

Jesus vs. Paul

Introduction

Controversy has arisen regarding Jesus versus Paul as scholars debate the different emphases and messages of Jesus and Paul.¹ Jesus preached the kingdom of heaven. Paul did not. Paul preached justification by faith alone. Jesus did not. What are we to make of this? Can the two be reconciled? The answer depends on what is meant by reconciliation.

Let us be clear from the outset. The messages of Jesus and Paul were *fundamentally different*. Reconciliation of their messages *cannot* be done by harmonization. This is a fact we must accept. No one is helped by attempts to lessen the differences by declaring that the gospel is a salvation story for both Jesus and Paul. The differences remain. No benefit comes from theological gibberish that the gospel is the kingdom and the kingdom is the gospel. No light comes from attempts to show that Paul “betrayed” Jesus or “perverted” His message. No value comes from those who maintain Jesus and Paul contradicted or disagreed with one another. Such offerings of strange fire move us further from the text and sound theology. Instead, we must seek a biblical understanding of the Scriptures for reconciliation.

Good News, Bad News

The good news is that this matter is receiving attention. For almost 2,000 years, Paul has been forced into the Gospels and the Gospels have been forced into Paul—and this continues. Some theologians have recognized problems in this, but most fail to provide sound, biblical solutions to resolve the differences between Jesus and Paul. The bad news is that most theological professionals misunderstand *why* we find differences between Jesus and Paul. Because of this, they do not have a sound foundation on which they can reconcile the

differences. Here's a clue: let the reader consider why God kept Paul separated from the Twelve after his conversion and why Paul's contact with them was extremely limited (cf. Galatians 1.1, 11-12, 15-19). The purpose of this brief study is to answer the question about how Jesus and Paul can be reconciled (what that means) and end the confusion.

The Messages of Jesus and Paul

The below chart identifies the chief differences in the ministries and message of Jesus and Paul. Each will be analyzed.

Differences of the Ministries of Jesus and Paul	
Jesus:	Paul:
1. Preached the gospel of the kingdom	1. Preached the gospel of the grace of God
2. Defined the "kingdom of heaven" as Israel's prophetic earthly kingdom	2. Defined the "kingdom of heaven" as the heavenly position of the body of Christ
3. Presented Himself as the Messiah and King of the Jews (Israel)	3. Presented Jesus as the risen Lord, Head of the Church, the body of Christ
4. Preached repentance, water baptism, keeping the Law, forgiving others, and faith in who He was as necessary for salvation	4. Preached faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as necessary for salvation
5. Had Jews as His audience (a couple exceptions)	5. Had Gentiles as his primary audience
6. Operated under the Mosaic Law	6. Operated under grace

1. Jesus' Gospel, Paul's Gospel²

Jesus

John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Twelve preached the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 3.2, 4.17). This gospel was the long-anticipated and prophesied good news that the King of Israel had arrived. He would establish His kingdom on earth and rule the earth according to what Israel's prophets foretold (Psalm 2.6, 8; Zechariah 14.9; Luke 1.31-33). Its focus was Jewish (Matthew 10.5-6), and Jesus instructed His disciples to pray for it (Matthew 6.10). During this kingdom reign, God would fulfill His covenant promises to Israel and through Israel's acceptance of their Messiah, Gentiles would be blessed. Apart from this kingdom and apart from this plan, God had revealed no provision to bless Gentiles. When God's established His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12.1-3) He decree all Gentile blessing had to come through Israel.

The prophets proclaimed this Messianic kingdom in hundreds of passages. Every Jew knew about this kingdom and every God-fearing Jew longed for it. One need only read the passages surrounding the account of Jesus' birth to recognize this fact. The reader is encouraged to read the accounts surrounding the Magi (Matthew 2.1-12), Zachariah (Luke 1.8-17, 67-79), Mary (Luke 1.26-38, 46-55), Simeon, and Anna (Luke 2.25-38). Their statements provide an excellent summary of Jewish expectations and theology.

