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♥ *Explains* that the Gospel is from God ♥

♥ *Establishes* the substance of the Gospel ♥

♥ *Emphasizes* the most important aspects of the Gospel ♥

♥ *Exhorts* that the Gospel must be embraced with the whole heart ♥

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The preaching of the Gospel is the preaching of Christ. The word “*Gospel*” signifies “*good news*.” The Gospel encompasses all that is related to the good news of the person, life, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ in favor of sinful men who are justly condemned under the holy wrath of Almighty God their Creator.

Although the Gospel embraces all that is related to Jesus Christ, its primary focus is the death and resurrection of Christ. These two aspects of Christ’s life and work comprise **THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL**. *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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** and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once”* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The indisputable proof of the death of Christ was His burial (Matthew 12:39-40). The indisputable proof of His resurrection was His bodily appearance to well over 500 witnesses (Acts 1:3). The Book of Romans manifests the two heart aspects of the Gospel: *“...**Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification**”* (Romans 4:25).

The Gospel is muddled and misunderstood by many today. The Gospel has been shamefully diluted and not clearly defined. It has been mixed with many religious dogmas, with human works, with baptism, with man’s self-righteousness, and with other evangelically accepted additions as a sure way for man to be saved from the wrath to come. However, sinful man is only saved by the true Gospel of God without human effort, human works, or human merit. In the Word of God, we see the following very beautiful aspects of the Gospel:

- The Gospel is **eternal** (Revelation 14:6).
- The Gospel is **unique** (Galatians 1:6-9).
- The Gospel is **powerful** (Romans 1:16-17).
- The Gospel is **of grace** (Acts 20:24).
- The Gospel is **truth** (Ephesians 1:13).
- The Gospel is **of God** (Romans 1:1)
- The Gospel is **unto salvation** (Ephesians 1:13).
- The Gospel **brings peace** (Ephesians 6:15).
- The Gospel **brings hope** (Colossians 1:23).

Through the Gospel--the death and resurrection of Christ--the thrice holy God, the Hater of all sin, the Purest of eyes that cannot look upon sin, and the perfectly just Judge that demands death as the only payment of sin, was wholly appeased by the bloody death of His beloved Son on the cross of Calvary. In order to redeem fallen and sinful man, it was absolutely necessary that Christ die. Christ satisfied divine justice through death and enabled God to forgive the sinner of all his offenses without being unjust Himself. God declares the guilty sinner righteous by faith alone in the Gospel of Christ's redemptive work. Therefore, in a very real sense, Christ died for His Father's sake, to satisfy and appease His holy wrath against sin.

At the very same time, Christ died for sinners to redeem them from their iniquities and transgressions. It is of utmost importance that you know the Gospel in truth and that you embrace it as your only hope of eternal life. There is only one saving Gospel. There is only one divine Gospel that you must believe and receive with your whole heart. It is urgent that you study the central and heart truths of the Gospel of the grace of God until they are written on your heart by the Spirit of God, and they have become the conviction and delight of your soul.



JESUS CHRIST THE ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE--The Lord Jesus Christ should be proclaimed as the acceptable sacrifice, because He alone was without sin and blemish. Because God the Father required a perfect sacrifice, it would have to be divine.

That is, God Himself would have to be made a sacrifice to redeem fallen, sinful man. For this reason, God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ and was born in a humble stable in Bethlehem.

The prophet Isaiah declared that Christ did ***“no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth”*** (Isaiah 53:9). The writer of the book of Hebrews states that Christ was ***“in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”*** (Hebrews 4:15). Later, the same writer penned: ***“For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens”*** (Hebrews 7:26). The Apostle Peter proclaimed: ***“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth”*** (1 Peter 2:22). And the Apostle John added: ***“And ye know that He was manifest to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin”*** (1 John 3:5).



JESUS CHRIST THE VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE--The voluntary sacrifice of God in the giving of His Son and the voluntary offering of the body of the Son of God on the cross of Calvary highlight two very important things: *the love of God and His grace*. If the sacrifices of the Father and Son were voluntary, then we must recognize that, in the truest sense, if they had not been willing to make those sacrifices, there would be no salvation whatsoever for sinful men. Without their voluntary sacrifice, we would be destined to the sure damnation of eternal hell fire (Matthew 25:41). The disposition of God to give His Son as a sacrifice clearly demonstrates that God is the God of all grace (1 John 5:10). The disposition of the Son to offer His body on the cruel cross exemplifies that salvation is entirely of divine grace and not according to human decision or merit (John 1:13; 2 Timothy 1:9).

