

Blaming the Blind

John 9

November 9, 2025

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Video and audio versions available online:

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/blaming-the-blind/>

Transcript document prepared by: Heather Eades.

This document was prepared by Heather Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please email us at transcripts@thesanctuarydowntown.org. Thank you!

Message

Peter starts singing *Open the Eyes of My Heart*.

Hey, I noticed that some of you weren't really into it. And you know everything we do is to be worship. Our life is to be like a dance, such that our bodies are animated by the rhythm and logic of heaven. We need to work on that. So, would you all stand up and find a partner? (Ted, would you be my partner?) I want us to play Patty Cake.

1. Face your partner and do this...“Patty cake, patty cake, baker’s man, bake me a cake as fast as you can.” [Ted and Peter demonstrate]
 2. OK, we’ll do it all together and I want to hear it, OK? “Patty cake, patty cake, baker’s man, bake me a cake as fast as you can.”
 3. OK, now that you understand Patty Cake, let’s do it with our eyes closed. Everybody close your eyes, keep them closed & play Patty Cake. “Patty cake, patty cake, bakers’ man, bake me a cake as fast as you can.”
 4. OK, if you messed up, just try harder, Try Harder! “Patty cake, patty cake, bakers’ man, bake me a cake as fast as you can.” Try Harder! “Patty cake, patty cake, bakers’ man, bake me a cake as fast as you can.” [Peter and Ted start hitting each other... “Ouch!” “That hurt!” “You butt head!”] [Peter and Ted wrestle each other to the ground, hurling insults and slaps until Peter yells “Stop, that’s enough, open your eyes”] You may be seated. Thanks Ted. That was helpful. I hope we all learned three valuable lessons.
1. Seeing is important. So, blindness is not OK; it hurts people.
 2. But yelling at Blind people is not particularly helpful.
 3. In fact, “trying harder” actually makes things worse. It’s like yelling “run faster” to someone that’s running in the wrong direction.

Let’s Pray: Jesus, we pray that you would open the eyes of our hearts that we might see you. Life is dancing with you, so help us to see you and what you are doing rather than assuming we know and just trying harder.

This is our 26th message from the Gospel of John.

John 9:1-3:

As [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³ Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed [*phanerao*: revealed, even “shine”] in him.

Creation is the work of God and Jesus just told us in John 6:29 “This is the work of God that you believe [that you have faith] in him whom he has sent.” Creating everything and creating faith in you is the Work of God

John 9:4-7:

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am [*ego eimi*] the light of the world.” ⁶ Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. [like God breathed into clay and made Adam] Then he anointed [*epichrio*, “christened”] the man’s eyes with the mud ⁷ and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent [*apestalmenos*: “apostle”]). So, he went and washed and came back seeing.

Amazing story, but we share the disciple’s questions. Why would anyone be blind from birth? Blindness is a real problem, with very painful implications. Jesus warned against “Blind Guides” and “the blind leading the blind.” Studies indicate that blind people are significantly worse at operating motor vehicles, performing brain surgery, and playing patty cake than the sighted. I mean we can try to be all politically correct about this... and say that blindness is not a liability, but it is. And yet it really doesn’t help to yell at blind people “Try harder, you just have to decide to see. It’s your choice.” Why would anyone be blind, and why would anyone blame the blind? Well, I think we all know the answer to that question, we just don’t like admitting the truth.

For one, blaming others makes us feel better about ourselves—at least for the moment. And blaming people does give us a sense of control—If something bad happens and it’s the result of someone’s choice; we think we can change that choice or avoid that choice ourselves and so protect ourselves in the future. And thirdly if you can blame someone it helps you not to feel sorrow for that someone. You simply say, “Well it was their choice; we all have free will.” But this guy was born blind. Scripture does say that “the sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons,” which is to say that we all suffer for the failures of our parents. But that’s different than saying that we inherit the guilt of our parents. Deuteronomy 24:16, “Children [shall not] be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.” That verse destroys the idea of a penal substitutionary atonement, as well as the idea that we inherit guilt; sin maybe—sin is the absence of faith in the Good—so, sin maybe, but guilt “no.”ⁱ Isaiah 7:16, A baby is unable to choose the good or refuse the evil. Deuteronomy 1:39, “Little ones” have no knowledge of good or evil. So, this guy is blind from birth.

- It’s not his fault, not his parents’ fault; so, whose fault is it?

- He can't drive a car, perform brain surgery, or play patty cake.
- He's not free—free to choose what you and I might choose.
- This guy didn't choose to be blind.

So why would anyone be born blind? Why would anyone blame the blind? And why would anyone ever choose to go blind, because sometimes they do. At the turn of the last century, Maria Von Sinding studied the lives of 66 patients who were blind from birth and received cataract surgery. Suddenly, they could see – And it was a crisis. (*krisis* in Greek, “a judgment”) Each patient had to deal with shocking new realities, and yet each lacked the mental categories with which to do so: depth, distance, and perspective.ⁱⁱ Instead of perceiving a person walking toward them, they would see a person growing before their eyes; vision was a crisis. One patient walked right off a balcony and was killed. And so, some actually chose blindness and returned to the dark. I once met a woman whose husband made this choice and went blind. Yet some could see that the light was good, and so chose the Good.

