

What Was/Is Paul's Gospel?

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For nearly two centuries now, many dispensationalists have asserted that the good-news or "gospel" which Paul preached—differed from that which the Jewish apostles and Jesus of Nazareth preached. However, the "limited-dispensationalists" [Ryrie, Chafer, Ironside, Moody, Pentecost, Walvoord, Gaebelin, Darby, Scofield, *et al*] cling to the traditional dictate that there is only one "gospel" and that it was preached by all of the New Testament apostles (including Paul and company). True dispensationalists who maintain that Paul's "gospel" differed are represented by: Stam, Bultema, Baker, Welch, Knoch, Anderson, Bullinger, J. C. O'Hair, *et al*.

Without question, the position taken by the "limited-dispensationalists" noted above, is the prevailing one today. That there is supposedly only ONE "gospel" from Matthew to Revelation is supported by nearly all Bible dictionaries and commentaries. This typical position is also reënforced in subtle ways, in nearly every English Bible. This is the position taken by most major religions as well, in fact it is rather blasphemous to infer that there may even be other "gospels".

"Gospel", as used above, generally means:

the good-news about the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It includes the aspect of salvation for those who trust by grace in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was/is full payment and full atonement for the sins of the believing sinner.

This is the modern definition of "gospel" *in nuce*. As used in this paper, this definition is the essential CORE meaning of the good-news, or "gospel". In fact, this is the essential core meaning behind many of the salvation messages as presented in the Bible wherein eternal life is viewed and salvation from sins committed is accepted/imputed! (Though not all "gospels" imply all this!). The reader is advised to keep-in-mind this core meaning as displayed above while progressing through this essay.

The purpose of this paper is to expose the fallacy of declaring that there is only one "gospel" in the Bible. We shall also examine several added aspects or connotations connected with the usage of the term "gospel". These added connotations and assorted semantic aspects clearly illuminate distinctions which exist between that "gospel" which Paul preached, and the "gospel" which Jesus of Nazareth and the 12 Jewish apostles preached. Thus, the burden of this essay. As stated above, as far as a salvation-from-sin message is concerned, there is indeed, the single core message as defined above—it lies at the heart of every salvation-from-sin "gospel". Yet, there are different "gospels". Different in that they have added promises, differing hopes, differing audiences, and for different dispensations! Confusing these differing "gospels" or messages of good-news, can and does cause great confusion. Such distinctions are involved in the split amongst the dispensationalists mentioned above.

"Gospel" is a common English translation for the Greek word for "good-news", the verb form is: εὐαγγελίζω and it basically means "to announce with good tidings". The noun form is: εὐαγγέλιον and it basically means "the message of good-news"; and via a related form, "one who announces or instructs in the good-news". These would form that singular monosemic meaning for the term "gospel". As is well known the various contexts in which the word(s) occur add additional meanings to the word(s).

Most usages of the verb and noun forms for "gospel" refer to the message of salvation connected with the person of Jesus Christ, but note the following: (the relevant terms are in bold)

For this cause I also, when I could no longer forbear, sent that I might know your faith, lest by any means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor should be in vain. But when Timothy came even now unto us from you, and brought us **glad tidings** of your faith and love, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, longing to see us, even as we also *to see* you; for this cause, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our distress... - I Thessalonians 3:5-7

And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you **good tidings** of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this *is* the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.
Luke 2:10-12

In both quotes, above, the verb form is utilized. In the Thessalonians passage, it is clear that reference to the person of Jesus Christ is not meant, and we have herein a clear demonstration of the common use of the Greek term as it was used in the Greek empire; a term denoting "good-news" ANY "good-news". In the Lukan quote the "good-news" was the birth (the first advent) of a "Saviour", known as "Messiah" (or, "Christ"). It would be a stretch to add the "death, burial and resurrection" to the quote in Luke, the birth of the Saviour itself is the "good-news".

