

Defining the Gospel

I. THE GREAT COMMISSION

- A. In light of the coming Kingdom, the Restoration of all things, and the Day of the Lord, the apostles were instructed to preach this 'Gospel' to the whole world beginning in Jerusalem.

⁴⁴ Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ... ⁴⁶ and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed (i.e. before 'all things' are completed) in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (Luk 24:44, 46-47 NASB)

²⁵ He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" (Luk 24:25-26 NIV)

- B. The "Great Commission" was simply the command to call the nations to repent (i.e. and obey) and believe that the crucified Lord, Jesus, is the One whom God appointed and anointed (i.e. gave authority) to judge the living and the dead and to restore the earth from its fallen state.

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (i.e. to bring the Day of the Lord) ¹⁹ " Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them (unto inclusion) in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Mat 28:18-20 NASB)

- ***⁴² "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." (Act 10:42-43 NASB)***

II. A FAMILIAR MESSAGE

- A. Within the context of the first apostles, the message was very simple. Both at the beginning in Jerusalem as well as throughout Israel and the various synagogues within the diaspora, the message was essentially, "**Jesus is the Christ**".

²² But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ. (Act 9:22 NASB)

- B. Thus, the early ministry of Paul and the other apostles was primarily to enter into a synagogue, and declare that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ. This was not only an affirmation of the Messianic expectation, but it was actually giving the Messiah arms, feet, and even a mother, brothers, and a hometown.

² And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." (Act 17:2-3 NASB)

²² "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- ²³ this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. ... ³² "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. ...

³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." (Act 2:22-23, 32, 36 NASB)

- C. An often overlooked but key point within the narrative of the Book of Acts is that the message of Paul and the other Apostles – along with all of it's implications – was understood clearly enough to land them in prison and even martyrdom.
- D. Saul was met on the road to Damascus on a mission from Jerusalem to stir up the Jews against the believers in Jesus, and to imprison them. The Pharisees and Sanhedrin were not doing this simply because they were zealous for truth, but rather because **the identity of Jesus as the Jewish Messiah was sentence of condemnation to them since the Messiah will crush the wicked at His coming.**
- E. A primary evidence that the Gospel preached in the book of Acts was not a redefinition of the Messianic hope is that when it was preached in Jerusalem it was an offer of mercy for the ones guilty of killing the Messiah. The offer of mercy was placed in context to the One who is going to crush His enemies at His coming in the clouds (cf. Luke 11:20).

²³ this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. ... ³⁴ "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, 'SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, ³⁵ UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET." ³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." ³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"" (Act 2:23, 34-37 NASB)

¹⁴ "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. ... ¹⁷ "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. ¹⁸ "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, ... ²³ 'And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' ... ²⁶ "For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways." (Act 3:14-15, 17-20, 23, 26 NASB)

- F. The term ‘the Gospel’ was not a new term nor idea, as is commonly supposed. This is the primary reason that there is little clarity regarding the Gospel message itself. The assumptions which have been made regarding the nature of the Gospel within most of Western Christianity assume a totally new starting point in the New Testament. The Apostles clearly understood the Gospel within the context of a message preached in the Old Testament.

⁸ The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." (Gal 3:8 NASB)

³² "We tell you the good news (Gr. euangelizo): What God promised our fathers ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. (cf. Ps. 2) ' ³⁴ The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: "I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.' ... ³⁸ "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. (Act 13:32-34, 38 NIV)

- **²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ... ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, (1Cr 15:20, 23 NASB)**
- **⁷ "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' ⁸ 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. ⁹ 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'" ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. (Psa 2:7-10 NASB)**

III. BRIEF SURVEY OF “THE GOSPEL” IN THE SEPTUAGINT

- A. The creation of the Septuagint was a significant development during the intertestamental period. It was the first time that the Hebrew Old Testament – read by very few – was translated into Koine Greek, which was the primary read and spoken language in the 3rd century B.C..
- B. The Septuagint¹ was so successful that by the time of Jesus and the apostles it was the most well read text of the Old Testament Scriptures even in Israel. Most of the New Testament references to the Old Testament are taken from the Septuagint.
- C. The Greek word for ‘gospel’, which is used in the New Testament is ‘euangelion’ (or ‘euangelizo’ for the verb). The book of Mark begins with Jesus preaching the ‘Gospel’ of God.

