

God's Glorious Good News, Part 2

The Gospel Preached from the Beginning

Light on the Rock

by Philip Shields

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The Good News! Don't miss this new angle on an old subject. You'll be surprised by many of the points. In Part 2, we discuss: what is the Kingdom; the Gospel must be believed and *obeyed*; followed by how the gospel is woven into everything God has done from the Garden of Eden to the Millennium and beyond! The Old Testament will ring with new clarity after you hear this message.
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To all of you who are now in Christ, or want to be in Christ, *greetings*, as we explore more deeply into the wonderful and glorious good news of God. I praise God that He is allowing someone like me, weak flesh with no resume to brag about, to be able to preach about His glorious good news. And you know what? He wants *you* also to wake up and *trumpet* the glorious gospel – both by your day-by-day life and in word, to everyone you can, in all the earth.

Hey, what bride could possibly keep quiet about her upcoming marriage if she loves her fiancé and is excited about their glorious future? We are the Bride of the Son of God! Let's start being more excited about it!

Don't worry that you feel unqualified to do so. Who is? *** It is in our very recognition of our weakness and unworthiness that Christ is glorified. God calls the weak of the earth – with no resumes, no “about us” column on their website – that no flesh will boast. Our boast is not in our experience, our clean record, and our accomplishments – NO! Our boast is in Christ, and what *He* is accomplishing through mere corrupted earthen vessels like you and I *are*!

Look at the ones Jesus used to spread the gospel of the kingdom of God: mere fishermen, men of despised Galilee with no Yale degree. Matthew – a despised tax collector. Simon the zealot, part of a fanatical movement. To whom did God *first* reveal the risen Son of God? Mary Magdalene (**John 20**) – out of whom were cast 7 demons. Who did the Christ use to reveal his presence in Samaria? The woman at the well, who had 5 husbands (**John 4**). Christ often chooses the weak of the world to confound the wise and to make it clear that it is God doing the work (**1 Cor. 1:26-29**).

In our weakness, Christ is made strong (**2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 11:34**). In our weakness, *He* is able to work and be seen. I just had to say that. I'll cover this concept in a future sermon.

This is Philip Shields, a nobody by the world's standards – but now God's son and part of the Bride of Christ, God willing, bringing you the glorious good news of God and of the glory of His Son (2 Cor. 4:4) to establish His kingdom through faith in His grace, peace and salvation.

Today I want to talk about: how broad and how all-encompassing the full gospel is, then show how the gospel is not just a message to be heard, but God's way of life to be obeyed and lived! We'll also cover how the gospel was revealed to mankind from even the Garden of Eden onwards. The Old Testament will never seem the same to you again when we're done today.

I hope you've heard Part 1 before hearing this message. In Part 1, we discussed how exciting the Gospel should be to us. *I discussed how there can be only one gospel – but that one gospel is*

much, much broader than most definitions allow. The gospel is not “JUST about” this or just about that. It is not “just about” the kingdom, nor is it just about Jesus, nor is it just about grace, nor just about salvation, nor just about the cross. However, the one complete and true gospel encompasses all of that and much more. The one true Gospel is the gospel of Christ, of the kingdom, of God. There are people who preach otherwise. Some literature belittles those who would preach a “gospel of grace”, or “gospel of salvation”, but in belittling others, they are belittling scripture when they do: **for scripture speaks of the “gospel of grace” (Acts 20:24), and the “gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13).** Read it. Scripture even discusses “the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15).

God's good news is huge and very encompassing, you see, but it is all part of the one true gospel.

The gospel of God *is* about His kingdom – but it's also *about* its king! I hope I clearly showed that last time. I read last time in **1 Cor. 15:1-4** where Paul defines the one true gospel he preached, and he says so clearly there as he defines it: verse 1 – **“I declare to you the gospel I preached”** – then in verse 3 he says, in defining the gospel he preached: **1 Cor. 15:3-4:** “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: 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”.