There are different degrees and ways of seeing and knowing. In Greek the verb “*blepo*” simply means to “see.” “*Oida*” means to see and know and is often translated “know.” And “*ginosko*” is the kind of knowing that can get you pregnant. I've heard that the doctors had no medical explanation for the blindness in Ray Charles. No explanation other than the fact that when he was a boy, he watched his brother drown as he stood frozen in fear on the side of a lake. And ever since that day, he could no longer see.

One day, about 40 years ago, driving somewhere with Susan, out of nowhere she said something like, “There was an accident here. I was the first to find Him. I gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for a long time. He died.” I said, “Honey, when was that?” She said, “About 6 months ago, I guess.” “Why didn't you tell me?” I asked. And she said, “Well, I just remembered.” She had chosen to forget, and she doesn't seem to remember it now. So, would you blame Susan for going blind? How about Ray Charles or the people with cataract surgery? If you choose to go blind, you choose not to see the light. And you choose not to see the light because you don't see that the light is good. All you see is death, guilt, confusion, and injustice. And so, your strategy is to close your eyes. Your strategy is to save yourself with blindness.



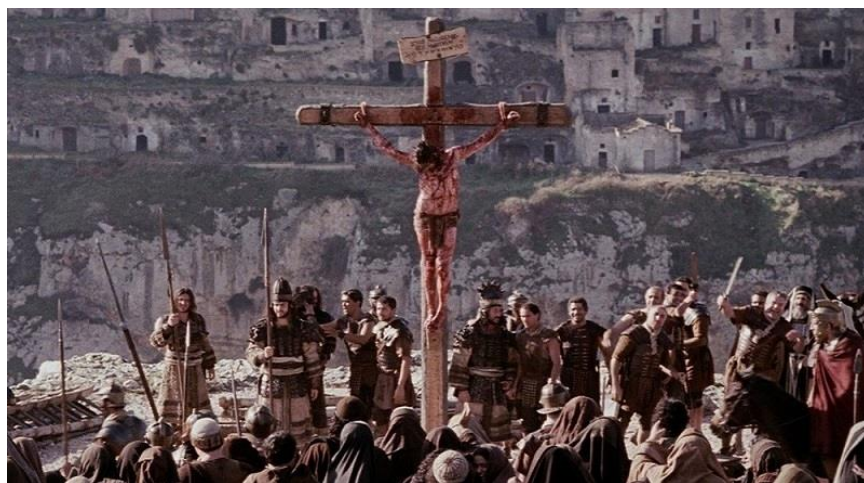
This is a picture of the Gaza Strip. About 69,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been killed in Gaza in the last two years. You can argue about just wars, but our taxes under Joe Biden and Donald Trump paid for those bombs. And I'd rather not see the picture.



There are about a million abortions every year in our country. You can argue about legislation, when and where they're justified, etc. etc. But I'd rather just forget that statistic, and I'm not showing you the pictures.



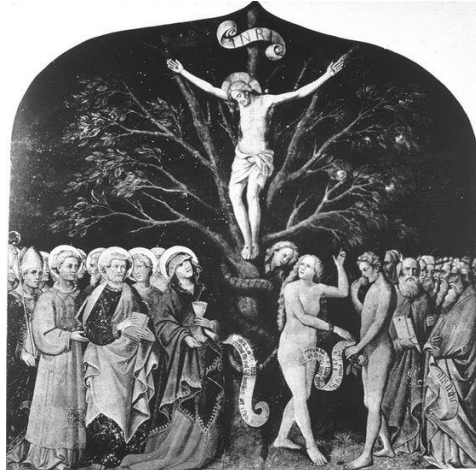
This is a picture of a blind man begging on the street of some city. You know this sight, and you know how easy it is to look away.



Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

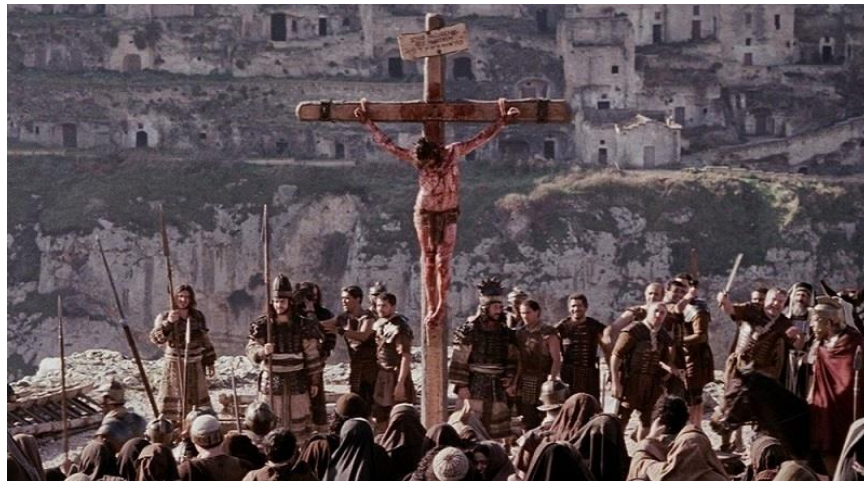
People have definitely complained about this picture—it's a depiction of Jesus crucified on the tree in the garden on Calvary. I've definitely received some criticism about this picture. John

3:19, “And this is the Judgment [*krisis*, the Crisis]: The Light has come into the world and people loved the darkness rather than the Light.” People did not love the light, for they had chosen darkness. And maybe they did not love the Light, for they hadn’t yet seen just how good the Light actually is—how good the Good actually is.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

In Scripture “the good,” the *tob* (Hebrew), means the desirable, the beautiful, the thing that everybody actually, and most passionately, desires.



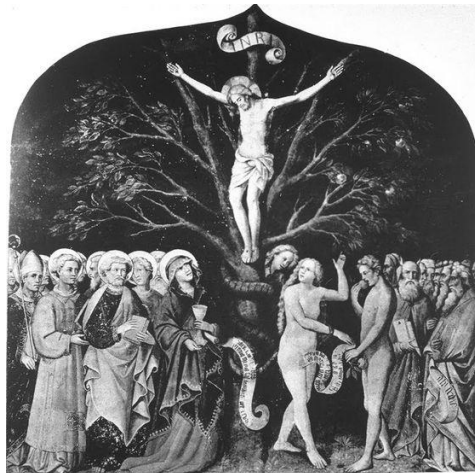
Gibson, Mel (Director). (2004). The Passion of the Christ [Motion picture]. USA: Icon Productions.

Susan saw death. Ray Charles saw his failure. The cataract patients saw chaos and confusion. We all see death, failure, confusion, and injustice. It’s like we all see Good Friday and then shut our eyes before Easter. We know about the good (enough to see that what we have done is bad). We know about the good, but we have not known the Good until we see that the Good knows us and does not condemn us. That’s how good he is! “Father, forgive them. They know (*ginosko*) not what they do, they ‘see’ but they don’t ‘know.’”

In our last message, I told you about the dark figures in the crawl space under the very spot where I used to stand and preach in the old building. I told you how Jesus appeared to them,

shining in glory, but they wouldn't look up until I preached the Gospel of Grace, proclaiming the forgiveness of sins. I told them "He loves you. He doesn't condemn you." I told you how Susan said in wonder, "Peter the moment they look up, they go to Jesus and through that door into the New Creation." And I told you how Jesus said, "I'm leaving this door here for those that will still come, and the Gates of Hell will not prevail against my church." We all took his life on the tree, but when we see that he always gives his life on the tree, we see the Good and are drawn to the Good for we were made for the Good... the Good is what we all most passionately desire. He is "our Helper."

Church fathers, like Maximus the Confessor taught that we have a natural will that is naturally drawn to God who is the Good and the Light. And we have a deliberative will that can stray from God but only because it has been blinded to the Truth—blinded by a lie.ⁱⁱⁱ Helen Keller, deaf blind and mute wrote, "There is blindness far worse than mine – those who can see and choose not to see."^{iv} And yet she still called it "blindness." And I don't think she blamed the blind. We choose not to see the Light for we haven't yet seen that the Light is the Good. And therefore, we cannot choose the Good in freedom. Julian of Norwich wrote, "Man (Adam)—does not see God; for if man saw God, he would have no evil feelings, nor any sort of impulse towards the craving which leads to sin."^v Sin in blindness; sin is a lack of faith in the good.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

And so, yelling at blind people doesn't seem to help. We yell, "Try harder. Try harder" and we're all running in the wrong direction. We literally beat each other trying to make ourselves Good. Sin is a failure to see the Good & to commit a sin is to act out of that blindness. The disciples failed to see the Good in the blind man. They had the worst form of blindness; they were blind to their own blindness. The Light of the World and the Glory of God will say on that day, "As you did to one of the least of these, my brothers, you did to me." I'm not saying this to you, to make you feel bad and "Try harder." I'm saying this to us, his disciples, in order that we would ask questions: "Am I blind? Was I born blind? Is everybody blind, except maybe Jesus?"

THE SEVEN SIGNS

- #1:** Water to Wine at a Wedding Feast
- #2:** Healing the Body of the Father's Sick Child
- #3:** A Lame Body That Becomes the Temple of Mercy
- #4:** Broken Bread That Becomes a Party in a Field by the Sea.
- #5:** Sight to the Man Born Blind
- #6:** One Man (Lazarus) Raised From the Dead
- #7:** ***"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."***

John 9:1-7 is the 5th of the 7 signs in John. And it includes the 2nd of the 7 I Am Statements in John.

