

Things that differ

Drew Costen

(First published: October 5, 2021/Last revision: May 4, 2024)

Just as a heads up, this Bible study is an edited excerpt from my (much longer) Bible study titled: “*What the Bible really says about heaven, hell, judgement, death, evil, sin, and salvation*” (and I’d highly recommend reading that one all the way through from beginning to end if you’re able to, in order to get the full picture of what the Bible is talking about when it comes to salvation; but for those who don’t have the time to read that one right now, please do read this Bible study carefully).

When considering the meaning of passages in the Bible, it’s very easy to unintentionally read one’s preconceived theological beliefs *into* a passage (this is what’s known as eisegesis), rather than trying to carefully determine the *actual* meaning of the text in question without coming at it with any preconceived ideas as to its meaning (this is what’s known as exegesis). This generally occurs because one has heard people they trust tell them that certain doctrines are true, and if they assume their teachers can’t be mistaken, they’ll rarely bother to look into the context of the passages they’re told prove these doctrines. This means that when they see certain words in these passages, they’ll just assume the inclusion of these words in the text proves that the doctrines must indeed be correct, and they won’t bother to actually do any study to confirm whether this is truly the case or not. Of course, as the old saying goes, a text read out of context is just a pretext for a proof text, so this often results in people never learning the truth about what these passages *really* mean.

Equally unfortunately, most people will rarely bother to compare these passages to the rest of the Bible either, in order to make sure the doctrines they’ve been taught aren’t contradicting other parts of Scripture. But even when they do try to dig a little deeper, they tend to be unfamiliar with the concept of perspectives in the Bible, especially the difference between the

absolute and relative perspectives, which means they aren't aware that the same word or concept doesn't necessarily always mean the same thing every time it's used in Scripture. As an example of this important hermeneutical principle, Ecclesiastes 11:3 tells us that the rain comes from clouds,¹ while 1 Kings 17:14 says that God sends the rain,² and we can understand that both of these statements are equally true when we recognize that God is the rain's origin from an absolute perspective (since all is of God³), even while the clouds are rain's origin from a relative perspective.

And even when the perspective principle doesn't come into play, words just don't always mean, or at least refer to, the same thing anyway. Certain words (such as the word "fire," as just one example of many) are used literally in some passages⁴ while also used figuratively in other passages,⁵ and unless you think being saved in whatever way it is you believe that Jesus saves us today — which, according to most Christians, is being saved from suffering never-ending torment in fire — is the exact same sort of salvation that Peter⁶ and the rest

¹ If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. — Ecclesiastes 11:3

² For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. — 1 Kings 17:14

³ For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. — Romans 11:36

⁴ And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord. — Exodus 29:18

⁵ If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee. — Proverbs 25:21-22

⁶ And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. — Matthew 14:28-30

of Jesus' disciples experienced⁷ when they were saved from drowning, that it's the same sort of salvation the Israelites experienced when they were saved from Egyptian slavery,⁸ or that women are required to give birth⁹ in order to experience that sort of salvation from inescapable torment in fire, I trust you agree that the words "salvation," "save," and "saved" are not all referring to the same type of salvation every time they're used in Scripture (although, if you don't agree, please let me know how those *are* literally all the exact same sort of salvation).

In fact, that there are different types of salvation referred to in Scripture is important to understand when it comes to interpreting the passages where Jesus spoke about getting to enter the kingdom of heaven vs going to hell, as well as the passages where Paul wrote about going to heaven, because when reading those passages about hell (such as Mark 9:43–48,¹⁰ as just one of many examples), somebody who isn't aware of what Jesus meant there might ask what He was warning us about, not realizing that He wasn't warning *us* about anything, because He wasn't talking to *us* to begin with (unless, perhaps, you're Jewish). You see, His death for our sins, burial, and resurrection on the third

⁷ And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. — Matthew 8:24-25

⁸ Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. — Exodus 14:30

⁹ Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. — 1 Timothy 2:15

¹⁰ And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. — Mark 9:43–48

day aside, Jesus' earthly ministry and messages were technically to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," as He told His disciples in Matthew 15:24,¹¹ and not to Gentiles (yes, He did help certain Gentiles on rare occasion, but that was the exception rather than the rule). This means that, while it technically is possible for the odd Gentile who fears God and does works of righteousness¹² to end up enjoying the type of salvation Jesus taught about during His earthly ministry

¹¹ But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. — Matthew 15:24

¹² Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. — Acts 10:34-35

(presuming they also believe in Jesus), as evidenced by Cornelius¹³ (as I already mentioned, it should be clear that the words “salvation,” “save,” and “saved” have different meanings in different parts of Scripture, and that there are

¹³ There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and he had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing. And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. — Acts 10:1-48

various different types of salvation, unless we're simply rescued from drowning in water by Jesus when we get saved), this sort of salvation is still primarily for Jews and other Israelites,¹⁴ and really, basically all of the rewards and judgements Jesus spoke about — including His warnings about hell — not to mention the majority of the other teachings He gave, were essentially only for and about Israelites, with the judgement of the sheep and the goats being one of the only significant exceptions, since He specifically said that one is a judgement of the nations.¹⁵ (That's not to say there won't be any Gentiles in hell, but the particular warnings Jesus gave regarding hell technically weren't for them, nor should the contents of these passages ever be taught to Gentiles as reasons they might end up in hell, because these passages just aren't relevant to Gentiles.)

And just as the punishment referred to as hell in those passages will be “experienced” by certain dead people right here on earth (please read my aforementioned longer Bible study for the scriptural proof of that, or my two shorter studies titled *“Immortality and the second death”* and *“What the Hinnom?”*, where I go into detail on this point), the salvation Jesus spoke about is also to be experienced right here on earth, in the kingdom of heaven (even if it might not be experienced until after one has been resurrected from the dead). Unfortunately, the fact that Jesus said the salvation He taught about during His earthly ministry is to be experienced in the kingdom of heaven has confused generations of people, leading most to assume it's a reference to an afterlife location called heaven, and others to believe it's instead referring to a spiritual state within themselves, based on the way the KJV renders Jesus' statement that *“the kingdom of God is within you”* (which they often interpret that way

¹⁴ Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. — John 4:22

¹⁵ And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: — Matthew 25:32

largely because they've misunderstood a handful of other statements by Jesus —not seeming to realize that He generally spoke in ways that kept the masses from fully understanding what He was getting at when they were around, purposely doing so to keep them from converting and experiencing the sort of salvation He spoke about because it wasn't meant for them,¹⁶ which also confirms that He wasn't talking about the same sort of salvation Paul generally wrote about, since that sort of salvation is meant for everyone¹⁷ — ultimately forcing them to descend into contradiction and even outright absurdity in their interpretations of large portions of Scripture). This passage really shouldn't be interpreted as meaning the kingdom is literally inside our bodies, though, since Jesus said that specifically to the Pharisees,¹⁸ and it doesn't appear that they were saved when He said that to them, which means it makes far more sense to interpret this as Jesus telling His audience that the kingdom had been present within the midst of the people He was speaking to—in the Person of its Messiah and future King—for as long as He remained among them in Israel (because the word “you” in the KJV is a plural word, translated from the Second Person Plural Greek word ὑμῶν/“hoo-mone” in this verse, this should also be obvious to anyone who is aware of how the KJV renders words such as this one). In fact, that the term “the kingdom of heaven”¹⁹ was really just a reference to the kingdom of God being ready to come fully into effect on the

¹⁶ And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. — Mark 4:10-12

¹⁷ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. — 1 Timothy 2:3-4

¹⁸ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. — Luke 17:20-21

¹⁹ And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. — Matthew 3:2

earth,²⁰ specifically in Israel, is made quite clear in many places throughout the Bible.

First of all, we know that Jesus' primary message of salvation was about the coming of the kingdom and how to get to live in it when it begins fully for certain humans, and we also know that Jesus' messages were simply confirming "*the promises made unto the fathers*" (which were primarily promises for the circumcision, meaning for Israelites), as Paul wrote in Romans 15:8,²¹ and since Israelites were promised they'd get to dwell in the land God gave to their fathers²² (meaning the land of Canaan,²³ now known as the land of Israel), as prophesied in the book of Ezekiel²⁴ (and really all throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, meaning the books of the Bible generally referred to as the "Old Testament"), this tells us that the kingdom will have to be located in Israel. The fact that the kingdom of heaven will have some pretty clear geographical

²⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. — Matthew 6:10

²¹ Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: — Romans 15:8

²² And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. — Genesis 15:7

²³ Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. — Genesis 12:1-5

²⁴ And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. — Ezekiel 36:28

boundaries on the earth²⁵ (and not in heaven, or even “in our hearts,” or whichever organs in our bodies some people think the kingdom exists inside)

²⁵ Thus saith the Lord God; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance. And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad; Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran. And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And this is the north side. And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side. And the south side southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And this is the south side southward. The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This is the west side. — Ezekiel 47:13-20

when the promises God made to Israel are finally completely fulfilled,²⁶ from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Jordan on the east, with the northern boundary at Hamath, and the southern boundary at Kadesh (we're told that it will contain a new temple with some pretty specific dimensions at that time as

²⁶ Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord God; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession: Therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people: Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about; Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men. Thus saith the Lord God; Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations: Therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord God. Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord God. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleanness: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the Lord. — Ezekiel 36:1-38

well,²⁷ with a part of those dimensions carved out for priests from the tribe of the Levites, who are Israelites, not Gentiles, and I trust that nobody believes we have tiny Levites living inside of us either, which would have to be the case if the kingdom and its temple were literally within our bodies), also confirms that the kingdom is going to be on earth, specifically within those borders that will make up the nation of Israel in the future, rather than somewhere else.

We can also know that Israel has to be where the kingdom will be located in the future because Jesus taught His disciples about the things pertaining to the kingdom during the 40-day period between His resurrection and His ascension up to heaven,²⁸ and yet, just before He ascended to heaven, when His disciples asked Him if He'd be bringing the kingdom to Israel at that time, Jesus didn't correct them by asking, "Did I not just spend 40 days explaining that the kingdom will be in heaven rather than on earth?", or, "Did I not just spend 40 days explaining that you're already living in the kingdom?", or even, "Did I not just spend 40 days explaining that the kingdom already exists within your bodies, which means the kingdom exists within you rather than you getting to exist within the kingdom?" (whichever of those three that somebody might happen to believe is the truth about the kingdom), but rather just said, "*It is not*

²⁷ Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the Lord, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand. This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about. Of this there shall be for the sanctuary five hundred in length, with five hundred in breadth, square round about; and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof. And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand: and in it shall be the sanctuary and the most holy place. The holy portion of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the Lord: and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary. And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers. — Ezekiel 45:1-5

²⁸ To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: — Acts 1:3

*for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power,”*²⁹ which means He not only didn’t tell them that the kingdom was already fully in effect for Israel, He also didn’t correct their understanding that the kingdom was going to be located on earth — specifically in Israel — which are things they should have really already understood if He’d actually just spent more than a month explaining what the kingdom was about, and that it wasn’t going to simply be located in Israel, anyway.

