**Euangelion**

A. The noun *euangelion* has the following cognates:
   1. *Euangelizo* (ἐὐαγγέλιζω) (verb), “to bring or announce good news, proclaim the gospel.”

B. Classical
   1. Liddel and Scott list the following meanings (Greek-English Lexicon, New Edition, page 705):
      a. Reward of good tidings, given to the messenger; to make a thank-offering for good tidings; to crown one for good news brought
      b. Good tidings, good news
   2. The verbs *euangelizomai*, *euangelizo* and the adjectival noun *euangelion* and the noun *euangelos* are all derived from the *angelos*, “messenger,” or the verb *angello*, “to announce.”
   3. The verb *euangelizomai* is a middle form and is found in Aristophanes.
   4. The verb *euangelizo* is a form not encountered until later Greek.
   5. The noun *euangelion* is found as early as the writings of Homer.
   6. *Euangelos*, “messenger” is one who brings a message of victory or other political or personal news that causes joy.
   7. In the Hellenistic period the word can also mean one who announces oracles.
   8. Similarly the verb *euangelizomai* means “to speak as a messenger of gladness, to proclaim good news,” and in the religious sense “to promise.”
   9. *Euangelizomai* also gains a religious meaning when it is used in connection with the appearance of a “divine man,” whose approach is announced with joy (e.g. of Apollonius of Tyana in Philostratus, VA 1, 28, 3rd century A.D.).
   10. The original classical definition of the noun *euangelion* was a “reward for bringing a good message.”
   11. But the term also stood for the message itself.
   12. It became a general term for the triumphant message from the battlefield, and it was used for joyous political proclamations or for personal messages of good news.
   13. It was a technical term for “news of victory.”
   14. The messenger appears, raises his right hand in greeting and calls out with a loud voice: *chaire…nikomen.*
   15. By his appearance it is known already that he brings good news.
   16. His face shines, his spear is decked with laurel, his head is crowned, he swings a branch of palms, joy fills the city, *euangelia* are offered, the temples are garlanded, an *agon* is held, crowns are put on for the sacrifices and the one to whom the message is owed is honored with a wreath.
   17. Such messages are seen as a gift of the gods.
   18. When the message had been received, sacrifices are offered to them out of gratitude but also in order to hold the gods to their gift.
   19. *Euangelion* is chiefly used in connection with oracles (i.e., the promise of some future event) and in the imperial cult it acquired a religious meaning.
   20. In the latter sphere news of the divine ruler’s birth, coming of age, or enthronement, and also his speeches, decrees and acts are glad tidings which bring long hoped for fulfillment to the longings for the world for happiness and peace.

21. Ulrich Becker, Professor of Theology at Hanover, quoting from Barker’s work entitled From Alexander to Constantine: Passages and Documents Illustrating the History of Social and Political Ideas 336 B.C.-A.D.337, documents the decree of the Greeks in the province of Asia in 9 B.C. marking the birthday of Augustus (September 23rd) the beginning of the civil year: “It is a day which we may justly count as equivalent to the beginning of everything—if not in itself and in justly count as equivalent to the beginning of everything—if not in itself and in its own nature, at any rate in the benefits it brings—as much as it has restored the shape of everything that was failing and turning into misfortune, and has given a new look to the Universe at a time when it would gladly have welcomed destruction if Caesar had not been born to be the common blessing of all men...Whereas the Providence (*pronoia*) which has ordered the whole of our life, showing concern and zeal, has ordained the most perfect consummation for human life by giving to is Augustus, by filling him with virtue for doing the work of a benefactor among men, and by sending in him, as it were, a saviour for us and those who come after us, to make war to cease, to create order.
everywhere... and whereas the birthday of the God (Augustus) was the beginning for the world of the glad tidings (in the Greek the Evangel) that have come to men through him...Paulus Fabius Maximus, the proconsul of the province...has devised a way of honouring Augustus hitherto unknown to the Greeks, which is, that the reckoning of time for the course of human life should begin with his (Augustus') birth.” (Colin Brown’s Dictionary of New Testament Theology, volume 2, page 108).