The gospel of the kingdom proclaimed by John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Twelve required repentance (Mark 1.15), water baptism (Matthew 3.6; Acts 2.38, 8.34-38, 19.4), keeping of the Mosaic Law, and belief Jesus was the promised Messiah (Matthew 16.13-16; John 11.25-27). Believing in Jesus according to the gospel of the kingdom meant believing who He was, i.e., believing in His *name* (cf. John 3.18; Acts 2.21, 38, 3.6, 16, 4.7, 10, 12, 17, 18, 30, 5.28, 40, 41, 8.12, 16, 9.14, 15, 21, 27, 10.43, 48). The gospel of the kingdom focused upon the *identity* of Christ.

Paul

Paul preached the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20.24; 1 Corinthians 15.1-4) and placed little emphasis on repentance or baptism in his evangelistic ministry. He only mentioned repentance in reference to unbelievers a couple times in his letters (Romans 2.4; 2 Corinthians 7.10). With regard to water baptism, he declared, "Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 1.14-17). Later, he wrote there was only *one* baptism (Ephesians 4.5). This one baptism was the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6.3-4; 1 Corinthians 12.13; Colossians 2.12). Thus, we must conclude water baptism ceased during Paul's ministry and has no Scriptural support as a *Christian* practice today.

The focus of belief in the ministry of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Twelve, was that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Son of God (Matthew 16.13-16; John 11.25-27). Paul preached the gospel of the kingdom immediately following his conversion (Acts 9.19-22). However, shortly afterwards, the ascended, glorified, heavenly (as opposed to Christ in His earthly ministry) Lord gave Paul a new gospel (Galatians 1.11-12). Paul's gospel (Romans 2.16, 16.25) was *different from the gospel of Jesus and the Twelve*. Its focus was not upon the *identity* of Christ but upon the *work* of Christ. Paul's gospel was that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15.1-4). This gospel was not preached during Jesus' earthly ministry or by the Twelve.

Paul referred to the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20.24) as "my gospel" (Romans 2.16, 16.25; 2 Timothy 2.8; Galatians 2.2). This designation indicated it was different from the gospel Jesus or the Twelve preached. Luke's account of the Council of Jerusalem made it clear that the apostles did not agree with or understand Paul's gospel (Acts 15) and Paul wrote that his gospel was a "secret" ([μυστήριον](#), cf. Romans 16.25; Ephesians 6.19). The Twelve had no understanding Jesus would die and rise from the dead (Luke 18.31-34; John 20.3-10). For them, Christ's death was *not* good news. Even

after Jesus' resurrection, Christ's death was not proclaimed as good news. The biblical record is that Peter proclaimed Christ's death as *bad* news. Peter's sermons show he regarded the death of Christ as a message of condemnation to Jews—a heinous act that demanded their repentance (Acts 2.22-42, 3.12-26). Peter proclaimed the *fact* of Jesus' resurrection as good news, but its significance was that Jesus was alive and could still bring about His kingdom on earth and be Israel's King if the Jewish nation repented. Peter did *not* preach Christ's death and resurrection for personal salvation.

For Paul, the preaching of the cross was salvation (1 Corinthians 1.18, 23, 15.1-4), a glorious message (1 Timothy 1.11). But Paul's gospel created so much consternation that the apostles in Jerusalem called a special council around 51 A.D. to consider it. The reader should understand Paul was probably saved around 34-37 A.D. A range of time of 14-17 years had passed before the Council at Jerusalem met, a long time. At the Council, after considerable argument, Peter made an astonishing (from a Jewish perspective) statement. Prior to this, the message of the Twelve was that Gentiles could be saved only the way Jews were saved. After great argument, Peter, under the power of the Holy Spirit, officially recognized (in light of Paul's revelations and ministry) that Jews *now had to be saved as Gentiles* (Acts 15.6-11). This was a watershed moment. After Peter made this declaration, Paul wrote the Galatians that anyone who proclaimed a gospel different from his was cursed (Galatians 1.8-9). Paul could not have written this prior to the Council of Jerusalem. Prior to Peter's statement, the Twelve legitimately preached the gospel Christ had revealed to them in His earthly ministry. During this same period, Paul preached the gospel the heavenly Christ had revealed to him. *Both* were valid gospel messages. Both had been commanded by the Lord. However, *after* the Council of Jerusalem, *only* Paul's gospel of grace was valid. The gospel of the kingdom preached by the Twelve was formally supplanted by Paul's gospel. Paul's gospel of grace focused

upon the *work* of Christ, rather than upon the *identity* of Christ, the focus of the gospel of the kingdom.

