

## 21. The Eternal Gospel

Sometimes when we read the book of *The Revelation* – perhaps because so much information regarding such huge pictures comes at us so quickly and in very few words – we can easily miss some detail or fail to grasp the profound significance of some sparsely described event. In this chapter, we intend to examine one such passage:

“Then I saw another angel flying in mid-air, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth – to every nation, tribe, language and people.” (Rev. 14:6)

### The Messenger

In the face of the decades-old worldwide effort of the “church” to “evangelize” the world through “church” planting, radio, television and the internet, why would it be necessary for *an angel* to proclaim the eternal gospel of Christ? Surely the work of all those “pastors,” “apostles” and “evangelists,” not to mention all the traveling hucksters and talking heads will have done that work already! No, the work of proclaiming the eternal gospel has either (as we will see shortly) been botched by these “evangelists” or the work of men (as must always be true) has come up short in some way in comparison to something of God’s standards.

There are some who put forth the idea that God is simply and only taking away every possible excuse from the men who refuse to repent and obediently turn to Him – that not even some isolated group on some remote island could claim to have never heard the eternal gospel of Christ. While it is always dangerous to insist absolutely on linear connections and temporal continuity in the Revelation – many indeed do so at great risk of deceiving themselves – and while there is some measure of validity in this idea, we should notice that this angel comes *after* the mark of the beast has been mandated worldwide upon *all*. (Rev. 13:16) There is not much likelihood that any people will have been missed by the demonically-driven worldwide government that is mandating this mark – that is, there is simply not likely to be any isolated, uninformed, unreached, untouched group of people.

It would also seem that the work of the second beast (the one that rises from the earth – Rev. 13:11) occurs either just before or concurrently with the Lamb’s appearance “on Mount Zion” with the faithful 144,000. (Rev. 14:1) It is after this that the angel we have been discussing flies around the whole world proclaiming the eternal gospel. (Rev. 14:6) It is a *third* angel (of which we have been discussing the first angel in a series of three that are sent out at that particular time) who warns of the dire consequences of taking the mark and worshiping the beast. (Rev. 14:9-10) If everyone on the earth had already taken that mark – particularly those who would otherwise respond in faith and obedience to the angels’ proclamation – there would be no point to either of these proclamations except to solidify and confirm God’s judgment against men. While this is sure to be true of many, even most, who will hear these angels’ proclamations (after several more of God’s dreadful, final judgments, we are told that men still will not repent and turn to God – Rev. 16:9, 11, etc.), it is also uncharacteristic of the God of mercy and grace who always reserves for Himself a remnant (Ezek. 6:8, Rom. 11:4, etc.) to have this angel proclaim the eternal gospel *only* to bring judgment upon *all* who hear his proclamation. Knowing the character of God, it is therefore most likely that men are only beginning or are at least still in the process of implementing the mark when these angels

proclaim their messages – and it is equally likely that at least *some* (even if just a tiny minority) will respond in faith after hearing the eternal gospel proclaimed by this first angel.

Though some of the prophecy prognosticators – those who make their own guesses and intellectual deductions about the meanings and interpretations of prophetic predictions and seek to become wealthy or famous thereby – see the only possible interpretation of “the Lamb standing on Mount Zion” as Christ having returned (even though He doesn’t do so until much later – Rev. 19:11) and being physically present in earthly Jerusalem. But this is not necessarily so.

The writer of Hebrews tells us, “You [those who have heard and been presented with the gospel of Christ] *have come* [past tense] to *Mount Zion*, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God.” (Heb. 12:22) If the readers of the book of Hebrews – who were by no means dead or “raptured” – had “come to Mount Zion” while they lived upon the earth (a metaphorical usage of the name), then why cannot Jesus – who can be wherever He pleases at any time (Jn. 20:21, 26, etc.) – also “come to Mount Zion” in some spiritual or metaphorical sense? That is, why cannot “the Lamb standing on Mount Zion” refer to Christ’s return to the actual Headship over His people, His body, His ekklesia? The “church,” which cannot even admit to having dismissed Christ as its Head, would certainly not be able to come to such an interpretation but that does not keep it from being true. In the face of the end of the age being characterized by apostasy and lawlessness (Mt. 24:10-12), it is a profound thought worthy of some contemplation that those who must endure to the end (Mt. 24:13), Christ’s “remnant,” will somehow also have to conform to the description given of “the 144,000.”

