

The Gospel of the Kingdom

by
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Foreword

The contemporary generation of followers of Jesus Christ is in danger of fumbling the baton of the Gospel, as they carry it through their leg of the race of life.

We have exchanged the glorious promise of the Kingdom of God for a pottage of personal peace, salvation smugness, and cold indifference to the eternal plan and counsel of God.

We are in danger, I believe, of having embraced, not the Gospel Jesus and the Apostles proclaimed, and for which our forebears in the faith lived and died, but another gospel, a shallow, self-centered, merely sentimental gospel, which “assures” us of heaven but does not equip us for the Kingdom of God.

Consequently, we may be headed for a rude awakening on a Day not too far hence.

This brief booklet is designed to help redress this unhappy situation and to bolster and fortify those who are running their race for Jesus with renewed perspective, power, and purpose when it comes to living and proclaiming the true Good News.

Section 1 -- Another Gospel?

From that time, Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
– Matthew 4.17

The Gospel that Jesus Christ proclaimed was the Gospel of the Kingdom of God¹.

Jesus declared the arrival of a new era, heralded and brought near by a new King, featuring a new agenda, a new power, and a new hope for the world. His message astonished the crowds, alarmed the powers-that-be, amazed and transformed His followers, and set in motion a new course for the history of men and events.

Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom, and nothing has been the same since.

Jesus’ disciples took up where He left off, carrying the Good News of the Kingdom of God beyond the nation of the Jews to Gentiles in every part of the Roman world². The Apostles, especially the Apostle Paul, brought together the Biblical vision of the Kingdom in a clear and compelling message about the Kingship of Jesus Christ, the rule of God’s Word and Spirit, and the new age of grace, hope, and glory which had come to earth in the Kingdom of God.

They went everywhere proclaiming this Good News, and everywhere they went communities of the King sprang into being as living testimonies to the reality of the Kingdom Jesus had taught and the Apostles believed and proclaimed.

But the father of lies wasted no time in trying to confuse the message of the Kingdom of God. False preachers and teachers appeared in various places, preaching something very much like the Good News of Jesus that Paul and the other Apostles had proclaimed – using the same words and offering similar hopes and promises – but with just enough difference to confuse and trouble, and even to lead astray, many of those who had embraced the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

Especially among the believers in Galatia did the Good News of the Kingdom of God come under attack. By briefly considering the challenge to the Kingdom vision and message which opponents of the true Gospel raised there, we can establish a backdrop for a fuller examination of the Good News of the Kingdom which the Scriptures contain, Jesus taught, and the Apostles proclaimed.

Faith plus works

The churches in Galatia were in a tumult. They had come to the knowledge of God through the preaching of the Apostle Paul, who proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom to them in the midst of personal suffering³. They entered into the liberating power of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ⁴ and had hit the ground running, abounding with joy and good works⁵. They had known the powerful indwelling presence of the Spirit of God, witnessed many of His mighty works, and had endured suffering for their conversion to Christ⁶. By all indications a true Gospel work had begun among the Galatians.

But troubling words soon reached the Apostle. The Galatians, it seems, were deserting the Lord they had professed to believe⁷. They were beginning to embrace “a different gospel” – not the true Gospel of the Kingdom, but a perversion of that Gospel, one that held out false hopes and put forth twisted requirements for those who would know the blessings of God.

A team of preachers had followed Paul into Galatia proclaiming that, in order to be a true follower of Jesus, a person who believed had to submit to circumcision, and to observing certain holy days and seasons⁸. Real Christians, these false preachers declared, obeyed select ceremonial protocols from the ancient corpus of Hebrew law. This was their great obligation and privilege, if they really wanted to enjoy the blessings of God’s covenant⁹.

Now this preaching troubled the Galatians, and worked great hardship among them, for many of those who had converted to Christ under Paul’s teaching were Gentiles, and the prospect of adult circumcision was not exactly appealing. Nor was the confusion of having to adopt ways of worship they had heretofore recognized as being the province of one particular ethnic community. Yet the Galatians were willing to undergo these hardships, if by doing so they could be assured of belonging to Christ. Thus the “different gospel” to which the Galatians were turning went something like this: Jesus has come to bring in the full blessings of God’s covenant. Repent and believe in Him and show that you really want to be a child of Abraham by submitting to circumcision and certain other regulations of the ancient Hebrew law.

Faith, that is, plus works equals salvation.

Let them be accursed! Jesus Christ was superficially at the center of this different gospel. But additional requirements were added for those who professed to believe in Him, which were presented simply as logical and reasonable ways of demonstrating true faith. By submitting to these regulations, as part of their confession of faith in Jesus, believers could be assured of being in the line of Abraham's children, heirs of the covenant, and true beneficiaries of the promises of grace.

Concerning this "different gospel" Paul said "not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the Gospel of Christ."¹⁰ This "different gospel", it seems, was distorting the true Gospel of the Kingdom by compromising the work of grace, minimizing the exclusive place of Christ, leading believers to trust in false works, and encouraging them to pursue priorities and practices more in line with "worthless elementary principles of the world" than the true teaching of Scripture¹¹.

The Galatians had begun to seek a glory associated more with the worldly happiness of men than the liberty and love of the Gospel of the Kingdom¹². Concerning those who came to the Galatians preaching this "different gospel", Paul wrote, "If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed." And just in case they didn't hear him correctly, he declared that same solemn admonition twice¹³.

Believed in vain?

Evidently, it is a very serious matter to compromise the Gospel by obscuring the grace of God, minimizing the work of Christ, imposing false obligations, and muddying the hope of the true Gospel.

- **Obscuring the grace of God:** Another gospel is being proclaimed when human works, in any form, are exclusive place of Christ, leading believers to trust in false works, and encouraging them to pursue priorities and practices more in line with "worthless elementary principles of the world" than the true teaching of Scripture¹¹.
- **Minimizing the work of Christ:** Any gospel that makes human happiness, rather than the honor of Jesus Christ, the primary end of salvation, and, to that end, selectively appeals to the redemptive work of Christ, emphasizing some aspects while almost wholly ignoring others, is not the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Gospel of the Kingdom is about Jesus and His reign. While it is true that receiving this Gospel is a source of great joy, the Good News itself is not, in the first instance, about making human beings happy.
- **Imposing false obligations:** They who insist on obligations or practices said to be indispensable for securing the blessings of God, which are the product of men's thinking rather than God's revelation, and that thus create a kind of spiritual smugness and lead believers away from the true path of Kingdom righteousness, are preaching another gospel and not the Gospel of the Kingdom.

