

## **1Tim 24-02-14a**

Good evening. Welcome to Wednesday night Bible study at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 14th of February, Valentine's Day 2024.

And we're going to continue the special that we started this past Sunday on the mystery, Paul's gospel of the mystery. I've got momentum on this and I want to push on through and continue that. So if you keep your notes in separate books, that's the book you need.

We'll take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study and we'll get started. Father, how grateful we are for this time of fellowship, the importance of not forsaking our assembly, of receiving the benefits and the uplift and the support from fellow members of the body of Christ who recognize how important it is to cultivate our daily walk before you and speaking the truth to one another in love, praying for each other, lifting each other up before your throne. What a privilege it is.

We thank you for that. We thank you for the privilege we have ourselves of coming into your presence, both to speak the the concerns that are on our hearts, to express our thanks and our praise, and also to remember each other and the challenges that face us. We also so appreciate that you speak to us through your word and the presence and ministry of your spirit.

We pray that as we look at these concepts from your word this evening, that the Holy Spirit will help us to not only understand them and see their importance, but to find that ground of application, the practical outworking of these truths in our onward progress through this life as we look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus to take us to himself and present us before your throne. So we pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.

The study that we undertook on Sunday pointed out that the word gospel is used to refer to different things. Euangelion means good news or the good message. And the angelion part of that is where we get the word angel.

And we're going to see as we go through tonight that there are messengers who carry this message. In most cases, both Old Testament and New, these messengers are heavenly messengers, angels of God, the angel of the Lord. But occasionally the word angel is used to refer to human messengers.

And that becomes important because even when the messenger is human, the message, the evangel, the good news is sourced in heaven. It comes from God and it is embodied and personified in the Lord Jesus Christ. The previous types of good news from heaven, the good news of the kingdom of God, the good news of the kingdom of heaven are indirectly associated with him.

In many cases, those who received the good news that God was going to fulfill his covenant promises did not specifically understand that the fulfillment of those promises would come through an individual. They had foretaste, they had prophetic vision of a coming king, a son of David, David's greater son, that there were Davidic expressions in the Psalms and in Isaiah, for example, that foreshadowed a great king from the line of David from the tribe of Judah. But the specifics were cloudy, imprecise, and largely unnecessary.

God gives us the necessary information at the point we need it. And sometimes we say, I would love to answer this question I have. I would love to delve into this deeper truth.

And it doesn't come to us because we don't need it. You think about Hebrews chapter 5 and chapter 6, where the author there, I think it's the Apostle Paul, says, I want to tell you about this high priest after the order of Melchizedek and these wonderful things related to Christ. But at such time as you ought to be teachers and able to pass on basic foundational truths, you have need that one teach you again the first principles, the basic principles of the doctrine of Christ.

And you are back needing milk and you can't chew solid food. And this is tragic. And so he bemoans that at the end of chapter 5, and then he goes on to say, but let's go on not laying again, the foundation that you so many of you have forgotten.

And so this foundation of a change of mind away from dead works and faith toward God, laying on of hands, baptisms, and so on. This, this is milk. This is the foundation.

But if you don't have a solid foundation, how can you possibly build? You're going to have a house on the sand. So we saw that the good news originally came to God's people, Israel. They are the descendants of Abraham, but not all of Abraham's descendants are included in this group.

It is Abraham's descendants through Isaac and Isaac's descendants through Jacob. It's not Ishmael. It's not the 17 princes, sons of Keturah.

It is not Esau. It is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Jacob's sons. Isn't it interesting that there's no tribe of Dinah? Wouldn't it be a great thing for feminism and, you know, the equality of men and women and, and women being equal partners and co-sharers in every way.

Why wasn't there a tribe of Dinah? You know, she was a sister to Reuben and Simeon and Levi and Judah and the rest. Why no tribe of Dinah? What happened to her descendants? Well, Lord only knows. And I digress.

But these are the kinds of questions you can kind of track, you know, go down to numbers. And when they're numbering the descendants of Jacob, does it ever say, and behold, Dinah married a guy from Laban's group and behold, she had these, she

disappears off the map. She just is an issue when you have Simeon and Levi disqualifying themselves after Reuben disqualified himself so that the rulership of the family comes down to the fourth son, Judah.

Be that as it may, the good news was the gospel of the kingdom. The good news that the kingdom is at hand, the fulfillment that comprehends the land promises. I will take you to a land, Abraham, wherever you place your foot, I've given you this land.