If we look at the description of the 144,000 who stand with Him “on Mount Zion,” we find they are pure, obedient, honest and holy. (Rev. 14:4-5) Is this not what the people of Christ were always supposed to be? (see Phlp. 2:15, Tit. 2:12, etc.) The writer of Hebrews describes God’s new covenant that is mediated by Christ as God writing His laws *on the hearts* of Christ’s followers so that they can be His people and He can be their God. (Heb. 8:10, also see 12:24) The Lamb and the 144,000 (a number of completion – twelve twelves – and not likely to be a literal number) standing “on Mount Zion” could refer to the return of the genuine people of Christ into the reality and purity of the new covenant as it was originally intended by God.

These people would be those who have rejected the apostate “church” in which those who do not love the truth perish because they have allowed Satan, through their own lawlessness (men doing what “is right in their own eyes” because Christ is not really their king – see Jdgs. 21:25), to take the headship of their assembly. (see 2 Ths. 2:4, 12) Indeed, the 144,000, who are described as “those who did not defile themselves with women” (see Rev. 14:4 – the only “women,” plural, in the book of Revelation are the prostitute daughters of Mystery Babylon - Rev. 17:5) may very well be those who have never submitted themselves to a “church.” In the face of the apostasy where Satan sits as lord over deceived assemblies characterized by strife, greed, confusion, selfishness and hatred, Christ leads and maintains His “remnant” who are pure, obedient, honest and holy.

It is against this backdrop of worldwide governmental economic and political and religious control that the Lamb and the 144,000 take their stand “on Mount Zion.” It is against this same backdrop that the angel comes as a messenger to the whole world carrying the eternal gospel. And just to show how limited our understanding of the Revelation has been – this “angel” may in our temporal reality simply be the corporate “spirit” of the 144,000 in the same way the seven ekklesias of chapters 2 and 3 have a corporate “spirit” (“angel” – Rev. 2:1, etc.)

that is responsible for repenting of their corporate sins and that presents itself routinely before God.

### **The Message: Fear God**

As we reflect upon all the various renditions of “the gospel” that have been presented at “church” and on the radio, television and internet (which run the gamut from realistic historical presentation to well-reasoned research to impassioned pleading to downright bizarre and unbelievable extravaganzas and stunts), let us move on to consider what the angel proclaims because what he says at that time *is* the eternal gospel of Christ! The angel cries in a loud voice:

“Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who created the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” (Rev. 14:7)

*Fear God?* There are some today who preach and practice a “gospel” of “grace” and “peace” with the “God of love” and these people would be religiously and mortally offended to hear this message preached! In their “doctrines” (teachings) and “theology” there is no place for the fear of God – a condition and attitude which Paul lists as the epitome or culminating proof of being under the power of sin. (Rom. 3:18) These boastfully proclaim, “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with *punishment*. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” (1 Jn. 4:18) And that is their final stand on the matter.

So, how do we reconcile this seeming contradiction – the eternal gospel *commanding* us to fear God and John instructing us about perfect love? The answer is “Both,” and the explanation is found in recognizing the dual source from which a believer in Christ can draw his life: the Spirit and the flesh. If we draw our life from the Spirit of God, we will love one another because “God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.” (1 Jn. 4:16) John then goes on to give the above instruction regarding perfect love casting out all fear of judgment and then says, “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And [God] has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” (1 Jn. 4:20-21) Many of the teachers of “grace” and “love” and “peace” don’t really love God or their brother. Instead, they have refashioned their notion of “God” into something that tolerates their sinful, fleshly, particularly religiously so, condition – and then they extend that fleshly tolerance onto any other human being (so long as they don’t have to get too close to them) and call that “love.” In truth, it is just another religious “Christian” travesty.