In the Septuagint (LXX), numerous examples exist of the common Greek usage, such as:

when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought **good tidings**, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his tidings. II Samuel 4:10

Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought **tidings** to my father, saying, A man-child is born unto thee; making him very glad. Jeremiah 20:14,15

These clearly reflect a "good-news" which have nothing to do with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor with salvation. Need we venture into profane Greek literatures? In such an environment numerous examples of the common usage can be displayed, one example suffices:

Forasmuch as I have become aware of the **tidings of joy** concerning the proclaiming as Emperor of Gaius Julius Verus Maixmus Augustus... [per an inscription of circa A.D. 238 - translation per Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p.367]

Consequently, it should be clear that the terms for "gospel" do indeed have differing meanings. Actually the word "gospel" just means

"good-news", it is the context which defines or tells us what the gospel is about. When we adhere to those usages within the New Testament itself, however, we encounter the above mentioned idea that there is only one "gospel" in the New Testament. We have seen that in the Greek language, in general, in some instances within the Bible itself, we have a variety of meanings. When we focus our attention upon the "gospel" as it relates to salvation, do we find variations as well? Are all New Testament usages identical?

Let us examine a few passages from the New Testament text in which we find a/the "gospel":

Jesus Christ came preaching a "gospel":

And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and **preaching the gospel** of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. Matthew 4:23

Again Jesus of Nazareth makes His message clear:

But he said unto them, I must **preach the good tidings** of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent. Luke 4:43 [to other cities of Israel!]

Philip preaches:

But when they believed Philip **preaching good tidings** concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12 [Philip is preaching in Samaria, probably to Jews and proselytes, note Acts 11:19]

In each of the above quotes, we note that the "gospel" (or the content of the preaching) was about the "Kingdom of God", or literally "the good-news about the Kingdom of/from God". Matthew 4:23, has simply the "good-news about the Kingdom". In the Matthew quote it is the noun form of "good-news" with the article, "THE gospel", not any gospel. Reference is to a specific "good-news". Jesus of Nazareth, like John the Baptist brought "good-news" to the Jews concerning the long awaited Kingdom. The contents of their message, was about the coming Kingdom, hence we often

refer to this gospel as "the Gospel about the Kingdom", or simply—the Kingdom Gospel.

Some other passages refer to different good-new(s), or gospels:

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or *if* ye receive a different spirit, which ye did not receive, or a different **gospel**, which ye did not accept, ye do well to bear with *him*. II Corinthians 11:4

But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any **gospel** other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any **gospel** other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. Galatians 1:8,9

Paul mentions different gospels, different messages which appear to be "good-news" but are not indeed really good-news! As Paul elsewhere states there is only one gospel; or, not another intended for the saints in Galatia, nor under Paul's ministry (Galatians 1:7). These other gospels are not really "good-news"!

We have a good example of another "good-news" which is a gospel; but to us today it is NOT a "good-news" as it was not spoken to us.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the **gospel** beforehand unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all the nations be blessed. Galatians 3:8

This gospel was good-news to Abraham—that all the nations would be blessed in him, we find the contents of this good-news further expanded in Genesis 12:1-3:

Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: ²and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; ³and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

This gospel spoken to Abram was good news to him, it also meant that he would have a son (else he could not become a great nation!). In Revelation 14:6,7 we find another gospel, another good gospel, but not to us today:

And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal **good tidings** to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; ⁷and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.

This "eternal gospel" is stated as: "Fear God, and give Him glory, for the hour of judgment has come; and worship Him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of water". To those people in Revelation 14 (those living on the earth during this portion of the tribulation) this message was of comfort, and a "good-news".

Hopefully, we can agree that there are different gospels in the Bible. Most are from God, most are good. Yet each is spoken to a distinct group or saints or peoples in a certain place or time. For example: I do not preach that the Kingdom is coming, nor to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-39). Nor do I preach a gospel accompanied with signs, wonders poisonous snakes and foreign languages (or ecstatic babblings).