The promises of peace and relief from enemies and invasions all around of proliferation. Your numbers will be as the sand by the seashore and the stars in the sky. So shall your descendants be, Abraham, that they would be God's people and receive God's blessing.

That there would be a king from the tribe of Judah and the line of David that would sit on the throne of Israel. Be the man after God's own heart and rule in accordance with God's will. So you have the Palestinian covenant, the covenant of the land.

You have the Abrahamic that they would be a blessing to all nations and all the families of the earth would be blessed that they would shine as a light to the Gentiles, the Davidic covenant, the son who would sit on the throne and so forth. So when John the Baptist comes after three or four centuries of complete silence, no prophetic communication whatsoever. Here comes John dressed in camel's hair, eating locusts and wild honey, shouting to the cliffs down by the Jordan, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The kingdom of God is imminent. He is the forerunner. There is one coming after me whose sandals I'm not worthy to latch.

I baptize you with water. He will baptize you with the Holy spirit and with fire. Then comes the Lord Jesus and John decreases.

The Lord Jesus increases as John said would happen. And the Lord Jesus comes preaching, repent. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The kingdom of God is near. This is the good news. To whom is this gospel given? As we saw on Sunday, it is the nation of Israel only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Go not in the way of the Gentiles. Jesus tells the 12 when they go forth in teams of two, go not in the way of the Gentiles and only go to people who are receptive. If you go into a village and they won't accept your message, leave, shake the dust off your feet.

If a house accepts you, grant it your peace. If they run you off, let your peace return to you. That was the gospel of the kingdom.

Jesus preached that gospel all the way up until the 14th chapter of the gospel of John. Halfway through the 13th chapter, Jesus shifts gears and we have a new facet, a new

aspect of the good news of God's blessings on mankind in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. It becomes clear that the Old Testament covenant promises, the Old Testament good news of the kingdom will be fulfilled in and through the Messiah, Yeshua Mashiach, Jesus the Christ.

Peter says, You are the Christ, You are the Anointed One, You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. That is the great confession, but it's still the Old Testament good news. That doesn't broadcast peace and salvation for the Gentiles.

This is the good news for Israel, but when that news is presented and they do not respond, there is a response called for by the bear fruit in keeping with repentance. The axe is laid at the root of the trees. The Messiah is coming and he's got his winnowing fan in his hand.

He is going to separate the wheat and the chaff. He's going to gather the wheat into his barn and he's going to burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. There is response required when this news is given.

It creates a decision point. Israel is considered to be, is treated as people of God, related to God by covenant and by promise. They're not distinguished in terms of saved and unsaved, the way we think of those terms.

Israel is treated in mass. You are the people of God. You are the descendants of Abraham.

And for, as we used to say, teaching gunnery at the Fort Sill, for purposes of instruction, you are the people of God. Are there exceptions? Will there be those who are going to end up in the lake of fire? No doubt. But the group is treated as, considered to be, related to God by faith, belief in God, under Hebrews 11, 6, the Old Testament criteria of salvation.

If you believe that God is, and if you believe that God rewards those who diligently seek him, even if you yourself are not a diligent seeker, if you believe in your heart of hearts that there is a God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a God of our fathers, and that he will reward those who seek him, that's salvation in the Old Testament sense. They didn't know the name of Christ. They didn't anticipate an individual personal savior.

Didn't know that somebody would come and fulfill the shadows and types of the Levitical offerings. They didn't know that. They didn't understand it.

Those who progressed, those who asked for the Holy Spirit, those who wanted to know more of the plan of God came to understand and to anticipate those things. But they were a Most of Israel believed in God, and that was as far as they got. So what is the good news? The fulfillment of God's promises is going to take place.

The detail, the unfolding of the accomplishment of those promises in Jesus Christ came in the generation of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus 2,000 years ago. That did not exhaust the plan of God. That did not fulfill everything that God intended for the human race.

And it turns out there was a mystery. There was an unrevealed part of God's plan and purpose that the Old Testament prophets never saw, that John the Baptist never preached, that the Lord Jesus himself did not reveal, except in very vague anticipatory terms. He doesn't reveal it even to his own disciples until the upper room discourse.

And this is what we're going to talk about tonight, because Paul is the apostle of the revelation of this mystery. Not Peter, not John, not John's brother James, Philip, Thaddeus, Nathaniel, Andrew, James the Less, Simon the Zealot, none of those understood this mystery. It is revealed to the apostle Paul.

