

38. Is seeing really believing?

June 25, 2011

One of my three jobs is being an artist. I draw tactical drawings of SWAT teams or our military special operation groups around the country. I love doing it. To draw some of my drawings, I have to composite several photos to accomplish what I want to portray.

Here is one example:

To draw a scene of a police helicopter with a SWAT team member covering criminals from the air, I had to use three different photos. First, I got a photo of a helicopter from Pima County Sheriff's Department. Because the pilot was not looking down as I wanted him in this photo, I took a photo of someone with a pilot helmet and a pair of sunglasses. Then, I asked one of the SWAT team members to pose for me while the helicopter was sitting on the ground. I combined all these photos by using Photoshop program in my computer to make them into one single photo for me to draw from. Then I started to draw it freehand. After about a month of drawing, here is the result.

If I didn't tell you how I got the photo resources of this drawing, you would think that I took a photo of the flying helicopter with a SWAT team member in it. So is seeing really believing? I think not.

If you only can believe what you see, then it is not faith. It should be called eyewitnessing a proof.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

The former blind man now reached the climax of his knowledge of Jesus Christ and his faith in Him. Jesus was no longer "a man called Jesus," or "a prophet," or "a man of God," to this man. We will see a wonderful salvation happen right in front of our eyes this morning. To this man, he not only gets to see everything around him physically, but also get to see Jesus and acknowledge Him as his Messiah spiritually.

A. GOD STILL FINDS PEOPLE

John 9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

This is absolutely beyond cool. Do you know why it is so cool? Note who is looking for whom. Jesus heard about the excommunication of this former blind man, so He looked for him in Jerusalem. We don't know where He found him, but He did. This reminds me of a verse from the Book of Luke:

Luke 15:4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"

Do you know Jesus still looks for people whom He can help. He is looking for sinners to forgive; looking for discouraged to encourage; looking for downcast to give hope; and looking for condemned to bless.

When I hear a new born-again Christian say, "I found God," I had to chuckle. I know what he or she meant. But in reality God has never been lost in the universe so we have to go find this poor God. We are the ones who were lost without Him. If

you don't know Jesus as your Savior and Lord, He is calling your name right now. His arms are stretched out wide to find you and embrace you. All you have to do is turn to Him and receive Him into your heart.

As I have mentioned before, the phrase "the Son of God" has a direct reference to God. Not in the sense of an offspring of God like the Jehovah's Witness and the Mormon doctrines, rather the second person in the Trinity as God Himself.

The ancient Jews as well as the current Jews connect the "Son of God" with the Messiah who is God Himself. Many of us know what kind of answer Peter, one of Jesus' disciples gave to the Lord when they were asked:

Matthew 16:15-17 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Some would say, "Yeah, Peter said that because he wanted to get some brownie points from Jesus." No. What about the comments made by satan himself?

Matthew 4:3 Now when the tempter [satan] came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

Did satan know that Jesus is the Messiah? You betcha. He knew it. He was in heaven before he fell and became satan. He was told by God the Father in Genesis 3:15:

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

Who else can we find who would know that the Son of God means God Himself? Do you think that the high priest of that time would know? Duh!

Matthew 26:62-65 And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" 64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." 65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!"

If Caiaphas didn't think that the Son of God means God Himself, he would not say that Jesus was blaspheming.

B. HE BELIEVED IN HIM AND HE WORSHIPED HIM

John 9:36-38 He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" 37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." 38 Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

Folks, this is the moment of conversion of this man – his eternal address was changing from hell to heaven right at this moment. This man didn't care that he was excommunicated from the society. When he was blind, the Jewish religious rulers didn't care whether he was alive or dead. Now that he can see, they want him to be out of their sight permanently. Some compassion these people have.

Jesus said to this former blind man, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you,” in v37. If you are hearing the words coming out of my mouth, you are hearing from God. I can say that with the authority of the Bible, not because I have any fancy thing to say or declare, but because I am speaking the Word of God which is His voice.

Yes, you cannot see Jesus through your physical eyes, but if you are willing to believe in Jesus like this man, you will hear from Him and you will get to know the Savior of the world.

I remember my own salvation moment. Sometime in January, 1987, at that time my family was attending Grace Chapel, now it is known as “Grace to the Nation” in Tucson. After the sermon from the pastor, he closed the service. There was no altar call, no salvation message. The Holy Spirit had been working on my heart without me knowing for sometime already.

We were sitting at the last row. As we were getting out of the pew, if I took four steps to the right side, I would be out of the church without knowing Jesus. But before I took any step, an invisible hand nudged my right shoulder to turn to left so that I walked down the aisle and knelt down and asked God to forgive me for my sins. Since then, it has never been the same.