The good news *has* to include the message of the Way into God's glorious kingdom, or there is no coming kingdom, there is no resurrection, there is no good news! It's that simple. And you know who “the Way” is: Jesus. **1 Cor. 15:1-4** cannot be denied. Paul clearly says it must include the message of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus. It must include the message *about* Christ – *as well as* the kingdom that Jesus will rule until He hands it to Father (**1 Cor. 15:23-28**). Read it for yourself. Some of you attend churches that deny the gospel can be about Christ. Be careful, lest you find yourself denying *Christ and what He has done for you!*

On top of that, Romans 1:1-3 says the gospel of God is “*concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord*”. It is also concerning the kingdom. It is also concerning grace, peace, and salvation, everything from A to Z in the word of God. The gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation (**Rom. 1:16**), by which we stand and are saved (**1 Cor. 15:1-2**). **When Paul preached the kingdom, part of his message was often also about Jesus. Here are a couple examples:**

Acts 28:23 says that as Paul preached from morning to evening about the *kingdom*, his message persuaded them “*concerning Jesus, both from the law and the prophets...*” It's all part of the same gospel! Verse 31 says something similar. So the gospel is very broad.

In fact I now feel the one true gospel is the *entire word of God*, from Genesis through Revelation. It's God's plan to save humanity. It includes God's plan to prepare a bride for the 2nd Adam – Christ. It is also about God's plan to have His family back in His presence, “in the garden of Delights” as it were. It's God's plan to establish His kingdom on earth. It's God's plan to *replace* the cherub *blocking* the way into God's presence (**Gen. 3:24**) with something wonderful: Jesus the door, the Way to salvation. It's about His kingdom, and how we must first be SAVED to be *in* that kingdom! And so it is also very much *about* Jesus, as I clearly showed last time. It's certainly also about *how* Jesus – through His blood – cut us loose from the chains of sin that bound us, and those chains of bondage drop with a resounding clang on the prison floor, and then we're led into His wonderful gracious freedom. That's wonderful good news!

I'm frankly amazed that God loves me....and washed me of *all* my sins. Every one of them. There are many times I've gone astray, but ***part of the good news is that God's love is stronger than my weakness.*** That's part of the good news too.

I asked each of you to do a concordance Bible study on the words “preached”, “preaching” and “preach” to see what the apostles actually talked about. I hope you did it, or will do it, if you never have. Yes, they preached the kingdom. And, there are numerous places where it says they came either **preaching Christ, or preaching the kingdom and the name of Christ**. Paul even combines in Romans 15:15-20, many of these elements and even adds that he was careful as he preached the gospel not to preach “where Christ was [already] named” (verse 20). Read it for yourself.

So I recommend you do your own study on the word “gospel” and read every single one of the scriptures with that word in it and then you will know what the Bible actually says about it.

Let's review a few key passages and then move on. After these verses we'll read, I will move to an aspect of the gospel that is often left out: ***how the good news has to be obeyed, and then we'll go into how the gospel was preached from the beginning.*** The good news is about God's kingdom, and that also includes the way Jesus lived and how He will live that way again in each of us, if we surrender our lives to God.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

God has a kingdom, which Matthew calls “the kingdom of heaven”. It's the Father's kingdom, but there's also a verse where it's called “**the kingdom of Christ and God**” (**Ephesians 5:5**). Jesus says His Father bestowed on Him a kingdom (**Luke 22:29**), and He was born to rule over a kingdom that would have no end (**Luke 1:33**). Several times Jesus refers to the kingdom as “His” kingdom (**Matt. 16:28; Matt. 13:41**). Jesus also taught us to pray “Thy kingdom come”.

Why? *So that* God's “will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”. Sure, God has overall say on what goes on here on earth, but this is not God's world. It's Satan's world here on earth, and we're pilgrims here, representing as *ambassadors* the higher kingdom of *heaven*. When God sends Jesus to take over, after everything's in place, only God's will will be done on earth, as it is in heaven! Praise God! Lord, hasten that day!!!

When we see what's going on in the world – and as I speak, what's going on in Lebanon between the Hezbollah and Israel, plus Iraq-Iran, and so on – we should pray all the more urgently, “thy kingdom come”. That kingdom is coming with power and might and there will be horrible war before it can be set up, but in the end every knee shall bow to the King of kings. When God sets up His rule on earth, the family of God – the kingdom of God – will rule the earth. Then the murderous nonsense in the Middle East will stop! The butchery between tribes in Africa will stop. Satan's reign of terror in the inner cities around the world, even here in America, will stop. You have been invited to be part of *that* real kingdom. A kingdom of spirit beings, for one must be ***born of spirit*** to be in that kingdom (**1 Cor. 15:50; John 3:5-6,8**). When we are, we shall be like the wind, invisible unless we choose to appear to mortals. At that time, sin will be impossible for us, for he who has been born of spirit cannot sin, just as God cannot sin (**1 John 3:9**). What wonderful good news!

