

# The Symptoms of Spiritual Blindness

**H**ow could someone convince you that they are God? Someone has said that if God showed Himself in the sky, then everyone would believe in Him. Since Scripture teaches that if anyone sees God they will die (Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 4:12), no one would have time to respond with belief in Him before they died and humanity would cease to exist. Therefore, how could Christ prove He was God so that others could believe in Him? John 20:30-31 gives us the answer. Jesus performed miracles of healing and cast out demons so that people would know He was God. Christ healed the blind, lepers, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics, and every kind of disease and sickness among the people (Matthew 4:23-24). He walked on water, multiplied food to feed 5,000 people on one occasion and then 4,000 people on another. He stopped a storm. He was as bright as the sun at the Mount of Transfiguration. He directed Peter to a fish that had a coin in its mouth. He told Peter to drop his fishing net on the right side of his boat. Peter then pulled in so many fish the nets started breaking. He turned water into wine and He raised the dead. He instantly disappeared from the presence of a crowd. He died on a cross and came back to life with an immortal body. Secular writers have written that He did these things. His Jewish enemies directly and indirectly admitted He did these things. That is how an individual reveals he is God without causing everyone to die. This study is about a miracle that reveals Jesus is God (John 9:35-41).

**THE LAST STUDY.** In our last study Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth. The Pharisees refused to believe that Jesus had performed the miracle. They tried to disprove that He had healed the man. But the man, who was once blind but now could see, did not cooperate with them. He dogmatically claimed that he could now see. The Pharisees visited his parents and asked them if he was born blind.

Most likely they were looking for proof the man was not born blind and that could prove that Jesus did not perform a miracle. But the parents said their son was born blind and the man insisted that Jesus had healed him. Therefore, the Pharisees

slandered the man, destroying his credibility, and excommunicated him from the Jewish religion. How else does a politically powerful group “disprove the facts”? The bad theology of the Pharisees caused these religious leaders to miss the most important event in human history: God had visited them. He had come in human flesh and was performing all of these miracles, signs and wonders. They were blind leaders. It



would be wrong to call them spiritual leaders. They did not have spiritual eyesight. They were spiritually dead. This study is the conclusion of this historic event that is described in John 9.

**J E S U S  
REVEALS HIM-  
SELF TO THE  
MAN.** At the

conclusion of the last study, the Pharisees had asked the man who could now see, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" They believed the man was not qualified to teach them. Then they excommunicated him from the Jewish religion. When we come to John 9:35, some time has elapsed. After Jesus heard what had happened to the man, He found him.

*Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" John 9:35 (NASB)*

The compassion of Christ is wonderful. It reminds us that God cares even for beggars and those rejected by proud leaders who think they are very spiritual. Jesus was not timid or reluctant to find and comfort the man. When He heard that the man had been excommunicated from the Jewish religion, He searched for him and asked the most important question, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

**THE SON OF MAN.** The term "Son of Man" appears in Daniel 7:13-14 as a title for the Messiah. The term appears eighty-four times in eighty verses in the gospels and each time it always referred to Christ. During Christ's ministry He used it repeatedly to refer to Himself. In John 4:25 Jesus referred to Himself as the Messiah. Then in the next verse, He will declare that He is the "Son of Man." In John 1:51 John the Baptist states that God had told him that angels would descend upon the Son of Man. In John 3:13 Jesus said that the Son of Man had descended from heaven. In John 12:23 Jesus will use the term to refer to His ability to be the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, the "Son of Man" refers to Christ's humanity and to the Messiah.

**THE MAN HAS SPIRITUAL EYES.** Now how did the man respond to Jesus' question, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Verse 36 gives us the answer.

*He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." John 9:36-37 (NASB)*

The man wanted to know who was the Son of Man, the Messiah. Jesus' response to this man was you have seen Him

and He is speaking to you now. The Greek tense of the word "talking" is a present participle. It has the idea of presently talking and continuing to talk. Jesus said, "I am He, the one talking to you." Immediately, the man responded in faith.

*And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. John 9:38 (NASB)*

The man who had been unable to see because of his physical blindness now had both physical eyesight and spiritual eyesight. He could see that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ. In response he worshiped Him. His worship reveals that he knew Jesus was God. We should not be surprised because of his worship because the man had already revealed that he did not believe that Jesus was a sinner. He believed that Jesus was someone greater.

