Introduction

Why is so difficult for some people to see Jesus? Gail B. Trafford; “It is not the darkness that blocks your vision so much as what is between you and God”.

What lies between you and God? Is it pride? Unbelief? Evidence? Pride lures us into living our lives apart from God and in independence of His revelation. The proud person depends on himself or herself rather than on the Lord God. This creates a kind of supernatural darkness; a wicked blindness. It was Augustine who said; “If you believe in the Gospel what you like, and reject what you don’t like, it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourself”.

John chapter 9 presents the sixth of seven miracles recorded in this gospel to prove that Jesus Christ is God, Jesus is Deity, Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. The first three signs pointed how how a person is saved; through the Word (water to wine); by faith (healing the nobleman’s son); and by grace (healing the impotent man). The last four signs show the results of salvation: satisfaction (the feeding of the 5,000); peace (stilling the storm); light (healing the blind man) and life (the raising of Lazarus from the dead)(see Warren Wierbe; Outlines of the New Testament; p.235). We need light. We have seen the characteristics of the lost sinner; and how Jesus saves the sinner; the controversy surrounding the miracle and now the sinner’s confession of faith.

The former blind man doesn’t realize it; but the safest place for him is outside the Jewish Temple. The Jews cast him out, but Jesus took him in. When I first became a Christian, I returned to the religious tradition I had been born into; and raised and educated and confirmed. But it was not to last long. Like Paul this man “lost his religion” only to find Jesus; salvation and the way to heaven. In John’s account of the man’s confession of faith; we see four characteristics that make for spiritual vision; the ability to see Jesus. (1) Jesus is the one who initiates the relationship; Jesus takes the first step toward the sinner. (2) the sinner’s response; faith, guarded faith; but it results in (3) recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ and finally (4) worship.

Sighted Souls See The Savior (vv.35-38)

A Divine First Move (v.35)

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?

Chrysostom wrote; “The Jews cast him out of the Temple; the Lord of the Temple found him”. Has your testimony of Jesus Christ separated you from family or friends? Then it will bring you closer to the Lord Jesus. William Barclay wrote; “Jesus is always true to the man who is true to him”. You will note that Jesus went out and “found him”. Jesus makes the first move. Jesus initiates salvation. If God didn’t take the first step, no one would be saved. Sinners simply
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don’t have the ability to locate God. The criminal doesn’t really seek friendship with the cop. “There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good; there is not even one” (Rom.3:10-12).

Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:44). “You did not choose Me” Jesus told the disciples; “but I chose you” (15:16).

Salvation begins in God the Father and continues in God the Son and finishes with God the Spirit. If I can talk a person into receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, then someone a little more clever than me can talk them out of it. Salvation depends on God’s sovereign grace; and God’s gracious power. Some of the third, fourth and fifth century manuscripts read; “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” Jesus on a fairly regular basis calls himself “The Son of Man” (some 80 times in the N.T.). The title identifies Jesus as the long awaited Messiah spoken of by the Old Testament prophets. Jesus is asking the former blind man if he believed (was certain) in the promised Messiah of Israel.

We find a second glorious truth in this verse; loyalty brings revelation. The person who is true to Jesus invites the revelation of Jesus. In other words, Jesus reveals Himself to those who identify with Him; and He rewards them with His presence and a richer revelation. What is the penalty of loyalty to Jesus? You may be ridiculed, you may be vilified, you may be persecuted, prosecuted, penalized, or perhaps even put to death at the hands of men. What is the reward? A richer walk with Jesus, an increasing knowledge of who He is; and the wonder of His presence and love!

The former blind man has a problem; he has been kicked out of his religious tradition; the place where Israel’s Messiah was supposed to show up. Jesus shows up to a man who has been kicked out of his religious tradition and asks him if He believes in Israel’s Messiah.

A Dependent Response (v.36)

*John 9:36; He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?*

Jesus makes a direct appeal to this man to believe! You will note that to this direct appeal to believe the former blind man makes a further inquiry; he asks one more question; “Who is he Lord, that I may believe him?” The man is unwilling to commit himself without knowing why! Who is the Messiah? The man’s reply reveals something about the man’s heart. God has been preparing that heart. Remember the progress; the man has been healed; he already perceives Jesus as a prophet (v.17) and from God (v.33). He is convinced that Jesus is a messenger from God and has a message from God. Yes salvation begins with God but continues with a response of faith; Jesus declared that sinners were to “repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). In the opening chapter of John’s gospel we read “But as many as received Him, to them
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He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12). And of course the most quoted and remembered verse in all the Bible “that whoever believes in Jesus shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). **The miracle has forced this blind man to take Jesus seriously. Signs and miracles in and of themselves do not constitute saving faith.** Lot’s of people have superficial faith. They believe on the surface. “We can believe what we choose. We are answerable for what we choose to believe” (John Henry Newman).