The Millennium is *ruled* by the kingdom of God, but the millennium technically is not the kingdom itself. We think of God's kingdom in terms of physical *things*, but that misses the point. The Kingdom is *not* the physical houses or food or bountiful harvests; the kingdom is not in food and drink (**Rom. 14:17**) but in righteousness, peace, joy, love and spiritual things! We need to think more spiritually. Those who are in Christ think of spiritual things, not physical things (**Rom. 8:5-6**).

Brethren, the good news is the kingdom *is* coming; the family of God is coming to set up God's way on earth. When Jesus returns, if we are in Christ, we will return with Him on spiritual white horses, as part of the army of God, commander of the hosts! This is very much a part of the good news too! This earth's governments are on a downhill slide to oblivion – unless God's Son, God's *Bride*, and the angels of heaven come down in power, glory and might to take over! ***We're going to be part of that Operation Rescue because of the good news of what the Son of God ALSO did 2,000 years ago!***

WHEN will we get excited about this! We need to awake from our stupor brethren, and start talking more about God, His plan, the coming reign of Jesus on earth. A reign you and I will be a part of! A time of true peace and a time when Arabs will sit down with Jews, who will sit down with Pakistani next to an Indian sitting next to someone from Shri Lanka – all worshiping the great God in love. God's kingdom is His way of love finally starting to happen. The good news is also the *way* into that kingdom, a kingdom of peace and love.

The kingdom of God however, please remember, is *not* flesh and blood (**1 Cor. 15:50; John 3:3-6**). God's kingdom will *rule* the earth, but technically, the kingdom of God is composed of those who have been changed to *spirit* when Jesus returns. God's kingdom is centered in heaven right now, and rulership is coming down to earth. However I think it is still entirely possible that those born into the family of God at Jesus' return will always reside in what is now heavenly Jerusalem – whether that city is in heaven or when it comes to earth – that will be our home and will always be our home.

That's good news too! I believe it's possible that we will *rule* on the earth – *work* on earth – but have our *home* in heaven. ***Heavenly Jerusalem is our city.*** That's where our home is. We are considered being “born” there in heavenly Mt. Zion (**Psalms 87:5-6**). That will be a future sermon, and I got that material from a study I read recently from another speaker. But whether or not that part is correct, we know we will be at the spearhead of God's kingdom, the first fruits setting it up. Jesus is the very first of the firstfruit making the rest of us holy. For “if the first fruit is holy, the lump is also holy” (**Romans 11:16**).

All of creation is about the good news of preparing a kingdom for the bride of Christ, and they will be co-heirs of all things, ruling from Christ's throne. In fact creation is groaning, waiting for the children of God to be revealed. “Fear not, little flock, for it is *your* Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (**Luke 12:32**). We will sit with Him on His throne, as a loving wife does as she snuggles up with her Beloved (**Rev. 3:21**). This is not just some internalized kingdom, but a real kingdom. We are going to judge the world and angels (**1 Cor. 6:1-2**).

This is such awesome news. This too, is the good news, the gospel. For you and for me, if we accept what we're being offered and live the kingdom way, showing we are children of our Father.

Let's pick up now in Revelation 11, as we read “the end of the book”.

Revelation 11:15-19

"Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" 16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying:

"We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. 18 The nations were angry, and your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth."

19 Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail."

The 7th angel, the last trump, is when you and I will be changed to spirit, or – if God willed that we should die before Jesus returns – we will be *resurrected*, into *spirit* life and we shall be just like Christ, transformed into a glory like His (though lesser). We shall see Him, for we shall be like him (**1 John 3:2**). What wonderful good news!

Brethren, I hope we'll hear the 7 trumpets! We'll be counting them off. Wake up, raise your eyes upward for our Redeemer and Beloved Lord of Lords and our betrothed, draws nigh (**Luke 21:28**). And what we're about to read begins to happen from *heaven*! Remember the 144,000 are seen on the sea of glass in heavenly Mt. Zion (**Rev. 14:1**) as well.

Revelation 19:1 "After these things I heard a loud voice of a great **multitude in heaven**, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!"