THE SEVEN "I AM THE" STATEMENTS

- #1:** ***"I am the bread of life."*** John 6:35, 41, 48
- #2:** ***"I am the light of the World."*** John 8:12, 9:5
- #3:** ***"I am the door."*** John 10:7, 9
- #4:** ***"I am the good shepherd."*** John 10:11, 14
- #5:** ***"I am the resurrection and the life."*** John 11:25
- #6:** ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life."*** John 14:6
- #7:** ***"I am the true vine."*** John 15:1

In John 9:1-7, what Jesus does is utterly profound, but the rest of chapter is like a Monty Python sketch—it's what we do. We'll read this again next week. So don't stress about everything this week.

John 9:7-39:

So he went and washed and came back seeing [*blepo*: see]. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen [*theoreo*: observe] him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am ~~the man~~." [*ego eimi*—that is a normal way to answer and yet it's also the name of God. "The man" is added by the translator] ¹⁰ So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight [*blepo*]." ¹² They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know [*oida*: see, or "I have not seen]." ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly

been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day [the 7th day, the sign that is the substance] when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see [blepo].” ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” ¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see [blepo]?” ²⁰ His parents answered, “We know [oida: see] that this is our son and that he was born blind. ²¹ But how he now sees [blepo] we do not know [oida: see], nor do we know [oida: see] who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²² (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue [aposunogogos] (In chapter 16, Jesus tells his disciples, “They are going to make you aposunogogos.” That would be a great name for our church— “the Aposunogogo.) Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” ²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God [How ironic.^{vi}] “Give glory to God. We know [oida: see] that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵ He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know [oida: see]. One thing I do know [oida: see], that though I was blind, now I see [blepo].” ²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷ He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” ²⁸ And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know [oida: see] that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know [oida: see] where he comes from.” ³⁰ The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know [oida: see] where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know [oida: see] that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³² Never since the world [aion: age] began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴ They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out [Maybe it’s not such a bad thing to be cast out, for then at last you can be found]... ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe [pisteuo: have faith] in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen [oida: seen, known] him, [That’s wonderfully, tragically, hilarious: Everyone is blind except the blind man and Jesus] and it is he who is speaking to you.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe [pisteuo: have faith],” and he worshiped [prokuneo] him.^{vii} ³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see [blepo] may see [blepo], and those who see [blepo] may become blind.”

Remember Saul of Tarsus, Pharisee of Pharisees, and chief of all sinners, who thought he saw so clearly that he persecuted believers to the point of prison and death? Jesus seems to be saying that his story is our story. Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, shining in such Glory that Paul was blinded! And yet, even though he had trouble with his eyes for the rest of his life, he began to see better than all—he became the apostle of Grace.

John 9:40-41:

Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind [If you saw that you don’t see], you would have no guilt [*hamartia*: sin]; but now that you say, ‘We see [*blepo*],’ your guilt [*hamartia*: sin] remains.

If Jesus were to help these men see that they don’t see, he would have healed them of blindness and saved them from their sin—sin, which is not seeing the Truth, who is the Light, and the Good in Flesh... even hanging on a tree.^{viii} So, do you see? I think He’s asking each of us some questions: Are you blind? Were you born blind? And if so, who’s to blame?

In Acts 17, to the philosophers in Athens, Paul says “In God we live move and have our being.” That means that you are a creation in God, and God is literally all around you. So, do you see him, or are you blind? Well, if you saw him what would he look like?^{ix} This is where the I am statements in John become so utterly astounding. If Jesus says, “I am the Light of the world” not “a light of the world,” He is NOT only implying that he’s God, but that He is the only light of the world. So, do you see any light? We swim in light, don’t we?^x If Jesus says, “I am the Life,” not “a life,” He’s not only implying that he’s God, but that God is the life in anything that lives, AND He is that life. If Jesus says, “I am the Truth,” not only “true” but “the Truth,” He’s saying, “I am the truth in anything that’s true, and I am God.” And we all know that even a lie is dependent upon the Truth. Lies have no independent existence of their own. If Jesus says, “God alone is good,” he’s saying that the goodness, beauty, truth, life and love in everything that’s anything is God, and the only thing that any of us actually desires (unless, of course blinded by a lie). So, do you ever see Goodness, Beauty, Truth, Light or Love? Well, of course you do! You see them every day and all the time. You see them, but do you know them, and did you know that they know you?

I once had something of a Damascus Road experience; Paul talked about his all the time, and I’ve mentioned mine quite a bit. In the morning God utterly undid me with just 10 words; he blinded me to what I thought was true, with a revelation of the Truth—He revealed that all my good works were like filthy rags. But that evening He revealed that I was his good work... and utterly immersed in him like a baby in a womb. He literally pinned me to the ground. And I saw that he is the beauty in everything that’s anything, the truth in every song, the light in every moment, the life already in my veins I saw that he was absolutely everywhere and everywhen in all of my space and my time constantly saying, “I love you. I love you. I love you. Peter.” And I could not help but worship, as if I was caught up in the River of Life and had no choice, and wanted no choice, other than returning to him as absolute praise and relentless worship. Everywhere and everywhen God was saying “I love you” and yet I knew that if I did NOT trust that voice, I could NOT bear the knowledge of that voice—I would be literally crushed by an immeasurable weight of glory. I thought I was going to die and yet I knew that, at last, I would

be truly living. And then it stopped, or maybe I should say, I stopped or I was stopped. Whatever the case, I began to see that I don't see; I'm blind.

