

What Is The Gospel?

By Dr. Harry Ironside (1876 - 1951)

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1st Corinthians 15:1-4).

It might seem almost a work of supererogation to answer a question like this. We hear the word, "Gospel" used so many times. People talk of this and of that as being "as true as the Gospel," and I often wonder what they really mean by it. First I should like to indicate what it is not.

THE GOSPEL IS... Not The Bible

In the first place, the Gospel is not the Bible. Often when I inquire, "What do you think the Gospel is?" people reply, "Why, it is the Bible, and the Bible is the Word of God." Undoubtedly the Bible is the Word of God, but there is a great deal in that Book that is not Gospel. "The wicked shall be turned into Hell with all the nations that forget God." That is in the Bible, and it is terribly true; but it is not Gospel.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." That is in the Bible, but it is not the Gospel. Our English word, "gospel" just means the "good spell," and the word "spell," is the old Anglo-Saxon word for, "tidings", the good tidings, and the good news. The original word translated. "Gospel," which we have taken over into the English with little alteration is the word, "evangel," and it has the same meaning, the good news. The Gospel is God's good news for sinners. The Bible contains the Gospel, but there is a great deal in the Bible which is not Gospel. Not The Commandments 8/7/12 What Is The gospel? - By Dr. Harry Ironside

The Gospel is not just any message from God telling man how he should behave. "What is the Gospel?" I asked a man this question some time ago, and he answered, "Why I should say it is the Ten commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, and I think if a man lives up to them he is all right." Well, I fancy he would be; but did you ever know anybody who lived up to them? The Sermon on the Mount demands a righteousness which no unregenerate man has been able to produce. The law is not the Gospel; it is the very antitheses of the Gospel. In fact, the law was given by God to show men their need of the Gospel. "The law," says the Apostle Paul, speaking as a Jewish convert, "was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. But after that Christ is come we are no longer under the schoolmaster."

Not Repentance

The Gospel is not a call to repentance, or to amendment of our ways, to make restitution for past sins, or to promise to do better in the future. These things are proper in their place, but they do not constitute the Gospel; for the Gospel is not good advice to be obeyed, it is good news to be believed. Do not make the mistake then of thinking that the Gospel is a call to duty or a call to reformation, a call to better your condition, to behave yourself in a more perfect way than you have been doing in the past.

Not Giving Up The World Nor is the Gospel a demand that you give up the world, that you give up your sins, that you break off bad habits, and try to cultivate good ones. You may do all these things, and yet never believe the Gospel and consequently never be saved at all. THERE ARE SEVEN DESIGNATIONS OF THE GOSPEL in the New Testament, but over and above all these, let me draw your attention to the fact that when this blessed message is mentioned, it is invariably accompanied by the definite article. Over and over and over again in the New Testament we read of the Gospel. It is the Gospel not a Gospel. People tell us there are a great many different Gospels; but there is only ONE. When certain teachers came to the Galatians and tried to turn them away from the simplicity that was in Christ Jesus by teaching "another Gospel, "the apostle said that it was a different gospel, but not another; for there is none other than the Gospel. It is downright exclusive; it is God's revelation to sinful man.

Not Comparative Religion

The scholars of this world talk of the Science of Comparative Religions, and it is very popular now-a-days to say, "We cannot any longer go to heathen nations and preach to them as in the days gone by, because we are learning that their religions are just as good as ours, and the thing to do now is to share with them, to study the different religions, take the good out of them all, and in this way lead the world into a sense of brotherhood and unity." So in our great universities and colleges men study this Science of Comparative Religions, and they compare all these different religious systems one with another. There is a Science of Comparative Religions, but the Gospel is not one of them. All the different religions in the world may well be studied comparatively, for at rock bottom they are all alike; they all set men at trying to earn his own salvation. They may be called by different names, and the things that men are called to do maybe different in each case, but they all set men trying to save their own souls and earn their way into the favor of God. In this they stand in vivid contrast with the Gospel, for the Gospel is that glorious message that tells us what God has done for us in order that guilty sinners maybe saved.