

“THE GOSPEL – PLUS”
Ac.15:1-5,24; Gal.5:1-6

I. INTRODUCTION

1. All of us are familiar with the old reliable over-the-counter medication for indigestion known as Alka-Seltzer.
2. Today we have what is claimed to be and may be an improved Alka-Seltzer; it is known as Alka-Seltzer **PLUS**.
 - a. To improve the original Alka-Seltzer some extra ingredients have been added, which are supposed to help with added problems.
 - b. Of course, the drug companies are honest and above board with their claim. They tell you it is Alka-Seltzer **Plus**.
 - c. It is the old Alka-Seltzer with added ingredients – thus Alka-Seltzer **Plus**.
3. In the case of medical remedies to heal physical illnesses, no doubt men have the God-given right and the civil right to improve upon present remedies and add whatever is necessary in an attempt to accomplish the desired end, subject to governmental guidelines.
4. But in spiritual matters of healing sin-sick souls and worshipping God, we are not given such liberties of adding to the perfect remedy, or way, decreed by God Almighty through his Son by means of the gospel. In fact, we are denied the right to add to, take from, or substitute for, Deut. 4:2; 1Cor.4:6; Gal.1:6-12; 1Tim.1:3; 1Pet.4:11; Rev.22:18,19; 2Jno.9-11; 1Jno.4:1.
5. In spite of this, in the spiritual realm, the world of religion, various people and religious groups view the gospel of Christ to be in need of some extra “ingredients” or extra doctrines, the doctrines of men to be added, hence, our title: “THE GOSPEL-**PLUS**”.
6. Take note of how some people are guilty of the gospel-plus view of the gospel of Christ, or some of the freedoms they take with the gospel of Christ by adding to it without divine authority to do so.

II. DISCUSSION

A. IN N.T. DAYS SOME WANTED THE GOSPEL-PLUS CIRCUM-CISION AS A MEANS OF BEING SAVED.

1. That is, in order to be saved they taught that it took the gospel of Christ plus fleshly circumcision, Ac.15:1-6,24; Gal.5:1-6.
2. In Ac.15:6-11, Peter denied their claim.

3. In Ac.15:12-32, Paul, Barnabas, James, all the apostles and elders with the whole church took measures to deny the claims of these false teachers, sending out letters by chosen men to the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, letters denying such men had been sent out by them and branding their doctrine as false.
4. Also, take note of how Paul in Gal.5:1-6 refutes the false teaching of the Judaizers. Cf. Phil.3:1-3,4-9.

B. SOME WANT THE GOSPEL-PLUS THEIR SO-CALLED INSPIRED SPIRIT-REVEALED LATTER-DAY REVELATIONS

1. They do not believe the inspired word as recorded that the gospel is complete and perfect and all-sufficient, Jno.14:26; 16:7,13; Jas.1:25; 2Tim.3:16-4:5; Eph.3:1-6; Jude 3; Gal.1:6-9.
2. They do not believe we have all of God's revelation, or God's complete revelation to us, in the Bible; nor that the Spirit-revealed, Spirit-preached, and Spirit-written word is sufficient.
3. Thus they seek and find a way to "get" their latter-day revelations (some written, some spoken directly to the claimants as they have "need" of them) adding to and teaching things not found in the Bible; such as, Mormons; 7th Day Adventists; Christian Scientists; various Denom. Preachers.
4. As a result they have what they want – the gospel-plus – and are in direct violation of God's word not to add to, take from, or substitute for the inspired Scriptures which are all-sufficient!

C. SOME WANT THE GOSPEL-PLUS THEIR HUMAN CREEDS, MANUALS, DISCIPLINES AND CATECHISMS.

1. This is how and where they seek to justify all the different doctrines of men along with some of the doctrine of Christ, which they believe and teach – thus the gospel-plus.
2. The gospel of Christ and it alone is God's power to save or to justify, Mk.16:15,16; 1Cor.15:1,2; 1:21; 2:1,2.
3. There is one and only one gospel of Jesus Christ, which is God's power to save, Gal.1:6-12; Rom.1:16-17.

4. Jesus prayed for unity of believers, Jno.17:20,21.
5. His chosen, sent and commissioned apostles preached this unity of believers and condemned division among believers, 1Cor.1:10-13.
6. They taught the sinfulness of adding to the all-sufficient Spirit-revealed word, 2Tim.3:16,17; 1Cor.4:6; 1Pet.4:11; Rev.22:18,19; 1Tim.1:3.
7. If a church creed, manual or discipline teaches:
 - a. More than what is revealed in the Bible, it teaches too much – it has added to.
 - b. If it teaches less than the gospel of Christ revealed in the Bible, it doesn't teach enough – it takes from.
 - c. In either case, it exists as a substitute for and is thus condemned!
 - d. If it teaches the same as the gospel of Christ revealed in the Bible, it is not needed – why have it?
8. The Spirit-revealed and Spirit-written Scriptures contain the doctrine of Christ, the complete doctrine of Christ – all of it, 2Jno.9; Jno.16:7,13; 2Tim.3:16-4:5.
9. The human creeds contain the doctrines and commandments of men (otherwise why have them), which make worship vain, Mt.15:9.
10. We must be very careful about – ever be on guard against – adding to or taking from or substituting for God's written word in the Bible.