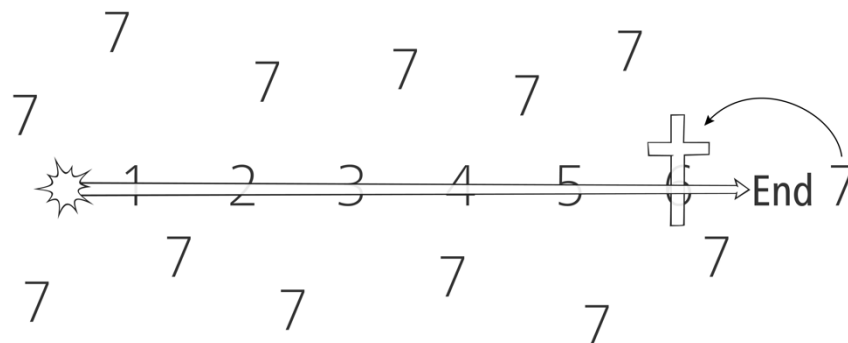
John had a similar experience He saw Jesus transfigure on the Mount. And He saw Jesus on the Island of Patmos and fell as if dead. And then He heard, "Every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is within them saying, 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!'" And then it stopped... or I should say, "John stopped seeing," for it never stops. Then John did his best to describe it in the Revelation and in his Gospel

Paul had a similar experience, Jesus blinded him on The Road to Damascus. And later he was caught up into Paradise, into Eden, where he saw things that man is unable to utter. And then it stopped, or I should say, Paul knew it hadn't stopped, and yet it stopped for him for he was still being prepared for the immeasurable weight of Glory beyond all comparison. He wrote "Now we see [*blepo*] as in a glass dimly but then face to face. Now I know [*gnosko*] in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

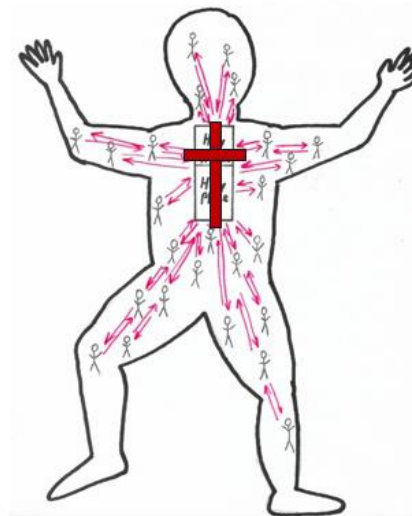
It happened to my friend Jim in Dallas who watches online: Jesus appeared to Jim when he was seven, like he did to Paul on the road to Damascus.^{xi} And Jim saw that he didn't see, but knew that if Jesus loved him, Jesus loved all.

It happened to my friend Chris, who is part of our fellowship in London. When he was a young man, Jesus appeared in his room. He told me, "I knew in that instant Jesus had recapitulated Adam, he had saved every person in himself, but then I went to church; they told me it couldn't be true." And he began to see that we don't see yet he wanted to see and to know.

And now please don't think that you need to have "an experience." Jesus said to Thomas, "Blessed, are those who haven't seen and yet believe." So, to my point, you have seen Goodness, Beauty, Truth, Light and Love. But you have also NOT seen Goodness, Beauty, Truth, Light and Love when you wanted to (you can't always control them). You've seen the Light but shining in the darkness. That's actually where it shines. That's when and where we begin to fall in love with the light. And, at times, it seems to simply go away. So did we close our eyes, or, perhaps, we had them closed by someone else? Perhaps Love is making you Hope in him so that when you see him in all his Glory, you won't hide in the darkness, like a ghost in hell, but rise from the ground and run to him like a lover and run with him through a door and into your new home.



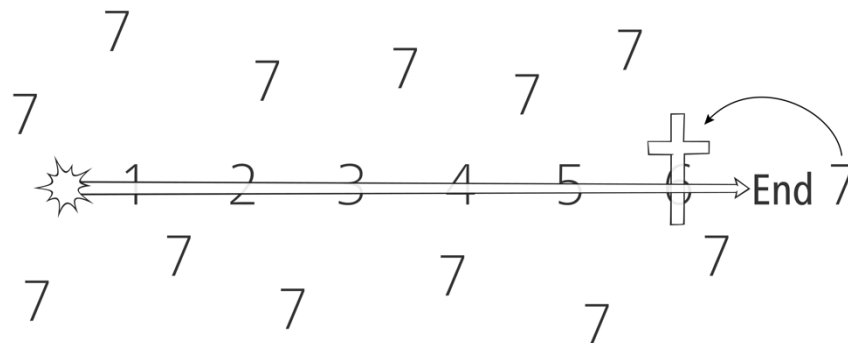
Remember that in Genesis One, God creates everything in six days (or ages), each with a beginning and an end. But the seventh day is different; it has no beginning or end, and on the seventh day “everything is Good and it is finished.” Your Home.