That’s not all, though. Jesus explained that angels *“shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth”*³⁰ in his explanation of the parable of the wheat at the tares³¹ (after which, *“the righteous shine forth as the sun in the*

²⁹ When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. — Acts 1:6-7

³⁰ Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. — Matthew 13:36-42

³¹ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. — Matthew 13:24-30

kingdom of their Father”³²). Now think about this carefully. If the kingdom of heaven is an afterlife location which people go to when they die, as most Christians assume, and only those who are saved can go to heaven, as most Christians also assume, this passage would make no sense, because the angels can’t “gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity” if these people are not already in the kingdom at the time of the judgement (and this doesn’t happen as each individual sinner dies, as some might try to claim in order to fit these facts into their assumptions about what the kingdom is, since the parable makes it clear that everyone involved “grew up” together in the same place,³³ meaning on earth, and also that the judgement would involve everyone being judged together at this time as well, at “*the end of the world*,”³⁴ meaning “the end of the age,” as the KJV tends to translate the Greek word αἰών/“ahee-ohn” — literally meaning “eon” or “age” — as “world,” so this can’t refer to each sinner being judged in heaven immediately after each of their individual deaths). If “the kingdom” was a reference to the heavenly afterlife most Christians believe the saved end up in after they die, they’d have to already be saved, not to mention dead, which means this parable would be telling us that some people will become sinners in heaven some time after they die, and then be cast out of heaven into hell, presuming the “furnace of fire” actually is a reference to hell (although, contrary to what most Christians assume, the mention of “fire” in this passage is actually very figurative, and isn’t talking about hell or the lake of fire at all, but that’s a topic for my longer Bible study that I already mentioned at the beginning of this one, so please check it

³² Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. — Matthew 13:43

³³ Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. — Matthew 13:30

³⁴ The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. — Matthew 13:39

out if you're not aware of this fact already). Or, if the kingdom was literally inside our bodies instead, it would mean that angels would have to pull tiny human sinners residing in the “kingdom” out of our bodies and cast them into some sort of literal furnace, leaving us behind. Since neither of those interpretations make any kind of sense whatsoever (not to mention since Jesus outright said in His explanation of the parable that the “field” refers to the world³⁵ — this time actually referring to the planet itself, being translated from the Greek κόσμος/“kos'-mos” rather than αἰών in this verse — not to heaven, or even to our bodies), it should be pretty clear by now that the type of salvation Jesus and His disciples taught about during His earthly ministry (and that even the type of salvation His disciples taught about *after* His ascension into heaven, both in person and in their writings) primarily involved certain descendants of Isaac³⁶ dwelling in the land of Israel³⁷ and reigning over the earth³⁸ and its people as “kings and priests”³⁹ (presuming they're included in Israel's first resurrection,⁴⁰ or are “overcomers” and survive the Tribulation⁴¹) during

³⁵ The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; — Matthew 13:38

³⁶ Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. — Romans 9:6-7

³⁷ The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. — Psalm 37:29

³⁸ But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. — Psalm 37:11

³⁹ And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. — Revelation 5:10

⁴⁰ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. — Revelation 20:6

⁴¹ And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. — Revelation 2:26-27

the thousand-year period of time⁴² that the kingdom of heaven exists in the land of Israel, thus fulfilling a prophecy from the Hebrew Scriptures⁴³ (and it seems unlikely that there would be any Israelite priests on the New Earth, since there presumably won't be any need for them to be priests with no physical temple in the New Jerusalem⁴⁴ like the one that will be in Israel when the kingdom finally begins there, as we just discussed, so this salvation seems to specifically be referring to the thousand years that the kingdom exists in Israel, although it's true that, until John wrote the book of Revelation, nobody would have known how long this type of salvation would last, and it's also true that anyone who experiences this type of salvation will get to go on to live in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth, but at that point the specific type of salvation Jesus was teaching about would technically have come to an end, since the thousand years will have run their course), as well as finally being able to keep the Mosaic law perfectly because the New Covenant will have finally

⁴² And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. — Revelation 20:4-6

⁴³ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. — Exodus 19:6

⁴⁴ And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. — Revelation 21:22

come fully into effect for the house of Israel and the house of Judah⁴⁵ (and since Gentiles don't have an old covenant of any sort to be replaced with by something new, because they weren't given any covenants to begin with,⁴⁶ it should be pretty clear that the New Covenant is for the members of the house of Israel and the house of Judah, as Jeremiah stated, rather than for Gentiles who aren't descendants of either of those houses), after the believing Israelites who aren't living there at the time⁴⁷ have been returned from their exile⁴⁸ back to the land of Israel.⁴⁹ Bringing His people into the New Covenant

⁴⁵ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. — Jeremiah 31:31-34

⁴⁶ That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: — Ephesians 2:12

⁴⁷ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. — Isaiah 11:11-12

⁴⁸ And I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive. — Jeremiah 29:14

⁴⁹ I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. — Ezekiel 20:41-42

(which was inaugurated by Jesus' death,⁵⁰ but which has largely been put on hold until His Second Coming because most of Israel rejected Him as their Messiah during His first time on earth, as demonstrated by the fact that Jeremiah said *"they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them"*⁵¹ when the New Covenant comes fully in effect, and that sure isn't happening anywhere in the world yet, especially not in Israel) is how Jesus will *"save his people from their sins,"* as the angel put it in Matthew 1:21⁵² — letting us know that Jesus will fulfill the prophecy in Psalm 130:8 which said, *"And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities,"* involving both forgiveness for their sins,⁵³ as well as finally being redeemed out from among the nations and Gentiles they'll have been living among⁵⁴ — because pretty much any reference⁵⁵ to *"His people"* in Scriptures⁵⁶ is specifically a reference to faithful

⁵⁰ And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. — Hebrews 9:15-17

⁵¹ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. — Jeremiah 31:34

⁵² And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. — Matthew 1:21

⁵³ But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. — Psalm 130:4

⁵⁴ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; — Revelation 5:9

⁵⁵ Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. — Deuteronomy 32:43

⁵⁶ And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the Lord, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel, — 2 Chronicles 35:3

Israelites.⁵⁷ And since the promises God gave concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah are without repentance,⁵⁸ we know that these prophecies will indeed be fulfilled for exactly the very people that they were made to (i.e., Israelites), in the exact location He said they'd take place in (i.e., the land of Israel).

And the method of getting to enjoy this kind of salvation in Israel isn't what most Christians have assumed either. You see, this isn't the type of salvation which Paul taught isn't based on works (although that is an equally valid type of salvation for those it applies to), but rather, in addition to having to believe that Jesus is Israel's Messiah (or Christ), as well as the Son of God,⁵⁹ this sort of salvation also requires a number of other things from those who are able to do so as well. For example, it requires repentance of one's sins⁶⁰ (as opposed to the type of repentance Paul wrote about, which simply referred to changing one's mind about who, or rather "capital W" Who, could actually save his readers), as well as making sure to do⁶¹ various sorts of good

⁵⁷ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, — Luke 1:68

⁵⁸ For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. — Romans 11:29

⁵⁹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. — John 20:31

⁶⁰ I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. — Luke 5:32

⁶¹ Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. — John 5:28-29

works,⁶² including baptism in water in the name of Jesus Christ⁶³ (and there are multiple other types of baptisms when it comes to this type of salvation too, including baptism *with*—or *in*—the Holy Spirit, as well as with fire,⁶⁴ among others), following the commandments Jesus taught His disciples during His earthly ministry,⁶⁵ which includes the commandments within the Mosaic law,⁶⁶ doing whatever it takes to be extremely righteous⁶⁷ and to avoid

⁶² What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. — James 2:14-26

⁶³ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. — Acts 2:38

⁶⁴ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: — Matthew 3:11

⁶⁵ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. — 1 John 2:3-4

⁶⁶ And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. — Matthew 19:17-19

⁶⁷ For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. — Matthew 5:20

sinning⁶⁸ (which is presumably what Jesus meant when He told His audience to amputate body parts in order to avoid hell and enter the kingdom), and then confessing one's sins if they slip up and do end up sinning⁶⁹ (not to mention also forgiving others who sinned against them⁷⁰). In addition, they're not only required to turn from pride and be extremely humble⁷¹ (since, while doing good works is required of Israelites, good works on their own don't save them, and, in addition to faith,⁷² humility and repentance are even more required for Israelites than almost anything else⁷³), as well as having to make

⁶⁸ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. — Matthew 7:21-23

⁶⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. — 1 John 1:9

⁷⁰ And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. — Matthew 6:12

⁷¹ At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. — Matthew 18:1-4

⁷² But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. — Hebrews 11:6

⁷³ And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. — Luke 18:9-14

sure they're both meek⁷⁴ and poor in spirit,⁷⁵ they also can't be greedy or selfish⁷⁶ (these sorts of warnings⁷⁷ directed towards the rich are given all throughout the Bible,⁷⁸ and since rich people can believe that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God just as easily as poor people can, it appears that being willing to give up one's wealth in order to follow Jesus⁷⁹ could be required of an Israelite in order for them to enter the kingdom, at least back then and as far as this type of salvation goes, since otherwise Jesus could have simply told the young man to accept Him as his personal saviour — or perhaps told him to do something that actually *is* a biblical concept — rather than telling him to sell all he had and give it to the poor so he could follow Jesus around Israel), and they do also have to endure to the end⁸⁰ (of one's life or of the period commonly known as the Tribulation, whichever comes first) as well (there are many other requirements mentioned elsewhere in Scripture too, but I think you get the idea, which is that this is not the same type of salvation Paul primarily taught about).

⁷⁴ Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. — Matthew 5:5

⁷⁵ Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. — Matthew 5:3

⁷⁶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. — Matthew 19:23-24

⁷⁷ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. — Matthew 6:24

⁷⁸ Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. — James 5:1

⁷⁹ The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. — Matthew 19:20-22

⁸⁰ And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. — Matthew 10:22

I know that most Christians reading this will want to insist that these required works are all meant to be interpreted as being the fruit of one's faith — or, as some claim, that Jesus actually commanded His audience members do all these things so that His more humble listeners would realize they couldn't do what He told them to do and would have faith in His death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection, instead (which is what Paul said people who experience at least one of the types of salvation he wrote about have to believe when they're saved,⁸¹ yet which isn't something anyone prior to him is ever recorded as teaching needed to be believed in order to be saved, especially not during Jesus' earthly ministry) — but there's absolutely zero indication in any of those passages that they aren't meant to be interpreted literally (and that would also require us to have to make ourselves humble enough to be able to do this, which itself would be a very difficult work in and of itself), particularly in light of what He said to the lawyer when He told the parable of the Good Samaritan, never once implying anywhere in Luke 10:25-37 that He didn't mean for the lawyer to keep the law (in fact, all He said about the

⁸¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: — 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Mosaic law after sharing the parable was, *“Go, and do thou likewise”*⁸²).

Besides, Jesus Himself said in Matthew 5:17-19, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”* All has not been fulfilled yet (heaven and earth haven’t passed yet — unless you’re reading this study on the New Earth, long after it was first published — and there are still many prophecies yet to be fulfilled, at least as of the time I wrote this study), so those for whom the Mosaic law is relevant to, namely Israelites, still have to follow it (or, at the very least, certainly still had to until Christ’s death, if Jesus’ statement that *“it is finished”*⁸³ was referring to all being fulfilled, although since the current heaven and earth are still here — and there are still many unfulfilled prophecies — as of the time I’m

⁸² And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise. — luke 10:25-37

⁸³ When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. — John 19:30

writing this, I don't believe it was). Nobody listening to Jesus could have possibly interpreted any of His statements as meaning that works weren't actually still required of them anyway, since not only had a form of salvation by grace through faith apart from works not even been taught prior to Paul doing so,⁸⁴ at the time they were preaching to the inhabitants of Israel, not even Jesus' disciples understood that He was going to die,⁸⁵ which means that A) this isn't something that Jesus' audience members could have possibly believed is true in order to avoid the type of hell He was warning about, and B) Jesus and His disciples spent three years preaching basically useless messages, considering this would mean they didn't once explain how to *actually* be saved from said "hell" fire, if the common understanding is correct, and people like Zacchaeus couldn't have actually been saved, despite what Jesus said in Luke 19:8–9⁸⁶ (which was actually in response to Zacchaeus promising to do good works in the form of making up for his previously harmful actions, not for claiming to believe in Christ's death for our sins, which is something that wasn't even discussed in the passage). In fact, even Jesus' disciples couldn't have been considered to be saved until *after* His death and resurrection — contrary to what Luke 10:20 seems to imply⁸⁷ — if it were a belief which was required in order to avoid this particular hell, since not even they believed He was going to

⁸⁴ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸⁵ For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him. — Mark 9:31-32

