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The Gospel Truth

This final chapter offers an overview of the gospel. Right at the start we took an overall look at the Letter to the Romans and summarised its teaching. To do that we read through the letter before listing its key ideas, after which we examined it in greater detail. We could do that because it is a detailed and carefully constructed explanation of the gospel which the apostle Paul believed and taught.

As we worked through that explanation we have diverted, here and there, to see what other parts of the Bible have said about particular subjects and topics. We should now be in a position to summarise our findings and, in so doing, should get a detailed picture of what the Bible teaches on all the important matters that have to do with our salvation and the unfolding purpose of God.

Here is that summary, topic by topic. Should you want to do some further research into particular items, Scriptural references are also included that will help you explore things in more detail.



"I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek"
(Romans 1:16)

❖ The Bible

The Bible is the basis of all our knowledge about God and His gracious purpose. It consists of the Old Testament (containing the writings of Moses and the prophets), and the New Testament (containing the gospels and the epistles, or letters). This book, or library of books, was given by inspiration of God. God's power operated in such a way that what the different writers recorded is wholly inspired

and without error. The only errors that might now exist in the Bible are those that have resulted from the process of copying or translation out of the original languages.

The Bible can give us all the understanding we need about God and His purpose to save us from sin and death. It is the foundation of our faith and it is vitally important that we read it regularly and in that way inform and transform our minds, so that we know what is pleasing to God.

Scriptures: 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Nehemiah 9:30; John 10:35

❖ God

There is only one true God who has revealed Himself to mankind in different ways. In past ages He communicated through angels, by visiting people like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. When the time was right, God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we could see, by the way that Jesus lived and from the things he said and did, just what God wants us to become, and what He wants us to understand about His purpose and His character.

God is supreme and unequalled. He has always existed and always will, for He is eternal. He dwells in unapproachable light yet He is everywhere present by His Spirit, or power.

By that Spirit God created heaven and earth and everything that is in them. It was the Spirit of God that operated through the patriarchs, prophets and apostles to reveal the Bible to mankind. Because it was a revelation intended to lead men and women to holiness, that divine power is called God's Holy Spirit. The power was occasionally given to people to show that they were working on God's behalf: it was a way of confirming their authority as the servants of God. But when the Bible had been fully revealed those Holy Spirit gifts were withdrawn. They do not exist today as they once did.

Isaiah 40:13-25; 43:10-12; 44:6-8; 45:5; 46:9,10; Job 38,39 and 40; Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29-32; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 26:13; Psalm 124:8; 146:6; 148:5; Isaiah 40:26,27; Jeremiah 10:12,13; 27:5; 32:17-19; 51:15; Acts 14:15; 17:24 1 Chronicles 29:11-14; Psalm 62:11; 145:3; Isaiah 26:4; 40:26; Job 9:4; 36:5; Psalm

92:5; 104:24; 147:4-5; Isaiah 28:29; Romans 16:27; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Job 28:24; 34:21; Psalm 33:13,14; 44:21; 94:9; 139:7-12; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:24; 32:19; Amos 9:2,3; Acts 17:27,28; Psalm 123:1; 1 Kings 8:30,39,43,49; Matthew 6:9; 1 Timothy 6:15,16; 1:17; Hebrews 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 13:8-13

❖ Jesus

God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Son of God who was begotten of Mary by God's Holy Spirit power, without the involvement of man. He is God's only begotten Son and was able to do and say so many powerful things because God anointed him with the Holy Spirit without measure when he was baptized. Although God had known from the beginning that He would need to save mankind by sending His Son, Jesus only came into existence when he was born of his mother Mary.

Matthew 1:23; 1 Timothy 3:16; Acts 2:22-24,36; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; Galatians 4:4; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 3:16,17; Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; John 3:34; 7:16; 8:26-29; 14:10-24.

God needed to intervene by sending His Son because of the desperate state of the human race. This condition had come about because of the events that occurred in Eden and the choices that were there made by Adam, who chose to please himself rather than God. In so doing he brought sin and death into the world and destroyed his fellowship with God. Jesus came to restore man's relationship with God and was wholly successful in that mission. Because of his faith and his obedience to his Father's will, Jesus was raised from the dead and exalted to glory.