- **Muddying the hope of the Gospel:** The Gospel of the Kingdom is compromised when people are led to hope, long for, and seek anything other than the glory of God and the righteousness, peace, and joy that come from living in His Spirit¹⁴.

Different gospels

In every age, our own included, the Gospel of the Kingdom has come under assault from false preachers who, in the guise of proclaiming the Truth that is in Jesus, preach a “different gospel.” In one way or another, the telltale signs of a “different gospel” can be discerned. Meanwhile, multitudes are happily following the teaching of false preachers in the belief that the gospel they have embraced is the very Gospel preached by Jesus and the Apostles.

In fact, what many have come to cherish is not the Gospel of the Kingdom but a “different gospel” – bearing many similarities to the true Gospel, to be sure, but a “different gospel” nonetheless, and therefore, no gospel at all.

We can only discern these wayward “winds of doctrine” – when we have a clear understanding of the Gospel of the Kingdom¹⁵. The better we understand and the more wholeheartedly we embrace this Good News as Jesus and the Apostles taught it, the better able we will be to counsel and lead our fellow believers who may be ensnared in the thrall of a “different gospel” and therefore in danger of having believed in vain¹⁶. And the better able we will be to fulfill our callings as witnesses for Christ who make disciples as we are going about in the normal situations of our everyday lives¹⁷.

For reflection or discussion:

1. Summarize in a few sentences the Gospel of the Kingdom as you understand it:
2. Do you sense that “another gospel” is being preached within churches these days? Of what does that “other gospel” consist?
3. What kinds of temptations do pastors face that may lead them to begin preaching another gospel besides the Gospel of the Kingdom?

Section 2 -- Near Christianity

As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. – Galatians 1.9

The Gospel of the Kingdom was compromised by the Judaizing preachers who followed in the tracks of the Apostle Paul.

These false teachers obscured the grace of God by preaching that salvation was, at least in part, a matter of faith and works. They minimized the work of Christ by making some human effort a partner in the work of salvation. In the process the Judaizers imposed false obligations on the believers in Galatia – obligations Paul insisted had passed away with the coming of the Kingdom. And they muddied the hope of the Gospel by encouraging people, if only indirectly, to seek something other than the glory of God.

Wherever we observe such teachings in place, people are hearing something other than the Gospel of the Kingdom which Jesus and the Apostles proclaimed. But there are other ways of knowing that some gospel other than the Gospel of the Kingdom has gripped the hearts of the followers of Jesus Christ. Among these is the lack of compelling evidence for a Kingdom presence within the churches.

What explanation?

There has to be an explanation why so many millions of people today claim to be born-again followers of Jesus Christ, attending nearly 250,000 churches, with around 3,000 of those being megachurches, accompanied by a growing Christian subculture of music, television, books and literature, education, internet presence, and even their own Yellow Pages – as I said, there has to be an explanation why, given all this, the morals and culture of America continue to decline away from the teaching of Scripture. The young are abandoning their Christian upbringing in growing numbers, and the public square continues practically devoid of any far-ranging, seriously taken Christian voice. There simply has to be an explanation for this.

And I think I have it. It harks back to a comment by G. K. Chesterton around the turn of the 20th century. Chesterton observed of his own day, that the reluctance people showed concerning the things of the Lord were not because people had tried the Gospel of Jesus Christ and found wanting. It was rather that the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the Gospel of the Kingdom – had not been tried.

This same situation confronts us today.

The Gospel of the Kingdom Jesus came preaching a particular message to the people of His generation. The gospel writers refer to it as “the Gospel of the Kingdom.” The Good News that Jesus announced had as its focus an objective reality which the New Testament refers to as the Kingdom of God¹⁸. What is that?

The Kingdom of God is the divine rule which Jesus came to bring into the affairs of men. It is an administration of righteousness, peace, and joy which we may enter by the Holy Spirit, through the new birth which comes by grace through faith¹⁹.

The Kingdom of God centers on Jesus, Who is its King, and on His call to follow Him in a life of self-denying service to the glory of God²⁰. To enter this Kingdom is to be born again to a life set apart for God, characterized by obedience to the Law of God²¹.

God gives His Kingdom to those who truly love Him, who renounce the desires and deeds of the world and the flesh, and who invest their strength in becoming rich in faith²². The Kingdom of God is not just a reality to be acknowledged and confessed; it is a realm of power, real spiritual power, in which, increasingly, all things are made new and every aspect of a person’s life is reconciled to God, unto the praise of the glory of His grace²³.

They who enter this Kingdom may be identified by their fervor in seeking to realize more of its presence and power²⁴, their prayers for its coming on earth as in heaven²⁵, their dutiful obedience to the holy and

righteous and good Law of God²⁶, and their faithfulness in living as witnesses to their risen and reigning Lord²⁷.

Where the Kingdom of God takes root in a person's heart, transforming grace begins to exert real spiritual power to make all things new, and to turn a person's world right side-up before the Lord²⁸.

Another gospel? It seems clear, by the conspicuous shortage of the qualities outlined above, that many churches are teaching, and many Christians have embraced, a gospel other than the Gospel of the Kingdom. But any gospel other than the Gospel of the Kingdom is no gospel at all.

Liberal Christianity, most readers will agree, is not Christianity at all, or, at best, is a corrupt version. As J. Gresham Machen argued so eloquently in the last century, liberal Christianity has many appealing features, and much to commend it. In many ways it is a quite fascinating and alluring religion. It even uses all the language of Christianity and holds Jesus in high esteem. But for all that, liberal Christianity just isn't Christianity. Indeed, Machen argued, it's not even close.

What about the gospel that is heard in so many churches today? The gospel that says, "Jesus died to forgive your sins and to bring you to heaven when you die"? Is that the Gospel? Rather, is that the whole Gospel? The Gospel of the Kingdom?

While that statement is certainly true, it doesn't sound as rich, full, comprehensive, and all engaging as what we outlined above as the Gospel of the Kingdom.

