

Parson to Person
2 Corinthians 4 – Part 3
(Blinded from the Light)

“Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.

And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, ‘I believed and therefore I spoke,’ we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 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).

Our Gospel

Paul wrote, *“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing...”*

The Gospel referred to herein should be understood as the Gospel we preach today. It is the Gospel of Grace—with direct connection to the Gospel of the Kingdom.

1) The Gospel of Grace

The Gospel of Grace is the Good News of the salvation being offered to all men through the perfect/ finished work of Jesus Christ. The simple fact that an individual may be saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, as declared in the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone, is Good News indeed.

The elements of the Gospel are manifold but include belief in the divine nature of Jesus—as God incarnate, His virgin birth, His role as Messiah of Israel, His sinless life, His sufferings and death—in our place for our sins, His burial and the time spent in the grave—three days and three nights, His physical resurrection from the dead—never to die again, His ascension to heaven, and the promise that He will come again.

2) The Gospel of the Kingdom

The Gospel of the Kingdom is like the Gospel of Grace in the sense that it is offered by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, as declared in the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone. However, in addition to the salvation provided in the Gospel of Grace, it describes the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel, the Promised Land, fulfillment of all New Covenant promises, Jesus as Messiah returning to physically reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords—from Jerusalem. These promises (and so many more) are included within the Gospel of Grace, but are more specific in definition and fulfillment when referring to the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Those who respond to the Gospel of Grace become recipients of all included in the Gospel of the Kingdom. However, one may proclaim the Gospel of the (coming) Kingdom indicating the fulfillment of prophecy concerning Jesus as King of Israel and King of the world. The distinction may seem insignificant to many—but no! The distinction is critical to proper biblical interpretation.

Blinded *from* the Light

Paul declared that the “blind” are unable and unwilling to see the truth. He seems to have indicated that the blindness is a manifestation of at least two distinct but interrelated causes: the god of this world, Satan, and personal active unbelief.

One may be tempted to focus their attention upon this singular passage, but in order to gain a full picture we must examine many other Scriptural passages.

1) The “god” of this World?

In the text we read, *“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, (who do not believe,) lest the light of the gospel of the glory*

of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (parenthesis added).

The text demands that we ask, is Satan the “*god of this age*” because God has made him such—having “lost” His authority, or is Satan “*the god of this age*” because man has acquiesced to his authority and thus made him *their* god by rebellion and unbelief?

The answer is simple: God is sovereign and therefore remains God forever! However, men in unbelief and rebellion have made Satan *their* god by surrendering to his schemes, lies, and deceptions, and have subjected themselves to his (God tolerated) lesser authority. (Satan remains subject to God!)

The Veil and Spiritual Blindness

Man suffers spiritual blindness through sin and rebellion—and thus, by continuing in unbelief he or she is subjected to the vision-obscuring “*veil*” Satan uses for his own purposes. The unredeemed have been provided the truth and yet suppress it in unrighteousness (see Romans 1:18). It is not that man cannot believe or “see;” it is the fact that men have given place to the Devil and thus fall prey to the powers of darkness.

Herein I provide no discount of the spiritual blindness mankind has been subjected to in the fall. This is a part of the Federal Headship we all suffer in Adam. However, God has made Himself known to all. It is the rejection of the gracious illumination we all receive that causes the increase of the spiritual blindness Satan uses to his benefit.

The Holy Spirit has illuminated our blind eyes, opened our deaf ears, and softened our hard hearts to the extent that we may believe the Gospel and therefore have that blindness removed—in Christ. Rejection of that illumination (provided by grace) afflicts men with

the ever-increasing blindness that is otherwise removed by Christ's redeeming power—under the Rule of Christ's Federal Headship. *"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"* (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Satan's Kingdom and Self Deception

Satan's self-deception and his own spiritual blindness led him to offer the *"kingdoms of the world"* to Jesus when tempting Him in the wilderness. This is laughable (see Matthew 4:8–11). Satan's "kingdom" is the "kingdom" of darkness, and only where darkness prevails does he maintain his limited authority.

Jesus had no interest in the "kingdom of darkness" then nor presently. It was/is under the influence of Satan—*"the god of this age."* The temptations Satan offered Jesus were a sure testimony to the blindness and foolishness he suffers.

Satan was able to deceive Eve (and Adam) in the garden—but miserably failed in the wilderness with Jesus.

2) Our God!

When referring to His redemptive work, Jesus said, *"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out"* (John 12:31). Moreover, following His resurrection, He said, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..."* (Matthew 28:18b–20a). Therefore, believers are not subject to Satan—nor his rule.

God (our God) has *"...delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed [transferred] us into the kingdom of the Son of His love"* (Colossians 1:13). We *"once walked according to the course of*

this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesian 2:2b). However, as believers we now walk in the Lord—under the rule of the King of all power—“who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him” (1 Peter 3:22).

By the victories of Jesus, *“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Revelation 11:15b).*

One may argue that the climactic fulfillment of this will not take place until a future date—when the Lord comes to physically reign in righteousness—and they would be correct. It is then that Satan will be manifestly bound, cast into the lake of fire, and Jesus will climactically be recognized as the authority He has always been (see Revelation 20:1–3, 7–10). However, *“We know that we are of God, [but] the whole [unbelieving] world [still] lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). Therefore, we preach the Gospel of Grace and the Gospel of the Kingdom that others “...may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (2 Timothy 2:26).*

My friends, as believers we now “see.” We now proclaim the Gospel of Grace and the Gospel of the Coming Kingdom. We represent the Lord, His Kingdom, and are no longer under the authority of Satan!

I love you all,
Pastor Paul