The voluntary sacrifice of the Father and the Son also emphasizes the love of God in all of its purity and perfection. Of His own free will, Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice. Of His own volition, Christ subjected Himself to all of the vilest intentions of wicked men, and at the same time, to all of the holy and judgmental wrath of the Father. *“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep”* (John 10:11). *“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again”* (John 10:17). *“No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again”* (John 10:18). *“As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour”* (Ephesians 5:2). *“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:14).

The most indisputable proof of selfless, true love is the laying down of one's life for another (1 John 3:16). Christ voluntarily laid down His life for His friends on the cross of Calvary (John 15:13). By His sacrifice, He demonstrated the great unconditional and inexplicable love of God for a people that only deserve to be eternally judged in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.



JESUS CHRIST THE SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE--The sacrificial death of Christ was made in the place of a particular people. Christ was the substitute for a definite people. Jesus Christ did not die generally for everyone, but He died particularly for a

people determined by God. The particular and substitutionary sacrifice of Christ is prophetically revealed in the ministry of the high priest of the Old Testament every year when the Day of Atonement was celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar (Leviticus 23:26-32). In the annual celebration of the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies in representation of the people of Israel to symbolically atone for their sins.

The substitutionary nature of the intercessory ministry of the high priest is clearly seen when we understand for whom he was fulfilling his priestly duties (the high priest symbolized the Lord Jesus Christ who would be our eternal Great High Priest and who would make one sacrifice forever by the sacrifice of Himself according to Hebrews 9:24-28). The high priest was commanded by God to wear an ephod. The ephod was a holy garment used exclusively by the high priest in the performing of his tabernacle service. There was an onyx stone on each of the shoulder pieces engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel--six names on one shoulder, and six names on the other (Exodus 28:6-12). Furthermore, connected to the ephod with chains of pure gold was the breastplate which included twelve precious stones. Each individual stone bore the engraving of one of the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Exodus 28:15-21).

These specific names testified that the high priest was fulfilling his priestly duties substitutionally on behalf of those whose names were engraved in the stones on his shoulders and on the breastplate close to his heart. The mediatorial work of the high priest was not general in nature, but rather particular, namely on behalf of the people of Israel. His labors were performed on behalf of a particular people who were identified by God Himself. The high priest was never free to make the holy sacrifice for whomever he desired, but only for those whom God determined would be the beneficiaries. The all-wise God decided who the high priest would substitutionally represent. God determined for whom the expiatory* sacrifice would be offered every year on the Day of Atonement. The beneficiaries of the substitutionary death and the application of the shed blood were entirely established by God.

In the very same way, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Great High Priest performed His mediatorial and redemptive work on the cross of Calvary. His faithful, substitutionary work was in favor of a particular people determined

**Expiation is atonement for a crime; the act of making satisfaction for an offence by which the guilt is done away and the obligation of the offended person to punish the crime is cancelled.*

beforehand by God the Father. Jesus Christ did not come to do His own will, but the will of His Father. Jesus Christ did not die capriciously for those of His own choosing, but rather He died for the ones whom the Father had chosen to be the beneficiaries of His redemptive work. God the Father established the ones for whom Christ would die and for whose sins He would atone by the shedding of His blood.

Moreover, the substitutionary nature of the sacrifice offered by the high priest every year on the Day of Atonement displayed clearly its particular nature. The Israelites presented two male goats on the Day of Atonement. One male goat would have to die substitutionally to declare prophetically the expiatory aspect of the death of Christ. The other goat, also called the scapegoat, represented the second aspect of the redemptive work of Christ, which is the removal of sin forever from the presence of God. According to Leviticus 16:16-34, both the expiatory sacrifice of the first male goat and the liberation of the scapegoat in the desert were substitutionary. They were offered for ***“the uncleanness of the children of Israel”*** (16:16,19), for ***“all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins”*** (16:21), ***“for himself and for the people”*** (16:24), ***“for you....and all your sins before the Lord”*** (16:30), ***“for all the people of the congregation”*** (16:33), and ***“for the children of Israel”*** (16:34).

The sacrificed male goat and the liberated scapegoat on the Day of Atonement were not offered for the whole world of the gentiles; rather, they were offered particularly for the people of Israel. On the Day of Atonement, the sacrifice was put to death for a particular people, for particular sins, for particular transgressions, for particular iniquities, and for particular uncleanness.

