

The Gospel That Paul Proclaimed

The Central Message Throughout the Pauline Epistles

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed*.

As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, *let him be accursed*.

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:6-12).

The use of the word “gospel” [Gk., *euaggelion*], meaning *good news*, **MUST ALWAYS** be understood contextually, for there is **NOTHING** in the meaning of the word itself which relates the nature of the good news.

Despite the preceding, the word “gospel” is used in Christian circles today, far more often than not, as *somewhat of a synonym for the message pertaining to salvation by grace*. And the whole of the N.T. is **THEN** interpreted accordingly.

As an example of the preceding, note *HOW* “the gospel of Christ” in the seven verses beginning this chapter is invariably understood by Christians today.

The word “gospel” is used five times in these verses, with NOT ONLY the whole of that stated having to do with this gospel BUT the nature of the “good news” in view is plainly stated (vv. 11, 12).

In spite of the preceding though, in spite of Paul’s explanation concerning which facet of the good news was in view — *which was OTHER than the gospel of grace* — Christians invariably miss it, seeing only *ONE* thing. They see these verses referencing the good news pertaining to salvation by grace.

HOW has the Church come into such a state — all segments, liberal and so-called fundamental alike — where a simple reading of a text within its context can’t be properly handled?

For anyone wanting to know, the answer to that question can be found in the first four parables of Matt. 13 and/or the letters to the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3.

BUT, the preceding raises another issue, presenting another problem. *IF* Christians can’t read and understand a simple, straightforward text like Gal. 1:6-12, *HOW* are they going to understand something more complex like the parables in Matt. 13 or the letters to the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3?

The Pauline Epistles, the New Testament As a Whole

Something not understood at all and something which would surprise, probably shock, a lot of Christians would be to find out *EXACTLY HOW* Paul used the word “gospel” throughout his epistles, *WITHOUT* exception.

Paul, throughout his epistles, ALWAYS used this word in a completely opposite respect to the way that it is invariably used in Christian circles today.

Paul ALWAYS used this word in a completely UNIFORM manner, ONLY ONE WAY — as a reference to the good news which had been delivered to him by “the revelation of Jesus Christ,” following his conversion (e.g., II Cor. 4:3, 4; Gal. 1:7-12; Eph. 3:1-6).

And THIS good news had NOTHING to do with salvation by grace. THIS good news was for those who had ALREADY been saved by previously hearing and responding to the good news concerning salvation by grace.

And Paul used the verb form of this word [Gk., euaggelizo, often translated “preach,” or “preach the gospel”] EXACTLY the SAME way.

(Paul used the noun form of this word [euaggelion] sixty times and the verb form [euaggelizo] twenty-two times in his epistles, more times than used in all the remainder of the N.T. books combined.

And the use of these two words in the gospels, Acts, general epistles, and Revelation is completely consistent with HOW Paul used the words in his epistles, needing NO explanation at any point concerning which aspect of the “gospel” was being referenced, for, from the contextual usage throughout, NONE would be necessary.

The complete N.T. — the gospels, Acts, epistles, Revelation — uses these two words in the same consistent manner:

In the GOSPELS, the words are used referencing the kingdom offered to Israel.

In ACTS, the words are used referencing the kingdom being re-offered to Israel and, at the same time, being offered to the one new man “in Christ.”

In the PAULINE and GENERAL EPISTLES, the words are used referencing the kingdom [taken from Israel] being offered to the one new man “in Christ.”

Then in REVELATION [10:7; 14:6; the only two places where the words are used], the words are used after the same consistent manner as previously seen elsewhere.)

Thus, as previously seen, *Paul used both of these words ONLY ONE WAY throughout his epistles. He used these words to reference the main crux of his ministry — the good news pertaining to that encompassed within the mystery, which had been delivered to him, which he, in turn, had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world (Eph. 3:1-11; Col. 1:25-29).*

And the Christians to whom Paul ministered would have easily understood his use of these two words from the context of that which he had either previously proclaimed or written.

And, since this was the message of the hour, something which Paul had proclaimed to Christians throughout the Gentile world, something which Christians understood and would expect Paul to reference, they would easily know what he meant by his extensive use of the word “gospel.”

