

## **Spiritual Sight**

**By George Davis and Michael Clark**

The physical or natural creation is a mirror image of spiritual things. The physical body with its many members serves as the supreme example of this. Of all the members of the body, the most significant and representative of spiritual priorities is the organ of sight, the eye. Jesus often used the eye as a parable of spiritual things, calling it "the lamp of the body." Sight is a light and darkness issue. When your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is unsound, the body is full of darkness (Luke 11:34).

This also is true of the church, the body of Christ. The body that lacks spiritual sight is full of darkness, but the spiritually sighted body is full of light. Everything is relative to sight or the lack of it. Christ often used sight as a synonym for wisdom and understanding, referring to those religious leaders who lacked it as blind guides leading the blind. The eye is the chief channel of information for man. Of all the five senses, sight is the most highly valued. Sight is the key to knowledge. What you cannot conceptualize, you cannot understand. Both in the natural life and in the spiritual life, seeing precedes knowledge.



It is not exceptional for a child to see. In fact, within six to eight weeks of birth a baby sees clearly. Anything less than this is abnormal. First children see, and then they learn about what they have seen. They see before they can sit up, crawl, or say their first word. Before any of these things, their little eyes are intently searching, assimilating, and discerning the grandeur of their new

surroundings. One of the little joys of parenthood is seeing that gleam of recognition in the eyes of our children as they learn to identify the people and things around them. Soon Junior is talking and walking freely about the house. Then something happens that catches the uninitiated parent completely off guard--the child becomes a two-year-old. At this stage of the child's life, only things that are out of sight and out of mind are safe. The discerning parent knows that it is not out of orneriness that the two-year-old gleefully runs from thing to thing, touching, pulling, pushing and twisting everything that catches his eye. Everything is new and exciting! The world is a wonderland, full of

mysterious and wonderful things, thanks to the miracle of sight. Everywhere he looks there is some new attraction, begging for his attention.

Nothing is sacred or safe. You turn on the stereo only to discover that every knob has been tweaked, the volume is at maximum and you have blown one of your prized 200-watt woofers. While you are grieving over this horrendous loss, you turn to discover that Junior has opened the lower kitchen cupboards and has scattered the contents all over the floor. Scrambling to clean up the mess, you again sense that unholy calm that always occurs when Junior discovers some new delight. The recurrent question comes to mind, "Where is Junior?" Then you turn to find this darling of your womb looking for hazardous waste underneath the bathroom sink, and as usual, attempting to stick these newfound objects in his mouth! At the day's end, when Junior is tucked safely into his bed and finally goes to sleep, a quiet and secret two-fold rejoicing ensues. One, that the day is over, and two, that somehow Junior has miraculously survived it. Slumping listlessly into the living room sofa in a near catatonic state, the haggard parents regroup for another day. All this because of sight! Regardless of all the maintenance required to monitor little sight-inspired creatures, I have never heard parents wish that their child had been born blind. Everyone knows that with sight and increasing maturity come understanding, maximum mobility and ultimate effectiveness in life. Perhaps this helps us understand how essential spiritual sight is to the growth and maturity of believers.

### **"Unless one is born anew, he cannot see"**

In both the natural and the spiritual, you must be born before you can see. An infant born into the natural realm sees with natural eyes, and one born of the Spirit sees with spiritual eyes. Paul put it this way, "While we look not at the things, which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18). How do we look at things that are not seen? What kind of ambiguous language is this? Spiritual sight is necessary for spiritual understanding.

A Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night. Nicodemus was an extremely educated man, a learned Master of Israel. He greeted Jesus in a posture and attitude of deference, saying, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God: for no man can do the miracles that you do, except God be

with him." Nicodemus came yielding to Christ in the same manner in that all students of his day yielded to senior mentors, acknowledging their superior knowledge.

Today we measure knowledge by titles of mastery, such as A.S., A.A., B.A., M.A., PhD., D.D., etc. What you know determines where you fit in the greater academic scheme of things as well as the social pecking order. The goal is to reach that enviable place of mastery where you are acknowledged as the authority on such matters.

