

# Beware of Spiritual Blindness

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We're going to talk about the subject of blindness today. Those of us who can see, which is the majority of everyone, we take our sight for granted. We don't give it a second thought. We wake up in the morning and open our eyes and we can see. A blind person knows they are blind every minute of every day of all of their life. They know they cannot see.

However, mental or spiritual blindness is a totally different matter than physical blindness. Mental and spiritual blindness, as we're going to see, is part of the era in which we live. In this political season that we're in, we get so frustrated with the blindness of politicians, the blindness of teachers, the blindness of leaders, and you just shake your head and think, "How can they be so blind?"

Many of you may not remember Life Magazine, but I grew up in the 40s and 50s as a kid. This was before television, and Life Magazine was kind of the television of the day. It was a big weekly magazine and they had world class photographers on their staff. They would take pictures from all over the world. Life Magazine was a picture magazine. I remember as a kid looking at all these pictures of things all over the world, and as I said, it was kind of a substitute for television before television arrived. I can remember as a teenager thumbing through the Life Magazine in our house.

There was a black and white picture of an eighty-year-old woman. You could tell she had been in the sun most of her life because her skin was very wrinkled and leathery. The only problem was that she was dressed in a bikini. This was taken on the French Riviera, and even though it was a black and white picture, you could tell she put heavy lipstick on and she was looking alluringly into the camera when the photographer took this picture. It was obvious to anyone seeing the picture that this poor woman was blind to the reality of the fact that she was eighty years old. In her mind, I'm sure she was thinking of the way she looked sixty years prior to that. It was kind of sadly grotesque, but she was blind to the reality at the moment the camera snapped that picture that she was eighty years old in a bikini out in public.

That speaks to the fact that we can be blind. We can be mentally blind and we can be spiritually blind. It is very difficult for human beings to see themselves and particularly difficult for God's people to see ourselves the way God sees us.

Two of Satan's most effective tools that he uses to deceive the world are:

**First tool: Satan has deceived the world that he does not exist.**

If you have an enemy and you don't believe the enemy exists, you're wide open to the enemy. That is his biggest and most effective tool.

**Second tool: Satan has blinded human beings to see their own sins and their own faults, all humanity.**

People get offended, but they don't realize that they are offending others. They're blind to that fact. We see this all too often. We see the height of narcissism in people. They blame others and don't accept responsibility for their own actions. They're not willing to admit their own sins. It is part and parcel of the era in which we live.

For an example of that, let me read from an article in "Dear Abby." I think most of us have read that at some point in our lives. She writes a daily column that appeared in our local paper on August 6<sup>th</sup> of this year.

Dear Abby:

I have been married to Ken for ten years. He is a successful business owner. It has been a struggle to stay married to him because he has control issues, and when he doesn't get his way, he begins a verbal assault on his victim, usually me. He has no friends because he runs them off claiming they did him wrong. That's not true. His employees don't like him and talk badly about him behind his back. They stay because he pays well. He uses his money to control people. I love Ken and life can be normal at times, but once he thinks I'm getting out from under his thumb, his destructive behavior begins. He treats me like his worst enemy.

I've seen that in marriage counseling many times. Going on:

The pain is becoming unbearable. One minute he tells me he loves me and the next he is punishing me for not coming home from the store on time. I have researched on line and have learned that he has many of the traits of a narcissist. (You betcha) It scares me because he doesn't know he has a problem.

This is the key. He doesn't realize he has a problem. He is blind to it. Going on, she says:

He thinks the rest of the world is messed up instead of him. How can I approach him in a way that won't send him over the edge? When I say anything to him that he thinks is an attack, he comes back at me viciously. I don't know whether to stay, hoping he will see the light one day or to get out before I am emotionally damaged beyond repair. Signed, Broken in Texas.

This poor lady. It's obvious that this man is totally blind to his behavior and he is totally blind to the consequences of his behavior on other people.

We talked about Satan's tools. A special target of Satan in using these tools is blinding the humans that God has called down through the ages.

Remember the parable that Christ gave us, the parable of the sheepfold?