Revelation 19:6-16

"And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "**Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. [I believe it's in heaven]**

9 Then he said to me, "Write: '**Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!**'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is **called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses [that includes us –the saints Jude 14; Zech 14:5].** 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness

and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Doesn't that make your heart beat a little faster? I'm jumping around in my seat right now as I prepare this!! What good news this is.

You and I have been called to put a stop to this murderous nonsense and chaos going on in the Middle East, going on between tribes in Africa, going on in the inner cities of America, and all over the world at that time.

Turn now please to Daniel 7. We will come with love – but at first, “tough love”. WE, the saints, will be given dominion and power to set up God's new regime, God's way. This is the time of good news spoken of by Daniel the prophet in Daniel 7:24-27 – *preceded* though by a horrific time of trouble, “the great Tribulation”:

Daniel 7:24-27 “The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, ***shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law.***

Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. [a terrible time of martyrdom and persecution for 3-1/2 years]

26 'But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.

27 Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

WE, as the now spirit-born Bride and executive assistant of the King of Kings, will be given power, authority and wherewithal to stop the carnage going on, to bind the evil doers (**Ps. 149**), to bring hope to the hopeless, to rebuild the ravaged cities, to turn the barren wilderness into a garden, to liberate the captive Israelites – including Americans, Canadians, British. ***That “exodus” will dwarf the original one (Jer. 16:14-15; 30:1-3).*** We'll reunite those separated from loved ones, we'll heal their sick, and you and I will let the blind see, and bring hope and joy to a dying world! They'll come back praising God (**Isa. 12**). Hallelujah and praise our loving Abba that He sees fit to let me be part of this. I hope you feel the same way. What a great gospel it is. Ps 149 says we are to praise Him even from our beds, even in the dance!

So the good news is also about Christ and Him crucified, (**1 Cor. 15:1-6**) that I may have a *part* in such wondrous times. And it's about Jesus rising again to live again in me, for me, because He loves me. That's *wonderful* good news. **I'm frankly amazed that God could love even me, after all I've been, after all I've been, and done.**

But you see, now I can be a vehicle for spreading His good news, that part of the good news is this: You see, **God's love is greater than my weakness.** He alone can wash me completely, and He has. And God wants to wash you too, and demonstrate His love to you too. Yes, God's love is good news! It's *part* of the gospel of God. ***God is love so the kingdom of God is about a kingdom of love.*** In fact, what I find *so* amazing, is to hear Jesus say – in His High Priestly prayer in John 17 – that Father above loves you and me as much as He loves Jesus (**John 17:23**). That is such good

news . . . a sinner like me can be loved by perfect, holy God – and invited to be part of the Bride for His Son, the Son of God. I find that just incredible! It makes me lift my arms up to my heavenly Abba, and with tearful gratitude, say, “Abba, thank you, thank you. I love you, my dear God and father, and help me love you more.”

His mercy seat is higher, is above, the law that condemned me when I broke it, even as *you* broke it. Mercy triumphs over judgment (**James 2:13**). Part of the good news is that by grace I have been saved through faith, not of works, lest any man might boast (**Ephesians 2:8-10**)—though He has certainly created me for good works to show the glory of a new creation in Christ. Yes, all *that* is also the good news!

The good news *has to include* the fact that the Supreme God and King of this kingdom is a *wonderful* king who sent His only Son to pay my death penalty for me, to deliver me from the shackles the Enemy had put me in – as the deadly clang of chains falling to the prison floor rings through his world and his kingdoms – when the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. What awesome news.

One more thing: the kingdom of God – because I’m a co-heir – is now also my kingdom. And your kingdom. Remember Daniel says that in **Dan. 7:27** “then the kingdoms will be given to the saints.” WOW, WOW, WOW! Praise God.

We need God’s children to take ownership in what is the God family’s kingdom. It’s GOD’S kingdom, but we need you to start thinking of it also as OUR kingdom, since we’re now heirs of God (**Galatians 4:7**). *Are you feeling it? Are you hearing it?*

As spiritual descendants of Abraham, just as God told Abraham in **Gen. 15:1**, He now tells us: “**I AM** your exceedingly great reward”. Brethren, let’s get excited, wake up, let’s hear it and feel it, and see it. Our reward is GOD. Let’s read it.

David says in **Psalms 16:5** “Oh **Lord, YOU are my inheritance**, you are my cup!”

