

Statement on Evangelism

Biblical Meaning

Euangelion

In order to accurately understand the biblical usage of the Greek term *euangelion*, which means *good-message*, it is necessary to understand the concept of *evangelism* as demonstrated in Paul's own ministry and writings. Paul viewed the redemption of the lost as primarily the sovereign working of God through *the good-message of God* (Rom 1:1, 15:16), that is, the message of the first-advent of Jesus Christ, His incarnate ministry and the cross for the forgiveness of sins. Accordingly, Paul never devoted his time and energy to an unevangelized community beyond a purposed initial effort to declare *the good-message of God* that was *prophesied beforehand in the Holy Scriptures* (Rom 1:2). These efforts are represented in the NT by the Greek verb *katangellō* (Acts 13:5, 38, 17:3, 23), which means *to declare*.

The idea of laboring without end to convince the lost of their need for a Redeemer was not a part of Paul's mindset about ministry. He gave it a good go, *declaring (katangellō) the good-message of God*. (Acts 13:16-31) Toward those who rejected this declaration, he shook the dust from his sandals and moved on. (Acts 13:51) He focused most of his time and energy *discipling* those to whom the Father had given faith to believe in the Son. (Acts 13:43, 14:21)

Paul viewed his primary ministry as discipling believers to become *spiritually-spoken worshipers* to God (Rom 12:1). In other words, he disciplined *the called of Jesus Christ* (Rom 1:6)—those men and women who were *foreknown and predestined* (Rom 8:29) by God to become *the children of God* (Rom 8:15-16) through His sovereign impartation of faith to believe *the good-message of God*—by teaching them his *good-message* (Rom 2:16, 16:25) about *the good-message of Christ* (Rom 1:9, 16, 15:19, 16:25) In short, the *good-message of Christ* is *spiritually-spoken worship* to God.

This introduction represents Paul's three vernacular uses of the immensely important Greek term *euangelion*. See the full discussion on the biblical usage of *euangelion* in the EXPOSITION titled "Tri-vernacular Usage of εὐαγγέλιον" in *Romans the Lost Gospel*, in the exegetical footnote for Rom 1:9.

Evangelism

In this regard, Paul consistently used the Greek verb *euangelizō* relative to his apostolic ministry as *one being sent* for the purpose *to bring the good-message*, that is, his *good-message to the children of God* about *spiritually-spoken worship*, his teaching to believers about the *good-message of Christ*, *for it is the power of God into salvation* (Rom 1:16). The English word *evangelism* is derived from *euangelizō*. In support of Paul's usage, *euangelizō* was consistently used in the Septuagint (the Greek OT, LXX) from the Hebrew verb *basar* (בָּשַׂר), which means *to bring good news* (e.g. 1 Sam 31:9, Jer 20:15) or *to bear good news* (e.g. Ps 95:2, Isa 60:6). In light of the biblical usage of *euangelizō*, the church's historical imperative to believers, that their primary role and responsibility is for the so-called *evangelism of the lost*, is a misnomer.

The NT concept of *evangelism* is primarily every church leader's role and responsibility to disciple *the children of God*, all whom God has given faith to believe, to walk according to *the obedience from faith* (Rom 1:5, 16:26), that is, giving *spiritually-spoken worship* to God,. This *spiritually-spoken* form of worship is represented in the NT by the Greek verb *keiroussō* (Rom 10:8, 14-15), which means *to proclaim*. *Spiritually-spoken worship* is *the proclamation of Christ* (Rom 16:25), that is, the proclamation

of the *rhema of Christ* (v. 10:8, 17). In this realm of organic spiritual union in *Christ Jesus* (Rom 6:11, 23, 8:1, 39), Jesus Himself disciplines His followers into what they must do. (John 6:45, Acts 9:6)

