11 - The Gospel

I. Gospel comes from the Anglo-Saxon gōd-spell, “good tidings” or “good news”

 A. The name is generally given to the four divinely inspired accounts of the life, death, and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Bible

 B. “the gospel of the Kingdom”, the good tidings of salvation for all men through Jesus; or, most broadly, the whole revelation of salvation by Christ

 C. The Gospel is the Good News of our salvation in Jesus the Christ

 1. Incarnation of “God with us”

 2. Life and teachings of Jesus as He showed us the way

 3. His Pasion and resurrection

 4. His continuing ministry through His Church and Sacraments

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (Rom 1:1–6)

II. ORIGINS

 A. Old Testament prophetic writings, in particular Isaiah’s predictions of the Good News of salvation of Zion (Isa 40:9; 41:27; 52:7; 61:1). Isaiah 61:1 says that the “good news” is “to bring good tidings to the afflicted … to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.”

 B. the birth of an imperial heir to the emperor (Caesar) or the accession of a new emperor to the throne. That Luke uses the word in the latter sense is apparent in the proclamation of the births of John the Baptist (Luke 1:19) and Jesus (Luke 2:10). Likewise, John the Baptist announces the Good News (Luke 3:19), as does Jesus (Matt 4:23; Mark 1:35–39; Luke 4:43–44).

III. There are five main types of sacrifices, or offerings, in the Old Testament.

 A. The burnt offering (Leviticus 1; 6:8–13; 8:18-21; 16:24),

 B. the grain offering (Leviticus 2; 6:14–23), the peace offering (Leviticus 3; 7:11–34),

 C. the sin offering (Leviticus 4; 5:1–13; 6:24–30; 8:14–17; 16:3–22),

 D. the trespass offering (Leviticus 5:14–19; 6:1–7; 7:1–6).

 E. Each of these sacrifices involved certain elements, either animal or fruit of the field, and had a specific purpose.

 1. Most were split into two or three portions—God’s portion, the portion for the Levites or priests, and, if there was a third, a portion kept by the person offering the sacrifice.

 2. The sacrifices can be broadly categorized as either voluntary or mandatory offerings.

 a. The first was the [burnt offering](https://www.gotquestions.org/burnt-offering.html), a voluntary act of worship to express devotion or commitment to God. It was also used as an atonement for unintentional sin. The elements of the burnt offering were a bull, a bird, or a ram without blemish. The meat and bones and organs of the animal were to be totally burnt, and this was God’s portion. The animal’s hide was given to the Levites, who could later sell it to earn money for themselves.

 b. he second voluntary offering was the [grain offering](https://www.gotquestions.org/grain-offering.html), in which the fruit of the field was offered in the form of a cake or baked bread made of grain, fine flour, and oil and salt. The grain offering was one of the sacrifices accompanied by a [drink offering](https://www.gotquestions.org/drink-offering.html) of one-quarter hin (about a quart) of wine, which was poured into the fire on the altar ([Numbers 15:4–5](https://www.bibleref.com/Numbers/15/Numbers-15-4.html)). The purpose of the grain offering was to express thanksgiving in recognition of God’s provision and unmerited goodwill toward the person making the sacrifice. The priests were given a portion of this offering, but it had to be eaten within the court of the tabernacle.

 c. The third voluntary offering was the [peace offering](https://www.gotquestions.org/peace-offering.html), which consisted of any unblemished animal from the worshiper’s herd, and/or various grains or breads. This was a sacrifice of thanksgiving and fellowship followed by a shared meal. The high priest was given the breast of the animal; the officiating priest was given the right foreleg. These pieces of the offering were called the “[wave offering](https://www.gotquestions.org/wave-offering.html)” and the “heave offering” because they were waved or lifted over the altar during the ceremony. The fat, kidneys, and lobe of the liver were given to God (burnt), and the remainder of the animal was for the participants to eat, symbolizing God’s provision. The vow offering, thanksgiving offering, and freewill offering mentioned in the Old Testament were all peace offerings.