In the same fashion, the death of Christ and His redemptive sacrifice on the cross were not made for everyone but rather for a particular and definite people. Christ died substitutionally for all who would truly believe in Him (John 3:16). Christ died substitutionally for all who would come to Him (John 6:37-39). Christ died substitutionally for all of His sheep (John 10:11,14-15). Christ died substitutionally for His people (Matthew 1:21; Isaiah 53:6,8,11-12). Christ died substitutionally for His brethren (Hebrews 2:9-12,17). Christ died substitutionally for all those that the Father gave to Him in the covenant of grace from eternity past (Hebrews 2:13-17; John 10:27-29, 17:2). Once for all by the sacrifice of Himself, Christ paid for and put away all the sins of all His people in all the world throughout all time (Hebrews 10:10-14, 9:11-12,28, 7:23-28).



JESUS CHRIST THE SIN-BEARING SACRIFICE--The satisfaction of the infinite holiness and righteousness of God required that all the sins of God's chosen people be atoned for and punished. Therefore, it was necessary that Christ take upon Himself their sins in His body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24). There on the cross of Calvary, God the Father laid upon Christ all the sins of all the people for whom He died (Isaiah 53:6,8). Every sin had to be addressed. Every sin had to be atoned for. Every sin had to be punished. Every sin had to be judged. God could not overlook even one sin of His people whom He would save.

Therefore on that old rugged wooden cross, God imputed to His Son all the sins of His people, from those of Adam, the first redeemed sinner in the Garden of Eden, unto those of the last sinner who will be saved before the end of the world. All the sins of all His people were laid upon Christ: all their wicked thoughts, all their idolatrous and abominable, false worship, all their heinous and blasphemous words, all their self-glorifying and diabolical motives, all their sinister plans, and all their rebellious and depraved acts. The Bible declares that Christ was made sin for His people (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:3). The Lord Jesus Christ, without any personal sin or guilt, took upon Himself our griefs. He bore our sins and sorrows. He was wounded and bruised; yea, He was chastised for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:4-5). Christ was the sin-bearer of all the sins of all His people on the cross of Calvary.



JESUS CHRIST THE PENAL SACRIFICE--Having borne all the sin of His people, it was absolutely necessary that divine judgment be meted out, fall upon, and crush Christ on the cross. The redemption of sinners demanded that the wages of sin be fully paid before sinful man could be redeemed.

What are the wages of sin? The only Biblical answer is death (Galatians 3:10; Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4,20; Deuteronomy 27:26). Every sin, whether it be flagrant or insignificant before the eyes of man, must be atoned and punished with death. ***"The wages of sin is death"*** (Romans 6:23). ***"The soul that sinneth, it shall die"*** (Ezekiel 18:4). This is the very reason that it was necessary that Christ suffer and die (Luke 24:46). The redemption of God's people required that Christ die in their place. Christ had to make a payment to ransom His people. Christ had to satisfy the

required penal punishment that was demanded by the perfect justice of His Father (Galatians 4:4-5). God the Father sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to vindicate His righteousness and holiness through His death on the cross of Calvary (Romans 3:24-26).

God the Father made Jesus Christ a propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:25; 1 John 4:10). As a propitiation, Christ was a sacrifice provided and punished by God. Christ's death placated divine justice and the holy wrath of God against sinners. Thanks be unto God that Christ was our penal sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. The Father poured out upon His Son all of His anger, fury, judgment, and holy wrath because of our sins. Christ paid what we justly should have paid.

Christ was made a curse for His people. The holy Father cursed His only Son on the cross to the end that the eternal curse would not come upon true believers in Christ in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (Galatians 3:13). The incredible weight of sin was placed upon Christ, obligating the Father to righteously judge His Son due to our heinous and abominable sins. The anguish and distress of Christ was so great that He verbally cried out from the cross, ***“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”*** (Mark 15:34). Christ was made a penal sacrifice to satisfy the perfect righteousness of God, and at the same time, atone for all the sins of His people. The Apostle Paul explained the penal sacrifice of Christ with these words: ***“...that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”*** (Romans 3:26).