Discipleship

The Greek verb for discipling is *matheiteuō*, which means to teach (Matt 28:19, Acts 14:21) or to be taught (Matt 13:52, 27:27). A disciple is any believer who subjects to *the obedience from faith into the good-message of Christ*. Any believer who will not be subjected to such *good-message* teaching is not a disciple. Jesus said that no one can be His disciple without a dying-to-self. (Luke 14:26-27, 33) As Paul taught, this dying-to-self is the prerogative of Spirit-regenerated believers according to *the obedience from faith*. (Rom 6:3-6, 1Cor 15:31, 2Cor 1:9, 7:3, Eph 5:14, Col 2:11-12)

One does not teach, per se, the unredeemed reprobate. One can only declare (*katangellō*) the cross to the unredeemed and observe what God will do. It is God who redeems *through the faith which is from Jesus Christ* (Rom 3:22), by His working, those whom He has *foreknown and predestined* to become *the children of God*. This is *forensic* justification. Even then, discipleship cannot begin until the believer's faith is sufficient to become subjected to the biblical teaching that is according to *the obedience from faith*, in order for God to be the one justifying the disciple who is just from the faith which is from Jesus (Rom 3:26), which is the "*according to election*" *end-purpose of God* (Rom 9:11). This is *sanctifying* justification.

In short, believers do not *make disciples*. Only God makes disciples, after which a mature believer may disciple those believers to whom God has given sufficient faith to be disciplined according to *the obedience from faith into the good-message of Christ*. This is an important distinction about the Christian faith that has not been well understood.

Biblical Story

Opposition from Within

Paul wrote that *the knowledge of God is manifest in them, for God manifested it in them*. (Rom 1:19) His indirect objects in this statement (*in them*) were the Jewish-Christians in the early church who were in active opposition to his *good-message* teaching about *the good-message of Christ*. In other words, he wrote here concerning those Jewish-Christians who actively opposed *spiritually-spoken worship* to God. Accordingly, this statement can be used by the church to discern among her members, *the called of Jesus Christ*, knowing both the disciples of Jesus Christ according to *the obedience from faith* and the disobedient children of God according to their active opposition to the disciples.

Both groups, the obedient *from faith* and the disobedient, will outwardly demonstrate their faith to believe in *the good-message of God*, that is, acceptance of the cross into the forgiveness of sins, *forensic* justification. God's visible revelation of faith to believe *the good-message of God*, faith into *forensic* justification, is a part of *the righteousness of God revealed in the good-message of Christ* (Rom 1:17) having been spoken by the obedient *from faith*. In other words, concerning redemption of *the children of God*, which is celebrated by public confession and water baptism, their faith is *the revealed righteousness of God*, a direct observable fruit of *the good-message of Christ* having been spoken by the disciples of Christ.

This is Paul's primary meaning in Rom 1:17-19. The spoken *rhema of Christ* is for the building up of the body of Christ (e.g. Eph 4:12), which is for both the divine strengthening of faith in the children of God and the divine giving of faith for the redemption of new believers.

But the disobedient children of God will outwardly demonstrate their active opposition to *the good-message of Christ*, dissent toward *the obedience from faith*, that is, de facto denial of the empty grave into resurrection life, *sanctifying* justification. God's visible revelation against active opposition to *the obedience from faith*, active opposition to *sanctifying* justification, is also a part of *the righteousness of God revealed in the good-message of Christ* (Rom 1:17) having been spoken by the obedient from faith. In other words, concerning God's response to active opposition to *the good-message of Christ*, *the wrath of God is revealed against every impiety and injustice of men, those suppressing the truth in injustice* (Rom 1:18) *in the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God* (Rom 2:5). This *revealed wrath of God* is a direct observable fruit of *the good-message of Christ* having been spoken by the disciples of Christ.