During the transitional book of Acts we note the passing of one age into another. We see the anticipated Kingdom hopes of Israel, as preached by Peter and the 11 diminish and fail—Israel rejects the good-news of the Kingdom as well as its King Jesus Christ. Consequently God raises up the "apostle to the Gentiles", Paul. Despite Israel's failure, God sends out Paul with his special gospel to the nations (*i.e.* all nationalities).

Traditionally most folks declare that Peter first won the Gentiles as illustrated in Acts 10 of Cornelius' family. But Peter caused this man to become a PROSELYTE to the new Messianic Church. Peter was shining forth the Kingdom gospel to this man. Let us carefully examine the contents of Peter's speech before Cornelius and his family:

And Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: ³⁵but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. ³⁶The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching **good tidings** of peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all.) -- ³⁷that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; ³⁸*even* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. ⁴⁰Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, ⁴¹not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God *to be* the Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins. ⁴⁴While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. ⁴⁵And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. ⁴⁶For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, ⁴⁷Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Acts 10:34-48

Make no mistake, the witnessing Jews present declared that this event matched that of the Pentecost of Acts chapter 2 ("...received the Holy Spirit just as we did..." NASB). We have the signs confirming this to the witnessing Jews present, we have water baptism which is needed for full conversion to Messianic Judaism, we have testimony that this accords to the prophets. What we do not have is the following:

- (1) no shed blood for remission of sins
- (2) Christ is referred to with His earthly title: Jesus of Nazareth
- (3) Jesus Christ is not referred to as the or our Lord
- (4) Christ is not referred to as the Lamb, nor is a substitution implied.
- (5) No participation in a future resurrection mentioned

It is true that Peter's message was interrupted by the descent of the Holy Spirit, and that Peter would have gone on. But no where else does Peter speak of believers being "temples of the Holy Spirit", nor of our heavenly home, nor of a rapture. Peter relates only those elements related to the good-news about the coming Kingdom. During the 1,000 year coming Kingdom, Christ (the Messiah) rules the earth and nations with a rod of iron, He is the Judge (Acts 10:42, John 5:22). This Messiah, this King is what Peter and the 11 preach. A coming Messiah and a coming Kingdom, both in fulfillment of the many Old Testament prophecies.

When Peter opened his mouth to the Gentiles (Acts 15:14), it was as a representative of the nation of Israel, Israel acting as a light, shining out to the nations (Isaiah 60:3,4 and 42:6,7). However, when Paul reaches out to the Gentiles it is not through Israel! It is despite Israel. Thus, Paul does not preach the good-news about the coming Kingdom!

Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch, and to folks in Samaria, but these were all Jews or proselytes. Had they been Gentiles then Acts 15:14 and 11:1-3 would be false, for Peter is the first to reach out to and win true Gentiles. The Gentiles Peter won, became Messianic Jews, they were water baptized, and began to look for the return of the King and for the coming Kingdom (Acts 3:17-20, and Acts 1:6-8): this is what John the Baptist had been preparing Israel for:

And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ²Repent ye; for the kingdom of (or, from) heaven is at hand. ³For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying,
The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight.
Matthew 3:1-3

This was and is Israel's promise, it is their promised future, a 1,000 year kingdom of peace and joy on the earth, ruled over by the personal presence of the resurrected Messiah, Jesus in His glorious nail-scarred body. This Kingdom has not yet come as Israel rejected the offer from Peter, and the book of Acts makes this clear!

As the door was being shut upon the Christ-rejecting Israel, God raised up Paul and committed unto him a gospel for the nations (including any believing Jews, with no more national discrimination or priorities (Romans 2:11-13)). Israel is treated as a Gentile nation, in darkness and needing Paul's gospel. (Romans 11:13-32 and Galatians 3:28)

Which brings us to the final "gospel" which I wish to illuminate—Paul's gospel. It is his gospel, in fact he is the only preacher in the Bible who calls a gospel,

"MY GOSPEL"

Romans 2:16

II Timothy 2:8

Romans 16:25

How bold! yet, indeed the contents of Paul's good-news originate in Paul's teachings, they are uniquely Paul's. Paul's gospel differs from Peter's and that of John the Baptist, and of Jesus of Nazareth. Like some of the other gospels, it does contain the core information; information about the cross, the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ—and then it exposes unique, yea, distinctive features found in no other gospel.

