

# Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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## What Good Is Jesus Without His Gospel?

### Part 1

In this article, I want to direct my remarks to Christianity's main point: the Gospel. The Gospel in Scripture has a label: It's called the Gospel *about the Kingdom of God*. That was the central message of Jesus; it was his passion. It was the tool and instrument by which he invited sinners to become saved. Luke 4:43 tells us that preaching the Gospel *about the Kingdom* was the purpose of Jesus in his whole mission.

The same is exactly true of the Apostle Paul. And this is hardly surprising because Paul was under the Great Commission, and Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 had said: Go into the whole world and preach exactly the same things as I have been preaching to you. In other words, take the same message, the same saving Gospel, as I have been announcing to you, and take that same Gospel, the Great Commission says, to the whole wide world, to all the nations. Indeed in Matthew 24:14 we read: **"This** Gospel about the Kingdom of God will be heralded in the whole wide world for all the nations, and then the end of the age will come." That is to say, **then** Jesus will come back to inaugurate that Kingdom — the subject of his own Gospel, the Kingdom of God. It seems to us that the evangelical world is in a tremendous muddle about what the Gospel is.

### What Is the Gospel?

An article in *Christianity Today* showed that most Christians cannot define the Gospel if asked to do so ("Good news, bad news," August 6, 2005). I want to suggest to you that that is nothing short of a disaster! Can one have accepted the Gospel if one cannot articulate it at all? If one doesn't know and understand what the Gospel is and cannot speak of it with clarity, is it clear that one has accepted it and understood it? I think the situation must be perilous and dangerous at this point.

Another series of articles in *Christianity Today* allowed nine evangelical leaders to define the Christian Gospel ("What's the Good News?" February 7, 2000). There was an extraordinary variety of explanations. Nothing was said about the Kingdom of God. No definition of the Gospel of the Kingdom was offered.

And yet, plainly, the Bible's Gospel is about the Kingdom of God. Jesus came into Galilee preaching

God's Gospel, saying, "Repent and believe the Gospel about the Kingdom" (Mark 1:14-15). He said: The Kingdom of God is approaching. Repent/turn/be converted/reorientate yourself and *believe that Gospel about the Kingdom of God*. That is reminiscent, incidentally, of "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as making him right" (Gal. 3:6). So, Jesus says: Repent and believe the Gospel concerning the Kingdom of God for conversion.

It is brilliant that Mark labels this foundational information "the beginning of the Gospel" (Mark 1:1). Why not follow Mark's and Jesus' well-defined scheme for evangelization?

In Matthew 13:19 we find the Gospel called the **"word of the Kingdom,"** not any old "word," but the word about the Kingdom — same as the Gospel of the Kingdom. It is the seed, or germ, of immortality to be sown in the hearts of people. And it's only when they understand and grasp and embrace and accept *that* Gospel of the Kingdom that they can possibly be accepting Jesus. The Bible doesn't speak vaguely about "accepting Jesus" or "asking Jesus into your heart"; rather it speaks about "God accepting *us*," only when we understand and receive God's Gospel about the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus.

Now back to that series of articles in *Christianity Today*. Nine leading spokesmen attempted to articulate the Gospel. There was an extraordinary confusion and an extraordinary lack of any reference to the main agenda in the Gospel as Jesus preached it — the Gospel about the Kingdom. This prompted a letter from Charles Taber, Professor Emeritus of World Mission from the Emmanuel School of Religion in Johnson City, TN, who wrote: "I read with great interest the nine statements attempting to answer the question, 'What's the Good News?' I am amazed and dismayed to find not even a passing mention of the theme which was the core of Jesus' gospel in three of the four accounts: the kingdom of God. Every one of these statements reflects the individualistic reduction of the gospel that plagues American evangelicalism" (*Christianity Today*, April 3, 2000).

You see, if one hasn't grasped that the Gospel is about the Kingdom, what *has* one grasped of the New Testament? This is the ABC, the foundation of everything, the rock. The essential Gospel message concerns what Jesus called the Kingdom.