This is Paul's secondary meaning in Rom 1:17-19. The spoken *rhema of Christ* contains divine judgment against those who would actively oppose the dominion of Christ. In this manner, *the 'from nature' uncircumcision* [who is] *fulfilling the law, shall judge you, the 'through the letter and the circumcision' transgressor of the law* (Rom 2:27), *the transgressor of the law* being the man who would actively oppose *the good-message of Christ*. Such transgressors were Paul's concern when he exhorted the Ephesian elders, "*I know that after my departure savage wolves will enter into your midst, not sparing the flock, and from you yourselves men will arise, speaking perversions, out of which to draw away the disciples after themselves.*" (Acts 20:29-30) Also when he exhorted the church in Rome, "*But I urge you, brethren, to watch out for those who are the dissension and the cause of stumbling alongside the doctrine you learned doing, and stay away from them; for such ones do not serve in our Lord, the Christ, rather the 'of themselves' appetite, and through cunning speech and flattery they deceive the hearts of the innocent.*" (Rom 16:17-18)

God's Sovereignty

The short statement concerning faith to believe *the good-message of God* in part B of Rom 1:19—*for God manifested it in them*—serves as an absolute refutation of the semi-Pelagian Arminian theology of *universal atonement*, which wrongly purports that God has granted to all of humanity via the cross and universal prevenient grace the ability to freely choose to believe. Paul states emphatically here that no one is able to believe *the knowledge of God* as revealed in *the good-message of God* except that God Himself, by the power of the Holy Spirit to regenerate a spiritually-dead human heart, *manifested it in them* with the gift of faith.

Jesus affirmed God's sovereignty when Peter confessed to Him, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" *And Jesus answered and said to Him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal [this] to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'*" (Matt 16:17-18) God's sovereignty in making disciples was demonstrated on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), when 120 disciples of the fledgling church at Jerusalem spoke the *rhema of Christ* as the Holy Spirit gave utterance to them, and God caused the devout Jews in the streets of Jerusalem to hear, each one in his own native dialect, about His mighty deeds. God made 3000 new believers that day. No man or woman is able to believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins except that God himself *manifested it in them*.

Paul considered it particularly important to his *good-message* teaching, that is, his argumentation on behalf of *the good-message of Christ*, to drive home this theological concept of *limited atonement* and *limited prevenient grace* relative to those men who were actively opposing his *good-message*, even while believing in *the good-message of God*. Paul was saying to them, in so many words, "You get no credit for your faith, *for God manifested it in you!*" For a discussion on the single use in LXX and three uses in

Romans of the Greek verb *phoneroō*, which means *to manifest*, see the EXURSUS titled “Vernacular Tri-usage of φανερώω” in *Romans-The Lost Gospel*, in the exegetical footnote for Rom 3:21.

The short statement in part B of Rom 1:19—*for God manifested it in them*—also gives great insight into Paul’s likely response to the modern Church imperative for so-called *evangelism of the lost*, if he were confronted with it, which obligates every believer to “*Go and Make disciples!*” (Matt 28:18), that is, to witness to the lost so that one’s missionary works would be ostensibly credited with saving the lost. Paul certainly viewed it as every believer’s responsibility to live devout lives and to witness for Christ—that is, as opportunity presents itself in the course of day-to-day life, to declare (*katangellō*) to the lost the cross, *the good-message of God*—so that those who are *foreknown and predestined* by God to become *children of God* might believe. But Paul never viewed it as the believer’s responsibility to *make* a new believer.

In other words, Paul understood that the righteousness of God as faith to believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins is only possessed by the believer as a sovereign working of God to *manifest it in them*. God’s prevenient initiating grace to believe is limited to those whom He has foreknown and predestined, without which no one is able to be baptized into *the repentance for the forgiveness of sins* (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3, 24:47, Acts 5:31), that is, into *forensic* justification. But for those who would believe, Paul then viewed it as his primary responsibility to *disciple*—that is, teach—the new believers his *good-message* according to *the obedience from faith into the good-message of Christ*, that is, into *sanctifying* justification.

