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The Gospel in a nutshell

Creation, fall, redemption, eternity

Bible passages: Genesis 1-3; John 1-3; Revelation 20-22

Introduction

To understand the message of the Gospel, the above passages from the Bible must be read carefully. The Bible is such an important book that one should own one and read it regularly. Our Western Christian culture has been shaped by it, but many people no longer know this foundation of life and faith. This major deficit urgently needs to be changed. The passages needed for a very first proper understanding of the Bible are the first 3 chapters (Gen 1-3), then the first 3 chapters of the Gospel of John and the last 3 chapters of the Bible (in the book of Revelation, which is mysterious to many). This is followed by a brief presentation of the Gospel. If you want to know more, do not limit yourself to these chapters, but read something from the Word of God every day and reflect on it with earnest prayer. God reveals Himself to man in the most wonderful way through His Word, and He still speaks to man today through the Holy Scriptures.

What is meant by the term Gospel? The word gospel means "good news". After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the gospel is preached by the apostles. It builds on the truths of the Old Testament. The New Testament, under a different sign, is in a sense the continuation of the Old Testament and inseparable from it. Thus the Gospel reached Europe, or rather Rome (Rom. 1:7ff.). From then on, it was and is proclaimed by God's faithful witnesses all over the world.

To understand the Gospel, one must first know and believe the very first revelations of God. So for this short version, one must read the first 3 chapters of the Bible,

starting from the first book of Moses, called *Genesis* in other translations, i.e. origin. From there, the whole truth is developed. Without accepting and believing the truths at the beginning of the Bible, one cannot understand the whole of Scripture.

Creation

When God begins to speak to man, usually through the Scriptures, He first reveals Himself as the sovereign Creator-God. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". No man can know or infer the beginning unless God reveals it. Unbelieving man thinks otherwise, so that he does not need to believe in God, and thinks he owes Him no responsibility as a creature to his Creator. "The fool says in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1-3). These two views, Creation or Evolution, are diametrically opposed. Recognition of God as Creator is a matter of unconditional obedience by faith (Heb. 11:1, 3 and 6).

Compromise never leads man to the goal of recognising God and *His* actions. Those who adhere to the theory or doctrine of evolution (a pseudo-religion) should ask themselves why they want this. Has man not fallen morally deep from the living eternal God, who is the Creator of all things, including man? How does man become free from the power of sin, that separates him from God? Is there no connection? Because man does not want to return to God, he hardens his heart more and more, i.e. it becomes more and more insensitive to the work of God's Spirit. Man usually hides behind this unbelief under scientific pretexts, thus misleading himself and others. These so-called scientific proofs of man have long since been refuted by God through the Holy Scriptures, the Bible (Rom. 1:18-25).

Creation (the entire universe) itself bears witness to the glory of its Creator; and the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims the work of His hands (Psalm 19). So there is no excuse or apology when you have to stand before your Creator one day and God calls every human being to account at the end of human history (Rev. 20:11-15). This truth, communicated at the beginning of the Word of God, cannot be denied by any human being.

Current science has explored the endless vastness of the universe. Galaxies are arranged in structures of unfathomable size. Scientists have discovered the tiniest details. Never before has the density of information in human DNA been so comprehensively explored and the majestic plan of God the Creator behind it. As a result, one can see that an indescribably higher intelligence than man himself possesses, is behind all the intricate beings we can see. Again and again, Holy Scripture is confirmed, which says of the Creator: „For the invisible things of him

from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20ff.). But the more the natural man examines, the less he believes in God, it seems. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22). For if man does not believe God and *His Word* and does *not* acknowledge *Him*, he falls from folly to folly.

Therefore, be honest with yourself and just face this truth. The ostrich puts its head in the sand so that it doesn't see the danger coming towards it. But when real danger is upon you, don't deny the truth of God. Read on from this truth and believe in the Holy Scriptures, the Bible. „But without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6); for who that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.“ God is the one, sovereign Creator who created the heavens and the earth in six days about 6,000 years ago.