**JESUS CAME TO JUDGE THE WORLD.** The next three verses reveal that the Pharisees had heard the discussion between Jesus and the man.

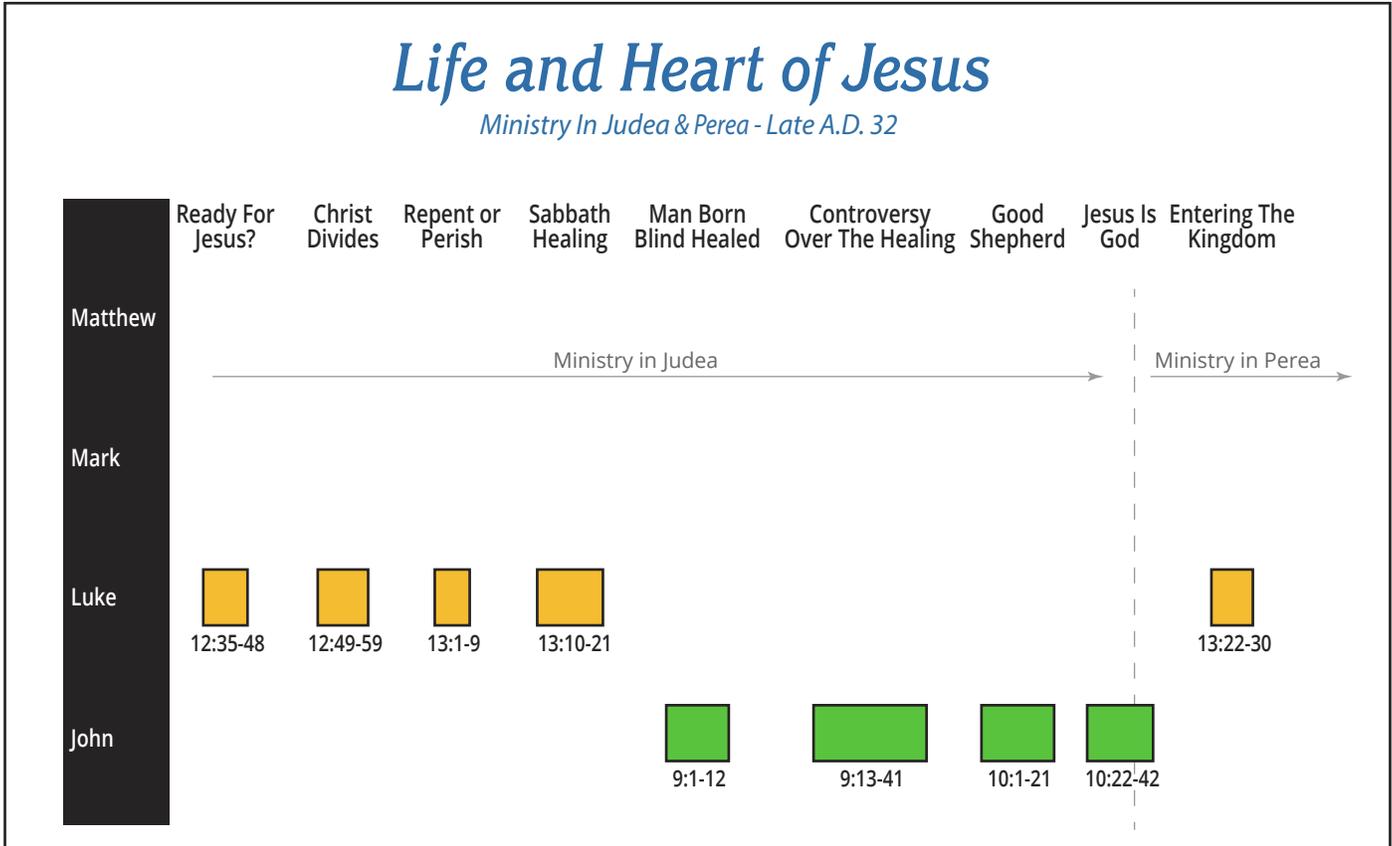
*And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains." John 9:39-41 (NASB)*

These two verses help us understand that the Pharisees had either heard the discussion between Christ and the man or they had witnessed the man worshiping Christ and then joined them. Otherwise, why would they respond with, "We are not blind too, are we?" Frankly, I am surprised that they were not angry.