In Christ's day, there was a very similar system of academia, a strict hierarchy of knowledge, where degrees of knowledge were measured by honorific titles such as Rabbi, Master and Father. Jesus was not impressed and warned His disciples to avoid this elitist system, explaining the antagonism between it and the brotherhood of believers.

"But don't you be called 'Rabbi,' for one is your teacher, the Christ, and all of you are brothers. Call no man on the earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you will be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matthew 23:8-12 WEB)

This helps us understand Nicodemus' attitude when he approached Jesus. Jesus had upstaged the entire rabbinical college, so Nicodemus came in the traditional, master-to-pupil mindset that was all he had ever known. To Nicodemus, if you wanted to learn, this is how you did it. You found a master and submitted yourself to him, and then he taught you out of his extensive pool of knowledge. Nicodemus came yielding to Jesus as Rabbi, desiring to learn about the kingdom. Seeing this, Christ begins His lesson with, "Most assuredly, I tell you, unless one is born anew, he can't see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3 WEB).

Nicodemus came to learn from Jesus and his first lesson was that he was blind to spiritual things. Before you can know you must first see and that seeing comes through a spiritual birth. A few months later Jesus told some of Nicodemus' contentious, scholarly peers, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains." There is seeing, and then there is seeing! Nicodemus wanted to learn with his natural mind but Jesus wanted him to see. There is an unbridgeable gap between spiritual knowledge and the fleshly human mind, yet Christians today still try to approach God through scholarship and scholasticism. It is

said that if you want to loose your faith in Christ, go to seminary. Paul put it this way, "If any man thinks he knows something, let him know this; he knows nothing as he ought to know."

Still attempting to understand with his natural faculties, Nicodemus went on to prove Christ's point. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Like Mr. Spock of Star Trek, Nicodemus was saying, "This is not logical!" This is the point exactly. Spiritual truth is often not logical to the human mind. Apostle Paul, who was a graduate of the best schooling that the Jewish system had to offer, wrote, "The natural man doesn't receive the things of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to him, and he can't know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Until you become alive to spiritual things by a spiritual birth, you cannot see the kingdom of God and you most certainly cannot enter.

Jesus answered Nicodemus, "Most assuredly I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he can't enter into the Kingdom of God! That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Don't marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew'" (John 3:5-8 WEB). It is a basic law of creation that each being must reproduce after its own kind (See Genesis 1:24 and 25). It takes divine intervention for a man to be born of the Spirit and no amount of learning can make this happen. It is a sovereign act of God.

When Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" They answered Him, "Some say John the Baptizer, some, Elijah, and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." Jesus responded, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:14-18 WEB). Flesh and blood can never know or reveal Christ. Human intelligence can never comprehend him. The Spirit of God, working in us mightily, enables us to "be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you (we) may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:18-19 NKJV). We cannot learn Christ from other learned men. The Spirit takes what belongs to Christ and reveals it to men on a spiritual level (see John 16:14).

Spiritual sight precedes the recognition and comprehension of spiritual things without previous study. Intellectual potential is of no avail. The prodigy is on no better footing than the mentally challenged. In fact, Jesus said that you must become as a child to enter the kingdom of heaven. The Master, Rabbi or the Doctor in theology must go through a much greater stripping before he can enter the kingdom of God. Nicodemus came expecting to be taught about the kingdom in a scholastic way, as one would be taught in the synagogue, setting at the feet of a Master. Nothing was as he expected. The words of Jesus offended the theological mind of this Master of Israel and left him totally puzzled. Jesus replied, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and don't understand these things?" (John 3:10 WEB). Christ was sharing the most rudimentary spiritual truths and Nicodemus, one of the sharpest minds among the Jews, knew nothing about them. Many in Christendom today are still ignorant about the reality of the new birth. What a humbling experience this must have been for that old Jewish scholar.

Mr. B. E. Hutchinson, Vice President of Chrysler Corporation, observed,

"Holy Writ is a record of what the prophets [seers] and not what the Sanhedrin [scholars] had to say." (Parenthetical emphasis added).

Mr. Hutchinson makes a very valid point here, which we should carefully consider. In collecting the canon of scripture, great care was taken to determine whether each letter or book was divinely inspired. This criterion demanded that the author of each book had seen the things that he wrote about. This stringent requirement does not hold true with theology. Theology (the study of God) concerns itself with the study of things that others have seen, trying to determine scholastically what the prophets and apostles saw in the Spirit.