Paul, himself shows us where, how and when he received his "new" revelation, his gospel.

For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. ¹²For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but *it came to me* through revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it: ¹⁴and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, *even* from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, ¹⁶to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood: ¹⁷neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus. ¹⁸Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to

visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. ¹⁹But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. ²⁰Now touching the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Galatians 1:11-20

I trust anyone who reads the above literally, will see that Paul did not reuse or adapt any prior or previous "gospels". It was new, and was not to be found in God's written Word (up to Paul's day). He was not taught it by the former Jewish apostles, or via any human.

In Galatians chapter 2, Paul shares his gospel with the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, they accept this different gospel and Paul's ministry. Here are some of the distinctive features of Paul's gospel, features which are supplied by the contexts, features in addition to the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ:

- (1) individual believers are INDWELT with the Holy Spirit
Romans 8:11, I Corinthians 6:19
- (2) we believers today are adopted, grafted on
Ephesians 2:19-22, Romans 8:15, Ephesians 1:5
- (3) our eternal home is heaven
Philippians 3:20, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, II Thessalonians 2:13, 14 and Ephesians 2:6
- (4) We will have new resurrected spiritual bodies, fit for heaven
I Corinthians 15:35-49 (note the "we" of verse 49)
- (5) We live by the imputed faith of Jesus, by grace NOT Law
Galatians 3:12, Galatians 2:16 ["faith OF Christ Jesus"]
- (6) Since it is by faith, no Jewish signs are needed, no rituals needed (water baptism, circumcision et al),
Ephesians 2:8, 9 Romans 3:19-22 (note the "now" of vs. 21)
- (7) Most importantly, Paul is the **first person** to preach that the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is GOOD NEWS (a gospel). Whenever Peter and the other 11 use references to the death of Jesus especially in Acts [prior to the date of I Peter chapter one], it is not as good news, but rather as a charge against the Israelites. (Recall that John's writings were written decades after Paul's ministry.)

The late William R. Newell, listed numerous distinctions in his famous tract/essay: *Paul's Gospel*. Below is a copy of some of Newell's distinctions, he enlarges this material in his booklet - *Paul vs. Peter, or Remarks on Galatians I and II*. Copyright 1930 by Newell, printed by Weir Brothers, Chicago.

Newell lists these distinctions as concerns Paul's gospel/revelations:

The great doctrines that Paul reveals may be outlined as follows -

1. The unrighteousness before God of all men.
2. The impossibility of justification by works before God, that is, of any man's attaining a standing of righteousness before God, by anything done by him. Do what a man may, he is a condemned sinner still.
3. The fact and the scripturalness of righteousness on the free gift principle - that is, of a Divine righteousness, separate from all man's doings, conferred upon man as a free gift from God.
4. Propitiation: That satisfaction of God's Holy nature and law for man's sins rendered by Christ's blood.
5. Reconciliation: The removal, by Christ's death for man of that obstacle to righteousness which man's sin had set up between God and man.
6. The plan of the actual conferring of the gift of righteousness upon all who believe, without any distinction. This change of a sinner's standing before God, from one of condemnation to one of righteousness, is called Justification. Negatively, it is deliverance from guilt an account of Christ's shed blood, and deliverance out of the old creation, by identification in death with Christ at the Cross. Positively, it is a new standing in the risen Christ before God.
7. Redemption - the buying back of the soul through the blood of Christ from sin; from the curse of the law, even death, involving exclusion from God, under penalty; from the power of death, which involves the hand of the enemy; and from all iniquity.
8. Forgiveness - the going forth of Divine tenderness in remitting penalty for sin, in view of the blood of Christ trusted in; and in complacency and fellowship, to creatures who before were necessarily under Divine judgment.
9. Remission of sins - that is, the actual removing of transgressions or trespasses from the sinner, so that for all time and eternity his sins shall not again be upon him.
10. Identification - (see above, Justification) the great fact that those who are in Christ were united with Him at the Cross, by God's sovereign inscrutable act; were crucified with Christ and buried with Him; so that their history is now ended before God; and when Christ was raised up as the First-born of the new creation, they also were raised up with Him, and their history began as new creatures in God's sight, in Christ, the Last Adam.

