

~ The Good News ~

From our earliest Christian learning, we are taught the meaning of the word *gospel*. We were told that it meant *good news*. That is what the angel said when he announced the central figure of this Gospel. He said, "I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people." (Luke 2: 10)

We recognize the word *evangelist* is from the same Greek word, meaning *one who teaches good news*. The good news has been the message of salvation through Christ. There is a troubling dark side to the message of salvation as it is being preached today. The fact is the good news excludes more people than it includes, and that is the inescapable dark side of the Gospel.

Few want to talk about this. Some preachers don't mind relegating all the unsaved to some form of eternal "damnation" – whether a burning hell, or, in some cases of those with kinder hearts, eternal separation from God. They seem to feel it serves them right for not accepting and supporting the ministry they offered these sinners. Then, there was Jonathan Edwards who said that when he got to heaven he would look down over the ramparts of hell and seeing there loved ones and friends writhing in pain, he would praise God all the louder. Something wrong here? He must have a heart of stone. Where is Christian compassion? Where is the *good news* here? We have human laws to protect even animals from the suffering and cruelty of temporary pain. Our compassionate hearts say, No, we cannot allow it! The dark side of the Gospel implies that somehow most mothers dandling their precious children on their knees or cuddling them warmly near their hearts are preparing kindling wood for the fires of hell at the worst, or at the best raising children who will be cast into the blackness of darkness forever.

Let's not talk about the billions of the unsaved who die. Two-thirds of the world is non-Christian. We cannot comprehend billions or millions or even thousands. We are made to think in terms of one at a time. Over in India or Africa, this very night a mother will listen to her child

cry itself to sleep. The child is hungry. There is no food to give it. It will cry tonight, and tomorrow, and the day after, and, then, its little voice will cry no more. The mother of that child will have gone through a heartbreaking experience. Yet, the dark side of the Gospel says beyond that heartbreak, more must follow. That child died for lack of food. It also died without Christ, and, hence, it lived and died without hope. Never mind telling me about the hundreds and thousands of well-fed and well-dressed men and women who have accepted Christ. Tell me about this child. One beautiful God-given child lived and died, without food and without Christ. Where does it fit into your Gospel? What would you tell the bereaved mother? How well have you studied your Bible? Can there be a dark side to the *true and complete* Gospel of Christ?

When is the last time you heard a sermon about the “times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His Holy Prophets since the world began”? (Acts 3: 19-21) Peter says it was spoken by the mouth of *all His holy prophets*. A teaching so comprehensive as this deserves our attention, study, and understanding. If you feel that you need some help in this study, we suggest for your library and reading *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, especially Chapter 7, which addresses “The Permission of Evil”, Chapter 8, which deals with “The Day of Judgment”, and most of all Chapter 9, which studies “Ransom and Restitution”. You might find some wonderful hope and assurance that you could give to that mother whose child died without food and without Christ. No, there is no dark side in the *true* Gospel of Christ. God heard that child’s cries and tears. He will wipe those tears away. There will be no more “sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain. These words are true and faithful”. (Revelation 21: 4, 5)

Send for a free copy of *The Divine Plan of the Ages*. It has fifteen chapters of topical Bible subjects collecting the scriptures on every subject. Click **REPLY**, and send an e-mail asking for it. Include the name of this publication, your name, and your mailing address. ♦