**John 10:10.** *The thief (referring to Satan) does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. (Christ goes on to say) I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (NKJV)*

What Satan wants to do is to get to God's people and blind them. He's got the rest of the world blinded, as we're going to see, and we are a special target in his attempt to blind human beings on this earth. Therefore, we must be constantly on guard against becoming spiritually blind.

The title of the sermon is:

### Beware of Spiritual Blindness

We're going to talk about five points today in the subject of being aware and constantly on guard against spiritual blindness.

#### **1. God has allowed Satan to blind the entire world.**

As we're going to see, God also allowed Satan to blind Ancient Israel. The world has been blinded since Adam. Since that decision was made, God allowed Satan to blind humanity.

Paul was eminently qualified to look back as a converted Christian and look at the Old Testament and look at the history of Ancient Israel. There was no one better qualified than Paul.

**2 Corinthians 4:4.** *In whom the god of this world ... (KJV)*

Now that's a mouthful. We see here that Satan is the god of this world. God has allowed that to happen.

*4b) ... hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (KJV)*

This tells us that God has given control of the world to Satan, not that Satan is more powerful than God, but God is allowing it for His own ends and His own purposes and He has allowed Satan to blind the entire world.

With that in mind, let's go to Ephesians 4 and we will begin in verse 17. The Ephesian church, we can tell by what is said, had many Gentiles in the church. Notice what Paul says:

***Ephesians 4:17.*** *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you (Ephesians) henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, (KJV)*

He's talking to the Gentiles in the Ephesian church. He's said, "Don't walk as the other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their minds."

*18) having their understanding darkened ... (KJV)*

We're going to see in a second why.

*18b) ... being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:*

*19) Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (KJV)*

He's talking about the fact that their understanding is darkened. Why? Because they are blind in their heart.

If you look at the Greek word for "blindness," it is Strong's 4457. It's the Greek word "porosis." It has two meanings that are very important to this discussion. The first meaning is *ignorant, that is, blind*. Now somebody that is ignorant of certain facts is blind to those facts. All of us at one time or another have been there. We walked where angels fear to tread. We've been in an area where we were ignorant or blind and we've made mistakes.

Let me give you an example. This is a story that occurred in a Honda Dealership in Canton, Mississippi. This woman is writing. Notice this behavior and put yourself in this mechanic's shoes, and I think we've all been there.

When my husband and I arrived at an automobile dealership to pick up our car, we had been told that our keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. I said to the mechanic, "Hey! It's open." His reply was, "I know, I already got that side."

Can you imagine? We've all been there and done that. How blind can you be? So the first definition of porosis is *ignorant, that is, blind*.

The second definition of porosis is *callousness, that is, hardness*. We know what a callous is. I have callouses on my palms where I lift weights. Your skin is kind of soft

and then you get the callous and it's hard. So the second definition is *callousness, that is, hardness*.

Later we're going to see an example of this callousness on the part of the Pharisees in Christ's day.

We know that blindness began after Adam and Eve made their choice. God allowed Satan to do the blinding and he has blinded governments, religions and teachers. They are all blind, everyone. Leaders are blind.

I said earlier in announcing the first point that not only is the world blind, but also Ancient Israel. Let's turn to Romans 11:25. God allowed Ancient Israel to be blinded. Paul is talking to the church at Rome, but obviously he is talking to us today. Notice what he says about Ancient Israel being blind.

**Romans 11:25.** *For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery ... (KJV)*

What is the mystery? He goes on to tell us.

*25b) ... lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. (KJV)*

As I said, Paul was an expert on Israel, the history of Israel, the Old Testament writings, and he is telling us that blindness has happened to Ancient Israel. Now let's go to John 12 and see what Christ had to say about Ancient Israel being blind. Christ is discussing in even greater detail the fact that Israel was blinded.

**John 12:37.** *But though he (Jesus Christ) had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:  
38) That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke ... (KJV)*

Now John is quoting Isaiah 53:1.

*38b) ... Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
39) Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again ... (KJV)*

Now Christ is quoting Isaiah 6:1.