¹⁴ Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mar 1:14-15 NASB)

¹ The Septuagint – literally ‘seventy’ in Greek – was named since it is believed that it was developed and translated by 70 Jewish scholars living in Alexandria in the 3rd century B.C. It is often referenced as ‘LXX’.

- D. Upon hearing Jesus' words, no one understands this as a new thing that Jesus is saying. This is simply the 'Gospel' that the prophets had proclaimed. Jesus' lack of concern to correct their assumptions seems to validate what they must have assumed.
- E. 'Euongelizo' is primarily a word developed by Isaiah the prophet. The first time the word 'euongelizo' appears in the book of Isaiah is chapter 40.

⁹ You who bring good tidings (LXX 'euongelizo') to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings (LXX 'euongelizo') to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. (Isa 40:9-10 NIV)

- ***¹ Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ³ For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!' (cf. Is. 40)" (Mat 3:1-3 NASB)***
- ***³⁰ The LORD will cause men to hear his majestic voice and will make them see his arm coming down with raging anger and consuming fire, with cloudburst, thunderstorm and hail. ³¹ The voice of the LORD will shatter Assyria; with his scepter he will strike them down. ³² Every stroke the LORD lays on them with his punishing rod will be to the music of tambourines and harps, as he fights them in battle with the blows of his arm. (Isa 30:30-32 NIV)***
- ***⁹ Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; Awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not You who cut Rahab in pieces, Who pierced the dragon? (Isa 51:9 NASB)***
- ***¹ Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD (cf. Is. 30:30, 40:10, 51:9, 52:10) been revealed? (Isa 53:1 NASB)***
- ***⁵ "I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me, And My wrath upheld Me. (Isa 63:5 NASB)***
- ***¹² "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. (Rev 22:12 NASB)***

⁷ How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news (LXX 'euongelizo'), Who announces peace And brings good news (LXX 'euongelizo') of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" ⁸ Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices, They shout joyfully together; For they will see with their own eyes When the LORD restores Zion. ⁹ Break forth, shout joyfully together (cf. Is. 30:32), You waste places of Jerusalem; For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰ The LORD has bared His holy arm In the sight of all the nations, That all the ends of the earth may see The salvation of our God. (Isa 52:7-10 NASB)

²⁸ And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ And on my servants and on my handmaids in those days will I pour out of my Spirit. ³⁰ And I will show wonders in heaven, and upon the earth, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord come. ³² And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved: for in Mount Sion and in Jerusalem shall the saved one be as the Lord has said, and they that have glad tidings (LXX 'euongelizo') preached to them to whom the Lord has called. (Joel 2:28-32 LXX [Brenton])

IV. THE 'KERYGMA' OF THE APOSTLES: THREE COMMON THEMES

- A. The kerygma (*i.e. proclamation*) of the early church, which was handed down from the apostles and Jesus Himself was essentially that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah (*i.e. the Christ*). The Gnostic heresy was an early movement which attempted to pervert the plain understanding of Jewish Christology, and replace it with a spiritualized Christ, spiritualized plan, and spiritualized destiny.

²² Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. (1Jo 2:22 NASB)

- B. The Gospel, being anchored in Jesus' Messianic identity, was preached with 5 separate facets. Three of them were common expectation during Jesus' day, and two more were clarified.²
- C. The first part of the apostolic kerygma was the **resurrection of the dead**. The resurrection of the dead and the restoration of all things was a central part of the gospel message preached by Jesus and the apostles.

¹ Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ... ²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ... ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, (1Cr 15:1, 20, 23 NASB)

¹⁹ "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. (Act 3:19-21 NASB)

¹ Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. (Hbr 6:1-2 NASB)

² Although many within the nation of Israel rejected Jesus' Messianic claims, it was due to an incomplete understanding of the Old Testament revelation of the Messiah, not because there was "new" information. After having their minds opened to the Scriptures, the apostles argued that the suffering of the Messiah was clear in the Scriptures, though it was not understood.

