

# WHAT IS GOSPEL?

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Wednesday, 25 April 2018

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### Jesus

returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and news about him spread through all the surrounding area. He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. He entered, as was his custom, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. The book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, Because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim release to the captives, Recovering of sight to the blind, To deliver those who are crushed, And to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began to tell them, "Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:4-21 WEB

### Today I once

again feel impelled to discuss the biblical concept of gospel and its use in modern churches---which seem to be on a long, slow slide toward irrelevancy. It's not scripture that prompts that slide, but rather our outmoded interpretation of it and our inaction in applying the portions we do believe.

### Gospel means

to announce or bring good news, and it is certainly that, but to many conservative Christians and churches the myriad of blessings covered under the concept of gospel seem lost amid the explanation that gospel simply means good news, or salvation, limited to the poor in heart and possibly the poor in wealth.

### Limiting

salvation to the poor sets up the problem of defining poverty. Does it mean those lacking in financial resources, or perhaps it might mean those who are merely "poor in spirit," as I've often heard. And what of those obviously not poor, can they also be saved under the cover of gospel? Yes, the good news of the gospel does cover financial as well as spiritual poverty. But it also covers much more, as we plan to investigate.

Jesus said

he came to bring the gospel to the poor. But he then adds healing of the broken hearted to his intentions, as well as release to the captives, sight to the blind, deliverance to those crushed, and the proclamation of the prophesied year of the Lord's favor. Since these additions also sound like good news, they must then fall under the concept of gospel. So gospel is much, much more than providing forgiveness and personal salvation to the poor. Gospel is the good news of God's plan for the healing and salvation not only for individuals, but for nations and eventually the entire creation

If that last

provision of the gospel is too much for you, read Ephesians 1:10, Philippians 2:9-11, and Colossians 1:20. These verses reveal God's plan that Christ's shed blood at Calvary provides that in the timetable of the ages God will gather and reconcile all creation into a restored relationship with God through Christ, under the cross of universal peace.

Jesus's other

comments on his power to deliver the suffering masses of humanity place blame more on oppressive world systems than on individual miscreants. These evil systems will also fall under God's displeasure, as you see happening as nations and world systems shake apart and descend into chaos as God brings his earthly kingdom ever closer.

The scope of

God's plan is really beyond human understanding. That we should participate in such an awesome action adds new meaning to the idea of working with Jesus toward salvation and deliverance---not just for the suffering individuals we hear of so often, but also for the anguished nations and the belabored earth. The gospel includes the last phrase of Jesus's first sermon, announcing the acceptable year of the Lord, otherwise known as Jubilee.

That's how  
wonderful God is!