

## Chapter 2

### Just One Gospel

In John MacArthur's book "Faith Works" he states, "Some dispensationalists apply 2 Timothy 2:15 (Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH) as if the key word were DIVIDING rather than RIGHTLY...Some dispensationalists teach, for example, that 'kingdom of heaven' and the 'kingdom of God' speak of different domains. The terms are clearly synonymous in Scripture, however, as a comparison of Matthew and Luke shows (Mt. 5:3//Lk. 6:20; Mt. 10:7//Lk. 10:9; Mt. 11:11//Lk. 7:28; Mt. 11:12//Lk. 16:16; Mt. 13:11//Lk. 8:10; Mt. 13:31-33//Lk. 13:18-21; Mt.18:4//Lk. 18:17; Mt.19:23//Lk.18:24). Matthew is the only book in the entire Bible that ever uses the expression 'kingdom of heaven.' Matthew, writing to a mostly Jewish audience, understood their sensitivity to the use of God's name. He simply employed the common euphemism HEAVEN. Thus the kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of God" (p. 226). Other tendencies are to sever justification from sanctification, believers from disciples, etc. Paul was offering a different salvation from Jesus. Abuses of dispensationalism teaches that Jesus' gospel of the kingdom had nothing to do with Christians or the Church age. This philosophy has become a tendency to divide and disconnect related ideas. Grace becomes the basis for antinomianism (lawlessness).

Jesus said that the law and the prophets were taught and in effect until the time of John the Baptist. Since that time the message this is to be proclaimed is the Kingdom of God (Lk. 16:16). Jesus also said that the gospel of the Kingdom would be preached in all the world, to all nations, before the end comes (Mt. 24:14). The apostle Paul states that there is only one gospel and it is referred to as the preaching of the Kingdom of God and is used interchangeably with the term the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24-25).

The proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom was the only gospel preached by Jesus (Mk. 1:14-15), John the Baptist (Lk. 16:16), commissioned to the twelve (Lk. 9:1-6; Mk. 6:7-130), then to the seventy sent out by Christ (Lk. 10:1-12,16), Peter (Acts 2; 2 Pet. 1:10-11), Philip (Acts 8:5-8, 12), the apostle Paul (Acts 14:19-22; 19:8-10; 20:20-27; 28:23-31), James (Jas. 2:5), John (Rev. 1:9; Jn. 3) and all Christians throughout the end of the age (Mt. 24:14).

Within this message is the presentation and appeal to each individual to receive Jesus Christ as their King (Lord)-Saviour. To receive Jesus Christ the King and His salvation is the only way to be restored to a full relationship and fellowship with God (Acts 4:12). The potential of His Kingdom ruling with us is now possible through the power of His Holy Spirit living within us (Rom. 14:17; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:2).

The transference of individuals from Satan's authority to Jesus Christ's authority is described as movement from one kingdom unto another (Col. 1:13). The possibility of

reinstatement to God's ruler-ship is only possible through the forgiveness of our sins and the full redemption that is offered by the grace of God in Jesus Christ (Col. 1:13-14).

This present world system, also called this present evil age (Gal. 1:4), is under the sway of the wicked one (1 Jn. 5:19). We should be careful not to attribute Satan's destructive rule of disorder, sin, confusion, disease and tragedy as being the works of Almighty God.

The announcement of the Kingdom of God was the announcement of God's King, Jesus Christ overthrowing Satan's rule and works of darkness (1 Jn. 3:8). Jesus' rule is the offer of life and deliverance from the flesh and Satan's rule (Rom. 6:16-19; Gal. 5:16). Jesus' ultimate victory over sin, demonic forces, and Satan's right to rule men, was accomplished at the cross (Col. 2:13-15). It was Jesus' death and resurrection that is the sole foundation of a full reinstatement of relationship with God and ruler-ship under Him (Col. 1:13-14).

The sermon on the mount outlines some of the foundational characteristics of individuals who are willing to receive his rule and the Kingdom He brings (Mt. 5-7). Nine times in this teaching the "kingdom" is mentioned (Mt. 5:3, 10, 19, 20; 6:10, 13, 33; 7:21). Christ's rule calls for humility (Mt. 5:3), willing to suffer for righteousness' sake (Mt. 5:10), the teaching and practicing of God's commands (Mt. 5:19), a life of prayer (Mt. 6:9), the willingness to forgive others (Mt. 6:14-15), the seeking first of eternal values over temporal things (Mt. 6:33), and submission to Christ's Lordship in deeds, not in just words (Mt. 7:21).

