

# Sacred Scriptures

*"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God,  
which liveth and abideth forever"*

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## THE BLIND RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT

*by Brad Rankin*

Jesus performed an extraordinary number of diverse miracles during his ministry which was not an uncommon sign of a man from God. Jesus empowered his apostles with many signs and wonders and the Holy Spirit enabled other devout children of God to perform miraculous acts. Prophets and apostles demonstrated God's miraculous powers for His glory. Naaman was cleansed of leprosy by the powers of the prophet Elisha. We remember that it is recorded that Elijah, Elisha, Peter, and Paul raised the dead. However, as amazing and awesome cleansing leprosy and raising the dead may seem to us, we must consider the significance of Jesus Christ's power to restore sight.

We recall that when John the Baptist's disciples came to Jesus inquiring about his being the Savior, Jesus responded with a list of evidences that would prove to John that he was the Christ. Jesus instructed these disciples to return to John and to inform him that "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt 11:5). There is no doubt that John understood the importance of Jesus including the fact that the blind were receiving their sight. John was fully aware that David and Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would have the power to open the eyes of the blind.

In Psalm 146:8, David wrote, "the LORD openeth the eyes of the blind." Isaiah stated, "the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness" (Isa 29:18), "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened" (Isa 35:5), and that the Messiah was

coming "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 42:7). These statements seem to refer to both physical and spiritual blindness. Although miraculous healing of physical blindness is gone, the power to restore sight to those who are spiritually blind is still with us today. Each and every Christian receives their spiritual sight at baptism.

All Christians can recall the days when they lived in spiritual blindness. We were wandering in the darkness of sin, stumbling through this sinful world in the need for a leader and a guide, and we were blessed in finding Jesus. These days are not recalled with fondness, but these memories help us as we reach out to the lost souls who are our neighbors. Each of us is capable of sharing this gift of spiritual sight with others.

We remember in the account of the apostle Paul's conversion, that Paul was not instructed by Jesus regarding what should be done for salvation. Paul was told that a man named Ananias would reveal it to him. We recall that Paul received his sight at the same time that he received the gospel, immediately before his baptism. Each of us has an obligation to those around us, much like Ananias did in restoring Paul's sight (Acts 9). Ananias was the instrument used to give sight back to Paul both physically and spiritually.

If we are not diligent as Christians, the blindness that once ruled our lives can easily return.

*(Continued on page 2)*

**inside...**

Beware of False Doctrines  
A Criminal Grace  
How Good is the Guarantee?  
Deliverance on God's Terms

*by Kevin Morton  
by Eric Owens  
by Marty James  
by Jeremy Morris*

pages 2-3  
pages 3-5  
pages 5-7  
page 8

*(Continued from page 1)*

The scriptures include a number of examples of disciples that allowed their blindness to return. One example provided to us is the congregation of Christians at Laodicea. The Laodiceans believed themselves to be rich and in need of nothing, but Jesus informed them that they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked..." (Rev 3:17) Jesus instructed them, through the apostle John, to "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev 3:18).

Peter has instructed us concerning the spiritual attributes that build upon our faith, such as virtue and knowledge (II Pet 1:5-7). He continues "but he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (II Pet 1:9). Peter is telling us that if we fail to grow and mature as Christians, we can become spiritually nearsighted. This impairment can be extremely harmful to our spiritual lives. We must always keep our eyes, and our focus, on our eternal reward.

The apostle John reminds us in his first epistle that blindness can be caused by hating our brother (I John 2:9). We then recall the last

attribute in II Peter 1 added to our faith is charity, our deep concern and love for the souls around us. It is easy to see people in the world who suffer from this type of blindness, but the apostle John was warning Christians not to fall into this spiritual blindness. Each of us must examine our own lives and relationships to be certain we have clear vision when it comes to our love, care, and concern for our brethren and for those outside the body of Christ.