Chapter 1 of the Bible (Gen. 1) says that God began by creating light, the earth with its oceans, plants and trees, then the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day, then the birds and fish and finally on the sixth day the mammals and, as the head of creation, Man: the man and the woman. After this climax, God rests from all His work that *He* created. So the whole value of man lies in the fact that he was created by God with body, soul and spirit. He did not arise by chance and did not evolve higher over millions of years. This is the lie of evolutionary thinking, which denies with transhumanism, that man has a soul and spirit. Salvation history clearly shows that God so loved man that He sent His only Son to this world for the salvation of man who was separated from God.

Then we have arrived at chapter 2 (Gen. 2). There we find the description of the ideal conditions in which God the Creator placed man: a paradise garden where everything he needed was available and where he could live in communion with God. God regularly visited man, Adam and Eve, in this garden to speak to them. There was no sin then, so no suffering, no lack, no death. Man was supposed to maintain and cultivate this garden, and thus found there his duties and fulfilment to develop the abilities God had given him. To remind man as a creature of the relationship between God the Creator and himself, God had given a commandment: he was just not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, otherwise he would have to die (Gen. 2:16-17).

Until then, man in his innocence knew only the good. How lucky. To be truly happy, it is better to know no evil. God wanted to protect man from this. That was the beautiful and good beginning of God's creation. In this we see the goodness of God and also that He wanted to have an unhindered fellowship with man. Man had the

ability to do so because, unlike the creation of mammals, he had received the breath of life from God. He was thus a creature of God with spirit, soul and body. That is why man still has a deep longing for God and can only be happy when he enjoys unhindered communion with his Creator.

Fall and redemption

After sin entered the world, we know that things became very different. This is now described in our chapter 3 (Gen. 3). It was important and good that man had been commissioned by God to keep the garden (Gen. 2:15). Was there any possible danger? This came through Satan, embodied in the serpent, who tempted man by his cunning. Satan does the same thing today by the same method of asking questions and pure lying: Had God really said that? In this way, Satan then and still today created doubt in man's heart whether God always speaks the truth. God cannot lie, we read in Scripture (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18). Satan, however, is the *murderer of man from the beginning and the father of lies* (John 8:44).

After Adam's wife Eve had listened to the serpent in the Garden of Eden, without immediately calling her husband to inform him of this new situation, she was deceived by the cunning serpent. The serpent openly portrayed God as a liar. It suggested that God wanted to withhold something from man, which would make them always under God. If they ate of the fruit, they would become like God and know what is good and evil (Gen. 3:1-7).

Lucifer, the prince or archangel (*i.e. shining star, son of dawn; an anointed cherub* (Ezek. 28:14), who fell through pride against God and was therefore banished or rejected by God (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:13-17), became God's bitter adversary. Thus, the sin of pride also brought down the first human couple in Paradise, Adam and Eve. In the process, 3 forms of lust emerged:

1. good, tasty food (*the carnal, physical pleasure*),
2. the lust of the eyes (*covetousness in the soul*), and
3. the desire to become wise and enlightened, this concerned the mind (1 John 2:16).

In all areas, Satan attacked man both frontally and cunningly and covertly, resulting in the deep fall and separation from his communion with God. The Fall changed man completely and permanently. Since then, man knew evil and was trapped by it. The serpent had hidden this terrible consequence from man. The judgment of

death began with man's spiritual death: since then there has been an unbridgeable barrier between the absolutely holy God and sinful man. God is absolutely holy and pure in His being; He is light. Man had lost his innocence. In his fall, he took the whole creation with him into death and destruction (Rom. 8:19-22). His physical death was only a matter of time. But God still gave man time to come to his senses and repent. But man does not always have time, as he may think (Heb. 4:1-7).