Two examples from Paul’s missionary journeys will illustrate God’s two-phased plan for salvation. The first phase is God’s initiating near-plan for *forensic* justification by His own sovereign working. The second phase is God’s perfecting final-plan for *sanctifying* justification by a cooperative working, wherein the child of God would become unified into the death of Christ so that by God’s working the child might become unified into the resurrection life of Christ. (Rom 6:5)

Evangelizing in Athens

At Athens in circa 50AD, early in his second missionary journey, Paul witnessed to a distinctly Gentile audience. Accordingly, he spoke in terms they might understand (Acts 17:22-31), even quoting their own Greek poet relative to the children of God, “*For we are His offspring.*” (Acts 17:28). He did not quote from the Hebrew Scriptures or speak of Jewish history. Paul stated, “*Indeed, then, after overlooking the times of ignorance, God, τα [to His children], now commands among men, everyone everywhere, to repent.*” (Acts 17:30)

Unfortunately, to the detriment of good exegesis, translations and commentaries of Acts 17:30 have completely ignored Paul’s stand-alone Greek plural-neuter article *ta* (underlined), which was Paul’s direct object, his cryptic accusative reference to the plural-neuter *children of God* (*ta tekna theou*). The proper exegesis of this stand-alone plural-neuter article (*ta*) then renders the masculine phrase *everyone everywhere* as an anaphoric reference to the neuter-plural *children of God*, being that these children are *men* (and women), thus inferring the predestined *children of God*, who are among *every* nation of men in this world.

These predestined *children of God* also become the anaphoric referent of the phrase in Acts 17:31, *granting faith to all* (πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν). Here again, entirely missing the point of Paul’s nuanced argument, English translations have grossly altered Paul’s meaning in Acts 17:31, treating his actual limited granting of *faith*, which related only to the predestined *children of God*, instead as a universal principle of general revelation for all mankind.

Thus, having first gone astray of Paul's meaning in Acts 17:30, English translations have translated *faith* (*pistin*) as *proof* (e.g. NAS, NET, NIV) or *assurance* (e.g. NKJ, NRS). But Paul's actual meaning was simply to establish for this Greek audience that God is sovereignly in charge of the impartation of *faith* for those He has *foreknown and predestined* to become *children of God*. He was speaking in terminology and concepts that his Greek audience might understand. This sovereign impartation of *faith* by God is the realm of *forensic* justification. Luke narrates that Paul gained several new converts at Athens before moving on to Corinth.

Evangelizing in Antioch

Paul's first recorded sermon occurred in the Jewish synagogue at Antioch of Pisida in 47AD, during his first missionary journey. Luke's narration of this event provides the best illustration of authentic *evangelism* in the entire NT. There Paul provided a distinct declaration (*katangellō*) of the *good-message of God* (Acts 13:17-31) and his *good-message* teaching about the *good-message of Christ* (Acts 13:32-42). In this early demonstration of his own vernacular, Paul began his *good-message* teaching with the verb *euangelizō*, stating, "*We bring you the good-message*" (Acts 13:32), and he finished by quoting Hab 1:5 (Acts 13:41) as a preemptive foretelling of the scoffing opposition that would be inspired in some of these Jews by what they would observe next. While Luke does not state specifically as part of a narrative continuum what came next, he does provide a very enigmatic and rather remarkable clue.

Directly following Paul's quote of Hab 1:5, Luke wrote, "*Out of their exiting from being, they were exhorting [them] in the interval between the Sabbath to speak with them these rhemata.*" (Acts 13:42 SWB) There Luke craftily began with the participle of a rarely used lemma of the verb *exeimē* (ἐξεῖμι), which means literally *to exit being*.¹ It seems quite apparent that Luke planted this word as an enigmatic portal into his full meaning. This lemma was used only one time in the canonical LXX (Exo 28:35) in reference to Aaron *exiting being* from *the holy place before the Lord*. Luke, likely with help from Paul, expected that the diligent and learned reader would find the meaning behind this word-clue in Exo 28:35.

