

III. Survey Notes on the Content of the New Testament

A. The Broad Concept

1. The Gospels: these are not really biographies but sketches of the life of the Lord with emphasis on the ministry and vicarious work of Jesus.

2. The Acts: the work of the Holy Spirit in the establishment of the church...historical analysis more than example or instruction.

3. The Epistles: foundation of Christian doctrine with application to life and practice.

4. The Revelation: completion of the Divine program and the foreseen end of the revelatory process.

B. Survey notes on the Gospels

1. Some general notes:

a. the term "gospel".

In general usage the Greek is translated into the Anglo saxon "God spell" meaning the "god story". It occurs in the LXX (2 Sam4 ;10) as a word to tell the character of a message but, in New Testament times at least, it had become identified with the message itself.

The verb behind the noun occurs in Isaiah 61:1 (52:7, etc) in the LXX and this citation is seen as being completed in the New Testament in Luke 4:18. Working from this basis, Thayer notes that the gospel is "the glad tidings of salvation through Christ, the proclamation of the grace of God manifested and pledged in Christ."

We usually note, however, that "preaching glad tidings" was but part of the Lord's ministry and, although at the present we identify all of his work with the term, there should be some distinction in the various aspects of His work. We note that the ministry of Jesus is threefold: preaching, teaching, and helping and in these he fulfilled the threefold role of prophet, priest, and king. The preaching ministry was essentially the Gospel thrust (although we do not divorce the teaching ministry from this) and it was largely a proclamation of grace. In this regard there is a further defining of the "gospel" along the lines of intent and understanding. We delineate the following: