

## "The Eternal Gospel"

Although the apostles preached the gospel for the first time two thousand years ago, it is still able to accomplish what God intended. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today, we're exploring the eternal gospel.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Although the Bible is an ancient book, it's as relevant as today's news broadcast. Its themes and messages are truly imperishable and much needed by every person. We need God's promises, God's commandments, and God's truth. There are no substitutes for God's ways. You cannot find a replacement for the truth, and morality that God teaches in His word. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Sarah Sallon, an archaeologist at Hebrew University, sifted through some dusty old boxes from the archaeological sites of Masada and Qumran. She found 32 ancient seeds, which were in "beautiful condition" she planted six of them in Southern Israel. Well, scientists carbon dated these seeds and found the seeds were 2000 years old. Now, these plants took root and grew. Some of the plants are now old enough to pollinate and produce fruit on their own. The seed, although 2000 years old, can still do what God intended. It still produces after its own kind.

God said in Genesis 1:11 to 12, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them"; and it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good." Seeds can only bear fruit after their own kind. They will not bear anything else. Seeds from the date plants, even if they're 2000 years, that is a date palm, can only produce another date palm. The gospel is an imperishable seed like that and it can only produce what God intended; it too can only produce after its own kind. Only the imperishable truth can produce eternal life.

Now, we offer this study free on the eternal gospel. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at [searchtv.org](http://searchtv.org). You can also download these materials online in printed, audio, or video formats.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Peter 1:22 to 25, and see how God's word is truly eternal.

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 22 to 25 and in this passage Peter talks about how that we are born again by our obedience to the truth.

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,

AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.

THE GRASS WITHERS,

AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,

BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER."

And this is the word which was preached to you.

Aren't you thankful that we have God's word preached to us. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that we have been able to purify our souls through our obedience to the truth. And that we're born again and that Your word has endured. Father bless us and help us to be obedient to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

In spite of his move from Jerusalem to Rome and from Jewish culture to Roman culture, Peter remained true to his message. He realized there was no new message for a new culture. He understood that what he preached to them was the word of the Lord that would remain forever. Others in later centuries might seek to change the message, but Peter realized that it was that same preached message he received from the Lord, which brought about the divine, new birth. What he preached would remain God's message until the end of time.

Jesus commissioned his apostles and disciples to preach the gospel, the one gospel, to every person in every culture, in every nation, and in every tongue. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 28:18 to 20 that, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." You see the gospel is ageless. What they were to teach in the first century was to last till the end of time.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

Many years later, Jude was facing some who had strayed from the truth and were spreading false teachings. Well, Jude wrote in verse 3, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." The faith which Jude spoke about was "once for all handed down to the saints."

Now we are born again through the living and abiding word of God. For, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the Word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word which was preached to you (1 Peter 1:23 to 25). Psalm 119 and verse 89 says, "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven." Now, culture may change with the wind; but God's word is still true and still carries God's authority. The Lord Jesus said in John 12 and verse 48, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." The last day won't happen until the end of time. The words of Jesus will say the same thing on the last day as they did the day Jesus spoke them.

God's word is an imperishable seed that is alive today and will remain to the end of time. It will endure every cultural change through the ages; it cannot die or be destroyed. Men have always rejected it, but it endures. Persecutions did not stop God's imperishable Word from continuing to do its work.

People find their souls purified, when they obey the truth found in this imperishable seed. True obedience is not self-designed; it listens to what God says. And God causes us to be born again by His word, not by some other way. If the seed is planted in order to reproduce, it must come from God. Men can't alter or redesign the seed and then expect to get the same result. Seeds only produce after their own kind. And if you change the seed, you get what the changed seed produces. Not what God intended. You see a changed seed is different. Do you think changing the seed or message honors God? Do you think He's pleased when men reinvent the gospel message?

Many current preachers believe obedience to the heart, to be heartfelt but not necessarily tied to obeying what God actually says. They think if the heart is right, it matters little whether the person obeying conforms to God's teaching. Well, this is popular within our culture, since it allows people to do whatever they wish to become a Christian. And some say well, "one doesn't have to be immersed to be baptized; one may substitute sprinkling or pouring and come out with the same result." But the Scriptures speak of baptism as a burial, (Romans 6) and the word baptism refers to an immersion in water.

And so, one must wonder, however, what Peter meant by obedience to the truth. Did he mean that we obey the truth that we agree with? Did he mean that we obey the truth that we understand, even if our knowledge of it is imperfect? Did he mean that we're obeying the truth, even if we obey a man-made tradition that rebels against the truth? Did he mean that we obey some of the truth but may ignore the rest? Did he mean that one is obeying the truth to the purifying of one's soul, even if one is substituting a manmade tradition for the gospel truth?

You see, some want the Man but they don't want the plan. They want the love and grace but not the authority and the teaching. Obedience, however, demands some instruction to be obeyed. When you obey the instruction, you obey the Person who gave it. That's how anyone obeys anything; he obeys the person and the authority behind the instruction. One does what one is told to do. The whole idea of obeying someone but dismissing or contradicting his teaching is doublethink.

The gospel is an imperishable seed that was preached in the first century and will last till the end of time.