Aaron's Mosaic Covenant ministry to the Lord in Exo 28:35 was a foreshadow of the New Covenant ministry to the Lord that was demonstrated by Paul and Barnabas in the closing segment of their teaching before the synagogue in Antioch. Luke used this rare word to indicate that Paul and Barnabas had both just completed a verbal demonstration of *worship to God in their spirits* (Rom 1:9) following Paul's admonition of Hab 1:5 to all in the synagogue who would witness this demonstration. In other words, Paul and Barnabas had just "*exited being*" in "*the holy place before the Lord.*"

Discipling in Antioch

Luke also wrote that Paul and Barnabas spent the intervening days between the Sabbath exhorting the people to *speak with them these rhemata*. Luke used the Greek verb *laleō* (λάλέω), which means *to speak* with primary emphasis on the act of speaking, as opposed to using the more common Greek verb

¹ There are two lemma forms for ἐξεῖμι. Lemma 1 is the commonly used 3p-sg form, ἐξεστίν (*exestin*, means "*to be proper*" or "*to be permissible*" or "*to be possible*"; 8 LXX, 32 NT, 3 Paul). Lemma 2 is the rare use of ἐξεῖμι in its root meaning, which is the NT hapax legomena used here in Acts 13:42. This is the gen-masc-pl-pres-act participle ἔξιόντων, a NT hapax legomena of ἐξεῖμι (*exeimē*, means "*to exit being*"; 3 LXX, 1 NT), which was used only one time in the canonical LXX (Exo 28:35) in reference to Aaron "*exiting being*" in "*the holy place before the Lord.*" Classical Greek usage indicates ἐξεῖμι was used in reference to "*being from or of (son or descendant of).*" (Georg Autenrieth, *A Homeric Dictionary for Schools and Colleges*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891.)

legō (λέγω), which means *to say* with primary emphasis on the content of speech. The content of their speaking during this week was *these same rhemata—the rhema of Christ*, Rom 10:8, 17—that had been spoken by both Paul and Barnabas during that particular state of being that they had *entered into being* and then *exited out of being* as a concluding demonstration of Paul’s *euangelizō* teaching in the synagogue about *the good-message of Christ*. In other words, after prefacing with the cautionary exhortation followed by a quotation of Hab 1:5, Paul and Barnabas finished the teaching by demonstrating *worship in Spirit and Truth* (John 4:23-24), speaking *the rhema of Christ*, the *obedience from faith* into *spiritually-spoken worship*.

Yet, this rare use of *exeimē* (*to exit being*) appears also to be a cryptic double entendre, both spiritual and physical; spiritual as Paul and Barnabas first exited the spiritual holy of holies and physical as they would then exit the physical synagogue of the Jews at Antioch. In this manner, Luke likely used *exeimē* both transfigurationally and temporally. In Acts 13:43 Luke wrote, “*And being loosed from the synagogue, many of the Jews and God-fearing proselytes, those speaking with them, followed with Paul and Barnabas. They [Paul and Barnabas] were persuading them to remain in the grace of God.*” (SWB) For the reader who has no ears to hear about the spiritual things of Paul’s *good-message*, Luke allowed for an alternative meaning that could be inferred in the physical.

In any case, Luke revisited the act of speaking [these rhemata] *with them* as an emphatic repetition of the discipling efforts of Paul and Barnabas during this week at Antioch, *exhorting them* (Acts 13:42) and “*persuading them*” (Acts 13:43), wherein *speaking* [these rhemata] *with them* is appositional to *remaining in the grace of God*. But Luke added another feature to this act of speaking. In Acts 13:43 he used the rare compound verb *pros-laleō* (προσ-λάλέω), which means *to speak toward*. This compound verb is formed with the prefixed preposition *pros* (*toward*) and the simplex verb *laleō* (*to speak*). The idea being emphasized by Luke with *pros-laleō* (*to speak toward*) is that this act of speaking was a directional act of speaking toward God.

Opposition from the Jews

Luke’s account of Paul’s Galatian ministry then provided the progression of Jewish opposition to Paul’s *good-message* teaching and discipling, which was foretold by Hab 1:5 and wherein the Jewish scoffers systematically incited both Jewish and Gentile opposition against Paul and Barnabas, first driving them out of Antioch, then attempting to stone them at Iconium, and finally actually stoning Paul in Lystra and dragging him outside the city gate where he was left for dead. Paul also made specific reference to these same persecutions in 2Tim 3:11.