**A Discerning Evaluation (vv.37-38a)**

*John 9:37; And Jesus said to him, You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.*

“If you accept the authority of Jesus in your life, then you accept the authority of His words” (Colin Urquhart).

The person who healed you, is also the person willing to save you. You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you”. Do you know why the former blind man can see Jesus? Because Jesus made his eyes! Do you realize the eye is one of the most complex organic objects in the universe? It moves an average of 100,000 times a day. Numerous muscles and tear ducts are in place to keep the eye moist, protected and functioning. Our eyes process 1.5 million bits of information simultaneously and provide 80% of the sensory stimulation sent to the brain. Eyes receive light images traveling at 186,000 miles per second through the iris, which opens and closes to let in just the right amount of light. These images travel through a lens made of transparent cells which focuses them on the retina at the back of the eyeball. The retina covers less than one square inch of surface. Yet this square inch contains 137 million light-sensitive receptor cells, 130 million rod cells (designed specifically to see black and white), and 7 million cone cells (allowing color vision). Finally the image is sent at a rate of 300 miles per hour to the brain for processing. Human beings have adopted, designed and patterned the camera lens after the human eye (Adapted from the Human Body: Accident or Design?, p. 56-58).

“Ears that hear and eyes that see--The Lord has made them both” (Prov.20:12).

My grandma was fond of saying; “There’s nothin’ so annoying as arguing with a person who knows what he’s talking about.” Open your eyes and see Jesus. When the Samaritan woman made reference to a coming Messiah Jesus said; “I who speak to you am He” (John 4:26). “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent” (John 6:29). The former sightless man now sees clearly. The one the former blind man first called Jesus (v.11), and then prophet (v.17), and the one from God (vv.31-33), now reveals Himself as Son of Man and Son of God (vv. 35-38). He has seen with eyes of faith and listened with ears of faith, not carelessly or critically like the religious leaders (see Roger L. Fredrikson; Mastering The New Testament; p. 176). Blaise Pascal said “There are three roads to belief: reason, habit, revelation”. The former blind man thinks with his brain; sees with his eyes and believes with his heart. Joseph Fort Newton has said, ‘Belief is truth held in the mind; faith is fire in the heart’.
The Spirit of God opened the former blind man’s heart to the truth. “Lord, I believe!”
Has the Spirit of God opened your heart to the truth? Proverbs 4:18; “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.”

The Christian has light in her heart. 2 Corinthians 4:6; “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”. We are light in the world (Matt. 5:14); we walk in the light (1 John 1) and we produce the fruit of light (Eph.5:8-9).

When the man said, “Lord I believe” his whole world changed. My whole world changed the day I believed Jesus.

A Disposition To Worship (vv.38b)

John 9:38; And he worshiped Him.

Worship is perhaps the final stage of belief. Belief in the true Jesus results in worship. The word ‘worship’ is an Anglo-Saxon word and means ‘worthship’ or ‘worthiness’. The most commonly translated ‘worship’ in the New Testament—though there are several other Greek words is proskuneo; to kiss or to kiss towards; or to kiss the hand; this was thought to be derived from the act of a slave that kisses the master’s hand; being a mark of reverence and respect; and implying affection.

With the absence of spiritual darkness comes the light of who Jesus really is. The Bible is a book about worship. In Exodus 3:1-6 Moses has an encounter with the living God. “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground” (NIV). Worship is first and foremost an encounter with the true God, the holy God, the living God. At God’s command Moses removes his sandals and covers his face; this is an act of reverence meant to communicate the unworthiness of Moses and the holiness of God. The fact that some people fail to recognize and worship Jesus means the darkness continues to linger in their souls. Should Jesus be worshipped?

Matthew 4:10; Then Jesus said to him, Away with you, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.

Is Jesus worshipped in the Bible? The Magi worship Jesus as a child (Matt.2:2, 8,11); Peter worships Jesus after he finds himself walking on the water, begins to sink and is lifted back into the boat (Matt.14:22-32); “And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God”. C.S. Lewis writes, "Among the Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if He were God. He claims to forgive sins. He says He has always existed. He says He is coming to judge the world at the end of time. Now let us get this clear. Among pantheists, like the Hindus of India, anyone might say that he is part of god or one with god. There would be nothing very
Sightless Souls See Themselves (vv.39-41)

The same light that brings hope and salvation can also blind others!