Please notice how v38 ended – “he worshiped Him.” If Jesus Christ is not God, then why did He accept this man’s worship? Peter, Paul, Barnabas in the Book of Acts, and the angel from Rev 19:10 certainly didn’t accept worship.

The original Greek word for ‘worship’ is ‘proskyneo’. This word also was used in chapter 4 of John.

John 4:23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

According to the Bible dictionary, ‘worship’ means “kneeling or prostration to do homage to God.” It is far more than a simple “Thank you.” This man was not thanking Jesus for the healing, rather he was giving his homage to the Lord as his God.

C. TRUE VISION AND TRUE BLINDNESS

John 9:39-41 And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.” 40 Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?” 41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.

If someone takes the first portion of v39 out of context, he would say, “I thought that Jesus came to the world to save the lost, not to judge it.” Yes. However, in context, it does not contradict John 3:16. To understand what Jesus meant in v39, we must read John 3:17-20.

John 3:17-20 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men

loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every-one practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

By people's own choice against God, their decision condemns themselves to be judged by Him. They cannot say that God didn't do anything to save them. What else could the Lord possibly do more than sending His own Son to die for our sins? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

The reason for our Lord's coming to this earth two thousand years ago was salvation, but the result of His coming was condemnation of those who would not believe. The same sun that brings beauty out of the seeds also exposes creepy insects hiding under the rocks; the same sun that melts wax also hardens clay.

The religious leaders were blind spiritually and would not admit it; therefore, the light of truth only made them blinder. This former blind man admitted his need, and he received both physical and spiritual sight. No one is so blind as he who will not see, the one who thinks he has "all truth" and there is nothing more for him to learn.

D. EDUCATED, BUT STILL IGNORANT

An English philosopher A.C. Grayling, who spent 30 years compiling "The Good Book – a Humanist Bible." It is recently published. He was raised without religion. He formerly taught at Oxford University, and now teaches at the University of London.

This book quotes many secular philosophers to counteract the Christian Bible. He thinks that Christianity is almost self-evidently absurd: "I could never believe the sin committed by Eve in the Garden of Eden was all that serious," he said. "It would seem to me that knowledge was a good thing to have." Sadly, Grayling missed the entire point. God was not jealous that Adam and Eve could have knowledge, but He knew that their disobedience from their pride would lead them to spiritual and physical death.

Obviously Grayling is very well educated and accomplished man from human perspective, but spiritually he is a blind man and he doesn't even admit it. He will find out someday when he meets his Maker face to face. He also will find out that it is, too, late for him to change his mind then.

The people who believe in the evolution theory and atheists have one thing in common. They are very staunch about their religion and faith. Someone would object, "Atheists do not have a religion. That is why they are atheists." I beg to differ. They firmly believe that there is no God under no circumstance, even though the whole creation speaks the handiwork of God. They deny it with their faith in the idea of non-existence of God. In other words, a person has to have faith in atheism to believe that there is no God.

The listening Pharisees were bothered by what Jesus just said. That is why they asked, "Are we *blind also*?" They were expecting a negative answer, but Jesus already called them "*blind leaders of the blind*" in Matthew 15:14, so they had their answer. They were blinded by their pride, their self-righteousness, their tradition, and their false interpretation of the Word of God.

Despite all the miracles Jesus performed in the last two and a half years, the Pharisees chose to ignore everything because what Jesus said threatened their pride and carnal desires. It is the same for the unbelievers of Year 2011. They pretty much don't mind about all the other religions except Christianity. Because it speaks the truth of God which reveals all of their ungodly lives with His penetrating light. It is no wonder why they hated enough to crucify Him and still hate Him now.

If you came to our church for the first time and you are not a born-again Christian, you have the most important decision of your life to make right now. You can ignore the invitation from Jesus to be saved by His grace and mercy alone or you can walk out the door and stay in the spiritual darkness and pretending that you've never heard a true Gospel message before.

You need to make the right choice for your eternal life at this point. Contrary to the atheist A.C. Grayling's belief, there is a God who will judge what you decide on this earth – accepting Jesus into your heart or rejecting Him. Don't be like these prideful spiritually blind Pharisees who thought they were fine. If you can hear their voice from their eternal damnation, they would tell you to choose Jesus.

E. APPLICATIONS

- 1) God can be as far as the other side of the universe when we reject Him, but He is as close as our next heartbeat when we seek Him with a sincere heart.**
- 2) Spiritual blindness is caused by our own pride, self-righteousness, tradition, and false interpretation of the Word of God.**