

The Gospel Summarized and Applied.

Acts 13:38-41

Sunday morning, November 28, 2010.

Paul comes to the end of his sermon, preached to the Jews and other God-fearing people gathered in the Synagogue of Antioch in Asia Minor. In bringing his message to a close he does two things:

1. He succinctly summarizes the significance of the grace of God, shown to His people in time past, and brought to a climax in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. He drives the point home with a solemn warning; all in the space of just four verses.

I. The gospel summarized. Vs. 38, 39.

A. After the Hebrew manner of speaking Paul says the same thing twice in different words in Vs. 38 and 39. This manner of speaking was employed to emphasize a point. You can find a host of examples of this way of speaking in the Psalms, in Proverbs and in the Prophets.

B. The message is brought to them in the form of “preaching.” This word meant in the context of the Roman empire a legal and binding proclamation of some edict issued by Caesar’s government in Rome, and it was made by official representatives of the Roman court. Others could repeat the message, but they could not make a legal and binding proclamation of it.

So is the structure of the Lord’s kingdom still; those duly called and set apart preach; others “share” or “exhort,” and no one sets himself apart as a preacher. Following the proclamation by the preacher or herald, the proclamation became law in the place where it was proclaimed, and all who lived in such a place were held accountable to it. So is the preaching of the gospel still; what will you do with Jesus’ kingship and rule? Will you embrace it and own it or persist in going your own way?

C. Paul’s summary of the gospel addresses man’s greatest need: Man must be forgiven; he must be reconciled to an offended God; he must be acquitted and justified in the court of God’s justice.

1. Forgiveness and justification are gateway-blessings. They are benefits bestowed upon us as we enter into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. There are however many other blessings to be enjoyed as the Psalmist expressed in Psalm 16:11 “In Your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.”

D. The gateway-blessings of forgiveness and justification, and all other blessings that follow it, come to us in the context of the administration of the kingdom of “this Man,” Jesus Christ, who lived and died, and rose and was exalted on our behalf. Grace and faith and salvation come in the context of embracing Him, His kingdom and His administration.

When someone becomes a citizen of the United States he “forsakes any allegiance to any foreign king or potentate,” and he pledges his allegiance to the republic of the United States alone. In that context the privileges of citizenship become his. So it is with the Lord and His kingdom; he who by faith receives Christ, receives Christ’s kingdom, and the administrations thereof; he embraces the values and virtues of that kingdom, and pledges and renews his allegiance to it.

This is why he who would receive the Lord Jesus Christ must also receive His kingdom and the administration of it. The Lord comes with His kingdom and its people. It is “the bigger picture” of the gospel, and, in these terms, we do not hear it proclaimed much these days.

- E. “Justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”
1. The sense of these words is not that Moses’ law justified from a lot of sins, but not from all, and that Jesus came to justify us from the rest of our sins.
 2. The meaning is rather that Moses’ law did not justify of any sins, and that Jesus came to enact a full and final justification in behalf of His people.
 3. Moses was shown the ministry of the true and heavenly temple on the mountain (Mt. Sinai) Exodus 25:40 and Hebrews 8:5.
 4. Moses was commissioned to enact an earthly pattern and illustration of the ministry of this heavenly temple, which was sufficient until the ministry and Minister of the heavenly sanctuary should be revealed. This is the burden of the book of Hebrews in the NT.
 5. The picture and pattern accomplished nothing; the ministry and Minister of the true and heavenly sanctuary accomplished everything.

II. A solemn warning. Vs. 40, 41.

“Beware lest that which has been spoken in the prophets come upon you.”

The quotation that follows is from Haggai 1:5.

- A. Haggai’s words are addressed to despisers; that is to those who listened to the message but did not think the message important enough, or believable enough, to act upon, or to take it to heart.
1. We can despise a message by engaging it with hostility and opposition. The Jews did this with the message of the gospel as described in the book of Acts.
 2. We can also despise a message by ignoring it; by tuning out; by pretending we never even heard it, or that it is not worthy of our time and attention.
 3. We can also despise a message by treating it as “too far out to be real;” literally unbelievable.

Haggai was dealing with the latter category in his prophecy; hence the words “Marvel and Perish!”.

- B. Haggai prophesied in his day that God would bring the Babylonians to judge Israel for her apostasy. This was the work that God worked in those days, yet it seemed an unbelievable work to many Jews as the Babylonians were far more wicked than Israel in its day. As such the Lord describes His work in those days as “A work which you will by no means believe though one were to declare it to you.” Yet the word and the work proved faithful and that generation of unbelieving Jews perished.

Application:

What about you? What have you done with the proclamation of the message of the King and His Kingdom. Have you despised it by opposing it; by ignoring it or by deeming it as “far out?” What will you do? Ultimately your only rightful reply can be to embrace and own it by faith and with humility and thankfulness, or else marvel and perish.