

The Gospel as Defined within its Biblical Context

God's **eschatological** salvation effected through the death and resurrection of Christ, and resulting in an **eschatological** community living out the life of the future in the power of the Spirit as they await the consummation.¹

The Gospel as Defined by the Modern Evangelical

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The loss of Christlike character among our leaders and members is not some strange phenomenon; it is but the natural product of the gospel ripped out of its own biblical context. When the redemptive story is purged of the traditions of men, and then read within its own biblical context, the New Testament presents a glorious "inaugurated eschatology" in which the final salvation and judgment have already begun in the death and resurrection of Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. The church is then understood to be the missionary people of God, ambassadors of the kingdom, and temple of the living God, living by the Spirit in a now, and not yet state within an unbelieving world, as they await Christ's return. The image of Christ marks such a community.

But the consequence of the modern, non-contextual, pared-down version of the gospel is the loss of identity, purpose, and hope on the part of the believer, *and life without context is no life at all, it is in fact, meaningless*. This equates to the loss of Christlike character and behavior in the believer's lifestyle. What is this pared-down gospel then but the work of the thief who comes but to steal, and kill, and destroy (John 10:10)? It is time therefore, to once again preach the whole gospel, the whole counsel of God, as did the apostles (Acts 20:20-27). If you are in Christ, you are **now** a child of God, a joint-heir with Jesus, a citizen of the kingdom of God, living under a new covenant; a new creation living out the life of the age to come in the present day, by the power of the Spirit. This is who you are, this defines

¹ Adapted from Gordon D. Fee, *To What End Exegesis?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p.196. See also Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

your purpose in life, and this provides you the certain hope of a **yet-to-be** fully realized redemption at the consummation when Christ returns.

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