

1 “*Ashamed of Me and My Words*” —*The Risk of Denying Jesus' Words Apply Today*

Ashamed of Jesus' Gospel

As we have seen many times so far, many cut-and-run from Jesus' words. They do everything possible to squirm away from costly grace. They prefer the cheap grace gospel. They dismiss Jesus' words on the Law, obedience, repentance from sin, cutting off body parts, etc., to a different dispensation than themselves. They are, bluntly put, embarrassed by Jesus' words. So they toss them into the garbage bin of a supposedly defunct dispensation.

However, could Jesus' message on salvation ever become superceded by another gospel? Jesus says no. Jesus said His words would remain valid even though “heaven and earth pass away” (Matt. 24:35).

Thus, all these commentators are, in fact, *ashamed of Jesus' words*. They betray their Lord by denying His plain meaning. It will do no good at judgment day to tell Jesus you were taught to dismiss His words to a different dispensation. Jesus expects you to know His voice, and recognize Him as your sole teacher.

“Ashamed of My Words” Warning Has An Unexpected Relevance

There is a common doctrine today known as Dispensationalism (or Covenant Theology) that teaches most of what Jesus taught belongs to a different dispensation. Anytime Jesus preaches a costly grace — where obedience to the

Law, repentance from sin, or sacrificing to follow Jesus are necessary for salvation — we are free supposedly to dismiss such teachings to a bygone dispensation between God and Jews. In the New Testament era, the new dispensation allegedly began when Jesus died at the Cross. At that juncture, supposedly all costly-grace salvation principles ended. All that we allegedly need now for salvation is faith, not works. Hence, we are supposedly free to reject the costly grace principles taught so frequently by Jesus.

John MacArthur, the prominent evangelical pastor of Grace Community Church, criticizes dispensationalism in his recent book — *The Gospel According to Jesus*:

This lamentable hermeneutic [*i.e.*, Jesus’ words were for a different dispensation] is widely applied in varying degrees to much of our Lord’s earthly teaching, emasculating the message of the Gospels.¹

However, dispensationalism is not simply a doctrine that is ‘lamentable.’ Those teaching it come under Jesus’ threat about being ashamed of Him and His words. Dispensationalism is a doctrine that, if swallowed, puts one directly under the threat of Jesus about those “ashamed of Me and My words.”

‘Ashamed of Me and My Words’

Many of us think denying Christ means denying we are saved by Christ. Or denying Jesus was savior. Or perhaps denying His divinity. However, Jesus appeared to mean that the denial was *with your mouth denying* the authority of His words and position in your life. Thus, you can deny Jesus by simply being *ashamed of His words*. You are embarrassed by

1. John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Zondervan 1994) at 33-34.

Jesus. You resort to some other teacher whose teachings are accepted as *Christian* even if they are totally opposed to Jesus’ gospel teachings.

For whosoever ***shall be ashamed of me and of my words***, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.
(Luke 9:26.)

Thus, dispensationalism is inherently a risky doctrine which affirms that *certain*, if not most, of *Christ’s words are invalid today*. The advocates of this are clearly afraid of being put out of evangelical churches if they abided in Jesus’ doctrine of costly grace. These Christians are no different than the religious rulers of John 12:42. Apostle John identifies them as follows:

Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, ***lest they should be put out of the synagogue***: (Joh 12:42 ASV.)

So these rulers believed in Jesus, but they would not confess belief in Him due to fear of being put out of the synagogue.

Here, what the dispensationalists are doing is virtually identical. They believe in Jesus, but for fear of being cast out of their denomination as a heretic, they will not confess the validity of Jesus’ words. They rationalize this behavior by relying upon verses selectively chosen from Paul’s writings. This does not make it any less true that they are ashamed and embarrassed by what Jesus teaches about costly grace. The Dispensationalist is clearly ashamed of Jesus as their Teacher, preferring verses in Paul selectively chosen to sustain a cheap grace gospel. But Jesus gives His response to you for such cowardice: He will deny you.

Elsewhere Jesus threatens hell on such cowardly believers. If you are a believer, but are afraid to affirm Jesus’ doctrine of costly grace because you will be put out of church as a heretic, then Jesus say your end is identical to what an unbeliever will get:

But for the *fearful*, and *unbelieving*, and ... all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. (Rev 21:8 ASV.)

The word for *fearful* there in Greek is *deilos*. The *New American Standard* translates it as *cowardly*.² It derives from the Greek word for *dread*, which is *deos*.