2. The Kingdom for Jesus and Paul

Jesus

The message John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Twelve preached was that the King of Israel had arrived and that the kingdom of heaven was near (Matthew 3.1-2, 4.12-17, 9.35; Luke 3.2-17, 4.16-19). This kingdom was an *earthly, political* kingdom in which the Messiah would reign as King (Matthew 6.10; Zechariah 14.9). It was the kingdom proclaimed by the prophets in which Israel would be preeminent among the nations of the earth (Deuteronomy 28.1, 13) and for which the Magi (Matthew 2.1-12), Zacharias (Luke 1.8-17, 67-79), Mary (Luke 1.26-38, 46-55), Simeon and Anna (Luke 2.25-38) longed. In this kingdom, Israel would become a nation of priests as God had revealed to Moses and the prophets (Exodus 19.6; Isaiah 61.6), which Peter wrote about to Jewish believers (1 Peter 2.9). To enjoy this kingdom required the Jewish nation to repent and accept Jesus as their King and Messiah. Once the nation repented, God would fulfill the promises He had made in His covenants to Israel. The *primary* beneficiaries of the "kingdom of heaven" were Jews, not Gentiles, since God's covenant promises focused upon Jews (Ephesians 2.11-12).³ Ever since God had called Abraham, He had dealt exclusively with the nation of Israel. He had no *direct* dealings with Gentiles as He had before Abraham.

Beginning with Abraham, God created a new program in dealing with the human race. This explains why Jesus commanded His disciples not to go to Gentiles (Matthew 10.5-6) and why He had personal contact with only two Gentiles (one by proxy) during His three-year ministry.⁴ The Old Testament prophecies had revealed Gentiles would be blessed *through* Israel (Isaiah 42.1-4, 49.5-6, 60.1-3; Zechariah 8.20-23). During the

Messianic kingdom, Israel will become preeminent among the nations of the world with the Lord Himself reigning as David's greater Son from Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 28.1-14; Luke 1.32; cf. Zechariah 14.9). Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) revealed what life would be like in this kingdom program. The Sermon on the Mount has nothing to do with the Church, the body of Christ. It has everything to do with Israel's earthly kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount is the charter of Christ's earthly kingdom and reveals what life will be like when Jesus reigns on earth as King (Zechariah 14.9).

Paul

Paul mentioned "kingdom" fourteen times in his epistles. To a discerning reader, it is clear Paul meant something different than Jesus in His references to the kingdom. When Paul used the term, he meant God's overall realm of rule (Romans 14.17; 1 Corinthians 4.20, 6.9-10; 15.24, 50; Galatians 5.21; Ephesians 5.5; Colossians 1.13, 4.11; 1 Thessalonians 2.12; 2 Thessalonians 1.5; 2 Timothy 4.1, 18). Thus, for Paul, the kingdom included both Israel's *earthly* kingdom as well as the Church, the body of Christ's reign as a *heavenly* people. Paul, as the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11.13), wrote to the body of Christ. His letters have nothing to say about the kingdom in respect to Israel's covenants, Old Testament prophecy, or Jesus' reigning as David's Son.

Paul emphasized the Church, the body of Christ. This terminology was entirely absent from the teaching of Jesus and the Twelve for it was unknown until the ascended Lord revealed it to Paul. In other words, it was *new*. Peter, James, John, Jude, etc., did not teach it and knew *nothing* of it until they learned about it from Paul. Paul alone revealed and taught that the citizenship and position of believers in the body of Christ was heavenly (Ephesians 1.3, 2.6; Philippians 3.20; Colossians 1.5), not earthly. Paul's last written words were, "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever

and ever. Amen" (2 Timothy 4.18). For Paul, God's kingdom as related to the body of Christ was heavenly and wholly different from the earthly kingdom proclaimed by John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Twelve.

3. Presentation of Jesus as King and Head

Jesus

The gospels present Jesus as King of the Jews (Matthew 2.2, 27.11, 29, 37; John 18.39, 19.14; Luke 1.31-33, 67-73) and as Messiah or Christ (Matthew 1.1, 16, 18, 16.16, 20, 26.63, 27.17, 22; Mark 15.32; Luke 2.11, 26, 4.41, 23.2, 35; John 1.41, 4.25-26; 11.27, 17.3, 20.31). Jesus came to minister to Israel and fulfill the Old Testament promises (Romans 15.8).

Paul

For Paul, the Lord Jesus Christ was the ascended Lord, not the earthly Messiah. Paul wrote "though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Corinthians 5.16). What Paul meant by "Christ after the flesh" was His earthly ministry to Israel. Those who are members of the Church, the body of Christ, know Jesus in His heavenly glory, not in His earthly humiliation. Paul did not call Jesus the King of the Church as He is presented in the Gospels. To Israel, Jesus is the King of Israel, the King of the Jews. He is not the King of the Church for the Church is His body, the body of Christ, not a kingdom. A king has subjects. Members of the Church, the body of Christ are heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ (Romans 8.17), not subjects. As such, the proper title of Christ for Christians is Head (Ephesians 1.22-23, 4.15, 5.23; Colossians 1.18) and Lord (Romans 1.4, 7, 5.11, 21, 14.9; Ephesians 1.17; Philippians 2.11, 3.8; 1 Thessalonians 3.11).

4. Repentance, Baptism, and Faith

Jesus

We have touched on these already. Jesus proclaimed repentance, baptism, and belief. These three were bound together in Jesus' kingdom gospel. Repentance was the first step of kingdom salvation (Matthew 3.2, 4.17; Mark 1.4, 15, 6.12; Luke 3.3, 5.32, 13.3, 5, 24.47). Peter continued this message after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. He demanded all Jews repent, be baptized, and believe that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 2.38, 3.19). Water baptism was required for salvation according to the kingdom gospel (Mark 1.4, 16.16; Acts 2.38, 8.34-38, 22.16). Saving faith was belief Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Son of God (Matthew 16.15-16; John 11.26-27; Acts 8.36-37), not that He died for our sins and rose from the dead. Another way of stating this is that the message of salvation of Jesus' earthly ministry and the message of the Twelve was based upon the *identity* of Christ. This was in contrast to Paul's gospel of grace which focused upon the *work* of Christ—that He died for our sins and arose from the dead.

Notice also the content of what most know as the Lord's Prayer regarding the Lord's words about forgiveness of sins. In the gospels of Luke and Matthew, we have a record of this prayer. Luke recorded:

¹ *It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."*

² *And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.*

³ *'Give us each day our daily bread.*

⁴ *'And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation'" (Luke 11.1-4).*

Matthew recorded:

⁷ *“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.*

⁸ *So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.*

⁹ *“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.*

¹⁰ *‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *‘Give us this day our daily bread.*

¹² *‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹³ *‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.‘]*

¹⁴ *For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

¹⁵ *But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions (Matthew 6.7-15).*

In both accounts, Jesus taught God’s forgiveness *depended* upon one forgiving others. Paul’s teaching was entirely different.

Paul

Paul’s gospel is a gospel of faith alone: faith + 0. It is *sola fide*. Paul’s gospel is a grace gospel, not a kingdom gospel. Paul’s gospel of salvation is Christ died for our sins and rose again (1 Corinthians 15.1-4). Jesus’ gospel and the gospel of the Twelve was Jesus was the promised Messiah. No one today preaches one is saved by believing Jesus was the promised Messiah. Why not? Because the gospel of the kingdom is not the gospel of the grace of God. Our gospel is Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. That is what we must

believe for salvation.

Contrast what the Lord taught in the Lord's Prayer with what Paul taught regarding forgiveness. Paul wrote the Ephesians:

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you (Ephesians 4.32).

A similar passage is Colossians 3.12-13 where Paul wrote:

¹² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

These passages are vastly different from what the Lord taught the Twelve in His prayer. Paul exhorted believers to forgive one another—not as a *condition* for divine forgiveness—but as a *result* of divine forgiveness (Ephesians 1.7; Colossians 1.14). This is grace not Law (Romans 6.14) and is wholly different from what Jesus taught the Jews in His earthly ministry.