*40) He hath (1) blinded their eyes, and (2) hardened their heart ... (KJV)*

These are both of the definitions of porosis.

*40b) ... that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I (Christ) should heal them. (KJV)*

Remember the two meanings of porosis, being *ignorant or blind* and also *callousness or hardness*. Christ, the God of the Old Testament is talking to Moses:

**Deuteronomy 5:29.** *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever! (KJV)*

It's not Israel's time and they were allowed to be blinded by God.

In the days of Christ, the Jewish leaders were leading in blindness and Christ noted that. Turn to Matthew 15:9. Christ had some specific things to say to the leaders of the Jews in those days, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. In verse 1, we get the context. He is talking to the Pharisees.

**Matthew 15:9.** *But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (KJV)*

Christ was talking to the Pharisees and they were the teachers.

10) *And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: (KJV)*

He is trying to explain to them about the error of the Pharisees.

11) *Not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defiles a man.*

12) *Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Don't you know that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? (KJV)*

You bet they were.

13) *But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up.*

14) *Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. (KJV)*

Christ is saying, "That is exactly what's happened before your eyes." It's true today as much as it was back then, both in the world and sadly to say, in the greater Church of God. Turn to John 9:39; picking up more of what Christ said.

**John 9:39.** *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. (KJV)*

He's not talking about physical blindness. He's not saying that part of His job was to come and cause physical blindness to people.

He's saying that they which don't see, might see; meaning those of us who are called and given God's holy spirit, our eyes are open. We're going to talk about that later. He said that they which see might be made blind, referring to Ancient Israel and the leaders of Ancient Israel. He's not talking about physical blindness.

*40) And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, are we blind also? (KJV)*

They asked the question. That opens up a door for Jesus' response in verse 41.

*41) Jesus said unto them, If you were blind, you should have no sin ... (KJV)*

God doesn't account our sins prior to our conversion because of this blindness or ignorance that all mankind has.

*41b) ... but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains. (KJV)*

The Pharisees said, "Follow us. We're close to God. We're setting the example. We know God; you don't, so follow us." Some of the Pharisees undoubtedly knew better. They knew Christ was the Messiah. They saw the miracles. They absolutely knew that, but they were calloused, they were hard-hearted and they willingly ignored the truth. That is the second definition of porosis.

Some of the Pharisees and the people in general, the majority of them were spiritually blind. They were blinded by Satan. That falls into the first definition of porosis. They were just ignorant. They just didn't know. They were blind.

That leads now to the second point. The first point was God allowed Satan to blind the world and Ancient Israel.

## **2. When God called us, He began to remove our blindness.**

I want to stress the word "began." He began to remove our blindness. It is a process that doesn't happen all at once. This process was hinted at in the Old Testament. The following scripture is a prophecy for our day. This is a prophecy that looks forward to the time in the New Testament when God would call selected individuals. It refers to each one of us.

***Psalm 146:8.*** *The LORD opens the eyes of the blind: ... (KJV)*

God has that power to whomever He calls.

*8b) ... the LORD raises them that are bowed down:... (KJV)*

We're going to see, if we go back and remember 1 Corinthians 1:26, God calls the weak of the world, those without power, not many mighty or strong. Those who are bowed down are us. The Lord raises them that are bowed down, and each of us have been blessed so much, to be raised up by God to answer a call.

*8 continued) ... the LORD loves the righteous: (KJV).*

So this is a hint of what was going to happen in New Testament times and also, obviously, during the Millennium and the hundred-year period.

Now it is stated directly in the New Testament. Let's go to Matthew 13 and begin in verse 10. The disciples are coming to Christ and Christ has been speaking in parables. The disciples asked why He spoke in parables. He states it directly that our blindness starts to be removed when we are called.

***Matthew 13:10.*** *And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speak you unto them in parables?*

*11) He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*

*12) For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance... (KJV)*

Meaning once God starts to open our eyes, if we exercise His holy spirit; if we respond, we will be given more clarity and more blindness will be removed.

