

## 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 8C 3**

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**Introduction:** The Gospel narratives give samplings of the many and varied mighty works and teachings of Jesus Christ the Son of God Who came into this world to save sinners. Occasionally an account of Jesus' works or teaching is given in more details and within a story context providing Divinely revealed explanations and applications for the Christian believers' life of faith.

One such example is found in the Gospel of Mark 8:22-26, where Jesus restores the sight of a blind man by a two-stage healing which is the only recorded incident of a process healing by Jesus. In Mark's Gospel account there is repeated emphasis on the immediacy/urgency of Jesus' public ministry, so the inclusion of this account only by Mark of Jesus using a process stands out for attention and should be interpreted within the context of the story.

**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**

**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...

**vv. (10) 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 false-teaching and corruptive influences that spread like leaven/yeast, e.g. the Pharisees and Herod's club...

**vv. 11-13,** Jesus' spirit-emotional growl was given verbal expression over the Pharisees' disputes trying to bait and entrap Him with temptation to perform heavenly signs and this should be interpreted by the words and story in the wider scope of the Bible, noting that Jesus saw through their trickery...

**vv. 14-21,** Jesus' teachings and works are the ultimate validation (cf. Hebrews 1:1-4, John 14:8-12, et al.) of God's ordinary means of grace intended to accommodate basic human learning and understanding in the use of language and object lessons...

*\* Jesus expected His use of analogies in preaching and teaching to be mentally clear and connected to the theological subject of His lesson objective, e.g. leaven/yeast used not literally but figuratively...*

**vv. 22-26,** The details and description of Jesus restoring this blind man's sight illustrates the progressive revelation of Scripture focusing and clarifying God's way of salvation by faith-sight through the New Covenant Gospel.

**v. 22,** Mark records another change of geographical location to Bethsaida and another act of faith and prayer bringing a blind man to Jesus...

- More than one town/village was named Bethsaida, from the larger context of the story's geographical details it seems likely that this was Bethsaida-Julius close to where the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee, ill. one of the most used town names in the U.S. → Springfield...

**vv. 23a**, Jesus leads the blind man out of the town away from the crowds seeking some seclusion with His disciples...

➤ In the scope of Mark's Gospel account, Jesus is moving to a more private ministry with His disciples...

➤ That Jesus is using this occasion as an object lesson about the need for a more theologically focused faith does not detract from the personal compassion and attentiveness of Jesus for this blind man...

*\*Scripture reveals that God's providence is both individual and collective in His personal and attentive care for the Body of Christ, saving faith and sanctifying faith are not one dimensional, often a believer's testimonies of God's mercy, grace, and special providences are sanctified to help the faith of other believers.*

**vv. 23b-25**, By a curious process, Jesus restores this man's sight literally healing his physical blindness, but also as an object lesson about faith-sight becoming more clear and focused through the progressive revelation of Scripture...

➤ Jesus spit on the man's eyes, so spittle is not always used in Scripture as a demonstration of scorn and contempt, another example of avoiding forced interpretations, ill. a mother licking her thumb to clean her baby's face...

➤ Jesus asked the man if he could see anything with his eyes [Gk. β λ ε π ω /blep'-o], looking up the man describes unfocused vision of seeing blurry images of people moving around but as shapes like trees [Gk. ο ῥ ᾶ ω /hor-ah'-o; properly to *stare* at, that is, (by implication) to *discern* clearly (physically or mentally); by extension to *attend* to; by Hebraism to *experience*; passively to *appear*: - behold, perceive, see, take heed.]...

In the second stage of the process, Jesus again touches the man's eyes with His hands so the result is that the man's vision is clear and focused to see near and far [Gk. ε ' μ β λ ε π ω /em-blep'-o; to *look on or in*, (physically) to *observe*, *focus*, or (mentally) to *discern* clearly: - behold, gaze up, look upon, (could) see... τ η λ α υ γ ω ~ς /tay-low-goce; adverb; in a *far shining* manner, that is, *plainly*: - clearly.]

*\*By the comparison of Scripture from progressive revelation, the description this man gives of his restored sight suggest that the object lesson is not about regeneration, e.g. opening the eyes of someone born blind, but about sanctification, e.g. restoring and improving vision. This is the same way the transition from Old Covenant to New Covenant sanctifying faith is described, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embracing them and confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Hebrews 11:13)*

*"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face." (1 Corinthians 13:12)*

*"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:22-25)*

*"...while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:18)*

**v. 26**, Jesus ordering this man to avoid returning to the town is not a gag order, but better understood as a ministry directive, cf. 5:19...

