



Heritage Christian Fellowship

Foundations Class 2008

Section 2

Defining the Gospel

*These lessons are intended for new Christians as a guide for a discussion class with a mature Christian instructor and a homework curriculum.

Defining the Gospel

How does someone become a Christian? The answer to this question is of course, “by believing the good news about the Lord Jesus Christ.” The most basic truth of all, regarding becoming a Christian, is belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This lesson will help you come to a *concise* and proper understanding of the Christian Gospel and what it means, according to the Bible, God’s Word. This study is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather a general overview of Gospel truths. Further, one should not think that a comprehensive understanding of everything here is required for salvation. However, if someone has come to faith in Jesus Christ, they will grow in an understanding of these truths as they mature in the Christian Faith.

To get started, we will state a fairly complete definition of the Gospel and its different elements. The Gospel is.....

The *message* or “*good news*” of the person and work of Jesus Christ, God the Son, come to the earth to fulfill God’s eternal plan of salvation. The message carries within it the power to transform the sinner by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, into a child of God through adoption, and grant them eternal life. It furthermore includes the proclamation of all of God’s promises to mankind in Christ, as well as His threatenings to those who continue in their sin and rejection of God’s way of salvation provided “freely” through Jesus Christ. Primarily, mankind has been separated from God by sin, is subject to His wrath, but that *mankind can be saved from God’s wrath by repentance from sins and faith* (trusting in and relying upon the person and work of Jesus Christ, receiving Him as both Savior and Lord) *in Jesus Christ*. Further, that this gospel message is to be preached among the nations so that mankind can be saved adhering to it. There is also a “*false gospel*” by which Satan, through the agency of ignorant and/or evil men, seeks to deceive and pervert the true Gospel.

In this lesson we will examine these different elements of the Gospel;

- **God is Self-existent, Creator, Sustainer, Omnipotent, and Holy**
- **Man is under His wrath because of sin**
- **God requires perfect righteousness**
- **God will judge the world with justice**
- **God has provided a sacrifice, a replacement**
- **God offers salvation and eternal life freely by His grace through faith**
- **God commands mankind to repent**
- **God JUSTIFIES those who have faith in Jesus Christ**
- **All of God’s promises belong to those who obey the Gospel –**

It is very important for people to have a proper understanding of the Gospel because it is always being misrepresented in the world. There is little true understanding of Bible truths in the world and sadly, even in the Church. Let us pay close attention to the Word of God as we examine these vital and important matters.

God is Self-existent, Creator, Sustainer, All-powerful, and Holy

God is perfect and because of that fact is set apart from mankind. God is Holy and without sin, He is utterly pure and without any blemish. God is dependent on nothing, but everything else is completely dependent on God for its existence. He is all-powerful, all-knowing and everywhere present. God exercises providence over the whole creation bringing to pass whatsoever He wishes. God possesses all dominion, authority and power. Mankind is limited in authority and power. ***Mankind owes his/her existence to God, even his/her next breath is given by the Providence of God.*** God created the world for the purposes of manifesting His glory through providence, sin and redemption.

Revelation 4:11 - 11 "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and **because of Thy will they existed, and were created.**"

Acts 17:24-31 - 24 "**The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth,** does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since **He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;** 26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined their appointed times,** and the boundaries of their habitation" NASB

Proverbs 16:4 - 4 **The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,** Even the wicked for the day of evil. NASB

Question #1: Referring to Revelation 4:11, how many things did God create and why?

Question #2: Referring to Acts 17:24-26, list several things about God and His nature that are described here.

Question #3: What does Acts 17:25 say about how human life is sustained on the earth?

Question #4: According to Proverbs 16:4, does everything have a purpose and if so, who assigns it?

Man is under His wrath because of sin

Through the sin of Adam and Eve all mankind have become sinners. The gospel declares that the punishment for sin is death (eternal separation from God). It speaks the message that God being Holy cannot tolerate sin, and His Holy angry is aroused because of sin, and He will come to destroy the world and the sinners within it. This Holy anger of God is called His "**wrath**" and all who sin are subject to it, which includes all the people in the world through all the ages of history. God is at war with those who sin and those who reject His Son Jesus Christ. Those who reject Jesus Christ will be eternally separated from God, and cast in to the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

Romans 5:12 - 12 Therefore, just as **through one man sin entered into the world**, and death through sin, and so **death spread to all men, because all sinned** NASB

Isaiah 13:9-11 - 9 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And **He will exterminate its sinners from it.** 10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises, And the moon will not shed its light. 11 Thus **I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity;** I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud, And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. NASB

Romans 1:18-20 - 18 For **the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, **so that they are without excuse.** NASB

Question #5: According to Romans 5:12, how many people have sinned?

