

# WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE GOSPEL IN ITS HEBREW ROOTS CONTEXT?

## A SURPRISING AND ENLIGHTENING ANSWER

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### What Is the Good News (Gospel) of the Kingdom of Heaven?

The word *Gospel* is one of the most common words in all Christendom. But what does it mean? The word itself is easily enough defined, but what about the concept behind the word? This will take us into another dimension of understanding.

First, let's define the word. *Gospel* or its synonyms are used 132 times in the Apostolic Scriptures (NT). *Gospel* (*Strong's* G2097 and G2098) literally means *Good News* or *glad tidings*. These two Greek words (*euaggellion* and *euaggelizo*) are translated into English in the Authorized Version (KJV) via the following words: as a noun, *gospel* and as a verb, *preach*, *bring good tidings*, *show glad tidings*, *declare*, and *declare glad tidings*. The word itself is quickly defined, but what really is the *Good News*? Let us begin to answer this by seeing how the authors of the Apostolic Scriptures used this term:

- ☞ *Gospel of the kingdom* or *of Elohim* (used five times) (e.g., Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14)
- ☞ *Gospel of Yeshua the Messiah* or *Yeshua* (used 15 times) (e.g., Mark 1:1; Rom. 1:16; 15:19; 1 Cor. 9:12; Gal. 1:7; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thes. 3:2)
- ☞ *Gospel of the grace of Elohim* (Acts 20:24)
- ☞ *Gospel of Elohim* (used five times) (e.g., Rom. 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor. 11:7; 1 Thes. 2:2,8,9)
- ☞ *Gospel of peace* (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15)

The vast majority of times the term *Gospel* is used in the Apostolic Scriptures the word stands alone in its noun form as simply *the Gospel* without any adjective modifiers.

But again, what is the *Good News*? One cannot read the Apostolic Scriptures without seeing that Yeshua the Messiah is at the center of this Good News. Thankfully, this same Good News (or Gospel) of "Jesus" has been at the center of the Christian message for two thousand years. This will hardly come as a new revelation to the reader. The famous passage of John 3:16 sums up this blessed message perhaps better than any other: "For Elohim so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This Good News of the Messiah (Acts 5:42; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2; 2 Cor. 2:12) involves understanding the spiritual significance of his death, burial and resurrection and how that relates to the redemption, reconciliation and salvation of sinful man through Yeshua's shed blood at the cross of Golgatha. But is there more to the basic message of the *Good News* that most have missed? Yes!

The Apostle Paul, a Jewish Torah scholar without peer in the first century, discusses the deeper implications of the meaning of the term *Gospel* in Romans 10:14-15,

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!'"

This is a quote from Isaiah 52:7. So what is this *Good News* or *Gospel* to which Paul is referring? Let us make a quick overview of the context of the Isaiah passage from which Paul is quoting by starting in verse two,

52:2, "O captive daughter of Zion"

