

Understanding the Bible

The Gospel

Have you ever noticed how the New Testament begins? It says... *“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”* Matthew 1:1. Then follows a list of the names of 42 prominent people in the genealogy of *“Jesus who is called Christ.”* Matthew 1:16.

The question is, Why should Abraham and David among others, be chosen for such special mention and what has this got to do with the Gospel? It was because these men pleased God by their outstanding faith that He gave them wonderful promises (see pamphlet 6) on which the Gospel of Christ is based.

The word “Gospel” means “good news” which it certainly is! *“It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”* Romans 1:16.

There are two aspects of the Gospel. These are included in the names “Jesus” and “Christ”.

The name “Jesus” means “Saviour” and it was given to him by God before he was born. The angel said... *“thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins”* Matthew 1:21.

The name “Christ” means “anointed” and points forward to his future work as King in the Kingdom of God on earth. Just before his crucifixion, Pilate asked Jesus *“Art thou a king then? Jesus answered “Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world...”* John 18:37.

When Jesus was on earth he preached *“the gospel of the kingdom of God”* Mark 1:14. He also spoke freely of his work as Saviour, saying, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* John 3:16.

The apostles also preached the Gospel, proclaiming both aspects it. *“When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women”* Acts 8:12.

The preaching of the Gospel is not confined to the New Testament. It is to be found throughout the whole Bible. It was preached to Abraham about 2000 BC. *“God...preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed”* Galatians 3:8. This promise would be fulfilled through a descendant of Abraham.... *“And in thy seed [descendant] shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”* Genesis 22:18.

We are clearly told in the New Testament who this descendant of Abraham is. It is Jesus Christ! *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ”* Galatians 3:16.

God’s promise to Abraham could only be fulfilled by the sacrifice and resurrection to immortal life of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote... *“Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”* 2 Timothy 1:10. This is why Abraham was chosen for special mention in the genealogy of Jesus.

But why David? David was reigning as King over Israel about 1000 BC, when God gave him a specific promise ... *“I will set up thy seed [descendant] after thee... and I will establish his kingdom... I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever”* 2 Samuel 7:12, 13. And notice how the Gospel is described: The Gospel (good news) of the kingdom of God – fundamentally the same kingdom David ruled!

When the angel appeared to Mary before Jesus’ birth, he said... *“the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob [Israel] for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end”* Luke 1:32,33. This is why David was chosen for special mention.

This promise will be fulfilled when Jesus returns to earth and reigns as King over the restored Kingdom of Israel. It is mentioned many times in the Bible... *“And he [God] shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began”* Acts 3:20,21.

It is necessary that we believe the Gospel and be baptised so that we can share in these promises made to Abraham and David at the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ...And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”* Galatians 3:27,29. The Gospel therefore is indeed “good news” and a message of hope for a troubled world.

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Note: all quotes are from the King James Version of the Bible.