Ps. 73:26 – “God is my portion forever!”

1 Cor. 1:21-23 – says ALL is now ours! “ALL things present or things to come is now yours”.

Rev. 21:7 - he who overcomes shall inherit all things!

We *must* be overcomers. That is part of the gospel too. And we overcome by the blood of the Lamb (**Rev. 12:11**). We overcome the world by faith (**1 John 5:4**), again – in Christ. Be sure to hear my upcoming sermon on “Righteousness – Yours, or God’s?”. We can be of good cheer, Jesus says, because He has already overcome the world (**John 16:33**). Therefore God, who is *in* us, is stronger than he who is in the world (**1 John 4:4**). We overcome evil with good (**Rom. 12:21**), and Jesus in us is what allows that to happen, since He is God, and there is no one good but God, Jesus said. We no longer walk in the former old sinful way, but we walk as He walked, or we can’t claim to know Him (**1 John 2:3-6**).

Incredible! Why don’t we *shout* this from the roof tops? Why aren’t we sharing this with all we can? Why are we so asleep? The greatest thing in all my life is to love God, to know Him better, to live His life, to serve Him, to worship Him, to be a house of prayer dedicated to Him, to be a holy sanctuary for His Spirit. We now want to serve our Lord and Master more than ever and to share His glorious good news as never before.

All of this is possible because of God and His Son. Yes, the gospel of God, scripture says, is *concerning* His Son JESUS – **Romans 1:3-4, for by no other name can any of this happen!**

Romans 1:1-6: “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, *separated to the gospel of God* 2 *which He promised before through His prophets* in the Holy Scriptures, 3 *concerning His Son Jesus* Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. 5 *Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith* among all nations *for His name*, 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ”

THE GOSPEL MUST BE OBEYED

This verse is a good segue into the next part we'll talk about: obeying the gospel of God.

Notice again Romans 1:5: 5 *Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith* among all nations *for His name*, 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;”

The true gospel, as glorious as it is, is also serious business. The Bible does not separate love and obedience, as so many pop psychologists do. You prove your love BY your obedience. Jesus teaches us “If you love me, keep my commandments” – **John 14:15. Verse 21** says “He who has My *commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me*. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

John 15:9-10 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; **abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love**, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.”

Those who *practice* a way of life of adultery, lying, homosexuality, idolatry, drunkenness, profanity and so on, have no part in this glorious kingdom (**1 Cor. 6:9-11**). But the good news: “such *were* some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” – v. 11. You are now a new creation in Christ! The old has passed away, and forgotten forever by God, and separated from you as far as the east is from the west. ***Then God gives us His Spirit to empower us to walk His way, the kingdom way.***

Hey, the whole Bible is the good news! I'm just telling you scripture after scripture!

That gospel must be believed – Jesus says so in **Mark 1:15**. It must *also* be *obeyed*, or else God will come “in flaming fire **taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not OBEY the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (**2 Thessalonians 1:8**).

So God is serious that His good news should get our attention, make us repent, believe, and obey – and in the end, worship and fear Him. *That* is all also part of the true and glorious gospel. In fact, we're told in the last book of the Bible, in **Revelation 14:6-8** that *here* is part of the gospel message:

“Then I saw another *angel* flying in the midst of heaven, ***having the everlasting gospel*** to **preach** to those who dwell on the earth -- to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people -- 7

saying with a loud voice, "**FEAR God** and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and **worship Him** who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Notice the gospel is also about fearing God, worshiping Him and giving Him glory! And who wouldn't want to fear and worship God?

Then more good news continues in verse 8 – Babylon is fallen, is fallen.

A few more verses about how loving God is equated with obeying Him in worship and in walking in His way of life:

1 John 2:3-6 "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But **whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.** 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."

Folks, we can't claim to be in Christ and disregard God's way of life. Though we still may stumble in a sin here and there because we're flesh and the flesh is weak, we're done with sinning as *a way of life*. We're *done* as a way of life with profanity; we're *done* with infidelity, flirting, or anything like that. We're *done* gossip. I get so tired of "He said...she said...they said...."

