

## **WHAT DOES THE TRUE GOSPEL CONTAIN?**

(Excerpt from my book, "The Book of Revelation Decoded", pages 117-126)

The true biblical gospel contains:

- a) **The Person of the Savior God**, that is, explaining who Jesus is (Matthew 16:15,16; John 1:1,14; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13),
- b) **His work**, that is, explaining the work He did for the salvation of those who will believe in Him, in other words, His death, burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), and
- c) **what must one do in order to be saved** (Romans 10:8,9,13,14).

### **Where can we find the apostolic gospel?**

In Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 10 and verses 1-15.

#### **LET US EXAMINE ROMANS 10:1-15**

**In verse 1**, the apostle Paul says that his heart's desire and prayer to God **for the Israelites is that they may be saved**. He wrote:

***"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God on behalf of Israel is for (their) salvation."***

Based on the above words, let us consider the following:

Did the Israelites believe in the True God YHWH? The ans-

**1.**

wer is, **“Of course they did!”** However, in the above verse, the apostle said that **they were not saved!** His prayer to God about them was that **they may be saved.** Therefore, the question that follows is: Since they believed in the True God YHWH, how is it possible that they were not saved? What were they lacking?

**In verse 2,** Paul testifies about them that they are zealous for God; but **their zeal is not according to knowledge.** From these words of Paul, we realize that their problem was lack of **“knowledge”**.

Thus, let us consider again: Did the Israelites know their God YHWH? The answer is, **“Absolutely”!** Did they know God’s law? **Of course, they did!** Better than anyone else! And they were trying to keep it faithfully, believing that by doing so they would be declared righteous and that they would earn eternal life (Matthew 19:16-19). Then, **what was the knowledge they were lacking?**

**In verse 3,** Paul says that **they did not know the righteousness that comes from God,** that they sought to establish their own and that for this reason **they did not subject themselves to God’s righteousness.**

**Who is God’s righteousness that a person must subject himself to? What does Paul say in verse 4?**

**In verse 4,** the apostle Paul preaches that Christ is the end of the law and that **He, Jesus, is the righteousness to all those who believe.** But now, the question is: Is Jesus the righteousness to all those who believe in **YHWH** the Father or to all those who believe in **Jesus** who is YHWH the Son? If Jesus is the righteousness to all those who believe in

YHWH the Father, then, how come the Israelites were not saved? What is **the only name** by which we can be saved? Is it the name “YHWH” or is it the name “Jesus”? (Acts 4:10,12)

**In verses 5-8**, Paul describes what Moses wrote about the righteousness that comes from keeping the law and compares it with the righteousness that comes **by faith** (in Christ). At the end of verse 8, he wrote: ***“that is the word of faith which we preach:”*** In other words, the apostle Paul said, **‘here is the gospel which we the apostles preach:’**

**In verse 9**, he presents to us the gospel of salvation which the apostles of the Lord Jesus preached. He said:

***“that if you shall acknowledge [ομολογήσης (omo-lo-ye-e-sis: Agree with me or confess)], with your mouth, (that) Jesus (is the) Lord (accusative case – Κύριον Ιησούν), and if you shall believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;”***

In the above verse, the accusative case found in the first of the two conditions for salvation, i.e., ***“if you shall acknowledge (agree with me or confess), with your mouth, (that) Jesus (is the) Lord,”*** demands that the person acknowledges that Jesus is the “LORD” (the substitute for “YHWH”) whose name one must pray to in order to be saved (verse 13).

The accusative case ***“(τον) Κύριον Ιησούν”*** [(the) Lord Jesus], brings the word ***“Κύριον”*** (Kyriion --- Lord) to its maximum extension. Jesus is not presented here simply as “a lord” or as “a master”. As there are many lords and masters, it wouldn’t be difficult for an Israelite to say with

his/her mouth that Jesus is “a lord” because He has followers or servants. Even today’s false prophets and false teachers have no problem calling Jesus “lord” with the idea that “lord” means “master”. How, then, did the apostles and the early Christians understand and use the word “**Lord**” in connection with Jesus? Let us examine the testimony of Irenaeus.