The one who relies upon the flesh as the source for his life (or some portion of it) – and there is no one who does not sin at one time or another (1 Jn. 1:8) – has great reason to expect punishment. If he is to remain a legitimate son of God, he can expect to receive corrective discipline or punishment from God to turn him back to the way of holiness. (Heb. 12:10) Jesus still *promises*, “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.” (Rev. 3:19) The one who persists in his sin to such a stage that he “tramples the Son of God underfoot, treats as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that set him apart and made him holy, and insults the Spirit of grace” has “no sacrifice for sin remaining but instead has only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God,” a category to which such a persistent rebel has returned himself. (Heb. 10:26-29) Christ Jesus “became the source of eternal salvation for all who *obey* Him” – not *disobey* Him! (Heb. 5:9, also see 2 Cor. 5:15) Those who live their life

in disobedience, whether wickedness (outright evil and wrongful ways) or lawlessness (whatever is right and good in a man's own eyes with no regard for what God says on the matter), have great reason to expect punishment! It is still true that "the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." (1 Pet. 3:12)

Trying to explain to someone exactly what it means to fear God is no easy task in part because it is not exclusively an intellectual concept but is also a spiritual and an emotional concept. Defining the fear of God is much like holding a handful of sand – just when you think the sand is securely in your hand, you find it is escaping from some crack on the other side of your hand. To fear God is to respect Him but the fear of God is more than mere respect. To fear God is to be in awe of Him but awe alone can inspire a fear that paralyzes. To fear God is to reverence Him but reverence apart from genuine love and emotional adoration for God can be an onerous, even hateful duty. In short, exactly what the fear of God is and how wondrous it is can only be taught to the human spirit by the Holy Spirit of God. And this "transaction" is not an intellectual one but rather a turning of the whole being (mind, will and emotions) toward God in humble adoration that includes reverence, awe and respect. Such a response is most natural for those who have had some genuine encounter with the reality of God. Those who have never truly encountered and experienced God may teach and preach their diluted notions about the fear of God but these will only be speaking things they have learned from some man and will probably never be able to recognize the impoverished condition of their own soul.

### **Glorify God**

The angel adds a second instruction to the first:

"Give glory to God." (Rev. 14:7)

God, by His own nature and existence, is glorious beyond our ability to fathom or comprehend. Why then does the eternal gospel of Christ command us to give glory to God?

The idea behind the phrase "give glory" or "glorify" is that of "enhancing the reputation of" or "raising one's esteem or opinion of." Since God is infinite and vastly transcendent over men, to glorify God is for us to raise our estimation or to cause others to raise their estimation of who and what God is, raising our or their appreciation of God's worth and value upward toward the infinite and transcendent attributes of our most worthy God. To glorify God is not to proclaim absurdities or to assign to Him qualities that are not really His – rather, to glorify God is to come ourselves or bring others to a more accurate appraisal of His wondrous nature.

Jesus still says to His followers, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Mt. 5:16) Because the end of the age is characterized by lawlessness (men doing whatever is right in their own eyes) and the love (the self-sacrificial, giving, caring and nurturing attitudes and acts) has died down and gone cold (Mt. 24:12), divinely initiated good deeds will stand out in stark contrast to the darkened, selfish and self-centered world that most often seeks only to buy and sell and gain their daily bread or their cherished luxuries and toys. (Rev. 13:17, Lk. 17:28, etc.) The true follower of Christ is to do many good works, not as his reason for living nor as the basis of his salvation, but because these good works enhance God's reputation among men. Jesus said, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." (Jn. 15:8) That only a small percentage of those who claim to follow Christ actually do good works that raises other's estimation of God's worth and value is an indication of the extent of the apostasy that prevails at this time.

Rather, because most who claim to follow Christ are as divided and divisive as the world, perhaps even more so, and so many “Christians” find ways, often “theological,” to avoid obedience and especially suffering, the way of truth is instead blasphemed. (2 Pet. 2:2)

There is perhaps no greater paradox within the gospel of Christ than the fact that how we respond to suffering is what most displays and constitutes and communicates our estimation of God’s worth and value. Peter wrote, “If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their [those who reproach you] part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ...if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.” (1 Pet. 4:14, 16) Suffering according to the will of God (1 Pet. 3:17, 4:19) is not a popular topic for preaching at “church” but it is a real part of the real gospel. “Christians” have huddled for so long in their ivory towers and done so little to change their world that for the most part the world simply ignores them because they pose no spiritual threat to the evil that is in the world. But wherever saints begin to surrender fully to Christ and God, the enmity of the world and the demonic and devilish rulers of this world is not far behind.