Because the apostle Paul's ministry was primarily to the Gentiles, Paul substituted the word "king" with its Gentile equivalent "Lord" in speaking of Christ's Kingdom. In the Roman Gentile world "king" was not used but "Lord" was. "Lord" carried the idea of Deity, as well as one having maximum authority, the boss. Unbelievers confessed Caesar as Lord, while Christians took their stand for Jesus as Lord. This caused great persecution for many Christians under Roman rule.

Although God's Kingdom is now in spiritual form, manifesting power to those who have been born again by receiving a new heart (Ezek. 36:26; Lk. 8:15). There will be a future coming of the Kingdom of God at the end of this age (Mt. 6:10; Acts 1:6).

In the New Testament, Satan's kingdom stands over and against God's Kingdom (Col. 1:13). The kingdoms of this age are being controlled by Satan's deception (Mt. 4:8; Lk. 4:5). The opposition between the two kingdoms, Satan's and God's is acknowledged in 2 Cor. 4:4, as Satan is seen to rule by holding men in spiritual darkness away from the light of the gospel.

Jesus' commission to His disciples was to preach the gospel of His Kingdom (Lk. 9:1-2), cast out demons and overthrow Satan's power (Lk. 10:18), thus calling men through repentance and faith, into a new rule and deliverance from the power of

darkness. John's gospel calls this a new birth (Jn. 3:3, 5), Paul a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17, Ezekiel a new heart and spirit (Ezek. 36:26). It brings men righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

In Jesus' preaching He invited everyone to enter His Kingdom by opening their lives to God's rule (Mk. 1:15). The church is the fellowship of those accepting Christ's offer of salvation and submitting to His rule (Mt. 7:21-23).

Vine's Expository Dictionary states the Greek word for "kingdom" (basileia) denotes "the territory or people over whom a king rules ... the Kingdom of God is the sphere of God's rule ... but since the earth is the scene of universal rebellion against God, the Kingdom of God is the sphere in which, at any given time, His rule is acknowledged ... Henceforth God calls upon men everywhere, without distinction of race or nationality, to submit voluntarily to His rule ... that a man is of the Kingdom of God is not shown in the outward observance of ordinances, but in the deeper matters of the heart, which are spiritual and essential, 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit' - Rom. 14:17, (from notes on Thessalonians by Hogg and Vine, pp. 68-70).

The advancement of God's Kingdom is a direct result of it's preaching (Lk. 16:16; Acts 10:22; 11:14).

As proof that the Kingdom of God, the person and work of the King (Lord)-Saviour is the only gospel message to be preached in the New Testament, consider the following verses:

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## **JOHN THE BAPTIST**

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The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. SINCE THAT TIME, THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS BEING PREACHED, and everyone is forcing his way into it. Lk.16:16 NIV

Then said Paul, John...[said] unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. Acts 19:4

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## **JESUS**

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The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, **PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. Mk. 1:1, 14-15

To whom also He shewed Himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Acts 1:3

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## **THE TWELVE**

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Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And **HE SENT THEM TO PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take nothing for the journey-- no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. And they departed, and went through the towns, **PREACHING THE GOSPEL**, and healing every where. Luke 9:1-6 KJV; NIV

And he called [unto him] the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for the journey except a staff-- no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. But [be] shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them. And they went out, and **PREACHED THAT MEN SHOULD REPENT**. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed [them]. Mark 6:7-13 KJV; NIV

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## **A CERTAIN DISCIPLE**

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He said to another man, Follow me. But the man replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: **BUT GO THOU AND PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD**. Luke 9:59-60 NIV; KJV

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## THE SEVENTY

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After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

He told them, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, Peace to this house. If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. And heal the sick that are therein, AND SAY UNTO THEM, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME NIGH UNTO YOU. But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be sure of this, THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME NIGH UNTO YOU. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me. Luke 10:1-12,16 NIV; KJV