I'm going to give you a seven-fold description of this revelation, and I am indebted to W.A. Criswell for this outline. So the Lord Jesus does anticipate this in Matthew chapter 13, Matthew 13, 9 through 13, to which, please turn. Matthew chapter 13, Jesus is speaking to the people of Israel in parables.

And when you look at the red ink in 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, the parable of the seed, parable of the sower, Jesus concludes in chapter 13, verse 9, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. There is something being transmitted at a higher frequency on a different channel. There is some spiritual truth here that transcends the immediate and the temporal.

And the obvious, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. So the disciples in verse 10 of chapter 13 of Matthew, the disciples came and said to him, why do you speak to them in parables? Why don't you just say things plainly? You talk about seeds, you talk about trees, you talk about treasures buried in a field, you talk about leaven, you talk about trees that are known by their fruit, you talk about these inscrutable things, and people are just getting confused. Here's the thing.

It is true then, and it is true now. When God is revealing truth, those who have ears to hear, have those ears by choice. It's not sovereignty, it's not an inscrutable election, it is choice.

If we have eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart that is receptive into which the seed of the word can be planted and it will sink its roots and bear its fruit, this is a choice. When the truth is not stated plainly and obviously, there's a reason for it. Even if Jesus had stated everything plainly, these people who do not have eyes to see and ears to hear, who don't have pliant and receptive hearts, would have twisted it, would have misconstrued it, would have misapplied it, would have distorted it, perverted it, corrupted it.

So Jesus lays it beneath a shell. I remember when I was a child, contact, the allergy medicine, used to talk about this outer shell that you swallow, and it gets down into your system, and that shell doesn't dissolve for a little while. But inside that capsule, there are tiny time pills, and they are different colors, and they dissolve at different rates.

And this is what would allow the medicine to be in your system, not just an immediate jolt that would quickly wear off, but to sustain a level of antihistamines and decongestants in your system for hours, because the little tiny time pills didn't get digested right away. They persisted, and the outer capsule would preserve them until they could get far enough down the system to then begin to release in a timed fashion. Some of them had quick dissolve coatings.

Others of the little tiny time pills took them a good while before the acids and the digestive fluids would eat through and release them and place them into the bloodstream. Well, there are people who are getting these capsules of Jesus' teaching in the parables, and it just goes right through their system. They don't ever digest it.

They don't get its benefit. It doesn't get into their bloodstream because their hearts are hard. They have closed their eyes.

They have stopped up their ears. It isn't what they want to hear. Have you ever heard somebody from the other political party, from the one that you sympathize with, trying to justify their policies? Every point they make, you're just like, wait a minute.

That's not right. No, no, no. I don't believe with that.

I don't agree with that. That doesn't comport with my grasp of reality. It can't sink in.

You can't consider it. You can't be converted or persuaded by it because, no, no, no. No, I'm sorry.

But every word you say is bouncing off of me like water off a duck because I don't agree. I don't consent to that. It doesn't match my understanding at all.

Somebody's been beating you with a wrong stick. You're wearing a hat that says W-R-O-N-G. And everything that comes out of your mouth, I reject.

Well, think of that feeling and think about the Pharisees and the scribes and the elders and the chief priests and others who had grown comfortable in the religious system of Judaism. And when Jesus came with facts and truth and the presentation of the kingdom of God, that was their reaction. You think about your instinctual visceral response to things with which you violently disagree.

Well, that's how they felt. Seeing they see and do not perceive. Hearing they hear and do not understand.

Their heart has grown callous. Now, we like to think that we're right and this stuff that we're rejecting, we're rejecting it because it's wrong. In this case, Jesus was bringing the truth of God, the gospel of the kingdom of God, being communicated by the king, and they were having none of it.

Visceral, bitter, utter and total rejection. We have to be careful. There is a way that seems right to a man and the outcome is death.

The ends thereof are the ways of death. And to be too trusting of our little I'm right meter and to think I am right because I feel right. Our understanding, our digestion of facts and information, our parsing of circumstances has to be based on the standards of the word of God.

We have to build our house on this rock. And when somebody wants to hang a picture on our wall and we say, that's not straight. Well, is the picture straight and my wall is crooked or is my wall straight and the picture is crooked? They're out of alignment, but why? Humility says, let me go back to the word.

Let me prayerfully consider. Let me cultivate the testimony of the Holy Spirit before I reject this out of hand. I could be wrong.

ICBTA is a little acronym. ICBTA, write it in your notes. I could be the wayward person.

I could be the person that's out of whack. I could be the donkey. I could be the mule.