1) Central Thrust of Paul's Ministry

This *central thrust* of Paul's ministry becomes *self-evident* as one reads through the Book of Acts and the Pauline epistles. Paul proclaimed both *the gospel of the grace of God* and *the gospel of the glory of Christ*, and he proclaimed the good news pertaining to *the grace of God* with a view to then being able to proclaim the good news pertaining to *the glory of Christ*. Paul explained to individuals *HOW they could be saved*, with a view to subsequently being able to explain to them *WHY they had been saved*.

For example, note how plainly the matter is outlined in Paul's final message to the Christians in Ephesus, through their elders (Acts 20:24-32).

Or, for that matter, *note also how plainly the matter is outlined in Paul's epistle to the Christians in Ephesus (2:1-22). And similar verses can be seen in other epistles, NOT ONLY in the Pauline epistles BUT in Hebrews and the general epistles as well.*

(*BUT*, note that the Spirit's work among the unsaved, a passing from death unto life [Eph. 2:5], is sparingly dealt with in Paul's epistles. *And, evidently to avoid possible confusion, Paul NEVER dealt with salvation by grace in connection with the noun or verb forms of the word for "gospel."*)

The epistles are simply NOT about the gospel of grace. The epistles have been written to saved individuals, to those who have already passed from death unto life, relating and dealing with a continuing aspect of the salvation message, with a view to that which lies out ahead.

[This, for example, is completely in line with how Scripture deals with Abraham's salvation and calling.

Scripture has to do with the things pertaining to Abraham's calling, NOT with things pertaining to his prior salvation.

In fact, Scripture *DOESN'T* even deal with Abraham's prior salvation. Rather, Scripture, following a reference to Abraham marrying Sarah, begins with Abraham's call, at the age of seventy, continuing from that point. And verses such as Gen. 15:6, often used as a reference to Abraham's salvation, years following his calling (usually using Rom. 4:3), should be understood accordingly (cf. Gen. 11:27-12:3; Ex. 12:40, 41; Gal 3:8, 17, 18)].

2) Gospel of Grace Referenced, Dealt with, *BUT*...

Though the gospel of grace is, at times, referenced and dealt with in Paul's ministry, the word "gospel," *throughout Paul's entire recorded ministry, is ONLY used ONE time to reference the gospel of grace* (Acts 20:24). And Paul is careful in this section of the Book of Acts to clearly distinguish between the gospel of grace and the gospel which he had been taught by the Lord and called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world (cf. vv. 25, 26).

Some type distinction or explanation of this nature would, of course, have been completely unnecessary throughout the Pauline epistles. As previously stated, the Christians, with

whom he dealt, were quite familiar with the main focus of his ministry and would need no clarifying explanation.

As also previously seen, *the word “gospel” (in its noun or verb form) is NEVER used in the Pauline epistles to reference the gospel of grace. Paul used these two words ONLY ONE WAY throughout his epistles, which is a way that would have been understood by the recipients of his epistles in the first century.*

Paul used these words to reference the message taught to him by the Lord, which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world (cf. Col. 1: 5, 6, 23), *NOT as a reference to the gospel of grace.*

Thus, when you see the word “gospel” in the Pauline epistles, *KNOW that Paul is NOT referencing the gospel of grace. Rather, Paul is referencing the on-going aspect of the “good news.” KNOWING and ADHERING to the preceding will prevent ALL types of interpretative errors and problems in this realm.*

Existing Confusion

Because of the dual nature of I Cor. 15:1-4 *relative to the complete gospel message*, this passage will be used to illustrate *Paul’s ministry as it pertained to the gospel which he proclaimed.*

This whole passage is invariably used in an erroneous respect by Christians, not in a dual sense, but in a singular sense — *as a reference ONLY to the gospel of the grace of God.*

BUT, as will be shown, this passage begins, NOT with a reference to the gospel of grace BUT, a reference to the gospel of the glory of Christ (vv. 1, 2), then briefly moves back to the gospel of the grace of God (v. 3 [apart from the use of the word “gospel”]), and then comes back to where it began, to the gospel of the glory of Christ (v. 4) — providing the complete gospel message, covering past, present, and future aspects of salvation.

Paul, in this passage, *BEGAN with the CENTRAL message which he had been called to proclaim (vv. 1, 2).*

THEN he briefly moved back to the message of the gospel of the grace of God, which, of necessity, he had proclaimed to them "FIRST" (v. 3).