When the angel proclaims that men should give glory to God, most will continue on in their wicked ways. There are global climate changes to correct (or at least use to control what men perceive as the stupid masses of humanity) or utility bills to pay or movies to watch and, if any religion is to be practiced and pursued, lawlessness or even the worship of demons and the practice of sorcery (see Rev. 9:20-21) provides more power for day to day existence than does following this God who is glorified when men suffer well. Even though the hour of God’s judgment is upon men (Rev. 14:7), men still choose to turn away from the true Most High God and follow after gods of destruction and vice that allows the man to believe he is pursuing his own way in life. The fall and depravity of man is tragic indeed.

### **Worship the Creator**

The angel adds a third instruction:

“Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”  
(Rev. 14:7)

We must not suppose that this refers only to God the Father because Christ was present and participating in the creation as well. (Jn. 1:3, Col. 1:16, etc.) To worship is to bend the knee, to bow before and recognize the superiority of the one bowed to. It is not just a kind of religious music to sing at religious meetings – in fact, if the life is not lived worshipfully, that is, in subjection to the Kingship of Christ and God, songs sung to God are mere hypocrisy and yet another abomination to Him that will only add to the judgment God will render to that individual. (Mt. 12:36-37)

Worship, for the true follower of Christ and God, is to be restricted to God alone and stern warnings are given against worshiping, that is, bowing the heart or knee and living in obedience to, any one or any thing other than God.

- “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, wealth, riches].” (Mt. 6:24)

- “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry... You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?” (1 Cor. 10:14, 21-22)

- “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” (Rev. 14:9-11)

- “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [of Christ’s return and final installation of His kingdom] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing that he is God... And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Ths. 2:3-4, 11-12)

Fear God. Glorify Him. Worship Him only. This *is* the eternal gospel of Christ which the first angel takes around the world. (Rev. 14:6)

### **Babylon Is Fallen**

A second angel follows the first and proclaims:

“Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.” (Rev. 14:8)

Again we are presented with a huge picture in very few words and we are confronted with multiple layers within this prophecy. There are those who would say this is only a prophetic warning of the dire calamity that will later come upon the city that is called “Babylon.” Though various prophecy prognosticators, those who earn their living or their preeminence by arguing or promoting this or that prophetic interpretation, insist that Babylon is only Rome or just the Roman Catholic “church” (or any of the various other theories about “Babylon’s” identity as put forth by these prognosticators), few take into account the vast scope of this “woman” named “Babylon” (see Rev. 17:5)

- “She” (this picture of her as a woman is figurative and not literal) has made *all* nations drink of her wine. (Rev. 18:3) There were nations long before Rome became a world empire and long before the Pope in Rome assumed his role of dominance and world-leadership.

- “In her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of *all* who were slain on the earth.” (Rev. 18:24) Whoever and whatever this “woman” named “Babylon” is, “she” was around and had a part in every murder, including Cain’s murder of Abel (see Gen. 4:8), that has ever occurred – long before there ever was a Rome or Roman Catholic “church.”

These facts about “Babylon” do not change the fact that Rome and the Roman Catholic “church” are facets or expressions of Mystery Babylon, but rather point out that Mystery Babylon is something that transcends these historical entities. Consider the following seeming contradictions:

- Babylon is a physical city that burns in one hour as is witnessed by ordinary men all around “her.” (Rev. 18:9-10)
- Babylon is “that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.” (Rev. 17:18) The prognosticators could argue endlessly as to whether this is a literal reference to Rome (or some other city or nation) or a figurative reference to a spiritual entity who dominates this world’s rulers, both human and angelic. Who knows, maybe *both* sides of this argument are right!
- Babylon is a *place* or *thing* which the people of God are commanded to “come out of...lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” (Rev. 18:4)
- As we have already touched on, Babylon shares in the guilt from *every* murder. (Rev. 18:24)
- *All* the nations were deceived by her “magic arts” or “sorceries.” (Rev. 18:23)

From these descriptions, we can see that “Babylon” is not just limited to one historical expression – that is, no one single historical expression encompasses all that “Babylon” is – yet each historical expression is, in varying degrees, a representation and manifestation of Mystery Babylon. “She” is everything from the spirit of false religion (the motive behind Cain’s murder of Abel – see Gen. 4:5) to the practice of abominations (“church” rituals that replace the true way of following Christ and God - Col. 2:8, etc.) to the proliferation of spiritual “prostitutes” (denominations, groups that practice religion for profit whether that profit be financial gain or emotional enablement – see Rev. 17:5). In our time, the spirit of false religion is the driving force behind most of what men call “church.”