Jesus' comment, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." Earlier in John 3:17 Jesus said that He did not come into the world to judge the world but that some in the world can be saved through Him. At that time Jesus was revealing that He came to save the lost. In Luke 19:10 He said, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus repeated His purpose in

# Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry In Judea & Perea - Late A.D. 32



John 12:47,

If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. John 12:47 (NASB)

Now this may seem contradictory but Jesus was simply saying that when He came the first time to earth, He came to die for our sins so that our sins can be forgiven and so we can escape hell.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NASB)

John 3:16 says He came to rescue people. Yet, He will also judge those who reject Him in this life and send them to hell. By default every person is sentenced to hell. If they do not believe in Christ, they will not escape! They are responsible for their destiny. That is the message of verse 18.

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18 (NASB)

Notice Jesus' words. If He came to save men, then those who reject Him have selected their own eternal destiny in hell. As their judge He will recognize their decision and sentence them accordingly. Acts 17:31 tells us that God has fixed a day of judgment when that will happen. Christ will be the Son of Man who will judge them. Therefore, the first time Christ came to earth, He came as Savior of the world and not as judge. The next time He comes as King to rule that world. After that is the day of judgment, and every Christ-rejecting man and woman will be sent to hell. They made their own decision.

**BLIND WILL SEE & THE SEEING WILL BE BLIND.** When Jesus said,

... so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind. John 9:39b (NASB)

He reworded Isaiah 6:10 and 42:19. The first part of the saying means that those who know that they are spiritually blind and want spiritual eyesight will see. Romans 1:19 states that God has created us with the instinct that He exists. He has created the universe with telltale traces that He exists. Our conscience has a sense that He exists. Since His basic moral law has been placed within us, we have a sense of right and wrong. This is evident in cultures around the world. Those who respond to the light that they have and seek after God will find Him. That is the message of Scripture. For example, Deuteronomy 4:29 says,

*But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. Deuteronomy 4:29 (NASB)*

The promise is repeated elsewhere in Scripture (2 Chronicles 15:2; Jeremiah 29:13-14a). The Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-40 is an example of someone who sought God. In response, God sent someone to the eunuch. The message of Scripture is that those who know that they are spiritually blind and seek more to know God will receive spiritual eyesight.

But those who do not respond to the light that has been given to them are described in Ephesians 2:1-2 as dead people due to their sins. In 1 Thessalonians 5:5 the apostle Paul said that Christians were sons of light and not sons of darkness. The Holy Spirit tells us that those who respond spiritually to God will be able to see Him — to know Him. Those who do not respond are spiritually blind, even though they may claim that they have spiritual eyesight.

Before moving to verse 40, notice the beginning of the verse. Jesus said that He had come for the purpose of judgment, and we have discovered that He will judge every man and woman at the end of time. But notice closely that Jesus said He also came in judgment against those who claimed they had spiritual eyesight but did not truly see.

*And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.”*

I believe that Jesus was saying that those who thought they had spiritual eyesight would stumble over Him and be confirmed in their continual rejection of Him. They thought that they had spiritual eyesight, but they did not. Their rejection of Christ would prove it and also condemn them.

**THE PHARISEES ARE SPIRITUALLY BLIND.** Did the Pharisees understand that Jesus was saying they were spiritually blind? The answer is yes!

*Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” John 9:40 (NASB)*

The Greek text indicates the Pharisees had been with Jesus. Therefore, they were present when He said, “. . . so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” They correctly understood that Jesus was saying some people were spiritually blind who thought that they had spiritual eyesight, but they could not understand that it described them. They wanted to know if Jesus was saying they were blind. Mostly likely they were suspicious that was Jesus’ message; and if so, it was an offense.

This is so typical of non-Christians and of some Christians. They hear the Word of God taught — they hear God speak and fail to see how this applies to them. Even worse is the person who understands the message and fails to apply it to themselves and respond with conviction. The prophet Ezekiel had a sad experience. In Ezekiel 33 God tells His prophet that the people hear his messages and think he is a great speaker, but they will not change.