Question #6: Referring to Isaiah 13:9-11, use your own words to describe how angry God is?

Question #7: In Romans 1:18-20, what is God's wrath against, and do people have any excuse for it?

2 Thessalonians 1:7-11 - 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 **dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,** 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed. NASB

Revelation 21:8 - 8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, **their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone,** which is the second death." NASB

Question #8: According to 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, who will pay the penalty of eternal destruction?

Question #9: In Revelation 21:8, the Scripture says "the cowardly and _____ and abominable and murderers and _____ persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all _____, their part will be in the _____ that burns with _____ and brimstone." Do people disregard this warning from God? Why?

God requires perfect righteousness

Since God is Holy, those who dwell with Him must also be Holy. He cannot tolerate the presence of sin as it violates His very nature. Therefore, for anyone to exist in His presence, they must be completely righteous, without blame or charge of any kind. Because all people have sinned, they have all become guilty in God's sight and must either be justified somehow or be separated from God forever in the second death. ***You cannot stand in God's presence with one single sin to your charge.*** One sin is a violation of God's nature and worthy of eternal separation from Him.

Romans 3:23 - 23 for **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,** NASB

Matthew 5:20 - 20 "For I say to you, that **unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.** NASB

Romans 3:19-20 - 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, **that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God;** 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; **for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.** NASB

Question #10: In Romans 3:19, what do you suppose is meant by "every mouth may be closed and the whole world may become accountable to God?"

Question #11: According to Romans 3:20, what is it that will NOT justify us and how do we know what sin is?

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - 9 Or do you not know that **the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, **shall inherit the kingdom of God.** 11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. NASB

Question #12: In 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul is asking the Corinthians if they know what?

Psalms 130:3 - 3 If you LORD, **should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?** NASB

Psalms 5:4-5 - 4 For Thou art not a **God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with Thee. 5 The boastful shall not stand before Thine eyes;** Thou dost hate all who do iniquity. NASB

Question #13: According to Psalm 130:3 and Psalm 5:5, what can't sinners do before God and what is it that God does not take pleasure in?

God will judge the world with justice

The Lord Jesus will come again to the earth in judgment. This judgment is said to be **“at the last day.”** (John 12:48). God will judge men and women based on their deeds. The Bible clearly states that God will judge the world and that, with justice, according to His perfect standard of righteousness, to give to all people the “recompense of his deeds.” All people will stand before God in judgment and will give an account of their deeds to Him. Because all people are sinners there will be a great need for justification before God, as the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23).

Acts 17:30-31 - 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, **God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed,** having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. " NASB

Question #14: According to Acts 17:30-31 the Scripture says “God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should _____, because He has fixed a _____ in which He will _____ the _____ in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed.”

Romans 2:16 - 16 on the day when, **according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men** through Christ Jesus. NASB

Ecclesiastes 12:14 - 14 For God **will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.** NASB

Question #15: According to Romans 2:16 and Ecclesiastes 12:14, how many acts of people will God bring to judgment? Does this include hidden secret things that no one knows about?

2 Corinthians 5:10 - 10 For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,** that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, **according to what he has done, whether good or bad.** NASB

Revelation 20:12-13 - 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; **and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.** 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and **they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.** NASB

Question #16: Referring to 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Revelation 20:12-13, by what are people judged?

Hebrews 9:27 - 27 And inasmuch as **it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,** NASB

Question #17: According to Hebrews 9:27, what happens after we die?

God has provided a sacrifice, a replacement

God has sent His Son into the world to die **“in the place of”** and **“as a substitute for”** those who believe in Him. According to God’s justice, someone must die for sins committed. So in order for mankind to be relieved of this penalty of death, he must either die for his/her own sins, or have someone else die in their place. And this must be someone who does not need to die for their own sins, a blameless one, they must die as a replacement, a sacrifice. Christ died for our sins, in our place so that we won’t have to experience death (eternal separation from God).