Brethren, let's stop it. It's not of God. Let's talk of God and His higher way instead, brethren! *We're done as a way of life, with coveting; we're done with angry outbursts and anything that doesn't bring glory to God!! The good news is also a way of life of love, the kingdom way, and if we profess the gospel, we live the gospel as a way of life, or we're fakes. Again, none of us does it perfectly. So don't misunderstand me. I fail too from time to time, and sometimes horribly. But as a way of life, this is our desire and our pledge: to do the things pleasing in His sight. Let's read it.*

1 John 3:22-23 "And whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.** 23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. 24 **Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.** And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."

So I hope I've made the point: the gospel must not just be believed, but obeyed. And this gospel so *transforms* us that we live it, breathe it, talk it, walk it, and exude it. It's our worship of God. It's our faith in God.

The good news is also that God can now live in us to give us life to walk this new way in obedience by His power and His mind in us.

You know why Jesus resurrected Lazarus? We're all going to die sooner or later. It wasn't so much because Lazarus needed to live a few more years: it was used as an object lesson! That we, who are dead in our sins, are dead unless He who has eternal life gives us life. And we do have life in Jesus and access to the Father. Jesus used that resurrection to talk about Himself and His purpose: *that HE is the resurrection and the life* and that if we believe in Him we will see life! That's all in

John 11. It's about the **good news, the gospel of our salvation**, and yes, that's part of the gospel (**Ephesus 1:13**).

Let's look now at how the gospel was declared from the beginning.

The Gospel preached from the beginning

Hebrews 4:1-2 says the gospel was preached to Israel but they didn't listen to it.

Romans 1:1-2 says the prophets declared the gospel.

Galatians 3:8 says God preached the gospel to Abraham.

Let's start with the Garden of Delights, which is what "Eden" means.

I've already shown you that the gospel Paul himself says HE preached included the message of the cross and the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-6). The Bible says Jesus was crucified from the foundation of the world. God's plan of salvation was in play from the very beginning.

If you go back to one of my favorite sermon series I gave in 2004 about "The Mystery of Christ and the Church", you'll see how various women were types of the church: Eve, before her sin; Rebekah, the wife of Isaac; the Prov. 31 woman, the nation of Israel, Ruth the wife of Boaz; the Shulamite wife in the Song of songs – ALL of these are types of the Bride of Christ. If you haven't heard that series, please go and download it and listen to it.

Why do I mention the Bride? All of history is about preparing a bride for the Creator. Every event in the history of nations is only significant in relation to what it did to position God's people to be prepared to be the wife of the King.

God created Adam outside the Garden of Eden ("Delight") and then put him into the garden (Genesis 2:6-7). We have to be invited into God's presence. Later God had Adam name the creatures and there was not found a mate for Adam. So from Adam's side, from his bones and his flesh, God built a woman and they were OF one body and became as one.

Paul teaches us that the point of all this was not just to have a cute story, but to picture the *spiritual*: that the Bride of Christ was part of His body, bone of His bones (**Ephesians 5:29-32**). The Bride of Christ was made possible, when Christ –like Adam – gave up a part of His side on Calvary. *In creating Eve from the body of Adam, the gospel was being preached.*

God knew they would sin, and so Jesus "was slain from the foundation of the world" (**Rev. 13:8**). But the plan of eternal life was "promised *before time began*" (**Titus 1:2**). Jesus Himself, and His sacrifice, was "**foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you" (**1 Pet. 1:20**).

No other religion even has a true, living God! And no other faith has their God coming to live as a mere mortal and dying for His creation that they may be forgiven and be saved. WOW, WOW, WOW!

The moon god Allah is not the same as our God, and never think Allah is just another name for the one true living God! No way. And for that matter, there is no other god that even exists, except for the one true God, Creator of all the universe and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Are we seeing why it is called the “**everlasting** good news (gospel)”? (**Rev. 14:16**).

Adam and Eve were both created on the 6th day. At the end of each of the first 6 days of creation, God says He looked at what He had done, and declared “it was good” (**Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25**). By the end of the 6th day, after man and woman were created, as the Sabbath was beginning at sundown - God says everything He had made was ‘VERY GOOD’, and it was the 6th day.

Now notice when God **creates the Sabbath** by putting His holy presence into a day in which He rested, way back at creation: there is no statement like “and it was the 7th day and God saw that it was good” at the end of it (**Gen. 2:1-3**). **Why? Because though the other acts of creation were completed on each of those days, the Sabbath was not completed.** It goes on and on. There remains a rest, a keeping of the Sabbath (**Hebrews 4:9-10**), picturing we too must rest from our former way – and are looking forward to the peaceful kingdom of God. **So, even in the creation and even in creating the Sabbath, God was preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and a time of spiritual rest forever and ever, without end.**

The good news of Christ the Savior was preached to Adam and Eve when they sinned.