And it is widely apparent that those who have embraced this message are not evidencing the kind of whole-life transformation Jesus demonstrated and promised, or that those first Christians experienced.

But isn't it true that the Gospel says that Jesus died for our sins so that we could go to heaven? Yes, it does. But that is not the same as saying that Jesus' death to grant forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe is the whole Gospel. And if that's not the whole Gospel, but it is the heart and soul of what we preach, then can we say that it's the Gospel at all?

The proclamation that Jesus died for our sins so that we could be forgiven and have eternal life is not, in fact, what C. S. Lewis referred to as mere Christianity – Christianity at its most basic. Rather, I would say that this message, which offers as its primary hope forgiveness and eternal life, and which offers these to all who merely profess belief in Jesus – this gospel which is roundly proclaimed in perhaps the vast majority of churches throughout the land – should be referred to as near Christianity.

The Good News that Jesus and the apostles proclaimed is a message so comprehensive, so altogether new and radical, that it requires deep seated, heart-felt repentance, complete surrender to the risen Christ, and whole-hearted belief leading to obedience in every area of life. It is the message of the Kingdom of God.

Anything other than the Gospel of the Kingdom is not the Gospel at all, but a form of near Christianity that holds out promises germane to the Kingdom, prescribes means related to the Kingdom, but holds

back on making the full vision and demands of the Kingdom clear to those who would enjoy the conditions of blessedness.

Such a message obscures the magnitude of God’s grace, minimizes the scope of Christ’s achievement, fails to nurture believers in the full obligations of Kingdom citizenship, and holds out a lesser hope – mere forgiveness and eternal life, rather than the glory of the living God Near Christianity, therefore, produces little in the way of Kingdom evidence in the lives and churches of those who embrace it. It leaves what it promises, and what people who embrace it desire: a sense of forgiveness, and the peace of mind that accompanies that, and a tentative hope of going to heaven when we die. As for power to transform sinful lives into beacons of holiness, goodness, beauty, and truth – well, that’s something to affirm, but not necessarily something to seek, much less to attain.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him Who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel...” (Gal. 1.6). Did you catch that verb – deserting? It wasn’t that the Galatians denied that Jesus was Savior. Not at all. Or even that He was Lord. They simply chose to minimize the power of His saving grace by adding to the Gospel in certain ways and detracting from it in others. So, their professions of faith notwithstanding, Paul said that they were deserting the true Gospel, the Gospel of the Kingdom. They may have been Christians, but they were not living the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Anything other than the Gospel of the Kingdom may be like Christianity, or near Christianity, but it is not the Good News of Jesus and Paul. Near Christianity is not the Christianity of Scripture and, therefore, is not Good News at all.

For reflection or discussion:

1. What are the primary differences between the Gospel of the Kingdom and “near” Christianity?
2. Do you agree that this is a matter of serious concern? Why or why not?
3. What difference does it make in the way we make disciples, whether we preach the Gospel of the Kingdom or the gospel of “near” Christianity?

Section 3 -- The Character of the Kingdom

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

— Matthew 4:17

The focus of the Gospel

The Gospel that Jesus proclaimed, that He taught His disciples to preach, and that the first Christians boldly embraced and declared, is emphatically “the Gospel of the Kingdom”²⁹.

The Gospel is “good news” concerning a “Kingdom” which Jesus declared had, with His appearing on earth, “come near”, was “at hand”, and could be found “within” or “among” men. The Kingdom that

Jesus brought near intruded a new reality into the affairs of men and nations, calling for universal submission.

The Gospel we are called to embrace and proclaim must be none other – and nothing less – than this same “Good News” concerning the “Kingdom of God.” Anything less than the Gospel of the Kingdom is another gospel – at best, a form of near Christianity – but not the Good News that Jesus announced. I want to examine more closely the focus of this “Good News” – the Kingdom of God. We will see that there are six facets to the Kingdom and its coming among men which have profound implications for our understanding of the Gospel.

We are not likely to proclaim the Kingdom as the substance of the Gospel until we first understand its unique and glorious character. The better we understand the Kingdom of God, the more fervently we will seek it, the more fully we will enter it, and the more boldly, consistently, and convincingly we will proclaim it.

The focus of the Good News that Jesus proclaimed is the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven (these terms are virtually interchangeable). In heralding this Kingdom Jesus was announcing something altogether new in the affairs of men and nations. There are, in fact, six facets to the “newness” which comes with the Kingdom of God. The first of these is the inauguration of a new era in human history.

A new era

In Acts 2:14-17 Peter referred to this “new era” in terms of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, as foretold by the prophet Joel. This new era entails an opening up of revelation, as the Word and will of God become more broadly known among men (vv. 17, 18). The entire cosmos is affected in startling and perhaps alarming ways (vv. 19, 20), and the knowledge of salvation goes out far and wide, to be embraced by all who put their trust in the Lord (v. 21; cf. vv. 38, 39).

This new era of the Spirit, increased revelation, and the far-reaching message of salvation was foreseen in various ways in the Old Testament³⁰. On the first Christian Pentecost Peter heralded the first surge of the Spirit in this new era of the Gospel, but even he would discover greater wonders and mysteries about the rule of Christ as the new era unfolded around him³¹.

Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, had been exalted as Savior and Lord, Peter proclaimed, and the new era He inaugurated by His redemptive work had now, with the coming of the Spirit, begun to advance in earnest.

A new sovereign

Second, the coming of the Kingdom of God means that a new Sovereign has appeared, whose claims and purposes must be reckoned with by all men. The people of Thessalonica immediately recognized that Paul and his associates “practiced” another King, and that His name was Jesus³². They also understood that this allegiance put the Christians at odds with the dominant worldview of the day; they “opposed” the doctrine of Caesar by proclaiming Jesus as Lord and insisting that all should submit in loving obedience to Him.

Again, the rule of a King descended from Judah, whose reign would prevail over all the nations, was foretold as early as Moses (Genesis 49.1, 8-12 – here, the word, Shiloh, means literally, “Him Whose it is”). Further, Isaiah (Is. 9.6, 7), David (Ps. 110), and the sons of Korah (Ps. 45.2-7 – cf. Heb. 1.8, 9; Rev. 6.1, 2 and 19.11-16) saw the coming of this new Sovereign, as did the prophets Micah (Mic. 5.2-5a) and Zechariah (Zech. 9.9, 10). It is the uniform testimony of the New Testament that Jesus Christ fulfilled these hopes and reigns now as King of kings and Lord of lords³³.