## So What Is the Kingdom?

So then, what does this mean to believe in the Gospel of the Kingdom as Jesus commanded in his first command? The answer is not difficult. If one traces the Kingdom through Mark, one will find that it is obviously a Kingdom which hasn't yet come. It would be very strange for Mark to write a document in which he intends you to understand that the Kingdom of God came with the ministry of the historical Jesus, and then at the end to have Joseph of Arimathea (who from Matthew's account we know was a Christian disciple) still *waiting for* the Kingdom of God after the end of the ministry of Jesus (Mark 15:43). Had Joseph missed the Kingdom? Are we to understand that the Kingdom of God had come with the ministry of Jesus and yet Joseph, as a Christian, was still waiting for it? It makes no sense at all.

The fact is that Mark did not intend us to believe that the Kingdom of God had come, except in the sense that the "spirit" of that Kingdom was being displayed in advance of the coming of the Kingdom. That's why the Lord's Prayer is where we should begin with evangelism, because everybody who knows anything at all of the Bible knows, "Your Kingdom come." And we point out that "Your Kingdom come" of course means that the Kingdom hasn't come. You don't pray for the coming of the Kingdom if it has already come!

In addition to that, we lay the foundation of the Kingdom message in Matthew, the first Gospel, when John the Baptist in the third chapter introduces the idea of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. Of course those two terms are entirely synonymous — no difference at all; they mean exactly the same thing. And any system of theology which tries to tell you that the Kingdom of God is different from the Kingdom of Heaven is introducing a fatal confusion into the teaching of Jesus from the start. John the Baptist introduced the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven/God. He announced that it was at hand and commanded repentance. He then talked about fleeing from the wrath to come and he defined the Kingdom as that time when judgment will decide between the good and the bad, going into the barn or the bonfire. It's the time when the wheat, the good seed, are ushered into the "barn" of the Kingdom, and the wicked are destroyed like the chaff (Matt. 3:2-12). That's what the Kingdom of God is. It's the coming of judgment to destroy the wicked at the return of Jesus and the coming of the Kingdom to be inaugurated at the same time, at the future spectacular coming of Jesus.

That fact about the Kingdom is clearly laid out in Matthew 3, and that of course is the beginning of the New Testament documents. And we learn the facts about the Kingdom progressively. It therefore makes a considerable nonsense and chaos of the Gospel from

the start, if one fails to tell the public that the Kingdom is essentially, primarily, predominantly that Kingdom which is going to come when Jesus returns.

Another good place to start would be Luke 19:11-27 where precisely that question about the presence or future of the Kingdom was raised. The people there thought that the Kingdom of God was going to appear *immediately* — implying of course that it had not yet appeared in the ministry of Jesus — but they thought it was going to come right then. Why? Because the text says Jesus was standing near Jerusalem. And it should be obviously clear then, not only to that audience but to us, that the Kingdom is something *headquartered in Jerusalem*. Because the King, the Messiah, was standing near to Jerusalem, it would appear reasonable to suppose that the Kingdom of God, that is to say the Royal Empire, the Davidic empire promised by all the prophets, and the basis of the Abrahamic covenant, the land promise — it would be reasonable to suppose that that Kingdom was to appear immediately. Well, of course.

And what did Jesus do? Did he say, "Folks, you've missed it! The Kingdom is really not an empire in the Davidic sense at all. It's just the reign of God in your hearts. It's just ethics and good behavior now. It's just a ministry of exorcism and the casting out of demons. And so you've misunderstood the Kingdom. Don't expect the Kingdom to come!" Did Jesus say anything like that? Well, of course not! He most carefully and specifically said: The Kingdom of God, as you *correctly* understand it, indicated by my proximity to Jerusalem — and I'm King of that Kingdom and I will rule in Jerusalem — that Kingdom is *not* going to come immediately. In fact, I am going to leave. I am the nobleman. I am going off to heaven to acquire possession of the Kingdom, to be authorized to rule in that Kingdom headquartered in Jerusalem, and then I'm going to return and establish the Kingdom and reward my followers with positions of executive power in the Kingdom — authority over five cities, ten cities and so on — and I'm going to slay my enemies.

