



“The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, ‘It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.’” (Jn. 5:10)

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Part 1

INTRODUCTION

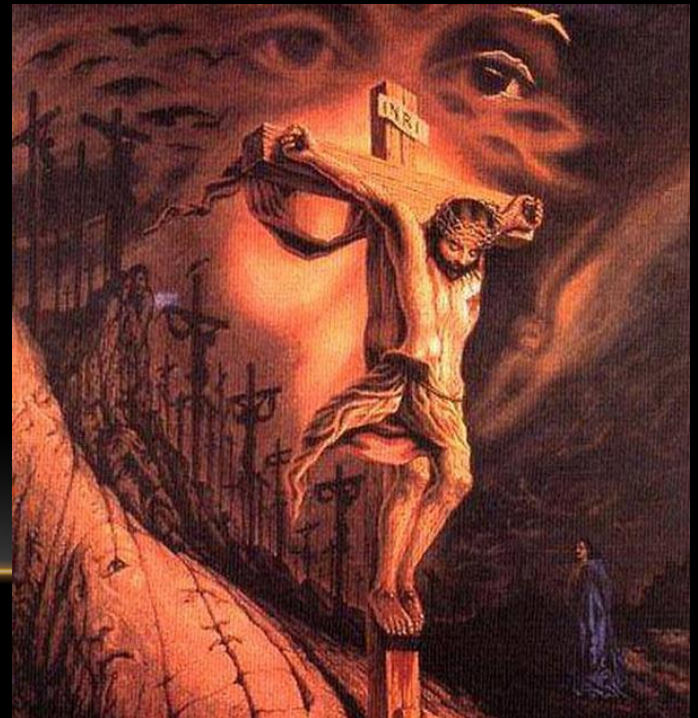
“Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:
‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;

INTRODUCTION

For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear
with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and
turn,
So that I should heal them. ’” (Matt. 13:13-15)

INTRODUCTION

- Seeing vs. Perceiving
- “Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him...” (Mk. 7:18)



OUTLINE

- General observations
 - Causes of spiritual blindness
 - Symptoms of spiritual blindness
 - Treatment of spiritual blindness
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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Typically occurs gradually

- Gradual disconnect from God
- “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.” (Heb. 2:1)
- May develop rapidly



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

2. Selective blindness

- Buffet style Christianity
- “The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, ‘How can this Man give us His flesh to eat.’” (Jn. 6:52)



THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING
TO YOU?

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

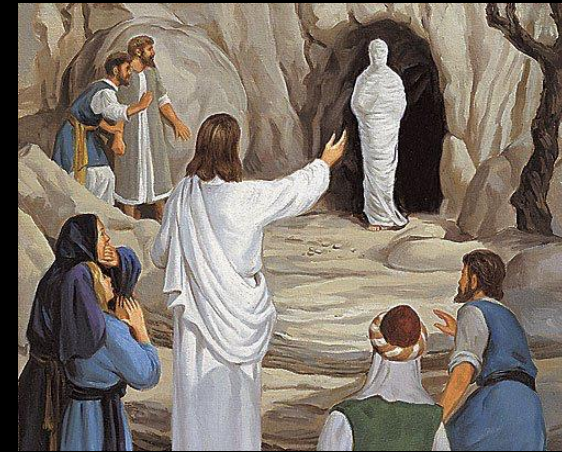
3. God does not make one spiritually blind
- Pharaoh
 - “But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh...”
(Ex. 9:12)
 - “But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.”
(Ex. 8:32)



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

4. Spiritual blindness is a choice

- Resurrection of Lazarus
- “Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.” (Jn. 11:45-46)



CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

1. Incorrect understanding of who God is and/or His message
 - Pharisees
 - “Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about 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 they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’” (Matt. 15:7-9)
 - Healing on the Sabbath

CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

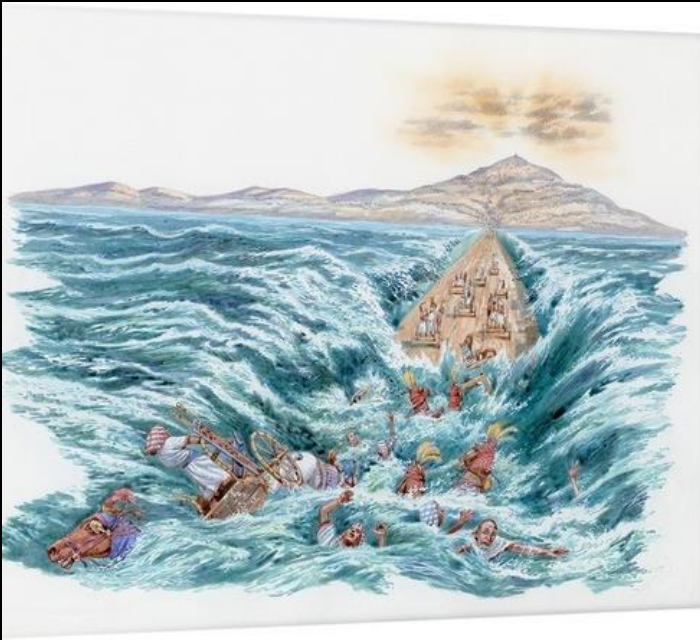
2. Preconceived notions

- Naaman the Syrian
- “But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, ‘Indeed, I said to myself, “He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.” Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?’ So he turned and went away in a rage.” (2 Kings 5:11-12)

CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

3. Stubbornness

- Pharaoh vs. Naaman



CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

3. Lack of a spiritual guide or confession father

“He who gives himself in the hand of a good teacher will have no such worries, but will live without anxiety and be saved in Christ Jesus our Lord ...”

(St. Symeon the New Theologian)

“I know of no falling away of a monk which did not come from his reliance on his own sentiments. Nothing is more pitiful, nothing more disastrous than to be one’s own [spiritual] director.”

(St. Basil)

CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

3. Untreated symptoms

- Samson



SUMMARY

- **General Observation**

- Typically occurs gradually
- Selective Blindness
- God does not make one spiritually blind
- Spiritual blindness is a choice

- **Causes of Spiritual Blindness**

- Incorrect understanding of who God is and/or His message
- Preconceived notions
- Stubbornness
- Lack of a spiritual guide or confession father
- Untreated symptoms