The new era of the Kingdom of God has been realized precisely because a new Sovereign reigns over the entire cosmos, bringing His Kingdom to reality on earth as it is in heaven.

A new economy

In the third place, the coming of the Kingdom of God means a new economy has begun to unfold in the affairs of men and through the course of history. By “economy” we simply mean “administration” – a new way of doing things. Whereas prior to the coming of Christ and His Kingdom, men had only their own wisdom, wits, and strength on which to rely, now a whole new way of making our way in the world is opened before us.

In the divine economy now established within the Kingdom of God, the Spirit of God works with the Word of God to build the Church and further the reign of Christ. An ethic of love and hope prevails within that realm which serves as a platform for embodying and proclaiming the truth of God and Christ. Salvation comes to those who believe, bringing them into the community of the saints and dramatically affecting every aspect of their lives in relationships of mutual service and love³⁴.

This divine economy is fueled by spiritual power to accomplish eternal ends of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit of God³⁵.

A new agenda

Fourth, the coming of the Kingdom of God indicates that a new agenda is in effect. The King has announced this new agenda as the principal means whereby, He intends to support and advance the new economy He has inaugurated in this new era. Central to the new agenda of the Kingdom era is the work of building the Church, the Body of Christ³⁶. This is a work of God’s Spirit as He engages the members of the believing community in worship and in mutual acts of service and love to build unity and maturity in the community as a whole.

The life of a church comes to expression principally in worship, koinonia sharing and giving, and every-member disciple-making, and then in service and witness to the surrounding community and the world. Through such efforts individual churches grow strong as expressions of the Body of Christ. And, as churches within particular communities find ways of worshiping and working together, they demonstrate the unity they have in Christ and realize an even richer and fuller manifestation of His Body Churches which grow in this way become beacons of light and hope in their communities, showing the way to full and abundant life in Jesus Christ³⁷.

A new priority

Fifth, a new priority Because of this new era, new Sovereign, new economy, and new agenda, the Kingdom of God also brings with it a new priority. Jesus summarized this new priority in Matthew 6:33, when He commanded His followers to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Believers seek the Kingdom of God as they exercise diligent stewardship of all the Lord’s gifts³⁸; wield the power of the Spirit for loving witness to the Lord Jesus³⁹; pursue holiness and the fruit and gifts of the Spirit⁴⁰; pray earnestly for the coming of the Kingdom⁴¹; serve others in love⁴²; and sow the true seed of the Kingdom by their lives and words in all the “as-you-are-goings” of their lives⁴³.

Kingdom-seeking is the defining priority for every aspect of life for those who have embraced, not the gospel of near Christianity, but the Gospel of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

A new hope

Finally, the coming of the Kingdom ushers in an era of new hope. Paul says that, being justified by faith we have entered into a new place, where we stand in hope of the glory of God⁴⁴. The glory of God is the presence of God, experienced as a “weighty” and overwhelming engagement with inexpressible joy and true spiritual pleasure⁴⁵. It is this presence of God, promised by our Lord and King⁴⁶, that Kingdom-dwellers earnestly seek; and, while they enter that presence with fear, they experience it as joyous transforming power and glory⁴⁷.

Thus the hope Christians seek becomes the hope they experience and express to the watching world, shown in every area of their lives, no matter how trivial or mundane⁴⁸. The Kingdom-dwelling Christian thus will make every effort to make his calling and election sure, so that he may know the hope of his calling and may show that hope to the world, bringing the knowledge of the glory of God to light in everyday ways and words⁴⁹.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is not, in the first instance, about you and me going to heaven when we die. It is about the Kingdom of God, first and foremost – about a new reality that has broken into human experience with irresistible, transforming power, making all things new and bringing the knowledge of the glory of God to light in the sight of all men and nations.

This, as we shall see, is Good News indeed!

For reflection or discussion:

1. What is the Kingdom of God? Why is it appropriate to say that the Kingdom of God has come, but not in its entirety?
2. What difference does it make if you are inviting a lost sinner to receive the Gospel of the Kingdom as opposed to the gospel of near Christianity?
3. In what particular ways does the character and coming of the Kingdom of God typically feature in your everyday life and conversation?

Section 4 -- The Good News

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God... - Romans 1:16

Good News!

With the coming of the Kingdom of God a new era has broken into human history. A new King is on the throne, and He is advancing a new economy – a spiritual economy in which grace fuses with Law, issuing, by the power of God’s Spirit, in widespread, ever-increasing love and truth among men. A new agenda governs the affairs of men: King Jesus is building His Church and calling out a people for Himself. His people pursue an altogether new priority – seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness for all of life. And they are infused with a new hope, the hope of knowing God’s glory and showing His glory to the world.

All this has come about because of the glorious saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ. His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension – and the promise of His imminent return – have ushered out the old era, overcome the old tyrant that ruled men’s souls, canceled the old economy of sin and death, replaced the old agenda and priority of mere self-seeking, and set aside the old, unreliable hope in fleeting things and circumstances.

The Kingdom of God is thus good news – Gospel! If we could summarize in one word just what that good news consists of, surely it would be the word, power.

The Kingdom of God is power! And the active presence and ready availability of that power – the power of God’s Word and Spirit – is Good News for the world because it makes possible a life that is new and transforming in all its aspects.

I want briefly to examine five aspects of the nature of the Kingdom of God – its power to transform and to make all things new.

The power of God for salvation

In the first place, as Paul explains, the Kingdom of God is the power of God for salvation. But salvation from what? Much, indeed.

Those who have been translated into the Kingdom of God’s own Son have been saved from a coming condemnation in which unrepentant sinners will be lost forever⁵⁰. No condemnation awaits those who are now, by faith, in Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. They are free in the truth of Christ and know unshakeable peace and joy in God.

The power of the Kingdom also liberates those who possess it from the power of indwelling sin, so that they may flourish in the virtues of grace and truth⁵¹. Kingdom-dwellers are saved from lives of inveterate disobedience to God⁵²; from the fear of death⁵³; and from slavery to unrighteousness⁵⁴. All these old things have passed away once a person enters the Kingdom of God’s dear Son, for in Him, all things have become new⁵⁵. But the Kingdom of God is the power of God for salvation from all of this and more.