God calls man to account and starts with the one with the highest responsibility and calls him with the words: "Where are you?" Do you also hear these words when God calls? Where are you really, what is wrong with you? Adam does not simply say, "God, here I am," but he starts apologising and he indirectly blames God. God keeps asking and Eve also apologises and refers to the serpent. God does not question the serpent, but passes judgment on it. Then God gives an important prophecy: there shall be enmity between the serpent (Satan) and the seed of the woman (not the man): „It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

So this points to a future event: from the woman would be born a Man (a Saviour) who would break the works of the devil. This was manifested when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth as a Man (1 John 3:8). But He had to suffer for this, and His career on earth would be interrupted – the bruising of the heel speaks of this. Many ancient mythologies have dealt with this great truth, so great was the subject that occupied man, but we find the fulfilment only in the New Testament. *It is as it were a declaration of war by God to Satan, after deceiving man, about the cosmic battle that will end in a Man's victory! We see this battle throughout Scripture.* But God does not leave it at that. He punishes the guilty: the woman suffers when she gives birth to offspring, and the man suffers the consequences of the curse of the ground. The way to the happy Garden of Eden is blocked. Hard life on the cursed earth is the consequence in God's government with man (Gen. 3:15-19).

But the question after these events remains: Did God want to deprive mankind of something? Did He not really love the humans, Adam and Eve? The angelic world witnessed the creation and these events. God did not immediately perform the final judgement. No, He showed His great mercy and love to fallen man. Instead of the meagre covering of fig leaves (*self-righteousness does not give man the proper clothing*), God slaughtered animals and clothed man with the skins of these animals (Gen. 3:21). God Himself thus brought the sacrifices, which means that man does not have to die physically immediately. This points to future sacrifices and ultimately to the once and for all conclusive sacrifice that God Himself brought, the

Lamb of God (Jesus Christ), who takes away the sin of the world. We read about this in the Gospel according to John (John 1:29,36).

The six days of creation also show God's systematic work in salvation history. The story of the Fall does not end with immediate judgement, which would have affirmed God's holiness, but would have left no room for the plans of His unfathomable love. Salvation history is a development of God's revelation to man. God shows man more and more of Himself: not only as the Creator, but then as the Judge over the earth, at the Flood, then as the Lawgiver to His earthly people Israel, then as the Redeemer, finally as our loving God and Father. God continues to speak to man in the history of salvation, carrying out His plans through Jesus Christ for the reconciliation and redemption of deeply fallen man. It is true that the ideal state will not return. But God has something better in store for the future: new heavens and a new earth (2 Pet. 3:13).

Man has experienced that in creation there is a power working contrary to the living God, and rebellious, which has tempted him with great cunning and deceit. However, God is immeasurably above anything that can be named and has therefore passed righteous judgment on this power. Natural, sinful man has become Satan's game ball. Yet man retains his responsibility to his Creator-God. He can and may return to God and repent (Luke 15:11-32). But he can also consciously move even further away from God. Ultimately, for such people then, there remains only the terrible, eternal separation from God, in eternal torment and darkness. Man was given breath (the immortal soul) by God. In the resurrection (1 Cor. 15), God gives each man a new immortal body. Reconciled with God, he can experience eternal bliss in the immediate presence of God; unreconciled, however, he will be in eternal pain and darkness and his conscience will accuse him eternally – an immeasurable torment (Luke 16:19-31). This is the everlasting pain of which Scripture speaks. No prophet has spoken of it more than Jesus Christ, the Lord, the Saviour and Redeemer. He wants man to accept *His* salvation and *His* work of redemption, and thus escape God's righteous condemnation by grace. To this end, Jesus the Christ, the Lord, has come into the world to seek and save the lost.

The message of the Gospel of John

John 1-3

John's gospel goes back to the beginning of creation. It goes even back to what was before creation. God the Lord (Yahweh) stands gloriously and far above the work of His hands, the work of creation and even far above space and time. He is from

eternity to eternity, and He was before the beginning of *His* creation. The apostle John speaks about this in John 1:1: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not one thing made that was made*".

Here we find a wonderful and glorious revelation from God: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. That is to say, God was not alone. Now, the Word was not anything less than God, or a creature. The Word was also God (John 1:1). Thus, it is clear that in the beginning there were three divine Persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:10-11). Through the action of the Word, creation came into being. Please read the entire first chapter of the Gospel of John. This chapter makes it clear that the Word – Jesus Christ – is the Son of the Father, from eternity in the bosom of the Father. But having come in the flesh as a true Man, He radiated the glory of the Father. This cannot be said of any mortal man. It was the counsel of God the Father and of the Son: God became a Man in Jesus Christ. What grace! God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, had such deep compassion for mankind that He sent His only-begotten Son to save those who would believe in *Him* and accept *Him* (John 1:12; 3:16).