- 52:3, “You have sold yourselves [to your harlot lovers] for nothing; and **you shall be redeemed without money.**”
- 52:5, “... my people is taken away for nought?”
- 52:7, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings **good tidings, that publishes peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation;** that says unto Zion, Your Elohim reigns!”
- 52:8, “... when YHVH shall **bring again** Zion.” i.e., redeem Israel from captivity where they were taken because they sold themselves into adulterous relationships with their foreign lovers.
- 52:9, “... **he has redeemed** Jerusalem.”
- 52:13ff, Enter Yeshua the Messiah, the Suffering Servant, who will redeem his people.
- 53:4-6, He bore upon himself the sin (death) penalty for adulterous Israel and Judah and then he “prolonged his days” (verse 10) by being resurrected so that he could remarry Israel, as we shall see later.
- 53:6, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and YHVH has laid on him [Yeshua the Messiah] the iniquity [i.e., Israel’s sinning against YHVH through violation of the Torah covenant or marriage agreement with YHVH that she made at Mount Sinai] of us all.”
- 54:1, “... for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, says YHVH.” Israel was desolate because of her captivity, but in captivity she became as the stars of heaven, as the dust of the ground, as the sand of the sea, a multitude of fish.
- 54:3, “your seed shall inherit the Gentiles ...” Israel shall be as a net who brings with her the riches of the sea (Gentile people of the nations).
- 54:4, “for you shall forget the shame of your youth, and shall not remember the reproach of your widowhood any more.”
- 54:5, “For your Maker is your husband; YHVH of Hosts is his name; and **your Redeemer** the Set-apart One of Israel; The Elohim of the whole earth shall he be called.
- 54:6, “For YHVH has called you as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when you were refused, says your Elohim.”
- 54:7, “For a small moment have I forsaken you; but with great mercies will I gather you [out of captivity back to Zion].”
- 54:8, “In a little wrath I hid my face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the YHVH **your Redeemer.**”
- 54:10, “... but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says YHVH that has mercy on you.” This is a reference to the renewed marriage covenant YHVH would make with Israel in the future—literally, a renewal of their wedding vows (Jer. 31:31-33).
- 54:11-12, This is a reference to New Jerusalem of which **all Israel** will be apart and which contains only 12 gates named for the twelve tribes of Israel. There will be no Gentile gate (Rev. 21:12).
- 54:17, No weapon formed against Israel shall prevent their redemption, restoration and attainment of righteousness through YHVH.
- 55:1, “Ho, every one that thirsts, come you to the waters,” Israel, returning out of the wilderness of her captivity, will be thirsty. Indeed she will drink water from the wells of her salvation in Yeshua, her Redeemer and Bridegroom (Isa. 12:3; See 11:10-12:6 for a prophecy about how a root from Jesse [Yeshua] will stand for an ensign of the people and the Gentiles will seek after it and the remnant of YHVH’s people that have been scattered in Assyria, Egypt, etc., the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah, will return from the four corners of the earth and will reunite into a united kingdom under King David once again [Ezek. 37:15-28].).
- 55:3, “Neither let the son of the stranger, that has joined himself to YHVH, speak, saying, ‘YHVH has utterly separated me from his people.’ Neither let the eunuch say, ‘Behold, I am a dry tree.’” By all appearances it would seem that the dispersed of Israel were cut off with no inheritance or progeny or had become a dry tree like a eunuch, and incapable of producing offspring, but in reality the opposite was true. Indeed, they would be found to be a stick or tree that was alive and well and had actually become a vast multitude that would be added to the tree of Judah (Ezek. 37:19) or grafted back into the olive tree of Israel (Rom. 11:13-24).
- 56:1ff, Sabbath-keeping is at the center of Israel’s redemption.
- 56:6, Here are the sons of the stranger that join themselves to YHVH to serve him and to love his name, who keep his Sabbath from polluting it, and take hold of his Torah-covenant.
- 56:8, YHVH will gather the outcasts of Israel.

- 56:10–12— Israel's (Christian's) watchmen (prophets) and shepherds (pastors) are blind, ignorant, dumb, barkless and greedy dogs.
- 58:1, “Cry aloud and spare not, lift up your voice like a shofar [the sound of the shofar is bringing many out-cast Israelites back to their Hebraic heritage] and show my people their transgression [i.e., violation of their Torah-covenant/marriage agreement Israel made with YHVH at Mount Sinai] and the house of Jacob their sins.”
- 58:13, The Sabbath is a focal point again. After all, it was the sign of the Mosaic/Sinaitic Covenant Israel made with YHVH (Exod. 31:13).
- 61:1, “The Spirit of YHVH Elohim is upon me; because YHVH has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”
- 61:2, “To proclaim the acceptable year of YHVH, [the first coming of Messiah] and the day of vengeance of our Elohim; to comfort all that mourn [the second coming of the Redeemer of the outcasts and dispersed of Israel].”
- 61:3, “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of YHVH, that he might be glorified.”
- 61:5, “Strangers ... sons of the alien ...” are a reference to the dispersed ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel
- 61:9, “Their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people ...”
- 61:10, “I will greatly rejoice in YHVH, my soul shall be joyful in my Elohim; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”
- 61:11, “For as the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so YHVH Elohim will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.” (emphasis added on all)