Genesis 3:14-15

14 So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.

15 *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

Then just as Jesus is our covering for our sins (**Romans 4:7**), God drew blood in that garden and sacrificed an innocent animal, possibly a lamb or ram. Look at that in Gen.3:21. This too was a picture of the gospel. I'm confident God explained to Adam and Eve about sacrifices, innocent blood shed for us – as certainly we see their son Abel understood. God teaches us that the blood of bulls and goats cannot forgive sin, but they look forward to the One they represented: Jesus the Son of God. I'm sure in the covering, this was preached to them.

Gen 3:21 “Also for Adam and his wife the Lord **God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.**” An innocent life died so Adam and Eve could be covered.

Then God had to cut all mankind off from Him, except those selected few, the first fruits, He would individually call to a knowledge of Him and to a relationship with Him. All descendants of Adam and Eve have been out of the garden since – except the few God offers the tree of life to.

Gen. 3:22-24: “Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" -- 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 **So He drove out the man;** and He placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”

In understanding the plan of God's salvation, it is important to understand God is not trying to save everyone right now. God is not losing any battle for people's eternity.

When Adam and Eve had 2 sons, they may have been twins for scripture doesn't use the customary language of Eve "conceived and bore" before speaking of Abel. She simply bore again, another son, without another conception mentioned; hence I believe they could have been twins.

Abel understood about sacrifices, for it says "in the process of time" – the Hebrew implies a specific time of worship, usually the end of a particular time – Abel brought his bloody animal sacrifice. He was a shepherd, like Jesus is called a shepherd. He brought a blood sacrifice for he understood the plan of salvation required Jesus to come and die. Without blood there is no forgiveness (**Heb. 9:22**). He was living that part of the gospel.

Next we read of Seth, Enoch, and then Noah. **Genesis 6:8** – "But Noah **found grace** in the eyes of the Eternal". If Noah found grace, he must have been looking for grace and needed grace, for all have sinned and come short of God's glory. The gospel includes the good news of grace (**Acts 20:24**).

God saved mankind alive, with 8 lives, because of Noah's righteousness. **Eight stands for new beginnings**. God made a covenant with them with the rainbow in the sky, and God's grace was again evident.

Next God calls Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees – and Abraham in faith *obeyed* (**Heb. 11:8-9**), waiting in faith for a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God. There's obeying again.

Gen 12:3, 7 "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; **and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**" **Verse 7** speaks of his Seed, referring to one descendant. **See Gal. 3:16**, which makes it clear that the Seed in whom all would be blessed was CHRIST, not Isaac or Israel or all the children of Israel. No -- Christ!

Gen 15:1 "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

Gen 15:6 "And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

This section is critically important! Paul uses Gen. 15:1-6 as the basis for much of what he teaches us in Romans 4 about faith in and of the righteousness of **Christ to impute His righteousness on to us** – not of works, lest any man should boast, but righteousness by faith in Christ. Read it for yourself in Romans 4, and the end of Romans 9 and the beginning of Romans 10.

In Genesis 22, Abraham acts out the role of God the Father, and 33-year old Isaac acted out the role of our Savior in being willing to be sacrificed. In this case though, once God could see Abraham's faith, God provided a substitute, the ram caught by his horns, the shofar that declares our liberty in Christ during God's holydays. And the holydays reveal the gospel – the plan to save mankind and bring us into His kingdom.

It was after this that another gospel message was preached, in **Genesis 22:18**, "**In your Seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed**, because you have obeyed My voice." Paul uses that very passage in **GALATIANS 3:7-8** to declare the proof that the good news of Jesus Christ – the Seed of Abraham – was preached to the prophets.

Galatians 3:7-9 “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."** The blessing of the nations through Abraham, was through His SEED, which Paul clearly identifies as Jesus Christ - and this is yet another proof that the message about Christ is a significant part of the true gospel (see also **Galatians 3:16**).