22. The proclamation of this euangelion does not merely herald a new era, but it actually brings it about.

23. The proclamation is itself the euangelion, since the salvation it proclaims is already present in it.

24. To Christians the emperor was a false lord (kurios) who claimed divine rule, something which belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

25. In the same way, the euangelion of the emperor cult was a false gospel which opposed the gospel of Christ.

26. Linguistically, however, the noun euangelion and its cognate verb euangelizo formed a background for the preaching of Jesus Christ as Lord.

27. Therefore, when Paul spoke of “another gospel,” a very literal sense can be understood because he lived in an age of “gospel preaching.”

28. When Christians used the term euangelion, they were speaking the familiar language of the day.

29. The emperor in Rome was considered divine by nature.

30. His power was considered to extend to men, to animals, to the earth and to the sea.

31. Nature belongs to him, wind and waves are subject to him.

32. He works miracles and heals men.

33. He is the savior of the world who also redeems individuals from their difficulties.

34. He has appeared on earth as deity in human form.

35. He is the protective god of the state of Rome and his appearance is the cause of good fortune the whole kingdom.

36. Extraordinary signs accompany the course of his life.

37. They proclaim the birth of the ruler of the world.

38. A comet appears at his ascension to power and at his death signs in heaven declare his assumption into the ranks of the gods.

39. Because the emperor was considered more than a common man, his ordinances are glad messages and his commands are sacred writings.

40. What he says is a divine act and implies good and salvation for men.

41. The emperor cult of Rome was inspired by Satan and is a counterfeit gospel.

42. Euangelion in the sense of good news itself belongs to a later period.

43. Outside of Christian literature the neuter singular form first appears with this meaning in a papyrus letter from an Egyptian official of the 3rd century A.D.

44. In the plural it is found in a calendar inscription from Priene about 9 B.C.

45. It is not until the writings of the apostolic fathers that there is a transition to the later Christian usage of euangelion as referring to a book which sets forth the life and teaching of Jesus (Justin, Apology i. 66).

C. LXX

1. The noun euangelion never appears in the singular form in the LXX.

2. The plural form of the word is used to render the Hebrew b’sorah (ב’סרה), “to reward for good news” is found in 2 Samuel 4:10.

3. In Samuel 18:20, 22, b’sorah could be translated “good tidings.”

4. It is rendered euangelia by the LXX translators.

5. This derivative of euangelion does not appear in the NT.

6. The noun never functions in a religious capacity in the LXX.

7. This fact indicates that the NT term euangelion is derived from the Greek usage rather than the Hebrew or more precisely from the language of the imperial cult.