## What then is the *Good News or Gospel*?

It is the Good News of the unquenchable love that YHVH-Yeshua has for his people Israel who have been dispersed and exiled among the Gentiles; who have been cut off from their Maker, their Husband; who have become aliens from the covenants of promise and from the commonwealth of Israel, without Elohim and without hope (Eph. 2:12). But by YHVH's unfailing love, these same wayward children have been brought near and redeemed by the blood of Messiah Yeshua, the Suffering Servant, who paid the price for the sin of their spiritual adultery, for breaking their marriage agreements with YHVH. They are, therefore, no longer strangers and aliens, but like the prodigal son, will return to their Father's household (Eph. 2:11–19). They were wild olive branches that were broken off of the olive tree of Israel because of unbelief (Rom. 11:13–24), but upon drinking from the Cup of Redemption, the third cup of the Jewish Passover Seder, which corresponds to the Cup of Acceptance, which a Jewish maiden drinks at her betrothal ceremony to show her Israelite suitor that she accepts his marriage proposal signifying the beginning of their betrothal. This corresponds to Yeshua, on the night of his Passover with his disciples, drinking of the fruit of the vine, and then passing that cup around and having them drink therefrom, which was their accepting, as representatives of the spiritual bride of Israel, his marriage proposal to Israel. And this corresponds to a new Believer in Yeshua confessing with their mouth Yeshua as Master and believing in their heart that Elohim has raised him from the dead. At this point one believes unto righteousness and accepts the redemption of Messiah Yeshua and is saved (Rom. 10:9–10). At this point one is grafted into the olive tree (or tree of life), which is a picture of Yeshua who is the Tree of Life of which he said, “I am the vine and you are the branches ...” (John 15:1–6; Rom. 11:13–24).

## Background of Israel's Marriage to YHVH

### The Whole House of Israel Was Married to Elohim

Ezekiel 16:6–8, “And when I passed by you, and saw you polluted in your own blood, I said unto you when you was in your blood, “Live”; yes, I said unto you when you were in your blood, “Live.”

I have caused you to multiply as the bud of the field, and you have increased and waxen great, and you art come to excellent ornaments: your breasts are fashioned, and your hair is grown, whereas you was naked and bare. Now when I passed by you, and looked upon you, behold, your time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt [*talit*] over you, and covered your nakedness: yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a covenant [*ketubah*] with you,' says the YHVH Elohim, 'and you became mine.'"

### YHVH Divorced the House of Israel

Isaiah 50:1, "Thus says YHVH, 'Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement [*a get*], whom I have put away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have you sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.'"

YHVH is not asking whether there is a *get* or not, but rather asking to be shown the *get* that he had previously written. How do we know this is the correct interpretation? If he had not put her away (divorced her) why would he have to make a renewed covenant (or renew his marriage vows) with her (Jer. 31:31-33)?

Jeremiah 3:8, "And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also."

Hosea 1:9, "Then said Elohim, 'Call his name Loammi: for you are not my people, and I will not be your Elohim.'"

Hosea 2:2, "Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts."

### Israel Marries Her Foreign Lovers

While there is no place in Scripture that specifically states that the House of Israel married any of her foreign lovers (the House of Judah, on the other hand, did marry "the daughter of a strange god," [Malachi 2:11]), the Torah specifically states that when two unmarried people have consensual intimate relations they are considered married in YHVH's eyes, for the sex act consummates the marriage (Deut. 22:28-29 and Exod. 22:16). If, on the other hand, a married woman lays with a man, this is adultery and is punishable by death (Deut. 22:22-24). As we have seen, YHVH gave the House of Israel a Bill of Divorce, freeing her to remarry.

