Gospel Word Study

Study Notes

“Gospel” is the word typically used to summarize Christian belief, often connected to phrases like, “Jesus died for your sins.” It’s one of the most familiar religious terms—maybe too familiar. We’ve created a word study video all about rediscovering “gospel” in its original context in order to bring us to a more complete understanding today. Did you know the word “gospel” occurs over a hundred times in our modern Bibles? Since we couldn’t include all these instances in one 5-minute video, we have created these video notes to point you in the right direction as you explore for yourself how this important word functions in Scripture.

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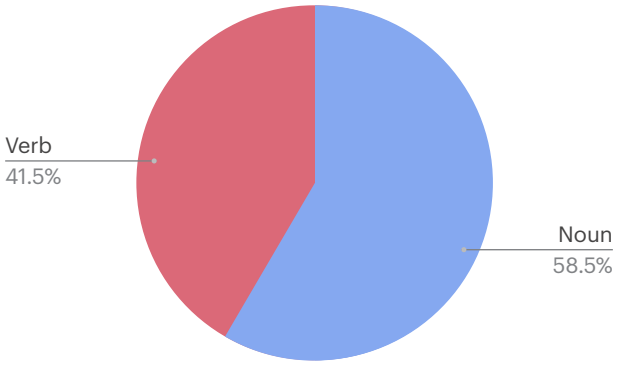
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Section 1: Statistics on Gospel in the New Testament

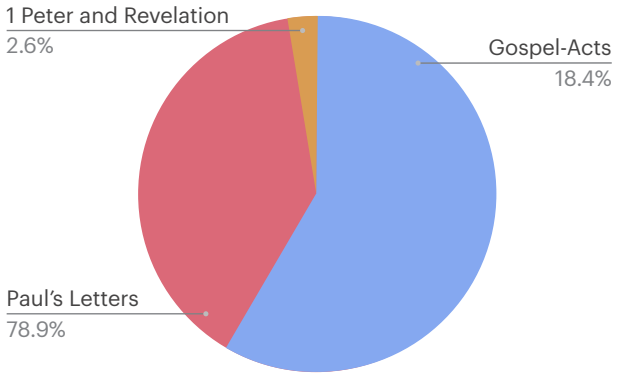
Let's think back to elementary school grammar lessons. A verb is a word that describes an action of the object/noun. An object/noun is a person or thing that performs or is affected by the action of a verb. Why does this matter? "Gospel" is an interesting word in that it functions both as a verb and object/noun. Take a look at the stats:

Percentage of Noun/Verb Use

The word "gospel" is used as both a noun and a verb. 41.5 percent of the time it is used as a verb, and 58.5 percent of the time it is used as a noun. Let's look first at a breakdown of the New Testament to see where "gospel" is used as a noun.



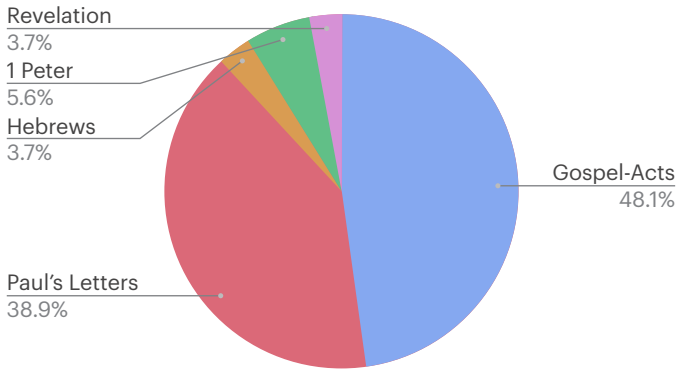
Gospel as a noun (ἐυαγγελιν) occurs 76 times



When the word "gospel" occurs as a noun in the instances above, there are often verbs—or actions—associated with it. We can learn more about the meaning of the Gospel when we look at the verbs for which "good news" is the object. Take a look at the variety of phrases which demonstrate the diverse interactions one can experience with the Gospel:

"Announce"	Matthew 4:24; 9:35; 24:14; 26:13; Mark 1:15; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:9
"Proclaim"	1 Corinthians 9:14
"To speak"	1 Thessalonians 2:2
"To bear witness to"	Acts 20:24
"Trust in"	Mark 1:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:4
"Not ashamed of"	Romans 1:16
"Disobey"	Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17
"To minister as a priest"	Romans 15:16
"To fulfill"	Romans 15:19
"To give birth through"	1 Corinthians 4:15
"To announce good news"	1 Corinthians 15:1; 2 Corinthians 7:7; Galatians 1:11
"To alter the good news"	Galatians 1:7
"To be entrusted with"	Galatians 2:7

Gospel is used as a verb (εὐαγγελιζειν) 54 times



The word "gospel" can also function as a verb like in the examples above. For example, you can "gospel" the kingdom of God or "gospel" the Messiah Jesus. What nouns receive the action of "good news"? Take a look at the various objects of the verb "to good news," which help us see the content of what is being proclaimed:

"The message/word"	Acts 8:4
"The kingdom of God"	Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:6; Acts 8:12
"The Messiah Jesus"	Acts 5:42; 8:35; 11:20; Galatians 1:16
"Jesus and the resurrection"	Acts 17:18
"The good news"	1 Corinthians 15:1
"The faith"	Galatians 1:23

Section 2: The Variety of Phrases in The Old Testament

The word "gospel" is typically associated with Jesus and the New Testament. However, the New Testament authors carefully built upon their understanding of the word "gospel" from the Old Testament. So what did the word originally mean?

In the Hebrew Scriptures, "gospel" translates the verb *basar* (בשר) and the noun *besorah* (בשר). In both the Septuagint and New Testament, these words are translated as *euangelizein* (εὐαγγελιζειν) and *euangelion* (εὐαγγελιον), meaning "good news."

A Royal Announcement

Often, the word is associated with kingship, like when the Philistines heard of the death of Saul, or to describe God's saving work toward his people.

"They... sent them throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news"	1 Samuel 31:9
"Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets..."	2 Samuel 1:20
"Let my lord the king receive good news, for Yahweh has vindicated you from all who rise up against you"	2 Samuel 18:31
The inauguration of Solomon as king is "good news"	1 Kings 1:42
Deliverance from the Arameans is called "a day of good news"	2 Kings 7:9
"I have proclaimed good news of [Yahweh's] righteousness in the great congregation... speaking of your faithfulness and deliverance"	Psalm 40:9-10
A chorus of women sing the "good news" of God's victory over his enemies	Psalm 68:11-12
"Announce the good news of his deliverance." "Deliverance" is from the Hebrew word *yeshua*, or ישועה, which translates to the names Joshua and Jesus.	Psalm 96:2

A Royal Rescue

As the story of the Old Testament develops, it becomes clear that the kings who rule over the people of Israel are as corrupt and violent as the rulers of any other nation. This is a problem because God had promised Israel's ancestors that through this nation all other nations would find God's blessing. And so in the Old Testament book of Isaiah, the prophet announces "good news" that Israel's divine king, the Creator of all things, was going to come in person and become the new king of Israel. But first, Israel's corrupt kings had to be done away with, and this happened in the exile of the Israelites to Babylon (check out the story in 1-2 Kings). While it may look like the distorted kings of Israel or Babylon are running the world, in reality there is good news: Israel's God is the true king of the world, and he's coming one day. In the following verses of Isaiah, the "gospel" refers to this royal and future hope.

"Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; lift it up, do not fear..."	Isaiah 40:9
"...and to Jerusalem, 'I will give a messenger of good news'"	Isaiah 41:27
"How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"	Isaiah 52:7
"They will bring gold and frankincense, and will bear good news of the praises of the LORD"	Isaiah 60:6

Section 3: The Variety of Phrases in The New Testament

The word "gospel" gains fuller meaning as we arrive in the New Testament. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are labeled "good news"—the equivalent to a royal proclamation that would make national news. This helps us see Jesus as more than a backwoods prophet but rather as the true king of the world. Observe how the word functions in a variety of ways in the following stories.