Christian writings are classified into two main categories. First there are the "pre-scholastic" writings, referring to the eye witness accounts of the apostles and those who received their witness. These were authoritative witnesses because they were eye witnesses, declaring those things that they had seen and heard (1 John 1: 1-3). Even our legal system recognizes that an eyewitness is the only reliable and therefore credible witness. When the witness starts to speculate on things he did not see, his testimony is stricken from the record as mere supposition. On the other hand there are the "scholastic writings" that are essentially man's attempt to comprehend, articulate and enter in with his mind of flesh to things that he has not seen.

Paul warned, "Let no one fraudulently deprive you of your prize, doing his own will in humility and worship of angels, entering into (searching into or scrutinizing) things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh" (Colossians 2:18 Darby).

Because of their lack of physical sight, blind people find it difficult to enter in or participate, and many activities are closed to them. When you scrutinize divine things, never having seen them by revelation, the end-result is always arrogance, pride and eventual misconception. This kind of knowledge always puffs up. This is the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the fruit that fallen man continues to eat in his quest to be all-knowing and self-governing like God.

In 1609, a man named Galileo invented the telescope. Using his invention, he discovered that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun, contrary to the popular belief that the universe was geocentric, revolving around the earth. Galileo's discoveries eventually brought him into conflict with the Catholic Church, which governed all scientific and religious matters at that time. Galileo was warned that he should no longer discuss or defend his theories. In 1633 he was called to Rome to face the Inquisition.

Galileo: "Look into my telescope and you'll see what I'm seeing."

Grand Inquisitor: "We will not look into the telescope because we cannot see what is not there."

We laugh at such "flat-earth" mindedness without thinking that future generations might judge us just as harshly. Will they judge us as we now judge the Pharisees? They judged the spiritual blindness of their forefathers by saying, "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them [of the blood of the prophets]" (Matthew 23:30). Will we allow the light of God to shine into our darkness and heal the blindness within us, or will we do as every generation before us and fill up the measure of our fathers?

It requires humility to admit that we see in part. "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12 NKJV). How can those who see in part give a total accounting of the truth of our infinite God, let alone write it down as systematic theology? Religious men are driven to do this very thing and are saying by their actions, "We do not see in part,

but we see the whole. We need no further revelation." They are like the man who Jesus started to heal of blindness. When Jesus ask him what he saw he said, "I see men as trees walking." A further healing was still needed.

Have we successfully inflicted blindness on our eyes and closed ourselves off from further truth through the arrogant belief that what is not codified within our belief-system is not "orthodox" and therefore not true? Are we delusional enough to believe that what we do not affirm is not real? In claiming to see, have we become blind? Jesus told the disciples that the Pharisees were blind guides leading the blind, yet we give way to scholarship like theirs before we will listen to the Holy Spirit of God. It was such blindness that Jesus came into the world to judge--that those who see might become blind and those that are blind might see.

In John 9 we read the story of how Jesus met a man that had been blind from birth. The rabbinical college of that day taught that such impairments were the consequence of sin. Being curious, Christ's disciples asked Him, "[Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?](#)" Jesus' answer is very telling. "[Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but, that the works of God might be revealed in him](#)" (John 9:4-5). This man had been born blind so that God could reveal specific things in him. He was a walking parable of the spiritual blindness of the religious leaders of Israel. God used him to expose just how blind they were.

Jesus spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva, anointed the blind man's eyes with the mud, and commanded him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He went, washed, and came back seeing. This created quite a stir throughout the region. According to the traditions of the Pharisees, Jesus broke the law by healing this blind man on the Sabbath day. To them this was no small transgression and made Jesus a rank sinner in their eyes. On the other hand, they had to admit that this miracle was a sign (Greek *semeion*), a mark of divine approval and authority. Yet this healing had been done on the Sabbath, so how could God honor a sinner in this way?

The solution to the dilemma was to discredit Christ under the pretence of an open-minded pursuit of the truth. When the theology of man conflicts with the Truth, man often chooses to preserve his theology at truth's expense. You do not have to hang around organized religion very long to find out that the traditions of men make void the commandments of God that are revealed in the scriptures.