This is exactly the picture we had in Matthew 3 — the destruction of the wicked, the ushering in of the good seed of the Kingdom, the royal personnel and family, into the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns in power and glory. This has not happened yet!

## The Church's Problem

If we lose track of this framework of the Kingdom teaching in the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke) we lose the entirety of the Christian faith. Churches constantly lament the fact that they are not doing very well. It's hardly surprising! They have dropped the Gospel as Jesus preached it. They have dropped the vocabulary of Jesus, which was always about the

Gospel about the Kingdom of God, as we see most clearly in the summary statements given by Matthew, Mark and Luke.

In Matthew 4:23 Jesus went about all of Galilee proclaiming, heralding the Gospel concerning the Kingdom of God. And again in 9:35 there is a summary statement, holding together the whole book of Matthew so that we would never forget the Gospel is about the Kingdom — the King and the Kingdom. So, **firstly** churches have abandoned the Gospel for some so-called “Pauline” Gospel, which is not a Pauline Gospel at all, because Paul did not make the mistake of dropping the Kingdom from the Gospel.

**Secondly**, if on a rare occasion an evangelical preacher does mention the precious phrase “Gospel of the Kingdom,” he almost certainly collapses that *future* Kingdom immediately by concentrating almost exclusively on the present, what he calls the “presence of the Kingdom.” Now, granted that the spirit and power of the Kingdom was being demonstrated in the ministry of Jesus, in advance of the *coming of the Kingdom*. But that’s not the emphasis. The “presence of the Kingdom” is not where the interest mainly lies in the Synoptic Gospels. Not at all.

Let’s point out that the Kingdom in Mark is *always* something future. In Mark 9:47 it’s the Kingdom which comes when the wicked are destroyed just as we saw in Matthew 3. In Mark 11:10 the people shout, “Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our father David!” In Mark 15:43, Joseph is still *waiting for* the Kingdom.

### The Kingdom Within You?

One can of course raise Luke 17:21, mistranslated in the King James Version, with disastrous consequences. “The Kingdom of God is within you.” That may mean the King was in their midst. That is possible, or it more likely is a future reference: when the Kingdom does come *in the future*, it will be all over and visible; it will not be localized. It will not be a question of saying “Look here” or “Look there,” rushing off into the wilderness. No, the Kingdom of God will be massively evident — like lightning, flashing from one end of the sky to the other (17:24). That’s what the Kingdom of God will be like. It’s the Kingdom of God which Jesus hasn’t yet even obtained in Luke 19. But he had to go off to heaven to get that Kingdom and return. The Kingdom begins at the stupendous event of the Second Coming.

About 98% of the references to the Kingdom of God in the Synoptics are to the Kingdom to be established on the renewed earth when Jesus returns. That’s the heart of the Gospel! But one can read evangelical tracts in church foyers and bookstores, even evangelical scholarly literature on the Gospel,

without finding any reference to the Kingdom of God! And yet we say we love Jesus!

Why then do we not speak the language of Jesus and use his words? No wonder he warned, “He who is ashamed of **me and my words...**” — ashamed of me and my Kingdom Gospel (Mark 8:35, 38). No wonder he said, “Unless you are converted and accept the Kingdom of God as a little child, you will not enter it” (Matt. 18:3; Mark 10:15; see v. 26). Whoever does not receive the Kingdom message as a child will not enter it, i.e. will not *be saved*.

