

25 WHICH GOSPEL?

Opening Questions:

- What does “gospel” mean?
- To whom should we go to understand "the gospel" of Joshua of Nazareth - Joshua or other people like Paul or Billy Graham?
- If something is false, how good can it be?
- If something is popular or widely accepted, does that prove or mean that it is true?
- What is the real "gospel" as given by the real, historical Person of Joshua of Nazareth and his words and teachings in the four “gospel” books?

OK, we have clearly and thoroughly addressed the central error of Christians/Biblians. Let us move on and take a closer look at what the Christian’s call “the gospel” or the central message of the Christian religion. We will take a look at what is believed by most to be the primary or core message of Christianity given by perhaps the most popular and successful modern proclaimer of that message in recent times, Billy Graham.

The following material is taken directly from the late Mr. Graham’s website here – billygraham.org:

“How to Know Jesus

In four brief steps, you can come to an understanding of how to find eternal life. During Billy Graham’s landmark 1954 London Crusade, his team developed a simple system to bring people to faith known as “Steps to Peace with God.” Since that time, and in various printed and electronic forms, this succinct and clear presentation of how to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and experience peace with God has been translated into dozens of languages and shared with millions of people.

“Steps to Peace with God” is the natural overflow of the Gospel message Billy Graham has given around the world. It clearly conveys God’s love, forgiveness, and plan for each person’s life.”

So, to sum up, Billy Graham’s team is going to provide people with steps to peace with God as well as the “plan for each person’s life.” He goes on to list

what he believes are the four steps that will get people into heaven or peace with God. The source quoted as the authority to validate that the steps are real and right is "the Bible." Out of the 15 quotes from the implied standard of the Bible, only two or 13% are from Joshua of Nazareth! So, while the Christians claim to represent Joshua of Nazareth, they do not look to him for the core of their beliefs or their gospel or good news. They do this because Joshua does *not teach* their "gospel" as we shall see.

And what do they provide as "the plan for each person's life"? It appears to be "join a religious organization, otherwise known as a church." That is a very deficient, shallow and narrow plan for anyone's life since church-going accounts for about 1% of people's waking hours per week and generally does not affect the way one lives for the other 99% of their life!

Let's take a look at Christianity's core message as given by Billy Graham's organization.

Step 1 of the popular version of the Christian gospel is entitled, "**God's purpose: peace and life.**"

Please note that while Joshua of Nazareth does want his followers to experience peace, he does not state anywhere that that is the Designer's primary purpose for people. Here is an illustration to help you understand.

Their once was a family trapped under a house after a tornado except for one child, a son. The dad says to his son, "go, and find help to get us out of here."

So the boy goes looking for help. Of course, the dad would like his son to be safe and not to be afraid while he searches for help, but his safety in traveling and managing his fear is not the primary purpose.

Instead, it was to find help to rescue his family.

In like manner, God's primary purpose is not for people to have a good life on the earth. Therefore, this claim from Mr. Graham is only partly true and is falsely represented in its context. God does want us to have inner peace *with Him as the source*. Joshua represents a "good life" on this earth, and it is **not** a comfortable life as Christianity portrays it. In fact, there was no better life lived than Joshua of Nazareth, and for that the people killed him!

Step 2 of the Christian gospel is entitled, "*The Problem: Our Separation.*" Paul and the Hebrew scriptures are used as the basis for this belief instead of Joshua of Nazareth. The fundamental teaching is because we sin; God is angry with us as a result and will not give us heaven unless a sacrifice is paid to Him so that He might forgive us. *This is false.*

As we have seen, we as human beings are naturally captured by our self-pride, fear or selfishness (part of our nature which produces most sins) which prevents us from turning to any person who could help us. This is the real cause of separation from our Creator. While adult humans have self-pride, fear and selfishness ruling their person and are thus in a state of captivity; and while human adults remain "captive" if they do not turn to the Freedom Giver in faith; the fact is that God is not angry with people. Christianity's god of wrath and vengeance who demands that His innocent Son is brutally killed as a

sacrifice to appease his rage is a drastically wrong characterization of our heavenly Father, and it keeps people *away* from Him.

Step 3 of the Christian gospel is entitled, “**God’s Bridge: The Cross.**” Step three contains no quotes from Joshua of Nazareth to justify or back up the content behind the step. This step says that “Jesus Christ” was the sacrifice God needed to forgive people. It states that God required that His innocent Son be sacrificed on the cross to pay for the sins of the guilty children so that God could forgive people and give free tickets to heaven to all who believe that religious doctrine. Please note how they make the instrument of his death central to their gospel – the cross – instead of the person himself. *This belief is grossly wrong.* God did **not** punish his Son by having him killed in order to forgive the wrongdoings of the guilty sons and daughters. Instead, God forgives everyone who comes to Him with a sincere and contrite heart and asks for forgiveness.

Step 4 of the Christian gospel is entitled, “**Our Response: Receive Christ.**” Again, no direct quotes from Joshua of Nazareth to support the content associated with the step. This step is a clever “sleight of hand” that contains truth, yet only enough truth to psychologically entice and manipulate people. *Whatever “Receive Christ” means, what we can be entirely sure that it does not say is to make the real, historical Person of Joshua of Nazareth the Leader and Master of your life and thus live according to his teachings as recorded in the four gospel books.* Instead, it is merely some empty words – an incantation of sorts – that lead people to believe that by saying the words and participating in religious organizations, they get to go to heaven. They even provide the words of the incantation – what they call a prayer - for people to read off the website.

Billy Graham and the many who seek to emulate him or be Christian evangelists have one thing in common. They do not use the teachings of the historical Joshua of Nazareth as the basis of their “gospel” or if they do quote Joshua, his words and teachings will:

1. Be a minority of their “gospel” (in this case, only 13 percent), not supporting their key principles, or;
2. Be taken out of context, or;
3. Are twisted to conform to Christianity’s gospel.

So, to sum up the Christian gospel, it is believe the stuff about God and how to know what God wants that the Christian leaders say is, and if you do that, you will go to heaven. In general, the only actual behavior requirements stated by the Christian leaders in their “gospel” is to attend and support (give money to) their religious organizations (what they call “the church”), partake in their rituals, and to abstain from doing grossly wrong things.

Of course, some will take issue with using Mr. Graham's version of “the gospel,” and this is typical since Christianity is made up of rival sects, thousands of them. Never-the-less, Mr. Graham's version of “the gospel” is representative of what most Christians believe. All one has to do is do a bit of

research on the internet of various Christian organization's statements of belief to validate this claim.

The False “Gospel” of Christianity

Let us restate in a clear, detailed fashion Christianity's “gospel.”

God sent His Son to die on the cross to pay for our sins so if we believe the stuff **about** the Jesus and God our religious leaders tell us; we will go to heaven when we die.

- That God, being a being of wrath, anger, and vengeance some of the time, decided to have his beloved son - which innocent son loved him and honored him and obeyed him - tortured and killed:
 - As a blood sacrifice to sate or appease his wrath and anger against people for people's wrongdoings;
 - And for punishment and atonement for the wrongdoings of other people who did not love or honor or obey this God.
- The Bible God will not forgive people unless he gets paid to do so (thus, by definition, he never forgives people, for true forgiveness does not require payment!), and the payment he selected was the torturing and killing of his “beloved” and *innocent* son who honored him and obeyed him;
- Now, this schizophrenic God has good moments too. On those good days, he loves us and wants us to put our faith in him; though on his bad days, he has his *innocent*, perfect, honoring and obedient son tortured and killed in a fit of anger about the wrong-doings of **guilty** sons and daughters (as well as having many thousands of women, children and babies killed - See 1 Sam. 15:1-3);
- Nothing significant has to change in you or your life pattern—you can stay exactly how you are and continue to live and work for money or the other things you love in this world, and you don't have to love anyone truly. We only ask that if you have any major outward sins, you must hide them, so they don't disturb other members of the organization or reveal the falseness and lovelessness and powerlessness of our religion;
- If you will believe the things about the Bible God the religious leaders tell us - and you do the things the religious leaders tell us (but are usually unwilling to do themselves); and you “go to church” and support the religious leaders with your money - you will go to heaven when you die.

The True Good News of the Light of the World

Let us now contrast the above false gospel of Christianity with the real and truly good news the Creator's Messenger gave.

