal. 2:16, “because we know that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”

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

1 Pet. 1:12, “To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.”

1 Pet. 1:25, “ ‘But the word of the LORD endures forever.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”

1 Pet. 4:6, “For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

Rev. 10:7, “but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.”

Rev. 14:6, “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. Repent is used with the gospel of the Kingdom in
Mark 1:5:**

The gospel of the Kingdom of God,

Mark 1:15, “and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’ ”

This goes back to Deut. 30:1–3.

8. Most frequently, among many who might be Lordship as well as most so-called “free grace” gospel advocates, the issue is what must be believed in order to have eternal life or the basics that must be explained in evangelism. However, most often, in the context of evangelism much more than the bare essentials are communicated.

9. This word group is used with only rare exceptions in the New Testament to include the life, substitutionary payment for our sins, and the resurrection of Christ as well as the implications of those events for the one who believes.

10. Just as the sin problem is complex, involving the violation of God's perfect righteousness, the sin penalty of spiritual death, our worthless righteousness, our position in Adam, the work of Christ on our behalf also expresses the solution through various aspects of Christ's work—we receive the imputation of Christ's righteousness, we are regenerated (born again), we receive eternal life, we are redeemed, we are justified, we are forgiven—so each one of these may be the focus of any one passage or any specific presentation of the good news of eternal life, forgiveness of sins, justification, redemption, etc. Different facets are not different gospels, but expressions of different aspects of the one gospel.

11. Dispensationally, in terms of different periods of God's administration of history, there are different emphases: in the Old Testament there was an anticipation of God's provision of deliverance and eternal life in some future event; in the ministries of John the Baptist and the first part of Jesus' ministry the emphasis was on the gospel of the Kingdom as in Matt. (4:23; 9:35; 24:14) and early Mark, where he is going to tell the "good news" about Jesus Christ in 1:1, but then calls it the gospel of [the Kingdom of] God in 1:14 preached by John the Baptist, which is the gospel of the Kingdom in parallel passages.

12. What is the focus of the gospel?

1 Cor. 2:2, “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”