

# **Voices: What gospel are you following?**

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If you're not satisfied with Jesus, don't worry. You've got gospels galore in this pluralist, postmodern age. Take your pick.

Two of our current favorites are the privilege gospel and the supremacy gospel.

## **The privilege gospel**

Those who teach the privilege gospel teach advantages are sure signs of God's blessing. Because privilege is a sign of God's approval and blessing, the privileged should be protected and maintained in their comfort and security, regardless of the cost to the less and the least privileged.

Amos, an Old Testament prophet, delivered a bracing condemnation of the privileged who use the poor for their own gain. Amos taught Israel their denial of justice and their oppression of the poor would result in their destruction. The true gospel teaches God expects God's people to enact justice for all.

The nature of privilege—the ignorance, whether willful or naïve, of the suffering of the unprivileged—allows for the ascendancy of our second current favorite gospel.

## **The supremacy gospel**

Those who teach the supremacy gospel teach the best life is realized when lesser people—the undesirables—are subjugated or exterminated. The

supremacy gospel is preached by racial and ethnic groups all over the world and often leads to genocide, the wiping out of entire populations of people.

Given supremacy's historic penchant for genocide, God's people must resist any expression of human supremacy. Today, God's white people must resist its white form.

From the first words of the Bible, we learn God created humans—all humans, regardless of color and gender—in the image of God. All humans, then, are sacred and should be treated as sacred, created in the image of God and bearers of God's image.

Peter offers a response to the supremacy gospel. When Peter's enemy—a Roman military officer—believed in Jesus, Peter said:

**“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right” (Acts 10:34-35 NIV).**

Peter laid aside his own supremacist ideas in favor of the teachings of Jesus, the true gospel, who taught that in place of hate, in place of killing those we oppose, we must love and pray for them.

## **The problem of other gospels**

The problem with other gospels is they distort the truth by using the language of the true gospel. Not long after Jesus returned to heaven, the good news (the gospel) Jesus came to deliver was distorted by people who thought Jesus' way was too good, too miraculous or too wrong to be true. Much of the New Testament was written to resist these distortions, these false teachings creeping into Christ's church carried by false teachers.

False teachers are of two kinds:

- those who claim to be inspired by God but who are not inspired by anything more than their own imaginations, and
- those who are inspired not by God but by a spirit of falsehood.

The problem with other gospels is they are perpetrated by false teachers whose teachings deceive us by sounding too much like the true gospel.

## The true gospel

The truth of false gospels is that the true gospel really is too good and too miraculous. We don't deserve what Jesus did. We can't earn it, and we can't do it for ourselves.

The truth of the true gospel is that it is open to all who call on the name of the Lord, regardless of skin color, ethnicity, gender or social status (Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, Romans 10:13).

The truth of the true gospel is that none who accept it are better or worse than any other, for in Jesus, divisions of color, ethnicity, gender and status are to cease (Galatians 3:26-28).

The truth of the true gospel is just as Paul wrote:

**“That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that [Christ] was buried, that [Christ] was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NIV).**

The truth of the true gospel is just as John wrote:

**“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. ... Everyone born of God overcomes the world. ... Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. ...**

**... God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

**I [, John,] write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:1a, 4a, 5, 11b-13, NIV)**

There are many gospels out there, but only one leads to life.

What gospel are you following? Are you chasing after comfort and security, power and dominance, or are you chasing after Jesus, the only One in whom is abundant and eternal life?

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