1 Corinthians 15:21,22; Romans 5:12-19; Genesis 3:19; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21

❖ Mankind

The first man was Adam, whom God created from the dust of the ground and made a living being. God placed him under a law - whereby the fruit of one tree in the garden was forbidden both to Adam and Eve. If they wanted to stay in that garden and stay alive they had to be obedient. If they ate of the forbidden fruit they would die.

Genesis 2:7; 18:27; Job 4:19; 33:6; 1 Corinthians 15:46-49; Genesis 2:17

Adam broke God's law, and was judged unworthy of immortality. He was sentenced to return to the ground from which he had been taken and that sentence became part of his everyday experience, and the experience of all his descendants. Two problems resulted. Firstly, we are all born mortal and are therefore destined to die. We do not have an immortal soul and when we die we are unconscious and our bodies corrupt. The only hope of life is resurrection from the dead at the second coming of Jesus. Those who are not resurrected will remain dead forever.

Secondly, all men and women are now inclined, like Adam, to disobey God. By nature we now prefer to serve self rather than God. The source of all temptation is inside us, but outside influences may also tempt us to disobey God. There is no supernatural devil or Satan who does the tempting; those Bible terms are picture language for sin in its various forms.

Genesis 3:15-19,22,23; 2 Corinthians 1:9; Romans 7:24; 2 Corinthians 5:2-4; Romans 7:19-23; Galatians 5:16,17; Romans 6:12; 7:21; John 3:6; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:2; Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; James 1:13-16

❖ God's Plan of Salvation

In His kindness, God had a plan of restoration by which He was able to rescue the human race from destruction and eventually fill the earth with people who are both sinless and immortal. Because He is holy and righteous in everything He does, and cannot be otherwise, God has made this possible in a way which upholds His righteousness and justice. In no way has God changed His attitude towards sin; rather, in all that was done God showed how terrible sin is and how determined and how right He is to destroy it absolutely.

Revelation 21:4; John 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 John 2:25; 2 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:2; Romans 3:26; John 1:29

❖ His Promises

This plan of salvation was the subject of great promises made at first to people like Adam and Eve, Abraham, and

David, which were afterwards given in even greater detail through the prophets. Those promises are a vital part of the gospel of salvation and have not been overtaken by later developments, nor have they yet been fulfilled altogether.

Genesis 3:15; 22:18; Psalm 89:34-37; 33:5; Hosea 13:14; Isaiah 25:7-9; 51:1-8; Jeremiah 23:5

❖ **Centred in Jesus**

These great promises point forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was necessary that he should be born in the line of Abraham and David, and that he should share the very same human nature with which we are all born. That was what happened when he was born of Mary by the power or Spirit of God. During his lifetime Jesus was tempted in the same way that we are tempted, but he remained sinless and lived a life of perfect obedience to his Father. The climax of his life of obedience was that he died on the cross. This destroyed the power of sin and made available a way of escape from sin and death, both for him and for all who would choose to believe and follow him. Because of his perfect obedience God raised Jesus from the dead and exalted him to sit in glory at His right hand in heaven. That is where he is now.

1 Corinthians 15:45; Hebrews 2:14-16; Romans 1:3; Hebrews 5:8,9; 1:9; Romans 5:19-21; Galatians 4:4,5; Romans 8:3,4; Hebrews 2:14,15; 9:26; Galatians 1:4; Hebrews 7:27; 5:3-7; 2:17; Romans 6:10; 6:9; Acts 13:34-37; Revelation 1:18; John 5:21,22,26,27; 14:3; Revelation 2:7; 3:21; Matthew 25:21; Hebrews 5:9; Mark 16:16; Acts 13:38,39; Romans 3:22; Psalm 2:6-9; Daniel 7:13,14; Revelation 11:15; Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 14:9; Ephesians 1:9,10

❖ **His Birth and Rebirth**

It was to fulfil God's great plan of salvation that Jesus was miraculously begotten of a human mother. The sinless Jesus carried the burden of our sins to the cross to make it possible for our sins to be forgiven. Then, because he had been perfectly obedient in all things, the righteousness of God required that he be raised from the dead. Jesus did not die instead of us (as a substitute); he died on our behalf (as our representative) so that we, through his death, might have our sins forgiven.