Having been left for dead at Lystra and after being surrounded by Barnabas and the new disciples, Paul arose and re-entered Lystra, presenting himself to all as being alive and well. Then Paul and Barnabas went on to Derbe where, likely as a result of Paul’s re-appearance in Lystra after being left for dead outside of the city, remarkably there was no opposition to Paul’s *good-message* teaching and discipling. Thus, Paul and Barnabas were able to tarry in Derbe in order to disciple the new believers to *walk in the Spirit* (Gal 5:16), that is, *teaching them to keep all things, as much as Christ Jesus enjoined* [His apostles]. (Matt 28:20 SWB) After finishing their work of discipleship at Derbe, Paul and Barnabas returned in progression to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to disciple the new believers. Luke mentioned no opposition against them in these return visits.

Discipling the Sufficient in Faith

At Derbe, Luke narrates, “...*after bringing the good-message (euangelizō) and after discipling (matheiteuō) the sufficient...*” (Acts 14:21 SWB) Here Luke used two temporal adverbial participles, the object of *euangelizō* being a destination, Derbe, and the object of *matheiteuō* being new believers, the

new converts to *the good-message of God*. Paul brought his *good-message* teaching about *the good-message of Christ* to Derby and, after first *declaring* (καταγγέλλω) *the word of God* (e.g. Act 13:5), that is, *the good-message of God*, he and Barnabas tarried in Derby and disciplined the new believers according to Paul's *good-message* teaching about *the good-message of Christ*. Notably, Luke selected an adjective with an adverbial force of *sufficiency* or *competency*, *hikanos* (ικανός), which means *sufficient* or *adequate* or *competent*. He used this adjective as a noun to represent the object of the temporal adverbial participle of *matheiteuō* (*discipling*). An important point of exegesis is present here; *hikanos* (ικανός) does not mean *many*.

Most English translations gloss the Greek *hikanos* (ικανός) as *many*, but this translation fails on two fronts, with the net result that the author's actual meaning is completely altered in translation. First is that the frequently used Greek adjective *polous* (πολύς), which means *many* or *much*, is virtually an exclusive choice when the author simply wishes to express the idea of a *large quantity*; i.e. a high count = *many*, or a high volume = *much*. Luke did not use *polous* (πολύς) here because a *large quantity* was not his intended object for the temporal adverbial participle of *matheiteuō* (*discipling*). He was not concerned here with the numerical count of the new converts at Derbe. They might be few or they might be many; body count was not Luke's context.

Second, the adjective *hikanos* (ικανός) is a very nuanced word wherein the idea of *quantity* is present by necessity, but only for the purpose that the idea of *quality* might then be emphasized, thus inferring the qualitative idea of *adequacy* or *sufficiency*. For example, the qualitative emphasis is clearly present in 2Cor 2:16, where Paul used *hikanos* (ικανός) to express a certain *quality* of an uncertain quantity, that is, *sufficient in ability*. (Moulton-Milligan, p. 302) In other words, an uncertain quantitative aspect is present in *hikanos* (ικανός), but only for the sake of articulating a certain qualitative aspect of the uncertain quantity. The uncertain quantity that is present in Luke's use of *hikanos* (ικανός) in Acts 14:21 is the faith of the new converts. Yet, while the actual measure of their faith is known only to God (e.g. Rom 12:3, 6), Luke wanted his readers to know that the faith of these new converts was *sufficient*, such that it was apparent to Paul and Barnabas that these men and women were both Spirit-regenerated genuine children of God and sufficiently strengthened in faith to become disciples of Jesus Christ, that is, *the sons of God* (Rom 8:14-15).

Paul and Barnabas only *discipled* those in Derby, regardless of whether they were many or few in number, who were first made *sufficient* or *competent* by God in terms of faith, *as God divides to each one a measure of faith* (Rom 12:3). These *hikanos* (ικανός) new believers, having first been quickened by God sufficiently—that is, given a measure of faith both to believe *the good-message of God* as publicly *declared* (*katangellō*) to them by Paul and Barnabas and to *proclaim* (*keiroussō*) *the good-message of Christ*—were then privately *discipled* by Paul and Barnabas by teaching them Paul's *good-message* according to *the obedience from faith*. This is the full picture of true *evangelism*.

