**The Gospel Message**

In this first lesson we are going to learn about the most important message in the world! It is so important that it effects every single person that has and will ever live. It’s the message of the **‘Gospel,’** which literally means **“Good News!”**

**Illustration:** The word *Gos*sip and *Gos*pel both have the same root. It’s tragic that people love to Gossip a bit of juicy bad news, which they actually should keep to themselves, but are silent about spreading the Good News. The truth is: We are commanded by Jesus, not to keep the Gospel to ourselves, but to spread the Good News. *Gossip the Gospel*, spread it far and wide!

Jesus tells us to: “Go make disciples…” which means go and share the Good News with *everyone!*

Okay, so what is this gospel or *Good News*?

We’ll let’s start with the *bad news* so that we can understand the *Good News* better!

1. God is Holy, but we are not!

God is Holy, sinless and magnificently perfect. When God first created humankind, Adam and Eve (which means ‘Man & Woman,’) they were beautifully and perfectly made in God’s image. There was no death in the world either. But they fell from that wonderful condition when they rebelled against God and disobeyed Him, bringing sin *and* death into the world.

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. – **Romans 5:12 NLT**

They rather obeyed Satan, who himself was a *‘fallen angel’* than listen to their Creator and original Master. Since *“the fall of mankind,”* all humans have inherited Adam’s rebellious or sinful nature (called: *‘Original Sin’*) and we are *all* by nature sinners and we are *all* born into a world where *Satan is our master*. This will be covered in greater detail in *Lesson 2* entitled “Salvation – *the devil’s family and God’s family.”*

Ephesians 2:1-3 speaks about the natural state or spiritual condition of all humankind…before they turned to God in repentance…

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. **–** **Ephesians 2:1-3 NIV**

So, the bible teaches that God has every reason to destroy *all* of humanity, no one is exempt, we have *all* fallen short of God's original standard – His *Holy, sinless and perfect* image that humankind was originally created in. Now, our inclinations are to rebel against God and obey rather, the ruler of the air (which is Satan). Therefore, we *all* deserve damnation!

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” **– Romans 3:23 NIV**

The Word *‘sin’* actually means *“to fall short.”*

Like an arrow trying to hit the bullseye from miles away, mankind’s attempt to please God by our own effort or wisdom or own religion, will always fall dismally short, not just of the bullseye, but we miss the target entirely! Remember, God is Holy, Perfect and Sinless…we are born the opposite of this!

**Illustration:**Imagine for a moment that you were served an omelet at a restaurant that had Salmonella or the E-Coli bacteria in it. The chef said not to worry since it was only a couple of eggs that were infected not all of them. The problem is the whole omelet is now inedible and the chef should be fired for knowingly serving deadly food. Like the omelet, we are unacceptable to a gloriously Holy, Perfect and Righteous God.

Our own best efforts at being as good as we can possibly muster, will never please a Holy and perfect God, because there is really nothing ‘good’ (godly, clean) in us! We have become wretched.

We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind. **– Isaiah 64:6 NLT**

Even our prayers and our so-called worship can be riddled in sin. Our natural human inclinations to have anything to do with God, is only motivated by the desire to receive what we want out of Him. We want the blessings, but we don’t really desire the Blesser. God, fix my finances, health, marriage, fix this crisis or that one. Give me this or that. But there is no desire in us to worship God just because He is God. This attitude only proves that we actually worship ourselves. God is not at the center of life, we are!

**OK, that’s the bad news. Here’s the Good News! – The Gospel!**

1. There is a way to be saved and restored and made Holy and sinless and perfect like God!

Did you get that? There’s a way not only to be saved from God’s wrath upon sin, but there’s a way to be *re-created* back into the image that we were supposed to be!

* 1. First: The way to be saved!

There is only one person “Jesus Christ the Son of God” who can give us eternal life and restore us back into that beautiful and perfect relationship with God that Adam and Eve were created for in the beginning.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” **- John 3:16 ESV**

When Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to cover themselves with leaves and hide among the trees to cover their shame. But God instead “covered them” with the skin of an animal.

Now where on earth did God get those skins from?

*Innocent blood* had to be shed *by God* to cover the shame that sin brought to mankind. This was a picture of what was to come…in Jesus Christ.

…without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. **– Hebrews 9:22*b* ESV**

Throughout the Old Testament, God required His people to offer a sacrifice of shed blood of a perfect lamb that was spotless and without any blemishes. This innocent and perfect lamb was a symbol of sinlessness. What was God doing? He was preparing the world for the only true Sacrifice that could actually take away the sin of the world – Jesus Christ His Son, who truly was the only person on earth who ever lived a perfect, sinless and Holy life. Notice, God Himself offered this sacrifice! Why? Because it was IMPOSSIBLE for any of us to offer a Perfect, Holy, Sinless and appropriate sacrifice for sin.

God had to intervene... God did it all for us and for His glory!

* 1. So, what actually happened on the cross?

Well, this is where the Good News becomes the Great News.

Remember earlier we said that God not only saves us from damnation but He actually makes a way for us to be made Holy and sinless and perfect like we were supposed to be in God’s image?

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. – **2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT**

On the cross, God the Father placed your sin on Christ as he faced the full blow of God’s wrath upon sin. At the same time God takes the righteousness of Christ and places His “righteousness” (right standing before God as perfect and blameless and spotless) and ‘credits’ it to you!