The announcement of John and Jesus' birth:

"I am Gabriel... and I was sent to speak to you and to announce good news"	Luke 1:19
An angel: "I announce to you good news of great joy, which is for all the people, that today there is born for you a deliverer, the Messiah, in the city of David"	Luke 2:10-11

John the Baptist's message:

"Challenging with many other things, he announced the good news to the people"	Luke 3:18

Jesus' message:

"Announcing the good news of the kingdom"	Matthew 4:24; 9:35; 24:14
"To good news the kingdom of God, for this I was sent"	Luke 4:43; 8:1; 16:17
"This good news will be announced"	Matthew 26:13
"Announcing the gospel of God"	Mark 1:14
"Teaching the people in the temple and announcing good news"	Luke 20:1
"Lose your life on account of me and on account of the good news"	Mark 8:35; 10:29
"The poor have good news announced to them"	Matthew 11:5; Luke 7:22; Isaiah 61
"The Spirit of the Lord has anointed me to announce good news to the poor"	Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61

The literary account of Jesus:

"The good news of Jesus Messiah, son of God."	Mark 1:1

The message of the apostles:

“Teaching and announcing the good news”	Acts 5:42, 15:35
“Good news-ing the message”	Acts 8:4
“Announcing the good news about the kingdom“	Acts 8:32
“Announcing the good news about Jesus”	Acts 8:35
“The message which [God] sent to the sons of Israel, announcing good news of peace through Jesus Messiah, who is the Lord of all”	Acts 10:36
Peter: “God chose that through my [Peter’s] mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the good news and trust”	Acts 15:7
Paul: “...I will finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to bear witness to the good news of the grace-gift of God”	Acts 20:24

Paul’s letters:

“The good news of God”	Romans 1:1
“The good news of his son”	Romans 1:9
“My good news and the announcement of Jesus Messiah”	Romans 16:25
“The light of the good news of the glory of the Messiah”	2 Corinthians 4:4
“The obedience to your confession of the good news of the Messiah”	2 Corinthians 9:13
“Another good news”	Galatians 1:6
“To announce the good news of the faith”	Galatians 1:23
“The truth of the good news”	Galatians 2:5; Colossians 1:5
“They did not walk straight with the good news”	Galatians 2:14
“The good news about your deliverance”	Ephesians 1:13
“He announced good news of peace”	Ephesians 2:17
“To announce the good news of the inexhaustible wealth of the Messiah”	Ephesians 3:8
“The open-secret”	Ephesians 6:19
“Defense and confirmation of the good news”	Philippians 1:7

“Live publicly in a manner worthy of the good news”	Philippians 1:27
“To contend in the good news”	Philippians 4:3
“The good news of the glory of the God who is blessed”	1 Timothy 1:1
“Illuminated life and incorruptibility through the good news”	2 Timothy 1:10
“Remember Jesus Messiah, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to my good news”	2 Timothy 2:8

Section 4: Summary

Believing and responding to the gospel is at the core of what it means to follow Jesus. This often too-common term is steeped in rich meaning from the Hebrew Scriptures that both Jesus and the New Testament authors pick up on. Through studying these examples, we see the gospel as the declaration of a new kind of king who comes to usher in God’s kingdom rule on earth.

Jesus was—and is—that king. He declared himself to be the fulfillment of the entire story of the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus is enthroned as king through his life, death, and resurrection.

It’s this good news that we are called to both receive and enact through our lives. We’re invited to become part of this kingdom by trusting Jesus and participating in acts of new creation through the same sacrificial love demonstrated to us. When we live like Jesus really is king of the world, the gospel becomes more than a casual announcement; it becomes the best news in the world.