The power of God for transformation

Second, the Kingdom is Good News because it brings power to transform. This is clearly visible in a passage like Acts 17.1-7. The demeanor, conversation, and public boldness of Paul and his companions were so markedly different from anything the people of Thessalonica had ever seen before that they declared them to have turned the world upside-down.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the power of God for transformation, a transformation so complete and thorough that it finally makes all things new. Those who know this power are changed by the glory of God so that, increasingly, their lives actually begin to refract the living reality of the risen Christ, their King⁵⁷. The fruits and virtues that flow from their lives, like rivers of living water⁵⁸, are precisely those most to be desired and least in supply in a fallen world. Together those who have entered the Kingdom of God form communities of grace and truth whose ability to transform relationships, cultures, and whole

Human beings have no power on their own to rescue themselves from any of these conditions. Apart from the Kingdom of God, and submission to its King, there is no salvation for any man, from anything which holds him in captivity and hurls him toward oblivion⁵⁶. Apart from the saving mercy of Christ and liberation into His Kingdom, men can look forward only to lives of uncertainty, doubt, disappointment, false hopes, fear, and death. Societies have demonstrated this truth over and over throughout the course of Church history⁵⁹.

This transforming power of the Gospel of the Kingdom is the experience and testimony of every person who, coming to salvation in Jesus Christ, has taken up the calling to seek this Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit as his guiding orientation in life.

The power for new fruit

In the third place, and related to the previous facet, the Gospel of the Kingdom has power to bear new fruit. Paul summarized the character of the Kingdom as “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁰

Righteousness is abounding love founded in spiritual knowledge and true discernment, leading to excellence and purity in life after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁶¹ Righteousness defines the character of Kingdom living.

Peace is that “beyond understanding” state of mind and heart that nothing can terrify, and nothing can shake⁶². Those who know the power of the Gospel know peace because they are settled on Christ, hidden in the palm of God’s hand, sheltered by His Word, and filled and protected by His Spirit. Peace is the condition of Kingdom living that emerges as people live together in Kingdom righteousness.

Joy is the consequence of Kingdom living. The joy that attends righteousness and peace conveys a hope that is lodged in transcendent and unchangeable realities, a hope that is so infectious that, observed, it leads others to seek a reason for it⁶³.

Where the power of the Kingdom, which we enter by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, is at work, the salvation of God is working transformation so that the fruit of righteousness, peace, and joy

begin to be increasingly in evidence. This is the Good News that men and women in every age have delighted to know.

Power to reconcile

Fourth, the Kingdom is Good News because it brings power to reconcile, to set things right. In the Kingdom of God, we are set right with God through the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ⁶⁴. We no longer fear His wrath against our sins; our hearts are devoted to knowing and serving Him; and we rejoice to see the evidence of His Spirit at work, making all things new in our lives.

Beyond that, the Gospel is powerful to reconcile strangers in the love of Jesus Christ⁶⁵; restore broken relationships and trusts⁶⁶; enable us to love those who wish us ill⁶⁷; and even to return creation and culture to higher states of goodness before the Lord⁶⁸.

The world may seek this reconciling power by a wide variety of means, but nothing short of the power of the Gospel can bring about the kind of inward and spiritual transformations that are required for reconciling men to God, one another, and the world.

Power exceeding and abundant

Finally, the Kingdom is Good News because it brings power exceeding and abundant to be and do more than we could ever ask or think⁶⁹. Here is a power we can never exhaust and that springs up day by day in ever fresher, ever more abounding ways to make all things new in our lives⁷⁰.

Here is power to overcome the sins that continue to plague and shackle us; renew and enrich all our relationships with the people we see each day; empower us to proclaim the Kingdom to others; impact our culture for the Lord; endow our children with a legacy of grace and truth; advance the experience of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit; sustain us in the face of trials; enlarge and expand our sense of purpose in life; and make us ever-increasingly fruitful in good works to those around us.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the power of God to save, transform, renew, and reconcile, and do so more and more for all the days of our lives and all eternity.

This is Good News! Good News, indeed! Is this the Gospel you have believed?

For reflection and discussion:

1. In one sentence, explain why the coming of the Kingdom of God is “Good News”:
2. Given the Good News of the Kingdom, what is it reasonable to expect of those who have actually entered that Kingdom by grace through faith?
3. What does it mean to pray, “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”?

Section 5 -- The Hope of the Kingdom

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us to His own glory and excellence... 2 Peter 1.3

God's hope for us The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Good News of God for salvation. Our King, Jesus Christ, is administering a new economy in and among the nations of the world, with a new agenda for building His Church and advancing His rule on earth, as it is in heaven.

We have observed that the coming of the Kingdom of God holds out a new hope for those who enter into it – the hope of glory. Because this aspect of the Gospel of the Kingdom is so important, we need to explore it more fully. God has, astonishingly, called us both to His Kingdom and His glory⁷¹. While perhaps every person who claims to be a follower of Jesus Christ will affirm that this is so, it is likely most have never considered the meaning and implications of this profound fact. We who have entered the Kingdom of God are also privileged to engage and to live for His glory!

I want to unpack this idea rather more clearly. Every Christian clings to hope, but unless that hope is the same as the hope God holds out for us in the Gospel, then we are missing a significant element of the life of faith and the promise of the Gospel. And unless we are daily motivated by that hope – the hope of glory – our faith will never rise to the levels of transforming excellence and power that God intends for us in the Kingdom.

Thus it is crucial that we understand this aspect of the Gospel of the Kingdom, and that we begin to know and experience the hope of glory as a more consistent part of our walk with the Lord. For once we have begun to engage the glory of God, we will never settle for anything less than this as the object of our faith and our reason for living.

The nature of hope

This is a very important facet of the Gospel, so let's not take anything for granted. Let's begin by exploring the nature of hope. What is hope, and how does it function in people's lives?

I suspect we all can agree that hope is an affection, an inclination of the heart toward future expectations. Those expectations are compelling, either because they promise happiness, excitement, fulfillment, or some other anticipated boon. Such hopes guide our daily decisions and choices as we jockey and navigate to stay in what we hope will be the fast lane for realizing our hope.