8. The only difference between the euangelion of the NT and the imperial cult is the content of the message.

D. NT

1. The noun euangelion appears 80 times in the NT.

2. The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon lists the following (page 257):
   a. A reward for good tidings
   b. Good tidings
      (1) The glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently also of Jesus, the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom
(2) The glad tidings of salvation through Christ; the proclamation of the grace of God manifested and 
pledged in Christ; the gospel
(3) As the Messianic rank of Jesus was proved by His words, His deeds and His death, the narrative of 
the sayings, deeds, and death of Jesus Christ came to be called euangelion
3. The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised lists the following (page 172):
   a. Glad tidings, good or joyful news
   b. The Gospel, doctrines of the gospel
   c. Metonymically, the preaching of, or instruction in, the Gospel
4. Bauer, Gingrich and Danker list the following (A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other 
Early Christian Literature, pages 317-318):
   a. Absolutely,
      (1) to euangelion
   (2) In general dependent on another noun, the true message of the gospel, the hope kindled by the 
gospel, faith in the gospel, authority over (i.e. to preach) the gospel, beginning (of the preaching) 
of the gospel
   (3) In certain combinations
   b. In combination
      (1) With adjective
      (2) With genitive; objective, subjective
   c. The transition to the later Christian usage in which euangelion means a book dealing with the life and 
teaching of Jesus
5. Louw and Nida define euangelion, “the content of the good news (in the NT a reference to the gospel of 
about Jesus)” (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, volume 2, page 
413).
6. Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, “euangelion originally denoted a reward for good tidings; 
later, the idea of reward dropped, and the word stood for "the good news" itself. The Eng. word "gospel," i.e. 
"good message," is the equivalent of euangelion (Eng., "evangel"). In the NT it denotes the "good 
tidings" of the kingdom of God and of salvation through Christ, to be received by faith, on the basis of His 
expiatory death, His burial, resurrection, and ascension, e.g., (Acts 15:7; 20:24; 1 Pet. 4:17). Apart from 
those references and those in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, and (Rev. 14:6), the noun is confined to 
Paul's epistles. The apostle uses it of two associated yet distinct things, (a) of the basic facts of the death, 
burial and resurrection of Christ, e.g., (1 Cor. 15:1-3); (b) of the interpretation of these facts, e.g., (Rom. 
2:16; Gal. 1:7,11; 2:2); in (a) the "gospel" is viewed historically, in (b) doctrinally, with reference to the 
interpretation of the facts, as is sometimes indicated by the context. The following phrases describe the 
subjects or nature or purport of the message; it is the "gospel" of God, (Mark 1:14; Rom. 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor. 
11:7; 1 Thes. 2:2,9; 1 Pet. 4:17); God, concerning His Son, (Rom. 1:1-3); His Son, (Rom. 1:9); Jesus 
Christ, the Son of God, (Mark 1:1); our Lord Jesus, (2 Thes. 1:8); Christ, (Rom. 15:19), etc.; the glory of 
Christ, (2 Cor. 4:4); the grace of God, (Acts 20:24); the glory of the blessed God, (1 Tim. 1:11); your 
salvation, (Eph. 1:13); peace, (Eph. 6:15). Cf. also "the gospel of the Kingdom," (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14); 
an eternal gospel," (Rev. 14:6). In (Gal. 2:14), "the truth of the gospel" denotes, not the true "gospel," but 
the true teaching of it, in contrast to perversions of it. The following expressions are used in connection 
with the "gospel": (a) with regard to its testimony; (1) kerusso, "to preach it as a herald, e.g., (Matt. 4:23; 
Gal. 2:2) (see PREACH); (2) laleo, "to speak," (1 Thes. 2:2); (3) diamarturomai, "to testify (thoroughly)," 
(Acts 20:24); (4) euangelizo, "to preach," e.g., (1 Cor. 15:1; 2 Cor. 11:7; Gal. 1:11) (see B, No. 1 below); 
(5) katangello, "to proclaim," (1 Cor. 9:14); (6) douleuo eis, "to serve unto" ("in furtherance of"), (Phil. 
2:22); (7) sunathleo en, "to labor with in," (Phil. 4:3); (8) hierourgeo, "to minister," (Rom. 15:16); (8) 
pleero, "to preach fully," (Rom. 15:19); (10) sunkakopatheo, "to suffer hardship with," (2 Tim. 1:8); (b) 
with regard to its reception or otherwise: (1) dechomai, "to receive," (2 Cor. 11:4); hupakouo, "to hearken 
to, or obey," (Rom. 10:16; 2 Thes. 1:8); pisteuo en, "to believe in," (Mark 1:15); metastrepho, "to pervert," 
(Gal. 1:7). Note: In connection with (a), the apostle's statement in (1 Cor. 9:23) is noticeable, "I do all 
things for the Gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof," RV, for the incorrect KJV, "that I might 
be partaker thereof with you."
7. Euangelion has a broad semantic range in the NT.
8. Nevertheless, this variety should be examined and understood in light of the basic concept that the gospel is 
a message of victory.
9. According to its Greek heritage, euangelion describes a good report from the battlefield, a message of victory.