The Good News in a Nutshell

See our condition of captivity; have remorse over our wrongdoings which are evidence of our imprisonment; and in order to escape, place our faith in Joshua (or Jesus) of Nazareth as he reveals himself and our Father through *his own words* in the four gospel books and *thus be set free from our cage of self-pride and fear and selfishness*. Make Joshua the Leader of *my life* (not of your "religious time" or your "church life") and stop living for the things this world values particularly money and material things. With this new found freedom and purpose, *change ourselves and go and make a change in people's lives where we can by introducing them to the Freedom Giver and our Father and by living out love with them and speaking that which is true and doing that which is right according to Joshua*.

Following Joshua is the primary life endeavor and passion ("To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength" and to "serve God"), NOT a part-time religious hobby which the *counterfeit of Christianity* offers. If we do this, we will be set free, and we will enter into eternal Life in this life - and if we stay faithful - we will enter into the fullness of Eternal Life after our body dies.

The Gospel of Joshua of Nazareth

Joshua quoted from the beloved Hebrew prophet Isaiah about his mission because Isaiah provided a saying that hit the core of his mission, and he knew the Jewish listeners would pay more attention since they venerated their prophet:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim **release to the captives**,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

Joshua later said it this way:

If you continue in My word, then you are indeed disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. (John 8)

And:

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Mark 10)

Please note the crucial part of his good news is that he will **set us free**. Also please note that this real, pure gospel of the Freedom Giver has *nothing* to do with blood sacrifice!

As I have been saying throughout the book, we human beings place ourselves in a cage during our adolescent years. We transition from innocence to guiltiness. Our conscience becomes fully formed and thus informs us that what we are doing is wrong and we have to willingly – at some level – ignore or push away the “voice” of our conscience. That is the equivalent of walking into our cage of darkness, locking the door and throwing away the key. Our self-pride and fear and selfishness (root level sins) form our cage and keep it closed. Our cage – and our unwillingness to look for a way out – will ultimately destroy us. We cannot escape that cage without help—we cannot be set free from that condition without a Freedom Giver greater than ourselves.

The Freedom Giver’s good news is that we don’t have to stay in our cage and thus forfeit our existence; we don't have to destroy ourselves and forfeit our true Life; we don't have to lose the ones we love. We can have a compelling, meaningful and beautiful purpose to our lives here on the earth.

God, the Designer and Creator of human beings, exists. This God can be known, and his will for us can be understood. The best way to know this God and what He wants is by looking to His Son, as his life, words, and deeds are recorded in the four “gospel” books placed at the beginning of what people call the New Testament. To truly know God is how one attains to eternal life (John 17:3) – a, better, enduring Life that is entered into after one's body dies. The good news is the Son of Man did the following for us:

- *He paid a ransom for us to set us free from our self-made cage of self-pride, fear, and selfishness* and he invites us to take advantage of that ransom and offer of freedom, through faith in him, and the Father HE reveals (Matt. 20:28, Mark 10:45; Matt. 18:4, Luke 14:11; Matt. 10:26, Luke 5:10; John 15:13);
- He taught us right versus wrong and how to treat other people (Matt. 5 for example);
- He showed us what *real love is and how to live it out* (John 8:1-11, etc.);
- He will give us *a new life and a new Family that really loves us* IF we and others are willing to listen to him and do what he says (Matt. 12:48, Mark 10:29);
- He has and will continue to *show us the Way Home to our Father* by helping us change and leading us into the fullness of eternal Life (John 5:24, 14:6).

The Light teaches that our Father will forgive us for all our wrongs if we see our guilt - the worst transgression we have committed being ignoring him and His Messenger or playing a religious game as a substitute. If we see our guilt and ask Him with a sincere and remorseful heart to forgive us, He does

(He does **not** need/want/require some weird blood sacrifice to forgive us! :)). If we will turn to our Father in faith during our time of remorse - and to His appointed Leader of humanity, Joshua of Nazareth - then we will be born from above, enter into Life, and start the most fantastic journey any human being can undertake. This journey is arduous, but anyone can make it **if** they have but a little faith and love. While the journey is daunting, it is the best, most meaningful and fulfilling journey human beings are called to enter into by our Creator.

That is the sure Hope of the good news of Joshua of Nazareth.

Let us continue to contrast Joshua's gospel to the Christian “gospel” from a different perspective to provide additional insight into this vital matter.