⁸⁶ And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. — Luke 19:8-9

⁸⁷ Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. — Luke 10:20

die or be resurrected until after they saw it all finally happen.⁸⁸ This also means that Jesus' death wasn't something people prior to His crucifixion were looking forward to for their salvation, because despite His death being foretold in the prophecies of both Jesus and certain other prophets, there's no scriptural basis for believing that anybody actually was looking forward in time in faith for His death to take place to save any of them, so this common assertion has absolutely no scriptural merit either (and if people could be saved *prior* to Christ's death by simply believing that He's Israel's Messiah and the Son of God, along with performing the requisite works of faith, of course, without having to believe that His death was *for our sins*, there's no good reason that I can think of to assume it couldn't *still* be possible to experience the sort of salvation Jesus and His disciples taught about that way either, especially since many of His teachings about this sort of salvation and how one experiences it are connected with the future Tribulation), which means there's no good reason to assume these commands weren't being mentioned as actual requirements for salvation (or, at the very least, for maintaining salvation) rather than just as evidence of one's salvation (or rather than to convince them of their inability to do what was necessary, in order to drive them to faith in a sacrifice they didn't even know He was going to make), at least not without reading one's preconceived doctrinal bias that there's only one type of salvation into Scripture (which anyone with a concordance can tell you isn't the case), and anyone who is being honest with the text will admit that works *are* required for *this* type of salvation (it's interesting how many Christians insist on interpreting the parts of Scripture which seem to be meant to be interpreted literally in a figurative manner, all the while criticizing those of us in the body of Christ for not interpreting the parts that make more sense to be interpreted figuratively in a literal manner, but they have no choice if they

⁸⁸ When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. — John 2:22

want to continue believing that their doctrinal assumptions are correct). And so, while not everybody will experience this sort of salvation⁸⁹ because, based on what Jesus said, not everyone will get to live in the kingdom of heaven during the time it exists in Israel, one day even Gentiles other than Cornelius and members of his house will be saved in this way because of Israelites⁹⁰ and their rise to prominence in the future.⁹¹ (And before someone brings him up, no, I don't believe the Ethiopian eunuch was a Gentile, but rather it seems likely that he was actually Jewish himself, of the diaspora, because not only was he visiting Jerusalem to worship⁹² like those a few chapters earlier in Acts 2 were,⁹³ but also because it wasn't pointed out in the chapter how problematic this should have been if he *was* a Gentile, even though such a big deal⁹⁴ is made of Peter's time spent going to minister to Gentiles in the same book⁹⁵ — and he wasn't he referred to as a proselyte the way Nicolas of Antioch was just two

⁸⁹ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. — John 3:36

⁹⁰ And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. — Isaiah 49:6

⁹¹ Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. — Acts 3:25

⁹² And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, — Acts 8:27

⁹³ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. — Acts 2:5

⁹⁴ And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. — Acts 10:28

⁹⁵ And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. — Acts 11:1-3

chapters before this one either⁹⁶ — so it seems very probable that preaching to Gentiles who weren't already proselytes was only done one time prior to Paul doing so, almost certainly for the purpose of Peter being able to later help defend Paul's ministry to the nations;⁹⁷ although, even if the eunuch actually was a Gentile, his statement of faith before his water baptism had nothing to do with trusting in Christ's death for our sins at all — which makes sense, considering the fact that, while he *was* told by Philip that Jesus died,⁹⁸ just as Cornelius later learned from Peter,⁹⁹ neither Philip nor Peter told their respective listeners that Christ's death was *for our sins*, or that His death *for our sins* is what they needed to have faith in for their salvation — but rather he simply confessed his belief that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God,¹⁰⁰ lining

⁹⁶ Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: — Acts 6:3-5

⁹⁷ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. — Acts 15:7

⁹⁸ The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. — Acts 8:32-35

⁹⁹ And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; — Acts 10:39-40

¹⁰⁰ And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. — Acts 8:36-38

up exactly with what John wrote that a member of the Israel of God had to believe in order to be saved.¹⁰¹)

And while Paul did sometimes teach about the same sort of salvation that Jesus and His disciples were proclaiming (especially when he's recorded as preaching to Jews in the book of Acts, as well as when he discussed the salvation of Israel in his epistles), most of the time he was either simply referring to being quickened¹⁰² (sometimes also referred to as being vivified, depending on your Bible version, which refers to having our mortal bodies be made immortal¹⁰³ as happened to Jesus after His resurrection,¹⁰⁴ being "*made alive*"¹⁰⁵ beyond the reach of death,¹⁰⁶ which means being incapable of dying,¹⁰⁷ as well as never being subject to the corruption¹⁰⁸ and the humiliation of mortality ever again,¹⁰⁹ which is something that will only happen to certain people who experience the

¹⁰¹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. — John 20:31

¹⁰² I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; — 1 Timothy 6:13

¹⁰³ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. — Romans 8:11

¹⁰⁴ For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: — 1 Peter 3:18

¹⁰⁵ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:22

¹⁰⁶ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:54-55

¹⁰⁷ Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. — Hebrews 7:16

¹⁰⁸ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. — 1 Corinthians 15:53

¹⁰⁹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. — Philippians 3:21

sort of salvation that Jesus taught about during His earthly ministry, at least at the time they're experiencing it — specifically those who are raised from the dead at the resurrection of the just¹¹⁰ — with those who are still living at the time they begin enjoying what the KJV figuratively refers to as “everlasting life”¹¹¹ (or “eternal life”¹¹²) in the kingdom of heaven not being given true immortality at that point, since those who are resurrected after Jesus returns will be like the angels¹¹³ and will no longer marry or reproduce, and if everyone who was given “everlasting life” was quickened/made immortal right then, there wouldn't be anyone left to fulfill the prophecies of righteous Israelites not only growing old but also having children in the kingdom,¹¹⁴ as well as later on the New Earth¹¹⁵), and finally being made truly sinless because of that immortality (which is what salvation will eventually be for those who

¹¹⁰ And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. — Luke 14:14

¹¹¹ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. — John 3:16

¹¹² But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. — Mark 10:30

¹¹³ For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. — Matthew 22:30

¹¹⁴ Again the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. — Zechariah 8:1-5

¹¹⁵ For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. — Isaiah 65:17-20

experience the type of salvation that Paul primarily wrote about), or to experiencing that particular salvation (immortality and sinlessness) before anyone else, while reigning¹¹⁶ with Christ in the heavens¹¹⁷ (which is what the **special** salvation Paul wrote is “**specially**” for those that believe is,¹¹⁸ at least in part, and which can only be experienced by someone who has been quickened, as I explained in that longer Bible study), since the citizenship of those he wrote to is in heaven¹¹⁹ rather than in the land of Israel where the citizenship of the people Jesus preached to is located. Those of us who get to enjoy this special sort of salvation (*also* referred to figuratively as “everlasting life,”¹²⁰ or as “eternal life,”¹²¹ in the KJV) are the members of the church that Paul (and only Paul) referred to as the body of Christ,¹²² which consists *only* of those who truly

¹¹⁶ It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. — 2 Timothy 2:11-13

¹¹⁷ Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. — Ephesians 1:15-23

¹¹⁸ For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. — 1 Timothy 4:10

¹¹⁹ For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: — Philippians 3:20

¹²⁰ But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. — Romans 6:22

¹²¹ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. — Romans 6:23

¹²² Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. — 1 Corinthians 12:27

understand what it means — and also truly believe — that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, as he explained three chapters later in the same book which he called us the body of Christ in (and if you aren't already aware of why this "everlasting life" is a figurative term, please read either the longer Bible study I already mentioned, where I discuss it in great detail, or my shorter study titled "*How long does 'for ever' last?*", where I discuss the meaning of the words "everlasting," "eternal," and "for ever" in the Bible). This obviously isn't something that anyone to whom Jesus and His disciples preached during His earthly ministry could have believed because, as we just discussed, at the time they were preaching to the inhabitants of Israel, not even His disciples knew that He was going to die, so this "method" of salvation was clearly intended for a different audience (which means that neither they, nor anyone who believed the message they proclaimed during Jesus' earthly ministry, could be members of the body of Christ; although that's okay, because they had membership in another church Jesus began¹²³ — one which was just as special as the church¹²⁴ that Paul was the first member of¹²⁵ — and their church was known as the Israel of God¹²⁶).

Just to add some further details about the special type of salvation Paul taught to the nations, unlike the requirements for experiencing the salvation that Jesus and His disciples taught about, this kind of salvation is entirely apart from any

¹²³ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. — Matthew 16:18

¹²⁴ Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: — Colossians 1:24

¹²⁵ Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. — 1 Timothy 1:16

¹²⁶ And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. — Galatians 6:16

works of any kind, as already noted.¹²⁷ In fact, even if we don't do any works at all, we can still be justified,¹²⁸ which means that faith without works is *not* dead for those in the body of Christ. In addition, something few are aware of is that baptism for those who enjoy this sort of salvation isn't in water. Yes, Paul did baptize a few people in water early on,¹²⁹ but he would have eventually stopped completely as he progressed in receiving revelations of truth from the Lord,¹³⁰ particularly after learning the truth that there's only *one* sort of immersion, or baptism,¹³¹ for us, which is immersion *by* the Holy Spirit, *into* the body of Christ,¹³² including into what He experienced in His body, such as His death¹³³ (and he was careful to point out that Christ *didn't* send him to baptize at all,¹³⁴ which would be unusual if water baptism *was* necessary for the sort of salvation he was teaching the Gentiles about, as some Christians believe, and if he actually *was* trying to get them saved)—as opposed to the various different

¹²⁷ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

¹²⁸ But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. — Romans 4:5

¹²⁹ I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. — 1 Corinthians 1:14-16

¹³⁰ It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. — 2 Corinthians 12:1

¹³¹ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. — Ephesians 4:4-6

¹³² For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. — 1 Corinthians 12:13

¹³³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. — Romans 6:3-4

¹³⁴ For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. — 1 Corinthians 1:17

types of baptisms for Israel that I already mentioned, some of which involved water and some of which didn't, telling us that not all baptisms end up getting someone wet—and so this baptism, or immersion, is quite dry for us, and happens to us entirely passively at the moment we believe and are saved. (In order to try to ignore this point, some Christians claim that Paul simply meant we should only be baptized in water once in our lives rather than repeatedly, but he preceded the words “*one baptism*” with the words “*one hope*” and “*one faith*,” and I certainly hope nobody would think we should only have hope or faith once in our lives, as would be the case if Paul meant we should be baptized only once in our lives there, so that interpretation doesn't really fit with the rest of the passage if we're interpreting the whole thing consistently, which tells us he's really just saying that there's only one *type* of baptism for us—one which doesn't involve water at all; and while not everyone uses that interpretation, because others will instead claim that 1 Corinthians 12:13 should actually be translated as saying “for *in* one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,” but since there is now only *one* baptism for those in that body, and this verse still tells us that baptism into the body of Christ is what this one baptism is, if “in one Spirit” *were* the best translation—and the assumption that it is a better translation is based on nothing more than their dislike of the idea that water baptism might not be meant for believers in the body of Christ today, and is not a translation that most English Bible versions I've read agree with, I should add—and if it did refer to that baptism *with*, or *of*, or *in* the Holy Spirit, then it can't also include getting wet, because water baptism would then be a *second* baptism *in addition* to our one baptism in or with the Holy Spirit, so this doesn't help defend the idea of water baptism for the body of Christ at all anyway.) And while forgiving others is still something God would like us to

do,¹³⁵ it isn't required for salvation for us the way it is for Israel¹³⁶ since we aren't under the Mosaic law¹³⁷ or required to do good works in order to be saved when it comes to our type of salvation (even though, yes, God will still end up having most members of the body of Christ do good works,¹³⁸ but we aren't required to do so in order to be saved, and since Paul told us that "*we are his workmanship*" in the verse where he said that, we know that those are works God will make sure we do, or that He'll technically do through us), the way Israelites are when it comes to their type of salvation (or the way other Gentiles are if they also want to experience the sort of salvation Jesus and His disciples spoke about — remember, Gentiles can experience the same salvation Jesus and His disciples preached about, as evidenced by Cornelius, just as Jews can experience the sort of salvation Paul primarily preached about, as evidenced by Paul himself), and, in fact, we can be saved right now *despite* the fact that Israel is not yet a light to the Gentiles¹³⁹ as they one day will need to be for Gentiles to be led to salvation,¹⁴⁰ which will be at the time when the law shall go forth of

¹³⁵ And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. — Ephesians 4:32

¹³⁶ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. — Matthew 6:14-15

¹³⁷ For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. — Galatians 3:10

¹³⁸ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. — Ephesians 2:10

¹³⁹ I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. — Romans 11:11

¹⁴⁰ Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. — Zechariah 8:22-23

Zion¹⁴¹ (which isn't right now, since the law not only *doesn't* go forth from Zion, but doesn't even apply to Gentiles at present).

The differences between those various forms of salvation also tells us how important it is that one doesn't confuse the people referred to as the body of Christ¹⁴² with the people called the Israel of God¹⁴³ (the words "and upon" in Galatians 6:16 mean there are two separate groups of people being wished peace and mercy by Paul in that verse; there's no reason to think that Paul was actually saying, "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and, oh yeah, these people are also called the Israel of God, by the way," especially in light of everything else he'd just finished teaching in that epistle, not to mention everything we've just gone over about the kingdom of heaven and the different types of salvation, which means there are two separate groups being written about there: the first group being "as many as walk according to this rule," referring to members of the body of Christ, and the second group being those known as "the Israel of God"), or else they're likely to misunderstand not only which teachings in the Bible apply specifically to them, but how they receive their type of salvation as well.

Of course, most Christians interpret the Bible with a major preconceived bias already present, which is the assumption that the whole Bible is to and about everyone. But unless you believe everyone needs to build a literal ark out of

¹⁴¹ But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. — Micah 4:1-2

¹⁴² Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. — 1 Corinthians 12:27

¹⁴³ And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. — Galatians 6:16

literal gopher wood,¹⁴⁴ to get naked when they preach,¹⁴⁵ or needs to own a sword,¹⁴⁶ it should be pretty obvious that there are things in Scripture which don't apply to you, and based on what we just covered about the different types of salvation, it should also be obvious that there are two entirely different sets of messages for two entirely different groups of people in the Bible (one for the body of Christ and one for the Israel of God). And if a declaration regarding one of those particular types of salvation could be referred to as a proclamation of "glad tidings,"¹⁴⁷ or a pronouncement of news which is good (aka "good news," all of which is what the English word "Gospel" means), if there *are* multiple different types of salvation mentioned in Scripture, which we know there are (unless, again, you think that Jesus' disciples being temporarily saved from dying by being saved from drowning in water is somehow the exact same sort of salvation you believe Christ provided through His death for our sins), then each of those proclamations of good news would technically not be the *same* proclamation of good news as one another, which would mean it could be said that there's more than one Gospel referred to in Scripture, based on the definition of the word "Gospel." But if that's the case, shouldn't the Bible also say that there are multiple types of proclamations of good news, perhaps even giving each of these proclamations different titles? Well, it actually does just that — and even tells us the names of these respective proclamations —

¹⁴⁴ And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. — Genesis 6:13-14

¹⁴⁵ At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. — Isaiah 20:2

¹⁴⁶ Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. — Luke 22:36

¹⁴⁷ And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, — Luke 8:1

in Galatians 2:7,¹⁴⁸ where we're told that they're called the Gospel of the Circumcision (also known as the Gospel of the Kingdom,¹⁴⁹ which is what the proclamation of good news that "*the kingdom of heaven is at hand*"¹⁵⁰ which Jesus and His disciples preached while He walked the earth is called) and the Gospel of the Uncircumcision (also known as the Gospel of the Grace of God,¹⁵¹ as well as Paul's Gospel, since it was referred to by him as "*my Gospel*"¹⁵² — and one generally doesn't call something theirs unless they're trying to differentiate it from something that belongs to someone else, or at least trying to point out that it doesn't belong to, or perhaps originate from, someone else, and if there was only one Gospel then Paul would have said "*the Gospel*," not "*my Gospel*" — which is the good news that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day¹⁵³).

Unfortunately, since most Christians mistakenly assume that there's really only one kind of salvation, and also that there's only one type of proclamation of

¹⁴⁸ But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; — Galatians 2:7

¹⁴⁹ And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. — Matthew 9:35

¹⁵⁰ From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. — Matthew 4:17

¹⁵¹ But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. — Acts 20:24

¹⁵² Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, — Romans 16:25

¹⁵³ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: — 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

good news about salvation anywhere in the Bible as well, they'll insist that because the next two verses in Galatians explain how both God and the pillars of the circumcision church sent Paul to the Gentiles while Peter and the rest focused on the Jews,¹⁵⁴ then verse 7 must have simply been saying the exact same thing as well. But these verses were really Paul *expanding* on his previous statement in verse 7, by telling his readers who the primary audiences of each of the two separate proclamations of good news regarding the different types of salvation are, providing new information about what he'd just told them rather than simply being unnecessarily repetitive the way most Christians assume he was, causing them to then read that assumption into verse 7, ultimately leading them to believe it just meant that Paul preached the Gospel to the uncircumcision and that Peter preached the exact same Gospel to the circumcision. However, for those who insist on interpreting it this way, if Paul *was* trying to get across to his readers that the different types of salvation are shared through different proclamations of good news with the titles of "the Gospel of the Circumcision" and "the Gospel of the Uncircumcision," or even different proclamations of good news with the titles of "the Gospel *to* the Circumcision" and "the Gospel *to* the Uncircumcision," if that's how you prefer to translate verse 7, I need to ask you to explain what he would have needed to have written differently there in order to convince you that there *are* indeed two separate proclamations of news which is good being referred to by two separate titles there, especially in light of the fact that there are obviously multiple different types of salvation referred to in different parts of the Bible.

That there isn't only one type of pronouncement of news which is good in the Bible should really be more obvious to more people than it currently is, though.

¹⁵⁴ (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. — Galatians 2:8-9

I mean, first of all, we know that Paul didn't learn the Gospel he preached from any mortal humans, but rather learned it directly from the glorified Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁵ However, it wouldn't make sense for him to have been persecuting the Israel of God if he wasn't aware of their most important teaching already (the Gospel they were preaching), so the Gospel he learned from Christ couldn't have been the same Gospel he was persecuting the Jewish church for preaching since he would have had to have already known that Gospel before he ever even met Christ on the road to Damascus in order to persecute them for preaching it. Although, if you disagree, I'd like you to explain *what* Paul was persecuting the Israel of God for, exactly, if his Gospel was the same one they were already preaching, as well as what the Gospel he said he received not of man, *but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*, was. In addition, it doesn't appear that Paul was told this Gospel by Jesus on the road to Damascus either,¹⁵⁶ yet he immediately preached the Gospel that Peter and the rest of the apostles were preaching after being healed by Ananias,¹⁵⁷ so the obvious conclusion seems to be that the good news he later preached to the Gentiles wasn't the same good

¹⁵⁵ But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. — Galatians 1:11-12

¹⁵⁶ And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. — Acts 9:1-6

¹⁵⁷ And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. — Acts 9:17-20

news which Peter preached to Israel and the proselytes, and which Paul himself preached at the beginning of his ministry in Damascus, as well as in Jerusalem three years later, where the apostles and Jesus' brother James became acquainted with him for a couple weeks,¹⁵⁸ and the most important part of the "him" they became acquainted with would certainly include what the Gospel he believed and preached at that time was — he wouldn't have just been sitting around discussing sports with them for two weeks — especially since he preached with them at that time as well¹⁵⁹ (and for those who aren't acquainted with 17th-century English, the phrase "*other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother*" in Galatians 1:19 in the KJV simply means "other than the apostles, I got to know nobody except for the Lord's brother James," which makes sense considering the fact that this James wasn't one of the 12 apostles, and that Acts 9:26-29 says he *did* meet the rest of the apostles and even preached with them, as I just mentioned). If the Gospel Paul referred to as "*my Gospel*" really was the same Gospel he'd already preached with them in Jerusalem, why would he have then had to return more than a decade later to explain what the Gospel he was now preaching among the Gentiles was?¹⁶⁰ Peter and the rest of the apostles (as well as James) would have already learned what the Gospel he preached was during his previous visit

¹⁵⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. — Galatians 1:18-19

¹⁵⁹ And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. — Acts 9:26-29

¹⁶⁰ Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. — Galatians 2:1-2

if it was the *same* Gospel, so what was the Gospel he preached among the Gentiles that he had to explain to them, exactly, if they already knew the Gospel he preached?

But all that aside, the definition of the word “Gospel” (or “Evangel,” as some Bible translations put it) really makes it clear that there’s more than one of them in the Bible anyway. Remember, the word “Gospel” refers to a pronouncement of glad tidings, or news which is good, and the word “news” quite literally refers to “a series of specific words which, when laid out in a specific order, conveys specific information about a specific subject.” This means that if you have *another* set of specific words which, when laid out in *their own* specific order, convey some *other* sort of specific information about that subject, you can’t say that you have the *same* news, regardless of whether both sets of news are good in nature, or even about the same person (for example, the news that “Joshua went to the graveyard” can’t be said to be the exact same news as “that thing you’ve been anticipating is nearby,” because the two messages mean something entirely different from one another since they convey entirely different pieces of information from each other: one piece of news being about an action a person took, with the other piece of news being about something the hearer or reader had been anticipating being close by). Because they’re providing us with different sorts of information from one another, it means that they are, by definition, different sets of news (and that there are at least two different sets of news in existence). And since the news which is good that Jesus and His disciples preached prior to Paul’s conversion (which was the news that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand”) didn’t contain the same specific words as the news which is good that Paul later preached to the nations did (which is the news that “Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day”), nor did it convey the same specific information (since their news which is good didn’t contain anything about Christ’s death for

our sins in it, which it couldn't have because most of the people proclaiming it weren't even aware of the fact that He was going to die at the time they preached their news), it should be very evident that the news which is good that Jesus' disciples preached during Jesus' earthly ministry simply *can't* be said to be the same news which is good (meaning the same Gospel) that Paul taught, and so anyone who still insists there's only one set of glad tidings/news which is good/Gospel in the Bible is simply lying to themselves at this point. Although, if anyone disagrees, I'd be very curious to hear them explain how the news which is good about Christ's death for our sins that Paul preached is indeed what Jesus' disciples were preaching when they preached the Gospel of the Kingdom during Jesus' earthly ministry.

And to quickly get the most common objections to the idea of there being two Gospels out of the way, first of all, some people mistakenly believe Paul was saying in Galatians 1:8–9 that anyone who preached another Gospel will be accursed.¹⁶¹ Unfortunately, those people not only read more into this passage than it's actually saying, they also don't pay close attention to the specific wording of the passage either, leading them to believe a whole doctrine that wasn't what Paul was getting at there at all. You see, Paul wasn't saying there is only one true Gospel there, or that nobody could ever preach a Gospel to someone other than the one he taught the body of Christ (if that were the case, nobody could ever share good news of any sort with anyone if it wasn't about Christ's death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection, including good news/Gospels/glad tidings about births or job promotions or any other sort of positive information). Most people who base their assumptions about there being only one Gospel on this passage have likely only read translations of

¹⁶¹ But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. — Galatians 1:8-9

Scripture which render verses 6 and 7 in the way the KJV does when it says “*another gospel which is not another*” in the verses before his warning.¹⁶² The problem is, if one doesn’t understand that this is a very poetic sort of translation, they can easily end up very confused. Is it another Gospel or is it not another Gospel? It can’t literally be both another Gospel and not another Gospel at the same time, which tells us that this particular translation isn’t meant to be read literally.

What most people aren’t aware of is that Paul actually used two distinct Greek words rather than one in the original text (and that Paul literally just meant: “a *different* gospel which is not another”) in order to differentiate between any legitimate Gospels that weren’t his but were still perfectly okay to be taught to certain people to follow for salvation (as long as it wasn’t members of the body of Christ being taught that) and any illegitimate “gospels” that shouldn’t be taught by anyone at all, speaking of both a **different** (ἕτερος/“het’-er-os”) so-called “gospel,” and **another** (ἄλλος/“al’-los”) *actual* Gospel. The word ἕτερος basically means “other of a differing sort” while ἄλλος means “other of the same sort,” so the wording of this passage allows for the existence of another/ἄλλος *true* Gospel (or even true Gospels, plural) in addition to Paul’s Gospel.