Did you get that? God poured out on Jesus Christ His wrath and anger for your sin! That wrath was meant for you! So, God treated Jesus how you were meant to be treated for your sin and now treats you as if you lived Christ’s perfect, holy, sinless life!

Isn’t that incredible! God no longer holds my sin against me BUT instead considers me like His perfect Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

That’s not just GOOD NEWS that’s GREAT NEWS! ***That’s the Gospel!***

1. WOW! So, is this Gospel for everyone?

It is made available to everyone who *repents* and *believes!*

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" **– Mark 1:15 NIV**

* 1. Okay, but what does REPENT actually mean?

It means: “turn around,” “turn back” or “to change our way/our minds…and AGREE with God.”

So, in light of the fact that we are fallen sinners, we are to turn back in REPENTANCE toward the way that God originally created human beings to interact with Him in the garden, before sin entered the world. No longer separated, unholy and estranged from Him. No longer following the way of sinful rebellion and having Satan as our master. Rather, we REPENT and *turn to GOD!*

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord **– Acts 3:19 NIV**

The Bible teaches that God has made Salvation possible by offering Jesus on the cross as a sacrifice (atonement) for sin. Yet, it is only through REPENTANCE and FAITH in what God has done that an individual can actually be forgiven and have their sins wiped out.

The whole world isn’t automatically saved by what Jesus did on the cross. An individual has to REPENT and BELIEVE to be saved!

* 1. Okay, so we’ve explained REPENTANCE, but what does it mean to BELIEVE?

Many people believe there is *a God*. They believe that a God exists. What is vital, is that we believe in the only true God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – the God of the Bible!

Explaining this Jesus said:

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me**. – John 14:6**

You must believe in the RIGHT God…the Only God!

1. Trusting in any *god* other than the God of the Bible, will not save you!
2. Anything or anyone else, outside of the Bible is a *counterfeit god!*
3. Trusting in a deformed (*made up version*) of the God of the Bible *will not save* you. Let’s explain:

Many people *claim* to believe the Bible, but then they all too often say things like, “I like to *think* that God is like *this* or like *that..*.” or, “My God would never do this or that!” Yet their claim totally contradicts what the Bible plainly says about God. Since God clearly reveals who He is and what He desires or requires from us *in the Bible*. Therefore, a concept of God that contradicts what God *clearly* reveals about Himself in the Bible is obviously a false god.

Therefore, these kinds of people don’t really believe in the God of the Bible after all, but a god they’ve made up in their own minds and imagination.

We sometimes do this with other people, don’t we? Or other’s do to us. They project an assumption of who they think you are upon you, before they even get to know who you really are. We shouldn’t do this with people and we certainly can never do that with God. It will cost you your soul.

Rather, get to know Him through the medium of how He has revealed Himself to us…the Bible.

1. Therefore, we encourage you to begin studying the Bible, so that you may learn to know God more deeply and completely. *(In another lesson entitled: “How to study the Bible 101” we’ll show you just how to do that!)* [*https://www.hispeopleknox.com/the-bible-4-beginners.html*](https://www.hispeopleknox.com/the-bible-4-beginners.html)

ii. Then, you must *truly* BELIEVE - meaning…

1. You must have *true* FAITH…that Jesus Christ is the sinless Son of God who voluntarily took the punishment for your sin.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. **– Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV**

1. Although this ‘*gift of faith’* will be fleshed out in more detail in “*Lesson 4 - Eternal Security and Perseverance,”* it is imperative that you *have* true FAITH in God and His promise of Eternal life through Jesus Christ, in order to be saved.

So, what is *true faith*?

**Illustration:**Some smart parents tell their children that Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy and the like, exist in their imagination. They say this, so as not to deceive their children. They’d say, ‘As long as you believe, they will exist. Stop believing and ‘poof’ they’re gone. So believe! When it comes to God however, these same smart parents will say: “God exists and is real whether you believe in Him or not!”

But, there is a BIG difference between believing in God and actually *Trusting Him* or placing your *Faith in Him*…

**Illustration:**There is a story about a tight rope walker who walked across a huge chasm. The people all gathered on one side to cheer him on. “Who believes I can walk across the tightrope pushing a wheelbarrow?” he asked the crowd. Seeing him walk across so confidently they shouted, “We believe, we believe.” And he did it. Once again he asked, “Who believes I can walk across with a couple of bags of grain in my wheelbarrow?” “We believe, we believe,” the audience shouted back. A task which he once again remarkably achieved.

“Ok, who believes I can push the wheelbarrow with a human being in it, across this chasm to the other side?” To which they all excitedly chanted, “We believe, we believe!”

“Alright then,” he said, “I need a volunteer.” And suddenly, there was not a voice to be heard!

Having Faith in Christ, doesn’t just mean you believe He exists. It means trusting Him with your entire life and soul. In light of the illustration, it means ‘getting into Jesus’ wheelbarrow.’

True BELIEF is placing your faith, hope and trust in Jesus Christ to be saved!

Do you BELIEVE this way? -- Why not commit yourself to Him in true Faith, today!

Receiving salvation through Jesus Christ by REPENTANCE & FAITH is the most important step one could make – but it is just the *first step* in turning back to God. You enter a brand-new life! **There is so much more** in store for you to learn, to surrender and enjoy in a new life in Jesus Christ.

When you are ready, please go to *“Lesson 2 – Salvation”* to learn more! If you have any questions please email: HisPeopleKnox@gmail.com