Thus, the believing religious rulers in John 12:42 were *cowards*, and the cowards along with unbelievers both end up in the lake of fire in Revelation 21:8.

Consequently, dispensationalism is more than a mere doctrine that is wrong. Instead, it has potential repercussions on your personal salvation. For dispensational doctrine is ashamed of Jesus’ words on the Law as too difficult. It teaches Jesus’ words are likewise too works-oriented. Thus, for dispensationalists, Jesus is just too far afield to be taken seriously for almost any doctrines He teaches about salvation.

2. This comports with Ancient Greek usage. “In [The] Republic 486b, Plato talks about distinction between philosophical and unphilosophical disposition: a man with a *cowardly* (*deilos*) and illiberal (aneleutheros) nature is not able to have a share in true philosophy.” (Ivo Volt, “Aspects of Ancient Greek Moral Vocabulary: Illiberality and Servility in Moral Philosophy and Popular Morality,” *Trames* 7:57 (2003) at 67, 74.

*Absurd Commentary To Uphold Cheap
Grace Is Another Form of Denial of Jesus*

Moreover, any commentary that devises preposterous ideas to hold at bay Jesus' words is a denial of Jesus as well. Such a commentary is ashamed of Jesus and His words. For such teachers, Jesus is simply a figurehead: a divine Messiah who dies and pays for sin, but whose teachings can be rejected as outmoded. As defunct.

The perfect example of this type of denial comes from two popular teachers: Charles Stanley and Joseph Dillow.

Charles Stanley is the formal head of eighteen million American Baptists. Joseph Dillow is the author of the famous *Reign of the Servant Kings*. It is a book used almost as a text-book in many evangelical seminaries.

Charles Stanley and Joseph Dillow admit several parables of Jesus do involve a risk of "weeping and gnashing" outside in darkness if a Christian believer fails later to have works.³ They both also realize that if weeping and gnashing is in hell, then Jesus would refute the Modern Gospel of Cheap Grace. ***Rather than cling to Jesus' obvious meaning, they treat cheap grace doctrine as outweighing Jesus' words.*** As a result, Stanley and Dillow both ***deny*** Jesus' words have their obvious meaning. They are ***ashamed*** of Jesus' words.

3. Stanley relies upon Dillow. Joseph Dillow wrote a monumental book entitled *Reign of the Servant Kings* which is now a text-book at various seminaries. Dillow is an adamant faith-alone teacher, and insists upon the validity of the doctrine of eternal security. Dillow concedes that three of the seven times Jesus warns weeping and gnashing of teeth outside in darkness that Jesus is threatening a Christian. For example, Jesus says one of those who accepted an invitation and is seated at the banquet is a "Friend" who was "called," but when examined he did not have on the "proper clothes."

For Dillow and Stanley argue that *weeping and gnashing outside in darkness* takes place in heaven for unprofitable servants, guests at banquets who accepted the invitation but do not have ready robes, etc. Charles Stanley in his book *Eternal Security: Can you Be Sure?* says:

It [*i.e.*, a place outside in darkness where there is weeping and gnashing] certainly does not mean hell....It clearly refers to being thrown outside a building into the dark....There is no mention of pain, fire or worms” (Stanley, *Eternal Security*, at 125.)

Stanley also insists the place outside where this weeping takes place is in Heaven. He writes:

To be in the outer darkness is ***to be in the kingdom of God*** but outside the circle of men and women whose faithfulness on this earth earned them a special rank or position of authority. (Stanley, *Eternal Security*, at 126.)

What is the purpose of these constructions? If weeping and gnashing outside in darkness occurs in heaven, then Jesus’ threats to punish Christians (servants, invited guests who accepted an invitation to the banquet, etc.) for lacking *works* are reduced to mere threats of loss of rewards. However, this construction is pure nonsense. It was first rationalized by Joseph Dillow in *Reign of the Servant Kings*. Stanley and Dillow are involved in a clear ***denial*** of what Jesus means. They both never discuss the fact Jesus once defines the place of “weeping and gnashing” as the “fiery furnace.” (Matt. 13:42.)

Why do they both do this? They are both dismissing Jesus’ meaning because of their preference for cheap grace. Rather than admitting we have *another* gospel than Jesus’ gospel, Stanley and Dillow prefer insisting that weeping and gnashing outside in darkness is in heaven.

However, Stanley and Dillow’s view is ***indefensible*** on at least three levels:

- There is no weeping in heaven.
- There is no darkness inside heaven; and
- Outside in darkness does not mean inside the light of heaven.

