THE UNIQUENESS OF THE GOSPEL OF THE BIBLE

THE RADICAL CONCEPTS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is emphatic that there is one God. He is without rivals and is vastly superior in all His ways. That being true, there must then be a radical difference between the message of the Bible and religious ideology.

The Bible says…**"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts".** *Isa 55:8-9*

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

This was the radical and disruptive teaching of the Lord Jesus (*Mat 5:44*). He exemplified what He taught when He even healed one of those who came to crucify Him (*Luke 22:51*). He prayed for the soldiers who spitefully mistreated Him (*Luke 23:34*) and blessed the thieves who cursed Him (*Luke 23:43*). Most significantly, **Christ died on behalf of sinners, who are His enemies** (*Col 1:20-22*).

By contrast, the best that religious belief systems and atheism can offer to those who reject their beliefs is benevolent acceptance or indifference. Some systems even teach hate and violence. Even human love is not selfless. It is often bound by what it makes us feel – happy, good, honourable, kind. God's love is different; it gives selflessly, and actively reaches out to those who are opposed to Christ (*Acts 26:1-20*).

BY GRACE YOU ARE SAVED

Grace could be explained as **God's love in action**; it is the granting of His unmerited favour to undeserving humanity. In total contrast, religion has an insistence on working to achieve merit. Not so with God's way of salvation (*Titus 3:5*).

God graciously shows that He will do all that is required for sinners to be reconciled to Him. **God does not ask us to bring about our own salvation**. He provides that salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ; through His death, burial, resurrection and coming again. We are simply asked to accept it as a gift (*Romans 6:23*).

A RANSOM FOR ALL

By dying on our account, the Lord Jesus Christ paid the ransom price to set us free from sin (*1 Tim 2:5-6*), its power and its penalty. The ransom price was high: at the Cross, God the Father laid on His Son, Jesus, the charge of the sin for all the world, treating Him as a world of sinners should have been treated (*Isaiah 53:5-6; 2 Cor 5:21*). He suffered all this that he might bring us to God (*1 Peter 3:18*). Religion says it's all about what I do. God says, it's all about what He has done for us! What amazing grace! What sacrificial love!

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

How could God ensure that there is no weakness, no point of failure, in the salvation that He offers? The Bible tells us that only faith in Christ can save. Churches, Christians and religion will all fail. Jesus Christ can never fail. **God is careful to guarantee success by providing a salvation where God does all the saving** (*Romans 4:16*). The sinners are simply asked to put their faith in Christ alone (*John 3:36*). No works, no self-help; God does all the working!

RESURRECTION

Faith in itself is of no significance. Rather, it is what we place our faith in that has value. If the object of faith is the critical matter, we must examine the worthiness of the One in whom we are asked to place our trust. Was Jesus Christ the Son of God? Was what he did at the Cross enough to save sinners? After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus was seen by over 500 witnesses at once (*1 Cor 15:6*). **This is absolute proof that Jesus was who He said He was, and that what He did was perfect.** If He had lied about who He was, deceived the people, or received any corruption by bearing sins of others, He could not have risen from the dead!

GOD DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

The gracious and loving character of God offers salvation to all *(John 3:16)*. He does not discriminate in the provision of salvation. The person with few sins and the person with many sins are forgiven and are received on the same basis. God emphatically and frequently states that **He is no respecter of persons. There is no difference; all mankind are the same – sinners needing salvation** (*Romans 3:23*).

NEW BIRTH

When God saves us, He does not ask us to reform our sinful nature. He rather gives new life (*2 Cor 5:17*). The person who is saved is regenerated, born-again, a new creation. For the first time, we can bring delight to God's heart as we have the power and ability to live a life that is pleasing to Him (*1 John 3:9*). It is through the new birth that lives are radically changed (*Phil 3:4-8*), the hypocrite becomes humble, the hard man becomes meek, the angry become patient, the addict is at peace….

NAMES THE BIBLE USES FOR CHRISTIANS

"BY THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM"

Mat 7:20; Gal 5:22

BRETHREN/BROTHERS (182 TIMES)
This term is often used inclusively of all believers. It indicates the relationship into which they have been brought with one another. They are given the prominent exhortation to "Love one another as I have loved you" *(John 5:12)*.

BELOVED (39 TIMES)
This is often used in two senses: those who are loved by God as children; those who have brotherly love to each other because they share a common bond as beloved of God. 'Beloved' demonstrates the truth of being brothers or sisters in Christ.

SAINTS (60 TIMES)
Those who are believers in Christ are made holy before God and are also called to be practically holy, as God is holy *(1 Peter 1:16; Eph 5:13)*. 'Sanctified' is an allied word and a description of those who are saints; they are separated to and for God.

SONS (15 TIMES)
As sons of God, Christians bear the character of God the Father; His character is to be seen in the Christian's life. The full consequences of being a son have not yet been realized; they will be seen when Christians return with Christ in glory *(Romans 8:1; Phil 2:5; 1 John 3:2)*.

CHILDREN (38 TIMES)
The focus of the term 'children' is dependence; those who are always in need of the Father's care, guidance, love and affection.

OTHER TERMS USED:

CHRISTIANS those who preached Christ. *Acts 11:26*
BORN AGAIN/BORN OF GOD a new creation in Christ. *John 3:5,7; 2 Cor 5:7*
REDEEMED freed from the power of sin. *1 Cor 6:20; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18*
BELIEVERS those who believe in the Lord Jesus. *John 3:36; 1 John 5:1*
DISCIPLES pupils who are learning by following (only used in the Gospels and in Acts). *Acts 20:17*

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

The Bible says, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". Romans 5:8

GRACE

The Bible says, "By grace are you saved by faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast". Ephesians 2:9

A RANSOM FOR ALL

The Bible says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all". 1 Timothy 2:5&6

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

The Bible says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". Romans 5:1

RESURRECTION

The Bible says, "God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God". 1 Peter 1:21

GOD DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

The Bible says, "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". Romans 3:22 & 23

NEW BIRTH

The Bible says, "Ye must be born again". John 3:7

MORE INFO