- D. The second part of the apostolic kerygma was that the Messiah was going to establish **the Kingdom of God** on the earth. The proclamation of coming world-wide government was one of the central messages of all Gospel proclamation.

¹⁴ Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mar 1:14-15 NASB)

² And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. ... ⁶ Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. (Luk 9:2, 6 NASB)

- **⁴³ "Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN (cf. Dan. 12:3) in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Mat 13:43 NASB)**

- E. The third part of the apostolic kerygma is the message of the **return of the Messiah**. This day, also called the **day of the Lord**, is the day when He will cleanse the earth from wickedness and crush the wicked rulers of the earth. It is the inauguration of His Kingdom and of the resurrection.

⁴² "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. (Act 10:42 NASB)

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth--to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." (Rev 14:6-7 NIV)

³² "And we preach to you the good news (Gr. 'euangelizo') of the promise made to the fathers, ³³ that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.' (i.e. thus confirming our faith that He will complete the rest of Psalm 2) (Act 13:32-33 NASB)

- **⁷ "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. (i.e. raising Him from the dead first - cf. Acts 13:33) ⁸ 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. ⁹ 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'¹⁰ ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. ¹¹ Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. ¹² Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Psa 2:7-12 NASB)**

V. THE POWERS OF THE AGE TO COME

- A. Within the simple mechanics of how the human heart works we must see the demonstration of the age to come lest we loose heart. Biblically, the power which the Holy Spirit displays is the power of the age to come. It is given as a gift to sustain men in perseverant faith throughout this age.

¹ Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, ² instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³ And God permitting, we will do so. ⁴ It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, ⁶ if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. (Hbr 6:1-6 NIV)

- B. The powers of the age to come strengthen us to believe in the Messianic hope of a restored creation under a righteous everlasting government. The Father gives these signs because He loves the Son and desires that all men would believe on Him.

²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these so that you will marvel...²² For not even the Father judges anyone, but has given all judgment to the Son ²³ so that all will honor the Son... (John 5:20-23 NASB)

- C. This is really the purpose for all miracles – that we would believe that Jesus is the One appointed to raise the dead, establish the Kingdom, and judge the living and the dead. Thus, miracles were always done in His name – Jesus the Messiah – as a means of anchoring the hearts of men in His return and the age to come.

⁶ But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene--walk!" ⁷ And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened... ¹² But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?" ¹³ "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him... ¹⁶ "And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. (Act 3:6-16 NASB)

- D. So all miracles are simply the signs of the age to come which are given that we might believe that He is the Messiah, and place all of our hope in His coming. This is why there was zeal in the early church to do miracles 'in the name of Jesus Christ'. The very miracles that will be done universally on the day of the Lord, are given as a down payment to strengthen us in faith.

¹ The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. ² They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. ... ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ... ¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Act 4:1-2, 8-10, 12 NIV)

²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. ... ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. (Act 4:29-31, 33 NIV)

VI. THE KERYGMA OF THE APOSTLES: TWO ADDITIONAL FACETS

- A. In addition to the common Messianic expectation, there were two additional facets of the Gospel which were clarified by Jesus and preached by the Apostles and the early church. The fourth part – **righteousness through faith in the suffering Messiah** – was largely unknown prior to the resurrection.

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (Jhn 1:29 NASB)

⁶ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me. ... ⁸ "She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial. (Mar 14:6, 8 NASB)

³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed-- ³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul--to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." (Luk 2:34-35 NASB)

- B. Although largely unknown before the resurrection, the revelation of the suffering of the Messiah as the means of entrance into the Kingdom and resurrection was the primary thing that Jesus revealed to the apostles prior to sending them out.