*12b) ... but whosoever has not ... (KJV)*

To those whose eyes have not been opened,

*12 continued) ... from him shall be taken away even that he has.*

*13) Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.*

*14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which said (He's quoting Isaiah 6:9), By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive:*

*15) For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted ... (KJV)*

He is talking about the conversion process that was available through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the holy spirit.

*15b) ... and I should heal them. (KJV)*

That is the process that all of us are going through.



*16) But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. (KJV)*

Now Christ is not talking about physical healing. He is talking about spiritual removal of blindness.

*17) For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them. (KJV)*

We are so blessed to have eyes that can see. It's not because of our greatness, but it is because of God's calling, and when He calls us, He begins to remove our blindness.

Let's go to Romans 11. Paul is contrasting

**Romans 11:7.** *What then? Israel has not obtained that which he seeks for... (KJV)*

It hasn't obtained it. They were blinded. They sinned. They were divorced by the God of the Old Testament.

*7b) ... but the election has obtained it, ... (KJV)*

The election is us. We were elected by God.

*7 continued) ... and the rest (Israel) were blinded.*

*8) (According as it is written (Now He's quoting Isaiah 29:10), God has given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. (KJV)*

Now let's go to a third scripture that talks about this subject, and Paul is using the analogy of a veil in having blindness removed from God's people. Paul is using an analogy that before we were converted, we had layers of veils in front of us that we just couldn't see. God begins removing the veils when we are called.

**2 Corinthians 3:12.** *Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: (KJV)*

He said, "I'm not going to hide this. I'm going to make it plain to you." He uses the analogy of a veil.

*13) And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: (KJV)*

Moses came down and his face was glowing and he put a veil over his face.

*14) But their minds were blinded: for until this day remains the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; ... (KJV)*

He said, "They're still blind. Even when they read their Old Testament, they are blind to it because God has put a veil over their eyes."

*14b) ... which veil is done away in Christ. (KJV)*

When Christ calls, the veils begin to lift.

*15) But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. (KJV)*

They are blind. They do not see.

*16) Nevertheless when it (Israel) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. (KJV)*

He's talking about a time yet in the future when Israel will turn to God.

*17) Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (KJV)*

I will read verse 18 from the New King James.

*18) But we all (those who are converted, those he wrote to and us today), with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being (notice this) transformed into (what?) the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Eternal. (NKJV)*

What he is saying is when we are called, God begins to remove a veil. We see a little bit. We see God and Christ more clearly through the power of the holy spirit. Then we begin to change to be more like the image of God and Christ. The longer we are in the church, another veil comes off and we see even more clearly and we begin to change more. Then down the road, God removes another veil and then we see even more clearly. We see our sins, our faults, but also we see God and Christ more clearly and through the power of the holy spirit, we then become more like them. So the blindness, (the veil) began to be removed from our eyes at conversion. But remember, it's a process that takes time. I mentioned last time that it took me thirty years to realize certain things. Shame on me. It's a process that takes time.

That leads to the next point.

**3. Someday all mankind will have their spiritual blindness removed.**

What a joy. We won't have to watch politicians debate. You sit there and just cringe and shake your head. We won't have to see the advertisements of lies and deceit and blindness.

Let's go to Isaiah 29. We're going to read just one verse. This is talking about a day yet future.

**Isaiah 29:18.** *In that day (in the future) the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. (NKJV)*

He is talking primarily about spiritual blindness. Yes, we know there will be healings in the Millennium. When people are resurrected and in the great white throne judgment period, there will be healings there. But he is primarily talking about healing spiritual blindness. People were blind from the time they were born until they died.

Now let's go to the New Testament and see what Christ has to say about this. Here Christ is returning to Nazareth where He grew up. Let's see what happens.

**Luke 4:16.** *So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.*

*17) And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, (KJV)*

Now He's quoting Isaiah 61:1.

*18) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, (Notice this) and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, (KJV)*

Freedom for those who were entrapped in sin and trapped by Satan; He said, "recovering the sight of the blind." He is talking primarily about spiritual blindness.