Though the ultimate fulfillment of the prophetic warnings culminates in the destruction of the physical city (whether that be Rome or some other place), we can still, because of the vastness and intricacy of “Babylon” in all our lives, draw some conclusions. When these angels make their proclamations, Christ has resumed His stand “on Mount Zion” in the face of worldwide political, economic and religious control. As a result, gone are the ways in which Christ’s remnant previously fell victim to the deceptions of false religion. The remnant, who have kept themselves pure, know only to follow Christ where He leads. (Rev. 14:4) They know

nothing of by-laws and denominational loyalties – they know Christ. They have no need for men to teach them (1 Jn. 2:27) – they know the Lord’s voice for themselves (Jn. 10:27) and God’s laws are written in and obeyed from their own hearts. (Heb. 8:10-11)

Make no mistake – being one of Christ’s remnant will be costly in the days when these angels make their proclamations. Immediately after the eternal gospel is proclaimed, the downfall of Babylon is pronounced and the warnings against taking the mark and worshiping the beast are given, a voice from heaven says to John,

“Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’” (Rev. 14:13)

### **Getting Personal**

The purpose of this writing is not to put forth yet another prognostication or interpretation of prophecy. The purpose is to stir us toward a greater overcoming of the wicked influences that are exerted upon us that keep us from being obedient to Christ and God. Thus we can look at this from a very personal perspective.

We must re-examine our faith. Is it consistent with the eternal gospel of Christ that commands us to fear God, glorify Him and worship Him only? Or are we caught up in some religious counterfeit that diverts us away from the one and only true gospel?

It is only when we are actively obeying the eternal gospel of Christ that we will see the counterfeit “Christian” religion begin to drop away from our lives. No longer will we be driven by those subtle mis-beliefs taught to us by men, themselves unwittingly and in varying degrees under demonic influence. Rather we will live by the words that proceed from the mouth of God. (Mt. 4:4, etc.) Fallen indeed will be the influence and effects of Babylon from our lives.

Then will come the change from bowing down and giving in to the economic pressures and standards of this world. Finally recognized will be the differences between the legitimate needs of life in this body and the excessive luxuries the world deceives us into thinking of as necessities. Technological gadgets (cars, computers, phones, etc.) will be utilized as tools to build and further *God’s* kingdom among men and no longer be collected as toys and trophies that display our wealth, “wisdom” and “good taste.” We will no longer bow the knee and obey this world’s standards of living.

All these things will bring us into conflict with those who persist in selfish and wicked living. They will demand their own right to be vile even as they seek to deny us our right to be righteous and good by the power of Christ and God. And those “church”-ites who mistakenly claim to follow Christ are the most likely to be our worst persecutors! (Mt. 24:10, Lk. 21:16, etc.)

The eternal gospel of Christ is not some doctrinal nicety which we can pick apart and choose which parts (if any) that we like. It is a declaration from God which requires obedience on our part if we would enter into the benefits offered therein. The eternal gospel of Christ is the opportunity for men to escape from this evil and wicked age. (Gal. 1:4, Tit. 2:12, etc.) Those whose lives are still characterized by sinful, selfish or even devilish wickedness should not consider themselves participants in Christ’s eternal life – no matter how many times they go to “church” each week, nor how many New Testament verses they can quote, nor even what title (“pastor,” “apostle,” “prophet,” whatever) they attach to their name. Lawlessness (doing what is



right in one's own eyes) is still contradictory to God's righteousness (2 Cor. 6:14) and is still grounds for dismissal by Christ on the last day. (Mt. 7:23)

### **Only One Gospel**

There are some "theologians," doctrinal hair splitters, who take the phrase "the eternal gospel" (Rev. 14:6) and separate it from other phrases like "the gospel of salvation" (Eph. 1:13) or "Paul's gospel" (Rom. 2:16) and concoct any number of "gospels" supposedly taught in the New Testament. The danger in this is that while there may be certain aspects of the multi-faceted but one single gospel emphasized by each of these phrases – aspects that can be legitimately and separately weighed and considered in our thinking within our hearts and minds at various times. But when we actually begin to practically or spiritually separate these aspects into two or more "gospels," these actually work against and take us far from the oneness that is God and the gospel. (Eph. 4:4-6)