²⁵ And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. (Luk 24:25-27 NASB)

44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ***45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,*** ***46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,*** ***47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*** ***48 "You are witnesses of these things. (Luk 24:44-48 NASB)***

18 "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ***19 "Therefore repent and return... (Act 3:18-19 NASB)***

2 And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ***3 explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."*** (Act 17:2-3 NASB)

22 "So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; ***23 that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."*** (Act 26:22-23 NASB)

- C. The suffering the Messiah is the means by which He is glorified, because it is the cross that demonstrates the Father's heart. He is the God of the cross, and His heart is only known through a suffering Messiah.

28 Father, glorify your name!" ***Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."*** ***... 30 Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ... 32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."*** ***33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. (Jhn 12:28, 30, 32-33 NIV)***

1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. (Jhn 17:1 NIV)

- D. This revelation was what ultimately clarified the last of the five primary facets of the Gospel preached. The fifth part of the kerygma of the apostles was the **faithful witness of the followers of the Messiah** during the gap of time between His first and second coming. Prior to a mature understanding of the suffering of the Messiah, many of the things that He taught them regarding discipleship did not have a foundation upon which they could rest.

22 saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day. (cf. Hos. 6:2)" ***23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me (i.e. to also be raised up), he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*** ***24 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. (Luk 9:22-24 NASB)***

- ²¹ ***From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. ²² Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, " God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." ²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. (Mat 16:21-24 NASB)***

²⁷ ***"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. (Luk 14:27 NASB)***

- E. After the resurrection of Jesus, He spoke to them for 40 days concerning the coming of the Kingdom and how they were supposed to live in light of that coming Kingdom.

³ ***To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. ⁴ Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ... ⁸ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses (Gr. *martys*) both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."* (Act 1:3-5, 8 NASB)**

- ²⁰ ***And when the blood of your martyr (Gr. *martys*) Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' (Act 22:20 NIV)***
- ¹³ ***I know where you live--where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness (Gr. *martys*; 'martyr' KJV, NKJV), who was put to death in your city--where Satan lives. (Rev 2:13 NIV)***
- ⁶ ***And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs (Gr. *martys*) of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly. (Rev 17:6 ESV)***

- F. Upon the conversion of Saul, the Lord sent Ananias to make known to Saul what following Jesus would entail.

¹⁵ ***But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." ... ²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. ²³ When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, (Act 9:15-16, 22-24 ESV)***

- G. The crucified Messiah is the only means of entrance into the Kingdom and the resurrection, and perseverance in our imitation of Him and His cross is the only means of making our election sure. **Just as Jesus was glorified by the cross, so we now glorify Him by loving not our lives even unto death.**

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things (i.e. a life of love and self-sacrifice, cf. vs. 5-8), you will never stumble; ¹¹for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (I Pet. 1:10-11 NASB)

¹⁸ ...when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go. ¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!" (Jhn 21:19 NIV)

²³ Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." ²⁵ The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. (Jhn 12:23-26 NIV)

- H. The cross was not viewed – as it often is today – as the means of escaping suffering and of being great in this age. Rather, **the cross of Christ was the atonement which delivers those who repent and believe from the lake of fire and the second death in the next age, and the perfect example of discipleship to be followed in this age unto a glorious inheritance at the day of the Lord.**

²¹For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, ²¹ WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; ²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously, ²⁴ and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (I Pet. 2:21-24 NASB)

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, ⁴ got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. ⁵ Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. ⁶ So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." ⁸ Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." ... ¹⁵ "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. (Jhn 13:3-8, 15 NASB)

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. (1Pe 4:12-14 NIV)

²⁴ Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. (Col 1:24 NIV)

- I. It is through the cross of the people of the Messiah that the love of God continues to be revealed upon the earth. It is long suffering love and joyful endurance under persecution which bears the most powerful witness of the Gospel on the earth. This will culminate at the end of the age with a powerful witness of the Messiah's patience and love being seen in the church.

³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. (Luk 23:34 NIV)

- ***⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. (Act 7:60 NIV)***

²⁶ "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. ^{16:1} "All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. ² They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. ³ They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. (Jhn 15:26-16:3 NIV)

- ***⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8 NASB)***
- ***¹⁸ and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ "But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. ... ²⁵ "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household! (Mat 10:18-19, 25 NASB)***