Everyone lives by hope. In our day people hope for a variety of things: a good marriage partner, a successful life, material comfort, safety and security, and so forth.

Yet these hopes, though real and, as far as they go, legitimate, cannot satisfy the deep longings of the human soul for lasting fulfillment, peace, and joy. For every such temporal hope is subject to changing circumstances and aspirations; moreover, no created thing can satisfy the deep longing in the human soul for a secure and blessed relationship with the living God. As Augustine observed, God has made us for Himself, and our hearts will continue to be restless until they find their full rest in Him.

Because of this Paul observes, in Ephesians 2.12, that those who are apart from Christ are “without hope” in this life. Only Christ can give human beings full and abundant life and, thus, only Christ can fulfill the deep longing in our souls which people try vainly to fill with all manner of created things and experiences.

Christians, however, do have hope, real and lasting hope. Saving faith involves the “assurance” that these things we hope for will not fail us, and it issues in a life that evidences that hoped-for boon in all aspects⁷². All sincere believers “hope” in Christ and in His promises of forgiveness and eternal life. Indeed, as we have seen, in our day, this is perhaps the most that the majority of believers hope for from their faith.

Paul teaches, however, that all who are justified by grace through faith stand in the hope of the glory of God⁷³. What does this mean? How does embracing the Gospel of the Kingdom affect the nature and object of what we as believers hope for in this life?

The glory of God

We need to make sure we understand the glory of God. In one sense, the glory of God is nothing more than the presence of God. We can say that, wherever God is, His glory is. The glory of God is His presence, wherever He may be at any time. The Scriptures tell us that the glory of God is present in heaven⁷⁴. It is revealed in the things God has made – creation⁷⁵, aspects of culture⁷⁶, and within the human soul, where the works of God’s Law bear witness to Him⁷⁷.

Thus, in a very real sense, we are never completely out of touch with the glory of God. Why, then, do so few of us experience the glory of God in these things? That is, why does the sense of God’s presence not “weigh” on us with more transforming power as a result of His presence in and around us everywhere?

The answer lies in a further consideration of the glory of God. At a second level, God, Who is everywhere present in His glory, manifests His presence and makes His glory known to men in certain ways and by certain means. So that the glory of God comes to expression and is clearly seen as God is pleased to make it known to men.

We can think of several instances in the Old and New Testaments where the glory of God suddenly became evident in the midst of His people: Moses coming down from the mountain, the glory of God filling the Tabernacle and the Temple, God’s revelation to Isaiah, the apostles’ experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, and so forth.

In all these cases, responses to the manifestation of God’s glory on the part of those who experienced it are fairly uniform: fear, wonder, praise, and even delight, all together and at once. When God makes His glory known to His people, they respond with worship, renewed conviction, and a determination to stay close to God and to obey His voice.

This is the hope of glory in which we who believe in Jesus now stand, to which God has called us, and which He expects us to seek. Every believer is invited to enter into the glory of God, as we have seen. Indeed, Jesus, Who intercedes for us, prays for us that we might know His glory, share in His glory

together, and, by that glory, make known the reality of Christ and His saving work to the unbelieving world⁷⁸.

If we thus truly hope to engage God in His glory and to know His glory – if this is what we hope for in the life of faith – we will seek out the most reliable means for doing so and make them increasingly part of our daily lives. If the hope of glory is not what we hope for as Christians, then let us admit that we are standing in some other hope than what Paul explained, and let us learn to seek the hope of glory as that for which we have been redeemed and justified.

Engaging God's glory

We may expect to engage the glory of God from three primary sources. First is the world of creation. Creation is the lesser light for engaging God in His glory. Creation is everywhere declaring the glory of God. God has “concealed” His glory in the things He has made, and He calls upon us who are His royal priesthood in the Kingdom of God to seek and to discover that glory, so that we might make Him known to the world through the things of the world⁷⁹. Some active and consistent engagement with creation and culture, with a view to discerning the glory of God, can be a powerful means of meeting God in His glory and learning to know Him there.

Second, the Bible is the primary light within which we may expect to encounter the glory of God. Paul talks about this in 2 Corinthians 3.7-18, where he is making a comparison of the glory we might expect to encounter in God's Word to the glory that shone on Moses' face. He says the glory we may expect to know in the Kingdom of God far outstrips Moses' experience of glory. This is the believer's hope.

“Since we have such a hope,” Paul says, referring to the hope of glory (v. 12), “we are very bold.” Bold, that is, to seek God in His glory in His Word, where, through Jesus Christ, we have access to the presence of God as He speaks to each one of us in His Word (cf. v. 15). This Word and the glory it reveals to us provide the light we need in order to meet God in His glory in the things He has made⁸⁰ and to live for Him in glory, manifesting increasingly the life of Christ in and through our lives (v. 18).

Thus, the bolder and more consistent we are in seeking the glory of God – engagement with His living presence – through His Word, the more effective we will be in discovering His glory in the things He has made and in showing that glory to the people we encounter each day.

Finally, we may also expect to encounter the glory of God “in the face of Jesus Christ,” as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:6. The face of Jesus Christ can mean the Lord speaking in His Word or, by His Spirit, engaging us in one way or another⁸¹. But we may also gaze upon the glory of God in the face of Jesus by contemplating, with the “eye of the heart”, the many passages of Scripture which describe Jesus, or, at least, which provide descriptions of Him in glory as the Lord intends for us to think of Him⁸². The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is the focusing light of divine revelation, teaching us how to read and focus in the light of creation and Scripture.

Here is a call not just for reading and study, but for prayerful, focused solitude and meditation, concentrating on the exalted beauty and excellence of our majestic King and Savior.

The heart of the Gospel

We are at the very heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom when we say that what God holds out to us is the privilege of knowing Him in His glory and the high calling of making His glory known to the watching world. This affects every area of our lives – all our relationships, roles, and responsibilities – so that we no longer live merely for ourselves, but unto and for Jesus Christ our King, and for the realization of His Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit in and through our everyday lives.

Because we have entered the Kingdom of God we have the privilege of engaging the glory of God and making that glory known to the watching world through everything we say and do. When this is the commanding hope of our lives, it leads to earnest seeking of the Lord, sincere repentance, and a disciplined life of obedience, motivated by love and thanksgiving, which brings the light of truth and the reality of grace into every part and parcel of our experience.