The joy for us is that we are going to have a part to play in this process. We will be there as spirit beings, and we will help remove spiritual blindness from those in the Millennium and those who died never knowing the Father and the Son.

Let's go to Isaiah 42 and we will begin in verse 5. Read this from the prospective of us having a part to play in this. Isaiah is setting the stage for who God is. He does this for a purpose. He is saying, "I want you to understand who God is, because I'm going to tell you what He is going to say."

**Isaiah 42:5.** *Thus says God the LORD (Now he is going to describe who God the Lord is), he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread*

*forth the earth, and that which comes out of it; he that gives breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: (KJV)*

This is the one that's going to speak to you. Keep it in mind. Now God starts to talk.

*6) I the LORD have called you in righteousness ... (KJV)*

That is a prophecy for us today.

*6b) ... and will hold your hand, and will keep you, and give you for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; (KJV)*

It's a prophecy for us today and also God is going to deal with Israel down the road in the Millennium and the hundred-year period will be an example to the Gentiles.

*7) To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison (the prison of Satan and sin), and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.*

...  
*14) I have long time held my peace ... (KJV)*

Can you imagine what we see today, and God is just biting His tongue because of what is going on in the world.

*14b) ... I have been still, and refrained myself (from just blasting this world to smithereens): now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.*

*15) I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs (all of the grasses; obviously referring to the Day of the Lord); and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. (KJV)*

There is going to come a day of reckoning for the sins of mankind. But notice the good news in verse 16.

*16) And I will bring the blind (spiritually blind) by a way that they knew not (they are blind to it today and don't know it); I will lead them in paths that they have not known ... (KJV)*

Why? Because they are coming out of Babylon at this time. They've never travelled out of Babylon before.

*16b) ... I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. (KJV)*

The good news is that we have a part to play in this. We will be assistants to God and Christ in making this happen. We'll be there to watch eyes opened and mental and spiritual understanding open. People will see what God wants them to see. They will

look back at their previous lives and just shake their head and say, “How could we be so blind?” We’re going to be part of that. What a time when people will see clearly.

That leads us to the fourth point. Now we get back to us and the era in which we live.

#### **4. Spiritual blindness is a key characteristic of the Laodicean era.**

It is prophesied; spiritual blindness is a key characteristic of the time in which we live.

Let’s go to Revelation 3:17, a very familiar scripture. This is the letter to the church at Laodicea, the letter to our era. Let’s read it from the prospective of being spiritually blind. I might add before we start, although we live in the Laodicean era, we don’t have to be Laodicean. That’s the key.

**Revelation 3:17.** *Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing (Maybe there’s some blindness in here?); and know not (You’re blind to the fact) that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and (notice) blind, and naked: (KJV)*

The Greek word for “blind” here is Strong’s 5185. It’s the Greek word “tuphlos.” The literal meaning is *opaque as if smoky*. If you’ve ever been in a building that’s been on fire, fire fighters cannot see well in a building that’s filled with smoke, it’s opaque. That is the literal meaning. However, it goes on to say, *opaque as in smoky, that is by analogy, blind; (but notice this), both physically and mentally*. This word specifically talks about mental blindness. We would say spiritual blindness.

With that in mind, let’s look at the religious leaders of Christ’s day and see what their level of blindness was. Let’s go back to Matthew 23. We know Matthew is about Christ denouncing the religious leaders of the day, the scribes and the Pharisees. He did not hold back. He was not politically correct. He nailed them.

Read this from the standpoint of being blind.

**Matthew 23:13.** *But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer you them that are entering to go in.*

...  
**16)** *Woe unto you, you blind guides ... (KJV)*

They claimed to be guides of the people, and He said previously that if the blind lead the blind, they are both going to fall into the ditch.

**16b)** *... which say, whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!*

**17)** *You fools and blind: for which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold?*

...  
19) *You fools and blind: for which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift? (KJV)*

In verse 24 He says it again.