The Christian gospel will have x marks, followed by Joshua’s gospel with check marks:

- ⊗ Believe what the Christian leaders say – both dead and living especially Paul - about God and their understanding of the Bible – a schizophrenic god who acts in love part of the time and wrath and vengeance the other part of the time and who sends people to eternal torment in hell, versus:
 - ✓ Believe what Joshua says and place your faith in him and the Father HE reveals by his own words **ONLY** in the four gospel books – a Father who truly loves you and demonstrated that love by sending His Son to save us *from ourselves*—a God who is *not* a God of wrath and vengeance who does *not* send people to eternal torment in hell;

- ⊗ Believe stuff about “Christ” to go to heaven with virtually no consequences on why or how you live your life, including remaining popular with most people, versus:
 - ✓ Place your faith in the Light and make him the Leader of your life with radical consequences on **WHY** you live your life and significant implications on *how* you live your life, including being rejected by most people;

- ⊗ Go to a religious organization the people call “the church”; support the religious organization and its work; partake in the rituals at “the church”;
 - The religious organization's work is primarily to build a building for the people to meet in to hear their leaders talk about God, and have programs that the people enjoy, and to build more organizations and buildings for the same sect. This work is *secondary* or *tertiary* for 95+ percent of the people (who merely give money to accomplish it) while all the people's *primary*

work is making money for themselves in regular “secular careers” and “secular jobs” in order to be comfortable in this world just like the rest of the people of the planet.

- ✓ Live out the new command with other disciples, genuinely loving and caring for each other thus sharing his Life together and doing HIS work together;
 - God's work is to bring the Leader and his truth and love and spiritual healing and therefore Life to other human beings and to help them do the same for others. This Life and work is the *primary* work for close to 100% of the people/flock/Family.

- ⊗ Do not do bad things, e.g., don't hurt yourself or other people when “unjustified.”
- ✓ Living out the new command of loving one another is primary and is lived out by helping one another and others in daily life.

- ⊗ Do these things (religious rituals, belief remembrance and abstention from gross sins of commission), and you will enter into heaven.
- ✓ Actually love other people and care about what is true and right and thus be a model and a change agent in this world, and you shall Live; and *that* Life will not end with the death of your body; and all the love you tried to express to others in your life will remain and grow in the next.

This contrast should also be used to understand the essential concept of faith versus beliefs **and** the concept of placing one's faith in the correct thing. What is the result of these two gospels?

For those who choose Christianity's gospel, its result is the successful failure that covers the earth at this time, as well as individual's likely self-condemnation for those who participate in it.

That which calls itself “the church” is nothing more than a religious social club built on Paul's or the Hebrew scripture author's or their religious leader's teachings. It is a group of people that feed themselves and is judged as successful by its members and the world of which they are part. It is successful if the organization gives them what they want-nice music, good moral or emotionally touching messages, good children programs, assurance of heaven, etc. And it is judged successful based on the amount of money it controls and through what money can buy, and the number of people it controls or influences.

For those who choose Joshua's good news, the result is a meaningful life; a life truly well lived; an exceptional life; *and* a painful experience with the same pattern of treatment/reception that Joshua received while here on the earth.

This troublesome Life, however, will provide the fullness of Eternal Life when our body dies.

In the next chapter, we will look at the empty ritual that Christians substitute for actually following Joshua.

Chapter Summary:

- The “gospel” of the Christians is not the good news that Joshua of Nazareth taught;
- The Christian gospel is a clever mix of truth with falsehoods which might result in a person sincerely coming to faith in God, but which faith will be in the god created by the Christians. If the individual who entered into faith clings to Joshua and starts to learn from **him**, he/she will be rejected by the religious people. Once that rejection starts, only one of two outcomes typically result – either their faith will die, and they will become a member of “the church”; or their faith will grow, and they will leave the religious system and speak against it, just like Joshua did some 2,000 years ago;
- The Christian gospel's good news is about as good as free hamburgers at McDonald's – a very popular offer of something free which is not substantive; does not address the real problems; will not lead to a truly healthy, well-lived life; and will not lead to eternal Life;
- The Christian gospel, in a nutshell, is, “believe this stuff about God and you will go to heaven”;
- The True Gospel of The Light is: "Let me set you free. Have faith in me. Turn from a wasted and selfish life and do my work, the most important of which is speaking truth and practicing love. If you do this, you will both enter into Life Everlasting, and change the lives for the betterment of the people around you.

See *Appendix 8, Forgiveness and Blood Sacrifice*.