The Gospel of John tells us that Jesus Himself is the Creator, but as a Man *He* entered into His own creation to redeem it and take away the sin of the world. God sent His beloved Son to restore the relationship with lost people, not just with the Creator-God, but with God as their gracious and kind Father. Only the beloved, eternal Son of God could do this for us as miserable and fallen human beings. But for that, we must be born of God, i.e. after sincere repentance and the surrender of our lives, receive and accept *Him* into our hearts and live according to *His* will.

In summary, this means: God gives man, absolutely separated from *Him*, a complete solution to the problem of the Fall. Man could not do this alone: he had fallen very low, i.e. fallen away from God, and he could never attain the absolute righteousness that is valid before God. Sin always clung to him (Rom. 3:23-24). Man could never free himself from the heavy bondage of Satan and mortal sin. For that, he needs the only Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Lost man must become aware of his absolutely hopeless situation. For that, recognition of God as the Creator and the Saviour is absolutely necessary. He who wanders in darkness, because he does not yet recognise God as the Creator, how will he come to realise that it was the Word, the eternal Son of God – Jesus Christ – through Whom God created everything? Jesus Christ came to the earth as a real Man, but without sin, and He was the brightness of His glory and the express image of God the Father (Heb. 1:1-

3). Through the Son, God created the worlds. This Son, the express image of God, is upholding all things by the word of His power. It is evident that He also sustains creation, i.e. everything runs its course and functions with divine precision (the heavenly bodies, the laws of nature, etc.). Without Him, creation would cease to exist. Man as a creature is totally dependent on God - what a blessed knowledge.

The apostle John presents the greatness and glory of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to the observer. But the Son did not stay in heaven to view the state of affairs from a certain distance. He came to the world and He came to His chosen people Israel, whom God had chosen on the earth. Israel had the Law and the Prophets as their possession and inheritance. Such riches and revelations of God had not been given to the other nations of the world. Christ came to fulfil all that the prophets had foretold about Him. Hundreds of prophecies about Jesus Christ have come true throughout history. The Lord God saw to it. Grace and truth were only fully revealed through Jesus Christ. Could God do more for the people? What would His people Israel do? "He came to His own, (to the people of Israel), but His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). Jesus Christ was by human birth a Jew. From the beginning, He was not accepted by His people as their Messiah, but rejected by them.

And you: Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour? He is the true Light of God, which gives light to every man who comes into the world, in other words, places them in the divine Light (John 1:9). In His light man recognises how sinful he is, that he cannot exist before an holy God. The question of how sinful we are is not answered by comparing us to Adam or to the demands of the Law, but by comparing us to Him, the holy and sinless Son of God, who came into this world as a Man. His light shines on us, not to drive us away from Him, but to save us from the righteous wrath of God.

He came and *He* gathered people around Himself as His disciples. They experienced Him, they looked upon Him, they touched the Word of life with their hands (1 John 1:1). John said, "He dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, a glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Are you not also drawn to this glorious Person, Jesus Christ, who came down from God to bring us and also especially you, the reader, back to God? For this He paid the highest conceivable price: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God". He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit (1 Pet. 3:18).

John, the disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ, heard the words from John the Baptist: "Behold! The Lamb of God (*Jesus the Christ*), who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). So God has a solution to the problem of man's sin. Jesus Christ

lived an absolutely holy life here on earth, without sin, showing by His deeds and His words, miracles and signs, who He really was: the Son of God the Father; the promised Saviour (Isa. 7:14; Mic. 5:1ff), born of the chosen virgin Mary. He was not at all conceived by a man, but conceived solely of God's Spirit (Matt. 1:18-25), born as a Man, come into the flesh. Before that *He* existed as the eternal Word with God the Father, and *He was* God Himself (John 1:1-3).