The Last (eschatos) Thing
The 7th Sign that is the Substance

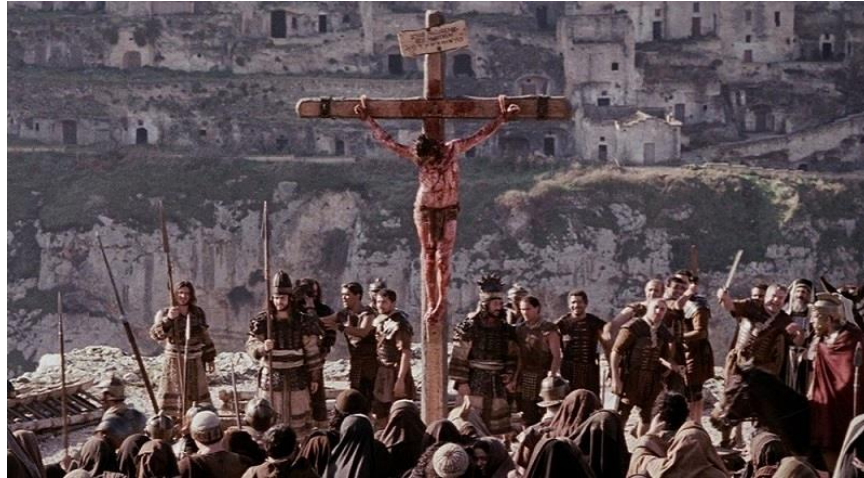
“Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”

The seventh day is the seventh sign that is the substance. For this is “the plan for the fulness of time” wrote Paul, “to unite—to bring together under one head all things in Christ Jesus.” The thing that I saw, that John saw, that Paul saw, that we all see but don’t know, is the Kingdom of Heaven that is always at hand. So YES, we are blind. And yes Adam, we were born blind.



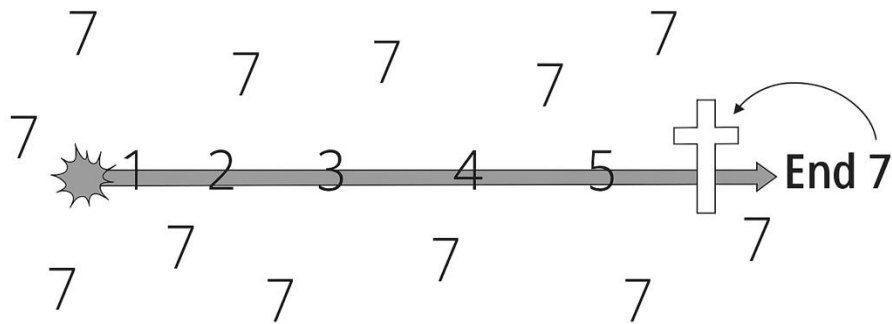
Remember that Adam (that’s you) is created on the 6th day of creation, so unless you’re all good and entirely finished, you’re still being created. Adam is created on the 6th day, and it is still the 6th day And on the 6th day, Adam can’t find his Helper, who is right there with him. And so, Adam is alone, which is not good, which is evil. And yet, Adam is blind to his own blindness. So, God (his Helper) puts Adam to sleep and begins to make a Helper fit for Adam; He begins to make himself fit for us, even Body Broken and Blood Shed. Eve is not Adam’s Helper. God is

Adam's Helper. His "ezer" in Hebrew. It turns out that We are all Eve, and God in Flesh is our Helper. It turns out that We are all the Bride of Christ, and Jesus is our Husband.