Simply put, Paul wasn’t saying that people who taught there are other Gospels are under a curse, since he did so himself in the very next chapter of this epistle;¹⁶³ he was only saying that anyone who tried to get those in *the body of Christ* to follow the requirements of any Gospels **for their salvation** other than the one *they had already received from him* would be accursed, but Peter and the

¹⁶² I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. — Galatians 1:6-7

¹⁶³ But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; — Galatians 2:7

rest of the apostles could preach their particular Gospel as something to be followed to anyone that they wanted to without fear, **as long as it wasn't to members of the body of Christ**, based on the words "*unto you*" in verses 8 and 9, since Paul was writing to those who had already believed his Gospel (meaning those who had already become members of the body of Christ), not to those who hadn't. In fact, the different/ἕτερος "gospel" that Paul was warning about there was actually an adulterated mix of both Gospels, which means it was an attempt to blend the two Gospels into one (those whom Paul was condemning were trying to mix the law elements associated with the Gospel that Peter preached in with the pure grace of Paul's Gospel, resulting in a bastardized "gospel" that can't help anyone). Unfortunately, this means that the evangelists and teachers of the Christian religion today who are also trying to force the contents of each of these Gospels into one (by insisting that there is only one Gospel) are guilty of preaching that very same different/ἕτερος "gospel" that isn't even another/ἄλλος (completely legitimate) Gospel at all like the Gospel that Peter preached was, bringing the curse that Paul warned about upon themselves.

And on the off chance that anyone ever tries to claim that "different" and "another" actually mean the same thing, here are some sentences to consider: 1) "the word 'different' is different from the word 'another,'" 2) "the word 'another' is another from the word 'different,'" 3) "the word 'another' is different from the word 'another,'" 4) "the word 'different' is another from the word 'different,'" 5) "the word 'another' is another from the word 'another,'" and 6) "the word 'different' is different from the word 'different.'" Read those, then ask yourself if those sentences all mean the same thing, or if the last five even make any sense at all. And to really drive the point home, if the two words truly did mean the same thing, the verse could also be translated as "a different Gospel which is not different," but that might be the most nonsensical one of them all. And if

the words “different” and “another” *don’t* mean the same thing, as those examples I just gave prove, there’s literally no way to interpret the passage as meaning Paul is saying there’s only one legitimate Gospel, because he’s clearly allowing for at least three separate messages called gospels in this passage, 1) his own Gospel, 2) another Gospel, and 3) a different “gospel,” which means the only way he could have been talking about only two messages called gospels — 1) his own Gospel, and 2) a different “gospel” — with only one being legitimate, is if “another” and “different” actually did mean the same thing. (This isn’t to say that ἕτερος and ἄλλος can’t ever be used as synonyms of one another in other passages, since we already know that the same word can have different meanings in different passages, but it should be clear by this point that Paul wasn’t using ἕτερος as another word with the same meaning as ἄλλος in this passage — since then he’d have been contradicting himself by saying it both was and wasn’t another Gospel at the same time — but that he was instead using the two words with different definitions, contrasting them with one another, in this case; and yes, I used the words “different” and “another” repeatedly in this sentence on purpose, to really drill in my point.) And even if we only look at the way the KJV renders the verse, that translation is obviously saying the same thing, just very poetically (since a literal interpretation on its own would be contradictory, as I just mentioned), so it has to be interpreted as meaning: “another” gospel which is not [actually] another [legitimate Gospel] (with the first “another” there being in quotation marks in order to demonstrate that it still just means “different” [from any actual Gospels], when it comes to this particular translation).

Besides, anyone who has studied the Bible already believes that there *were* other glad tidings (again, meaning Gospels) preached in Scripture, such as the angel Gabriel’s proclamation of glad tidings regarding the impending birth of

John the Baptist to Zacharias,¹⁶⁴ with “glad tidings” being translated from a verb form of the same Greek word εὐαγγέλιον/“yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on” that “Gospel” is translated from in the KJV (and that the English word “evangelism” is transliterated from), literally meaning to “preach this good news” in that passage. So simply put, there’s no way Paul could have been saying there’s only one message allowed to be called words of good news/a Gospel/glad tidings in existence or else we’d have to remove those verses discussing the other “glad tidings” from the Bible altogether, and Gabriel would have been accursed for telling Zacharias about his wife’s pregnancy, unless those various other words of good news/glad tidings are all a part of a larger, all-encompassing, progressively-revealed “Gospel” we have to believe in so we can be saved. But then John the Baptist’s birth would also have to be a part of what the body of Christ has to have faith in for their salvation (and someone who hadn’t heard of John the Baptist yet couldn’t get saved until they do), so this obviously makes no sense, especially in light of what Paul said the Gospel he preached actually was, which means that right off the bat we already have multiple proclamations of good news/Gospels/glad tidings in the Bible even before we get to any of the Gospels that one can believe when they get saved. All that being said, even if somebody somehow still hasn’t recognized that there’s more than one Gospel in the Bible after everything I’ve already covered, they should at least now recognize that this passage can’t be used to refute the idea, since the wording does allow for another/ἄλλος legitimate Gospel to exist, even if they don’t believe it’s specifically saying there is one.

And yet, even though the idea of including all proclamations called good news/Gospels/glad tidings in the Bible into one progressively-revealed Gospel makes no sense and contradicts other parts of Scripture (unless, again, people have to

¹⁶⁴ And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. — Luke 1:19

have faith in John the Baptist's birth in order to be saved), anyone who *does* still believe there's only one Gospel in the Bible after reading all that is pretty much *forced* to believe in a progressively-revealed Gospel (whether they're consistent and include the good news about John the Baptist's birth in it or whether they choose to ignore consistency and leave it out). Of course, many Christians who believe there's only one proclamation of good news/glad tidings (meaning one Gospel) in Scripture actually do admit that they believe this one proclamation of good news as a whole was progressively revealed throughout Scripture, and that it now contains both the proclamation of good news made during Jesus' earthly ministry (that the kingdom of heaven was at hand) as well as the proclamation of good news which Paul preached to the nations (that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day), and that these two different proclamations of good news are simply two parts of one all-encompassing proclamation of good news which has only been gradually revealed through progressive revelation (although not too all-encompassing, or else, again, we'd have to have faith in the birth of John the Baptist for our salvation). And while this idea isn't actually stated anywhere in Scripture, which means they're ultimately just making this idea up in order to support their assumption that there can't be more than one Gospel in Scripture, at least they recognize that this would have to be the case if there really was only one Gospel recorded there, which it indeed has to be, considering the fact that what Paul referred to as the Gospel he preached among the nations included Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection, which is something that Jesus' disciples couldn't have included in the Gospel they preached during His earthly ministry, since they weren't even aware He was going to die at the time, much less be resurrected. Some of these Christians also like to say things such as, "Jesus is the Gospel," however, and while this makes for a catchy statement that many people would automatically want to nod their heads in assent to because of how spiritual it sounds, since the Bible tells us what the two

different proclamations of news which is good related to salvation made by Jesus' disciples and later by Paul really are, and because it tells us that these proclamations of news which is good are *about* Jesus, not that He Himself *is* the proclamation of news which is good (with the first proclamation being about the *identity* of Jesus, and the second one being about the *work* of Jesus), unless you're aware of a verse in Scripture which actually outright says, "Jesus is the Gospel" (which is something I've never seen in the Bible), we know that this is also nothing more than an assertion made in order to defend their assumption that there really is only one Gospel.

However, let's pretend for a moment that the Bible actually did say there's only one progressively-revealed Gospel in Scripture. If that were the case, considering the fact, again, that none of Jesus' followers prior to Paul preached that Christ's death was *for our sins* (or even that Christ was going to die in the first place, when they were proclaiming the news which is good that they preached prior to His death), or that one had to have faith in His death *for our sins* in order to be saved back then (which they couldn't have since – just as a reminder for those who have somehow already forgotten – none of them even understood that He was going to die prior to Him doing so), this would mean the Gospel being preached before Paul's ministry to the nations (or, at the very least, before Jesus actually died) would have been pretty useless unless those who heard the Gospel being preached back then could be saved *without* believing that Christ's death was *for our sins*, which means anyone who believes this idea is ultimately telling us that we have to divide this one, supposedly progressively-revealed, proclamation of news which is good into *two* separate sets of news which is good, proclaimed at *two* different periods of time, about *two* different things needing to be believed (and perhaps performed) in order to be said one is saved: one preached prior to Paul (or prior to Christ's death, at least; but since we have no scriptural record of Christ's death being *for our sins* as something that was taught as something that had to be believed in order

to be able to be said one is saved by anyone before Paul did, especially based on Peter's sermons in Acts, we have no good basis for assuming it was) and one that Paul first taught, taking us full circle to what I've been getting at all along here. Which means the bottom line here is, if there *are* two different proclamations of news which is good that were preached by two different sets of people at two different periods of times (as would have to be the case even if they were both a part of one progressively-revealed Gospel, and which we've already determined is the case anyway, one being about Jesus' identity and the other being about His work on the cross), since the phrase "news which is good" is literally the definition of the word "gospel," then the existence of one progressively-revealed Gospel would still ultimately result in the existence of *two* Gospels after we divide that one progressively-revealed Gospel into its two respective proclamations of news which is good preached in their two respective time periods. So at the end of the day, even if we decided to say there is only one Gospel, progressively revealed over time, it still ultimately results in two Gospels once all the facts about how it has to be divided into two separate messages preached in two separate timeframes are taken into consideration. And with all that being said, there's now almost no point in even going over the other objections to the idea of two Gospels, because we've now proven that it's impossible for there to be anything less than two Gospels in Scripture once we've properly divided the hypothetical progressively-revealed one Gospel into its two respective parts, but for the sake of clarity, I'm still going to go over them quickly.

And so, in answer to the next most common objection, yes, it's true, as many Christians also like to point out when trying to deny the existence of multiple Gospels in Scripture, that there is neither Jew nor Gentile.¹⁶⁵ However, that's only the case within the body of Christ, because one's nationality is irrelevant

¹⁶⁵ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. — Galatians 3:28

for those in Christ's body,¹⁶⁶ whereas, for the Israel of God, and even for Gentiles during the thousand-year kingdom, the nationality of Jews and other Israelites will remain very important¹⁶⁷ — based on everything we've now covered, it should be clear that Paul was reducing the scope of membership within the Israel of God in Romans 2:28–29¹⁶⁸ to include only certain Jews, not expanding it to include the Gentiles in the body of Christ as well, since “neither Jew nor Gentile” doesn't mean “you're all Israelites now,” considering there would then still be Jews, even if *only* Jews, in the body of Christ.

And yes, it's also true — as some will point out — that while Peter didn't teach Christ's death as being *for our sins* in the book of Acts, and even taught that Jesus' death was bad news for the Jewish people he was speaking to in the

¹⁶⁶ Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. — Ephesians 2:11-22

¹⁶⁷ Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. — Zechariah 8:22-23

¹⁶⁸ For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. — Romans 2:28-29

same book¹⁶⁹ (rather than being the good news that it was for Paul's Gentile audiences and that it is for us), Paul technically isn't recorded as teaching Christ's death as being for our sins, or as being good news, in the book of Acts either. However, the fact of the matter is that *no* sermon of Paul recorded in the book of Acts contains a *full* "Gospel message" explaining how one gets saved, which means his full Gospel message of how one is saved must have been preached "off screen,"¹⁷⁰ so to speak (meaning that specific part of his messages wasn't recorded in Acts, unless you think "*believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*"¹⁷¹ in and of itself is enough of an explanation of how to get saved for someone who wouldn't have known what that even meant, since they didn't say *what* to believe *about* the Lord Jesus Christ in that verse, so he must have explained that later), whereas the sermons of Peter recorded in Acts are a lot more comprehensive, and in fact contained his explanation of exactly how his listeners could get saved as far as the Gospel he preached is concerned (and while these sermons telling his audience members how they could be saved often did include the fact that Jesus Christ died, exactly *zero* of these sermons contained the information that His death was *for our sins*, or that it was necessary to believe that this is *why* He died in order to be saved). So this just means that the writer of Acts didn't include the contents of Paul's Gospel in the book, likely because it's primarily a Circumcision writing (meaning a book of the Bible not signed by Paul¹⁷²) to Israelites concerned with why the kingdom of heaven didn't come fully into effect in the nation of Israel at that time, and not

¹⁶⁹ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? — Acts 2:36-37

¹⁷⁰ And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. — Acts 16:32

¹⁷¹ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. — Acts 16:30-31

¹⁷² The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write. — 2 Thessalonians 3:17

simply a general history lesson about the “early church” and nothing more, the way many assume it is.