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; Galatians 4:4; Isaiah 7:14; Romans 1:3,4; 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:14-17; 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21-25

❖ **His Life on Earth**

Jesus was begotten of God and showed us, in his life and by everything that he did, just what God is like. It was as if God was speaking to us through His Son, who gave the fullest ever disclosure of what godliness is like in day-to-day terms. Father and Son worked together to accomplish God's great plan of salvation and Jesus willingly obeyed his Father's commandments. During his life on earth, he was a mortal man who shared all the problems of our humanity, including death itself. He chose to lay down his life as a matter of obedience and was not compelled to do so. It follows that any suggestion that Jesus had existed beforehand in heaven, or that he was part of a three-in-one godhead, is unscriptural and does a great disservice to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 1:23; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 2:17; John 10:17,18; 17:3

❖ **His Teaching**

The message that Jesus delivered from God called men and women to repentance. That means turning away from sin and turning towards God by abandoning every evil work and seeking to transform our thinking and the direction of our lives towards God, so as to be in harmony with His revealed will. Jesus first made that appeal to his own nation, the Jewish people, explaining in the process his part in God's purpose, as God's Son. He showed that he was the long-awaited Messiah who could deliver them from sin and death. He said that he had come to fulfil all that was written in the law and in the prophets.

Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:17; 5:20-48; John 10:36; 9:35; 11:27; 19:21; 1:49; Matthew 27:11-42; John 10:24,25; Matthew 19:28; 21:42,43; 23:38,39; 25:14-46; Luke 4:43; 13:27-30; 19:11-27; 22:28-30; Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44

❖ **His Death**

For delivering this message, Jesus was put to death by the Jews and Romans. Nothing had gone wrong with God's purpose; for God had intended that in this way He would

demonstrate His love for mankind and show the awfulness of sin. By his death on the cross, Jesus showed how right God has always been to condemn sin; demonstrated what sin is really like; and revealed how great God's love is in rescuing us from ourselves, and our own choices. That sacrificial death thus declared the righteousness of God, and made it possible for God to forgive repentant sinners. It showed God to be both righteous and forgiving. All believers who become related to God by baptism, through this crucified but risen representative of Adam's disobedient race, can be forgiven. The Scriptures use several different words to refer to God's gracious work through His Son, including "reconciliation", "redemption" and "atonement".

Luke 19:47; 20:1-16; John 11:45-53; Acts 10:38, 39; 13:26-29; 4:27,28; Romans 8:3; Hebrews 10:10; Acts 13:38; 1 John 1:7; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Peter 3:18; 2:24; Hebrews 9:14; 7:27; 9:26-28; Galatians 1:4; Romans 3:25; 15:8; Galatians 3:21,22; 2:21; 4:4,5; Hebrews 9:15; Luke 22:20; 24:26,46,47; Matthew 26:28

❖ His Resurrection

On the third day after his crucifixion God raised Jesus from the dead, and exalted him to the heavens to be a priestly mediator between God and man. He is there now, at God's right hand, working to gather together from all nations a people who can be saved from sin and death by believing and obeying the saving truth that God has revealed.

1 Corinthians 15:4; Acts 10:40; 13:30-37; 2:24-27

❖ His Priesthood

Jesus is the only priest who is acceptable to God. There is no need for human priests; for the Lord Jesus is the God-given mediator and intercessor between God and man. He lives in heaven to make intercession for those who have accepted the gospel and who become his brothers and sisters. If they confess and forsake their sins, those sins can be forgiven.

Luke 24:51; Ephesians 1:20; Acts 5:31; 1 Timothy 2:25; Hebrews 8:1; Acts 15:14; 13:39; Hebrews 4:14,15; John 17:9; Hebrews 10:26; 1 John 2:1; Proverbs 28:13

❖ His Apostles

Jesus sent forth apostles to proclaim salvation through him, as the only name under heaven whereby men must be saved. That salvation was available for both Jew and Gentile, but it is necessary for all who want that salvation to approach God in the one way that has been provided.

Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19,20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 26:16-18; 4:12.

❖ The Only Way of Salvation

The only way to obtain salvation from sin and death is to believe the gospel as it was preached by the Lord and his apostles, and to take on the saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is done by baptism, which is an act of burial or immersion in water, and that must follow a satisfactory confession of faith. Baptism which takes a different form, or one that occurs before a person has a saving faith, is unacceptable to God.

Baptism begins a new life in Christ, one which requires patient observance of all that he commanded, none being recognised as his friends except those who do what he has commanded.

Acts 13:48; 16:31; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,41; 10:47; 8:12; Galatians 3:27-29; Romans 6:3-5; 2:7; Matthew 28:20; John 15:14.

The gospel of salvation consists of "the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ".

