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The 'Gospel Coin'

By

Mark McGee

This article will be brief, but I hope helpful. I try to read through the Bible (Old and New Testaments) every year or two. It's not a legalistic thing. It's more of a 'I need this' thing. I've always been attracted to verses in the Bible that speak of how important God's Word is to living the Christian life. Maybe it's because I was an atheist for years that made me so hungry for the truth. Whatever it is, I need it.

One thing I've learned from 55 years of reading through the Bible regularly is that I learn something new each time. I often get ideas that lead to new articles, eBooks, ways to share the Gospel better, or to help Christians in their walk of faith.

One of the ideas that came to me is what I call 'The Gospel Coin.' I decided to share it with you in case you might find it helpful in sharing the Gospel with others or in your own walk with the Lord.

It's Everywhere!

The word 'Gospel' in the Greek means 'to bring good news' (*euaggelizó*). The Hebrew word for 'bring glad tidings' is *basar*. Someone who brings those glad tidings (good news) was called a *mevasser*. We find a good example in Isaiah 52:7:

"How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"

The reason I mention the use of the word in the Hebrew Bible is because the idea of the 'Gospel' (good news, glad tidings) is not just a New Testament idea. Jesus told His disciples in Luke 24:44-49 that they would find the good news about His death and resurrection in the 'Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms.' He told them that they were 'witnesses' of His life, death, and resurrection and that He would send 'the Promise of My Father upon you' (the Holy Spirit).

I read those words years ago and I took the challenge. Could I find the good news about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament? I did! Jesus Christ is the central figure of the Old Testament and the New Testament. That means He is the central figure in the entire Word of God!

The Coin



Grab a coin, any coin, and look at it. What do you see? Two sides. One side may have a picture of someone (e.g. former president). The other side may have another picture along with some words. Each coin has some value (e.g. penny, dime, quarter) as a whole, but what value would it have if I cut it in half and gave it to you to purchase something? You would probably refuse to accept it for payment because a coin cut in half has no value.

The same is true with the 'good news' about Jesus Christ in the Bible. One side of the 'Gospel coin' is about 'salvation.' The other side is about 'destruction.' Does that surprise you? How can destruction be part of 'good news?' Here are some examples:

God created Adam and placed him in a beautiful garden He had planted:

“And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Genesis 2:9

Good and evil? What's that all about? God told Adam he could 'freely eat' from 'every tree of the garden' except for one – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.' What would happen if Adam ate from that tree? 'for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' Good news and bad news. Eat from every tree except one – good news. Eat from the 'forbidden' tree – bad news.

Jump ahead one chapter to Genesis 3. The serpent (devil) deceived Adam's wife and they both 'fell into transgression' (1 Timothy 2:14). Bad news. God cursed the ground and reminded Adam that he would die (Genesis 3:17-19). Bad news. God told Eve that He would greatly multiply her sorrow and conception, and that she would bring forth children 'in pain' (Genesis 3:16). Bad news. God told the serpent (devil) that the 'Seed' of the woman would 'bruise' (*shuwph* – break, overwhelm) the head of the 'seed' of the serpent. Good news.

Eve gave birth to two sons – Cain and Abel. Good news. They grew up and Cain killed Abel. Bad news. God gave Adam and Even another son – Seth. Good news. Seth had a son named Enosh and people began to 'call on the name of the Lord.' Good news.

Salvation and Destruction

You can go through the entire Bible – every Book – holding that coin and flipping it from one side to the other – good news or bad news. It's everywhere! Genesis though Revelation. Read a passage of Scripture in context while holding the Gospel coin. Once you read the passage, decide whether it represents a statement of God's 'salvation' or God's 'destruction.' The 'good news' side of the coin represents 'salvation.' The 'bad news' side of the coin represents 'destruction.'

Select any section of the Old Testament and see that what I'm claiming is true:

- Torah (Law)
- Nevi'im (Prophets)
- Ketuvim (Writings)

The same is true in the New Testament from the Gospels, to the Book of Acts, to the Apostolic Letters. Here's a few examples:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

How would you flip the Gospel coin? Look at the words in context. To ‘perish’ is a word representing ‘destruction,’ but the words ‘everlasting life’ represent ‘salvation.’ Overall, the verse is good news – but buried in the text is a warning about bad news (perish). It’s good to point that out to people when you share the Gospel.

Too many Christians today have the idea that God is only ‘love’ and lacks any desire to punish people for their sins. About 50% of younger Christians think it’s wrong to try to change someone’s religious beliefs, so they don’t evangelize (e.g. [Barna Research](#), [Lifeway Research](#)). Does that fit with what Jesus Christ told His disciples to do? I don’t think so. If

you disagree, please contact me. I'd love to discuss that with you.

Here's another verse that demonstrates why Jesus came from Heaven to Earth:

“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8

How do you flip the Gospel coin for that verse? The purpose that Jesus Christ, God's Son, was manifested (phaneroó – revealed) was to 'destroy the works of the devil.' It's about destruction, so is that bad news? Not in this case. It's 'Good news! The 'curse' that began with the devil will soon come to a wonderful end.

Conclusion

The only way to 'rightly divide the word of truth' (2 Timothy 2:15) is to present both sides of the Gospel coin. Look at what Jesus taught and think about how you would use the Gospel coin with each thing He said:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Matthew 7:21-23

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ... Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels Matthew 25:31-34, 41

Inherit the kingdom. Eternal life. Good news.

Cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Bad news.

The apostles said the same:

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our

testimony among you was believed.” 2 Thessalonians
1:3-10

Good news. Bad news. The Gospel of Christ, just like the coin, must have both side to have any real value. Read the Bible from beginning to end. Hold the coin in your hand and turn it to one side or the other. You'll see how clearly God differentiates between good news and bad news. Both are necessary to understand God's holiness, righteousness, grace, and compassion. They fit together and have great value – just like the coin.

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