10. This is its essential meaning in the NT.

11. The NT use of euangelion does not derive from the LXX.

12. The gospel is God’s victorious proclamation of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection, which was in accordance to His promise in the OT Scriptures (1 Co. 15:4).

13. Depending upon the context in which the word is used it can refer to:
   a. The gospel presentation to the unbeliever.
   b. The communication of Bible doctrine to the believer.
   c. A combination of the two, i.e., doctrine in general.

14. The gospel is the message of Christ’s victory over the enemy, Satan and the kingdom of darkness.

15. The strong one (Satan) has been conquered by the One (Christ) who is stronger (cf. Mt. 12:29).

16. Therefore, the good news of Christ’s victory is to be proclaimed to the spiritually poor (unregenerate) who are the captives of Satan who will be set at liberty by its power (cf. Lk. 4:18; Rm. 1:16).

17. Euangelion appears 5 times in Matthew and 9 times in Mark.


19. The other 60 instances are attributed to Paul.

20. In about half of these Paul used euangelion in an absolute sense meaning without any qualifying definition.

21. For the apostle Paul, there was only one gospel.

22. Paul’s ministry was distinctively that of the propagation of the gospel.

23. Unto this gospel he was set apart (Rm. 1:1) and made a minister according to the grace of God (Eph. 3:7).

24. His special sphere of action was the Gentile world (Rm. 16:16; Ga. 2:7).

25. Since Paul accepted the gospel as a sacred trust (Ga. 2:7), it was necessary that in the discharge of this obligation he speak so as to please God rather than man (1 Tm. 2:4).

26. The divine commission had created a sense of urgency in Paul where he cried “woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Co. 9:16).

27. For the sake of the gospel Paul was willing to become all things to all men (1 Co. 9:22-23).

28. No sacrifice was too great since eternal issues were at stake.

29. By the time wrote his epistles, the word was a technical term for the Christian proclamation.

30. In the Synoptic Gospels euangelion and euangelizo denote the message and teaching of the Lord Jesus.

31. The Christian message of salvation is both a proclamation of and an interpretation of the facts of salvation history.

32. Thus, one word, euangelion, summarizes the Christ event:
   a. His incarnation
   b. His earthly life
   c. His death on the cross
   d. His resurrection
   e. His ascension
   f. His session

33. Euangelion is the message of God’s action in Christ, executed within the framework of human history, which is the appeal trial of Satan-what God has done to make salvation possible.

34. The proclamation of this message of Christ’s victory is the creative Word of God in action.

35. It changes spiritual darkness into light and death into life.

36. It is the power of God for salvation (Rm. 1:16).

37. This same word becomes active in those who trust it (1 Th. 2:13).

38. The gospel receives many qualifying descriptions:
   a. “Gospel of the kingdom” (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14).
   b. “Gospel of Jesus Christ” (Mk. 1:1)
   c. “Gospel of the kingdom of God” (Mk. 1:14).
   f. “Gospel of His Son” (Rm. 1:9).
   g. “Gospel of Christ” (Rm. 1:16; 15:19, 29; 1 Co. 9:12, 18; 2 Co. 4:4; 9:13; 10:14; Ga. 1:7; Phlp. 1:27; 1 Th. 3:2).
   h. “Gospel of God” (Rm. 15:16; 2 Co. 11:7; 1 Th. 2:2, 8, 9; 1 Pe. 4:17).
   i. “Christ’s gospel” (2 Co. 2:12).
39. In addition to the above qualifying descriptions, other phrases are used in the NT to describe the gospel.

40. The content of the message is "the preaching of the cross" (1 Cor. 1:18) and also the "witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4:33).

41. It is also called the "word of God's grace" (Acts 14:3), "the word of salvation" (Acts 13:26), "the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19), "the word of truth" (Eph. 1:13), "the word of faith" (Rom. 10:8), "word of life" (Phil. 2:16).