D. SOME WANT THE GOSPEL-PLUS WHAT THEIR PREACHER SAYS IS TO BE BELIEVED AND PRACTICED.

1. After all, their preacher claims to be a special messenger sent from God with special insight and a direct line of contact with the God of heaven; because he claims to speak for God!
2. Believing this to be true, they dare not reject what bro. Preacher says for fear they will be rejecting God himself.
3. But bro. Preacher preaches some gospel, plus some or many of his own opinions which become matters of faith for those who allow him to think and speak for them.
4. But consider Ac.17:10-12; Jno.5:39,40; 2Tim.2:15; 1Jno.4:1; Jno.12:48; Jno.8:31,32; 2Th.2:10-12.

E. SOME WANT THE GOSPEL-PLUS THE ADDITIONAL WORKING AND GUIDING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT SEPARATE AND APART FROM THE WRITTEN WORD.

1. They think the gospel alone is insufficient, that we must have an additional working of the Holy Spirit, or a direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit working separate and apart from the written word of God, without which we can't really understand the word or can't live free of sin's influence.
2. That the Holy Spirit is working today in conviction, conversion and sanctification there can be no doubt.
 - a. Jesus promised that he would be, Jno.14:26; 16:7,13; 20:19-23; Lk.24:49; Ac.11-8.
 - b. The apostles affirm that he came and guided them as promised, 1Cor.2:1-13; Gal.1:11,12; Eph.3:1-6; 1Jno.1:1-3
 - c. Scripture declares that the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost and began working through the apostles by means of the word, Ac.2:1-11.
3. Inspired affirmation of the Spirit's work by means of the word in conviction, conversion and sanctification, and the answer to their question of Ac.2:12 is recorded beginning at Ac.2:14 continuing through v.47.
4. By this means people the world over were convicted, converted and sanctified, with churches belonging to Christ established wherever the gospel was preached by these Spirit-filled, Spirit-guided apostles.
5. That word is all sufficient to convict, convert and sanctify – guiding the saved from earth to heaven, furnishing us unto every good work, and by which we shall be judged in the last day, 2Tim.3:16,17; Jno.17:17,19; 1Cor.1:1,2; 15:1,2; 1Th.2:13; 2Th.2:13,14; Jno.2:48

F. SOME WANT THE GOSPEL-PLUS VARIOUS GIMMICKS AND HUMAN SCHEMES TO ATTRACT OR DRAW THE PEOPLE TO CHRIST.

1. In our day churches are saddled with every kind of scheme and gimmick imaginable used as means to draw people to Christ.

- a. Churches have become social organizations and social centers rather than strictly spiritual bodies for the work and worship of God.
 - b. These human schemes are designed for and their purpose is to draw or bring in the crowds and to please them when they get there.
 - c. By these, even some brethren are saying they are “ministering to the whole man,” when in reality it is more correctly the “carnal man” – it’s an appeal to the flesh, not the spirit!
2. If we have to draw people with such carnal means; we also have to use the same carnal means to keep them. You don’t draw them by carnal means and keep them by spiritual means.
 3. Do some people think you can’t draw people unless you feed them or entertain them? Evidently they do!
 4. God has one and only one means of drawing people to Christ, which is his word, the gospel of Christ, Jno.6:44,45; Cf. Rom.1:16,17.
 5. Is it any wonder then that the Lord gave the Great Commission to his apostles as recorded in Mt.28:18-20; Mk.16:15,16; Jno.20:19-23?
 6. Also, is it any wonder that this was used as it was on Pentecost in Ac.2? And elsewhere, the world over in N.T. times?
 7. Or why Peter said what he did in 1Pet.1:22-2:2?
 8. Or why Mt.6:33 says what it says?

III. CONCLUSION

1. Our physical bodies can be fed and be healthy without the gospel, but the soul of man cannot! 1Pet.2:2; 2Pet.3:18; 2Pet.1:2.
2. Alka-Seltzer **PLUS** no doubt is fine, but the gospel-**plus** is a perversion that will damn both the perverters and the accepters of the perversions, Gal.1:6-9! Cf. 2Th.2:10-12.
3. The Lord authorized the gospel of Christ to be preached, believed, obeyed, practiced and defended; nothing else!
4. If we respect the authority of Jesus Christ, we will preach, believe, obey, practice and defend the gospel. That and that plus nothing, minus nothing – the gospel of Christ only and only the gospel of Christ!

5. It takes the Bible or the gospel of Christ plus the doctrines of men to make one something other than or more than simply a Christian as revealed in the N.T., or a hyphenated Christian; such as:
 - a. Baptist-Christian, or a Christian who is a Baptist.
 - b. Methodist-Christian.
 - c. Presbyterian-Christian.
 - d. Lutheran-Christian.
 - e. Pentecostian-Christian.
 - f. Mormon-Christian.
 - g. Jehovah's Witness-Christian.
 - h. Ch. of God In Christ-Christian.
 - i. Church of God-Christian.