

"That is the story  
- that man rebelled  
against God and  
God Himself made  
provision for man to  
come back to Him."

*Pastor Bola Ogedengbe*  
*The Gospel is a Story*

# SUMMARY

## *The Gospel is a Story*

In this maiden series of her programme 'Passion for God', Pastor Bola Ogendengbe teaches about the revelation that she received from God regarding the true sense of the Gospel – the Gospel is a story, the Gospel is a promise, the Gospel is a person and the Gospel is power. The French version of this teaching 'Qu'est-ce que l'Evangile?' has been the foundation of the ministry La Compagnie Theophile's evangelistic efforts, of which Pastor Bola is the founder.

Pastor Bola begins the first teaching 'The Gospel is a story' by relating a scene from one of her favourite television adaptations of a literary work, i.e. the 1995 BBC adaptation of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*. In it the character Mr Darcy asks for Elizabeth's hand in marriage to which she calmly agrees, which to the viewer who is unfamiliar with the full story from the beginning would seem like a classic girl meets boy love story. However Pastor Bola explains that for the person that has been following since the beginning this scene would take on a totally different meaning and cease to be a mere girl meets-boy love story, but become dramatic, electric and meaningful because he/she would have witnessed the evolution of their relationship.

Pastor Bola subsequently draws a parallel with the Gospel by explaining that in actual fact it is a story. When we (Christians) evangelise and start explaining salvation with the fact that Jesus saved us, the person listening to this would be prone to ask what they need saving from because they do not see the need for it.

Pastor Bola then makes reference to the book, "On the Incarnation "by St Athanasius, in which she highlights a quotation about the sorry state that mankind was in that necessitated the incarnation of the Word. This demonstrates that when we talk about salvation and the coming of Jesus we have to go back to Creation because that is when the story fully takes on its meaning. The person that does not take this into cognisance misses out on the power of the moment ( Jesus coming to the earth) because they are not aware of the events that preceded it.

Having drawn this parallel, Pastor Bola then begins to narrate the beautiful story of the Gospel. At Creation God created the elements of nature (sky, day, light, stars, animals etc),and then brought forth mankind with a heart of love and of desire for relationship. Genesis chapters 1-3 show the intense love that God has for humankind. The story of salvation actually began at creation when God made man in His own image and blessed him, which was God's original intent for humankind.

Pastor Bola relates that God contemplated His creation and saw that it was very good but something happened to destroy this goodness as today we witness wars, darkness and absolute wickedness in our world. God made humankind and settled and established them, and gave them dominion, authority and the capacity to rule, reign and function under His authority on the earth. He then prohibited them from touching a particular tree.

The devil then came in the form of a serpent to change things as they were too good to be true. He perverted man's thinking and insinuated that God was not fair and through his lies began to draw man's heart away from God thereby pushing them to rebellion and desire to usurp authority.

Consequently, they believed that God was not good and was being dishonest to them. They were manipulated into thinking that God was hiding something from them and were pushed into desiring to be like God, which was actually the devil's desire which he came to tempt man with. The consequences of their actions were devastating. The covering of glory that they had was removed and they felt vulnerable and began to hide. The free flow of love between man and God ceased to exist, and because of their submission to the devil they became separated from God.

This separation is the sorry state of mankind referred to by Athanasius earlier on in the teaching. As a result of their actions, they

- Lost their innocence and the glory of God;
- Lost their intimacy with God and sense of well-being;
- Lost their marital harmony;
- had to labour and toil; and
- were banished from the garden of God so as not to touch the tree of life and death and eat of the tree in their fallen state.

The situation became progressively worse and in the early chapters of Genesis we witness the first murder and the Bible says that the thoughts of men were directed continually towards evil (Genesis 6).

God then decided to remove mankind from the earth through a flood because His heart was so grieved at the extent of wickedness that existed.

However, God found Noah, a righteous man, and decided that Noah was going to be rescued along with his family ( and 2 out of every species of animals) and through him a new set of people were going to populate the earth. God allowed man to multiply after the flood and as they multiplied evil continued to multiply.

God decided to establish a covenant with humankind and found Abraham whom He called out of his environment and circumstances to work with him to bring forth a people through whom the seed of the woman would come - the One who would defeat the devil and enable Him to establish a relationship with human beings. Abraham followed God and although he was not perfect he remained faithful to God.

A series of Abraham's descendants followed through whom God sought after man. God used Joseph, to preserve his people from destruction when there was a famine. He had been sold as a slave in Egypt but God raised him to be a Prime Minister and he brought his family over and thus they were saved and remained in Egypt for many years.

God then found Moses and used him to bring His people out of slavery to the Promised Land ( although Moses did not enter) that He had spoken to Abraham about. For the very first time God laid a body of legislation to govern His relationship with humankind and a religion was formally established whereby man could relate to God.

The sacrifices, laws and religious rituals that God put in place were to temporarily remove the sins of mankind and enable God's people to have a relationship with Him.