What would win the day--the truth or the traditions of men? Before this pseudo pursuit of the "truth" was over, the Pharisees concluded that Christ was indeed a sinner and that the man who was born blind was deceived. They completely ignored the sign, the evidence of Christ's authority from God, and they threw the healed man out of the synagogue. They couldn't have him hanging around as a reminder of their own impotence, challenging their judgment and authority. They had come together to judge this matter, but little did they know that another judgment was taking place in the courts of heaven where they, not Jesus, were on trial. They were passing judgment on themselves by their actions.

After the Jewish leaders had cast him out of the synagogue, Jesus found the man who could now see and revealed the reason for his many years of blindness. "I came into this world for judgment, that those who don't see may see; and that those who see may become blind." Some nearby Pharisees overheard Jesus and understood exactly what He meant. They said, "Are we also blind?" Jesus answered them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains" (John 9: 41).

The healing of this blind man had a twofold purpose. One was to reveal the miracle working power of God in him. It was also a parable or object lesson. Jesus did not come into the world to judge the world or the sinner (John 3:17), but to judge religious arrogance, calling it by its rightful name--blindness. When you consider the meaning of judgment as putting things in right order, these words of His make much more sense: "I came into this world for judgment, that those who don't see may see; and that those who see may become blind."

### **"Blind Guides of the Blind"**

Jesus spoke rather harshly to the religious leaders of His day, calling them such things as snakes, vipers, children of the devil and tombs full of dead men's bones. In today's politically correct environment such speech would be considered "hate speech." Jesus stood in the authority of heaven and openly exposed the pious ones of the religious world, with little regard for their feelings.

Some people have difficulty harmonizing this severity of our Lord with the "Spirit of Love." All things considered, this was the most loving thing that Jesus could say to the Pharisees. He could not affirm them in their blindness. A Christianity that lives by a

"no-speak" rule that allows darkness and blindness to continue for the sake of peace and unity sees this as harsh and even cruel language indeed. If Jesus were physically here today, what would He say to the venerated leaders of Christendom? Would He tell them the same thing that He told the religious leaders in the days of His flesh? Would he say to them, "[You have made the commandment of God void because of your traditions. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 'These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrine rules made by men'](#)"?

This statement troubled Christ's disciples greatly, and they asked Him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying?" To this Jesus replied, "[Every plant which my heavenly Father didn't plant will be uprooted. Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. If the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit](#)" (See Matthew 15:6-14).

It is interesting to note that Jesus said to "leave them alone. . .both will fall into the pit." Pits have a purpose in the kingdom of God. When blind people have blind leaders they trust to keep them out of spiritual pits and they still end up in one, they have a chance to see and forsake such leadership. Many of us fell into our spiritual pit before we would finally surrender to God, admit our spiritual blindness and be healed. Many a failed attempt has finally led us to a place where we put our trust in God alone to guide us.

The words of Christ ought to serve as a profound warning to us all! Every plant that the Father does not plant will be rooted up. What plant was Jesus talking about here? Jesus was telling the Pharisees that they were not the planting of the Lord, neither were their traditions that He called "rules made by men."

The Pharisees fancied themselves as guides of the blind. No one ever loved them enough to call them blind guides before. The term blind guides was extremely offensive but true none the less. It's easy for us to point fingers at the Pharisees but we had better be careful here, least we succumb to the same pride. Do we dare be honest enough to allow God to expose our religious blindness? Know this! According to Jesus, our blindness is the greatest when we say we see. "[If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know](#)" (1 Corinthians 8:2).

Our pride in our knowledge is proof enough that we know nothing yet as we ought to know. Pride stops us from learning any more. Often thinking we know keeps us from fully knowing. Approaching the things of God on a head level misses what can only be known experientially and internalized. The secret to knowing the things of God is to know that no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Truth is resident within the Spirit of Truth and nowhere else. It is never ours to toy with intellectually.

When Paul encountered the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus, the first words out of this humbled Jew were, "Who are you Lord?" Paul admitted to Jesus that he did not really know God as he thought he did. This very question should never stop being our own. We should pray, "Lord, I knew you yesterday, but I know that there is so much more of yourself that you want to reveal to me. Who are you today?" Of the increase of His kingdom, there will be no end. Our knowledge of our Creator should be equally expanding day by day and it will if we humble ourselves before Him and admit that we really know nothing as we ought to know.