### Repenting and the Kingdom

But what if the Kingdom message is never put to the people, how can they enter it? Ask a dozen people, attending faithfully at church Wednesdays and Sundays, year after year, “What is the Kingdom of God?” Or better still, “What is the Gospel?” Almost certainly they will not say, “The Gospel, of course, is about the Kingdom of God.” Then direct them to Acts 8:12 where Phillip was preaching “the Gospel about the Kingdom of God.” It was only when the men and women had intelligently grasped “the Gospel of the Kingdom and the things about Jesus” that they were ready to be baptized, to enter the Christian faith. Only on condition of intelligent understanding of the Gospel of the Kingdom were they qualified to be Christians.

The same is true in the parable of the sower. The whole point there is: one’s eyes must be opened to the Kingdom of God before one can repent. It would be very cruel to ask a person to “repent” and “receive Jesus” if one does not offer him the terms on which Jesus makes that possible. What good is it to invite a person to be forgiven by Jesus, if he remains in blindness about the very thing that requires forgiveness? That is to say — the failure to grasp and understand the Gospel of the Kingdom teaching of Jesus.

Mark 4:11-12 says that it is only when people understand the Kingdom — have their eyes open to the Kingdom — that they are ready to be converted and forgiven. In fact, Satan understands this so much better, I think, than the average church member. In Luke 8:12 (cp. Acts 8:12) Luke clearly says that it is *only* upon intelligent acceptance of “the word of the Kingdom” — Matthew 13:19 is the parallel — it is only when that happens that people are being saved. And so the Devil works hard at snatching away the Gospel of the Kingdom from the heart of the potential convert so that, as Jesus says in a brilliant intelligence report, the person may not *believe that Gospel of the Kingdom and be saved*. Crystal clear!

Yet in tracts we customarily find isolated texts from Romans 10. Even there, the context is not read. “Believing in Jesus” and “confessing him as Lord” —

two verses — but Romans 10:17 is omitted. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the Gospel of the Messiah.” That is the Gospel as Jesus preached it.

Substitutes for the Kingdom of God Gospel are everywhere. Some, in widely spread tracts, speak of the Gospel as being three days’ work. “Jesus came to die, to be buried, and to be raised.” That’s not true. Jesus came to preach the Gospel about the Kingdom, first of all. Luke 4:43 says this: “I am duty bound,” the Messiah said, “to proclaim the Gospel about the Kingdom. That is the **reason** that God commissioned me.” And since He commissions us to preach the same Gospel, that’s the reason, the rationale — the *raison d’être* — of every Christian believer: to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. But what if he or she does not know that the Gospel is about the Kingdom?

### Can You Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom from the Old Testament? Paul did!

Daniel 2 is a good place to start. There we find the Kingdom of God is going to be the worldwide empire, established on the ruins of a Babylonian kingdom (Dan. 2:44). The Kingdom of God is the Messianic empire to be established *under* the whole heaven (Dan 7:27), that is to say on a renewed earth. It is this planet, renewed, not some distant ethereal heaven.

The Kingdom of God in Daniel 7:14, 18, 22, 27 — all of that is central to the preaching of the Gospel. And in Isaiah 40:5, “the **glory** of the Lord is going to be revealed, and all people will see it at the same time.” “Glory” is often a synonym for “Kingdom.” In Isaiah 52:7, “The good news... Your God [represented by the Messiah] has become King.” That is to say, in prophecy. He will have become King. He has not become King yet. He is going to become King.

And that’s the time when the seventh trumpet will sound as Revelation 11:15-18 says. At the seventh angel trumpet, the kingdoms of this world — the Satanic kingdoms of this world, where at present the Devil is master and master-deceiver<sup>1</sup> — those kingdoms are going to change hands dramatically, absolutely, catastrophically, cataclysmically, only at the seventh trumpet when the dead will be raised *from death*, not from floating in heaven. They will be raised *from death* — the sleep of death (Dan. 12:2; Ps. 13:3) — into the Kingdom of God as it then will become, when Christ returns.

And so the fact is simply this: When Jesus said that the meek are going to inherit the earth, quoting Psalm 37, he substantiated and confirmed the great Abrahamic covenant, now extended, of course, since

the death of Jesus, to the Gentiles and all true believers. So all of us, as one group, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, male or female — we all are one, the one Israel of God, the **true circumcision** (Phil. 3:3; Gal. 6:16).