- ❖ The "name of Jesus Christ" expresses those things about the nature and work of the Lord Jesus which have been outlined above.
- ❖ The "kingdom of God" consists of that truth which is revealed in the writings of the prophets and by the Lord Jesus and the apostles, as outlined below.

Acts 8:12; 19:8,10,20; 28:30,31

❖ The Kingdom of God

God will set up a kingdom on earth, which will overthrow all others, and change them into "the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ".

Daniel 2:44; 7:13,14; Revelation 11:15; Isaiah 32:1,17; 2:2-4; 11:9,10

For this purpose God will send Jesus Christ to the earth. He will come visibly, personally and powerfully.

Acts 1:11; 3:20,21; Psalm 102:16,21; 2 Timothy 4:1; Acts 1:9,11; Daniel 7:13

The kingdom which he will establish will be the kingdom of Israel restored, in the territory it formerly occupied, namely the land that was gifted by covenant for an everlasting possession to Abraham and his seed. Abraham's seed is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Micah 4:6-8; Amos 9:11,15; Ezekiel 37:21,22; Jeremiah 23:3-8; Genesis 13:14-17; Hebrews 11:8,9; Galatians 3:16; Leviticus 26:42; Micah 7:20

This restoration of the kingdom to Israel will involve the ingathering of God's chosen but scattered nation, the Jews. It was predicted by the prophets that after years of dispersion they would be reinstated in the land of their fathers, which would be reclaimed from "the desolation of many generations". Long ago the Bible predicted that Jerusalem would be occupied once again by Jews. This was to happen prior to it becoming "the throne of the Lord" and the capital city of the whole earth.

Isaiah 11:12; Jeremiah 31:10; Zechariah 8:7,8; Ezekiel 36:34,36; Isaiah 51:3; 60:15; 62:4; Jeremiah 3:17; Micah 4:7, 8; Joel 3:17; Isaiah 24:23

The governing body of the kingdom of God which is to be established will be the brothers and sisters of Christ – those people from all generations who have believed the promises of God and have been obedient to His commands. They will be made immortal rulers in that age and, with Christ at their head, will comprise the collective "seed of Abraham", in whom all nations will be blessed,

Daniel 12:2; Luke 13:28; Revelation 11:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; John 5:28, 29; 6:39, 40; Luke 14:14; Matthew 25:34,46.

❖ Resurrection and Judgement

At the appearing of Christ, prior to the establishment of the kingdom, those who know the revealed will of God, and

have been called upon to submit to it, will be summoned before his judgement-seat. This will necessitate those from times past being raised from the dead. They will be raised mortal. It will be a time of reckoning for both faithful and unfaithful alike.

2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Romans 2:5,6,16; 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Revelation 11:18

As a result of that judgement, the faithful will be given the gift of immortality and will be exalted to reign with the Lord Jesus Christ as joint heirs of the kingdom. The unfaithful will be consigned to shame and "the second death". Their punishment will be that they are excluded from the presence of the Lord and the glories of his reign.

The Bible does not teach that people will be endlessly punished in hell or with hell fire. Such terminology is picture language for the total destruction of those who are rejected by God as unworthy of the life to come.

Matthew 7:21; 8:12; 25:31-46; Daniel 12:2; Galatians 1:8; 5:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10; Hebrews 10:26-29; 2 Peter 2:12; Revelation 21:8; Malachi 4:1; Psalm 37:29-38; Proverbs 10:25-30; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4; James 1:12; Romans 2:7; John 10:28; Matthew 5:5; Psalm 37:9,22,29; Revelation 5:9; Daniel 7:27; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 3:21; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; Psalm 49:7-9; Luke 22:29, 30

❖ The Millennium

The Kingdom of God, thus constituted, will continue a thousand years, during which sin and death will continue among the earth's subject inhabitants, though in a much milder degree than now. It will be the mission of the kingdom to show the mortal inhabitants of that age how best to live in a way that pleases God and makes their own lives happy and contented.

Revelation 20:4-9; 11:15; Isaiah 65:20; Ezekiel 37:22,25; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

A law will be established, to which all nations will become subject, for their "instruction in righteousness". This will result in the abolition of war to the ends of the earth; and the "filling of the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea".

Micah 4:2; Isaiah 11:1-5; 2:3,4; Habakkuk 2:14

The work of the kingdom will be to subdue all God's enemies and finally death itself, by opening up the way of life to the nations. Men and women will have the opportunity to live in this kingdom during the thousand years.