Only God could solve the problem of sin and death, and it was done by Jesus Christ by giving Himself completely as a sacrifice on Calvary's cross! We could not solve the problem, only *He* could. But we can and may participate in this work of redemption through a living faith and by obedience to Jesus Christ. For this it is necessary to recognise the situation that we as sinful human beings have ended up in by our own fault. We must repent of our wicked sinful ways and sincerely repent to God, i.e. confess all our transgressions, our sins and our guilt before Him and ask for forgiveness according to His great mercy. To receive this salvation and deliverance, one must personally accept Jesus Christ, and become a child of God. This happens through the new birth (John 3:3), by believing in His Person, or in other words through the new birth by water and the Spirit.

Among the people of Israel, the lamb was often a sacrificial animal, of which there were many at the Jewish Passover feast. But there was only one Person, Jesus Christ, to whom Scripture bears witness, Behold the Lamb of God (John 1:29). John the Baptist could testify to this. For this purpose, the Lord Jesus had come into the world. The apostle John tells us how Jesus became the Lamb of God.

In John chapter 2, we find the first sign by which the Lord Jesus showed His glory. He turned water into wine (John 2:1-12). This sign indicates that the Lord would solve the general loss of true joy, which condition had arisen because of the Fall, and also offer the better wine (John 2:10). This was a foreshadowing of what He would do in the future. He would remove sin and bring about greater joy and peace than the first humans, Adam and Eve, possessed in the Garden of Eden.

In chapter 3 of John's gospel, the Lord Jesus explains to the scribe and Pharisee Nicodemus during his visit that the new birth is absolutely necessary to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:1-7). Man must be born of God. With his sinful human nature, he cannot possibly enter the kingdom of God. But God gives him a new nature when he is sincerely and unconditionally converted to God. The old sinful nature of man must be put to death, and it has been crucified with Christ (Rom. 6).

The people of Israel were bitten by fiery serpents in the wilderness near the Red Sea, because of their disobedience and their unbelief, and many died (Num. 21:6-9). This is a clear reference to what had happened at the beginning of human

history. The cunning serpent, Satan, has deceived man (Gen. 3:1-6). Dying by the bite of the fiery serpents came to an end when Moses raised the brazen serpent on a rod, and the death-stricken people had only to look at it in faith to be healed. "Even so the Son of man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). This is the only way to salvation. This is the message of the Gospel: "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).

The first man had indirectly blamed God for his deadly transgression and disobedience. What happens next? God became a Man in Christ. The Son of man, Jesus Christ, took the guilt upon Himself and He was lifted up on the cross (John 19:17-30), and made sin in our place. He received the full and severe judgement of God in the place of fallen and sinful man, thus fulfilling the demands of a holy and righteous God. Thus, God forgives the sins of the repentant sinner and remembers them no more. In the Garden of Eden, the question had arisen whether God withheld anything good from man. Now it was clear that God gave His beloved Son, in order that lost people might accept Him and receive the gift of eternal life. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

Now the love of God has undoubtedly come to light. God makes a very great offer to man, that involved the sacrifice of *His* beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Anyone who ever hears of this should accept it with thanksgiving. The greatest sin is not disobeying God, as Adam did, or breaking the law of the ten commandments, but it is rejecting this offer of salvation through Jesus Christ and thus deeply offending God (1 John 5:10). This is why John's Gospel continues after chapter 3:17 as follows: the one "who believes on Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

So in our day it is possible to proclaim, hear and accept the gospel of God's grace. God can rightly expect nothing else from people trapped in sin than to accept such an extraordinary gift of grace. Through the message of salvation, many were and still are saved to eternal life and added to the number of the redeemed, the Body of Jesus Christ. You still have to take advantage of it in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. This changes your entire relationship with God: once separated from God, but now reconciled to God. Unhappy because of sin, but now cleansed from your sins, and brought into happy fellowship with God and His people. From a negative future outlook to a blissful future.

This is also the only way to end up on the winner's side in the cosmic battle. In the end, there are only winners and losers. Those who belong to the Lord Jesus are with the Victor. Who wants to be among the losers? Some do, because they do not want to submit to God. But it requires a decision of the heart to join the Victor.

