

THE GOSPEL
Follow Christ
Banská Bystrica, 21st December 2022

ἐὰν μὴ στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε ὡς τὰ παιδιά,
οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν
οὐρανῶν

Mt 18:3 "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

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0. INTRODUCTION

- The Gospel is best "explained" by a childlike experience of trust... learned words may just complicate it
- Lecturing on the Gospel may be compared to lecturing on metabolism when you are hungry... giving lecture instead of giving of food...

0.1. WHAT KIND OF LECTURE/DEFINITION?

- εὐαγγέλιον → the literary form → the four gospels
- εὐαγγέλιον → the news of the Yeshua Hamashiach whom we call Jesus Christ...
- "first aid" definition → *Believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved...*
- "historical" definition → In I Cor 15:3-4, Paul introduces the gospel he "received:" "...that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

- “theological” definition → **Rom 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the **power** of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek
- “psychological” definition → 1Cor 1:18 For the word of the Cross is to them that are perishing **foolishness**, but to us who are being saved it is the **power** of God.
- “worldview” definition → in the context of available knowledge of reality...

0.2. THE GREEK WORD

- εὐαγγέλιον → “good news” → a reward for a good news
- There are many uses of this word that show this but the most famous is that of the **Priene Inscription** and its date of 9 BC puts it right into the context of the New Testament happenings and writers minds. The Priene Inscription reads in part, → “Since Providence... has set in most perfect order by giving us **Augustus**, whom she filled with virtue that he might benefit humankind, sending him as a **savior [σωτήρ]**, both for us and for our descendants, that he **might end war** and arrange all things, and since he, **Caesar (and inherent from this Lord)**, by his appearance... surpassing all previous benefactors, and not even leaving to posterity any hope of surpassing what he has done, and since the birthday of the god [τοῦ θεοῦ] Augustus was the beginning of the **good tidings [εὐαγγέλιον]** for the world that came by reason of him...”¹
- (Diodorus Siculus) θεοῖς εὐαγγέλια θύσας
- Announcement of a victory (Marathon runner 490 BC → Νικη)

0.3. BIBLICAL WAR

- → What kind of war is THE GOSPEL talking about?
- ... between heaven and hell → fall of angels → fall of man → Satan – “god” of this world...

0.4. KIERKEGAARD’S CLOWN

- [HEINE *Wintermärchen*] “Den Himmel überlassen wir / Den Engeln und den Spatzen.”
- [KIERKEGAARD *Either/Or I*, p. 30] In a theater, it happened that a fire started offstage. The clown came out to tell the audience. They thought it was a joke and applauded. He told them again, and they became still more hilarious. This is the way, I suppose, that the world will be destroyed-amid the universal hilarity of wits and wags who think it is all a joke.

1. WAR SITUATION

- **John 8:44** [the devil]... He was a **murderer** from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. ...he is a liar and the **father of lies**.

1.1. THE LIES (...WE LIKE)

1.1.1. ANTHROPOCENTRISM

- [PHILOSOPHY] Man in the centre
- God is under suspicion → or outright evil

1.1.2. INDIVIDUALISM

- [ETHICS] “self” in the centre
- God should solve *MY* situation regardless of others

1.1.3. SCIENTISM

- [EPISTEMOLOGY] belief in scientific methods
- God should persuade me of his truth without a necessity of my being changed

¹ <https://thelogosofagape.wordpress.com/2018/11/01/euangelion-what-exactly-is-the-gospel-a-greek-word-study/>

1.1.4. SECULARISM

- [RELIGION] life-fulfillment NOW
- God should give me all I desire in this life

1.2. REBELLION

- → “God in the Dock” (C. S. Lewis)
- Against the RULE of God (Law)
- Against the WORK of God (creation)
- Against the CHARACTER of God (idolatry)

1.3. DETRACTIONS

- Entertainment
- Workoholism
- Media

Once he was in the street the battle was won. I showed him a newsboy shouting the midday paper, and a No. 73 bus going past, and before he reached the bottom of the steps I had got into him an unalterable conviction that, whatever odd ideas might come into a man's head when he was shut up alone with his books, a healthy dose of 'real life' (by which he meant the bus and the newsboy) was enough to show him that all 'that sort of thing' just couldn't be true. He knew he'd had a narrow escape and in later years was fond of talking about 'that inarticulate sense for actuality which is our ultimate safeguard against the aberrations of mere logic'. He is now safe in Our Father's house.

2. VICTORY OF GOD

2.1. MESSIAH

- against pluralistic/individualistic/anythinggoes self-salvation
- ADAM → the head of old mankind ↔ Jesus Christ → the head of new mankind
- Jesus of Nazareth → declared the Son of God through the RESURRECTION

2.2. SACRIFICE (THE CROSS)

- the inevitability of DEATH (**Rom 6:23 - 7:1** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.)
- the death of the MESSIAH → the death of all mankind (**John 12:32** And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.)

2.3. RESURRECTION (NEW WORLD)

- eternal life → more than this life prolonged indefinitely

3. ANNOUNCING VICTORY

- κήρυγμα → the authority of the ACT of proclaiming

3.1. PRONOUNCING A JUDGMENT

- your master – the devil – has been defeated

[William TEMPLE *Reagings in John's Gospel*] The offer of salvation involves judgement and (for those who refuse the offer) condemnation. For this is the [process of judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved rather the darkness than the light. We recall the words of the Prologue: There was the light, that lighteth every man, coming into the world (i, 9). **No greater gift can be offered to men**; yet many refuse it. They loved the darkness rather than the light. That is their choice ; there is nothing worse that can be done to them after that.

3.2. INVITATION TO JOIN THE VICTORIOUS SIDE

- → REPENTANCE → confess sin; receive forgiveness from Christ...

- waiting for Parousia

3.3. FOLLOWING CHRIST

- communion with Christ ...NOW (**Rom 14:17** ...(1) righteousness and (2) peace and (3) joy in the Holy Spirit)
- suffering ...NOW
- **Mt 10:38** And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me
- **Mt 16:24** Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me

3.4. THE PAROUSIA

- **John 14:1-3** "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again** and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also

4. TO REMEMBER

- The Gospel speaks of the **victory of Jesus**.
- The Gospel makes us choose sides – it's either God or Satan, either heaven or hell.
- The Gospel gives hope and power to wait for the Second Coming of Jesus to finalize his work of salvation.