

What should go into a gospel message?

I What John Emphasized

Jesus is the Christ and Son of God, and if you believe this you can have life by him: Joh 20.30-31 NET: Now Jesus performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Thus, the identity of Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God is integral to the gospel. But understanding what that identity means implies understanding what these terms meant! Here are some passages that lay out the OT understanding of the Christ and Son of God.

- † **Deliverer from Satan:** Gen 3.15 NAU: “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”
- † **Prophet and Deliverer Greater than Moses:** Deu 18.18-19 NET: I will raise up a prophet like you for them from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them whatever I command. ¹⁹ I will personally hold responsible anyone who then pays no attention to the words that prophet speaks in my name. [See Acts 3.22ff]
- † **God’s Son and Anointed King:** Psa 2.1-12 NAU: Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ³ "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. ⁵ Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, ⁶ "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." 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. 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!
- † **God’s Eternal Priest and King:** Psa 110.1-4 NAU: A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.” ² The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*, “Rule in the midst of Your enemies.” ³ Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You *as* the dew. ⁴ The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”
- † **Divine and Human:** Isa 7.14 NAU “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” [Immanuel means “God with us.”]
- † **Divine and Human, Eternal King:** Isa 9.6-7 NAU For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.
- † **Savior from Sin and Atoning Sacrifice:** Isa 53.5-6 NAU: But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. ⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

† **Divine and Human, King and Deliverer of Israel:** Jer 23.5-6 NAU: "Behold, *the* days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'

† **Priest and King:** Zec 6.13 NAU: "Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices."

Jesus was both divine and human: Joh 1.1, 14 NET: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God... ¹⁴ Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We saw his glory— the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father.

Jesus had to be crucified so that our faith could lead to eternal life: Joh 3.14-18 NET: Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." ¹⁶ For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. ¹⁸ The one who believes in him is not condemned. The one who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.

In Summary: Jesus is the one the Old Testament scriptures promised would come as a deliverer of people from Satan and sin, deliverer of Israel from oppression, God's greatest prophet, God's eternally anointed king and priest, God's own Son who is both divine and human, who was crucified so that our faith in his identity and deliverance could bring us eternal life. Note this implies a need for deliverance on our part.

II What Paul Emphasized

Christ died for our sins as the OT prophesied, was buried and raised on the third day as the OT prophesied, and appeared to hundreds of people after his resurrection: 1Co 15.1-8 NET: Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel that I preached to you, that you received and on which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message I preached to you— unless you believed in vain. ³ For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received— that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, ⁴ and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as though to one born at the wrong time, he appeared to me also.

Who Christ is, God and Man: Rom 10.9, 13 NET: because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved... ¹³ For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. [Note v.13 is quote of Joel 2.32 (NET: It will so happen that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered.), so Paul is equating Yahweh with Jesus.]

We have sinned, but can be made righteous in God's sight by grace through being redeemed from sin and death by Christ: Rom 3.21-24 NET: But now apart from the law the righteousness of God (which is attested by the law and the prophets) has been disclosed— ²² namely, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. ²⁴ But they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

The punishment earned by sin is eternal death, but God gives eternal life through Christ: Rom 6.23 NET: For the payoff of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Salvation is by grace through faith, not by our own efforts: Eph 2.8-9 NET: For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ it is not from works, so that no one can boast.

God saves us to eternal life not by our works, but by grace given through Christ and administered by the Holy Spirit: Tit 3.3-7 NET: ³ For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various passions and desires, spending our lives in evil and envy, hateful and hating one another. ⁴ But "when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, ⁵ he saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior. ⁷ And so, since we have been justified by his grace, we become heirs with the confident expectation of eternal life."

In summary: Jesus was both God and man, who fulfilled the OT prophecies about paying the penalty for our sins on the cross, being buried, and being resurrected on the third day, and then appeared to hundreds of people; we have sinned and deserve eternal death, but God is willing to extend grace through our faith in Christ's deliverance, which is administered by the Holy Spirit and which will redeem us from sin and death and bring us to eternal life.

III So a List:

- † Mankind's sinfulness
- † The penalty for sin is eternal death [physical and spiritual] and we are unable to mitigate this

- † Jesus' divinity
- † Jesus' humanity
- † Jesus' identity as the Messiah/Christ promised in the OT, the deliverer of individuals from Satan and sin and of Israel
- † Christ's role as prophet, priest, king, judge

- † Christ's death on the cross, burial, and resurrection as prophesied in the OT, and appearances
- † Christ's accomplishment on the cross of paying the penalty for our sins as prophesied in the OT, making possible deliverance through reconciliation with God, redemption from sin, eternal life, and imputed righteousness

- † The Holy Spirit's work of administering this grace to us
- † Our need to appropriate these grace blessings by faith in Christ's identity and deliverance