

concerning the Kingdom of God." Acts 8:12 records for us, "They believed Philip preaching the Good News (the Gospel) about the Kingdom of God..." The book of Acts ends by stating, "[Paul] stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus the King with all openness, unhindered" (28:30–31).

Jesus is God's Anointed. The Hebrew word *Mesiah* (Messiah) and the Greek word *Christos* (Christ) both mean "Anointed." The New Testament use of "Christ" harkens back to Psalm 2, which meant the King whom God had anointed to rule the world. The apostles' use of "the Christ, the Son of God" also harkens back to Psalm 2, demonstrating that they were proclaiming, "Jesus is King!" This is why their enemies said in Acts 17:7, "they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus!" The Gospel is that the King has come and inaugurated His Kingdom.

Observe Peter's words in Acts 2:36: "God has made Him (Jesus) both Lord and King—this Jesus whom you crucified." Acts 5:31 records, "[Jesus] is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Ruler and a Liberator." A few verses later, "every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the King" (2:42).

The Gospel is: **Jesus is KING!!!**

According to Jesus, the Gospel (Good News) is that the Kingdom of God is near.

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God finds its fullest definition based on Daniel 2:31–45 and Psalm 2:1–12, and on the authority of John 3:3–5 and 1 John 4:15–5:1:

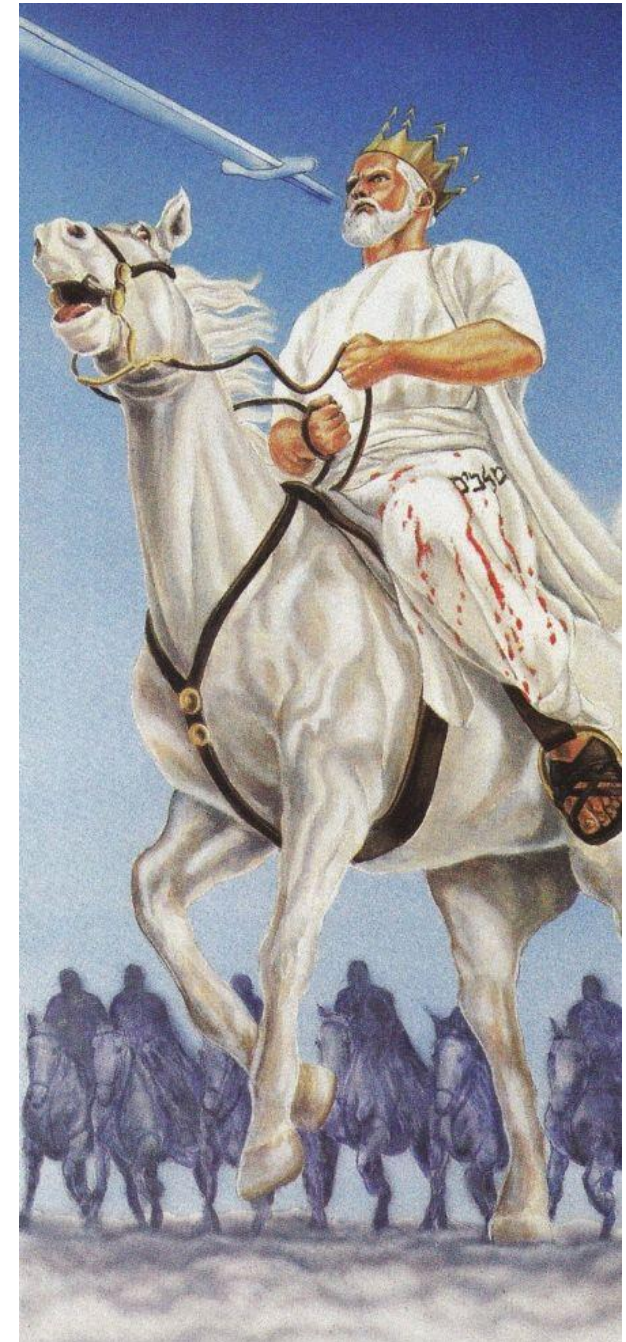
The reign of God's anointed King begins with the indwelling Holy Spirit and destroys the rulers and authorities of the world.

A ruler named Sin, an authority named Death.

- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus died for your sins," then Scripture fails to record a single example of a Gospel sermon to non-believers.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus is the *Christos*," then the book of Acts records many examples of Gospel sermons.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus died for your sins," then Scripture never explicitly ties belief in the Gospel to salvation.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus is King," then John 20:31 and Romans 10:9 tie belief in the Gospel to salvation.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus died for your sins," then salvation is the avoidance of God's wrath.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus is King," then salvation is *liberation* from the kingdom of darkness.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus died for your sins," then I read the Gospel books of Scripture to learn what Jesus will say about sin and what Jesus will do about sin.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus is King," then I read the Gospel books of Scripture to see what they will reveal about His new Kingdom and our *liberation* from the kingdom of darkness.
- ▶ If salvation is avoidance of God's wrath *by faith*, then I do not understand how the *act* of baptism saves me even though the apostles said it repeatedly.
- ▶ If salvation primarily refers to *liberation from the kingdom of darkness*, then the *act* of baptism can contribute to my liberation from darkness in this lifetime without being mandatory for a near-death convert to enter Paradise.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus died for your sins," then atonement teachings (although addressed to believers) primarily invite non-believers to faith.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus is King," then atonement teachings equip believers to live holy lives separated from sin.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus died for your sins," then meditating on the Gospel as a believer encourages me to consider myself a sinner.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus is King," then meditating on the Gospel as a believer encourages me to consider myself a citizen of King Jesus.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus died for my sins," then avoiding sin is noble but optional, and so likewise is walking in the Spirit.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus is King," then walking in the Spirit is my chief goal. Otherwise I will walk in the flesh and testify to the kingdom, the power, and the glory of Satan; thereby denying the Gospel, "Jesus is King."
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus died for my sins," then the book of Revelation primarily reflects the final judgment of sin.
- ▶ If the Gospel is "Jesus is King," then the book of Revelation primarily reflects His final reclamation of the kingdom of the world from the authority of darkness.

A QUESTION

FOR YOU...



DO YOU HAVE A KING? ▼

If answer is "No"...

The apostles proclaimed that God has anointed Jesus as King of all the Earth.¹

If answer is "Yes"...

WHAT IS THE NAME OF YOUR KING? ▼

If any answer other than "Jesus"...

The apostles proclaimed that God has anointed Jesus as King of all the Earth.¹

If "Jesus" is the answer...

HOW DO YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT HE IS KING? ▼

If any answer other than "His resurrection"...

The apostles said that God proved Jesus is King by raising Him from the dead,² an event which they personally witnessed.³

If "Jesus' resurrection" is the answer...

HOW DO YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT HE ACTUALLY ROSE FROM THE DEAD? ▼

If any answer other than "the blood of the apostles"...

We can trust the eyewitness testimony of the apostles because they willingly submitted to torture and execution for their eyewitness testimony. They did not die for their beliefs, which would prove nothing. They died for eyewitness testimony. If their testimony were false, they would

not have willingly accepted torture and execution to defend a lie.

If "the blood of the apostles" is the answer...

HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF KING JESUS? ▼

If answer is "No"...

Jesus and His apostles commanded all who believe to turn from sin and be baptized into His name to be liberated from and receive forgiveness of sins.⁴

If answer is "Yes"...

Now that you have chosen King Jesus to rule over you, and to submit to His authority and rule, obeying His every command and teaching, it is important for you to have personal discipleship and to take part in a local congregation of King Jesus. Consider yourself *dead* to sin and *alive* to God in King Jesus.⁵ Read the Scriptures and use them to teach, reprove, correct, and instruct in righteousness.⁶ Find like-spirited people who will do the same for you. This is congregational life. Do this in and out of the assembly.⁷ Deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly. Grace teaches us to do so,⁸ and walking by the Spirit makes it possible.⁹ Assemble with other disciples (at least one or two), keeping the unity of the Spirit, and get to know each other well enough that you can provoke each other to love and good deeds and exhort one another.¹⁰ Now go and serve your King!

¹ Acts 2:36; 5:31; 10:42; 13:33

² Acts 2:24; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30

³ Acts 2:32; 5:32; 10:41; 13:31

⁴ Acts 2:38; 5:31-32; 10:43; 13:38-39

⁵ Rom. 6:11

⁶ 2 Tim. 3:16-17

⁷ Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25

⁸ Titus 2:11-12

⁹ Rom. 8:3-13; Gal. 5:16-25

¹⁰ Heb. 10:24-25

THE BIBLICAL GOSPEL

FOR CHRISTIANS...

The atonement is *not* the Gospel. Justification by faith is *not* the Gospel. The so-called "Romans Road" is *not* the Gospel. (The "Romans Road" is soteriology [the doctrine of salvation]. Romans was written to *believers—Christians*. It is *not* the Gospel the apostles preached to *the lost*. The *true* Gospel is much simpler. So what *is* the Gospel?

Twenty-eight verses in Scripture declare, "**the Gospel of ...**" Twenty-five of those twenty-eight verses *explicitly* refer to the Good News that God has anointed Jesus as King: the Gospel of Christ (11 times), the Gospel of God (8 times), and the Gospel of the Kingdom (6 times). The other three occurrences refer to the Gospel "of salvation," "of grace," and "of peace." These are *not* different Gospels; they describe the *one* Gospel.

The very first words out of Jesus' mouth concerning the Gospel are defined for us in Mark 1:14-15: "**Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Gospel.'**" In other words, "Believe in the Gospel of God concerning the Kingdom of God."

Matthew 4:17 records, "**From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'**" Six verses later, we read, "**Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom...**" (4:23). Six chapters later, He instructed His followers, "**As you go, preach, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'**" (Matt. 10:7). Luke recorded the same pattern of preaching in 9:60 and 10:9-11.

In the final week of Jesus' life, He explicitly stated in Matthew 24:14, "**This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world...**" Hours before His death, Jesus still claimed to be King and to rule a Kingdom which was "**not of this world**" (John 18:36). When Jesus rose from the dead, Acts 1:3 states that Jesus taught His disciples over the course of forty days "**the things**