Jewish Rabbinical authorities recognize this fact. Baal HaTurim, the notable medieval Jewish Torah commentator, states in his commentary on Exodus 19:4, "Just as a woman may be acquired [as a wife] through any one of three ways (i) through money; (ii) through a legal document or (iii) through marital relations" (bracketed phrases are in the original). He then goes on to show how YHVH acquired Israel through money (i.e., the spoils of Egypt and the sea; through a document (i.e., the Torah as a written marriage document or *ketubah*); and through marital relations (as it is stated, "I will spread my skirt or wing over you ... and I will enter a covenant with you [Ezek. 16:8]) (*ArtScroll Baal HaTurim Chumash—Exodus*, p. 731). This is further proof that consensual sexual relations between a man and a woman not only consummate but also legally establish the marriage. The House of Ephraim/Israel and the House of Judah were therefore legally married to their foreign lovers, spiritually speaking.

### The Divorced Wife Grieves For Her Divorced Husband

Hosea 2:7-8, "And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal."

### A Marriage Agreement (Betrothal/*Erusin*) Is Anticipated

Hosea 2:16-19, "And it shall be at that day,' says YHVH, 'that you shall call me Ishi; and shall call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the

beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth you unto me for ever; yes, **I will betroth you** unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.” (emphasis added)

Isaiah 62:3-5, “You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of YHVH, and a royal diadem in the hand of your Elohim. You shall no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall your land any more be termed Desolate: but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah: for YHVH delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you: and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your Elohim rejoice over you.”

Jeremiah 31:31-34, “Behold, the days come,’ says YHVH, ‘that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, says YHVH: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel; After those days,’ says YHVH, ‘I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know YHVH: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says YHVH: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

### A Problem: Divorce and Remarriage?

The Torah forbids that a man remarry his divorced and remarried wife (Deut. 24:4). YHVH divorced the House of Israel. Legally, YHVH cannot remarry her according to his own Torah. The solution: YHVH has to die. Enter Messiah Yeshua, the Suffering Servant (Isa. 52:13ff) who would die for his people and redeem them from captivity. This is the message of Romans 7:1-14,

1 Know you not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know *the* [supplied],) how that **the/this** [Strong’s G3588, a demonstrative pronoun: this, that, the, etc.; namely, a reference to a specific Torah pertaining to divorce and remarriage] **law** has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

2 For the woman which has an husband is bound by *the* [supplied] law to her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from **the/this law of her husband**.

3 So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress, but if her husband be dead, she is free from **that [here the translators used the demonstrative pronoun] law**; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, you also are become dead to **the/this law** by the body of Messiah; that you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto Elohim.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by **the /this law**, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

6 But now we are delivered from **the/this law**, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is **the/this law** sin? Elohim forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by *the* [supplied] **law**, for I had not known lust, except **the/this law** had said, “You shall not covet.”

8 But sin, taking occasion by **the/this commandment**, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without/apart *the* [supplied] **law** sin was dead.

9 For I was alive without/apart *the* [supplied] **law** once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And **the/this commandment**, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by **the/this commandment**, deceived me, and by it slew me.

12 Wherefore *the* [supplied] law is holy, and **the /this commandment** holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? Elohim forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by **the/this commandment** might become exceeding sinful. (emphasis added on all)

### This Is a Difficult Concept: A Quick Summary

Because of Israel's unfaithfulness YHVH divorced her (Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8) and rejected her (Hos. 1:9; 2:2). In her pursuit of her spiritual, heathen lovers she was not satisfied, but longed for YHVH, her former (spiritual) husband (Hos. 2:7-8). But because YHVH had already divorced her due to her violation of her marital/covenantal agreement (or *ketubah*), which she made with him at Mount Sinai when she said, "I do" to him three times (Exod. 19:8; 24:3, 7), he could not remarry her without violating his own Torah (Deut. 24:4) since she had become another man's wife. YHVH's intentions were clear: he would remarry her (Hos. 2:16-19; Isa. 62:3-5; Jer. 31:31-34). But how could he do so since (a) she was worthy of death for her adultery under Torah and (b) he could not remarry his divorced and remarried wife?

Enter the Apostle Paul, who as a Jewish legal expert, could, from the pages of Scripture, unravel this perplexing legal dilemma and give us a Scripturally and legally sound answer. Romans 7:1-6 is a discussion of this very issue. If a woman's husband dies she is free to remarry. She is no longer legally bound to her husband since the Torah-laws pertaining to marriage have no jurisdiction over a dead man.