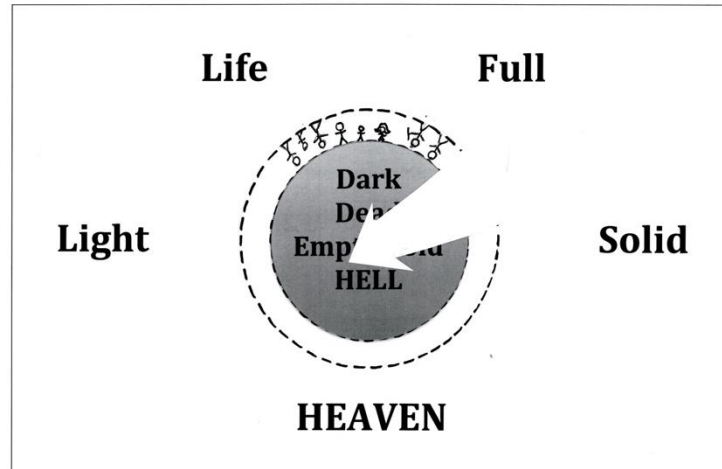


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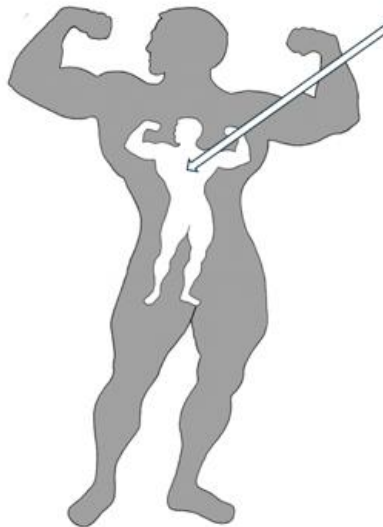
But we don't wake to this reality until "NOT knowing what we do" we take his life on the tree and discover that he's always given his life on the Tree. Our Husband is absolute and relentless Love; He is the Beauty, Truth, Life, and Love that surrounds you every day; He is the Light shining in your darkness. The Light is not of this world; it's eternal, and yet, it constantly enlightens our world; He enlightens all our space and time romancing us to himself. He will fill all things with himself, that "God may be all in all."



He will fill all of time with eternity.



He will fill the depths of this earth with the glory of Heaven.

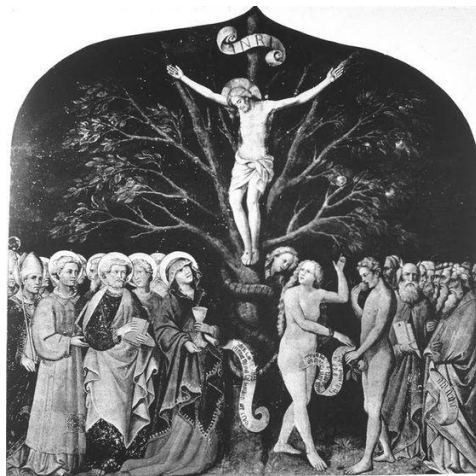


He will fill each of our empty vessels with himself.

So, will God fill all things with himself? ...OR will He birth us into his Kingdom of Love? ...OR will He simply open our eyes? I think the answer is YES; It's all of the these. And because we have gained knowledge of the Dark, we will freely love the Light in the Light... with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. You will know, and be known, by the Good in endless and ecstatic Love. So Yes: You are Blind. Yes, you were born blind. And whose fault is that? Jesus doesn't blame the blind man, and he doesn't blame his parents. He doesn't even blame the Pharisees... And the Pharisees are so blind that they're going to lead all the blind—the Jews, the neighbors, even some disciples—to take the Life of the Light of the World on a tree in a garden. It may be their fault, but Jesus doesn't blame them for that fault for they couldn't have done anything differently. They were blind. And whose fault is that?

On Palm Sunday in John 12, speaking of his cross, Jesus says, “And I when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” Then John adds, John 12:37-41 “Though he (Jesus) had done so many signs before them they could not believe, for again Isaiah said, ‘He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, (HE HAS) lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.’ Isaiah said these things, writes John, because he saw his glory (the glory that is Jesus) and spoke of him.”

John is quoting Isaiah 6. In Isaiah 6, Isaiah sees the Lord “High and lifted up... the train of his robe fills the temple... And the Seraphim cry out, ‘Holy Holy Holy is the the LORD of hosts; the whole earth (And that would include each one of us) is filled, is filled, is filled with his glory.’” So, Isaiah cries out “Woe is me, ‘I’m lost.’” The Seraphim touch a burning coal to his lips atoning for his sin. And Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord—that’s Jesus—saying, “whom shall I send?” And Isaiah says, “send me!” And the Lord says, “Say to this people... ‘See indeed, but do not perceive.’... and blind their eyes.” Isaiah asks, “How long?” And the Lord says “Until cities lie waste^{xii}... and the forsaken places are many... and though a tenth remain, it will be burned again...” Isaiah is told to blind Israel and preach Israel down to a stump. (So that all that Israel can see is this stump.) And then the Lord says, “The Holy Seed is it’s Stump.” Read Isaiah, and you discover that Isaiah preaches that all things will be filled with the Glory of God until all flesh worships God together as the New Jerusalem.^{xiii} (I’ve discovered that there is no better message, and yet there is no message more offensive to the human ego, for it must be utterly destroyed in the burning love of God at the edge of the city in the Valley of Gehenna.) Isaiah preaches that everything will be filled, and is filled, with the glory of God, BUT NOT because of our decision to glorify God but because of God’s decision to be glorified in us because of The Promised Seed. Isaiah preaches that a suffering servant will open the eyes of the blind, and unite all flesh in himself, as a symphony of praise to our Creator.