There are no more tears in heaven nor in the New Jerusalem for all present. See Rev. 7:17 (“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes”); Isaiah 25:8 (“God will wipe away tears from all faces”). Nor is there any more “sorrow, nor crying....” Rev. 21:4.

Furthermore, a place of darkness outside is clearly depicted in Revelation. The context is established by the fact inside the New Jerusalem there is never any night. Thus, a place of darkness could not conceivably be *inside* heaven/the New Jerusalem. Yet, Stanley precisely puts it “*in* the kingdom of God.”

Revelation 22:23 speaks of the New Jerusalem that needs no sun because the “glory” of God and Jesus are the “light” thereof. The New Jerusalem, importantly, is the picture of the kingdom of God. This is thus the same as heaven. Then it says there shall be no “night” there. And there “shall no wise enter into it...[except] they who are written in the lamb’s book of life.” (Rev. 21:27.)

Revelation also speaks of the place outside the New Jerusalem. Revelation 22:15 says “outside” are the “dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

Will they be enjoying eternal life or be sent to hell’s fire? Stanley says those outside in outer darkness are *inside* heaven, to keep Jesus not contradict the Modern Gospel. What does the Bible teach?

Those outside in Revelation 22:15 are almost verbatim listed again in Rev. 21:8. Listen to their fate:

But the fearful [cowards] and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, ***shall have their part in the lake which***

burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Rev. 21:8 KJV.)

Thus, indubitably, those outside in darkness are not in heaven (because there is no darkness in heaven). Moreover, those “outside” are depicted in the Bible as heading for hell.

Lastly, Dillow also made his argument in a disingenuous fashion, underscoring once more his position is indefensible.

Dillow ignores Jesus did say the place of weeping and gnashing was the fiery furnace:

(41) the Son of Man shall send forth his messengers, and they shall gather up out of his kingdom all the stumbling-blocks, and those doing the unlawfulness,

(42) and ***shall cast them to the furnace of the fire***; there shall be the ***weeping and the gnashing of the teeth***. (Matt. 13:41-42.)

Jesus repeats this again later:

So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and ***sever the wicked*** from among the righteous, (50) and shall ***cast them into the furnace of fire***: there shall be the ***weeping and the gnashing of teeth***. (Matt. 13:49-50 ASV.)

Here, there is no question what Jesus means. The place of weeping and gnashing is the fiery furnace. Dillow tried to insist otherwise, but curiously never discussed how Matthew 13:41-42 and 49-50 completely negates his argument.

Thus, those who teach that Jesus’ threatens Christians with merely sadness in heaven if they do evil are so ashamed of Jesus’ words that omit Jesus’ words on the topic. They read out of the bible Jesus’ contrary teaching which proves the fiery furnace is this place of weeping and gnashing. In this era of computer indexes, it is difficult to imagine that both men, writing separately, never saw this contrary verse in Mat-

threw 13:41-42 and 49-50. What were they thinking? It is obvious: these two prefer abandoning Jesus' Gospel of a Costly Grace in the pursuit of another gospel: the gospel of Cheap Grace. They are — simply put — ashamed of what Jesus says, so they don't tell you about it. If they told you about it, and believed in *costly grace*, they would lose their pastorates. They are cowards. Jesus tells us their future destination, absent repentance, is the very place of weeping and gnashing of teeth which these two men misinformed so many is in heaven.

Relevance of Denial Doctrine in Contemporary America

Thus, the issue of denial is a current one in modern America. If you try to *not* be ashamed of Jesus' words, and instead claim they are *still valid*, enormous pressure will be brought against you to recant and confess the cheap grace gospel's validity over Jesus' current validity. You will be forced, if possible, to confess Jesus spoke to persons under the Law, which you must also agree is now a defunct covenant. You will be demanded to repeat this mantra that only gives a few select verses from Jesus as having any validity.

Hence, you have a difficult choice if you decide to follow and obey Jesus as opposed to gospel of cheap grace. You can be ashamed of Jesus and run back to cheap grace, or you can be brave and stand up for Jesus. It is a choice that applies in modern America as much as it did centuries ago.

What Is The Risk If A Christian Denies Christ?

If we had Jesus' Words alone, what would we tell a friend who accepts Christ is the consequence if they deny Christ under pressure? Would we tell our friend they risk Hell, as Jesus promises (Luke 12:4-9)? Or would we refrain

because of contemporary salvation doctrine which claims we would be a heretic by telling anyone their salvation turns on more than faith?