5. Audiences of Jesus and Paul

Jesus

Jesus came as Israel's Messiah (Romans 15.8). His ministry was to Jews exclusively (Matthew 10.5-6). As noted above, He made two exceptions: the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15.21-28) and the Roman centurion (Matthew 8.1-13 cf. Luke 7.1-10). Because of the great faith of these individuals Jesus relented His Jew only policy to grant their requests.

Following Jesus' resurrection and ascension Peter and the Twelve addressed the nation of Israel. Most people think the

disciples ministered to Gentiles as well as Jews in light of the so-called "Great Commission" of Matthew 28.16-20. But the biblical record states otherwise. The Twelve continued to address Jews only. They recognized the Jewish priority of God's kingdom program proclaimed by the prophets. They understood Gentiles were to be blessed *through* Israel. They knew their Bibles. Because of this, they *could not* go to Gentiles until the Jewish nation repented and believed Jesus was the promised Messiah. To have done so would have been to disobey God. Thus, even in the face of severe persecution, the Twelve, the leaders, refused to leave Jerusalem and go into Gentile territory (Acts 8.1). As late as Acts 11.19 (probably about 38 A.D.), the gospel preached from the Jerusalem believers was to Jews alone.

Paul

God saved Paul and commissioned him as "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11.13). As noted, Jesus ministered exclusively to Jews and the Twelve were apostles to Israel, not to Gentiles. Jesus had promised them rulership over Israel, not over Gentiles (Matthew 19.28). The Old Testament kingdom program was in place during Jesus' earthly ministry and would have been fulfilled had the nation repented. Paul explained this truth in his excursus on Israel in Romans 9-11. Paul wrote that Israel will repent, and God will fulfill His covenant promises to the nation (Romans 11.25-27). The next event on the prophetic timeline as revealed in the Old Testament was the Day of the Lord—a time of divine wrath. Peter expected it to occur soon and quoted Joel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2.14-21). But God in His mercy interrupted the kingdom program to bless Gentiles in spite of Israel's disobedience. In His matchless grace God delayed His wrath. He saved Paul to minister to Gentiles and began a whole new program with Paul as its head. Thus, Paul, a Jew, became the "Jewish agent" or "proxy" to bless Gentiles. He typified a reborn Israel. This was why he referred to himself as one

“untimely born” (1 Corinthians 15.8). God revealed to Paul the Church, the body of Christ, and other secrets He had kept hidden from the prophets and the Twelve.⁵

6. Jesus Ministered Under Law, Paul Ministered Under Grace

Jesus

Jesus ministered under the Law of Moses throughout his earthly ministry (Matthew 5.17-18). He constantly referred to the Mosaic Law as the foundation of His ministry (Matthew 7.12, 8.4, 12.5, 12, 23.1-3; Mark 1.44; 10.3-4; Luke 10.25-29). Gentiles had nothing to do with the Mosaic Law. God gave it to the Jews, not Gentiles (Ephesians 2.11-13), and not to the Church, the body of Christ.

Paul

Paul was born under the Mosaic Law. He was a Pharisee who knew and rigorously enforced the Law (Philippians 3.5-6). But after his conversion, Paul taught that those who believed his gospel were *not* under the Law of Moses. He taught believers of his gospel were under the administration of grace and guidance of the indwelling Spirit rather than under the administration of the Mosaic Law (Romans 6.14-15; Galatians 5.1). He taught the believer of his gospel was free from the Law of Moses and that Law had no claim upon him due to the believer's identification with Christ in his crucifixion and resurrection (Romans 7.1-12, 8.2, 10.4). Paul taught that only by becoming dead to the Law can one live the Christian life (Galatians 2.19, 4.21, 5.1, 18).⁶

Conclusion

To reconcile Jesus and Paul we must be faithful to the text and recognize major differences exist between their ministries. The Scriptures do not contradict one another for God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14.33). We

simply need to recognize that God had a program for Israel (His prophetic, covenant program) which He revealed to and through the prophets and that He revealed a new program to Paul (a program God had kept hidden) for the Church, the body of Christ.