42. The main emphasis of the message is contained in the phrase "preach Christ" (cf. Acts 8:5; Col. 1:28).

43. The content of the gospel message is further explained in Romans 1:17 which states that "therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." 

44. Faith in Christ and not obedience to the Law brings righteousness.

45. Faith alone in Christ alone enables the justice of God to impute the righteousness of Christ to an individual.

46. It is the preaching of the gospel that provides an individual to exercise faith (Rom. 10:17).

47. Faith alone in Christ alone produces peace in the soul (Eph. 2:17; 5:16), confidence (Col. 1:23) and provides eternal life (Titus 1:1-3).

48. Believers are not to be ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 1:8) and are to govern their lifestyle by it (Phil. 1:27).

49. Believers are at times called on to endure undeserved suffering because of the gospel (Phil. 1:27), yet they must continue to proclaim it to the end of the dispensation (2 Tim. 4:2).

50. It alone heralds the sound words of truth, salvation, reconciliation, and grace (e.g. Acts 13:26; 14:3; 2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 1:13).

51. Only the gospel is the word of life (Phil. 2:16).

52. According to 1 Timothy 1:11, the Gospel contains teaching on the right use of the Mosaic Law.

53. It reveals the glory of God.

54. The Law has no validity for Christians, but it has validity for non-Christians on account of sins.

55. Evangelion was the central concept of Paul’s theology.

56. For Paul, evangelion was not only the content of what is proclaimed, but also the act, process and execution of the proclamation.

57. Content and process of proclaiming the message are one for him.

58. The gospel is not of human origin but the word of God (1 Pet. 1:12).

59. It was entrusted to Paul as an apostle and teacher (2 Tim. 1:11).

60. Its message of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, and descended from David (2 Tim. 2:8) is not limited to a single, past event, but rather is experienced as a word charged with power in the present so that it cannot be fettered by human chains (2 Tim. 2:9).

61. This message of Christ’s victory at the Cross of Calvary produces regeneration and eternal life.

62. It brings peace (Eph. 2:17; 6:15) and incorporates both Jews and Gentiles under the Headship of Christ (Eph. 3:1-9).

63. It not only gives salvation but has “brought life and immortality to light” (2 Tim. 1:10).

64. The Gospel is the manifestation of divine glory in history.

65. It is the presence of Christ.

66. The gospel is divine power (Rom. 1:16) and as an instrument of the Holy Spirit it convicts (1 Th. 1:5) and converts (Col. 1:6).

67. Although it is good news, it is strenuously opposed by a rebellious unregenerate world (1 Th. 2:2).

68. Opposition to the message takes the form of opposition to the messenger (2 Tim. 1:11-12; Phil. 13).
69. Yet those who proclaim it must do so boldly (Eph. 6:19) and with simplicity (2 Co. 4:2), not with eloquence lest the cross of Christ be robbed of its power (1 Co. 1:17).

70. To those who refuse to respond to the gospel it is both foolishness and a stumbling block (1 C. 1:18 ff.), but to those who respond in faith it proves itself to be “the power of God unto salvation” (Rm. 1:16).

71. “Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David” (2 Tm. 2:8) may well stand as a summary of what the entire NT means by “gospel.”

72. It has to do with the Person of Christ, though with an equal stress on Christ’s saving work centered in the cross and resurrection.

73. The advent of salvation is depicted in the OT terms of promise and fulfillment (Rm. 3:21; 15:4-9; 1 Co. 10:11).

74. The present availability of that salvation is offered “by grace alone, through faith alone.”

75. The work of reconciliation is both complete meaning God in Christ has effected the salvation of the entire cosmos (2 Co. 5:19, 21) and incomplete meaning that God has entrusted the gospel to His servants who as ambassadors for Christ call men and women to accept all that has been accomplished (5:20).