The Scriptures teach that God saves through the blood of Christ when one is baptized into Christ. And, when the Jews on the day of Pentecost asked for the very first time what to do to be forgiven, Peter responded, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." God forgives our sins when we repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Ananias, you'll recall, told Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."

The apostle Paul explains how baptism unites us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Rom. 6:3 to 7 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin."

Unfortunately, some have become convinced that they're saved before and without baptism. They believe God has freed them from sin before that they're united with Christ in baptism. They believe that they're blessed before they obey the command of God. One must wonder how a person can say they are obedient to the Lord and yet ignore what the Scriptures teach about the necessity of baptism to salvation. Can you obey the Lord while denying what He teaches? When one gets away from obedience to the Lord in small measures, it's not long before one takes much larger steps. A small twisting of the truth today can lead to a large twisting tomorrow. Once people forsake obedience to the truth, there's little to stop falling away altogether.

Only the Lord has a right to determine who is and who is not a Christian. Popular culture can believe whatever it wishes, but they cannot overrule or edit the Lord's will. And it's arrogant and presumptuous to think that Jesus is subject to the whims of a new generation, that he must change his mind should he want to attract it. Jesus made it clear in John 3 and verse 5 to Nicodemus that unless a person is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Now, we're hearing from some, "A new culture should require a new brand of Christianity adapted to the culture, Amen?" So says the "emerging church." The church must change or die, we hear, so says all the experts! We have to be postmodern; we have to be pluralistic; we have to stop being judgmental about anything; and we have to stop using the Bible. We need a new church for a new age! This is not the wisdom that is from above, but the wisdom of the world speaking, in all of those things.

The word of God is not only eternal; it is wisdom from above. James 3:17 to 18 says, "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." God is calling us to follow Him and His teaching rather than compromise His morals with worldly sins and teach truth rather than compromise, the truth and lead people into error. God's word brings peace to the individual, to the home, to the church, and to the community. False doctrines are built on misunderstanding, selfish ambition, and even jealousy. James 3 and verse 16 says, "For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing."

Now no generation can thumb its nose at the Lord Jesus and escape accountability. No generation can tell God to hush and replace Him with its own laws for long. Now past generations have abandoned God's way to pursue their own desires, but that course leads only to destruction. When Israel embraced idolatry, they suffered for their sins. Now, you can decide that some sinful behavior is okay; you can even convince the majority to agree with you. But, popular opinions cannot turn sin into righteousness. God is still in charge. And when Israel despised God's statutes, and embraced idolatry to be like nations around them, and abandoned the commandments of God, they found out that they could not dismiss God so easily. God punished them. And reading through the Old Testament and especially the book of Jeremiah will open our eyes: God will punish those who refuse to repent. And He means what He says.

Now, Jesus is Lord of all. And God gave all authority to him over culture in every age. The Father has given all things into His hands (John 3 and verse 35). We can believe all kinds of things, but what we think or imagine doesn't change the gospel. We can propose our ways to be saved like the sinner's prayer, but the Lord Jesus makes the rules. Some imagine they can rewrite morality, but God's word has the last word. A new interpretation that denies the plain message will not stand with God. New interpretations that say things that God never said won't change God true standards. Time cannot and will not change God's word. Scripture will say on judgment day exactly what it said when Jesus and the apostles first taught it. And what God says and calls sinful is still sinful today. We can find ways of worship that please and entertain us, but the worship that pleases the Lord looks to Scripture and obeys Him. We can say all religions are alike and can save us, but Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14 and verse 6).

Let's pray together. Oh, heavenly Father we're thankful that the Lord Jesus came in to this world and left us the words that You wanted us to hear. Father help us to be diligent, to study Your word and to be obedient to it, so that we too might have newness of life. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Sadly, some think the Bible is an ancient book filled with myths and legends. They don't realize the Scriptures, inspired of God, are alive with meaning and power. Hebrews 4:12 to 13 says, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." God knows our hearts. Some think they should stand in judgment of the Bible and they don't realize the Bible will judge them.

The Lord Jesus said to the devil in Matthew 4 and verse 4, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" The phrase, "It is written" should be understood to mean "It stands written." What God said, or what God had Moses to write in Deuteronomy over a thousand years was still binding in the eyes of the Lord Jesus. The things that Jesus said 2,000 years ago, are still binding on us today. His words will judge us on the last day (John 12 and verse 48).

And for this reason we must take our faith in the Lord seriously. We must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and be willing to confess our faith. We must repent by turning from sin and worldly ways so that we live for Him; and we must be baptized into Christ in order to be forgiven and to have newness of life. Baptism into Christ means being unified, or united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3 to 7). And this takes place when we're immersed or buried in water. And that's when God washes away our sin (Acts 22:16). My friend won't you be baptized into Christ?

We hope that today's study about the eternal gospel has deepened your faith in God's word. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now, you can download these lessons in audio or video formats. You can find a newsletter online at our website: [searchtv.org](http://searchtv.org). There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now, don't worry, if you get a hold of us, we're not here asking for money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Get your heart focused on God today by worshiping at church. There is probably a church of Christ in your area. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well, we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So, keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. And as always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.