Jesus told a parable that clearly sets out the principle.

Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself like this: "God, I thank you, that I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get." But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 18:10-14).

The Pharisee saw himself as set apart and different from all other men. He saw extortioners all around him but failed to see his own dishonest heart. This is blindness indeed! He claimed to see, so his sin remained. On the other hand, the tax collector saw his true condition, asked forgiveness and went down to his house justified.

The prayer of the Pharisee can still be heard reverberating through the hallowed halls of Christendom. "God, I thank you that I am not like other people!" Have you ever sat in a church service and said to yourself, "I sure hope so and so is listening to this sermon. He sure needs to hear it." Or have you ever attended a prayer meeting and

aimed a prayer at another person there? "Lord, I just pray right now for those among us who are still smoking, blah, blah, blah."

In looking around and comparing ourselves among ourselves, we fail to see the Pharisee in us. We are like the Laodicean Church, dressed in her fineries, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Remember that Jesus views us as we really are, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17). Hear these words of our Savior! "I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich; and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see" (Revelation 3:18).

## **Spiritual Sight and Saving Faith**

Let's return to Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus to further comprehend the principle of Spiritual Sight and its effect on every area of our Christian lives. After telling Nicodemus that he could neither see nor enter the kingdom without spiritual birth and spiritual sight, Jesus directed his attention to the entrance of the kingdom. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15).

The Son of Man must be lifted up in the same manner as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. In Numbers 21:6-9, we read how God sent fiery serpents into the camp of Israel because of their rebellion. Many were bitten and died. Israel repented and asked Moses to pray to Yahweh to remove the serpents. Moses prayed and God answered, "Make you a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard: and it shall happen, that everyone, who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live (21:8) Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He "made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived" (Numbers 21:9 NKJV).

In comparing John 3:14-15 with Numbers 21:6-9, we see that looking and believing are the same thing. The act of looking at the Old Testament bronze serpent prefigured New Covenant belief in Christ. In this instance, seeing is believing. Brilliantly assessing the problem healed no one. A different seeing was required, the kind of seeing that the Lord spoke of when He said, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced . . ." (Zechariah 12:10).

## **How critical is this seeing?**

Paul wrote to the Galatian believers who were returning to the bondage of law-keeping, "Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you not to obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth among you as crucified?" (Galatians 3:1). The New Living Translation reads, "You used to see the meaning of Jesus Christ's death as clearly as though I had shown you a signboard with a picture of Christ dying on the cross." The Galatian believers had lost sight of the lifted up Christ. They used to see but now they had lost faith and were returning to blind legalism.

We cannot be drawn unto Christ and made whole unless He is lifted up and seen. When I, George, was growing up as a child I heard the story of Jesus every Sunday, but I did not truly see Him. He was little more than a cutout on a flannel graph or a story in an old leather-bound book. This Sunday school knowledge of Him did not keep me from setting out on a life of alcohol, drugs and every other vice imaginable. One day the Father revealed His Son to me by His Spirit! I saw my true condition upon the backdrop of His glory. I felt like Isaiah must have felt after seeing the Lord high and lifted up, "Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Why this new perspective? "My eyes have seen the King." (Isaiah 6: 1-5). When he saw who Jesus really was, that rough fisherman Peter responded, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord" (Luke 5:8).

Religious people made sure I knew I was a sinner. That didn't bring the grace I needed to change. Nothing short of seeing Jesus lifted up, by the Spirit, could reprove me of sin and nothing but being drawn to Him by that same Spirit could deliver me from sin's dominion. Everyone who truly looks on Him will be drawn to Him. He is himself the transforming power, or as one brother so graphically put it, "Jesus is the Change Agent." He is the resurrection and the Life! Christ has been made unto us redemption but He has also been made our sanctification ( 1 Corinthians 1:30). We are changed, from glory to glory as we with open faces continue to behold His glory (2 Corinthians 3:18). Both the forgiveness of sins and the power to live righteously begin with spiritual sight.