### Managers with the Messiah

It is the Kingdom in which the disciples of all the ages are going to reign as executives with Messiah. “If we suffer with him, we will reign as kings with him,” Paul said to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:12). This was a slogan of the early church. In 1 Corinthians 6:2 Paul asked, “Don’t you know that the saints are going to manage the world?” in the future, that is, when Jesus comes back. But do not imagine that you are a king now, he said; you are not ruling anything now. You are the scum of the earth if you’re an Apostle. If you’re a disciple, you’ve probably been rejected everywhere (1 Cor. 4:8-13). But all that is going to change when Jesus comes back. You are going to be vindicated, don’t you know? That is to be your reward and prize and recompense (Col. 3:24). 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 defines that reward and destiny as “inheriting the Kingdom of God.”

That’s exactly what Matthew 19:28 declares, where Jesus promised that “at the regeneration of the world” — when the world is new-born, when the world is restored to its Edenic perfection, as all the prophets prophesied — then the Messiah will reign and you too will be promoted to sit on thrones to administer the twelve tribes of Israel, regathered and converted at that time in the land renewed. That is exactly Matthew 5:5: “Blessed are the meek [the meek of all peoples, who respond to the Gospel]: they are going to have the land as their inheritance.” This is irrespective of the blood that flows in their veins. No Jewish privilege here, except in the sense that the international Church is the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), and therefore entitled to all the promises in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.

The pattern of the New Testament is very simple, provided however that one does not get muddled by listening to sermons about “going to heaven.” We have dropped the term “Kingdom” from the Gospel. This is a serious loss of information. The Kingdom of God must be restored to the Gospel. Everything in the New Testament looks forward to that grand restoration: “Heaven must retain the Messiah [the nobleman of Luke 19] until the time comes for the restoration [*apokatastasis*]” — the putting back right of everything that’s in a mess now; the straightening out of the world. This will be achieved and implemented only at the future return of Jesus (Acts 3:21).

<sup>1</sup> “The whole world lies in the power of the Evil One” (1 John 5:19). “The Devil is deceiving the entire world” (Rev. 12:9). Satan is “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4).

It's no good trying to fix the world now, much less trying to help the world with a distorted Gospel. The church had better sit in church and learn the Gospel before it goes out and preaches anything to anyone. Otherwise it certainly goes out with a blunted tool, a half Gospel. And that will not do the job!

Galatians 1 is fair warning that any compromise of the Gospel, any addition or subtraction from it, must be anathema. A "false" Gospel offers false assurance to the believer. It invites him to think that he is saved when he is not. That's a terrible tragedy! Only the true Gospel can save. Jesus warned vigorously against the huge number of "Christians" who thought they were serving Christ and really were not (Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46). ✧

"Those committed to sin will not inherit it [the Kingdom] 1 Cor 6:9ff. Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5. The latter passages show that for Paul the Kingdom is **essentially future**...Flesh and blood will not inherit it, i.e. bodies under the direction of the spirit of Christ are required for entrance (1 Cor. 15:50)" (*Bauer's Lexicon*, p. 169).

## "Law of Moses": A Biblical or Forbidden Phrase?

by Matt Sacra, Pennsylvania

It is unfortunate how often people today reject the words of Jesus, the New Testament, and the entire Bible itself. Some of us have noticed a recent rejection trend among those who have come to believe in one God, the Father of our lord and savior Jesus the Messiah. This rejection is by those who are against the use of the phrase "law of Moses" or "the law of Moses" because they say it should only be called "the law of God." Although it is true that there is only one Lawgiver (James 4:12), the hearts of these people are no different than the Pharisees of Jesus' day. They place their faith and trust in an obsolete covenant (Heb. 7:11-12, 18-19, 8:13, 9:9-10), and disregard the New Covenant. And because of this, they carry on today the Pharisees' works in placing heavy yokes of bondage on all others which they themselves cannot bear (Matt 23:4, Acts 15:10). They sadly have no problem subjecting professing Christians under Mosaic Law, and they have no problem rejecting the Law of Messiah in the New Covenant.