24) *You blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

...  
26) *You blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. (KJV)*

It's obvious that the religious leaders of Christ's day were spiritually blind as bats. They were deceived and absolutely blind, yet they set themselves up as religious leaders. We can see blind religious leaders today. All you have to do is turn on the television on Sunday morning and you see blind religious leaders. You see fire and brimstone on one side, yelling and screaming, and then on the other end of the spectrum, you see people dancing and cheering and holding up their hands. You see these guys speaking in this cadence and rhythm and they are all blind as bats. Sadly, among religious leaders of our day, we see it among the churches of God. It is there. It is part of the Laodicean era.

Let's see what spiritual blindness in the church leads to. There is spiritual blindness in God's church and it leads to certain things and we see those things every day within the greater Church of God. John speaks very plainly here. He doesn't hold back. He speaks in very short and direct sentences.

**1 John 2:11.** *But he that hates his brother is in darkness (blind), and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes. (KJV)*

We see that darkness today in hatred between various groups. I talked to a man the other day that was worried about the group he was in because he noticed that there is increasing hatred for other groups and condemning other groups, elevating their group in relation to other groups. He said there is downright hatred toward others who have God's holy spirit, and he was very worried about it. You see, the hatred is a result of blindness. It leads to darkness and deception. Satan wants to blind the leaders more than anyone else, because if he can blind the leaders, then as Christ said, the blind lead the blind and they're all falling into a ditch. That is something that we have to be careful of because spiritual blindness is a key characteristic of the Laodicean era.

That leads to the fifth and final point, and one that is of critical importance for us today.

**5. Spiritual blindness can keep us from being in God's Kingdom and cause God to say, "I never knew you."**

Christ could say, "I don't know who you are. I'm not going to marry someone I can't recognize." Many today, as part of the Laodicean era in God's church, are spiritually blind. These are members and ministers. It's something that all of us have to be aware of.

I have been blind to my own conduct in times past. I have said and done things I thought were correct, but blind to the fact that they were not correct. They were not Godly. I look back and just cringe at some of my thoughts, my words, my attitudes and my deeds. Looking back and it's scary because at the time I thought I was doing the right thing. But now you look back and say, "Oh, no. How on earth did we do this?"

Let's go to Isaiah 56. Isaiah is talking about the ministry. He calls them watchmen and shepherds. This is a prophecy for us today. It is also prophecy down the millennia since this was written. But it is for sure for us today because we live in Laodicea.

***Isaiah 56:10.*** *His (God's) watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant (first definition of porosis), they are all dumb dogs (what a condemnation), they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. (KJV)*

They don't get up and work. They don't strive, he says.

*11) Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough ... (KJV)*

What's in it for me? We've seen that in years past in the church.

*11b) ... and they are shepherds (This has to be referring to the ministry) that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. (KJV)*

What's in it for me? How can I better myself? How can I climb the corporate ladder within the church? How can I have a better car, a better home or whatever it might be?

*12) Come you, say they (the shepherds; referring to the watchmen who are blind), I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. (KJV)*

Does that sound like someone who says, "I have need of nothing."? Does it sound like someone who is ignoring what is going on in the world and what's going to happen down the road?

There is a description called "uniformitarianism." It means that today is the same as yesterday. Today will be the same as tomorrow. Nothing is going to change. What that says is that Christ isn't going to return any time soon so we don't have to worry about it.

All of us are susceptible to this attitude. Let's go to Isaiah 59. Here's a very familiar scripture, but let's look at this in relation to being blind.

*Isaiah 59:1. Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: (KJV)*

We need to pay attention to this.

*2) But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, that he will not hear. (KJV)*

These people, because of their sins, distance themselves from God. They don't have a close look at God. They lose the ability to see God as He really is. Because now, through their sins, they are far away from God. They have distanced themselves from God. God hasn't moved; they have moved away from God.

*3) For your hands are defiled with blood ... (KJV)*

Blood can mean actual murder, of course, but it can also be slandering other people.

*3b) ... and your fingers with iniquity (lawlessness, sin); your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.*

*4) None calls for justice, nor any pleads for truth: they trust in vanity, (here again) and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity (sin).*

Going on to verse 8. Look at the lack of peace among God's people.

