

## **Evangelical Identity - From the 1st Century for the 21st Century**

Every generation since the evangelical revivals of the 18th century has asked the question ‘what does it mean to be an evangelical?’ The issue of evangelical identity is hotly contested today. Some want to redefine historic evangelical convictions about Scripture and salvation to fit with contemporary culture. Some want to define evangelicalism more narrowly to include convictions on secondary issues as well as primary doctrines. Others are embarrassed by the way that evangelicalism has become associated with particular political positions or parties. It is therefore essential that we define evangelicalism biblically, so that we know what it means to be an evangelical. The New Testament defines an evangelical as someone who believes and preaches the apostolic gospel. Those who reject or change this message cannot be accepted as evangelicals. Paul’s letter to the Galatians defines the gospel for us, so we can identify both those who are faithful evangelicals and those who are dangerous false teachers. Such clarity will enable us to guard the gospel in Europe in the next generation, build meaningful unity with fellow evangelicals, and protect churches and organisations from compromising the gospel.

**John Stevens** is the National Director of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, a family of over 500 Bible-centred churches in the UK, a position that he has held since 2010. Prior to this, he was one of the founding pastors of City Evangelical Church Birmingham, which was planted in the centre of the UK’s 2nd largest city in 1999. He was instrumental in starting the Midlands Gospel Partnership, was the course Director of the Midlands Ministry Training Course and is a visiting lecturer at Oak Hill Theological College. John is also one of the pastors of Christchurch Market Harborough, a church he helped to plant when he took up his current role. He was converted whilst studying law at Cambridge University, and after taking a post-graduate degree at the University of Oxford worked for 16 years as a University Lecturer, ending his career as Deputy Head of the Law School at the University of Birmingham. John is married to Ursula and they have four children aged between 12 and 7. He blogs at [www.john-stevens.com](http://www.john-stevens.com) on theology, church life and ministry, culture, and politics.

- I. Galatians 1v1-10: The Gospel & Evangelical Identity
  - A. The Gospel Is a Message Revealed by God
    1. The message revealed to Paul and the apostles
    2. The message revealed in the Scriptures
  - B. The Gospel Is a Message of Rescue from Sin Through the Finished Work of Christ
    1. Jesus’ death for our sins
    2. Our justification by faith alone

C. The Gospel Is a Message That Cannot Be Changed

1. We cannot add to the Gospel
2. We cannot take away from the Gospel

D. The Gospel Is a Message That Must Be Proclaimed

1. Paul preaches the Gospel
2. Paul seeks to please God and not man