Just as God's work to bring about the first creation took six days (Genesis 1), God's history of salvation also takes six "days". The fourth day was dominated by the sun. The Son of God appeared as the Light of the world. It irradiates the moon, that is the church, bearing witness to the light of the sun in this dark world. The stars point to the individual believers as lights shining in the world (Philippians 2:15). On the sixth day, man appeared as the head of creation. Thus, according to God's counsel and timing, Christ will appear in glory to rule over creation in blessing (Zech. 14:9; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 11:15b; 20:1-6).

Eternity

Revelation 20-22

When the history of salvation comes to an end, God will create a new heaven and a new earth that will last for all eternity (2 Pet. 3:12, 13; Rev. 21:1). This is what Revelation 21 shows us. It is a glorious future for those who are redeemed by Christ. But Scripture tells us that first there will be judgement on the dead, small and great. All will be judged according to their works. The righteous, holy God overlooks nothing and forgets nothing. *Satan, the old serpent and his angels will also be judged* (Rev. 20:2 and 10). What God had prophesied in the beginning will come true. The man Jesus Christ is the Victor of Calvary, who bruises the serpent's head.

Those who do not accept the offer of the Gospel, which brings them reconciliation and forgiveness through the holy blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cursed tree, must suffer eternal death in indescribable torment and be eternally removed from God. Those who refused to repent to God during their lifetime cannot do so afterwards. The reality of being lost in eternity is truly terrifying and unimaginable (Rev. 20:13-15).

Now is the time to flee into the arms of a still merciful God, full of grace. Think of it that you are still living on this God-created earth, enjoying all that He gives to man. *God, in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness* (Acts 14:16-17). You enjoy life, the beautiful creation, and at the end of your life it's all gone, and will

not come back. And while God gives you all this, will you reject Him? If you persist in this wrong attitude, you will be separated from God in eternity (Rev. 21). The righteous and holy wrath of God then abides on you (John 3:18-20; 3:36).

But the eternal day of rest according to the history of salvation will one day dawn for the redeemed (Rev. 21 and 22). "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." We read in Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the first things have passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

Death, the consequence of sin, will therefore not occur in this new creation. The description of the eternal state is characterized by the absence of what is still present in the sinful creation. Through the work of Jesus Christ on Calvary, He has bought a bride, the church, and all the redeemed who belong to it, who will be at His side forever. Even more beautiful than Adam and Eve had been in their state of innocence in the Garden of Eden, the appearance of Christ and His Bride, or His Body, will be. The freshness of their love and beauty will not diminish. These last chapters of the Bible point back to the beginning in their imagery. God's purposes and plans cannot be changed by anything or anyone. What He has once begun, *He* also brings to a glorious end, to *His* highest glory and honour. He has revealed Himself in absolute perfection and so He dwells with men (Rev. 21:3). An eternal blissful state for people who may inherit all this by grace without merit.

You have now heard or read the Gospel of God's grace and you have the opportunity to partake of it by returning to God and repenting and accepting the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart and life (i.e. an *unconditional and total surrender of your life to the Lord Jesus Christ*). Just do it now, get on your knees and confess your guilt and sins to Him and thank Him that the punishment you deserve *He* has already suffered for you on the cross of Calvary. Then you will be saved forever.

To understand the Bible, God's wonderful message to all people, it is absolutely necessary to read and study it daily, morning and evening if possible, in the pathway of faith in following the Lord Jesus Christ, constantly and with fervent prayer. First one must be converted, only then you can understand the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:14). The new nature also needs this daily nourishment, by reading the Bible (John 6:27); and communion with God by prayer (1 John 2:24). To enter into the kingdom of God, one must become as simple as the children (Matt. 18:3-4),

who were taught to sing, "Read the Bible, pray every day." Verily I say unto you, if ye do not change and become like the children, ye shall by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Source: This contribution is just a condensed version of the Gospel: the Gospel in a nutshell. (A.Th. Bouter. German Version Sept. 2014 / Translation into Dutch and English Sept. 2022. Author's note: This article may only be freely distributed unmodified and in its entirety. E-mail: athbouter@klikSAFE.nl)

