

385 NOW can you see why I'm so excited?

This is longer than normal, but you can skim read the first third – we know it all too well.

What do Bible-believing Christians say is the gospel?

Bible-believing Christians typically define the gospel as the central message of the Bible: the good news that God saves sinners through Jesus Christ.

Here's how they often break it down:

- God is holy and created us for relationship with Him.^[Gen 1:1]
- All humans have sinned and are separated from God.^[Rom 3:23]
- Jesus Christ, God's Son, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to take the punishment for sin, and rose again.^[1Cor 15:3-4]
- Salvation is a gift – not earned by good works but received by grace through faith in Jesus.^[Eph 2:8-9]
- Those who repent and trust in Christ are forgiven, made right with God, and given eternal life.^[Rom 10:9]

Bible-believing Christians emphasize that the gospel is not about religious performance or moral improvement – it's about trusting in what Jesus has already done. As one writer put it, 'The gospel doesn't tell us how to live our lives, it introduces us to a person.'

What does N T Wright say is the gospel?

N T Wright, a prominent NT scholar, describes the gospel not simply as a message about personal salvation, but as a royal announcement: that 'the crucified and risen Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again according to the Scriptures, has been enthroned as the true Lord of the world'.

For Wright, the gospel is deeply rooted in the story of Israel and the fulfilment of God's promises. It's not just about going to heaven when you die – it's about God's kingdom breaking into the world through Jesus, bringing justice, restoration, and new creation. He emphasizes that Jesus' resurrection is the launch of God's new world, and that Christians are called to live as citizens of that kingdom now.

So in Wright's view, the gospel is cosmic in scope: it's good news for individuals, yes – but also for communities, societies, and the entire creation.

How does Wright's view differ from traditional evangelical interpretations of the gospel?

Wright's view of the gospel differs from traditional evangelical interpretations in both scope and emphasis.

1. The gospel as royal announcement vs. personal salvation:

Traditional interpretations often focus on the gospel as the message of how individuals can be saved from sin and go to heaven – emphasizing personal repentance, faith in Jesus' atoning death, and assurance of eternal life. Wright doesn't deny this, but he reframes the gospel as the royal announcement that Jesus is Lord – that through His death and resurrection, God's kingdom has been inaugurated on earth.

2. Cosmic restoration vs. individual escape:

Wright emphasizes that the gospel is about God's plan to renew all creation, not just save individual souls. He sees Jesus' resurrection as the beginning of new creation, and the gospel as the call to participate in that renewal – socially, politically, and environmentally.

3. Israel's story and the fulfilment of scripture:

Whereas traditional views often treat the gospel as a timeless message detached from history, Wright roots it deeply in the story of Israel. He argues that Jesus fulfils the promises made to Israel, and that understanding this narrative is essential to grasping the gospel's full meaning.

4. Justification and the role of the church:

Traditional Protestant theology often centres on justification by faith as the heart of the gospel. Wright sees justification as important, but as a result of the gospel – not the gospel itself. He also places strong emphasis on the church's role as the community through which God's kingdom is made visible in the world.

In short, Wright shifts the focus from 'How do I get saved?' to 'What has God done in Jesus, and how does that change everything?' It's a broader, more narrative-driven vision that invites believers into a mission of transformation.