JESUS CHRIST THE EFFECTUAL SACRIFICE--The sacrifice of Christ was effectual. In other words, Christ achieved all of the divine goals set for Him in His redemptive work. Christ did not fail in any point or at any moment. The vocabulary of the New Testament declares that our salvation is a finished work accomplished in time past, that is, on the cross of Calvary. We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:14-16). Christ made our peace through His shed blood on the cross (Colossians 1:20). Christ delivered us from the fear and bondage of death by His death on the cross (Hebrews 2:14-15). Christ delivered us from this present evil world by giving Himself for our sins (Galatians 1:4). Our sins were put away once for all by His sacrifice (Hebrews 9:26,28). We were bought with the price of His shed blood on Calvary's cross (1 Corinthians 6:20).

The efficacy of the death of Christ is seen in the very words of the Redeemer: *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day”* (John 6:37-39). *“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand”* (John 10:28-29). *“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled”* (John 17:12).

The efficacy of the death of Christ is that He perfectly fulfilled all that the Father required of Him (John 17:4). He accomplished all that the Father desired of Him, and consequently, He will enjoy all of the benefits obtained through His death (Isaiah 53:11-12). Everyone for whom Christ died and whose sins were effectually atoned for on Calvary’s cross will ultimately be quickened by the Holy Spirit and converted through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.



JESUS CHRIST THE APPROVED SACRIFICE--Was the sacrifice of Christ accepted by God the Father? Was God satisfied with the bloody and seemingly impotent death of His Son at the hands of cruel and wicked men? Were all the conditions and demands of God’s eternally perfect character fully met by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross? The unequivocal and emphatic answer is an affirmative *“YES,”* without a shadow of a doubt.

How can we be so completely sure and confident that God was wholly gratified with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ? How can we be so dogmatic that Christ was fully accepted as the penal substitute of His people? Is it not true that many people doubted regarding the person of Christ, His mission, and His plan of redemption? On the third day after His death, being the first day of the week (Sunday), God the Father gave the clearest, plainest, and most public approbation of His total acceptance of what Christ did on the cross of Calvary. God approved Christ’s sacrifice by resurrecting Him from among the dead so that He would never die again. Just as fire descended from heaven upon the divinely accepted and approved sacrifices

of Old Testament saints, God's resurrection of His Son was the permanent testimony that Christ's redemptive work was entirely pleasing to and accepted by Him. Christ's redeeming sacrifice was totally approved by His Father by the undeniably empty tomb where He had been buried on the day of His death.

The New Testament saints clearly understood the glorious reality of God's approbation of the death of His Son. Christ's suffering and death were completely accepted by the Father through the resurrection. All that are in Christ by faith will be equally accepted, approved, and granted full, eternal privileges in the presence of God (Acts 2:22-36, 3:13-15; 1 Peter 2:21; Romans 6:4,9).

Christ was declared to be the approved sacrifice, not only by His resurrection from the dead, but also by His ascension to glory to sit down at the right hand of God the Father (Isaiah 52:13). God the Father was totally satisfied with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Truly, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one can come to the Father, but by Him (John 14:6).

Jesus Christ is the only pleasing and divinely provided sacrifice by God for the salvation of sinners. If you do not come to God by way of Christ and His Gospel, you will never enter into His presence. If you place your trust and confidence in anything other than the consummated redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be lost and condemned forever. As God's humble servant, I beseech you in Jesus' name to repent of your sin and come to Christ by trusting in His death and resurrection. God's acceptance of you does not depend upon your good works, but rather upon Christ's perfect work. The salvation of sinners is through Christ's redemptive work, not through the sinner's religious works. God will save eternally and securely all that come to Christ in repentance and faith.

--written by Elder Bert Craft, Baptist Missionary in Oaxaca, Mexico

The Gospel is NOT:

- Inviting Christ into your heart.
- God helping them that help themselves.
- Asking Christ to be your personal Saviour.
- Giving your heart to Christ.
- Making a personal decision for Christ.
- Repeating the sinner's prayer.
- Beseeching God to forgive your sins.
- Offering to God your life or anything else.
- Walking a church aisle after an evangelistic message.
- Raising your hand in response to a preacher's invitation.
- Submitting to water baptism to wash away your sins.
- Speaking in tongues as proof of being filled with the Spirit.
- Receiving the healing of the physical body.
- Calling upon the name of the Lord.
- Being baptized in the Holy Spirit.
- Keeping the ten commandments.
- Sanctifying the sabbath day.
- Uniting with an evangelical church or organization.
- Reading and studying the Word of God.

If you are trusting in any one of these things to be right with God or to go to heaven, your confidence is misdirected. Do not be deceived! You need to be saved, believing the true Gospel of God.