

## 404 Good news? about what? about who?

After an eye-opening high-speed ride through Acts (maybe a new article?), I took a break. ‘OK, now let’s do a similar overview of Romans.’ But I only managed four verses! Here’s Tom Wright’s translation. (Yes, I *know*: translations vary according to the overall interpretation that the translator has of the Scriptures: they can tend to stress certain ideas.)

**1** Paul, a slave of the Messiah, King Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for God’s **good news**, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the sacred writings — <sup>3</sup> the **good news** about his son, who was descended from David’s seed in terms of flesh, <sup>4</sup> and who was marked out powerfully as God’s son in terms of the spirit of holiness by the **resurrection** of the dead: Jesus, the royal Messiah, our Lord! (*my emphasis*)

I was using an electronic version of *NT for Everyone*, and I had highlighted all the words relating to ‘gospel/good news’ and ‘raised/resurrection’, because I was trying to check what part resurrection plays in the gospel. (It was having done that with Acts, that had so blown me away.) Anyway, here again, the gospel is **about** Jesus, his historical origin, and – because of the **resurrection** – **who he is**, the royal Messiah, our Lord! – not the sort of definition of ‘the gospel’ that you’d get if you asked Christians generally today.

So I asked my summarising friend, Copilot: ‘What, for Christians, is the good news?’

In Christianity, ‘the good news’ refers to the Gospel – the joyful proclamation that **through** Jesus Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, God offers salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life **to** all who believe. (*my emphasis*)

Sorry if I’m a stuck record, but the ‘good news’ has become, not *who Jesus is*, but what **we** get **through** Jesus. Yes, we only get that salvation because of who Jesus is and what he has done for us, but the good news is now mainly focused on what **we** receive.

So I asked Copilot what Jesus would say the good news was:

According to Jesus, ‘the good news’ (the Gospel) is the announcement that God’s **kingdom** has arrived, bringing forgiveness, healing, and restoration through Him.

Yes, OK, I know that what AI gives you is the views of the people who shout loudest(!), but, as last time, it has highlighted some clear differences in focus. Although I’m not going to draw conclusions from it, I shall certainly be looking into this more widely, maybe at the references to ‘salvation’ in statements e1–6 and ‘kingdom’ in j1–8? <sup>[401,402]</sup>

If I were to (but I won’t!) ask AI, ‘What do Christians understand by salvation?’ and/or ‘What do Christians understand by God’s kingdom?’, I’d have a happy hunting ground of ideas, often conflicting and mutually exclusive. We need some focus here, and I think I know where to find it... [to be continued].

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