## **The Visible Standard of Righteousness**

Toward the end of Christ's earthly ministry he turned His attention more and more toward His disciples. He seemed to look forward to those times away from the crowds,

when He could draw them to Himself and prepare them for His departure. He wanted them to understand that a time of transition was nearing, a time when He must go to the Father. His speech was mysterious and ambiguous to the natural mind. "A little while, and you will not see me. Again a little while, and you will see me . . . the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me."

How is it that the world will no longer see Jesus but His disciples will? Jesus continues, "I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, that he may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world can't receive; for it doesn't see Him. You know Him, for He lives with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also . . . A little while, and you will not see me. Again a little while, and you will see Me" (John 14:15-19, 16:16 WEB).

The world cannot believe what it can't see with the natural eye. The world could see the physical Christ but Jesus spoke of a time when only those with spiritual eyes could see Him.

Jesus said, that He would ask the Father to give "another (*allos*) Comforter." The Greek word that is translated another is *allos*, meaning another of the same kind or identical. How does Jesus come to us and abide with us? How is He made visible to us and not to the world? He comes to us through the Comforter, the one who is (*allos*) identical to Jesus. Jesus said of His coming, "I will come to you." Christ has come to us through the Holy Spirit and the promise is kept, "I will never leave you or forsake you." Although Christ has ascended to the right hand of the Father, He has never left us alone. He has come! The world can't see Him but we see Him. To the sinner, the lifted-up-Christ is the reproof of sin but to the saints, who see Him by the Spirit, He is still the visual standard of righteousness.

Christ spoke of this standard in John 16:8-11. "And when he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness. . . Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more."

Two different groups of people are spoken of here--they and you--the world and the believer. When the world sees Christ, they are reprov'd of sin. When the believer sees Christ, he takes on the likeness of what he sees, and the righteousness that results belongs to Jesus alone.

While He was in the world, Jesus was the light of men. Then the physical Christ served as the visible standard of righteousness on the earth and the judgment on those who rejected His words and deeds was severe. Jesus had to go away before the Holy Spirit could come. He said of this great transition, "I am going to my Father, and you won't see me any more." The Standard would no longer be seen with physical eyes, but by spiritual sight.

The Holy Spirit takes the standard, (Jesus) the Logos, and convinces the believer of righteousness. But it does not stop there. He is much, much more. Christ has not only been made to us righteousness, but also sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). He is all and in all. He is the full meal deal as we partake of Him. He does not just save from having to pay for our sins. God had much more in mind when He sent His only begotten Son. True discipleship has little to do with general intelligence but is utterly dependent on spiritual sight. A true learner is a seer.

### **Spiritual Sight and truly being Christ's Disciple**

Jesus said to some Jews that believed on him, "If you remain (continue) in my word, then you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Consider what Jesus is saying here. Although these Jews believed on Christ, they were not yet truly His disciples. The Greek word for disciple means learner. The amazing thing about Christ is that He always knew just what to say to expose the bondage in the hearts of men that kept them from following Him. To the rich young ruler who was bound by his wealth, Jesus said, "One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me, taking up the cross" (Mark 10:21). Jesus asked him to give up his wealth and prestige for a cross!

These Jews were under an even greater bondage to their pride and traditions, which kept them from truly being Christ's disciples and fully knowing the truth and the freedom that it brings. They depended on the righteousness of Moses and were still under the law. They proved this when they said, "We are disciples of Moses." But in the economy of God, you cannot coast into heaven on another man's righteousness. You cannot be another man's disciple and fulfill the plan of God. You must be a disciple of Christ. Jesus cut straight to the chase. In saying to them, "you will know the truth," He was implying that though they knew the law, they didn't know the truth. By saying, "the

truth will make you free," He was telling them that they were in bondage. They got the message and it offended them. "We are Abraham's seed," they boastfully retorted, "and have never been in bondage to anyone. How do you say, 'You will be made free?'" (John 8:31-33). Talk about blindness!

