



"People do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself. They reject it because it contradicts them."

—Anonymous

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## **The True Gospel (Part 1)**

The evangelist Mark begins his recounting of Jesus' ministry with these words: "Now after John was put in prison, [Jesus](#) came to Galilee, preaching [the gospel](#) of the [kingdom of God](#), and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of [God](#) is at hand. [Repent](#), and believe in the gospel'" ([Mark 1:14-15](#)). Gospel in English derives from *godspel*, meaning "good news." Similarly, in the Greek in which Mark wrote, *evangelion* means "good tidings."

The apostle Paul opens his epistle to the Galatian Christians with stern criticism: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ" ([Galatians 1:6-7](#)). Written in the early <sup>AD</sup> 50s, this book describes a situation occurring in the church not even twenty years after Christ's death! In less than two decades, Jesus' message had been perverted to something that, to Paul, no longer announced "good tidings."

The specifics of this Galatian perversion are not important in this context, but the principle that we can derive from it is: Any alteration, any shift of focus, from Jesus' original announcement changes the message from one of

good to bad news. A change in the gospel changes its goal, which means believers will arrive some place other than the Kingdom of God! How vital it is that we follow the true gospel of God!

The church of God has the same source of Christ's gospel as the rest of the "Christian" world, the Holy Bible. Why, then, is the gospel we preach so different from the Protestant and Catholic gospels? There could be many answers to this question, but every one boils down to one point, mentioned by Jesus in [Mark 1:15](#): We "believe in the gospel" He preached. We believe time is short. We believe that Christ will establish the Kingdom of God soon. We believe that we should repent and do so as a way of life. We believe Christ's message by living it in [faith](#).

Other churches may say they also believe and live in faith. Do they? Jesus says in [Matthew 7:16](#), "You will know them by their fruits." This is the easiest way to spot those who follow a [false gospel](#):

- Do they try to live by every word of God?
- Do they tremble before God's Word?
- Do they keep God's commandments (all of them)?
- Do they repent of and strive to overcome their failings?
- Do they show a steady growth in character?
- Do they focus on the Kingdom of God?
- Do they prioritize their lives with God first?
- Do they focus their teaching on the message He proclaimed?
- Do they exhibit genuine [love](#) for the brethren?

Depending on our understanding and viewpoint, it is likely that no one person or group will pass or fail all of these questions. "For we all stumble in many things" ([James 3:2](#)). However, if we are to judge righteously in the matter of whom we choose to fellowship with, we ourselves need to have a thorough grasp of the true gospel. We will walk down that path in the next issue.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[Faith \(Part One\)](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Most of us would like God to respond and instantly gratify our desires. Consequently, we find operating by faith extremely difficult. We think that God does not seem in all that big of a hurry. We look at time differently than God does because, like Abraham, Moses, and Gideon, we do not trust that He has things under control. As we encounter our own Red Seas, our faith gets exercised and toughened. In His infinite patience, God, as the Master Teacher, uses His time to instruct us so that, despite frequent failure, we will eventually grow in faith and get turned around. Faith is the quality that a person exercises between the time he becomes aware of a need he hopes for and its actual attainment. Like a muscle, the more we exercise faith, the more it grows. God will manipulate our experiences to make both our weakness and His power clear.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Eating: How Good It Is! \(Part Five\)](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

We live in a society where both food and information are readily available. John Ritenbaugh asks, "What is our approach to them? How are we using attitude toward and application of them makes all the difference."

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