Surely this is a hope – a hope that includes forgiveness and eternal life, but so much more – that every sincere follower of King Jesus will want to embrace, know, and live each day.

It is absolutely crucial to living and proclaiming the Gospel that the hope of glory be a vibrant and growing aspect of our own walk with the Lord. We will only rise in our experience of the Gospel to the level of our highest expectations. Only hope in the glory of God can enable us to know the “exceeding abundantly beyond all that you could ever ask or think” power of the Gospel of the Kingdom as a living reality every day of our lives⁸³.

For reflection or discussion:

1. What is the glory of God? What does it mean to “hope” in the glory of God?
2. How can preaching enhance the hope of glory? What is your responsibility as a witness to Christ for leading others – whether unsaved or saved – into the hope of glory?
3. When do you “enter” or “engage” the glory of God? What is the effect of this on you?

Section 6 -- The Joy of the Gospel

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” - John 15:11

Joy to the world!

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is associated with joy. From the announcement of the angels to the shepherds, through all the healings and good works of His public ministry, to the joy of the disciples on the Emmaus road, the experience of joy features large in the accounts of Jesus’ life and ministry. The Kingdom of God, moreover, is “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,” as we have seen. We should therefore expect joy to have a large place in our lives as the followers of Christ and citizens of His realm.

But what is joy? From where does it come? How can we know it, and what happens when we experience joy? How much should we expect joy to be part of our experience of the Gospel and its benefits? These are some of the questions we need to answer if we are to understand clearly, and experience increasingly, this most fundamental Gospel affection. True joy belongs alone to those who know the Lord and walk according to the counsel of His Word. That joy not only enriches and sustains them; it also enables them to reach out to others with the offer of joy through the Gospel of the Kingdom.

From the seen to the unseen Like “glory”, “joy” is a term that we often use with only the most meager understanding of what it is. We understand joy to be a pleasant, and therefore, desirable experience. However, many of us find it difficult either to explain joy or to account for it when we know it. Moreover, many of us have difficulty expressing the joy we are experiencing, with the result that our joy is not as infectious or enticing as it otherwise might be.

Habakkuk 3.17-19 is a good place to start in trying to get at the true nature of joy. Let’s make two brief observations.

First, note the progression of the passage, how it moves from what is seen to what is unseen. Our immediate experiences and circumstances are not always such as to elicit from us a response of joy. Nevertheless, Habakkuk appears to have been able, at least in his mind, to rise above even the most unfavorable circumstances to know rejoicing and joy in the Lord.

Joy, it appears, is not determined by what we can see in our immediate environment. Instead, joy is a condition that attaches to knowing the Lord and being able to see past what is seen in order to engage what is not seen. This is part of what gives joy its great appeal: it is not attached to changeable circumstances but to fixed realities and eternal verities in which we participate by grace through faith.

Second, the ability to know joy – in spite of any untoward circumstances or conditions – is dependent on the extent to which one actually knows the Lord and is intimately engaged in a relationship with Him. Habakkuk declared that he would rejoice in the Lord and in His salvation, which he experienced as strength, security, and safety (v. 19). The experience of joy associated with knowing the Lord thus depends on the extent to which we know the experience of His salvation. If salvation is for us only a “by-and-by” experience, then we may struggle to know joy amid the trials that we must endure as we await translation to eternal glory. On the other hand, if salvation is an experience of living in the Kingdom of God, where we know the hope of glory, experienced and expressed, as a daily reality, then our joy will be more constant and full because our relationship with the Lord will be as much for the “here and now” as for the “then and there.”

True joy – a pervasive sense of wellbeing, strength, security, and safety – comes from the Lord. We may find joy in the presence of the Lord and His strength⁸⁴. God’s Law and, indeed, all His Word, bring delight and joy for the believer⁸⁵. The Spirit of God, Who dwells in each believer, bears the fruit of joy in us⁸⁶. Fellowship in the Body of Christ, with other believers, is also a source of joy⁸⁷. And the words of Christ – His counsel, teaching, and promises – bring deep-seated joy to all who receive them by faith⁸⁸.

The joy believers may know in the Kingdom of God comes always from the Lord, and it is available to them through all these various avenues. We deprive ourselves of this joy when we neglect the Word of God, fail to walk in the Spirit, or do not resort often to the presence of the Lord in prayer. Believers must not look to their circumstances for the joy only God can give.

Joy hereafter and here and now But when may we expect to know this joy? Most believers understand that great joy awaits us in the presence of the Lord once we have departed this life. The book of Revelation gives ample the wellbeing of God’s people⁹⁵; nurturing love for the unseen Christ⁹⁶; sharing in the sufferings of our Lord⁹⁷; serving the Lord’s people well⁹⁸; and participating in the unity of God’s people⁹⁹.

Thus, believers should not be strangers to the joy of their salvation, the joy of the Kingdom of God. God is always ready to meet us with joy, and He has provided ample means whereby we may engage Him for the joy that is to be known in His presence.

Only our slothfulness, distractedness, or neglect of His salvation – or the idolatry of seeking our joy in places other than the presence of God – can keep us from living in joy now, and in anticipation of the fullness of joy yet to come.

Expressing joy

When we experience it, joy should come to expression in a variety of ways. That is, joy is not an affection merely to be experienced. In order for joy to have its full effect, it must be expressed. Once again, the Scriptures provide numerous suggestions to guide us in expressing the joy we have in the Kingdom of God. We may shout for joy, like a home-town partisan whose favorite player has just scored the winning basket¹⁰⁰. Singing songs of joy is also commended¹⁰¹. We may express our joy by giving to others in the midst of our adversity¹⁰²; sharing in the sowing and harvest of the seed of the Kingdom¹⁰³; doing justice¹⁰⁴; and by increasing in our experience of the Kingdom of God¹⁰⁵.

The joy that fills our souls must come to expression as joy lived, through all the various manifestations we have seen. If we fail to bring our joy to expression, we will short-circuit its full effect. Further, by stifling the expression of joy we do not bear witness as we should to the reality of the Kingdom and its impact on our lives. Manifesting our joy is what makes our salvation visible to the watching world and signals them concerning the reality of the hope in which we live¹⁰⁶.

