

The Completeness of the Gospel

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It is necessary to see that the gospel is complete as it pertains to our salvation. Many do not accept this idea, thinking that they have need of an additional revelation to keep up with the changing times. But God has made it clear that his gospel was delivered once for all, as we read in Jude 3. The new covenant was presented, and accepted in full by the church, and through God's providence, we have just what God wants us to know. It seems to be expressed very clearly to me in Galatians 1:8, "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!"

Again, many seem to think that the gospel needs more fanfare, or legalism, or freedom, or tradition, or mysticism, or miracles. There are so many sects that have taken one of these items to extremes this is the real reason for the great number of divisions in the religious world today. People want to put their own ideas into the gospel. Now it is true that we must think and meditate about the gospel of God. The New Testament effectively combats these extremes if we will just study it. We must put into effect the desires of God, and not our own.

The gospel is complete in its power to transform the lives of willing people. First of all, the gospel has the power to persuade men to turn from their lives of sin to walk in the paths of the living God. This is perhaps most powerfully expressed in the story of the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost, where so many were pricked in their hearts in shame and were added to the church. It has the power to renew the mind continually, as we read in Romans 12:2, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will."

The gospel also has the power to perfect, or complete, or mature people. Reading from Colossians 1:28, "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ." This then, is the answer to the hope of accomplishing God's challenge in Matthew 5:48, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The gospel also has the power to prepare people, both for life ahead and for the life eternal that we will one day inherit. We read in 2 Timothy 2:15 that we should work "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." The purpose of this rightful dividing I believe to be not just for teaching others, but for knowing how to live our lives and to tackle the problems in life that come along. Then in the 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The gospel perfects people. But it cannot do so unless we read it and write it on our hearts.

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