Genesis 24: When Isaac needed a bride, Abraham sent his servant to his homeland, to his own household. Rebekah was found at the spring of living waters (not just “well”), drawing water. **Her father was Bethuel (Gen. 24:24), which means “house of God”**. Of course. The Bride must be of the house of God! God’s Son must also marry a bride from the House of God, for we must be of like mind, even of the same kind. The “house of God” is the church!

I’ve been speaking a lot lately of how this “house of God” – which you are – must be a sanctified house of prayer, a house of worship! I’ve spoken about *the Tabernacle of David*, and how David elevated worship of the Highest to 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, and he included in that worship a lot of praising, singing and even dancing. Twenty four hours a day, 7 days a week. You need to hear that 2-part sermon on “The Tabernacle of David” and start praising God more.

Rebekah, who pictured the church, went to Isaac and Abraham’s home for the wedding (Gen. 24:61). She loved Isaac without seeing him, as we must love Christ though we haven’t seen him (**1 John 4:19-20**). She had to leave her place and move to another and follow the servant to her new home. We too will be brought back by Jesus’ servants – the angels – to Christ, the reality of Isaac and go where He is. We rise with Christ to be married by our Father, and taken by God’s servants the angels to be with the Lord. God the Father is the King who will put on a wedding for His Son. Who else could be the king, who puts on a wedding for His son (**Matthew 22:1-2**)? Where else, but at Jesus’ home and our Father’s kingdom in heaven, could be an appropriate wedding site for the wedding of all time, the wedding of the universe!?

THIS IS AWESOME NEWS WE SHOULD BE TALKING ABOUT MUCH, MUCH MORE. I’ve spelled much of this material out before in the series on Woman, and the series on The Mystery of Christ and the Church.

Their wedding/marriage was consummated in Sarah’s tent.

Genesis 24:67 “Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.”

Sarah? What does she picture in the Gospel of GOD? Everything in the Old Covenant pictures something!

Gal. 4:21-26 makes it clear that Sarah and Hagar picture two very different things. Hagar is of the earth. Notice what is said of Sarah:

Galatians 4:25-26 “for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children -- **26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.**”

So Sarah represents heavenly Jerusalem. Isaac took Rebekah, the daughter of the House of God (Bethuel) into Sarah's tent to consummate the marriage. Jesus is going to take the church, the daughter of the House of God also, into heavenly JERUSALEM to consummate HIS wedding. The wedding of Christ and His bride is clearly set in HEAVEN (**Revelation 19:1, 14**). The armies of heaven follow Christ and his saints out of heaven to return to earth.

Some have preached that our mother is the church. NO. We are the church. We are not our own mother! The Bible says our mother is heavenly Jerusalem. Of course. That's where we're born – in and by our mother, which is heavenly Mt. Zion! (**Ps. 87:5**).

Psalm 87:4-6

4 "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me; Behold, O Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia: 'This one was born there.'"

5 **And of Zion it will be said,**

"This one and that one were born in her; and the Most High Himself shall establish her."

6 The LORD will record, when He registers the peoples: *"This one was born there."*

Jesus meant it when He said He was going to prepare a place for us.

Brethren, there is so much more in the Old Testament that was a form of preaching the gospel.

The Passover in Egypt. The manna from heaven. The fresh, living water from the Rock – and that rock pictured Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). Even Christ becoming sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) – pictured by the bronze serpent story in Num. 24:4-9. Compare John 3:14-15 and John 12:32-33.

John 3:14-15

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Even the name of the leader who took them into the Promised Land - JOSHUA – is just the exact HEBRAIC name for the Greek name JESUS. Same name. It is JESUS – Joshua – who will take us into God's Kingdom, and the reality of the Promised Land.

There is so much more, but we're out of time.

The point I hope you remember: the good news, the gospel is much bigger, much broader, than many have thought. It's not just this or just that but much bigger. I believe it's ultimately the whole Bible; every word of God is ultimately the good news.

It's the coming kingdom, and it's the Way into the kingdom, our kingdom – all about Jesus Christ. It's also the good news of peace, of a world living in harmonious love, its salvation. And it's exciting! We should adore and worship our Father and praise our Beloved Jesus – for the gospel is being preached and will be preached before the wonderful 2nd coming of the Son of God and our King of Kings!

God hasten that day. Accept the gospel, help proclaim the gospel. Until next time, this is Philip Shields, your brother. Pray for me too, that God will continue to grant us the time, the means, the inspiration, and the energy to continue to do this labor of love. God bless you.....