*But as for you, son of man, your fellow citizens who talk about you by the walls and in the doorways of the houses, speak to one another, each to his brother, saying, “Come now and hear what the message is which comes forth from the LORD.” They come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain. Behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words but they do not practice them. So when it comes to*

pass — as surely it will — then they will know that a prophet has been in their midst.” Ezekiel 33:30-33 (NASB)

Are you like those folks? You hear the pastor and afterwards think he was a great speaker, but you do not change? Possibly you are emotionally affected, but you shrug it off soon and then resume your normal self-centered life? That describes the response of the Pharisees. They heard Jesus’ words. They understood His message, but they did not understand if or how it applied to them. They missed the application and are offended by the thought that it might apply to them.

Jesus’ reply was stunning!

Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but

thought they could see, but they were spiritually blind. They were the blind leading the blind. The man who once was physically blind now had spiritual eyesight and he was not a Pharisee. Wow!

The Pharisees heard Jesus’ message, but it did not affect them because they did not think His message applied to them. Once again this is how some people respond to the Word of God. The message of Jesus was a “sensual song” but it had no spiritual impact on them. If you are a Christian, can I encourage you to ask God to make your heart sensitive to the preaching of the Word of God? Ask God to help you understand it and move you to respond as He wants you to respond.

**CONCLUSION.** Jesus summarizes their sad spiritual con-

You are very entertaining to them, like someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice or plays fine music on an instrument. They hear what you say, but they don’t act on it!

Ezekiel 33:32

since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.” John 9:41 (NASB)

In the Greek language there are classes of “if” statements. Jesus used the second class of “if” statement here which means “if and it is true.” We could reword this statement to help us better understand Christ’s statement this way, “If you are blind, you would have no sins; oh, by the way, you are blind and you are in sin.” The two Greek words that are translated as “were” and “have” are in the imperfect tense. Both verbs imply repeated and ongoing activity. That is, they were continually blind and as a result continually in sin.

Then Jesus, knowing their thoughts, captures their inward response with “You say, ‘We see.’” But the truth was they did not see. Near the end of Jesus’ ministry, He will call the Pharisees blind guides (Matthew 23:16-26). They

condition with, “Your sin remains!” These religious leaders, who had read the Scriptures, were headed to hell because they were spiritually blind. Their bad theology caused them to not understand the character of the coming Messiah. They missed that He would be God in human flesh. They ignored the message of Christ’s miracles, signs and wonders. Oh, they had the Scriptures memorized, but it did not affect them. Because they were spiritually blind, they were smug and comfortable with their bad theology. As a result, they missed the Messiah and excommunicated the blind man. They were offended at Jesus’ message. *They were still in their sins and going to hell. They were not seekers after the truth about God but were content in their blindness.*

**This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and**

men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. John 3:19 (NASB)

The spiritually blind are not motivated to rethink their theology and honestly consider that they might be wrong about God. The spiritually blind do not seriously seek after God and reevaluate their theology. They ignore the truth about God (Romans 1:19; 2:14-15). Their bad theology appeals to their own desires (1 Peter 2:17-19).

The early church father Eusebius refers to a Christian man called Hegesippus (A.D. 110-180) in his book titled the *Ecclesiastical History*. Eusebius tells us that Hegesippus traveled to Rome and Corinth in an attempt to determine the truth about Jesus and the apostles. He concluded their doctrines were true. The following quote will reveal that he concluded the stories were true.

Hegesippus in the five books of Memoirs which have come down to us has left a most complete record of his own views. In them he states that on a journey to Rome he met a great many bishops, and that he received the same doctrine from all. It is fitting to hear what he says after making some remarks about the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. His words are as follows: 'And the church of Corinth continued in the true faith until Primus was bishop in Corinth. I conversed with them on my way to Rome, and abode with the Corinthians many days, during which we were mutually refreshed in the true doctrine. And when I had come to Rome I remained there until Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. And Anicetus was succeeded by Soter, and he by Eleutherus. In every succession, and in every city that is held which is preached by the law and the prophets and the Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

There are many secular and Christian accounts about Christ that reveal He existed, did miracles and wonders. How else would one discover that Christ was God, since we cannot see Him and live?

God has chosen to speak to us in the Scriptures and through pastors who have been gifted by the Spirit of God. Let us listen and believe our God.

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1. Eusebius. *The History of the Church*, 4.22.2. Philip Schaff. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Henrickson Publishing. 1995. vol. 1, pp. 198-199.