

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

The Eyes of Your Heart

By Micky Galloway

Paul prayed for the Ephesians that *“the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened”* (Eph. 1:17-18). *“The eyes of your heart”* is an unusual expression, but it indicates the need to see things clearly. This is contrasted to being *“darkened in their understanding”* because of the *“blindness of their heart”* (Eph. 4:18, KJV), that had formerly characterized the walk of the Gentiles. *“Enlighten”* (photizo) is defined: *“illuminate, light up; bring to light”* (*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*); *“To bring to light, render evident...to cause something to exist and thus to come to light and become clear to all”* (*Thayer*). Paul’s prayer was that they be freed from ignorance and misinformation, and come to a greater appreciation of the grandeur of God’s purpose in Christ.


Evidence is powerful to open eyes. The Lord said to Paul as he appeared to him on the road to Damascus, *“for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me”* (Acts 26:16-18). He later wrote to the Ephesians, *“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see (bring to light NASV) what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things”* (Eph. 3:8-9). We must preach the gospel in its fullness to enlighten the eyes.

Some have closed their eyes to the evidence. Jesus said, *“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, And I should heal them”* (Matt. 13:15). Following the healing of the blind man, Jesus said, *“For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see,”* i.e. those who are blind and ignorant by sin; whose minds have been darkened; that these may see, enlightened by the truth to the path of duty and salvation. Jesus continues however, *“and that they that see may become blind”* (Jn. 9:39); i.e. they who suppose they see; who are proud, self-confident, and have no love of the truth (cf. 2 Thess. 2:10-12), will find themselves sinking deeper into condemnation. We must open our eyes and enthusiastically respond to the gospel when it is preached.

Our eyes must be focused. Jesus said, *“The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness”* (Matt. 6:22-23). In the preceding verses (Matt. 6:19-21), Jesus emphasizes laying up treasure in heaven. When my eyes are focused on one thing my conduct follows, but when my allegiance is divided, it is like walking with double vision. We cannot see and are sure to stumble and fall. *“No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”* (Matt. 6:24; cf. 19:16ff). We must *“set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth”* (Col. 3:2).

Examples of those whose eyes were enlightened. *“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a (land) not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations,*

whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:8-10). “By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward” (Heb. 11:24-26). The apostle Paul said, “Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens” (2 Cor. 4:16-5:1).

Beloved, let us open our eyes and receive in our hearts the evidence presented in the gospel. Let us by faith live worthy of Christ and His gospel. Let us be fruitful and strong in His service focusing the “*eyes of our heart*” on things eternal. – *Fifth Street East Church of Christ Bulletin*, June 19, 2014. 


“Do You Understand What You Are Reading?”

By Joe R. Price

“...And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him” (Acts 8:28-31).

Do you understand the Bible when you read it? If not, you are not alone. We are not suggesting the Bible is impossible to understand; just the opposite, in fact. Jesus said we can know the truth (Jn. 8:32). We are commanded to understand the will of the Lord (Eph. 5:17). To do so, we must be willing to be taught.


One way God helps us understand the Scriptures is through the work of teachers. Just as we need teachers to guide us through our academic training, we need teachers to guide us in understanding the word of God. Jesus “*gave some to be... teachers*” in order to equip us to serve Him and His people (Eph. 4:11-12).

We should never let pride or any other obstacle keep us from humbly admitting that we need to learn God’s word, and ask for help to do so. The Ethiopian knew he needed someone to guide him in understanding the prophet Isaiah. God knew it too, so He sent the man a teacher who taught him about Jesus and salvation (Acts 8:34-39). God is willing to teach you today, if you are will to be taught by those who teach the truth (Jn. 6:45). – *Sword Tips*, December 3, 2016. 

God Has Spoken: Are You Listening?

By Joe R. Price

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds” (Heb. 1:1-2).

It is fascinating to listen to people tell how they believe God has spoken to them. Some say they have had a vision of God. Others, that God spoke to them in a dream, or in the wind, or by some other experience. Some believe God speaks to them when they pray (failing to grasp that prayer is how Christians speak to God, not how God speaks to Christians). This passage answers and rejects all these claims of divine communication. Notwithstanding the sincerity of the claim, they are mistaken. God speaks to us all in the very same way, and just as He has since the first century – “*by His Son.*” God speaks to you and me today by the message Christ’s apostles preached to the world. They spoke the word of God, and they wrote the word of God for us to hear. God has spoken the same message to us all. The New Testament of the Son is how God has spoken to us “*in these last days.*” The vital question is whether or not we are listening to God by listening to His word. We bring judgment upon ourselves “*in the last day*” if we will not listen to and receive the words of Christ (Jn. 12:48). God is speaking to you by His Son; are you listening? – *Sword Tips*, November 16, 2016. 

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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