And Receive Judgment (v.39)

*John 9:39; 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.*

This passage can be difficult if not read in its context. “John evidently wants us to see that the activity of Jesus as the Light of the world inevitably results in judgment on those whose natural habitat is the darkness. They oppose the Light and they bring down condemnation on themselves accordingly (Leon Morris; *the Gospel According To John*; p.429).

For the person who admits his or her darkness; for the person who confesses the lonely emptiness and the persistent presence of sin; for the person willing to acknowledge there is something wrong with me; comes the opportunity to embrace the light. William Barclay writes: “Whenever a man is confronted with Jesus, that man at once passes a judgment on himself. If he sees in Jesus nothing to desire, nothing to admire, nothing to love, than he has condemned himself. If he sees in Jesus something to wonder at, something to respond to, something to reach out to, then he is on the way to God” (*The Gospel of John Vol.2*; p.50).

And Refuse To Admit Blindness (v.40)

*John 9:40; Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, Are we blind also?*

The Pharisees the religious leaders believe they see all too clearly. Because they claim to see; they claim to see Jesus and reject the evidence; they refuse Christ. They refuse to receive Christ.
The Gospel brings different reactions from different hearts; the blind sinner receives the truth and sees; the self-righteous religious person rejects the truth and sears and cauterizes his heart and spiritual eyes; burning and singeing so that darkness becomes even darker; and what little light they once had is now gone.

Oswald Chambers wrote; “Darkness is my point of view, my right to myself; light is God’s point of view.”

There is no more dangerous game than rejecting light.

“The man who is conscious of his own blindness, and eyes can be opened and who can be led more and more deeply into the truth. The man who thinks he knows it all, the man who does not realize that he cannot see, is the man who is truly blind and beyond hope and help” (Barclay; p. 50).

And Reject Sight (v.41a)

John 9:41; Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no sin;

The religious leaders expected they would be exempt from judgment. Yes the religious leaders opposed Jesus; they expected Jesus to say they were blind. But what he said shocked them and rocked them. He said that blindness was an excuse. Certainly physical blindness limits sight and makes excusable the inability to see.

If they really were blind, they would have been acting in ignorance, not knowing what they were doing. But they knew the law of God; they had access to the prophecies and promises of God; they were aware of spiritual things; they claimed to see; they failed to see God’s Son; and therefore they were judged guilty.

And Result In Doom (v.41b)

“. . .but now you say, We see. Therefore your sin remains.”

“The more knowledge a man has the more he is to be condemned if he does not recognize the good when he sees it. If the Pharisees had been brought up in ignorance, they could not have been condemned. The condemnation lay in the fact that they knew so much and claimed to see so well, and yet failed to recognize God’s son when he came. The law that responsibility is the other side of privilege is written into life” (William Barclay).

John 3:19; 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.

Conclusion
There is a tragic chasm between faith and rejection; between light and darkness.

What makes Jesus different? For centuries religious leaders have come and gone. Yet Jesus makes Himself the central issue of what it means to have a right relationship with God.

Other religious leaders have made their “teaching” the centerpiece of their message. For Jesus it isn’t simply his teaching, but his claims; his claims about Himself. Jesus claims to have authority over everything and everyone. Jesus heals on the Sabbath and the religious leaders are filled with rage; “This Man is not from God because He does not keep the Sabbath”(v.16). Jesus says; “For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Matt.12:8)

Jesus makes Himself the issue. Jesus asks His disciples “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am’? (Matt. 16:13). He doesn’t do this because of some personal insecurity; but rather because He is the issue.

Jesus demonstrates authority by forgiving sins, performing miracles, casting out demons and even conquering death. When Jesus rose from the dead, he did what no other religious leader has ever done; given us good reason to be able to ask and answer the question; “What will happen to us when we die?” Faith is not absent reason; Jesus provides good reasons to believe in Him.

Not only that but the resurrection of Jesus can be tested; while other religions may claim a “spiritual resurrection” (untestable) the Bible teaches a bodily resurrection. Jesus is different from other religious leaders in at least three ways; (1) He makes Himself the issue; not simply His teachings; (2) He backed up His claims with observable miracles; and (3) He conquers death in a historical resurrection.

Have you examined your spiritual eye sight lately? There aren’t charts on a wall to help with these test; only attitudes inside your heart. Is the Holy Spirit showing you any symptoms of spiritual blindness; are you dimming your ability to follow the Light of the World? What are you more likely to see the rules, or the ruler? In doing what’s right or relying on God’s love?

_O make me understand it_  
_Help me to take it in,_  
_Will it meant to Thee, The Holy One, _  
_To bear away my sin._  

_Katharine Agnes Mae Kelly_