Now, some like to also point out that Peter *does* mention the death and blood of Christ in one of his own epistles (in 1 Peter 1:18-19¹⁷³ and in 1 Peter 2:24¹⁷⁴) in a manner that was far more positive for his readers than the way he explained it in his sermons in Acts was (where it was discussed only as a negative as far as his listeners at the time were concerned¹⁷⁵). And while what Peter wrote in his first epistle technically *can* be considered news which happened to be good, at least as far as his written audience was concerned (which consisted only of Israelites, since it was addressed to “the strangers,”¹⁷⁶ and the Greek word rendered as “stranger” in that verse — translated from παρeπίδημος/“par-ep-id'-ay-mos” — literally means “someone who comes from a foreign country into a new location to reside there by the side of the natives,” telling us that Peter was writing specifically to Israelites of the dispersion, or diaspora), it’s important to note that it wasn’t *called* “the good news” (or “the Gospel”) in Peter’s epistles the way the message which Paul proclaimed in 1 Corinthians 15 was,¹⁷⁷ and also

¹⁷³ Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: — 1 Peter 1:18-19

¹⁷⁴ Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. — 1 Peter 2:24

¹⁷⁵ Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: — Acts 2:23

¹⁷⁶ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, — 1 Peter 1:1

¹⁷⁷ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: — 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

to note that we already know what the *actual* message called “the good news” which Peter taught his audience could be saved by following was, at least the message called “the good news” which he preached during Jesus’ earthly ministry, and that the message which *he* would have called “the good news” at that time had nothing to do with Christ’s death for our sins, or even His subsequent burial and resurrection, at all, because at that time he didn’t even realize Jesus was going to die, as we’ve already discussed. So yes, Peter did eventually realize the connection between Christ’s death and Isaiah 53,¹⁷⁸ but not until much later, and there’s also no indication that he ever actually understood the full effect that Christ’s death for our (meaning all humanity’s) sins had the way Paul did either, with it seeming likely that he only knew the Circumcision connection to His death according to prophecy rather than the Uncircumcision connection according to the revelation of the mystery (or secret, depending on your Bible translation), which was kept secret from the

¹⁷⁸ Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. — Isaiah 53:1-12

time the world began until it was revealed to and through Paul.¹⁷⁹ Because yes, Jesus *did* have to die in order for Israel's New Covenant to come into effect, and also in order to be a propitiation for their sins¹⁸⁰ (presuming they obeyed all the requirements of the Gospel of the Circumcision, which includes keeping the commandments Jesus gave while walking the earth¹⁸¹), but His death accomplished *so much more* than that as well (and Peter and John and the other disciples certainly weren't aware of *any* of what the cross accomplished until *after* Christ died and was resurrected, which means the Gospel they preached prior to that point couldn't possibly have contained anything about it the way the Gospel which Paul preached did anyway, and the parts they *did* eventually understand likely not being understood by them until *after* Paul explained it to them). You see, the cross of Christ reached so much deeper into humanity's need than merely bringing one small nation closer to their second birth (although that is an important result of His death and resurrection as well), getting right down to the root of humanity's biggest problem itself. Remember, Israel's Passover lambs were not tortured during the temple sacrifices under the Mosaic law. Rather, their throats were slit, with that being the extent of their suffering. However, the same can't be said about Jesus Christ on the cross. His six hours of torment on the cross touched an aspect of humanity's condition that the swift death of the Passover lambs could never reach. In fact, the depth of suffering during His time on the cross goes deeper

¹⁷⁹ Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, — Romans 16:25

¹⁸⁰ And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. — 1 John 2:2

¹⁸¹ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. — 1 John 2:3-7

than anything Peter or John ever understood, telling us that the whole human race is finished (the Passover lambs left Israel intact while the cross wiped out everything and everyone in its path,¹⁸² even if this might only apply in practice to believers in Paul's Gospel at first, with it only applying to everyone else from a proleptic perspective until later — prolepsis being a figure of speech meaning “the representation or assumption of a future act or development as if presently existing or accomplished,” calling what is not yet as though it already were, in other words, as God Himself often does in Scripture¹⁸³). The apostles looked back to the patriarchs, but when Paul taught about what happened on the cross, he went all the way back to Adam in his explanations.¹⁸⁴ No other writers discussed Adam when it came to dealing with sin and salvation; they wrote about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, among others, but only Paul traced our entire spiritual history back to the first man,¹⁸⁵ and only in his Gospel is the entire race made new. Yes, the Hebrew Scriptures promised a new birth for Israel, but the new creation Paul taught about is to the new birth what a lake is to a teacup. You see, when Jesus rose from the grave, there was a whole new creation (referred to as a new “creature” in the KJV) which came into existence,¹⁸⁶ one which comes into the lives of everyone who believes Paul's

¹⁸² For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: — 2 Corinthians 5:14

¹⁸³ Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. — Romans 4:16-17

¹⁸⁴ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:22

¹⁸⁵ Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: — Romans 5:12

¹⁸⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. — Galatians 6:15

Gospel today,¹⁸⁷ and which will eventually come into the lives of every human who will ever have lived (as I demonstrated in that longer Bible study I mentioned, so please do read it if you aren't already aware of this fact). This new creation eliminates fleshly distinctions such as Gentile and Israelite,¹⁸⁸ but Peter wasn't able to teach this because he has to remain an Israelite in the kingdom, seeing as Jesus promised him that he would sit on one of twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel¹⁸⁹ (which also means he was not, and is not, a member of the church called the body of Christ, but is instead a member of the church called the Israel of God, and the same goes for all of the rest of the twelve apostles for the same reason). So if you want to really understand the complete result of what happened on the cross, you look to Paul's epistles. While the Circumcision writings are indeed useful for their intended purposes, they just don't teach us everything that the cross accomplished the way Paul's writings do.

Some Christians also like to claim that because the churches of Judea had heard, "*That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed,*"¹⁹⁰ that this means Paul had been preaching the same Gospel Peter and the rest of the disciples preached. And the truth is, they're absolutely correct, because Paul *did* preach the Gospel of the Circumcision to Israelites at

¹⁸⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. — 2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁸⁸ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. — Galatians 3:27-28

¹⁸⁹ And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. — Matthew 19:28

¹⁹⁰ Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me. — Galatians 1:21-24

various times, as we already covered, including at the time when the churches of Judea heard this report. But having done so doesn't mean he couldn't have *also* preached a *second* Gospel to the Gentiles at *other* times as well, so this doesn't actually help prove that there's only one Gospel at all the way they might think it does either.

On a somewhat related note, certain Christians also argue that because Paul wrote to believers in Galatia,¹⁹¹ and because Peter also wrote to believers in Galatia,¹⁹² these believers must have all been following the exact same Gospel and must have been members of the exact same local church (a similar argument is also sometimes made that because Paul wrote an epistle which is labeled as being to the Ephesians in our Bibles, and because John was also given a prophecy for a local church in Ephesus,¹⁹³ that the teachings in both of these writings had to have been for and about people in the same local church — and even that they had to have been for people living in the same time period, which I say because I personally believe that the seven churches listed in Revelation are seven Jewish churches which won't even come into existence until around the time of the Tribulation in the future, but that's a much bigger topic than I have the time to get into here). Of course, this assertion demonstrates a serious deficiency of logic, since the idea that, just because two men wrote to people in the same general region, they had to have been writing to the exact same people in the exact same local church (and also had to have been writing about the exact same thing), is nothing more than an assumption

¹⁹¹ Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: — Galatians 1:1-2

¹⁹² Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, — 1 Peter 1:1

¹⁹³ Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. — Revelation 1:11

one has to make in order to support their presupposition that there's only one Gospel in the Bible. In addition, they sometimes also argue that because Paul wrote specifically to the same audience Peter wrote to at least once,¹⁹⁴ he must have taught the exact same things as Peter. And, in fact, Paul sometimes *did* teach the exact same things as Peter, when he taught members of the Israel of God doctrines related to their own Gospel (as we already covered in the last paragraph). But again, that doesn't mean he didn't *also* teach *different* things to those under *his* Gospel. Besides, as we've also already discussed, we know from 1 Peter 1:1 *exactly* who Peter's audience was anyway, and it didn't include Gentiles since it was specifically addressed to "the strangers," telling us that Peter was writing to Israelites of the diaspora in Galatia, and not to the Gentile members of the body of Christ that Paul was writing to in his epistle to the Galatians at all. And just as Peter was only writing to Israelites among the diaspora in his epistles, I should also point out that James was also only writing to members of "*the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*,"¹⁹⁵ just as John was writing specifically to Jewish "brethren" rather than to Gentiles,¹⁹⁶ and Jude, who technically didn't specify an audience, but seemed to also be writing to people who were intimately familiar with Israel's history,¹⁹⁷ and considering the intended audience of rest of this batch of epistles, it's very unlikely that Gentiles were included among his book's audience either, any more than they

¹⁹⁴ And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; — 2 Peter 3:15

¹⁹⁵ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. — James 1:1

¹⁹⁶ Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. — 3 John 1:5-7

¹⁹⁷ I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. — Jude 1:5

were included in the audience of the book of Hebrews, with the name of *that* book clearly pointing out *its* intended audience — although I think it's safe to say that all the Circumcision writings would likely still apply to all believing members of the Israel of God and not just to those among the diaspora. Simply put, while all Scripture is useful for all of us in various ways,¹⁹⁸ any book of the Bible not signed by Paul is primarily to and about the Israel of God, with only Paul's 13 epistles being specifically to about about members of the body of Christ.

Meanwhile, other people have also argued that Paul wasn't teaching how to get saved in his epistles, since he was writing to people who were already believers, and it's quite true that his written audience *was* primarily made up of believers. However, this is irrelevant because he also said in the passage where he explained what his specific Gospel consists of that it was A) the Gospel he preached unto them,¹⁹⁹ and also B) the Gospel by which they are saved,²⁰⁰ so we know exactly what he preached unto them as how they're saved, which means that argument doesn't actually help the way the sceptics might think it does. That said, it is also true that chapter 15 of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians wasn't *specifically* written to teach about Paul's Gospel (although, whether he originally intended to or not, he ended up expanding on what his Gospel meant later in the chapter regardless, as also discussed in my longer Bible study), but was instead originally written to discuss bodily resurrection (since some of the members of the church in Corinth had stopped believing in

¹⁹⁸ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. — 2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁹⁹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; — 1 Corinthians 15:1

²⁰⁰ By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. — 1 Corinthians 15:2

their own physical resurrection, thinking the term “resurrection” was instead a “spiritual truth” rather than an actual future event), with the specific contents of Paul’s Gospel only being included in two verses in the chapter in order to make his point that resurrection has to be literal because otherwise it would mean that Christ Himself hadn’t even risen from the dead. And this fact about the point of this chapter is actually important to keep in mind for when someone attempts to claim that Peter and the others were preaching the same Gospel as Paul based on verse 11, when Paul wrote, *“Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.”* If Paul’s Gospel was the point of that chapter, that would be a valid claim, but if you read this verse in its context with the rest of the chapter, it becomes clear that Paul was simply saying that both he and the others all saw and preached about the risen Christ because He was indeed resurrected from among the dead,²⁰¹ not that they both preached the same Gospel.

It’s also sometimes pointed out that Paul had Timotheus (Timothy) circumcised,²⁰² and that he even performed other actions under the Mosaic law

²⁰¹ And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. — 1 Corinthians 15:5-11

²⁰² Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. — Acts 16:1-3

at times as well,²⁰³ in order to try to argue that this means there must be only one Gospel, not realizing that these facts actually help prove the exact opposite of what they assume. The reason Paul had Timothy circumcised was simply because he wanted to bring him along on a particular journey to help preach, and he knew that the Jews in the region would cause trouble for them if someone who was Jewish but hadn't been circumcised was preaching to them. This doesn't mean that Paul was supporting following the Mosaic law as something members of the body of Christ should do, however. So how could he have done these things, then? Well, simply because he wasn't doing them for the sake of obeying the Mosaic law in the first place (nor was he doing them for the sake of his or Timothy's salvation), but rather was doing them because these actions were beneficial for the spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom to other Israelites.²⁰⁴ As we've already discussed, Paul often preached the Circumcision Gospel to Israelites in the hopes that they as a whole would finally accept Jesus as their Messiah, which would help the kingdom of heaven finally begin on earth, and law keeping was still important for those who followed that particular Gospel (if it wasn't, James wouldn't have been bragging to Paul about how zealous for the law the Jewish believers in Jerusalem were,²⁰⁵ and Paul would have also chided him for not correcting them). But when he was teaching about his own Gospel instead, Paul was very careful to point out that

²⁰³ Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. — Acts 21:26

²⁰⁴ And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; — 1 Corinthians 9:20

²⁰⁵ And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. — Acts 21:20-21

law keeping for its own sake was *not* something they should be trying to do,²⁰⁶ and that following the law simply for the sake of following the law (or even for the sake of trying to please God) leads to falling from grace²⁰⁷ (that's not to say it's wrong to do or avoid certain actions listed in the law for reasons *other* than keeping the law itself, including being circumcised, or avoiding murdering people; it's just doing so for the sake of following the Mosaic law that causes us to fall from grace – which, I should probably also point out, doesn't mean losing one's salvation, but just means missing out on enjoying the freedom Christ gave us, and possibly also losing out on certain rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ).

