

## Is “the Gospel” Concerned ONLY with “the Kingdom of God”?

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It is certainly true that Herbert W. Armstrong always **emphasized** that “the Gospel” is the Good News message *of the coming Kingdom of God!* Yet, did Mr. Armstrong teach that anything *else* was also included as **part of** that message? Notice the following **quotes** by Mr. Armstrong:

“What is Christ’s Gospel? What is the message God sent to mankind by Jesus Christ? It is the GOOD NEWS of the KINGDOM OF GOD!.... Of course that power-filled message **includes the knowledge about the Savior, High Priest and coming King!** Of course, **it includes the true way of salvation**, which the churches seem to have lost!” (Herbert W. Armstrong, *Good News* magazine, Jan. 1980, p.9)

“We must believe the GOSPEL, and **that means** also believing on Jesus Christ, the King of the Kingdom of God, and coming King of kings over all the families of the earth. It means believing in Him as personal Saviour, as High Priest, now and as coming King” (Herbert W. Armstrong, *What is the True Gospel?* 1972 booklet, p.10).

“If those who claim to preach a gospel of SALVATION understood and proclaimed what salvation really is... it might be **a part of** the gospel” (Herbert W. Armstrong, *Incredible Human Potential*, 1978 hardback edition, p.16).

“I must call the reader’s attention again at this point to the fact that a full and complete understanding of the *message* sent by God to all mankind, by His Divine Messenger Jesus Christ, involves a vast comprehension of God’s great purpose, and of events, prehistoric, historic, present and future. I might say it means an overall understanding of **everything!**” (ibid, p.15).

“The true **gospel**, when viewed with **all that it embodies**—the reason for it, the prehistoric truth of earth’s first inhabitants, the reason humans were created and put on earth, the CAUSE of all the earth’s evils and sufferings, the nature of the human mind, the need for spiritual salvation and what it is, the coming world tomorrow of peace, what lies on beyond, and man’s ultimate incredible potential—becomes **the most all-encompassing subject** that can enter the mind of man” (ibid, p.11).

The word “Gospel” means “Good News.” And although Mr. Armstrong regularly emphasized that “the Gospel” is the Good News of the coming Kingdom, he **also** taught (as shown above) that it includes *other* things—one of which is certainly the news that God has sent us a Savior.

**And that, indeed, IS “good news”!!** Without a Saviour and High Priest, we are totally and utterly *without* hope in this world! (Eph. 2:12; John 14:6; Acts 4:12)

Yes, Mr. Armstrong taught that the Gospel message includes MORE than just the message of the coming Kingdom of God. **What Mr. Armstrong condemned was the fact that the churches of this world CONFINE their message to the *person* of Christ—and that they preach a *false* Christ... a Christ who came to do away with His Father’s laws!**

Occasionally, Mr. Armstrong would say that we have not preached Christ *often enough*. Roderick C. Meredith occasionally said the same thing. Yet, for anyone to infer that the Church under HWA **did not regularly teach** a message of Christ and His supreme importance, then that person is either being dishonest or is simply ignorant of what the Church taught!

At this point, let’s notice some scriptures, as we answer the following two questions:

(1) Does “the Gospel” have anything to do with “salvation”?

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, **the gospel of your salvation**; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...” (Eph. 1:13).

“For I am not ashamed of the **gospel of Christ**, for it is the power of God **to salvation**...” (Rom. 1:16).

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the **gospel** which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, **by which also you are saved**, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day” (I Cor. 15:1-4).

“...and the ministry which I [Paul] received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to **the gospel of the grace of God**. And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more” (Acts 20:24-25).

(2) Was Paul’s **main** focus *on Jesus Christ*?

“For I determined not to know anything among you **except** Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (I Cor. 2:2).

[And **not just** Paul]: “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they [Peter and the other apostles] **did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ**” (Acts 5:42).

“For **to this end** we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the **Savior** of all men, especially of those who believe” (I Tim. 4:10).

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God **and** the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized” (Acts 8:12).

“**And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He** who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. **To Him** all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:42-43).

“... many came to him [Paul] at his lodging, to whom **he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening**” (Acts 28:23).

“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, **preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ** with all confidence, no one forbidding him” (Acts 28:30-31). [And notice that this scripture does *not* say “preaching the GOSPEL and Jesus Christ.” Rather, it says “preaching the *kingdom of God* and Jesus Christ.” They, **both together, ARE “the Gospel”!!**]

Notice, now, what Roderick C. Meredith stated:

“...the Gospel is the message Jesus preached *about* the coming Kingdom of God. And it is **also** the good news that the King of **that** Kingdom has died for our sins so that you and I can be a **part of** that coming Kingdom! *Without the King, there would be no Kingdom, nor could you and I take part in it!* The true Gospel is comprised of *both* of these vital aspects. Either one without the other is **incomplete**....we [in the Living Church of God] nearly always *emphasize* that part of the Gospel that has to do with Christ’s **Second** Coming and the coming **Kingdom of God**....We take this approach because most people in the world who call themselves ‘Christian’ *already* understand at least part of the message about Jesus Christ’s sacrifice for our sins. But we do not deny or negate the *full* Gospel message...” (*Living Church News*, July-Aug. 2011, Living Church of God).

## Conclusion

This entire argument over what “the Gospel message includes,” is somewhat a matter of *semantics*. **Even if it were true** that “the Gospel message” has nothing to do with Christ and salvation, the fact is that the Church—under Mr. Armstrong, as well as the Living Church of God—has always **regularly taught** a strong message about salvation **and** the supreme importance of Jesus Christ! So, **rather than** being an issue concerning *what the Church should teach*, this issue is largely one of *semantics*!

Now, *that being the case*, **why is it** that certain Church of God leaders make an *extremely big issue* over the **definition** of “the Gospel”—claiming that it is about “the Kingdom of God” and

NOTHING else? Why do they harp on this, even though *they themselves* (rightfully) preach Christ and salvation?!

Sadly, one wonders whether those Church leaders are **intentionally** causing contention, *for the very purpose* of dividing the Church, so as to **draw away members to their own group!** Again, this issue is **not** about **WHAT** *is to be preached!* Rather, it is an argument whose purpose is simply to stir up contention...*for the purpose of gaining a following!*