Jesus and the Twelve ministered to Jews under the Mosaic Law and preached the gospel of the kingdom to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies of Israel's earthly kingdom with the Messiah as King (Romans 15.8). Paul ministered to Gentiles (Romans 11.13) under grace, apart from the Law, and disclosed secrets the *ascended and glorified* Lord had revealed to him. Paul taught believers of his gospel, the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20.24; 1 Corinthians 15.1-4; Romans 2.16, 16.25), were members of the body of Christ with Christ as its Head, not its King. Finally, in addition to the differences noted above, were other "secrets" the risen Lord revealed unto Paul alone. These are the subject of the article [Paul's "Mystery."](#) What can we conclude with regard to reconciling Jesus and Paul?

Saul of Tarsus did not become Paul the Apostle by human efforts (Romans 1.1-6; Galatians 1.1, 15-24). He became the apostle of the grace of God by the sovereign will of the glorified Christ. Just as God established His plan with Israel beginning with Abraham, He began a new plan with Paul. God laid the groundwork for His plan for Israel beginning with Abraham. God created the Church, the body of Christ, beginning with Paul. The risen Lord revealed His plan through Paul just as He revealed His plan through Abraham (the Abrahamic Covenant) and later, Moses (the Mosaic Covenant). These two programs are different but complementary. They are not contradictory for God cannot contradict God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, Israel and Church. God is sovereign over both His earthly people, Israel, and over His heavenly people, the Church, the body of Christ. We both have one Master. Each has its own glory and purpose

before God. The glory of God is in heterogeneity and in homogeneity. Both Israel and the Church are citizens of the kingdom of God as Paul expressed it—the rule of God over all creation. We share different blessings and serve under different contexts but have the same Lord. Paul taught this reality in his great example of the olive tree⁷ in Romans 11. Summing up his revelation, he concluded by exclaiming:

³³ O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴ For who has known the mind of the Lord or who became his counselor? ³⁵ Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? ³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen (Romans 11.33-36).

¹ The title, “Jesus vs. Paul” is not to be taken in a challenging sense as if Paul can compare with Jesus. No one would be more embarrassed by this title than Paul himself. The title was selected because this is the way the controversy about their *teachings* has been framed at the present time. Thus, “Jesus” serves as a vehicle to represent the Old Testament program God initiated with Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant. When Jesus arrived on the scene, God’s kingdom program to Israel revived under the calling and ministry of John the Baptist. Israel had an opportunity to have its long-promised kingdom on earth if it repented (Matthew 6.10). The King was present. This program was entirely different from the program of the Church, body of Christ, which Paul received from the ascended, heavenly Lord.

² Some bristle at the idea there has been more than one gospel. We have one gospel today: 1 Corinthians 15.1-4, the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20.24). However, the Scriptures clearly reveal that for a period of time two gospels were in effect:

from Paul's return from Arabia after his salvation until Acts 15.11. During this period, the Twelve proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom and Paul proclaimed the gospel of the grace of God. According to Acts 15.1, 5 and many other passages, the gospel of the kingdom required works for salvation. Paul's gospel, the gospel of the grace of God, was *sola fide*, faith alone. The gospel of the kingdom focused upon Christ's *identity*, who He was, the Messiah, the Son of God. Paul's gospel focused upon Christ's *work*: He died for our sins and rose again. After Acts 15.11, only one gospel remained, Paul's gospel. This explains Paul's words of Galatians 1.6-9.

³ The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is unique to Matthew. The phrase is a genitive of source and means the source of this kingdom is from heaven. It is not a genitive of location meaning it is located in heaven. The kingdom of heaven is future and will be located on earth. Jesus told His disciples to pray for its establishment on the earth (Matthew 6.10). The chief beneficiaries will be Jews (Deuteronomy 28.1, 13) for God will fulfill His covenantal promises to them. Gentiles will be blessed in this kingdom through Israel (Isaiah 42.6, 49.6, 60.3; Zechariah 8.20-23) and Israel will be the premier nation among the nations (Deuteronomy 28.1, 13), a nation of priests (Exodus 19.5-6). The Church, the body of Christ, will be joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8.16-17). God has not revealed what this entails or what our role will be during His Millennial reign except that we will rule angels (1 Corinthians 6.3).

⁴ See the author's study, [Two Remarkable Healings](#).

⁵ See the author's study, [Paul's Mystery](#).

⁶ See the author's study, [Paul and the Law](#).

⁷ See the author's study, [The Olive Tree](#).

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