These however had to be renewed annually and it was through God's goodness that He set up this system to allow man to continually relate to Him despite their sinfulness.

Nonetheless, God had a plan because something more significant and better was going to happen. Through the story of the people of Israel we see God's relationship with humankind and how He deals with them through the leaders.

After Moses' death, Joshua took over and he was succeeded by a whole series of leaders and the people would follow God and then walk away from God and suffer because of their disobedience and then come back to God.

Then God gave His people prophets of whom many made clear declarations and statements about the coming of the Messiah who would deliver and save the people and be a messenger of God. The prophets made declarations about different aspects of the Messiah (the prophet Isaiah declared that He would be born of a virgin, carry the sins of the people and be called Emmanuel; the prophet Micah declared that He would be born in Bethlehem; the prophet Jeremiah declared that there would be a massacre of children at the time of His birth; the prophet Zachariah declared that He would be betrayed ) whose fulfilment we see in the New Testament. The prophets challenged people to follow God.

od also gave His people kings beginning with Saul and David. David followed God with his whole heart and the Messiah would be a descendant of David. As the story continues and takes shape, expectation grew in the hearts of the people that One sent of God was going to come to deliver them.

Then one day an angel went to meet a young woman (Mary) and announced to her that she was going to have a baby that would save His people from their sins (Luke 1:26-38). She believed and accepted this word. An angel was also sent to the man (Joseph) that was going to marry the young woman to let him know that the child she was carrying was from God and that she had not been unfaithful.

All these events lead to the incarnation which the Apostle John makes reference to (John 1), in which he mentions that He who was God became a human being. The story continues with the coming of Jesus who lived on earth as a man.

As a child He was taken to be presented to God and on that occasion, two prophets, Simeon and Anne, recognised the baby as the Messiah and they prophesied over the baby. Jesus grew up and began to do ministry work. When He was baptised by the Apostle John, God revealed Himself and declared Jesus as His Son. Jesus went into the wilderness and was tempted by the devil and overcame that temptation. He lived His entire life showing the goodness of God to man (Acts 10:38).

Jesus lived and died to take away our sins because the sin that brought about the fall was committed by a human being and the sacrifice that would bring about salvation had to be done by a human being, which is the reason why Jesus came to earth.



He willingly accepted to go to the cross because something had to be done to pay the price of man's sins.

Jesus came, suffered and took our sins away on the cross (Isaiah 53), died on the cross and before ascending into heaven made a promise that we would receive the Holy Spirit. When we come to Jesus (Romans 10:9) we receive the Holy Spirit who takes us to another level in our walk with God. The story continues with the Apostles in the book of Acts who received the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Jesus into heaven. They then embarked on a life of extraordinary adventure of sharing the Gospel with their generation, which we too are called to. We are called to devoting our lives to share the good news with our generation regardless of the fact that people get upset because what we are giving them is good. This good news simply put is that God has come to man and man can be reconciled to God.

In conclusion, the story of the Gospel can be put this way: man rebelled from God and God Himself made provision for man to come back to Him. God Himself came to the earth to pay the price for the sin that humankind committed. Because of the price that was paid anyone that comes to Jesus can be set free and delivered from the sorry state in which we found ourselves that necessitated the incarnation.





# *Scriptures*



The Gospel is a story



### GENESIS 1:28 (HCSB)

“God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”

### GENESIS 3:1-6 (HCSB)

1 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden’?” 2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. 3 But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’” 4 “No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “In fact, God knows that when] you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

### LUKE 1:26-35 (NIV)

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,  
27 to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, favored woman! The Lord is with you."  
29 But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. 30 Then the angel told her: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call His name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end. 34 Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?" 35 The angel replied to her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy One to be born will be called the Son of God."

### LEVITICUS 17:11 (HCSB)

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

### JOHN 1:1-5 (HCSB)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. 4 Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men. 5 That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it.

### MATTHEW 26:53-54 (HCSB)

53 Or do you think that I cannot call on My Father, and He will provide Me at once with more than 12 legions[s] of angels?  
54 How, then, would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?"

### **ACTS 10:37-38 (HCSB)**

37 You know the events that took place throughout Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John preached: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were under the tyranny of the Devil, because God was with Him.

### **ISAIAH 53:1-10 (HCSB)**

1 Who has believed what we have heard? And who has the arm of the Lord been revealed to? 2 He grew up before Him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He didn't have an impressive former majesty that we should look at Him, no appearance that we should desire Him. 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from; He was despised, and we didn't value Him. 4 Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains; but we in turn regarded Him stricken,

struck down by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on Him, and we are healed by His wounds. 6 We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished Him for the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, He did not open His mouth. 8 He was taken away because of oppression and judgment; and who considered His fate? For He was cut off from the land of the living; He was struck because of my people's rebellion. 9 They made His grave with the wicked and with a rich man at His death, although He had done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully. 10 Yet the Lord was pleased to crush Him severely. When You make Him a restitution offering, He will see His seed, He will prolong His days, and by His hand, the Lord's pleasure will be accomplished.