1 Corinthians 15:25,26; Revelation 21:4; 20:12-15; Isaiah 25:6-8

At the close of the thousand years, there will be a general resurrection and judgement, resulting in the final extinction of the wicked, and the immortalisation of all those who have lived during the thousand years who are now considered worthy of eternal life.

Revelation 20:11-15; 1 Corinthians 15:24

The government will then be delivered up by Jesus to the Father, who will manifest Himself as the "all-in-all". Sin and death will have been taken out of the way, and the human race will be completely restored to a fit state for fellowship with Almighty God.

1 Corinthians 15:28

❖ **Life in Christ**

All who believe these things and who are baptized as Jesus commanded must live in obedience to the Lord's commandments. This will require them to have the right attitude towards God and the Lord Jesus Christ by putting their requirements first, and by loving them more than anyone or anything else. We should always seek to care for and respect our fellow believers, putting their interests in front of our own, and loving other men and women as ourselves.

- ❖ We should love God first and foremost, putting Him before all else. We should pray to Him frequently and worship Him regularly.

Matthew 22:37; Luke 18:1; Matthew 6:7; Ephesians 5:20

- ❖ We should always highly regard the Lord Jesus Christ and honour him in all things. He is our role-model in life. In everything we should seek to be Christ-minded and to live as he lived – selflessly and in the best interests of others.

1 Peter 2:21; Luke 14:26; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 3:17

- ❖ We are to love even our enemies and not to be aggressive or vengeful, not exercising legal rights or going to law but seeking agreement and reconciliation at all times, seeking to overcome evil with good. It should always be our aim to do to others as we would have them do to us.

Matthew 5:25,39-44; 7:12; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Corinthians 6:7; Hebrews 12:14

- ❖ We should choose employment which is in harmony with the things we believe, not taking an oath of allegiance to any other king or ruler except the Lord Jesus Christ and showing a conscientious objection to those things which are contrary to our beliefs. That means that we should not work in the armed forces or in the police.
- ❖ We should not vote to elect political parties, because our allegiance is to Jesus Christ alone, and we await his government, when he rules as king in Jerusalem.

John 18:36; Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:4; Hebrews 11:13-16; 13:14; 1 Peter 2:9,11-14

- ❖ In employment we should be diligent, honest and conscientious employees, not complaining or causing trouble but working for our employer as unto the Lord.

Matthew 7:1; Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:23; James 5:9

- ❖ Our personal relationships should always be appropriate to our calling as a follower of Jesus. We should choose friends carefully. Sexual relations are only permissible within marriage and believers should marry believers. Marriage is for life and divorce is to be avoided. In all our relationships we should be gentle, meek, kind-hearted, compassionate, merciful and forgiving. Our behaviour should always be courteous and caring. We should always be ready to talk about the things we believe.

UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE FOR YOURSELF

2 Timothy 2:24; Titus 2:2; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12; Matthew 18:35

- ❖ Our words should always be appropriate and seemly. We should never use the name of God or the Lord Jesus in vain. We should not be angry or engage in speaking evil about others but we should be sincere, truthful and honest at all times.

Ephesians 4:25,31; Titus 2:2; Philippians 4:5; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 2:1; 5:8; Colossians 3:8; 4:6

- ❖ Our behaviour should always be above reproof, for we are to be an example to others, showing by the way we live that we serve the Lord Jesus and do not live to please ourselves. We should therefore have nothing to do with adultery, fornication, rude jesting, foolish talking or immoral behaviour of any sort, but should seek things that are pure and wholesome at all times.

Philippians 2:15; 4:8; Ephesians 5:3,4; Romans 12:2; Titus 2:12

- ❖ We are to do good to all as we have opportunity, the greatest good being to share our knowledge of the gospel with others.

Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:4,16; Galatians 6:2,10; Matthew 6:1-4; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:16

- ❖ We are to obey rulers, pay taxes and in every respect be model citizens as we wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven, to reign from Jerusalem. Nothing that we do should dishonour God's name or bring his Word into disrepute.

Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13; 1 Timothy 5:14; 1 Corinthians 3:17; 10:31

- ❖ Whilst we await the Lord's coming we should be diligent about his business, watchful for his appearance and careful in all things to give God the glory due to His holy name.

1 Corinthians 16:13; Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-10; Titus 2:14; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9