THEN he came back to the message which was to be proclaimed to individuals once they had heard the gospel of the grace of God — the CENTRAL message which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world (v. 4).

The problem emerges when a person attempts to *NOT ONLY* make Paul's reference to "the gospel" in verse one a reference to the gospel of the grace of God *BUT ALSO* make that stated in *ALL* three of the continuing verses refer to the gospel of grace as well.

Verses one and two, as evident from a plain reading of the text, *CANNOT possibly have to do with the gospel of grace.*

NOR can that seen in verse four, the burial and resurrection of Christ.

It is the "death" of Christ *ALONE, in verse three, which pertains to the gospel of the grace of God.*

The "burial" and "resurrection" of Christ move beyond this and have to do with things pertaining to the continuing good news, *the gospel of the glory of Christ* (from vv. 1, 2).

Note the type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve.

"Death" *ALONE* is seen in this chapter. "Death" had been decreed upon the firstborn, but God provided a way for this death to be carried out *in a vicarious manner.*

And it is EXACTLY the same today.

"Death" has been decreed upon the firstborn, but God has provided a way for this death to be carried out *in a vicarious manner.*

In the type, *this was done through the death of paschal lambs and the application of the blood from these lambs, reflecting back on "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).*

In the antitype, *THIS is done EXACTLY the same way.* The Paschal Lamb has died in the stead of the firstborn, but the

blood *MUST be applied* (through believing). The individual being “quickened,” made alive (Eph. 2:5), occurs *at THIS point*.

“Burial” and “resurrection” though move *BEYOND* this in the type — the Red Sea passage (burial), and emergence from the Sea on the eastern banks (resurrection [cf. Ex. 14:13-15:19; John 3:3-5; I Cor. 10:2]).

And it is EXACTLY the same in the antitype (Col. 2:12; 3:1ff).

(Note from the preceding that God has established His foundational truths *in the types, beginning with Moses*.

In this respect, *anyone NOT beginning with or ignoring the types can ONLY find himself building a superstructure [dealing with all subsequent Scripture] apart from a foundation upon which the structure can rest.*

And with the disdain for or little attention paid to the types today, is it any wonder that the Church finds itself in its current position, described in Matt. 13:33 and Rev. 3:17!)

1) I Corinthians 15:1, 2

The opening two verses, then commentary:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

As previously seen, verses one and two refer to the good news (the gospel) which Paul had previously proclaimed to those in Corinth, which they had accepted and upon which they presently stood.

In verse two, this good news is clearly seen having to do with *present and future* aspects of salvation (*NOT past*, as seen in the gospel of the grace of God), it has to do *with holding fast* to that which had been proclaimed (with the possibility

that there could be *loss*), and it has to do with Christians in Corinth *EITHER believing OR NOT believing* the message with reference to a *purpose (or cause)* in view.

The present and future aspects of salvation in this gospel are shown by the words, “By which also ye are saved [*lit.*, ‘...ye are being saved’],” referring to the Christians in Corinth.

Holding fast to the message proclaimed is shown by the words, “if ye keep in memory [*lit.*, ‘if ye hold (are holding) fast’] what I preached unto you.”

And *believing or not believing* the message with reference to a *purpose* in view is shown by the words, “unless ye have believed in vain [*lit.*, ‘...believed apart from a purpose,’ or ‘without a cause in view’].”

The present and future aspects of salvation have to do with *the salvation of the soul* (cf. James 1:21; I Peter 1:4-9). The salvation which we presently possess — *the salvation of the spirit*, wherein man passes from death unto life (Eph. 2:5) — places man in a position *where he can realize the salvation of his soul*.

And these two aspects of salvation *MUST ALWAYS be kept completely separate and distinct, one from the other*.

The thought of Christians *holding fast* to the things being proclaimed can be seen in the second and fourth warnings in the Book of Hebrews. The same word appearing in the Greek text of I Cor. 15:2 appears twice in the second warning (3:6, 14) and once in the fourth warning (10:23).

Holding fast in the second warning is with reference to “the heavenly calling” and “the hope” set before Christians (vv. 1, 6); and *holding fast* in the fourth warning is with reference to this same hope — “the profession of our faith [*lit.*, ‘the confession of the hope’]” (vv. 23-25).