However, if we follow Jesus alone, there is no freedom to deny Christ and be faithless, and yet God will forgive you anyway. We would teach this clearly if we only had Jesus’ words as the measure of orthodoxy. Let’s study this by examining the principle behind the threat of Hell by Jesus.

Lose Life For Kingdom Gains Life Eternal

Jesus taught you shall find life if you lose your life for Jesus’ sake:

And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. (39) He that findeth his life shall lose it; and **he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.** (Mat 10:38-39, ASV)

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (Matthew 16:25.)

The Greek here is a second aorist active participle for both *findeth* and *loseth*. The active component mixed with the aorist tense means *he that keeps grabbing hold of his life is step-by-step losing his life*. He who keeps letting go of this worldly life is step-by-step finding his true life.

What does Jesus mean? It is obvious. Here Jesus is using *life* to signify eternal life. There is no mistaking the risk and the reward at stake is salvation. *Gaining life* as a benefit is contrasted with *losing life* as a loss. The two sides must mean *life beyond physical life* and *death beyond physical death*. This is not a discussion of rewards for being a disciple, as so many contend.

Rather, these are forceful words of Jesus that you will *lose your life for eternity* if you make the choice to save it for this world. To ignore this is what Jesus intends as the risk is to engage in self-delusion. You are adopting doctrines of men at *direct odds* with your savior.

In sum, Jesus teaches that if you are cowardly, and deny Jesus to preserve your worldly comforts and lifestyle, then you lose your life for eternity. By a corollary, Jesus says he that is “losing their life for my sake *shall* find it.” He that does not deny Jesus under pressure but sacrifices all for His sake shall receive eternal life.

*Commentators Who Agree Jesus Is Talking
About Salvation*

Gill in his famous commentary concurs that Jesus is warning in Matthew 10:39 about loss of salvation for the cowardly Christian. He explains verse 39 (if gain life lose it) means:

That man that seeks to preserve his life, and the temporal enjoyments of it, by a sinful compliance with his friends and the world, and by ***a denial of Christ, or non-confession of him;*** ... is sure to ***lose*** the happy and ***eternal life*** of his soul and body, in the world to come: so that the present finding of life, or the possession of it, on such sinful terms, will in the issue prove ***an infinite and irreparable loss*** unto him.

Thus, denying Jesus leads to irreparable and permanent loss. Caving into social pressure to do so means you chose *life* in this world and thereby forfeit life in the next.

Thus, Gill supports the view that holding to your confession and not denying Him is *crucial*. Faith that is alone is not enough.

When we look at many comparable messages from Jesus, there is no disputing what Jesus teaches about denial and confession. Jesus makes the same warning and promise about confessing Him being crucial to salvation in other passages as well.

Promise for Confession, Risk of Denial

In the same vein, Jesus teaches:

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in **hell**. (Matt 10:28.)

Jesus means God can send you to hell. Rather than fear men and thus deny Jesus, rather fear God who can send you to hell for denial. Jesus’ meaning is rather plain.

Jesus in Luke 12:4-9 likewise says:

And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. (5) But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed hath **power to cast into hell**; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. (6) Are not five sparrows sold for two pence? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. (7) But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows. (8) And I say unto you, Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: (9) but he that **denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied** in the presence of the angels of God. Luk 12:4-9 ASV

Here, Jesus clearly parallels being thrown in Hell with denying Jesus under pressure.

Conclusion

This warning, incidentally, can only apply to someone who is already *truly* a Christian. Jesus is trying to encourage *believers* to have a *fear* of the consequence of denying Him. Jesus makes the risk as clear as day: denial means hell.

Conclusion

Jesus teaches us that denial of Him means Hell. Jesus includes in this denial that we are ashamed of Him and His words. We saw that such denial is engaged in by those who teach Jesus' words at odds with the cheap grace gospel must be disregarded. They are afraid of being regarded as heretics if they stayed true to Jesus and His teaching. Thus, they deny any validity to Jesus' doctrine. This denial, Jesus says, puts their salvation at risk. Or if the proponents of cheap grace hold onto their gospel by ignoring verses from Jesus at odds, they are not better off. Such omission of Jesus' contrary teachings to their teachings is just another species of cowardice about standing up for Jesus. Our Lord says all who believe in Him who are yet cowards Jesus will deny. Their end is in hell with unbelievers. These are threats to take seriously.