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## PHILIP

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Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and PREACHED CHRIST unto them. And the people with one accord GAVE HEED UNTO THOSE THINGS WHICH PHILIP SPAKE, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed [with them]: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But when they believed Philip PREACHING THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:5-8, 12

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## THE APOSTLE PAUL

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And there came thither [certain] Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew [him] out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had PREACHED THE GOSPEL to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and [to] Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls [i.e. strengthening the disciples] of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that WE MUST THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Acts 14:19-22

And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, DISPUTING AND PERSUADING THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia HEARD THE WORD OF THE LORD JESUS, both Jews and Greeks. Acts 19:8-10

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to TESTIFY THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, shall see my face no more. Acts 20:24-25

And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into [his] lodging; to whom HE EXPOUNDED AND TESTIFIED THE KINGDOM OF GOD, PERSUADING THEM CONCERNING JESUS, both out of the law of Moses, and [out of] the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and [that] they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND TEACHING THOSE THINGS WHICH CONCERN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. Acts 28:23-31

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## **JAMES**

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Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM WHICH HE HATH PROMISED TO THEM THAT LOVE HIM? James 2:5

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## **PETER**

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Therefore, my brother, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. 2 Pet. 1:10-11 NIV

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## **JOHN**

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I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and IN THE KINGDOM AND PATIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Rev. 1:9 (See also Jn. 3.)

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## **ALL CHRISTIANS THROUGHOUT THE END OF THE AGE**

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And this GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:14).

## Questions

1. **Read Luke 16:16.** Since the time of John the Baptist the only message that is preached and is to continue to be preached is: a. the Christmas story. b. the kingdom of God. c. the prosperity message.
2. **Read Matthew 3:1-2, 6.** John the Baptist message of the kingdom involved: a. repentance. b. baptism. c. the confession of sins, the acknowledgement of one's sins for the need of forgiveness.
3. **Read Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43.** Jesus said: a. I must preach the kingdom of God. b. it may be good to look into the subject of the kingdom. c. the reason I was sent was to preach the kingdom of God.
4. **Read Mark 3:14-15; Luke 9:1-2, 6.** The twelve apostles were sent to: a. preach the same message that Jesus preached, the kingdom of God. b. feed the multitudes. c. start Bible studies throughout Judea.
5. **Read Luke 10:1-2, 9-11.** Jesus appointed seventy to: a. attend church on Sundays. b. attend church on the Sabbath. c. heal the sick and preach the kingdom of God.
6. **Read Luke 9:59-60.** To those who followed Jesus: a. they were to preach the kingdom of God. b. build hospitals for the sick. c. visit local nursing homes on the week-ends.
7. **Read Acts 21:8.** The only evangelist who is named by name in the scripture was: a. Stephen. b. Philip. c. Billy Graham.
8. **Read Acts 8:5, 12.** The message of Philip the evangelist was: a. ask Jesus into your heart. b. ask Jesus to be your Savior. c. the kingdom of God and the person of Jesus the Christ.
9. **Read Acts 14:21-22.** Paul and Barnabas made it clear that: a. anyone signing up for the kingdom of God has to go through plenty of hard times. b. we must continue in the Christian faith. c. we should take it easy, what you do doesn't matter.
10. **Read Acts 2:36.** The apostle Peter concluded his sermon on the day of Pentecost by using the kingdom terms that God hath made Jesus: a. Lord (Master, ruler, boss). b. a good teacher. c. Christ (Messiah, anointed King).
11. **Read Acts 19:8-10.** Paul in the synagogue at Ephesus preached: a. the things concerning the kingdom of God. b. ask Jesus into your heart. c. the word of the Lord (Master), Jesus (Savior).

12. **Read Acts 20:20-25.** Within the preaching of the kingdom, Paul spoke of: a. repentance toward God. b. faith toward the Lord (Master), Jesus (Saviour), Christ (anointed king). c. grace. d. authority, God's rule, that is, kingdom.

13. **Read Acts 28:19-31.** Paul's ministry in Rome consisted of expounding and testifying about: a. the kingdom of God. b. the Roman road to salvation. c. the things concerning Jesus.

14. **Read Matthew 24:14.** The end shall come when: a. air pollution gets out of control. b. people quit reading the Bible. c. the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world.

## Answer Key

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