Irenaeus lived from 130-200 A.D. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John and lived from 65-155/6 A.D. Irenaeus became the Bishop of Lyons. His writings were against heresies. About the name “**Lord**”, he wrote the following:

*“The name of God or Lord is given only to Him who is called God and Lord of all; who said to Moses: ‘My name is I AM. And you shall say to the Israelites, HE WHO IS has sent me to you.’ The name of God or Lord is given also to His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord ... And the Son says to Moses: ‘I have come down to rescue this people.’ For it is the Son who descended and ascended for the salvation of men. Thus, through the Son who is in the Father, and has the Father in Himself, HE WHO IS has been revealed.”* (Against Heresies, III, vi:2).

From the above teaching of Irenaeus, we understand that the name “**Lord**”, when it refers to the One who is God and the Lord of all, **is an explicit title for Deity and it stands for “YHWH”!** The apostles used it freely in naming God’s only begotten Son because they had believed that **Jesus is the “Lord of all”** (Acts 10:36).

When the Hebrews found it necessary to translate the Old Testament from the old Hebrew language into the Greek

language (**for the benefit of the Israelites who spoke Greek**), they decided (for valid and serious reasons), to replace the Hebrew name of God, the Tetragrammaton “YHWH”, with the Greek word “**Κύριος**” (Lord). Thus, in that translation, which became known as the “Septuagint”, the God of the Hebrews became known as “**Κύριος**” (Kyrios - “**Lord**”). When the Hebrews of the first century were talking about the “**Lord**”, they were referring to their God **YHWH**. Consequently, the name “**Lord**” (Kyrios) became synonymous with the name “**YHWH**”.

The New Testament writers continued to use the name “**Κύριος**” (Lord) in their writings and, as I said above, they used it freely in naming God’s only begotten Son. They named Him “**Lord Jesus**” (Acts 8:16), “**Lord Christ**” (Colossians 3:24) and “**The Lord Jesus Christ**” (Acts 11:17).

An important point to remember here is that even the Pagans were using the word “**Κύριος**” (Kyrios-Lord) before the names of their gods and before the names of their emperors whom they worshipped as gods (for instance, Lord Serapes, Lord Nero, etc.). For this reason, **the early Christians preferred to die rather than to say, “Lord Caesar”!**

From the previous information, we come to the conclusion that **when Paul said a person must confess or acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord to be saved, he meant that a person must acknowledge or confess that Jesus is God by nature in order to be saved.**

When one confesses that Jesus is God by nature (Galatians 4:8), one **does not** express the belief that Jesus is YHWH the

Father because Jesus is **YHWH the Son**; this is so, because Jesus is **the only begotten Son** of YHWH the Father (John 3:16). What one expresses is the belief that **the nature or substance of the pre-human Jesus was the same as the substance of His Father** because the substance of every son is the same as the substance of his father. In other words, as one who is born of a human is 100% human and has the form of a human, the same is true of **the only begotten** (not 'the only created' as He is described by the unlearned) **Son of God**, was always 100% God and had the form of God (John 1:1,14; Philippians 2:6,7; Romans 9:5). If the pre-human Jesus was a created son of God, like the humans or the angels, it would have been impossible for Him to be *"in the form of God"* (Philippians 2:6).

**The fact that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God demands equality to the Father** (John 5:18,23), something that the leaders of Israel of His time could not possibly accept and for this reason they condemned Him to death for blasphemy (Matthew 26:63-66).

**In verse 10**, we hear Paul saying that **when one believes with his heart, the result is that God declares him righteous**, and **when one confesses with the mouth, the result is that he receives salvation. Thus, until one believes with his/her heart that Jesus is YHWH** (the "Lord" of verses 9 and 13) **and confesses that faith with his/her mouth, that person is not saved! That person is "dead"** (John 8:24; Matthew 8:22)!