No, in fact many of those uncomfortable with the phrase "law of Moses" place themselves and all of Christianity under the Old Covenant. They often say things like, "I hate calling it 'the law of Moses' because it is the law of God" or "Stop calling it 'the law of Moses!' It is God's law, not Moses' law!" But is this rational? More importantly, is it biblical to say such things? What is the spirit behind those who speak in these ways?

**Is it rational?** Is it rational to be bothered by the phrase "law of Moses"? We know it was God who commanded circumcision to Abraham in Genesis 17, and yet Jesus says in John 7:22, "Moses has given you circumcision" followed by either Jesus' or John's comment: "not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers," alluding to the patriarchs — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. After all, these three and Moses were agents used by God to convey His truths and commands. John used this agency concept in John 4 when he tells us that the Pharisees heard Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (the Baptist). John's gospel comments: "although Jesus himself was not baptizing; rather his disciples were" (4:2).

We also see agency at work with the Roman centurion in Luke 7:6 who "sent friends" to Jesus — friends who spoke for the centurion: "I am not worthy for you to come under **my** roof." Matthew 8:5, 8 record the same incident as "a centurion came to him" and "the centurion replied." Whether it was the centurion himself as Matthew records, or his friends as Luke records, the result is the same — the words came from the centurion. In fact, just before this in Matthew's gospel, Jesus himself told the healed leper to "present the offering **Moses** commanded."

Considering these agency truths and examples, it seems quite irrational to split hairs and reject the phrase "law of Moses" since the Sinai Covenant came from God by or through Moses. I suggest that those bothered by those of us who say, "the law of Moses" in contrast to "the law of Christ" (1 Cor 9:21, Gal 6:2) are irrationally attempting to elevate Mosaic law to a higher status — and they are attempting to correct or control our words by eliminating the phrase from our messages. They want us to either remove "the law of Christ" and "the law of Moses" from our lips, or they wish us to completely replace them with "the law of God" (as an elevated term for Mosaic Law).

**Is it biblical?** Is it biblical for anyone to tell us to stop calling it "the law of Moses"? Not according to the Old Testament. Although the Old Testament does refer to "the law of Moses" as "the law of God" (or "LORD/YHWH") on occasion (Josh. 24:26, cp Ezra 7:6, 10), it records **14 occurrences** of the phrase "the law of Moses" (*torah mosheh* in Hebrew). Joshua mentions it thrice (8:31, 32, 23:6). The authors of Kings and Chronicles say it five times (1 Kings 2:3, 2 Kings 14:6; 23:25, 2 Chron. 23:18; 30:16). Ezra uses the phrase twice (3:2, 7:6), and Nehemiah once (8:1). Daniel has no problem recording the phrase "the law of Moses" twice (9:11, 13), and God Himself says in Malachi 4:4 to those under the Old Covenant: "Remember **the law of Moses** My servant, the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for

all Israel.” If God Himself called it “the law of Moses,” we dare not correct anyone else saying the phrase! Also note God’s point here in Malachi that this law was “for all Israel” — with no hint of the rest of the nations.

This should be enough to convince us that there is nothing wrong with calling Mosaic law “the law of Moses,” but let’s quickly examine the New Testament for the phrase (*nomos Mouseos* in Greek). Luke 2:22 is the first gospel occurrence. Both Luke and John even record Jesus using the phrase. In Luke 24:44 Jesus reminds his disciples of his previous words that those things “written about me in **the law of Moses** and the prophets must be fulfilled.” Jesus also tells his listeners in John 7:23, “If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath so that **the law of Moses** will not be broken...” — indicating again that he has no problem calling it such. Neither Jesus nor his disciples insist upon calling it “the law of God” instead of “the law of Moses.”