*8) The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths ... (KJV)*

Christ says that God's way is a straight path.

*8b) ... whosoever goes therein shall not know peace. (KJV)*

*9) Therefore is judgment far from us, neither does justice overtake us: (Notice this, referring to blindness) we wait for light, but behold obscurity (remember, smoky & opaque); for brightness, but we walk in darkness.*

*10) We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. (KJV)*

You take what we just read in Isaiah 59 and the conclusion is that sin leads to separation from God. Separation from God leads to blindness, because the farther we are from God, the less we see God, the more blind we become. It all starts with sin. Sin separates us from God. Once we become separated from God, blindness can set in and Satan can begin to cloud our spiritual vision.

Peter has an antidote for spiritual blindness. He has the solution. Let's go to 2 Peter 1. Here is the solution for spiritual blindness.



**2 Peter 1:9.** *But he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off ... (KJV)*

That's because of the obscurity and blindness. They have removed themselves from God and cannot see God far off.

*9b) ... and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (KJV)*

Peter is talking about a class of people that are blind and cannot see. They've forgotten that Christ died for their sins. Why is that? He gave the answer previously. Let's go back to verse 5. This is the antidote. This is the answer.

*5) And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue (Do what is right); and to virtue knowledge; (KJV)*

We must understand God and know who God and Christ are.

*6) And to knowledge temperance (self-control, moderation); and to temperance patience; and to patience (here's the big one) godliness; (KJV)*

We must become like the Father and the Son.

*7) And to godliness brotherly kindness (the second great commandment); and to brotherly kindness charity (love, which covers all the commandments).  
8) For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (KJV)*

He goes on to say in verse 9 what we read before.

*9) But he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*

So growing in the fruits of God's spirit, you see, purges blindness from us. We need to be aware that spiritual blindness is here amongst us in Laodicea and we have to be on guard. That is the whole message of the sermon today.

So we've seen that God has allowed Satan to blind the entire world and to blind Ancient Israel. We've seen that when God called us, the blindness began to be removed, and we've seen that someday, all mankind will have the spiritual blindness removed. But then looking to today, we see that spiritual blindness is part of the Laodicean era, and if we don't overcome spiritual blindness, we will not be in God's kingdom. Spiritual blindness is one of the greatest things that God's people face today.

Why is it so difficult? Why is it such a big problem? It's because we do not realize that we are spiritually blind because we are blind. As I said in my case, I thought I was doing the right thing, but I was blind to it. When we are spiritually blind, we don't realize

we are blind. When we are deceived, we don't realize we are deceived because we are deceived. It's a form of self-deception, Satan's deception. None of us is immune to spiritual blindness.

As we start to wrap this up, let me ask a question. What is the greatest example of spiritual blindness in the Bible? Just think for a minute. In my mind, it has to be David in the situation with Bathsheba. Let's go to 2 Samuel 12. This is at least nine months after the incident with Bathsheba because the child is born. It could be a year or more after that. Nothing has happened to David. David is on his throne. Bathsheba has had the baby. Everything seems fine. David is content and happy so far as we know.

**2 Samuel 12:1.** *And the LORD sent Nathan unto David ... (KJV)*

Now is the time of reckoning.

*1b) ... And he came unto him, and said unto him, there were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.*

*2) The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:*

*3) But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. (KJV)*

We see that today. It can be cats or dogs, but the animals are pets and they're just like a member of the family and loved like a member of the family. This is what happened with this little lamb.

*4) And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. (KJV)*

Oh, boy. David heard this, and ...

*5) And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD lives, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:*

*6) And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. (KJV)*

Let's just stop there. It is obvious that David did not have a clue that God was talking about him. Otherwise he wouldn't have said that this man should die. David was absolutely spiritually blind to what he had done and to what God's commandments are and to what God's judgment would be. He was blind to it all. He didn't understand that Nathan was talking about him.

