

MODERN
GOSPEL



J A William

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J. A. WILLIAM

Modern Gospel

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Introduction

The word ‘gospel’, in the title of this book, is a word that historically means ‘good news’. Over the centuries the gospel has come to refer to the good news of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Although it’s up to you to determine whether or not you will agree this is good news for you. The Bible says the good news about Jesus is the most wonderful news possible, but Scripture also upholds your right to accept or reject it.

While Christians think that objections to Christian teaching can be dealt with through a correct understanding of Scripture, at these various points you’re free to respectfully disagree. For whatever reason you’re reading this book, regardless of your current beliefs or worldview, I extend respect toward you as a free-willed individual.

My hope is that this respect goes both ways. This book hopes to be an authentic explanation of the message about Jesus Christ. It isn’t seeking to offend anyone by its honest portrayal of biblical teaching.

When anything is claimed as being ‘true’, it naturally excludes other claims of truth. For instance, not everything can be true at the same time. This is true of every major religion and worldview. Each worldview needs to decide that other views are wrong for it to assert that it is right or true. This is also true for atheism, which would be proved false if any one religion with competing claims is found to be correct.

While disagreements will arise between different views, it honours the God of the Bible for peace to abound through respect. Many agree that respect should be expected of every human being towards others, regardless of their own personal beliefs about life. This is the view that ‘world peace’ should be fostered by a respect of difference—not coercion towards only one perspective! My hope for you in reading this short book is that you gain eternal relationship with the loving and wonderful God of the universe. Although, this possibility is your decision to pursue.

Part 1:

The Gospel Condensed

The ‘gospel’ is a message. The preface explained that the word ‘gospel’ means ‘good news’. It’s the *good news* about what Jesus has done for humanity. This message is at the heart of Christian teaching.

Although the gospel is an important message for all people to understand, it can also be quite confusing. Many people don’t understand Christianity because they don’t understand the gospel. This section aims to make this central message easy to understand. My hope is that an understanding of the gospel will lead you into a personal relationship with God.

Chapter 1

Jesus Rose from the Dead



*“...you killed the Author of life,
whom God raised from the dead. To
this we are witnesses.”*

~ Acts 3:15 (ESV)

The gospel message starts with Jesus' resurrection. To be 'resurrected' means to come back to life after death—it's a supernatural miracle! Jesus did many miracles in his life, but his resurrection is the most important one. Jesus died and came back to life three days later.

If Jesus' resurrection is true as Christians claim, it shows that Jesus is the eternal God, having power over death.

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as Christians claim, it shows
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Chapter 2

Our Biggest Problem: Sin



*“...your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God, and your sins
have hidden his face from you...”*

~ Isaiah 59:2 (ESV)

The Bible says ‘sin’ is the biggest problem we humans have. What is sin? In the Bible, this word ‘sin’ means more than just ‘moral evil’. Sin more accurately means disobedience against God in a number of ways. We offend God by ‘sinning’ against him when we do things like lie, cheat, steal, hurt others and act in disobedience towards God’s universal moral laws. We also sin as we ignore God and intentionally suppress the truth about his existence. Understanding sin will take more pages to explain in the rest of this book, but before we understand sin in detail, let’s first look at the big picture.

The Bible says that the biggest consequence of our ‘sin problem’ is that it stops us from having any kind of positive relationship with God. The presence of sin, which is in humans from birth, automatically makes us God’s enemies. Sin eternally divides us and God. Because sin dwells in us, we’re automatically unable to be connected with God. In fact, sin completely *disconnects* us from God.

We can see this in the verse mentioned above. In Isaiah 59:2, ‘iniquity’ is used as another word for sin. It shows that human sin and God can’t co-exist—sin separates us and God. The rest of the book will explain in more detail how sin causes people to be eternally separated from God and punished after death.

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is in humans from birth,
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”

Chapter 3

Only God is God

“God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

~ Exodus 3:14 (ESV)

The Bible teaches that God is a different type of being compared to human beings. He's unique. This is why in Exodus 3:14, God introduces himself to a man named Moses by saying— "*I Am who I Am.*" God describes himself as "I Am" because referring to himself is the only possible way for God to describe what he is like. Nothing else can describe him but himself. In fact, the Bible says God is so different to us, we can hardly understand it. For starters, he's all knowing and all powerful.

We've just spoken about how sin completely divides us and God in the previous chapter, but since the gospel means *good news*, the next few pages will explain how God has made a plan to remove sin and restore humans back into relationship with himself.

Although because God is different to us, forming a positive relationship with God is different to relationships between humans. Since the gospel is a message about forming relationship with God, we should expect it to be a complex message of 'relationship restoration' because God is God, he operates in ways we don't easily understand.

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What is “The Trinity”?

The word ‘trinity’ means *three*. In the Bible, God is shown to be made of three persons in one. These are:

The Father;
the Son; and,
the Holy Spirit.

The Bible shows that each of these three persons are:

Fully God; and,
part of God.

But wait...how can that be possible? How can Jesus be fully, or completely God, and part of God at once? This question has boggled the minds of Christians for centuries. But the Bible displays each part of the trinity of God as both fully God and part of God at once. This means that, even though we can’t understand it, it’s possible for God to exist in a way that doesn’t conform to our earthly reality. God isn’t human; he’s able to be different beyond what our human minds can grasp.

Chapter 4

God the Problem Solver



*“...God will not take away life,
and he devises means so that the
banished one will not remain an
outcast.”*

~ 2 Samuel 14:14b (ESV)

This Bible verse from 2 Samuel 14:14 says that God isn't happy that people are banished from having relationship with him. God doesn't want the consequences of sin to eternally separate us and him. He's the kind of God who wants to make a way for outcasts like us, who are banished by sin, to return to relationship with himself. The good news is that this is exactly the kind of plan that God has made.