Of course, in the experience of the Christian, there comes a time when he is actually made partaker of this new life; that point of time when he is, as we say, saved, or converted, or born again, etc. Nevertheless, the life that is in every Christian came up out of the tomb, and it is in Christ Jesus that a man is created anew.

11. Incorporation. This tremendous doctrine Paul alone mentions, and he makes it practically the foundation of all his exhortations to the saints with regard to their conduct and life. By "incorporation" we mean the fact that all those who are really saved and are new creatures in Christ Jesus become members of one organism, which is more real than the very earth we tread upon called "the Body of Christ", Christ Himself in heaven being the Head of this Body, and every real Christian a member of it. So that believers are thus members of Christ in heaven, and also members one of another here on earth. No wonder Paul is able to exhort the saints to love one another when they are members one of another! (Rom. 12, I Cor. 12, and Eph. 4).

12. Inhabitation. The wonderful fact that the Body of Christ and each member of it individually is inhabited, indwelt, by the Holy Ghost Himself, and not only so, but that the Church is being "built together" as a great temple of God so that in the future God's actual eternal dwelling place will be this wonderful, mysterious company built into a building called "a holy habitation of God in the Spirit."

This mystery is a great and marvelous one, the fact that we are saved, are partakers now of the life of the Lord in glory, that the Holy Spirit indwells us!

13. Divine Exhibition, that is, that through the Church, in the ages to come, is to be made known that which God counts His riches, even His Grace (Eph. 2:7; 3:10).

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, there exists a split amongst dispensationalists. One of the reasons for the split concerns the "when" Paul began preaching his unique gospel, and thus when he began building the church of this present dispensation. The "limited-dispensationalists" see the beginning of the church of this present dispensation in the Pentecost of Acts 2. The "true-dispensationalists" see the beginning with Paul's commission and preaching Acts 9-13. (known as the "mid-Acts" position). This Acts position of chapters 9-13 is the position I prefer.

Another view rose up in the late 19th century with the teachings of one Charles Welch. He saw in Acts statements which convinced him that Paul was preaching the Kingdom Gospel up until the declaration of Acts 28:28. One such passage was surely Acts 26:16-23:

But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; ¹⁷delivering thee from the

people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, ¹⁸to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. ¹⁹Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: ²⁰but declared initially to both those of Damascus and Jerusalem, and then into every area with reference to the Jews and the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of a change-of-mind.* ²¹For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. ²²Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; ²³how that the Christ must suffer, *and* how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles. ²⁴And as he thus made his defense,

Another text which caused Mr. Welch some trepidation would be:

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. ²⁶Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. ²⁷For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. Acts 20:25-27 (spoken to the church at Ephesus) Note too Acts 19:8 and Acts 28:31.

In these passages Mr. Welch was unable to grasp the correct meaning. In Acts 20:25-27 and 28:31, I suppose he focused upon one single meaning of the word "kingdom" as the 1,000 year reign of the King Jesus Christ. Paul certainly did mention such a kingdom, but he did not preach the coming kingdom as good-news to the Gentiles, nor as a hope to be hoped for! Rather he taught about the SPHERE or realm of God's influence, another type of kingdom. Each believer is today, in the kingdom of God. We have been put there by God (our spiritual position):

giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; ¹³who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; Colossians 1:12,13

For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Philippians 3:20

* this verse is riddled with variants, I took the liberty to make my own translation of verse 20, based upon films of manuscripts in my possession and other known manuscripts.