Some Christian biblical expositors claim this passage teaches that "New" Covenant Believers through Yeshua are now dead to the Torah of Moses meaning that one is now only obligated to keep the moral aspect of the law (no idolatry, no murder, no adultery, etc.), but that one is freed from the more ritualistic, ceremonial, and lifestyle aspects of the Torah (Shabbat, feast days, kosher laws, etc.) except tithing, curiously so (sarcastically speaking).

But is Paul teaching this in this portion of his letter to the Roman Believers? No he is not. Those who teach this are overlooking a major detail in the Greek grammar of Romans 7:1-6. In every place where the phrase "the law" (in the KJV) occurs in these six verses (where the definite article *the* is found in the Greek) the word *the* is Strong's G3588. According to *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* this word "corresponds to our definite article *the* which is properly a demonstrative pronoun" and can therefore mean *this, that, which, who*, as well as *the*. Indeed, the KJV translates this Greek word as *the* in our passage under consideration in all places except in verse three where this word is translated (in the KJV) as the demonstrative pronoun *that* as in "that law."

The question is this, therefore: Is Paul referring to the sum total the Torah, or to one specific law within the Torah that pertains to marriage?

In verse two we find the phrase, "the [or *this*] law of her husband." Here Paul is talking about a specific law pertaining to marriage found in the Torah, and not to all 613 laws contained in the Torah. Based on this and the translators' use of the demonstrative pronoun *that* in verse three (as opposed to the definite article *the*), the internal evidence of this passage would point to the phrase *this/that law* being preferred over the phrase *the law*. This being the case, to which specific law out of the 613 found in the Torah would Paul be referring? In verse two we read, "... if the husband dies she is loosed from [this/that] law of her husband." It is the law that states that if a woman has sex with another man beside her husband (and she is not legally divorced) she is an adulteress (Exod. 20:14).

The Torah also forbids a woman from remarrying her first husband who had divorced her due to her adulterous relationship with and subsequent marriage to another man (Deut. 24:4). But how could she remarry her first husband (if her second husband was still alive) without violating the Torah prohibiting this? Impossible in the natural, but with YHVH all things are possible. What if her first husband were to die in her place (and pay the legal death penalty under the Torah for her adultery) and then resurrect as a new or different man? Is this possible? Evidently, Paul thought so. In Romans 10 he expresses his heart's desire for the salvation of Israel and states that this occurs through one's calling upon the name of Messiah Yeshua who did just that: he died on the cross and paid the sin penalty and resurrected as a new man.

The preaching of this message, which Paul calls the Gospel or Good News, is the message of YHVH-Yeshua remarrying his divorced bride. We see this in Romans 10:14-15 where Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7, which in its greater context (Isa. 52:2 - 62:12) is talking about the Final Redemption (a Rabbinical concept based on YHVH's promises in Deut. 30). This involves the return and restoration of the exiled House of Israel back to YHVH through the death, burial and resurrection of Messiah Yeshua (see Isa. 53). This glorious event then paves the way for the establishment of the Messianic Age (or Millennium).

Messiah Yeshua is presently betrothed to his Bride (the Body of Messianic, Torah-keeping Saints who make up Israel (see Rev. 12:17; 14:12; 19:7-9) whom he has redeemed and sanctified by his blood from her state of spiritual harlotry. This Bride awaits his return from his Father's house where he will claim her as his own and take her as his full-fledged wife. She awaits the wedding feast that will last for 1000 years.

All Israelites whether they come to faith in Messiah Yeshua through the Judah branch or through the Ephraim branch combine to become the one new man in Messiah Yeshua (Eph. 2:11-19). All those who place faith in the Messiah are descendants, by faith, of Abraham (Rom. 4:16; 9:8,11; Gal. 3:14) and will rule with Yeshua, as his spiritual wife, as kings and priests in his Millennial kingdom (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

**This is the *true* Good News (Gospel) of the kingdom of Elohim!**