Then, the thought of Christians *believing WITHOUT a PURPOSE (or CAUSE) can ONLY* be a reference to the fact that *a person has been saved for a REVEALED PURPOSE* — a purpose seen, in its entirety, in the gospel of the glory of Christ. And that purpose is the same as the purpose pertaining to man's creation in the beginning — "...let them have dominion" (Gen. 1:26-28).

Man has been saved *with a view to his one day occupying a position of power and authority with Christ in His kingdom, which has to do with realizing the present aspect of salvation at a future date — the salvation of his soul.*

Believing *WITHOUT a PURPOSE (or CAUSE) in verse two leads a person NOWHERE.*

An individual has been saved for a PURPOSE, which can be seen and understood ONLY through believing the gospel which Paul referred to in the previous verse.

And THIS is a PURPOSE which can one day be realized ONLY through presently governing one's life accordingly, set forth in verse two.

2) I Corinthians 15:3, 4

THEN, a continuation from verses one and two, *OR...*:

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures"

Paul's statement in verse three *is NOT at all* a continuation of the subject matter from the first two verses.

And this is really *self-explanatory*. Paul states this in so many words.

Note again *HOW* verse three begins: "For I delivered unto you *FIRST OF ALL THAT* which I ALSO received..."

THAT which he is about to reference is something which he had proclaimed unto them *FIRST* (prior to proclaiming the good news to which he had previously referred, in verses one and two).

And *THIS* is something which he had *ALSO* received (that is to say, he had received *THIS* in *ADDITION* to the good news referred to in verses one and two).

The message which Paul proclaimed unto those in Corinth *FIRST* can be seen by going back to I Cor. 2:1, 2:

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

Paul, when he *first* went to Corinth, couldn't begin with a message pertaining to the gospel of the glory of Christ, referred to in I Cor. 15:1, 2 (and also in I Cor. 2:1, preceded, as in I Cor. 15:1, 2, by a proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God [2:2; 15:3]).

When Paul *FIRST* went to Corinth, he found a city filled with unsaved Gentiles. And *he had to FIRST* minister to those in Corinth on this basis.

He had to FIRST proclaim the simple message pertaining to the gospel of the grace of God unto them. *He had to BEGIN* with “Jesus Christ and him crucified.” *He COULDN'T begin* elsewhere.

BUT, once individuals had believed, once individuals had been “quickenened,” made alive, *THEN Paul could move beyond this message*.

(Verse three, in actuality, deals with a dual aspect of the matter, seen first in the preaching of the cross to the unsaved, then to the saved [ref. the author's article, “The Preaching of the Cross”].

The word “first” [v. 3] would show that the subject matter at this point had to do with the unsaved; but the context in which verse three is placed would also show that the subject matter has to do with the saved as well.)

Paul, in the preceding respect, spent one and one-half years in Corinth “teaching the word of God among them [among those who had been saved under the preaching of the simple message pertaining to the gospel of the grace of God]” (Acts 18:11; cf. I Cor. 2:3ff).

And this is why Paul, in I Cor. 15:1, 2, could allude to these things through simply calling their attention to “*the gospel [‘the good news’] which I preached unto you...*” They would know EXACTLY what he meant, for he had previously spent *an extensive period of time* teaching them things pertaining to this gospel.

And they would ALSO understand the distinction when he moved back in time and referred to that which he, of necessity, had proclaimed to them “*first of all,*” which could ONLY have been the gospel of the grace of God (v. 3).

But, though moving back in this manner, Paul then came back to where he had begun — *continuing to reference things pertaining to the central message which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world* (v. 4).

(As previously seen, Paul, throughout his epistles to individuals and different Churches, used the word “gospel,” time after time, *in a singular respect*. Paul repeatedly used the word “gospel” to reference a message — *good news* — *directed to Christians, NOT a message directed to the unsaved*.

In this respect, it would make NO sense whatsoever to see Paul opening an epistle such as his letter to the Christians in Rome by referencing the gospel of grace. Paul, opening this letter, expressed a desire to travel to Rome in order to proclaim *the gospel — the continuing aspect of the good news — to the recipients of his letter, the Christians in Rome, to those who had*

already heard and responded to the gospel of grace [vv. 7-16].

