

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

8, The Gospel Paradox in this sin-fallen world demands faith in Divine providence integral to the salvation of the world, progressive revelation recorded in Holy Scripture, predictive prophecy terminating in Christ's New Covenant Gospel, and promised gospel consummation to the glory of God, Part 8E

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Introduction: Offering a summary theme chapter by chapter of Mark's Gospel, the theme of chapter 8 is the Gospel paradox in this sin-fallen world with the several episodes of the chapter related to that theme:

vv. 1-10, Jesus' miraculous feeding of the 4,000+ people in gentile territory further demonstrates God's providence integral to the salvation of the world...

**The seeming contradiction is that it does not appear that the world is being saved...*

vv. 11-26, Jesus' healing a blind man in 2 stages provides another gospel object lesson about the need to understand the progressive revelation of Scripture in order to avoid the spread of false-teaching and corruptive influences that spread like leaven/yeast, e.g. the Pharisees and Herod's club...

**The seeming contradiction is that there are many false-teachings about who Jesus is...*

vv. 27-33, Jesus' commending Peter's Christocentric confession and consequently rebuking Peter's confusion from satanic influence establishes the gospel hermeneutic (i.e. interpretive method) of predictive prophecy terminating in Christ's New Covenant fulfillment...

**The seeming contradiction is that the Gospel appears to be a failure of weakness and defeat to the human desire for god-like power and control.*

Do you comprehend the Gospel Paradox? (cf. v. 31) When Jesus asks the disciples and us who the world says He is and then again who we say He is, straight talk about Jesus Christ has reached its climax. The solution to the Gospel paradox is Scripturally revealed by the content of the faith, what we must believe, and the means of resolve, i.e. saving-faith—the act of believing.

**The Gospel paradox is also a personal paradox of saving-faith.*

vv. 34-38, Predictive prophecy, like all Scripture, is not for private presumptive—make up your own—meaning, Jesus establishes the gospel hermeneutic (i.e. interpretive method) of predictive prophecy terminating in Christ's New Covenant fulfillment, i.e. promised Gospel consummation to the glory of God.

v. 34, Jesus makes the Gospel paradox a public message generally calling all kinds of people to follow Him...

- By Christ's example and Gospel commission (cf. Mk. 16:15-16, et al.) the open, public, general call of the Gospel is to be faithfully preached...
- The faithful preaching of the Gospel must admonish, i.e. urge by warning, to the way of the cross which is the heart of the Gospel paradox...

vv. 34b-35, Jesus applies the Gospel paradox to the way of the cross in terms of saving or losing one's life on account of what someone believes about who Jesus is...

- The desire for Christian discipleship is not a momentary or passing fad, i.e. short-lived enthusiasm, but an on-going [Gk. present tense] faith-commitment, "Whoever desires to come after Me...and follow Me"...
- **v. 34b**, The Gospel paradox becomes a personal paradox when saving-faith demonstrates Gospel power by the urgency of un-selfing, "let him deny himself..." [Gk. imperative mood]
- **v. 35**, The Gospel paradox becomes a personal paradox when saving-faith demands a shocking identification with Jesus' death, "and take up his cross..." [Gk. imperative mood]
"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

"But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Galatians 6:14)

vv. 36-37, Jesus makes it clear that the Gospel paradox is about a person's immortal soul now and beyond this world—a world with different values...

- **v. 36**, Jesus illustrates the idea of saving one's life by the false security of unlimited material profits in this world but which cannot buy off death, e.g. one of the most profound and soul-leveraging observations repeated in O.T Wisdom writings...
- **v. 37**, Jesus presses the human conscience with a rhetorical question about an ultimate exchange, e.g. "what is your soul worth?"—a haunting psychological bomb...

v. 38, Jesus' warning is for everyone because every generation from this sin-fallen world will be judged by the moral law of God at the Gospel consummation when Jesus the Son of Man returns as the glorified Son of God on that Great Day...

- Jesus links a person's life/soul now with the life/soul beyond this world based on one's disposition toward Jesus and His Gospel as being shameful and disgraceful (not to be confused with shyness, timidity), i.e. an embarrassment, a joke, a laughing—stock, mockery, ridicule—contemptuous and dismissive, i.e. worthless!
- Jesus' two-fold indictment of "adulterous and sinful generation" is a summary judgment from the 1st and 2nd tables of the Moral Law of God: adulterous/unfaithful to God per Commandments 1-4, and sinful by selfishly breaking Commandments 6-10...
- Jesus again identifies Himself with the prophetic Son of Man returning in promised exaltation to God's glory with commanding holy power and holy angels...

**So what is the urgency over the Gospel paradox in this sin-fallen world? This sin-fallen world is a storm of conflicted contradictions inciting hatred and violence repeatedly pounding like angry waves against the shore of God-conscious reality. i.e. warring against God.*

Jesus' Gospel paradox only appears to be a contradiction of weakness and defeat to the human desire for god-like power and control. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes..." (Romans 1:16) The Christian Gospel is only "good news" if it is God's good news which carries the soul beyond this life and world!