Isaiah 53:5 - But He was pierced through **for our transgressions**, He was crushed **for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him**, And by His scourging we are healed. NASB

Romans 6:23 - 23 For **the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASB

Hebrews 7:26-27 - 26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, **holy, innocent, undefiled**, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, **first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself**. NASB

1 Peter 3:18 - 18 For **Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust**, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; NASB

Question #18: Referring to Isaiah 53:5, the two word phrase **“for our”** is repeated three times. What is meant by this?

Question #19: According to Hebrews 7:27 and 1 Peter 3:18, Jesus died _____ for all.

This sacrifice is said to **“propitiate”** or **“satisfy”** God’s requirement of justice for sins. Therefore the price required for sin is paid by Jesus’ death, much like a **“ransom.”** This paying of the price for sin for us is called redemption. We have been **“redeemed”** or **“ransomed”** by the death of Jesus upon the cross, and the righteous requirement of God’s justice has been met by His death.

1 Timothy 2:5-6 - 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 **who gave Himself as a ransom for all**, the testimony borne at the proper time. NASB

Titus 2:14 - 14 Jesus, who **gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself** a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. NASB

Question #20: According the above Scriptures, what did Jesus give to ransom and redeem us?

Question #21: According to Titus 2:14, whose possession are we?

God offers salvation and eternal life freely by His grace through faith

God offers eternal life and salvation as a free gift to them that will believe in Jesus Christ. This **“belief”** means to repent of sins and put faith (trust and reliance) in Jesus Christ. Through faith in Christ mankind can be declared righteous and justified before God, not based on any merit of His own, but based on the merit of Christ. All of the benefits of a right relationship to God are offered through Christ, including all of the promises which, God has made through Jesus, the prophets and Apostles.

Romans 3:22-24 - 22 even the **righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being **justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption** which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

Ephesians 2:8-9 - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. NASB

Question #22: In Romans 3:22, “the righteousness of God comes through _____ for all those who _____.”

Question #23: According to Romans 3:24, we are “being justified as a _____ by His _____ through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

Question #24: According to Ephesians 2:8-9, we are saved through what? Who is this not from and what is it not a result of?

John 3:36 - 36 "He **who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life**, but the wrath of God abides on him." NASB

John 6:29 - 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.**" NASB

Question #25: According to John 3:36 and John 6:29, the key factor in our relationship to God through Jesus is what?

God commands mankind to repent

The gospel calls people to repentance. Repentance is to turn away from sins to God and to obey Him. This is the active obedience that comes from true faith in Christ. Repentance is a required element in salvation. Without the outward evidence of repentance, the reality of faith in the heart is lacking. Repentance is the fruit of faith and the vehicle by which it is applied. It is further the product of regeneration, the divine act of God in salvation.

Acts 20:20-21 - 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks **of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ**. NASB

Acts 26:20-21 - 20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that **they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.** NASB

Question #26: Referring to Acts 20:20-21 and Acts 26:20-21, what things/words stand out in Paul's proclamation of the Gospel?

Acts 17:30 - 30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, **God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent,** NASB

Question #27: In Acts 17:30, what is God declaring that mankind should do?

John 3:36 - 36 "He **who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life,** but the wrath of God abides on him." NASB

Question #28: According to John 3:36, Jesus equates believing in the Son with what action?

God JUSTIFIES those who have faith in Jesus Christ

This justification is a complete work of God whereby He declares the sinner righteous. In this work God.....

satisfies and appeases the divine requirements of justice - **Propitiation**

completely removes the guilt of our sins, - **Expiation**

credits the righteousness and merit of Christ to the believer – **Imputation**

restores relationship and right standing with God - **Reconciliation**

It is clear from scripture that in the death of Christ upon the cross, that God's wrath because of sin has been satisfied by Christ's payment of death. This is called **"propitiation."** Because Jesus was without sin, He was qualified to pay the debt for all sin by His death. He died as a substitute or in place of sinners, and bore the wrath of God Himself. It means that the death of Christ affected a real and fundamental change in our relationship to God by taking our place and bearing the guilt of our sins as an offering to appease the holy wrath of God.

1 John 4:10 - 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and **sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** NASB

Jesus paid a very real price, He literally bore the penalty for our sins! Our chastisement became His! He carried our griefs and our sorrows! Let's look at how this was expressed by the prophet Isaiah in chapter 53...

