

As the great apostle Paul stood at the brink of death and penned his final letter, he admonished Timothy, his fellow evangelist, and co-laborer in the gospel, to be faithful to the ministry, knowing that in his absence some would turn away from the faith, "...For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables. ..." (2 Timothy 4:1-8). This they did! And to this day, God's servants are called upon to refute these fables. The fable we are to deal with in this lesson is, "The Gospel Accounts Are Not Part of the New Testament."

What Is The Gospel?

Strong defines gospel as, "2097. euaggelizo, yoo-ang-ghel-id-zo; from 2095, eu, and 32, aggelos; to announce good news ("evangelize") espec. the gospel: --declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel)" (p. 42). And, "2098. euaggelion, yoo-ang-ghel-ee-on; from the same as 2097, euaggelizo; a good message, i.e. the gospel:--gospel" (p. 42). That the gospel entails more than just the death, burial, and resurrection, is seen in Vine's definition and explanation of the word, "...The apostle uses it of two associated yet distinct things, (a) of the basic facts of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, e.g. 1st Cor. 15:1-3; (b) of the interpretation of these facts, e.g., Rom. 2:16; Gal. 1:7,11; 2:2; ..." (p. 275). This truth is further illustrated when Peter first preached the gospel on the day of Pentecost after the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. He presented the facts of the gospel - the death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2:29-36), the commands of the gospel - repentance and baptism (Acts 2:37-38), and the blessings of the gospel - eternal life (Acts 2:38-39). Thus, the term gospel, is a reference to the entire system of salvation and is not limited only to the facts of salvation mentioned above.

This point is seen again when Paul wrote to the Galatians, "...But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ..." (Galatians 1:6-12). Here Paul isn't referencing to the preaching of another death, burial and resurrection, but a different system of salvation. In the context, that of Judaism. Thus, the term gospel is again used in a broader sense than the death, burial, and resurrection.

Paul told the Roman brethren that we will be judged by the gospel (Romans 2:16), yet Jesus said we will be judged by His words (John 12:47-48). From this, we learn and conclude that he gospel is inclusive of the teachings of Christ and not exclusive to the death, burial, and resurrection alone. The word gospel is a comprehensive term used of the entire system of salvation.

From Eden To Eternity

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). The gospel was first preached in Eden. Coffman says of this verse, "Thus, this twenty-seven word promise of healing for the sins of Adam's race conveyed limited information, but the significance of it is unlimited. In the light of subsequent events, it comprises as comprehensive and definite a statement of God's Plan of Redemption as could have been devised in so few words" (p. 68). About 2100 years later, the gospel was then preached unto Abraham, "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). It was also preached to those of both the Mosaic and Christian Ages, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit

them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2).

It was always God's plan to save all men through the blood of Christ, from Adam to eternity. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). And again, "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:11). The only way man can be saved by law alone, is by perfection (Galatians 3:10-11). Since all men have sinned and failed to live perfect lives, they are all in need of the blood of Christ (Romans 3:23). If man could have lived above sin, salvation could have been attained through law alone: But, since man hasn't, all are in need of the blood of Christ (Galatians 3:21-22). As noted above, this grace, the gospel, was then extended to all men of every age whether Christian, Mosaic, or Patriarchal. The various laws of each Age served to instruct mankind as to what they had to do to access this grace (Romans 1:16-17) and how they were to live in order to continue in this grace (Titus 2:11-15). While the facts of the gospel and the blessing of the gospel remained the same, the laws to access and maintain this grace changed with the progression of the fulfillment of the promised salvation (Hebrews 7:12).

The Authority of the Gospel Accounts

This great scheme of Redemption would find its fulfillment in the coming of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His Eternal Kingdom. Thus, Mark ties the gospel accounts to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;" (Mark 1:1). Paul later tells us that this New Testament Law began with the teachings of the Lord, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard

him;" (Hebrews 2:3). After His death, burial, and resurrection, but before his ascension into heaven, Jesus told His disciples to teach the believers to observe all things He had taught His disciples while on earth with them, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: ..." (Matthew 28:20). These passages confirm that the Law of Christ began with His teachings.

In an attempt to annul God's law on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, some have tried to deny this Biblical fact. They argue that Jesus lived and died under the Mosaic Law and therefore, the Law of Christ didn't begin until Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff). While it is true that Jesus live and died under the Mosaic Law, as seen above, it is also true that He began to introduce His own Law to His disciples while yet on the earth. When Jesus wished to direct those of His own day and age to the law, He usually responded to them in this manner or something similar, "...What is written in the law? how readest thou?" (Luke 10:26). Jesus appealed to God's law of marriage which was given in Eden, "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, ...?" (Matthew 19:4-5). They responded by appealing to Moses' Law, "...Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" (Matthew 19:7). Jesus settled the argument by introducing His own Law, "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9). Later on Paul confirms that this is what Jesus taught on this subject by penning, "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: And let not the husband put away his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Thus, the law of Christ teaches that it is sinful to divorce and remarry, except in the case

of fornication. And, those who do so are living in a state of adultery.

Conclusion

Beyond any shadow of a doubt, the above ties Jesus and His teachings to the gospel accounts. They are not a part of the Old Law or its teachings but a fulfillment of its promises and the beginning of the Law of Christ (Matt. 5:17-18).

Works Cited

1. All scripture references are from the KJV of the Bible unless noted.
2. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, James Strong, World Bible Publishers Inc., 1986, Greek Dictionary of the New Testament, (page 42).
3. Ibid, Strong ... (page 42).
4. Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, W. E. Vine. Merrill F. Unger - William White Jr., Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville - Camdenton - New York, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, (page 275).
5. Commentary on Genesis, James Burton Coffman, 1985 ACU Press, Abilene Texas, (page 68).

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