In sacrificial love, God has provided a way for us to escape the consequences of sin. The Bible says Jesus chose to die—he wasn't forced. Jesus chose this in obedience to God, his Father's, decision. God the Father wanted his son Jesus to die because only Jesus' death and resurrection can solve our sin problem. Only Jesus' death and resurrection can bring us back into positive relationship with God.

There are two things that Jesus' death and resurrection achieves that creates a way for us to return to a restored relationship with God.

1. Jesus takes away sin

We've said that sin eternally divides us and God. I also said that sin results in punishment. Well, in order to remove the punishment of our sin from us, Jesus took it on himself. In other words, sin has bad consequences for us, so on the cross Jesus took

those consequences onto himself. Jesus died, was forsaken by God, and judged—even though he was innocent. Jesus paid the price for our sin. He took *our* place and suffered under God's anger against our sin. Jesus suffered the judgement God's people deserved for their sin. By taking away our sin problem, Jesus creates a way for us to have a new and restored relationship with God forever.

2. Jesus gives us his heavenly status

Jesus not only takes away the sin of his people but he also credits them with perfection. Jesus has a perfect relationship with God with the Father because he lives a sinless life. If Jesus only removed our sin, we'd still lack the record of perfect love and goodness that Jesus' life displayed, which is needed for us to dwell with God forever. To have a positive relationship with God we need to be perfect. As humans we don't have the strength to live the life of perfect love and goodness that Jesus did. We don't have Jesus' record of a perfect life which we need to enter into God's presence. To solve this problem, at the cross Jesus transfers the heavenly status of his perfect life to us. He not only takes the place of sinners, but Jesus lets sinners take his place of perfection in God's sight. Now, because Jesus' perfectly good life can be counted as ours, it's possible

for us to have a new and restored relationship with God.

In essence, Jesus death and resurrection can make us perfect in God's sight. Jesus takes away our sinful record and gives us the record of his perfect life. In other words, Jesus swaps his perfection for our sinful imperfection. By this exchange we can be restored to relationship with God. These ideas are difficult to understand but will be explained in more detail in the rest of the book—especially how this offer is received by genuine faith.

Can you see God's incredible love? God the Father lovingly sacrificed his *only* innocent son for us. God did this so that we could escape the consequences of our sin and be restored in relationship with him. God loves us deeply and wants to bless us eternally! The next few pages will show that to benefit from this gospel offer, we need to receive it like a gift.

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Jesus swaps our sinful
imperfection for his
perfection before God. By
this exchange we can be
restored to relationship with
God.

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Summary & Response

*“everyone who calls on the name of
the Lord will be saved.”*

~ Romans 10:13 (ESV)

In this chapter I've made four main points in order to explain the gospel message in an introductory way. Don't forget this chapter is the gospel message in a very condensed and simplified form. To understand the gospel in more depth, or if you have unanswered questions, you'll have to read the second part of this book.

Here are the points I've made so far:

1. Jesus historically rose from the dead

If this is true he must be God.

2. Our biggest problem is sin

Sin is a characteristic of humans which completely and automatically stops them from having any positive relationship with God. Sin makes us God's eternal enemies.

3. God is very different to humans

Because God is different to us, being restored back into relationship with him will be a different process to what we might expect.

4. Jesus' death and resurrection solve our sin problem

God the Father sent his son Jesus as the solution to our sin problem. Jesus takes our sin away and gives us his heavenly status. By doing this, Jesus' death and resurrection are the key to our positive relationship with God being restored.

An important point to make is that the benefits of Jesus' death aren't given to us automatically. The verse above from Romans 10: 13 says that *"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* This means that only those who respond to the gospel by seeking restored relationship with God will be saved from the consequences of sin. The offer that Jesus can restore us back into positive relationship with God is something we need to receive for it to benefit us. The gospel is like a gift, or an offer, you can either choose or reject.

To accept the gospel, you need to say sorry to God for your sin by prayer. You'll also need to commit to learning more about God through the Bible in order to understand how to live in new relationship with him. Reading Bible books Matthew, Mark, Luke or John are good places to start because they record Jesus' teachings and time on earth. You'll also have to find Christian people who

follow the Bible in order to grow in your relationship with God alongside them. Although don't join people who call themselves 'Christian' but don't follow the teachings of the Bible.

If the gospel is an offer you'd like to accept, here's a prayer you could pray. This prayer is only the beginning of an incredible journey of new life with God! If you're praying this prayer, the Bible says that angels are celebrating in heaven that you've accepted the gospel (see Luke 15:10).

Prayer:

God, I'm sorry for my sin. Thank you for sending your son to both die for my sin and give me his heavenly status. Please help me to learn more about you. Help me to understand the Bible so I might understand how to live in new relationship with you. Also help me to meet Christian people who follow your words so I can grow in my new relationship with you. Amen.

So maybe you didn't pray this prayer because you're still unsure about the gospel. That's ok. In the preface I said that it's important your personal choice is respected. If you want to know more about the gospel message in more detail, or you still have unanswered questions, I encourage you to read the rest of the book. This entire

book is found in the link on the following page.

Join our community!

If you accepted the offer of the gospel and said the prayer—this is amazing news! We'd love to celebrate with you!

Please tell us if you became a Christian so we can help you take the next steps in your new relationship with God. Join our community by visiting modern gospel.org/join.

Looking for the rest of the book?

So far you've read the first part of this book. We hoped you've enjoyed learning about the gospel so far. We invite you to keep reading and welcome you to download a free copy of the entire book. To download the entire *Modern Gospel* book, including the second section, visit modern gospel.org/parttwo.