And finally, no, the body of Christ has not been “grafted into Israel,” nor are we now “fellowcitizens of Israel,” as many misunderstand Romans 11:16-25 and Ephesians 2:11-22 to be saying. In fact, we can see quite clearly that the Israel of God is a distinct group from the Gentiles in the body of Christ because Israelites are only said to be the natural olive branches in the passage in Romans, not the

²⁰⁶ O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? — Galatians 3:1-3

²⁰⁷ Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. — Galatians 5:1-4

whole tree.²⁰⁸ Remember, not all of the natural olive branches are pruned out of the tree in that figurative explanation of present and future events. Instead, some of the natural olive branches remained attached to the tree (with these particular branches referring to Israelites who believed the Gospel of the Kingdom) while the wild olive branch was grafted into the tree *next* to them rather than replacing them. And as Paul made clear, Israel is not cast away permanently,²⁰⁹ but is only “cast away” temporarily²¹⁰ (the phrase “*cast away*” in Romans 11:1 was translated from a different Greek word in the KJV – ἀποθέω/ “ap-o-theh'-om-ahee” – than the phrase “*casting away*” in Romans 11:15 was – which was instead translated from ἀποβολή/“ap-ob-ol-ay” – and is referring to a more forceful and permanent thrusting away in that verse than the temporary placing aside that the “casting away” of verse 15 is referring to, for anyone who might be wondering how Israel can be not cast away while also being “cast away” at the same time), until the full complement of the nations may be

²⁰⁸ For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. — Romans 11:16-25

²⁰⁹ I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. — Romans 11:1

²¹⁰ For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? — Romans 11:15

entering the body of Christ,²¹¹ at which point the nation of Israel will become the focus of God's purposes once again. If this seems confusing, it helps to understand that this passage has nothing to do with the salvation of individuals, nor does being pruned from the tree have anything to do with the idea of losing one's salvation, which is made clear by the fact that the pruned-off natural branches were never saved to begin with and yet had to have been a part of the tree at one time in order to be pruned from it. This is also made clear by the fact that it's a *singular* wild branch (although pretty much only the KJV reveals this fact to English readers, by using the Second Person Singular "thou" in verses 17²¹² and 24²¹³ of Romans 11, rather than the more catch-all "you" that most English Bible translations used to render the Greek word σύ/"soo" in those verses) – as opposed to the *plural* natural branches – telling us that it refers collectively to every single Gentile who will have lived during the entire time that the dispensation (meaning the administration or economy) of the grace of God is in effect²¹⁴ rather than simply referring to those Gentiles who join the body of Christ. And since the *whole* wild branch will eventually be removed from the tree so that the temporarily-removed natural branches can be grafted back "*into their own olive tree*," every Gentile member of the body of Christ would lose their salvation if that's what being grafted into and pruned from the tree was referring to. And so, no, being grafted into the tree doesn't mean that a Gentile has been grafted into Israel, or that they have become a

²¹¹ For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: — Romans 11:25-26

²¹² And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; — Romans 11:17

²¹³ For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? — Romans 11:24

²¹⁴ If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: — Ephesians 3:2

“spiritual Israelite,” which is a completely unscriptural term anyway. Instead, the wild olive branch being temporarily grafted into the tree simply refers to the fact that Gentiles currently have access to God (via justification by faith²¹⁵) without having to go through Israel as they’ll have to do once again in the future. Which means they don’t replace or become a part of the church called the Israel of God at all, but rather are currently able to join the church called the body of Christ instead (in which no national distinction is made, contrary to the national distinction this tree analogy uses), at least until the full complement of the nations has entered, at which point the dispensation of the grace of God will come to an end, and the only way to God again (at least for 1,000 years) will be to go through Israel.

And this all tells us that the same goes for the idea of Paul saying Gentiles join the “commonwealth of Israel,” or become “fellowcitizens” of the nation of Israel, when they join the body of Christ. Based on everything we’ve just covered, this obviously can’t be what he meant in Ephesians 2.²¹⁶ The word “commonwealth” (translated from *πολιτεία* / “pol-ee-ti’-ah” in the original Greek)

²¹⁵ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. — Romans 5:1-2

²¹⁶ Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. — Ephesians 2:11-22

has to do with actual citizenship in an actual nation, and we don't legally become citizens of the country called Israel when we join the body of Christ (if you disagree, try moving to Israel and telling the government there that you're now a legal citizen of their nation because you've come to believe in Jesus, and let me know how well that goes). Besides, our citizenship is in the heavens, not down here on earth where Israel is located, as we've already established, and I don't see the term "spiritual Israel" anywhere in the chapter (or in the Bible, for that matter), so anyone who tries to claim we're "spiritual Israelites" is just reading their assumptions into the chapter. Instead, we've become fellowcitizens of the kingdom of God, and of the household of God (which members of the Israel of God are certainly also members of), and not of Israel itself (although Israel will become a part of the kingdom of God after Jesus returns, at which point the land will be known as the kingdom of heaven, but it certainly isn't a part of the kingdom yet, which means that we Gentiles can't be said to become citizens of Israel or a part of Israel in any way when we believe Paul's Gospel).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Will keep the law perfectly when the New Covenant finally comes fully into effect and replaces the Old Covenant completely (Jeremiah 31:31–34, Ezekiel 36:26–27, Micah 4:2, Hebrews 8:8–12).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Not only are we not under the law at all, and in fact should not try to keep any of it (Romans 6:14, Galatians 5:3), Gentiles were never under the Old Covenant — which was about Israelites keeping the Mosaic law — to begin with, so we don't have an Old

Covenant to be replaced with by a New Covenant the way Israel does anyway (Exodus 12:43–49, Exodus 19:3–6, Leviticus 26:46, Deuteronomy 28, Nehemiah 9:13–14, Psalm 147:19–20, Romans 2:14–15, Romans 9:3–5, Ephesians 2:12).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Jewish believers within this church were still zealous of the law, even after the Council of Jerusalem, and they were upset that Paul was teaching Jewish members of the body of Christ to avoid practicing the Mosaic law, including circumcising (Acts 21:17–26).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Not only did Paul teach against circumcising — or any law-keeping — for Gentiles in the body of Christ, he taught against it for *anyone* in the body of Christ, including Jewish members, and if Paul was teaching the same thing that Peter and James and the rest of the Jewish church were, the members of their church in Jerusalem wouldn't have been so upset at Paul for teaching against circumcising and law-keeping for Jewish members of his church when he visited them later (Acts 15:1–21, Galatians 2:1–3, Acts 21:17–26).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Spoken of by the prophets since the world began (Acts 3:21–25).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: A secret until Paul (Romans 16:25, Ephesians 3:8–10).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Only 12 apostles for this church — a number with much spiritual significance to Israelites — and they were all called inside of Israel (Matthew 4:18–22, Matthew 10:2–4). Even though Judas was replaced by Matthias after being disqualified (Acts 1:12–26), no others out of the 12 were ever replaced because there will only be 12 thrones for them to sit on in the kingdom of heaven, and only 12 foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem to be named after them on the New Earth (Matthew 19:28, Revelation 21:14).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: The first apostle of our church — who is not one of the 12 apostles of the Israel of God — was called outside of Israel (Acts 9:3). This is spiritually significant because Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Are supposed to eventually teach all the nations to obey everything Jesus commanded, and to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:16–20), although — outside of Peter’s visit to Cornelius — Scripture tells us this hasn’t happened yet (Acts 11:19, Galatians 2:8–9).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: The fact that Paul is called *the* apostle of the Gentiles, and that a whole new set of apostles were in fact sent to the Gentiles, is significant because it means the 12 apostles of the Israel of God were *not* the apostles of (or to) the Gentiles (Romans 11:13, Acts

14:14, 1 Corinthians 4:6–9, Ephesians 4:11), nor were the rest of the members of that church preaching to the Gentiles yet either, since the pillars of their church had agreed to leave the preaching to the Gentiles to Paul and to those with him, for the time being, which means Israel hasn't even really begun her so-called "Great Commission," as it's often referred to, yet (Galatians 2:8–9, Acts 13:2).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Proclaimed among Israelites (James 1:1, 1 Peter 1:1).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Proclaimed among the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:8).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: As future citizens of the New Jerusalem, which is referred to as the bride of the lamb itself after it descends to the New Earth, the saints of this church who will inhabit this city can figuratively (albeit only proleptically) be referred to as the bride of the lamb (John 3:29, Revelation 21:9), and are also referred to as the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: The saints of this church are referred to as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:30).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Racial distinctions important (Matthew 15:26, Matthew 19:28, Revelation 21:12, Zechariah 8:23).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Racial distinctions irrelevant (1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Believers known *from* the foundation of the world (Revelation 17:8).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Believers known *before* the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Believers called first, then chosen (Matthew 22:14).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Believers chosen first, then called (Romans 8:30).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Water baptism required (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Water baptism not required (1 Corinthians 1:17, 1 Corinthians 12:13).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Many types of baptism/immersion: John's baptism in water unto repentance, the Lord's baptism in water — obviously not a baptism unto repentance — water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ/the name of the Lord, baptism *in* the Holy Spirit, and in fire, baptism into Moses, and baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, 13–17, Acts 1:4–5, Acts 2:38, Acts 10:48, 1 Corinthians 10:2, Matthew 28:19).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Only one baptism/immersion: not *in* the Holy Spirit (or in water either), but rather *by* the Holy Spirit, *into* the body of Christ, including into what He experienced in His body, such as His death (Ephesians 4:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Romans 6:3–4).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Must be born again in order to become saved (John 3:3).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Those who are saved become an entirely new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), proleptically — and perhaps spiritually — for now, and literally at our quickening.