Paul in Acts 13:39 not only shares with his listeners how they have more freedom in the New Covenant through Christ, but specifically states they “could not be freed through **the law of Moses**.” Strangely enough, in Acts 15:5, even some Pharisees who wrongly insisted upon new Gentile converts being circumcised and directed to “observe **the law of Moses**” didn’t think the phrase was too “lowly” for God’s Old Covenant law. Luke concludes the book of Acts with Paul persuading his hearers about the kingdom of God and about Jesus from “both **the law of Moses** and from the prophets” (Acts 28:23). Finally, Paul calls it “the law of Moses” in 1 Corinthians 9:9, and the Hebrews author contrasts the punishment for those who formerly “ignored **the law of Moses**” (Heb 10:28) with those who in verse 29 receive a worse punishment for trampling the Son of God underfoot, and regarding the blood of the covenant as unclean. The Hebrews writer not only uses the phrase some suppose is wrong, but he explicitly elevates Christ’s blood and the New Covenant above the law of Moses here.

**What spirit are they of?** So what spirit are they of — those who despise the phrase “the law of Moses” and despise its inferiority to the New Covenant Law of Christ? Some people may still be searching out these matters, and some people may be easily influenced by those trumpeting all Mosaic law commands as a salvation or obedience issue. Yet there are still those who reject the rational and biblical use of the phrase because they are anti-Christ. No, I don’t mean the antichrist figure of the end times, but simply that some people hate the law of Christ so much, they simply merge it with the law of Moses or dismiss it entirely. They want the law of Moses to be the only law of God ever, rather than the law of God now being the law of Christ (1 Cor 9:21) in the New Covenant.

When Elijah called down fire from heaven to consume people, it was from God in the Old Covenant (2 Kings 1:10). Yet the Messiah who preached the New Covenant rebuked his disciples for such a fire-consuming mindset, as some manuscripts record in Luke 9:55 with the words “you do not know what spirit you are of.” Jesus came to save lives, not destroy them. His goal was to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17), to bring it to its full meaning, not merely repeat it. According to Jesus, he did just that: he fulfilled it as he explained to his disciples in Luke 24:44.

So what spirit are we of, if we insist on banning a phrase which occurs 22 times (14 in the Old Testament — once by God Himself; 8 in the New Testament — twice by Jesus himself)? Would we correct the authors of these verses below? Would we correct Jesus or God? If not, why would anyone correct those of us who preach the New Covenant and call the Old Covenant by one of its biblical, rational, and proper names — “the law of Moses”?

- Joshua 8:31, 32; 23:6
- 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 23:25
- 2 Chronicles 23:18; 30:16
- Ezra 3:2; 7:6
- Nehemiah 8:1
- Daniel 9:11, 13
- **Malachi 4:4** (God Himself)
- Luke 2:22; **24:44** (Jesus himself)
- **John 7:23** (Jesus himself)
- Acts 13:39; 15:5; 28:23
- 1 Corinthians 9:9
- Hebrews 10:28

## The Lie of the Century?

by Barbara Buzzard

True or False? *There should be an exception in abortion law to save the life of the mother.*

Please be prepared for a sea change in your thinking. One hears the above statement ad nauseum. It has been repeated so frequently and so long that it surely must be true. Sometimes propaganda hits us so hard that truth is hard to believe. Have we been manipulated?

“Abortion has never saved a life. It has only destroyed lives. Abortion is, by definition, the destruction of human life. Despite the propaganda you hear from the abortion industry, **abortion is never necessary to save a woman’s life... There is never a scenario, and never could be a scenario, where a woman’s life will be saved by directly killing her child.** In an abortion, a child is stabbed, poisoned, decapitated, or ripped to shreds. No mother has ever derived a physical benefit from her unborn son or daughter being torn apart or stabbed in the skull...