They were in bondage to the Roman Empire, but more than that, they were in bondage to the law and the traditions of the elders even as they spoke. Jesus revealed the truth about their captivity. "I say the things which I have seen with my Father; and you also do the things which you have seen with your father" (John 8:39). "Our father is Abraham," they answered. Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham didn't do this . . . You are of your Father, the devil . . ." Wait a minute! Weren't these believing Jews? How could they believe on Jesus and yet have Satan as their father? They may have believed, but they certainly weren't teachable and so had not yet been taught the truth. Truth has to be assimilated or it remains fiction to the hearer. As one unknown sage put it, "When a man who is honestly mistaken hears the truth, he will either quit being mistaken, or cease to be honest."

The term Father was a title of respect given to teachers who shaped the minds or thoughts of men. This is why Alexander the Great claimed Aristotle, the principal shaper of western rationalism, as his father. These Jews were not truly learners or Disciples of Christ, but defenders of the teachings of their father, who had enslaved them through the traditions of men. Their position was based on what they had seen with their father, the father of lies. They were clearly not Christ's disciples yet. To be a disciple of Christ requires a new heart that manifests itself in obedience and love for Him. How could they learn of Christ while arguing with Him? Jesus ended the debate when he said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (See John 8:38-56).

Thousands of years before Christ, Abraham saw Christ and was glad? This is clearly one of the best definitions of faith in the entire Bible. Abraham looked, through spiritual eyes, at those things that are not seen. If these Jews who were beginning to believe on Christ were truly Abraham's seed they would have possessed Abraham's spiritual sight. They would have seen what Abraham saw. They would rejoice in what Abraham rejoiced in. But no, they lacked the family resemblance. The absence of Abraham's

vision and faith was clear evidence that they were not the seed of Abraham. Instead of seeing Christ's day and rejoicing, they tried to kill Him. They couldn't help but do the things that they had seen with their father.

Abraham looked at those unseen eternal things, beyond the temporal realm. He saw Christ and rejoiced. He saw "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). He saw Christ! This is the secret of Abraham's faith. He saw Christ! God has no grandkids. This seeing heart that Abraham had could not be passed even to Isaac, the next generation, much less hundreds of generations later to these Jews. The kingdom of heaven is not entered by fleshly birthright. Paul observed, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption." Later he added to this thought and wrote, "[While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal](#)" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Abraham did not see himself in a Cadillac, sporting a \$3,000 suit, diamond ring and a Rolex watch like the hedonistic, "name it and claim it" faith-teachers of our day. No! He saw Christ's day and rejoiced. His faith was based on sacrifice and hope. He refused the wealth of Sodom, the security of its city walls and dwelt by faith in tents, awaiting a better hope, looking for that city whose Builder and Maker is God. This is faith. Faith is seeing beyond the temporal to the eternal--looking at those things that are not seen. It is not a means of gaining wealth. In fact, Paul exhorts us to withdraw from men of corrupt minds who suppose that gain is godliness (1 Timothy 6:5)

True faith is Christ-centered. Faith works by love. Love takes no thought for itself (1 Corinthians 13:5). True faith is not driven by private ambition but requires sacrifice. Moses by faith saw beyond the carnal and temporal world of need and desire, want and lust and "[chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season . . . Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt](#)" (Hebrews 11:25-26). This is the kind of faith that Abraham had, a faith based upon spiritual sight. The blessing of Abraham that is given to all true believers is the Spirit, who gave Abraham such clarity of vision, the very Spirit that led him out of the luxury and earthly security of Babylon to dwell in a humble tent in an unknown land.

Jesus died to take away the veil that obscures spiritual sight. The Jews to this day still have eyes that cannot see because they have not appropriated the sight of their Savior by faith. We can be just as blind as we cling to our own traditions and refuse to follow His Spirit. We get letters from hundreds of saints who are learning to be sons of God and this is a great blessing, but there are still many that cannot hear or see Him for themselves. The best they can do is pass on some tidbit from the vision of others that caught their fancy. It makes us sad to know of such a great inheritance we have in Christ, spiritual sight, and see it sold so short. Dare to open your hearts to Him this day and pray that He opens the eyes of your understanding as you read the scriptures. Pray that He speaks to you through other sources as well. The One who is called The Word has never quit speaking. Be watchful. Perfect wisdom comes forth out of the mouths of babes for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Remember that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. Don't look to others for spiritual sight. See with your own eyes. He still rewards those who diligently seek Him.