Great Commission

Luke's brief accounting of Paul's ministry at Derbe illuminates the true meaning of what Jesus was commanding in the so-called *Great Commission*, Matt 28:19-20. The two present-active participles in this passage, *baptizing* and *teaching*, are representative of Paul's two-dimensional theology of justification: 1.) **baptizing** as a sign pointing to God's sovereign unilateral initiating grace *through the faith which is from Jesus Christ* (Rom 3:22), that is, *forensic* justification; and 2.) **teaching** sound doctrine concerning God's cooperative ongoing grace *from faith* (Rom 3:26), that is, *sanctifying* justification. In other words, we do not make disciples. God makes the disciple and we teach the disciple.

With this understanding, the imperative portion of this passage is better translated as “***Go and Disciple!***” In this manner, the eleven apostles were commanded to **Go!** forth into all nations, *declaring* (*katangellō*) publicly about *the good-message of God* (Rom 1:1, 15:16; the first advent of Jesus) to any and all men and women who might listen, and then **Disciple!** within the believing community by **baptizing** the new believers and then **teaching** those among the new believers who have been made sufficient (*hikanos*; e.g. Acts 14:21) in faith by God “*to keep all things, as much as I enjoined in you*” (Matt 28:19), that is, to *proclaim* (*keiroussō*) *the good-message of Christ* (Rom 1:9, 16, 15:19, 16:25), *the rhema of Christ* (Rom 10:8, 17), *spiritually-spoken worship* (Rom 12:1). In short, God makes disciples and we are to disciple these disciples, so that they might become one with the resurrected Jesus Christ. This is evangelism (*euangelizō*).

Paul’s *good-message* teaching is for the purpose that *the children of God*, those who are *sufficient* (*hikanos*) in faith, might walk according to *the obedience from faith into the good-message of Christ*. Concerning the Great Commission, it is vital to bear in mind that Matthew’s narrative had just revealed in Matt 28:16 that this commission was given only to the eleven apostles of Jesus, and that some among these apostles doubted. In other words, they were *weak in faith* (Rom 14:1-2). Their faith was not yet *sufficient* (*hikanos*). Their example should give hope to every believer.

Conclusion to Romans

Paul’s second explicit reference to *the good-message of God* is found in Rom 15:16, and his third explicit references to both the verb *euangelizō* as pertains to his *good-message* teaching and *the good-message of Christ* are found just ahead in Rom 15:19. Accordingly, the passage in Rom 15:13-16 and the following passage in Rom 15:17-21 serve as a final summation in Romans of the three *euangelions*, a replication of the three *euangelions* in his formal introduction to Romans. Remarkably, the Introduction in Rom 1:1-19 and the Conclusion in Rom 15:13-21 serve together as inclusio bookend passages for the entirety of Paul’s argument in Romans. Both of these passages serve to emphasize the tri-vernacular usage of *euangelion* as Paul’s primary thesis for Romans.

In the first half of the conclusion, Rom 15:13-16, the accusative phrase “*the good-message of God performing the priestly service*” must be understood as a parenthetical prerequisite to Paul’s ability to perform his apostolic ministry “*to be a temple-servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles.*” For this reason, SWB contains this clause inside of an em-dash parenthesis:

¹⁵Yet I wrote rather boldly to you out of a part of *my good-message* as one reminding over you through the grace which was given* to me by God ¹⁶for me to be a temple-servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles—the *good-message of God performing the priestly service*—in order that the offering of the Gentiles might become well-acceptable, being sanctified in the Holy Spirit. (Rom 15:15-16 SWB)

