

# OBEYING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

What does it mean to obey the gospel of Jesus? What is the gospel of Jesus?  
How do we know we have the right answers? We only find the right answers as we  
look to God's word in the context of the coming apocalypse of Jesus Christ.

THE FLAMING FIRE — AFFIRMATION OR JUDGMENT?



*How do we know?*

1. Those who obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus are blessed with grace and have no reason to fear the flaming fire of the coming judgment.

- (2 Thessalonians 1:1–2 ESV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 **Grace to you and peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- A. We are supplied with grace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Grace is unmerited favor and activity of God based on his character, his power, his authority, his infinite wisdom and the riches of his glory by which he works for our ultimate good and for his glory.
- B. Grace abounds and reigns in the life of the person who obeys the gospel of the Lord Jesus.
- (Romans 5:20b–21 NIV) But where sin increased, **grace increased all the more**, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also **grace might reign** through righteousness **to bring eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C. The abounding and reigning of grace results in the person living in the abundance of eternal life that Jesus promised.
- (John 10:10b ESV) **I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.**

**EXCURSUS #1:** What does it mean to obey the gospel of Jesus?

We are only able to accurately answer the question when we examine it in the context of that day when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance.

- (2 Thessalonians 1:7b–8 ESV) ... **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven** with his mighty angels 8 in **flaming fire, inflicting vengeance** on those who do not know God and **on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**
- I. To obey the gospel is to believe in Jesus Christ.
- (John 20:31 ESV) But these are written **so that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and **that by believing you may have life in his name.**
  - (1 John 3:23 NIV) **And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.**
- II. Obeying the gospel in its most basic form is doing what

God says to do in regard to his good news of salvation.

- (Matthew 7:21 ESV) Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, **but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.**
  - (Romans 1:16a ESV) For I am not ashamed of **the gospel**, for it is **the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.**
- III. We are commanded by Jesus to enter by the narrow gate.
- (Matthew 7:13 ESV) **Enter by the narrow gate.** For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.
- IV. The group Jesus was speaking to did not obey Jesus but chose to do something other than what God said to do.
- (Matthew 7:23 ESV) And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, **you workers of lawlessness.**'
- When a person chooses to do something different than what God says then that person is believing in a work other than the work of God. This person will be judged according to his choice. Note that in Romans 2:6 below that those workers obeyed unrighteousness.
- V. We are commanded to strive to enter through the narrow door—Jesus is the door.
- (Luke 13:24 ESV) **Strive to enter through the narrow door.** For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.
  - (John 10:9a ESV) **I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved.**
- VI. This group did not obey Jesus' instructions but chose their own way and performed a work of evil.
- (Luke 13:26–27 ESV) Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' 27 But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all **you workers of evil!**'
- VII. For those who choose their own way of salvation and do not obey the truth there will be wrath and fury.
- (Romans 2:6–81 ESV) **He will render to each one according to his works:** 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, **he will give eternal life;** 8 **but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.**

**END EXCURSUS**

## **EXCURSUS #2: What is the gospel of Jesus?**

We are only able to accurately answer the question when we examine it in the context of that day when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance.

- (2 Thessalonians 1:7b–8 ESV) ... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

I. Only one gospel can withstand the flaming fire and instead provide grace and peace—the gospel of God.

- (Romans 1:1 ESV) Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.

II. There is not a different or another gospel as a different gospel will not withstand the fire of judgment.

- (Galatians 1:6–9 ESV) I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

III. Only the gospel that Paul preached that he received from Christ himself will withstand the flaming fire.

- (Galatians 1:11–12 ESV) For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

IV. On the day of judgment God will judge the secrets of humans according to the gospel Paul received from Jesus. .

- (Romans 2:15–16 ESV) They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

V. This is the gospel that Paul received from Jesus.

- (1 Corinthians 15:1–4 ESV) Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

### **END EXCURSUS**

2. Those who obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus are blessed with peace and have no reason to fear the flaming fire of the coming judgment.

- (2 Thessalonians 1:1–2 ESV) Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. We have peace with God through Jesus Christ.

- (Romans 5:1 ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace: Complete right standing and full assurance in our right relationship with God. A life of peace in which the love of God removes all fear of judgment.

B. We have peace with God and are now able to live in a perfect love relationship with God which removes our fear of judgment.

- (1 John 4:17–18 ESV) By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

3. Those who obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus have faith that is growing abundantly and love for one another that is increasing.

- (2 Thessalonians 1:3 ESV) We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

**4. Those who obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus have an observable, praiseworthy steadfastness and faithfulness in facing persecutions and afflictions.**

- (2 Thessalonians 1:4 ESV) Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God **for your steadfastness and faith** in all **your persecutions** and **in the afflictions** that you are enduring.

Steadfastness ... ὑπομονή [hupomone] – a patient enduring, sustaining, perseverance; constancy in withstanding hardship or stress; characteristic of one who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose; a patient, steadfast waiting for.

Persecutions – the hunting down, or chasing after, of opponents to inflict pain or death upon them; harassment, oppression, especially with the intent to force a person to deny his beliefs.

An affliction is a faith test ... a trial of life that God sets before us which increases the pressure of living in a sin ravaged world and brings us to life transforming moments of decision. Will we trust God in the affliction and grow in faith ... or will we shrink back in distrust and unbelief?

- A. Those who obey the gospel know the reality of the spiritual battle confronting the followers of Jesus.
- B. Persecutions are the relentless attacks of the spiritual forces of wickedness that encompass all realms of our spiritual warfare.
- C. Afflictions are our destiny and are used of God in his transforming work in our lives.
  - (1 Thessalonians 3:3 ESV) ... **that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this.**

**5. Those who obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus should understand that the affliction of this world is evidence—a sign, a plain indication of their citizenship in the kingdom of God.**

- (2 Thessalonians 1:5–6 ESV) **This is evidence** of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you.
- (Philippians 1:27–29 ESV) **Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ**, so that whether I come and see you or am

absent, I may hear of you that you are **standing firm in one spirit**, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, 28 **and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction**, but of **your salvation**, and that from God. 29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.

**6. Those who obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus will be granted relief when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven.**

- (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8 ESV) **And to grant relief to you who are afflicted** as well as to us, **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.**



**CONCLUSION: WILL YOUR GOSPEL TAKE THE HEAT?**