Just as David and Isaiah prophesied, Jesus continues to open the eyes of the blind. All of us are a witness to this power. Jesus continues to be the salve that we need to maintain clear vision and to prevent becoming nearsighted. We must always thank God for the gift of Jesus, and that we have been blessed to have received our sight. We must never forget that we are to assist our neighbors in gaining their spiritual sight. As Christians we must continue to use our eyes of faith, so that we can follow the admonishment of Paul "to walk by faith, not be sight" (II Cor 5:7).

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*Member of Gardner, KS church of Christ*

## BEWARE OF FALSE DOCTRINES

*by Kevin Morton*

Several years ago, I had lunch with a man that I worked with named Anthony. I was working for KU Student Housing at the time, and he was a resident assistant. We started talking and he asked me the question: "Are you saved?" I told him that yes, I had accepted Jesus and been baptized, but that didn't seem to satisfy him. He replied, "That's great, but was there ever a time when you realized that Jesus was in your heart?" Again, I said yes, I realized I needed to be baptized, and did it. Still not satisfied with my answer, he asked a third time, "But when was the exact moment that you knew Jesus was in your heart?" At this point, I was starting to get a little irritated because in my mind I had already answered this question twice. I was beginning to see, though, that baptism was not what he was trying to get at, so I told him that my belief developed over time, and I

came to the realization that I needed Jesus as my Savior gradually. I finally realized that he did not think baptism was a necessary part of salvation, so I asked him what he thought about scriptures like Acts 2:38 and I Peter 3:21. His reply was that he thought that it is a good idea to be baptized, and it makes God happy, but it is not a necessary part of salvation. At that point, our conversation began to shift to other topics.

This is just one example of how obvious the truth can be to one person, and how Satan can disguise it so cleverly for another. I'm sure many, if not all of us, have faced situations not unlike this one. Anthony is one of the kindest, most caring, and cheerful people I know, and I'm sure he wasn't

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

purposely trying to mislead me. He showed concern for my soul. As Anthony expressed, believing in Jesus is a vital step to being saved; however, the Bible also teaches us that baptism is another equally important step in the process of salvation.

There are countless false doctrines in the world today. Some are quite obvious, but others, like their originator, Satan, are a bit more subtle, and have the potential to slowly and quietly work their way into even the most knowledgeable of Christian minds.

2 Cor. 11:13-15 tells us that people who twist the word of God, or simply ignore or overlook parts of it on purpose "are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve." This is why we must continue to diligently go over the word again and again. This is why you see elderly men and women who have spent a lifetime studying the word continue to do so until the day they go to meet the Lord. It is amazing to me, but it seems as though the more I study God's word, the more things I pick up on that I had not noticed before. This is true even of scriptures that I have read countless times before.

Besides gaining new knowledge, we must also study continuously in order to stay in peak spiritual health, that we might "...always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..." (1 Peter 3:15). We must strive to be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11 who "received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." Even though Paul had been filled with the Holy Spirit and was teaching these people, they continued to verify what he said by using the Old Law. In an age where that measure of the Holy Spirit is no longer given to people, we

must make every effort to do the same thing, because as already stated, there are many false doctrines in the world, and some may come mistakenly by one of our own members.

No one is perfect, except Jesus, and one of our own brethren may make a mistake in something he says or teaches, in which case we must use the word to correct him "with gentleness and respect." We have an example of this in Acts 18:24-28 where we find a man named Apollos who had heard the teachings of John, but not those of Jesus. He spoke boldly in the synagogue about what he had heard, but it was not the whole truth. So, Priscilla and Aquila explained to him about Jesus. The end result was that Apollos now knew the complete truth of Jesus, and went to

Achaia, where in verses 27 and 28 we see that he "was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."

Our best weapon against false doctrine is the word of God. Apollos used it in this example, and it is still the most effective tool we have today. 1 John 4:1 also bears this fact out: "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

I will leave you with a final warning from Paul against false doctrines. This warning can be found in Romans 16:17,18: "I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people."

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