In other words, Paul was acknowledging here that the indwelling Holy Spirit is the Father’s gift associated with the gift of faith to believe *the good-message of God*, thereby performing the priestly service for both the conviction of sin and the leading (cf. Rom 2:5, 10:15) of Spirit-regenerated believers into *spiritually-spoken worship*. This is the very reason that Paul used two very rare cultic terms in Rom 15:16 (underlined in the text above), calling himself a subordinate *temple-servant* (*leitourgon*) and attributing *performing the priestly service* (*hēprougounta*) to the Holy Spirit, the One sent by the Father (John 14:26) for *the good-message of God* and the One sent by the Son (John 15:26) for *the good-message of Christ*. Paul nails this meaning for the New Covenant Spirit-administration of the law of God in the final clause of Rom 15:16, that the New Covenant administration is lead by the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, most all commentaries on Romans wrongly treat this phrase as if Paul was referring to himself as the one performing priestly service. For example, Cranfield explicitly correlates this phrase with the previous clause, writing, “*hēprourgounta to euangelion tou theou* indicates the activity wherein Paul’s *leitourgēa* consists. That [sacrificial offering] is impossible here is obvious.” (Cranfield, p. 2756) Cranfield et al are unable to understand that the sacrificial offering is *spiritually-spoken worship* (Rom 12:1) because their heels are dug into a one-dimensional theology of justification. English translations tend to paraphrase Paul’s words in order to render a meaning akin to typical commentary interpretations like the one above. Note below that the dynamic paraphrase of NET/NIV and the free translation of NLT conflate the text in order to force Paul’s words to correlate between these two clauses, the latter explaining the former, that they both pertain only to the ministry of Paul:

NAS: to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, ...

NET: to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. I serve the gospel of God like a priest, ...

NIV: to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God.

NKJ: that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, ...

NLT: I am a special messenger from Christ Jesus to you Gentiles. I bring you the Good News ...

NRS: to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, ...

Romans-The Lost Gospel has clearly established Paul’s two-dimensional theology of justification. In this light, Paul’s meaning is quite straight forward, even if his prose is elliptic. Accordingly, faith to believe *the good-message of God* is the realm of *forensic* justification, wherein the man or woman who has been predestined by God to become a child of God is sovereignly granted the gift of faith to believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. To these, God grants the indwelling Holy Spirit for the ministry of conviction of sins, in order that the Holy Spirit might perform the priestly service of leading the child of God (Rom 2:5, 8:15) according to his or her *obedience from faith into the good-message of Christ*, that is, into *sanctifying* justification.

Nevertheless, in Rom 15:16 Paul likely also had in mind his role in declaring (*katangellō*) *the good-message of God*—that is, the Hebrew OT Scriptures (Rom 1:2)—to the Gentiles. This *declaration* was demonstrated in the first half of Paul’s first recorded sermon, Acts 13:17-31. Then, for those to whom God gave faith to believe *the good-message of God* (*forensic* justification), Paul could then perform his *temple-service to Jesus Christ*, teaching them his *good-message*, so that the Gentile believer’s might become *obedient from faith to proclaim* (*keiroussō*) the *spiritually-spoken good-message of Christ* (*sanctifying* justification). This *euangelion-teaching* (*euangelizō*) was also demonstrated in Paul’s first recorded sermon, Acts 13:32-41.

Summary of *Euangelion*

Paul’s *good-message* is for the purpose that the Spirit-regenerated believer, having believed *the good-message of God*, might then be “*given over into this type of teaching and to obey from the heart*” (Rom 6:17), thus becoming a willing conduit between heaven and earth, speaking the *spiritually-spoken good-message of Christ*; that is, becoming a vessel emanating a pleasing *fragrance of Christ to God* (2Cor 2:15), speaking *the rhema of Christ*. Having established in sufficient detail Paul’s tri-vernacular usage of *euangelion*, it is thereby fitting that this *Statement on Evangelism* should conclude with a brief summary:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. The <i>euangelion</i> of God | <i>katangellō</i> (to declare) | The Hebrew Scriptures on first advent. |
| 2. The <i>euangelion</i> of Christ | <i>keiroussō</i> (to proclaim) | Spiritually-spoken rhema intercession. |
| 3. The <i>euangelion</i> of Paul | <i>euangelizō</i> (to bring and teach) | Doctrine about the <i>euangelion</i> of Christ. |