“As the over 1,000 obstetricians, neonatologists, pediatricians, and midwives who signed the Dublin Declaration have testified, there is never any medical justification for abortion. Now, it may indeed be necessary in some rare circumstances to deliver a baby early in order to save the mother. But the additional step of killing the child is not necessary.”<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Anthony Levatino, former abortionist, has testified that NONE of the abortions he performed “to save the life of the mother” were actually necessary! How simple the truth actually is but we have missed it: the most direct and safest way of ending a *dangerous* pregnancy is to deliver the child. This does not dictate that the child must be killed.

### The Right to Reason

It is past time for honesty. The overwhelming majority of abortions are performed for convenience. Which is to say that abortion does not preserve a woman’s life — it preserves her *lifestyle*. And lifestyle has become so important that to criticize irresponsible taking of life can mean that one is labeled brutish or stupid.

Abortion is designed to “preserve the *lifestyle* of the mother. *A baby’s life and her mother’s life are never in competition.* We are never required to ‘choose between the two,’ as abortion advocates often claim. What may be in conflict, however, is the baby’s life and the mother’s preferred lifestyle...Ultimately, this is why all abortions are performed, even if the mother is tricked into thinking that there are nobler reasons behind it.”<sup>3</sup>

“The first step towards turning today’s society against abortion is to show them that legal abortion is not needed in maternal healthcare, that it is not needed to save women’s lives and that banning abortion does not bring about a rise in maternal mortality. This is the sentiment the Dublin Declaration achieves...”

“As experienced practitioners and researchers in obstetrics and gynecology, we affirm that direct abortion — the purposeful destruction of the unborn child — is not medically necessary to save the life of a woman...We confirm that the prohibition of abortion does not affect, in any way, the availability of optimal care to pregnant women.”<sup>4</sup>

How marvelous that knowing these truths can actually save lives! Please share this amazing information with your friends, your neighbors, and acquaintances. Share it as you would an incredible financial windfall. May you feel a burden to be a voice for those who don’t have one. ✧

## Comments

• “Since I found your YouTube videos, I rejoice to discover that what God said through His prophets (and His Christ) is exactly what He meant, and He meant exactly what he said. I have become much more aware of the need to tread carefully in studying the different English translations of the Bible (e.g., Jesus ‘went to God’ versus the false ‘Jesus went *back* to God’).” — *California*

• “Since I was 19 I have had a deep longing to dedicate my life to God. This aspiration mainly came to me in the form of seeking ordination in a monastic order as I come from a Catholic background. After a few years in different monasteries I discerned it wasn’t my calling from God. In 2018 while I was doing volunteer work in India, I had a spiritual experience by the grace of God. This experience made me feel born again; it made me develop my prayer and contemplative life, while also focusing on church history and theology. I started questioning a lot of the teachings of the Catholic Church as I wanted to draw as close to God as possible, in-terms of following His commandments and getting closer to what the early Church taught and practiced. In the end I rejected most of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Now I consider myself a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ beyond denomination. I’m very grateful to you not only for your scholarly work but also for your spiritual guidance through your written works, lectures and debates as it has been of immense importance to me.” — *Spain*

• “I want to share some great news with you. A 36-year-old man who received the word of the Kingdom and the name of Jesus was baptized here, and I began an intense Bible study with him. After that, both my wife and his wife were baptized by me and him and we are glad that God has set up a small fellowship in these places, through which His truth and His love in the Anointed Jesus are proclaimed.” — *Romania*

• “I am part of a small group who have been greatly enlightened and encouraged in the truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom through your ministry. A few of us were brought up in mainstream evangelical churches and over the last decade or so have been gaining understanding of the verses that troubled us and didn’t match with what we were being taught from the pulpit. I wanted to encourage you to keep preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and confirm that your work is reaching the twos and threes out here!” — *Northern Ireland*

<sup>2</sup> Matt Walsh, “Abortion does not preserve a woman’s life — it preserves her lifestyle,” 2016, theblaze.com

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> “Almost 900 doctors sign Dublin Declaration,” 2014, lifesitenews.com