

Valley of Vision: Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Have you seen the glory of Jesus? Is that the same thing as what the song says, “My eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord . . .”? There’s more to it by far than written in the song. You will, however, meet a person in this book who saw the glory of Jesus. This person lived centuries before Jesus stood on the Judean landscape preaching the Kingdom of God, feeding the hungry and healing those who were sick in body and spirit.

That must have been some vision this person had—seeing the glory of Jesus hundreds of years before He came to earth. This person was no different from any of us, you or I. It is entirely possible that you are surrounded by the same circumstances as this person, yet you are unable to see the glory of Jesus.

Something else is remarkable about what this person saw. He not only had this vision, but he wrote about it. What he wrote was largely ignored or rejected by others. What was the problem? Was it too obscure? Was it too threatening? Was it too “visionary”?

Well, if any of those were the issue, than perhaps no one would have been able to see what this person saw. There were some who did see. It forever changed their lives. You see, your vision sets the limits of your perception. Like the answers to many of life’s greatest questions, the answers are often beyond the scope of our experience. The answers are there, but we can’t see them. Let’s take an example from the Bible to see how it was in Jesus’ time.

The Man Born Blind

This blind man couldn't see, but he saw. Religious leaders around him could see but they were blind. One had vision; the others had no insight; or, as we might say it today, they didn't have a clue! Here is the story which you can find in the book of John, chapter 9.

Jesus and His disciples came upon a man who had been blind from his birth. While not part of what we want to discover from the story, the question hot in the disciples' conversation was the matter of sin: Who sinned—this man or his parents? It was just like the man Job of the Old Testament being “comforted” by three friends. Their soothing words were, “Job, you're very sick. It's obvious you must have committed some great sin.”

Listen to Jesus response: “No, this man will show the work or the glory of God in his life.” Many of us have discovered that the tough things in life enable us and others to see the hand of God in our lives. When we are prospering and in good health, God is often at a distance from our thoughts and actions.

Jesus then heals the man, giving him the sight he never had. This act created a problem for the custodians of religious correctness of that period. Jesus had healed the man on the Sabbath. Healing was a “work” and, according to the traditions of the fathers, work was not to be done on the Sabbath. Jesus had broken the law.

However, when this man was healed, what did he see? Yes, we know he saw trees and people and houses. But what else? With one statement, he placed everything together in his mind: “Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born

blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” (John 9:30-33).

The man born blind had something the others lacked: he had vision. He recognized that Jesus was from God. Nonetheless, despite the miracle confirmed by the man, his parents and neighbors, the religious leaders could only see a violator of their traditions. The possibility of Jesus being the promised Son of Man, the Messiah, was beyond their reach. They were looking to the past rather than stretching their perception to grasp what was possible. They would not see what was right in front of them.

Are we Blind?

Even though they refused to see, the leaders of Jesus’ time asked the right question when they were confronted. “Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, ‘What? Are we blind too? ’ ” Did they want to see? Would they open themselves to the vision necessary to understand the truth? They were willing to judge the “blind man” (they threw him out of their fellowship), but were they willing to assess their own condition?

What was Jesus’ conclusion? “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.” (John 9:41). What was He saying? Admit to your blindness of spirit so that you can have the vision of this man you just threw out. He saw what you are unwilling to see. Or, as someone has well said, There are none so blind as those who refuse to see.

Just a few pages later, the writer has more to say about this kind of blindness. Jesus had been doing everything possible to get them to open their eyes. With what result? “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.” (John 12:37).

The Vision Man

John then quotes from the writings of The Vision Man: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" John's heart is filled with pain as the plain truth is being shunted aside in favor of their traditions. They could not see the vision of the glorious future. It is the same future which Isaiah, The Vision Man, saw. The truth was available. The vision was open to those who would see. They refused to see. Therefore, God would not let them see. Their eyes were blinded and their hearts hardened.

What about Isaiah? What does John declare about him? "Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him." (John 12:38-41). Yes, Isaiah lived some 700 years before Jesus was even born. But he had vision. He saw. He understood. He rejoiced.

And what about you? Where do you fit into the picture about vision? Oh, my friend, if you are willing you, too, can have the same vision. You, too, will see the glory of Jesus. It is what He wants you to see and what this book is about. Although we are on the other side of Jesus, we can be as clear in our vision of Him as Isaiah was 700 years before His birth. Just be open to that possibility. Have the courage to take that risk.

You see, without faith it is impossible to please God. Believe Jesus when He says to you, "Come to me, you that labor and are weary of life. I will give you rest and you will find rest for your soul." If those are the words you have been waiting to hear, please read on.

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