It's a really funny thing at Navy. They had a tendency for a while. Everybody was getting their nicknames based on the last syllable of their last name.

So Bender was Durr and Hamner was Nurr. Well, if you've only got a one syllable last name, it doesn't really work. And so they would then, if you had a bad last name for that purpose, then they would go to your first name.

And so a guy I played volleyball with, really great guy, passed away a few years ago, good friend of mine for three years at Navy. But he would always call me mule because it's Sam Mule. And I thought, I don't want to be the mule.

That's a hardheaded, recalcitrant, non-compliant person. But anytime I saw Alden Salcedo, and of course he had a great last name, so we called him Sal. He was Salcedo, so he's Sal.

And we typically played next to each other for those three years. And so there was Sal and there was mule, and that was the two of us. I could be the mule.

I could be, and there are stronger terms that start with A that you can put there, and you need the shock. You need to put that word in there and say, I could be the bad guy in this situation. It could be me.

And humility considers that as one of the first possibilities. Humility says, I'm not always right. And just because I think I'm right, and just because I feel right, and just because I've got a few other people I hang around with, and they agree with me.

How many Pharisees hung out with other Pharisees? How many scribes hung out with other scribes? How many priests hung out with other priests? How many elders hung out with the other elders? There was a whole culture of mutual admiration. When the good news comes, sometimes the good news is bad news, because I am not in a position to receive the benefits being announced in this good news. I'm not right.

I'm not good. I'm not ready. I'm not prepared.

Jesus spoke in parables to people who weren't ready, and weren't right, and didn't consider the ICBTA. He's wrong. He's goofy.

He tells these strange stories. I don't know what he's talking about. Certainly doesn't apply to me.

This guy needs to go. And ultimately, their rejection turned to animus, to hatred, and to active, sinful, overt plans to murder him, to murder him. And this made sense, and seemed right, and they got together in groups.

Oh yeah, yeah, we agree. We need to slay this man for talking in ways we don't like, so we'll kill him. Remember the parable Jesus told of the servants who were left in charge of the field, and the man went away, and he sent back servants to collect the proceeds, and they beat up the servants.

And so he said, well, I'll send my son. They'll respect him. And when the owner sends his son, they said, this is the heir.

Let's kill him, and we'll take possession of the field. And they slay the son of the owner. Perfect description of what was happening, and what was about to happen in Israel.

What kind of a dent did it make? The fact that the son has been sent is good news if you're on the right side of the plans and purposes of God, but it is not good news if you reject it. And if you hate the son, let's kill him, and we can take what belongs to him. And that's exactly what the religious leaders did.

However, there is good news even embedded in that, and we'll see it when we're looking at the revelation of this mystery. But Paul is on the other side of the cross, and as a result of the cross, the unrevealed... Can you imagine what would have happened if MacArthur had revealed his plans for defeating Japan in the South Pacific? Can you imagine what would have happened if Eisenhower had revealed his plans in Europe ahead of time, and the enemy knew about D-Day, and knew about the invasion of Normandy, and knew about these various dispositions of truths, and a faint F-E-I-N-T,

where you fake like you're going to strike in one place, and they built cardboard tanks, and cloth-covered silhouettes of airplanes, and so on, so that aerial reconnaissance would think there was a big buildup, and it was all fake. It was a shell.

That's not where the action is. That's not where the concentration of force is coming. Camouflage, deception, hit them where they ain't, strategy of the indirect approach.

This is how battles are won. There is a great deal of the plan and purpose of God that was not revealed in former times. This is what we're going to see.

If the princes of the world had known the mystery, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. It always reminds me of playing chess. You know what a fool's mate is if you've played any chess at all.

One of the first defeats that will be inflicted on you when you're learning to play chess, somebody that knows a little more, you move the wrong pawn, there's a bishop, there's a queen, and there's another move, and you're checkmate. It's like four moves to checkmate, the fool's mate. Later on in the game, as you get more sophisticated, you've got your king safely ensconced behind a couple of three pawns, and you're moving your people around.

All of a sudden, out of nowhere, a rook or a queen goes down to the eighth rank, and it's checkmate. Your king is in check. He can't move out.

He's trapped behind his own people. You can't take the queen. You can't move anything to interfere.

If you do, she just takes it, and you're still checkmated, and it's all over. Once that happens to you a few times, you learn to really watch and make sure that nobody can slide a rook or a queen down there and trap your king behind his own lines. That's exactly what happened to Satan.