*7) And Nathan said to David, You are the man ... (KJV)*

Oh, now the gong rings. The 2 x 4 hits between the eyes and it's all out there in the open. There were most likely other people around (his court) and leaders of the military. I'm sure that his throne area was absolutely silent at that point. Nathan goes on to say:

*7b) ... Thus said the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;  
8) And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. (KJV)*

He said, "I would have given you much more."

*9) Wherefore have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? ... (KJV)*

David didn't see himself. He thought he was okay. He was spiritually blind to the fact that he had committed murder, he had committed adultery, he had lied and had been deceptive. He was blind to all of that.

*9b) ... You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. (KJV)*

That was Israel's most hated enemy. "You have allowed your hated enemy to kill this innocent man, and you have taken his wife."

*10) Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house; (Notice why) because you have despised me (God is saying), and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. (KJV)*

He despised God because he was spiritually blind, spiritually blind to the fact that the law applied to him just as much as anyone else in Israel.

Let's go to Psalms 19 and start in verse 12. This is why David later said this after he came to himself, after he repented and after his eyes were opened to his blindness in the whole matter of Bathsheba.

***Psalms 19:12. Who can understand his errors? ... (KJV)***

He said, "I've made many errors and I didn't understand. He said:

*12b) ... cleanse you me from secret faults. (KJV)*

He means the ones he did not see or had yet to see.

*13) Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins ... (KJV)*

The Hebrew word for “presumptuous” means *arrogant or proud* sins. He was arrogant and proud because he was king. “Those rules don’t apply to me. I don’t have to live by those rules because I’m way up here and everyone else is down here.”

*13b) ... let them (meaning presumptuous sins) not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent (notice this) from the great transgression. (KJV)*

During David’s life, as the Chronicles tell us, this was his great transgression. The Chronicles say that David was a man after God’s own heart, except in the matter of Bathsheba. This is what he is referring to. He said, “*Then I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*”

*14) Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer. (KJV)*

He finally realized that his meditations, his words and deeds were not acceptable to God. Then he had the 2 x 4, the coming to himself moment, as the prodigal son did and said, “What have I done?”

The same blindness continues to this day. The same blindness has happened in the church. In the Worldwide days, I remember a very high evangelist and vice president say; this is a direct quote: “God does not hold me accountable because of what I do for the work.” This is a man who routinely broke the Ten Commandments over a period of years, decades. He was blind through callousness. That is the second definition of perosis. He was just calloused to the fact. Like David, “These rules don’t apply to me. I’m up here. I’m the vice president. I’m the evangelist.”

Both he and David saw other peoples’ sins. David said, “This rich guy that took the ewe lamb is going to die.” This vice president railed about other peoples’ sins, but in both cases, they didn’t see their own. They were spiritually blind. But in David’s case, the spiritual light bulb went off, illuminated his sins, and he saw himself.

Let’s go to Psalms 51. This is a final scripture. This is what we want for us. We want the spiritual light bulb to come on and illuminate ourselves so we can see ourselves relative to God and Jesus Christ. David said:

***Psalms 51:3. For I acknowledge my transgressions ... (KJV)***

No more narcissism. No more, “It doesn’t apply to me.” He saw his sins and he saw himself as he really was in God’s eyes. As a result, he said:

*3b) ... and my sin is ever before me. (KJV)*

“How could I have done such a thing? How could I have thought this way?”

*4) Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight ... (KJV)*

David came to himself and he repented.

In closing, one of my greatest fears is that I ask myself, “What do I not see in me? What am I spiritually blind to in me right now? What don’t I see?” I’ve been spiritually blind before and didn’t have a clue, like David. Over time, we see, but we are running out of time. What do I not see in myself? What am I spiritually blind to today?

So, looking forward to Passover; the fall holy days are over and the spring holy days are a few months ahead. But looking forward to that time, we need to rid ourselves of spiritual blindness. During the time between now and the Passover, we need to ask God to show us how we really are, to let us see ourselves the way He sees us. Then we begin to make the change and transformation from the old person to the new person with new knowledge and understanding of where we don’t measure up to the image of Jesus Christ. So let’s do that between now and the Passover so we can become the bride of the Son of God.