**In verse 11**, Paul continues to refer to Jesus and brings to the attention of those Israelites who were seeking their own righteousness by keeping the Law of Moses, that the Scrip-

tures say, *“The one who believes in Him will by no means be ashamed.”* (Isaiah 28:16; 49:23).

**In verse 12**, Paul says to those Israelites that **there is no difference between a Jew and a Greek because the same Lord is over all** and He is rich to all who call upon Him (to all those who pray to Him).

**In the above verse, therefore, we see that Paul actually says that the Lord of the Jews, YHWH, and the Lord that the Greeks had believed through his preaching, Jesus, is one and the same Lord who is over all and who is rich to all who pray to Him!**

These words of Paul go hand in hand with his words in Romans 9:5, where he says that **Jesus “is God over all and blessed forever”** (Greek text).

**In verse 13**, the apostle Paul presents **the requirement for salvation which God has placed**, as the prophet Joel reveals it. Although in the original Hebrew text the prophet Joel presented this requirement as,

*“whosoever shall call on the name of YHWH (Yahweh), shall be saved”* (Joel 2:32),

the apostle Paul, applying the above words of Joel to Jesus, copies them from the Greek translation, the Septuagint, and he presents them as:

*“whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.”*

Therefore, Paul’s preaching is loud and clear:

**One must believe that Jesus is the YHWH (Yahweh) of verse 13 whose name one must call upon (one must pray to), in order to be saved!**

However, in **verses 14 and 15**, Paul asks in wonder:

*“How, then, can they (the Israelites and the Greeks --- verses 12,13), call on (pray to) the One in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in (Jesus) the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear (of who Jesus is) without someone preaching? And how can they preach if they are not sent? As it has been written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who are evangelizing the good things (the gospel)!”*

Based on the above questions of Paul, we must consider the following:

- 1) Had the Israelites heard about Yahweh? **Of course, they had!**
- 2) Did the Israelites believe in Yahweh as their God? **Of course, they did!**
- 3) Did the Israelites call upon the name of Yahweh? In other words, did they pray to Him? **Of course, they did!**
- 4) In Paul’s days, would God have found it necessary to send preachers to the Israelites to preach to them about who Yahweh is? **Of course, not!**

**Beyond any doubt then, in verses 14 and 15, Paul’s Subject, “the One”, is not Yahweh the Father, but Yahweh**



**the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the “Lord” (YHWH) of verses 9 and 13!**

From the previous study of the first 15 verses of the tenth chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans, we realize that *“the word of faith”*, in other words, the gospel which the apostles preached, was not preached to already saved individuals, but to those Israelites who worshiped YHWH, who had zeal for God, but, **who had not recognized Jesus as God Yahweh the Son in the flesh and had not believed that God Yahweh the Father had raised Him from the dead and who, because of this unbelief, were not saved** (verse 1). Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for one **to hear about who Jesus is, so he/she can confess with faith that He is the “Lord”, in other words, the Yahweh of Romans 10:13 whose Name one must call upon** (whom one must pray to --- Acts 7:59; 9:14; 1 Corinthians 1:2), **in order to be saved! This is the pure apostolic gospel!**

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Today, there are many who confess that they are Christians but who preach twisted things and change the simplicity of the gospel of salvation preached by the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles. While Jesus said that **whosoever believes in Him** (in God’s **only begotten Son** -- a fact which makes Him, at once, God by nature) **will not perish but has everlasting life** (John 3:16), they preach that one can receive salvation, **before** one believes that Jesus is God by nature and therefore, **before** one can confess with his/her mouth that Jesus is the **Yahweh**, that is, **the “Lord”** of Romans 10:9,13 and 14, whose name one must call upon **in order to be saved!** The Bible says that these people will experience *“swift destruction”* (2 Peter 2:1).