

## The Gospel

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Greetings.

Today, I have a message for the Greeks here in America, especially those that are Orthodox.

Let me introduce myself. I am Theodore Zachariades. I was born in England. My parents are Cypriots. I, too, was once a Greek Orthodox. One thing, however, I learned was that the orthodox have a saying: "Believe and don't investigate/search out."

When I was 21 years old my family moved to Cyprus, my homeland. It was there that I learned about Jesus Christ for the first time, because the church didn't help me all those years in England. It didn't help me to know Christ. Jesus, Himself, said, "Search the Scriptures, Search the Scriptures." If Christ tells us to look at the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God, then why do we say, "Believe and don't Investigate/search out"?

Unfortunately, this is what we believe in the Orthodox church. Ah! Those things are for the Priest; these matters are for the Theologians. It is correct that the Theologians ought to know the Word of God. Even I had an opportunity to obtain a doctorate in Theology. And I can verify to you that the New Testament is the Word of God, and only there can one find the message of salvation.

In the Orthodox church we say, "you have to be baptized when you are young." When an infant is born, we all focus on baptism, baptism. The Apostle Paul said, "Jesus did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel. "The gospel. What is that?" The gospel is the most important message in the Holy Scriptures. The gospel is that we people, all of us, are sinners. As Paul says in the Epistle to the Romans that we are all fallen, "we have sinned, and we have come short of the glory of God." But, God has predetermined a way to save people: Through Jesus Christ, His Son, God the Son, indeed, was incarnated, He came into the world and He died on the cross to save His people.

Look! The Holy Scriptures are the only way one can know about Jesus Christ. Don't listen to what men simply say! You must read in the New Testament. We, Greeks, gave our language for the wondrous works of God to be recorded. But today, we close the Bible, we lift it up and we worship the Scriptures. God didn't give us the Scriptures so that we would place them up high and do the sign of the cross before them. God gave us the Holy Scripture, so we would investigate, to search out in study; to read it. Because, only in this way can we become close to Christ, and to know Him personally, and to believe what God says about the gospel.

The gospel of God is precious. Paul says, "I am in chains. I am in prison but rejoice because the Word of God is not chained." The Word of God goes forth and accomplishes all that God wants. In the old Testament, Isaiah tells us that the Holy Scripture "will not return void" when it is proclaimed.

I want to tell you that I know you may have heard various things both in and outside of the church. You may have seen, here in America different churches: Protestant churches, Evangelical churches. I have not come to speak about the church, which is the correct church. But I have come to proclaim to you, to show you what is the gospel – the gospel of Jesus Christ. If I had one thing to tell you today, it is: "get

the Holy Scriptures. Read the Bible, especially the New Testament.” There are several translations today declaring the majestic works of God in both neo-Hellenic or Demotic Greek. Those who know the original text can show you exactly what is the true gospel. And I tell you what the Apostle Paul says, “that by grace are you saved.” If one is to be saved, to have their sins forgiven it is to be by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. And, “not by works,” says Paul, “so that no one may boast.” This is the important point. If we claim, “we have done something for God, either being baptized, or attending liturgies, or giving money to the church, or anything else we have done ourselves, “this is not enough,” says God; “It isn’t sufficient!”

The precious blood of Christ was shed to save sinners. Look to Him. The Word of God says, “that he was lifted-up,” just like an account from the Old Testament where Moses placed a serpent up high. And when the Israelites had been bitten by snakes, they were to look to the serpent up high, and God saved the ones who looked. And the Word of God says, you must be regenerated/born-again so that you can look to Jesus Christ as lifted-up, so that the believer will not perish, be lost forever, but will have eternal life.

For the Glory of God, in the Name of Christ, and through the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Goodbye.