

Mark 10:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

Analysis

The disciples 'were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?' (οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἐξεπλήσσοντο λέγοντες πρὸς ἑαυτούς, Καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι;). After Jesus said it's easier for camel to pass through needle's eye than rich enter kingdom (v. 25), disciples despaired. If wealthy people (who seemed most blessed by God, per prosperity theology common in Judaism) couldn't be saved, who could? Their question reveals human inability—no one can save themselves. Jesus' answer (v. 27) resolves this: salvation is impossible for humans but possible for God. This is gospel essence: humans are spiritually dead, unable to save themselves (Ephesians 2:1-3, 8-9); God makes alive (Ephesians 2:4-5). Salvation is monergistic—God's work alone, not human cooperation. The disciples' despair was appropriate—recognizing human inability is prerequisite for embracing divine grace.

Historical Context

First-century Jewish theology generally viewed wealth as sign of God's blessing and poverty as potential curse (Deuteronomy 28). Wealthy people could afford temple sacrifices, synagogue donations, almsgiving—external religiosity. Disciples assumed rich had advantage in salvation. Jesus shattered this assumption, teaching that wealth often hinders salvation by creating false security (Mark 10:24, 'trust in riches'). The question 'Who then can be saved?' expresses genuine perplexity—if not the rich, then who? Jesus' teaching inverted conventional wisdom, demonstrating that worldly advantages (wealth, status, education) don't

guarantee salvation. Paul taught similarly: not many wise, mighty, or noble are called (1 Corinthians 1:26-29). Salvation comes through God's sovereign choice and grace, not human merit or advantage.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why is recognizing human inability to save themselves essential for understanding and embracing the gospel?
2. How does Jesus' teaching challenge contemporary 'prosperity gospel' that equates wealth with divine favor?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	περισσῶς	ἐξεπλήσσοντο	λέγοντες	πρὸς	ἑαυτούς
G3588	And	out of measure	they were astonished	saying	among	themselves
	G1161	G4057	G1605	G3004	G4314	G1438
Καὶ	τίς	δύναται	σωθῆναι			
G2532	Who	then can	be saved			
	G5101	G1410	G4982			

Additional Cross-References

Acts 16:31 (Salvation): And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

2 Corinthians 11:23 (Parallel theme): Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