 d. The first mandatory offering was the sin offering. The purpose of the sin offering was to atone for sin and cleanse from defilement. There were five possible elements of a sin sacrifice—a young bull, a male goat, a female goat, a dove/pigeon, or 1/10 ephah of fine flour. The type of animal depended on the identity and financial situation of the giver. A female goat was the sin offering for the common person, fine flour was the sacrifice of the very poor, a young bull was offered for the high priest and the congregation as a whole, and so on. These sacrifices each had specific instructions for what to do with the blood of the animal during the ceremony. The fatty portions and lobe of the liver and kidneys were given to God (burnt); the rest of the animal was either totally burned on the altar and the ashes thrown outside the camp (in atoning for the high priest and congregation), or eaten within the tabernacle court.

 e. The other mandatory sacrifice was the trespass offering, and this sacrifice was exclusively a ram. The trespass offering was given as atonement for unintentional sins that required reimbursement to an offended party, and also as a cleansing from defiling sins or physical maladies. Again, the fat portions, kidneys, and liver were offered to God, and the remainder of the ram had to be eaten inside the court of the tabernacle.

 F. The sacrifices in the Old Testament pointed forward to the perfect and final sacrifice of Christ. As with the rest of the Law, the sacrifices were “a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ”

IV. Human sacrifices fall short

 A. God in infinite, so is our offense

 B. Infinite harm requires infinite repair; human damage can only be repaired by a human

 C. The good news – Jesus is God incarnate, true God and True Man!

 D. His offering of himself (infinite) as a human repairs the infinite damage caused by sin

 E. many ways to try to describe this

 1. Atonement

 2. Sin debt paid

 3. Purchase the rewards of eternal life

 4. All are metaphors, expressions

V. the Gospel proclamation in the NT did not imply the four Gospels as we have them today in written form.

 A. euangelion meant the Good News of the Kingdom.

 B. This difference forms a key element in understanding the place of the written Gospels in the process of handing on the Gospel proclamation.

 C. the understanding of the Gospel as representing the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ did not change even after the evangelists committed the Gospel to the written form. There was, after all, only one Gospel, and the appearance of four records of it did not represent four different Gospels, but rather individual accounts of the same Gospel.

 D. But fairly early, the word “Gospel” was also attached to the written accounts. This is already apparent in Saint Justin’s first Apology (46), when he writes of the “Memoirs of the Apostles which are called Euangelia,” manifestly pointing not to the one Gospel proclamation, but to the four books (CCC 2763).

 E. Indeed, after the Ascension of the Lord the Apostles handed on to their hearers what He had said and done. This they did with that clearer understanding which they enjoyed after they had been instructed by the glorious events of Christ’s life and taught by the light of the Spirit of truth. The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explaining some things in view of the situation of their churches and preserving the form of proclamation but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus. For their intention in writing was that either from their own memory and recollections, or from the witness of those who “themselves from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word” we might know ‘the truth’ ” concerning those matters about which we have been instructed (see Luke 1:2–4). (DV §§18–19)

 F. three stages in the tradition, “through which the life and teaching of Jesus have come down to us.”

 1. First, there was Christ’s teaching, and when he gave his teaching orally, he “used the forms of thought and expression prevailing at that time” and “adapted Himself to the mentality of his audience so that His teaching would be firmly impressed on their minds and easily remembered by His disciples.”

 2. Second, there was the apostles’ teaching, by which the apostles gave testimony to Jesus and proclaimed his death and Resurrection. In telling the story of Jesus’s life and setting forth his words, the apostles used words and phrases that were ideally suited to their audience, including such forms of speech as “catechetical formulas, narrative reports, eyewitness accounts, hymns, doxologies, prayers, and similar literary genres commonly found in Sacred Scripture and the speech of that period.”

 3. Third, the four Evangelists set down in written form the apostolic teaching, applying the methods that were best suited to their specific audiences and above all for the churches

VI. Among the more famous apocryphal gospels are

The Gospel of Basilides

The Gospel According to the Egyptians

The Gospel of Eve

The Gospel According to the Hebrews

The Gospel of Judas

The Gospel of Marcion

The Gospel of Matthia

The Gospel of Nicodemus (Acts of Pilate)

The Gospel of Peter

The Gospel of Philip

The Gospel Teleioseos

The Gospel of Thomas

The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles

The Gospel of Valentinus

The Protoevangelium of James