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Must have circumcision of the heart (Deuteronomy 10:16, Acts 7:51, Romans 2:29).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:11).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Must have works, since faith without works is dead for them (James 2:20).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Even if we don't have works, but only have faith, we are still justified, which means faith without works is not dead for us (Romans 4:5).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: *Must* keep His commandments, and live as Jesus did (1 John 2:3–6).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: God's grace motivates us to live well, not the threat of losing our salvation if we don't, as is the case for Israel (2 Corinthians 5:14–15).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: *Must* forgive others or God will *not* forgive them (Matthew 6:15).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Should forgive one another as God has already forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32) — but even without works, we're still justified, so we aren't required to forgive others in order to be saved, even if it's still good for us to do so (Romans 4:5).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Must not eat things sacrificed to idols (Revelation 2:14, 20).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Are permitted to eat things sacrificed to idols as long as conscience permits it (Romans 14:14, 1 Corinthians 8:4).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Must be an overcomer to avoid second death (Revelation 2:11).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Saved from second death by grace alone (Ephesians 2:8–9).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Hoping for grace, which will be brought to them when Jesus returns to the earth (1 Peter 1:13).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Already standing in grace (Romans 5:2).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Must be waking and watching, not sleeping (Matthew 25:1–13, Luke 12:37, Hebrews 9:28).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Whether waking or sleeping (1 Thessalonians 5:10).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Must be wise, not foolish, or will not be chosen (Matthew 25:1–13).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Few who are wise are chosen, and most who are chosen are foolish (1 Corinthians 1:26–29).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Can be put to shame at His presence if not careful (1 John 2:28).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Will all be changed for the better — meaning given glorified, immortal bodies — at His presence, which is the blessed hope all of us in this church should be looking forward to (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17, 1 Corinthians 15:52, Titus 2:13).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Will go through day of wrath (Revelation 6:1–17).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Not appointed to wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:9).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Will meet Christ on earth (Acts 1:11–12, Zechariah 14:4).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Will meet Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: The resurrection of the just, also known as Israel’s “first resurrection” (Luke 14:14, Revelation 20:1–6), occurs after Christ’s second coming to the earth, 75 days *after* His feet touch down on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4–7, Acts 1:9–12, and compare the

numbers in Daniel 12:11–13 to the numbers in Revelation 13:5 to understand the 75 day difference between these two events).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: The dead in the body of Christ are first resurrected, then those who are still living will rise with them to meet Christ in the air together when He comes for our church, before He ever even gets close to the Mount of Olives (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Will reign on the earth as a kingdom of priests over the nations (Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:5–9, Revelation 2:26–27, Revelation 5:10, Revelation 20:6, Isaiah 61:6).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Will reign in the heavens (Ephesians 2:6–7, 2 Timothy 2:12).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Will fill earth with knowledge of God's glory by being a light to the Gentiles and salvation to the ends of the earth (Habakkuk 2:14, Isaiah 49:6).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Will display God's wisdom among the principalities and powers in the heavens (Ephesians 3:10–11).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: The meek shall inherit the earth, and will live in the land God gave the patriarchs, which is the land of Israel (Matthew 5:5, Ezekiel 36:28).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Our citizenship is in the heavens (Philippians 3:20).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: There will still be mortal “flesh and blood” humans living in the part of the kingdom of God that is on the earth, and they will even continue to reproduce, both in the thousand-year kingdom of heaven in Israel, as well as on the New Earth for a time (Zechariah 8:3–4, Isaiah 65:17–25).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Mortal “flesh and blood” is not able to inherit in the part of the kingdom of God that is in the heavens (1 Corinthians 15:50–54).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: The 12 apostles will judge the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Paul, not one of the 12 apostles of the church known as the Israel of God, but rather the first apostle of the church known as the body of Christ, will, along with the rest of the body, judge the whole world, as well as judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:2–3).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Their Gospel is also called the Gospel of the Kingdom, and it was the good news that the kingdom of God was near, meaning ready to begin if Israel met the required conditions (Mark 1:14–15), which they did not, so its fully coming into effect on earth — specifically in Israel — has been pushed back while the Gentiles are temporarily saved apart from Israel (Acts 28:17–28, Romans 11).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Our Gospel was also called the Gospel of the Grace of God, as well as referred to as “my Gospel” by Paul, which is why we now call it Paul’s Gospel, and it’s simply the Good News that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day (Acts 20:24, Romans 2:16, Romans 16:25, 2 Timothy 2:8, 1 Corinthians 15:1–4).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: The cross was only bad news to those hearing the Gospel of the Kingdom — at least in the sermons recorded in Acts — and a shameful thing which needed to be repented of in order to be saved (Acts 2:22–38, Acts 3:13–15, Acts 7:52).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: The cross is only good news for those hearing Paul’s Gospel, and is even something to glory in because it is how we are saved (1 Corinthians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 15:1–4, Galatians 6:14).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: As far as their Gospel is concerned, Jesus gave His life as a ransom only for “many” — meaning only for those who obey this Gospel (Matthew 20:28).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: As far as our Gospel is concerned, Jesus gave His life as a ransom for all — meaning all humanity (1 Timothy 2:6).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Exhorted to remain in Him, and seem to be able to fall away and not be able to be renewed to repentance, so appear to be able to lose their sort of salvation (1 John 2:28, Hebrews 6:4–6, Hebrews 10:26–27), although since this is not the same sort of salvation that Paul primarily taught about, anyone who doesn’t experience this sort of salvation will still experience the salvation of Paul’s Gospel.

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: If we died with Christ — and if we did, we can’t un-die — we *will* live with Him, since He cannot disown His own body. Yes, we can “fall from grace,” so to speak — which basically just means placing oneself under the bondage of religion and rules, such as the law, and, because of doing so, missing out on enjoying the freedom Christ gave us — and it might be that we can also lose out on reigning with Him by denying Him in order to avoid suffering, but either way, we still remain His body, and He won’t amputate and disown His own body parts, and body parts can’t amputate themselves either (Galatians 5:1–4, 2 Timothy 2:11–13). Besides, Paul said that if we’re called, we *will* be justified and glorified, and didn’t include

any qualifications in that verse, so any passages in Paul's epistles which seem to teach otherwise *must* be talking about something else (Romans 8:30).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Abraham being justified by works given as an example (James 2:21–23).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Abraham being justified by faith rather than by works given as an example (Romans 4:2–3).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Gentiles will be blessed by Israel's rise in the future (Isaiah 49:6, Acts 3:25).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: Gentiles are currently blessed by Israel's fall (Romans 11:11).

The Israel of God/The Gospel of the Circumcision: Salvation will come in the future for them, when the kingdom of God comes fully to the earth, and when Israel's sins are forgiven (1 Peter 1:5, Romans 11:25–27).

The body of Christ/The Gospel of the Uncircumcision: We have already been saved now, and are, in fact, already complete in Christ (Ephesians 1:13, Colossians 2:10).

Now these aren't just minor variations in terminology; these are completely different messages for two completely different groups of people. Unfortunately, if one isn't being honest with Scripture, and insists on trying to make these major differences between Paul's teachings and the teachings in the Circumcision writings say the same thing, because their preconceived doctrines force them to have to believe they mean the same thing, they're just not ready to interpret the rest of Scripture, and should not be teaching anyone from the Bible. In fact, not only is this concept so extremely important for believers to grasp, it's also so central to understanding what the Bible is saying that one can't properly interpret much of Scripture at all without beginning from this perspective. Even something like evangelism will be a confusing task for those who don't understand that "the Great Commission" (a label that isn't actually even found in the Bible) wasn't meant for the body of Christ at all. Instead, rather than teaching all nations to be observing *all* things that Jesus commanded His disciples, and baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (which, as I already mentioned, is a whole different baptism from the one that Peter did with water, since the baptism he's recorded as having performed in Scripture was specifically "*in the name of Jesus Christ*," and would also be a command Paul would have been disobeying when he stopped baptizing people in water if it was meant for everyone to do) as the Israel of God will be called to do in the future (when the dispensation of the grace of God is complete and Israel has been saved²¹⁷ and finally begins their ministry to be a light to the Gentiles and salvation unto the ends of the earth as

²¹⁷ And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: — Romans 11:26

they were long ago prophesied to one day be,²¹⁸ and when Gentiles will in fact only come to know God by following the Jews²¹⁹), we have a greater “commission” and “one baptism” (into the body of Christ), and are called to be stewards of the mysteries that were kept secret since the world began just as Paul was,²²⁰ and can in fact currently help other Gentiles come to God even if we’re not Jews, which is why it’s imperative to truly understand this important topic.

Even after learning all of that, however, some Christians will still want to say things along the lines of, “I follow Jesus, not Paul,” with some of them quoting Paul himself when he wrote, “*was Paul crucified for you?*”, pointing to Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 where he corrected his readers for saying, “*I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas;*”²²¹ often following their statement up by then saying they’re only of Christ. The problem is, if they only took the time to read the whole verse, they’d notice that Paul condemns saying even, “I am of Christ.” That doesn’t mean we aren’t supposed to follow Christ, as some will then accuse us of teaching when we point this fact out, but following Christ wasn’t the point of the passage, which was simply about Paul condemning

²¹⁸ And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. — Isaiah 49:6

²¹⁹ Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. — Zechariah 8:23

²²⁰ Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. — 1 Corinthians 4:1

²²¹ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? — 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

sects, meaning divisions, which had begun springing up within the local church in Corinth. Besides, Paul made it quite clear in the very same book that we *are* to follow him, when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*” So yes, we still follow Christ, but those of us in the body of Christ do so by following the teachings that He gave to us through *our* apostle: Paul.²²²

I should add, in a last-ditch effort to defend the idea of there being only one Gospel, I’ve heard it pointed out by some Christians that the words “*the Gospel*” technically aren’t included in the original Greek text prior to the words “*of the Circumcision*” in Galatians 2:7 (which is true), and then asserted that Paul would have used those words there if he meant for it to be understood that he was referring to two separate Gospels, but based on the clear pattern of things that differ between the teachings Paul preached among the nations (including the exact words in the Gospel message he preached to them, and what those words mean) and the teachings that Peter and Jesus’ other disciples gave to Israel (including the exact words in the Gospel message they preached to them, and what *those* words mean, especially in the four books commonly referred to as “the Gospels” and in the book of Acts), it should be clear by now that Paul being concise in that verse doesn’t detract at all from the fact that there *are* at least two Gospels in Scripture.

Still, if somebody wants to somehow insist that there really is only one Gospel taught in Scripture after reading everything I wrote above, I’d very much like to hear why they want Scripture to contain only one Gospel so badly. And it has to be a matter of wanting it to be true, since, at the very least, they have to not only admit that all of the passages we’ve looked at *can* be interpreted in such a

²²² If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. — 1 Corinthians 14:37

way that supports the existence of two Gospels, but also that there's no passage in Scripture which actually outright says there's only one Gospel. But really, at this point it should be obvious to anyone who has been paying attention that even if I missed any other passages somebody might try to use in order to argue that the disciples *were* proclaiming the exact same news which is good during Jesus' earthly ministry that Paul later proclaimed to the nations (specifically the news which is good about Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection, and how those who believe this news which is good are saved) simply can't actually support their belief at all. And so, my challenge to anyone still trying to hang on to the idea that there's only one Gospel is to tell me their answers to the various questions I've asked throughout this study, and to provide their refutations of every single one of the scriptural interpretations and arguments I've brought up in support of the existence of two Gospels, including an explanation of how they reconcile the extensive list of scriptural contradictions that would seem to exist if there *was* only one Gospel (based on the comprehensive list of differences I've laid out which only seem to make sense if there are indeed at least two Gospels). In addition, I want them to write down and send to me (or to whoever sent them this study) **exactly** what they believe this one Gospel is and what someone has to do in order to be saved under it, both someone who lived prior to Christ's death and someone who lived after His resurrection (leaving no details out, and including their scriptural basis for all of it). And if what someone had to do in order to be saved under this one Gospel was different before Jesus died than it now is after He was resurrected, they also need to explain how that different thing they had to do actually *is* the exact same thing Paul said the people of the nations that he declared the Gospel unto had to do (which includes believing that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day), which it would have to be if both proclamations of news which is good actually *are* the *exact* same Gospel message with absolutely no differences. So far nobody has

been able to do all of the above after reading earlier editions of this study (a few have sent attempts at refuting a few points, but they all ignored the majority of my arguments), and unless someone can, the idea of there being only one Gospel simply remains an assumption there's literally zero excuse for making.

All this does bring up a very important question, however, which is *why* there are two Gospels in the first place, and why Jesus *didn't* preach the same Gospel during His earthly ministry that Paul later preached to the nations. Well, the answer to that question is simply that He couldn't, because if He had, *nobody* would be able to get saved (at least not in the manner of salvation that Paul generally referred to). You see, as we've already learned, the Gospel Paul preached is Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection, and this event is the very basis of our salvation (and is, in fact, the only reason *anyone* can be saved when it comes to the type of salvation Paul primarily taught about). This means that if Jesus had preached the same message (that His death was going to be *for our sins*, meaning that His death would be the basis of our salvation) as His Gospel around Israel before He died, the spiritual powers of darkness behind His death would have undoubtedly gotten wind of this, learning the truth about how we're saved, and would *not* have Him crucified after all²²³ (and, in fact, would have done what they could to keep Him from dying, since they don't want humans being made immortal and sinless). Yes, humans technically killed Jesus, but it was the evil spiritual beings ruling the world behind the scenes during this age who drove them to it, but only because they thought it would put an end to His eventual usurping of their leadership. Little did they realize that they were played, since His death was the main reason He was born

²²³ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. — 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

in the first place, but that fact was well disguised by His ministry to the Circumcision (in fact, that's likely a large part of why God had a chosen people in the first place: basically, God plays the long game).