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17

to the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who called [καλεσαντος, aorist participle] you into his own kingdom and glory. I Thessalonians 2:12

As a "Christian" in this present dispensation, I (we all who are elect) are **IN** the Kingdom of God, we are under His care, sealed by the Holy Spirit; which "kingdom" is not the coming 1,000 year Kingdom! One Kingdom (the 1,000 year Kingdom) is earthly and future; the other Kingdom, that one in which we now live, is spiritual and heavenly.

As concerns the famous speech by Paul in the Acts 26 passage (quoted above), Paul had mentioned that it is "the HOPE of the promise" (verse 6 of Acts 26) for which he is being condemned or is on trial for (note this also in Acts 23:6 and Acts 24:15). He is not on trial for preaching about a coming 1,000 year kingdom. The resurrection of Christ is the hope, THE hope connected with the coming kingdom, as all deceased Jews (those who are elect) cannot enter into the coming Kingdom unless there is a resurrection. The resurrection of Christ validates this hope. It is this hope which was the primary object of Paul's preaching to anyone who listened (Jew or Gentile).

As an aside, I was just recently reading through Acts with my wife (Gale), and as I read the text of Paul's speech in Acts 26, I was struck by the fact that Paul did present an impressive verbal defense, but he also focused upon the needy heart of King Agrippa! It is almost as if Paul was more concerned about Agrippa's spiritual state than his own defense! Much love and bravery is thus exhibited by Paul in this amazing speech!

Unfortunately Mr. Welch mixed up his "kingdoms" (and yes, just as there are different "gospels" there are different "kingdoms"). In the Acts 26 text, Mr. Welch obviously lost sight of *the hope* (of the promise) and instead placed an incorrect emphasis upon the word "promise", and thus perverted Paul's intent here (note again Acts 26:6, in lieu of 26:8, Acts 23:6, and 24:15). Mr. Welch's view [that Paul also preached the Kingdom Gospel prior to Acts 28] would have remained harmless and ineffective had he not

convinced Dr. Bullinger (of the *Companion Bible* fame) to change his position (which was mid-Acts). Mr. Welch negatively impacted Dr. Bullinger in early 1909, and thus the *Companion Bible* made popular the "Acts 28" position as it is known. This was/is an unfortunate split. All a student needs to do—is study Paul's epistles written during the Acts period and after—to see that Paul consistently preached the same gospel. His earlier epistles contain revelations of the mystery as do his latter epistles. It is true that his latter epistles (known as the "Prison Epistles") do contain advanced teachings, but their subject matters were earlier espoused by the apostle to the nations, Paul. In the "Prison Epistles" (especially Ephesians and Colossians) Paul elaborates upon many of his advanced teachings and revelations. One could reasonably state that Paul's epistles (Romans - Philemon) teach doctrines in a PROGRESSIVE-CHRONOLOGICAL order! It is possible that he codified (wrote down) for us (in Ephesians) what he had **earlier** spent years in Ephesus teaching, Acts 19:10. In fact, we have scant remains in Acts of Paul's teachings which went on for about three to four years in Asia Minor and in Corinth and elsewhere. All that the historian/compiler Luke relates of Paul's teachings would only fill several pages of text. Luke preserves some of his important speeches, but very little of Paul's daily teachings are recorded.

It is in Paul's epistles where we find the texts of his teachings, all that God wants us to know of Paul's teachings and revelations are therein preserved. In writing these epistles, we can and should assume that Paul added to and clarified some of his prior taught tenets, they are often a reiteration of what he had earlier taught—now written down in convenient form. All good teachers restate and remind their students of the materials taught, this assists with learning! (Recall Philippians 3:1).

In conclusion, I hope that I have made clear that Paul's Gospel is not that which Jesus of Nazareth preached, nor which was preached on the Day of Pentecost of Acts 2. It is distinctive enough that Paul could refer to it three times as,

"my gospel".