And *EXACTLY* the same thing is seen in Galatians chapter one through Paul's reference to a gospel other than the one which he had proclaimed to them. Paul thought enough of this message that he pronounced *a curse* upon any who would pervert this message, whether men or angels.

During Paul's day, this message — this gospel, this good news — was proclaimed to Christians in Churches scattered throughout the Gentile world (cf. Col. 1:5, 6, 23).

THIS was the message of the hour, the central message proclaimed; and the contents of this message would have been familiar to practically any Christian.

And Satan's emissaries perverting this message would also have been an ever-present danger, particularly because of the central content of the message — *Christ and His co-heirs one day replacing Satan and his angels in the kingdom.*

Today though, the situation in the Churches has completely reversed itself. It would be extremely rare to even hear this message taught to Christians today.

Thus, there is really no existing message to pervert.

And the vast majority of the Bible teachers of the land find themselves keeping it that way by squelching any mention of the subject, calling it heresy, etc.

The curse in Gal. 1:8, 9 has to do with those perverting an existing gospel during a past day.

It will be left for the reader to make any application concerning the almost universal substitution of the gospel of grace for Paul's gospel in Gal. 1:6-12.)

Paul's Gospel, Hebrews, General Epistles

The epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, and General) were written by at least five — probably six — different men (the author of Hebrews being unknown), and certain individual distinguishing qualities and characteristics of the writers can be seen in their writings.

In Paul's case, his extensive use of the word "gospel" — *HOW and WHY* he used this word — forms a major trait which makes his writings uniquely different from those of any other writer of a New Testament book.

Paul, for evident reasons, appeared almost *obsessed* with this word, *using it far more extensively than any of the other writers.*

And he used the word both alone and through qualifying it various ways (e.g., "gospel," "my gospel," "gospel of God," "gospel of Christ," etc.), usually referring to the same facet of the overall gospel message, though possibly with different emphases.

Paul's writings comprise slightly less than one-third of the New Testament, but of the one hundred thirty-two times that the word "gospel" appears throughout the New Testament — in both its noun and verb forms (*euaggelion* and *euaggelizo* respectively) — almost two-thirds of these occurrences are found in the Pauline epistles.

The word appears twenty-three times in the three synoptic gospels, seventeen times in the Book of Acts, six times in the general epistles, and three times in the Book of Revelation.

BUT, Paul used the word eighty-two times throughout his epistles.

WHY did Paul use this word so extensively? The writer of Hebrews only used the word twice; James didn't use the word at all; Peter only used the word four times; John didn't use the word in either his gospel or his epistles, though he used it three times in the Book of Revelation; and Jude didn't use the word in his epistle.

Invariably, as previously seen, individuals want to associate the word "gospel" with *ONLY one thing* — *the good news pertaining to Christ's finished work at Calvary.* They see the word "gospel" in Scripture, and this is what comes to mind (particularly in the epistles, but often in the gospels as well).

And, looking at the word after this fashion, they seek to understand almost any portion of Scripture where this word appears, at least after some fashion, *SOLELY* in the light of the gospel of the grace of God.

And, interpreting Scripture after this fashion, they invariably end up with a perversion, *for the word “gospel” is simply NOT used this way throughout the New Testament.*

And erroneously understanding the word “gospel” to refer to Christ’s finished work at Calvary, in a text where it doesn’t, will *NOT ONLY* do away with that which the text does deal with *BUT* it will also often result in a perversion of the message pertaining to the simple gospel of the grace of God.

As previously seen, an example of this misunderstanding and misuse of the word “gospel” would be the manner in which I Cor. 15:1-4 is usually understood.

And the *SAME* thing seen in this passage would be true numerous places in the Pauline epistles when the exact wording of the text and the context are ignored and the word “gospel” is made to refer to something which the text doesn’t refer to at all.

Paul’s extensive use of the word “gospel,” particularly his extensive use of this word to refer to something other than the gospel of the grace of God, goes back to his experiences at the outset of his ministry.

Before Paul ever launched out on the ministry to which he had been called — *to carry the good news rejected by Israel to the Gentiles* — the Lord took him aside and taught him all the various things about the message which he was to proclaim.

And after this, as Paul went about fulfilling his calling, it was only natural for him to use the word “gospel,” meaning *good news*, to refer to the good news (which the Lord had personally taught him) which he had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world.