The institutional "church" has long since practiced – whether by "theological" intent or simple spiritual negligence – what can only be called a "two step gospel." We will examine this in more detail in the next chapter but we need to examine it in the light of Christ's eternal gospel. The first step of the "church's" false two-step "gospel" is to follow a "gospel of salvation" in which anyone who says "a sinner's prayer" becomes "saved." The "convert" may continue to live as he or she pleases and may attend the "church" of his or her preference as much (or little) as one pleases and do as much (or little) *for* God (who is, after all, quite incapable of doing anything without our help!) as one pleases. This first step of this "gospel of salvation" denies Christ His legitimate place as King and Lord and Head over His people in all things (Eph. 1:22) and virtually guarantees that none of these participants in this "gospel of salvation" will ever make it into the kingdom of God where His will is sought with diligence and perseverance. (Mt. 6:10, 7:21, etc.) This "two step gospel" is popular at "churches" that refute and ridicule our responsibility to live in obedience to God, but it is not God's way to eternal life.

When Jesus first began to preach, He said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt. 4:17) We should note also that John the Baptist preached the same message (Mt. 3:2) and when Paul encountered converts in Ephesus who, after hearing Apollos, who "knew only the baptism of John" (Acts 18:25), had been baptized "Into John's baptism" (Acts 19:3), Paul simply, as Aquila and Prisca had done for Apollos (Acts 18:26), explained to them the way of God more accurately - he did not change the teachings of either John or Jesus. Paul said to these Ephesian converts, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." Paul then baptized them in the name of the Lord and laid hands upon them and the Holy Spirit came upon them. (Acts 19:4-6) Repentance has always been at the core of all preaching of the gospel. (see Acts 2:38, 3:19, etc.)

The idea behind the word "repent" is substantially the same as the angel's proclamation of the eternal gospel, commanding all who hear to "Fear God and glorify Him and worship Him." (Rev. 14:7) Repentance is more than a change of mind, it is an about face, a change of direction in life, a change of purpose, "no longer living for themselves, but living for Him who died for them and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:15) It is a full 180 degree turn away from self and toward God. Repentance is a denial of self in all its devious manifestations and a following after God unto true holiness and righteousness.

When John the Baptist preached the same message of repentance, he said, "Bear fruits worthy of repentance." Another interpreter translates him as saying in effect, "Go and do

something to show that your hearts are really changed.” (Mt. 3:8, NKJV and Phillips’ translation) In our season of apostate churchianity, there is no shortage of people claiming to be “saved” but few are those whose lives are characterized by fruits that are worthy of repentance. Few indeed practice or even teach the fear of God, glorifying Him or worshiping the Creator. This lack of worthwhile fruit calls into question whether these are truly entering into God’s eternal and holy life which He gives through Christ Jesus.

It does absolutely no good for anyone to have a “faith” that does not move that person toward obedience to God. If we don’t repent – change from what we used to be and do in order to become what Christ made us to be and do – what kind of belief do we actually have? James says that such “faith” does not save but is, in reality, dead. Even the demons believe there is one God and they tremble – but they certainly will never be saved! Faith must work through the good deeds God prepared for us beforehand that we should practice them if it is to be perfected or brought to completion, the salvation of our souls. (see Jas. 2:14-24, Eph. 2:10, Heb. 10:39)

The gospel – the eternal gospel that calls us to repent and live fearful, godly and holy lives – is the only hope men have to attain to eternal life. God still *commands* all men everywhere to repent and live their lives subject to His Kingship. (Acts 17:30, Heb. 5:9) Anything else is mere “church,” mere deception, a mere strategy of the devil to lure us away from the precious inheritance we have in Christ. Let no one deceive you with empty words. (Eph. 5:6, Col. 2: 8, Mt. 24:4)

Let he who has ears hear.

Chapter 20: The Message of the Kingdom

<http://paidionbooks.org/girrard/tgotk/20motk.pdf>

Chapter 22: The Two Step Gospel

<http://paidionbooks.org/girrard/tgotk/22ttsg.pdf>