That's what happened to the princes of the world. They didn't figure that this ultimate gambit, a gambit is a sacrifice. You put a piece out there and let your opponent take it, and when he takes it, he's done.

He's defeated. He may think he's ahead on points, but you run your rook or your queen down, and it's checkmate. You think, well, but I just took a rook.

Well, you took the wrong one. You weren't watching. You won the battle and lost the war.

If they had known the mystery of God's purpose in Christ, they would have never crucified the Lord of glory. They crucified him because they thought that was the way to win. That was their defeat.

It was in the crucifixion. It is through the cross that the crown comes. It is through that gambit that the sin problem is solved, and it is through that that a new people of God is revealed.

Satan and his minions thought that God's plan was always and ever concentrated in Israel. He had Israel under the thumb of his Roman legions. Rome was a satanic empire, and the people of God are subject, and Satan thinks, you know, eventually I'm just going to run the legions of Titus in there.

I'll wipe them out. I'll scatter them. There can't be a kingdom.

There can't be a king. There can't be. I'll defeat God.

He'll never be able to fulfill his promises, and here is the heir. Here is the lion of the tribe of Judah. Here is a son of David.

I'll kill him, and God's plan can never be fulfilled. I tried to subvert him by offering the kingdoms. I tried to subvert him by getting him to turn stones into bread.

I tried to subvert him by getting him to jump off the temple. I couldn't be fooled. I'll just kill him, and I'll use his own people to do it.

It's genius. It's brilliant. I'm going to win the strategic conflict with God in heaven.

I'll outsmart him, and there was never a more fervent celebration in the dark realms than the day the Lord Jesus died on the cross. Satan figured he had won. Little did he know.

If he had known, he would have never perpetrated the crucifixion. He would have tried anything else. Never crucify the Lord of glory.

Lord of glory, and it is in that seeming defeat that the victory is won. Many times in our lives, there are circumstances that seem to be defeating us, that seem to have us on the ropes, that seem to be sucking away the love and the joy and the peace, and our long-suffering takes away our gentleness and our goodness, erodes our faith, makes us want to take charge of the reins and no longer be humble, no longer be meek. It drives us to the point where we're tempted to lose our self-control.

Those are the moments where God can bring the same kind of victory that he achieved at the cross, because after these hardships and after these difficulties and after these setbacks and seeming dead ends in our life, the secret of the resurrection, the mystery of the resurrection is revealed. You don't see it coming. You've got to operate in faith.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The glory of the Lord Jesus Christ was not seen. There was vague anticipation.

There was seeing through the glass darkly. You go to Numbers and the prophecy of

Balaam, I see him now, but not near. The star that is going to rise in Jacob and smite the brow of Moab and crush the skull of Sheth, he's going to shatter Moab's head and he's going to crush the skull of Sheth.

And you think, what is that about? Well, nobody can figure it out, least of all Satan. He should have thought back to Genesis 3.15. He will crush your head. You will bruise his heel.

This scepter that is going to arise out of Israel, this star that is going to come out of Jacob and is going to smack the head of Moab and crush the skull. This is a great, by the way, if you want a little refrigerator magnet verse, something to hang in your car. The star is going to arise, the scepter is going to appear, and he's going to crack the head of Moab and crush the skull of Sheth.

I love that. Crush the skull. But notice the beginning.

I see him now, but not near. It's far off. It's not now.

It's not near. Don't think that resolution and elimination of the conflict is going to happen now or even in the near future. It's coming, but not now.

I see him, but not near. But when he comes, there's going to be some skull crushing going on of these enemies, and what a victory day it's going to be. We will celebrate the crushing of the enemy's skull.

That's a great Christian motif. They ought to have t-shirts and things. He has crushed the skull of Sheth.

Oh boy, that's worth waiting for. Well, we're going to take our break, and when we come back, we're going to see the seven aspects of the gospel, the good news that were a part of this mystery, unrevealed until after Christ, unrevealed until they were given to the Apostle Paul. He is the steward of these mysteries, and if you miss Paul, as so much of progressive Christianity is doing, it's saying, you know, it's all about Jesus.

We're Jesus people, Jesus followers. We're going to be disciples of Jesus. We're just going to live the Sermon on the Mount.

It's all about fulfilling the law. Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor. That fulfills the law.

You're done. You're over. You're history.

You missed it. That's the old covenant good news, and you've missed the new covenant good news, the new covenant founded on new and better promises. We're going to see this seven-fold revelation, gigantic, colossal, galactic good news that the Old Testament good news never comprehended, never saw coming.

We'll see it when we come back from break.