Isaiah 53:4-6, 11-12 - 4 Surely **our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried;** Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He **was pierced through for our**

transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the **LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.** 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, **My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.** 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet **He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.** NASB

Question #29: How did Jesus affect a real and fundamental change in our relationship to God?

Question #30: According to Isaiah 53:6 and verse 11, who did our iniquity fall on and what was the outcome?

Further, the actual guilt of sinners has been removed by Christ's payment, because He paid the full price of that guilt. This is called **"expiation."** Jesus removed our guilt having paid the full price of redemption for sins. Christ made a fundamental change in our relationship with God by expiating our guilt. Having paid the full price of our sin by His death, our guilt was removed. We were bought with a price, a ransom and we were redeemed by the price of the death of the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ. Our guilt has been canceled because the debt of it has been paid. All of this was done by God. It is God who justifies and so the scripture says;

Colossians 2:13-14 - 13 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 **having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us** and which was hostile to us; and **He has taken it out of the way,** having nailed it to the cross. NASB

Romans 8:33-34 - 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? **It is God who justifies.** 34 **Who is he that condemns?** Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

This is why the scripture can say, **"there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."** The guilt of our sins has been removed.

Romans 8:1-2 - 8:1 There is **therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. NASB

Question #31: According to Colossians 2:14, what has happened to the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us?

Question #32: Referring to Romans 8:1-2 and 8:33-34, what no longer remains and who justifies us?

Now having our guilt removed and God's wrath because of our sins satisfied, we also have the righteousness of Christ credited to us. This is called **"imputation."** Jesus' perfect righteousness has become ours through faith in Him. We can stand in God's presence because Jesus has imputed His righteousness and holiness to us through our faith and trust in Him. It is clear from scripture that Christ's perfect righteousness is now ours by faith, and we are declared righteous because Christ has perfected us by His perfect life.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

Hebrews 10:14 - 14 For by one offering **He has perfected for all time** those who are sanctified. NASB

Romans 5:19 - 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.** NASB

2 Corinthians 5:21 - 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** NASB

Colossians 1:21-22 - 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to **present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-**

Question #33: Referring to Hebrews 10:14, what has Christ done for us by His offering?

Question #34: According to Colossians 1:21-22, how does Christ now present us in His sight?

Therefore when we say that the sinner is **"declared righteous"** by God it is because the sinner is not actually righteous in himself but in Christ has received a foreign righteousness which is not his own, but is from God in Christ. Since Jesus life was one of sinless perfection, this righteousness which is received is also therefore perfect.

Philippians 3:9-10 - 9 and may be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own** derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the **righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,** NASB

And all of this has brought about Justification before God.

Romans 5:9 - 9 Much more then, **having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** NASB

Question #35: In Philippians 3:9-10, the Bible says that we "may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my _____ derived from the Law, but that which is through _____ in Christ, the righteousness which _____ from _____ on the basis of faith.

Question #36: According to Romans 5:9, what two things have been accomplished by Christ?

1. _____ 2. _____

All of God's promises belong to those who obey the Gospel

Because we have been reconciled to God and our relationship with Him has been restored through Christ, we now have the benefits of right standing with. This includes all of the covenant promises He make to His people which are many.

2 Corinthians 1:20 - 20 For **as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes**; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. NASB

Question #37: According to 2 Corinthians 1:20, how many promises of God are ours in Christ?

As a part of this we actually receive all the benefits of right relationship with God which He promises to His people. He promises to be our guide giving us wisdom and light to see our path. He promises to be our shield and our shelter from life's difficult situations and problems. He promises to walk with us through the deepest difficulties that life can bring our way.

Psalm 23:1-6 – **"The LORD is my shepherd**, I shall not want. **2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness** For His name's sake. **4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me;** Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. **5 Thou dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; Thou hast anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."**
NASB

Question #38: According to Psalm 23:4, even in the most difficult times, God is where?

Question #39: Referring to Psalm 23, write down some of the benefits of the Lord being our Shepherd.

Among these promises that God gives us is the promise of eternal life. By believing the Gospel and coming to faith in Christ, we receive eternal life.

1 John 5:11-12 - 11 And the witness is this, that **God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.** 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. NASB

Question #40: In 1 John 5:11-12, how is the life we receive from God described?

And so now we have seen a brief overview of the Gospel and how it is defined. May the Lord bless you as you grow in your knowledge and understanding of Him and His Kingdom!