This “good news” had to do with *the mystery* revealed to Paul by the Lord (evidently after he had been taken to Arabia, then into heaven [II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11-17]).

This “good news” had to do with believing Jews and believing Gentiles being placed together in “the same body” as “fellowheirs [‘joint-heirs’]” (Eph. 3:1-11); and these Jewish and Gentile believers (Christians), together, possessed the “hope” of one day occupying positions of honor and glory with Christ in “his heavenly kingdom” (*cf.* Col. 1:25-28; II Tim. 4:17, 18; Titus 1:2; 2:12, 13; 3:7).

(Note particularly Titus 2:13 among the previous references in connection with the misuse and abuse of Scripture by expositors these days, associating “that blessed hope” *with the rapture*.

BUT, that’s NOT what the text CLEARLY states. And making the text say and teach something that it DOESN’T say and teach, DOES AWAY with what the text DOES say and teach.

Note that Titus 2:13 has two parts:

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

In the first part of the verse, “the glorious appearing” is a further description of “that blessed hope” (“that blessed hope,” which is “the glorious appearing”).

And in the second part of the verse, “our Saviour Jesus Christ” is a further description of “the great God” (“the great God,” Who is “our Saviour Jesus Christ”).

The preceding is not only seen in the construction of the Greek text but it can be seen in the English text as well.

The Book of Titus, as a whole, has to do with *things surrounding Christ’s return in all His glory, NOT with the rapture*.

And the reference to His return in all His glory in 2:13 is part and parcel with being “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life [‘age-lasting life’ (the millennial age)]; 1:2; 3:7], *which has to do with Christians having a part as co-*

heirs with Christ in that coming day.

BUT, as seen, Titus 2:13 is almost universally taught in Christendom to be a reference to the rapture, resulting in “that blessed hope” from the verse being extensively used as somewhat of a synonym for the rapture.

Note what glossing over this verse and ignoring the exact wording of the text, along with the context and the subject matter of the book as a whole, does to that which is actually being dealt with in the verse.

Then note what this does relative to incorrect teaching being extensively spread throughout Christendom.

And note this particularly in the light of the high premium that the Lord places on the message in this text and other corresponding parts of the Book of Titus *being proclaimed throughout the dispensation in a completely uncorrupted form* [“If any man preach ANY OTHER gospel...” (Gal. 1:6-12)].

For additional information on Titus 2:13 and the Book of Titus as a whole, refer to Appendix I, “The Hope,” in the author’s book, *The Rapture and Beyond*.)

Again, as previously seen, in his epistles, Paul referred to *the good news* which he had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Churches in the Gentile world as “my gospel” (Rom. 16:25), “our gospel” (II Cor. 4:3), “the glorious gospel of Christ [*lit.*, ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ’]” (II Cor. 4:4), “the gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1; II Cor. 11:7), “the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16; Gal. 1:7), etc.

Then, numerous times Paul simply used the word “gospel” alone to refer to *THIS good news* (Rom. 1:15; Gal. 1:6).

The fact that the mystery had been revealed to Paul, with Paul called to carry this message to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:2ff), is evidently *the reason WHY* he used the word “gospel” so often in his epistles. *It was ONLY natural* for him to refer to the message which he had been called to proclaim through the use of a word which meant “good news,” for *THIS message was good news*.

For the unsaved, Christ's finished work on Calvary was "good news." As unsaved individuals, THIS was THE BEST NEWS that they could ever hear.

BUT, once they had been saved, they were THEN to hear the "good news" about WHY they had been saved. And, as saved individuals, THIS was, as well, THE BEST NEWS that they could ever hear.

And Paul's ministry centered around the latter, NOT the former. Paul's ministry centered around proclaiming that which the Lord had revealed to him following his conversion, referred to as a mystery.

And the message contained therein dealt with the reason an individual had been saved (cf. Deut. 6:23); and THIS message was THE BEST NEWS redeemed man could ever hear, which was why Paul let NOTHING stand in the way of his proclaiming THIS message.

THIS "good news" had to do with the greatest thing God could offer redeemed man — positions as co-heirs with His Son, from a heavenly realm, in the coming kingdom.

To reference words which the writer of Hebrews used, it was "so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3).

And Paul's repeated reference to the message pertaining to this offer as "good news" is one of the distinguishing characteristics of his writings.