# THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

PAUL WASHER



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# THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

The central message of Christianity is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The word *gospel* means "good news." Christianity offers the best news of all time! Indeed, it offers the only solution to our most pressing crises. No educational program, political party, or psychological therapy is able to address the deepest problem of the human race. Though human wisdom has brought many temporary benefits to us, history has also revealed how bankrupt we are to address the profound guilt and pervasive corruption under which our world groans.

The gospel reveals that God has come and won the victory for us. It is good news precisely because it is not about what we have done or can do, but what God has done and will do on behalf of His people. The gospel declares divine intervention into a hopeless world.

The gospel announces the good news of the coming of Jesus Christ. Approximately two thousand years ago, during the height of the Roman Empire, God sent His Son into human history in order to save people of every nation from their sins and misery. Christ was conceived by the Spirit of God in the womb of a virgin and was born Jesus of Nazareth, the God-man.

Jesus came to bear the sins of fallen men and women and to offer His life as a sacrifice in our place. His death satisfied the demands of God's justice against sinners and made it possible for a just God to pardon them. His resurrection three days later testified that He is the Son of God and that God accepted His death as full payment for our sin. Now, all people may be fully forgiven, reconciled to God, and receive eternal life through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Through this great work of salvation, God has revealed to us who He is.

### THE CHARACTER OF GOD

To understand the gospel, we must understand something about God. God is not an impersonal force or energy all around us, but the personal

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Creator and Lord of all (Genesis 1). The Bible teaches us that the only true God exists as a Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16–17; 28:19). They are three distinct persons who are distinguishable from one another, and yet they are one being, not three (John 10:30–33). They share the one divine essence with the same divine qualities. Because of these qualities, which make God uniquely Himself, the Lord requires a sacrifice for sin if sinners are to be saved. To see the need for Christ's death, therefore, we must know more about the character of this triune God.

## GOD IS LOVE

The Bible teaches us that God is love (1 John 4:8) and that His love moves Him to freely and selflessly give Himself to others for their benefit or good. It is important to understand that God's love is much more than an attitude, an emotion, or something that He does. Instead, love is an attribute of God—His very being or nature. God not only loves; He *is* love. He is the essence of what love is, and all true love flows from Him as its ultimate source. Other words that are often associated with the love of God are benevolence, mercy, grace, and patience. Regardless of what we may think or even hear, the unwavering testimony of the Bible is that God is love!

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8)

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. (Psalm 103:8; see also Exodus 34:6; Psalms 86:15; 145:8)

Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. (Isaiah 30:18)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17)