The Gospel of the Kingdom brings joy to those who know it. This joy enables them to rise above their circumstances, filling them with delight, assurance, and an overall sense of wellbeing as they enter into the presence of the Lord, worship and give, serve and bear witness, work for justice and righteousness, and all this in spite of how unfavorable or oppressive may be their situation in life. This is true joy, lodged in the unseen realm, which comes to visible manifestation as the followers of Christ, who embrace the Gospel of the Kingdom and know the joy of God and of His Spirit increasingly in every aspect of their lives.

This joy comes not from a gospel of “near Christianity,” but only from the Gospel of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. In what ways has this study affected your understanding of the Gospel?
2. In what ways has this study affected your experience of the Gospel?
3. In what ways do you expect this study to affect the way you share and proclaim the Gospel?

My Gospel Presentation

In the space below, outline a presentation of the Gospel of the Kingdom, as you might use it in sharing with a friend or co-worker:

Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
 Let earth receive her King!
 Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
 and heav'n and nature sing,
 and heav'n and nature sing,
 and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
 Let men their songs employ,
 while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 repeat the sounding joy,
 repeat the sounding joy,
 repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,
 nor thorns infest the ground;
 He comes to make His blessings flow
 far as the curse is found,
 far as the curse is found,
 far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace,
 and makes the nations prove
 the glories of His righteousness
 and wonders of His love,
 and wonders of His love,
 and wonders, wonders of His love.

Notes:

1 Cf. Matthew 4.17, 23, etc., and the many parables of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God.

2 Acts 8.12; 20.27

3 Galatians 4.13

4 Galatians 4.8, 9

5 Galatians 5.7; 6.9, 10

6 Galatians 3.1-5

7 Galatians 1.6

8 Galatians 2.3-5; 4.10

9 Galatians 4.21-31

10 Galatians 1.7

11 Galatians 4.9

12 Galatians 5.13-15

13 Galatians 1.8, 9

14 Romans 5.1, 2; 14.17, 18

15 Ephesians 4.14

16 Galatians 3.1-16

17 Acts 1.8; Matthew 28.18-2

18 Matthew 4.23, 9.35

19 Romans 14.17; John 3.1-16

20 Mark 10.42-45

21 Matthew 5.17-19; 1 John 2.1-6

22 James 2.5

23 1 Corinthians 4.20; 2 Corinthians 5.17

24 Matthew 6.33

25 Matthew 6.10

26 Ezekiel 36.26,

27; Romans 7.12 27 Acts 1.8

28 Acts 17.1-9

29 Cf. Matthew 4.23; 9.35; Mark 1.14, 15; Luke 9.1-6; Acts 8.12

30 Cf. Genesis 49.1, 8-12; Psalm 2; Isaiah 2.1-5; Micah 4.1-5 31 Cf. Acts 10-15

32 Acts 17.1-9

33 Cf. Acts 5.29-32; 17.5-7, 29-31; Ephesians 1.15-23; Philippians 2.5-11

34 Cf. Acts 2.14-41; Galatians 4.1-7; Ezekiel

36.26, 27; Matthew 22.34-40; Acts 2.42-47; 4.32-32; 6.1-7; Micah 4.1-5

35 Romans 14.17, 18

36 Matthew 16.13-19; Ephesians 4.11-16

37 Psalm 48.1, 2; Matthew 5.13-16; John 17.21; 1 Peter 3.15

38 Matthew 25.14-30

39 1 Corinthians 4.20; Acts 1.8

40 2 Corinthians 7.1; Galatians 5.22, 23; 1 Corinthians 13

41 Matthew 6.9, 10

42 Mark 10.42-45

43 Matthew 13.18-23; 28.18-20

44 Romans 5.1, 2

45 Psalm 16.11

46 Matthew 28.20

47 2 Corinthians 3.12-18

48 1 Corinthians 10.3

49 2 Peter 1.5-11; Habakkuk 2.14

50 Romans 8.1-4

51 Romans 7.21-25; Titus 2.14

52 Ephesians 2.1-10

53 Hebrews 2.14-18

54 Romans 6.2-23
 55 2 Corinthians 5.17-21
 56 Acts 4.11, 12
 57 2 Corinthians 3.12-18; Ephesians 4.17-24
 58 John 7.37-39; Galatians 5.22, 23
 59 Acts 6.1-7; 19.18-20
 60 Romans 14.17
 61 Philippians 1.9-11
 62 Philippians 4.6, 7
 63 1 Peter 3.1
 64 2 Corinthians 5.17-20
 65 Ephesians 2.13-16
 66 Luke 19.1-10
 67 Romans 12.14-21
 68 Romans 8.20, 21; Hebrews 2.1-9
 69 Ephesians 3.20
 70 John 7.37-39
 71 1 Thessalonians 2.12
 72 Hebrews 11.1
 73 Romans 5.1, 2
 74 Psalm 29.9-11
 75 Psalm 191-4
 76 Psalm 68.18; Acts 14.17
 77 Romans 2.14-16
 78 John 17.20-26
 79 Proverbs 25.2; Habakkuk 2.14
 80 Psalm 36.9
 81 Ezekiel 39.29; Psalm 119.135
 82 Cf. Psalms 2, 45, 110; Ephesians 1.15-23; Revelation 1
 83 Ephesians 3.20
 84 1 Chronicles 16.25-27; Psalm 16.11
 85 Psalm 119.14, 24, 97, 111
 86 Galatians 5.22; Romans 14.17
 87 1 Thessalonians 2.19, 20
 88 John 15.11
 89 Revelation 19.6-8; 21.2-4; 22-27
 90 2 Peter 3.18; John 17.3; Philippians 2.12
 91 John 16.21; Romans 5.1-5; James 1.2
 92 John 16.23, 24
 93 1 John 1.4; 1 John 5.13; Jeremiah 15.16
 94 Philippians 4.1; 1 Thessalonians 2.19, 20
 95 3 John 4
 96 1 Peter 1.8
 97 1 Peter 4.13; Acts 5.41
 98 Hebrews 13.17; 2 Corinthians 1.24
 99 Philippians 2.2
 100 Psalms 47.1; 66.1
 101 Psalm 92.4
 102 2 Corinthians 8.1, 2
 103 Psalm 126.5
 104 Proverbs 21.15
 105 Matthew 13.44
 106 1 Peter 3.15