A BLIND MAN WHO SAW THE LORD

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The man who was blind from his birth but was healed by the Lord said in the gospel of John, “…I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25b). He then continued by making a statement and then asking them a question. “He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?” (John 9:27).

The ninth chapter of the book of John is dedicated to the narrative of the blind man whom Jesus healed. His disciples asked who was it that had sinned to cause him to be blind. They still had a misconception that one's illness was also a direct relationship to someone's sin. This was one of Job's three friends' problems in their response to the suffering of Job. Jesus assures them that this was not the case, but rather this was to show the works of God, verses 2,3. Jesus helps us to understand that not all suffering is a result of sin. After his neighbors questioned the man about his sight, they brought him to the Pharisees, and they begin to question him as well. They asked him twice how he came to see; not liking his answer, they then called his parents and questioned them. His parents verified this man was their son and that he had been blind since birth but referred them back to the son about how it happened, verses 13-23. They once again questioned him, and this time he responded by saying, "…one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see,” (John 9:25). Not liking his answer, they asked again how this happened, to which he said, “…I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?” (John 9:27).

The Pharisees were blind and refused to open their eyes to see the truth, even when all the evidence stood right before their eyes. It is for this reason they would eventually take part in the crucifixion of the Lord. Jesus said, “And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matt. 13:14,15).

Upon the confession of the man who had been blind but was healed, Jesus said, “…For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind" (John 9:39). Jesus was speaking about spiritual sight and blindness. Some have been walking in darkness, but now can see because they have believed in the light which lighted the world, John 1:6-12; 8:12. The Pharisees heard the words of the Lord and asked, “…Are we blind also?” (John 9:40). To which said, “…If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth” (John 9:41).

Taking the word ‘‘blind” in the sense they intended it in their query to Jesus (verse 40), the Lord turns their position against them, saying, in effect, “Were you blind in the way those are who do not see but who gladly accept the truth when presented, you would be without sin in not having believed on me because your blindness would be from lack of opportunity, a condition for which you would not be morally blameable; now, however, you profess to see and to be in possession of truth in consequence of which you are not only sinners but your condition of sin persists because you reject me?’ Their profession, “We see,” thus became a perpetual barrier to their reception of truth. This disposition added to their other sins and increased their responsibility. Their claim to superior knowledge compounded their guilt. Thus, their sin was against the truth by which alone they could be led into the light, and their words became witnesses against them! (Matt 23:31.) It has been well said that “None are so blind as those who will not see,” this was especially characteristic of these Jews who professed to be guardians of the truth but were themselves violators of it. (Guy N. Woods, Commentary on John, Gospel Advocate, p. 202)

This narrative helps us to understand that we need to open our eyes and ears to the truth. It is possible to have eyes to see and still be blind and to have ears to hear and still not hear. It is easy to see this fault in others, but unfortunately, we often cannot see it in ourselves. This may, perhaps, be one of the most significant problems for humanity. That is, they cannot see past their traditions. They have been blinded by what the world thinks is acceptable to the Lord and what is not. The longer we walk in darkness, the more we are consumed with it and become complacent.

When addressing the church at Laodicea, Jesus said, “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:” (Rev. 3:17). His advice to them was, “…anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (Rev. 3:18b).

When Peter wrote to us about the Christian graces in 2 Peter, he reminded us that if we do not add these graces to our lives, then the consequences would be that we would be blind. "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (2 Peter. 1:9).

The Lord’s purpose was to shine a light in the darkness and give hope to a lost and dying world. Isaiah prophesied that when the Lord came, he would indeed bring light into the world. "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, And will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, And give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, To bring out the prisoners from the prison, And them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (Isa. 42:6,7).