

MAKING ALL MEN SEE

The restoration of the blind man's sight (recorded in John chapter nine) enabled him to see the blue in the sky, the green in the leaves, and bundles of love tied with the strings of smiles on the faces of his loved ones. The restoration of his spiritual vision however, enabled him to see greater things than these. With 20/20 vision he was able to see that Jesus was the Son of God and that the Jewish leaders were blind in more serious ways than he had been. His blindness may have had to do with cataracts, astigmatism or a damaging of the optic nerve. Theirs had to do with a blindness of the heart. Jesus, the divine expert in optometry and ophthalmology has called Christians to work with him in the restoration of man's spiritual vision.

Through the sensory organs man is able to explore and experience life in the physical realm. In this dimension man is able to hear music, taste food, feel sensations, smell fragrances and see sights. However, there is a spiritual world just as real to be explored and experienced, and man has spiritual sensory organs that parallel those in the physical. In this realm he sees better and farther with the eyes of the mind.

Scripture has much to say about spiritual blindness and vision. Jesus told his disciples that they were blessed for being able to see the mysteries of the kingdom of God, while others in the same audience were left to grope in the darkness of misunderstanding. (Matt 13: 11- 16) He expressed frustration with the Jewish leaders whom he called "blind guides" for failing to see how their distinctions between swearing by the temple and by the gold in the

temple were superficial and illusionary. (Matt 23: 16- 22) He painted the somewhat humorous picture of a blind man escorting a group of blind men across ditch-laden terrain. Leaders and followers alike would meet a common muddy end. (Matt 15: 13, 14) Paul prayed that the Ephesians would have the “eyes of their understanding enlightened” that they would be able to see the hope of God’s calling, the riches of His inheritance and the greatness of His power toward those who believe. (Eph 1: 18, 19)

But as it is in the physical, so it often is, in the spiritual. That is, conditions affecting vision are complex and manifold. An understanding of these is crucial to the quality of help we are able to provide toward the objective of making all men see. A few are here listed. Macular degeneration manifests, among other symptoms, a blind spot in the center of the visual field. Peripheral vision is usually not affected by this condition. This symptom can also be manifested in the spiritual realm. People with otherwise good vision, can have an inability to see certain things. The irate Pharisees, who objected to Jesus restoring the blind man’s sight on the Sabbath day, may have suffered from macular degeneration of a spiritual sort. Though they could see clearly that Moses, (a prophet of the distant past) had been authorized by God, they could not see that Jesus, (present in their midst), and manifesting greater miraculous credentials, had the backing of God for his ministry works and teachings. (John 9: 28- 33)

Retinal detachment is a severe visual condition that can lead to permanent blindness. Patients suffering with this ailment see a shadow or curtain over part of their field of vision. Advocates of a return to the shadows of the Old Testament may need to schedule an appointment for re-attachment of their

spiritual retinas. They do not see how the shadows of the former dispensation have given way to the substance brought through Christ, in the present dispensation. Sadly, a veil of misunderstanding still obscures their reading of the Old Testament. (II Cor 3: 14)

Myopia, more commonly known as nearsightedness, is another disease of the eye. Those affected by it are able to see close objects well. More distant objects like highway signs or writing on a chalk board appear blurred and indistinguishable. Christians who do not add to their faith Peter's recommended virtues may have a diagnosis of spiritual myopia. Hear him. "For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins." (II Pet 1: 9 NASB) We must be able to see how a failure to move beyond the rudimentary elements of our faith will affect us in our ultimate goal of heaven.

Diagnosing these various conditions and administering Jesus' optical solutions to people who think their vision is fine is not easy. Nonetheless Paul's vivid description of his ministry helps us accept and execute ours. "*...I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to **make all men see** what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Christ Jesus*" (Eph 3: 8b- 9)

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