"The Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

The Suffering Servant is the Promised Seed. And He is the root of the tree. It must be the tree in the middle of the garden—it’s the tree of knowledge that becomes and always was the tree of Life; It’s the cross. And Jesus is the door to the 7th Day, when and where it is finished and everything is good. And it’s all God’s fault, and yet, God is never at fault, and so, in the End, in Christ, we see that there is no one to blame. But go ahead if you must. Take the blame train, blame your parents, and they’ll blame the pastors, and the pastors will blame the Jews, who can

keep blaming the blamers all the way back to the tree in the middle of the garden. You can blame the man on the tree, BUT he doesn't blame you. You can take his life on the tree, BUT there you'll discover that he gives his life on the tree—He gives it to you... and he makes all things new. And then you'll see and know Him, the Seed, shining in your own darkness. You've been blinded that you might see the Work of God, who is God, living his life in you, believing his truth in you, delighting in his goodness with you, trusting his Father in you, and loving all creation through you. You've been blinded by the Light and consigned to disobedience^{xiv} that you would know that even your faith is Grace and begin to worship. You've been blinded by the Light that you might become the Light and forever know as you have always been known. You are the image and likeness of God, and God is infinitely happy.

Many years ago, the famous gospel singer, Bill Mann gave a concert and returned to his dressing room. Waiting for him there was a woman, blind, deaf, and mute. Through the lady who was with her, she asked if he would sing for her the last song he had sung in the concert that evening. "Surely," he replied. And so, standing only five inches from his face, Helen Keller placed her fingers on his lips and on his vocal cords as he sang it again, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" As he finished, a tear ran down her face. Indistinctly, she said, as the words were repeated by the lady who was with her, she said, "I was there."^{xv} Helen Keller was blind, and yet she saw and she knew: Christ was in her, and she was in Christ. She is His glory. She is His Bride. They had died together and were already rising together. He is the light shining in the darkness.

I think we all see but we don't truly know, until we see the light shining in our own darkness. And we won't see the light shining in our own darkness until we have faith enough to open the eyes of our hearts. And yelling at blind people won't help people to open their eyes; the only thing that can do that is the Seed, The Word of Love, the Gospel. It will make people angry—we'll talk about that next week—the Spit. It will make people angry, but then the Truth will set them free and set all of us free, until we've all joined the party. But right now, IF we only saw that we don't see, but are blind, we would see and

1. We'd stop yelling at blind people, "try harder." For
2. We wouldn't be jealous of sinners; we'd have compassion on sinners. And
3. Wherever we went and whatever we did, we'd preach the Gospel—it's not a threat, but news, the very best news.

We'd announce to the World: "He doesn't condemn you; He forgives you; He knows that you did not know, but now you do and so, it's time to party." God said to Isaiah, "Preach them all down to a stump. The Holy Seed is the Stump." Here's the tree [the cross] and Here's the stump [communion bread], which is also THE SEED.

Communion

And so, he took the bread and broke it saying, "This is my body given to you. Take and eat. And in the same manner after supper and having given thanks, he took the cup saying "This is the New Covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you."

Tear off a piece of bread and dip it in the cup. [Peter holds up a piece of bread dipped in wine, like a seed between finger and thumb.] Do you see???? What is it???

- It's Manna (That's what manna means, 'what is it?')
- It's Grace and Faith (But we think those things are dead things.)
- A better word for it would be...JESUS
- Once you truly see him (the seed) you see everything

So, place the Light of the World in your own darkness and swallow. AMEN

Endnotes

ⁱ “Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” wrote Paul. So, whatever does proceed from “faithlessness,” the absence of faith, is sin.

If we define sin as the absence of “faith,” then clearly Adam is born (created, or at least partly created) with sin (the noun) for he has no faith in the Good; he lacks knowledge of the good.

If we define sin as acting in bad faith or the absence of faith, then clearly Adam is born (created, or at least partly created) without sin (the verb) for he has taken no action.

If we remember that Adam means “man,” which means each one of us, then its easy to see that we were each born with “sin” (a lack of faith) and yet never “sinned” and were therefore not “sinners” for we had never acted upon our “sin.”

The story of the fall of Adam is the story of each and every person that isn’t “handicapped” in some way (i.e. downs syndrome etc.).

ⁱⁱ One distraught woman cried out in the middle of her training, “How is it that I now find myself less happy than before? Everything I see causes me a disagreeable emotion. Oh, I was much more at ease in my blindness.” Eventually – to her great joy – she went blind again.

ⁱⁱⁱ David Bentley Hart, That All Shall Be Saved, (Yale University Press, 2019) p. 36, see also pp.177-187

^{iv} I don’t know where I originally read this. But the following quote is similar...

When Helen Keller was asked if there were anything worse than being blind, she answered, "Yes! Being able to see and having no vision."

- Tony Campolo, Everything You've Heard is Wrong, Pg 115.

^v Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love, Translator: Elizabeth Spearing (Penguin Books, 1998) p.109

^{vi} Jesus is Salvation, Salvation is the Glory of God. How would you glorify a savior other than testifying that he saves? The formerly blind man is glorifying God; the Pharisees are glorifying themselves—that is, defending their own glory: me-sus, rather than Jesus (“God is Salvation”).

^{vii} “The Father is seeking such people to worship him,” said Jesus to the Samaritan Woman in John 4

^{viii} If Jesus were to help these men see that they don’t see, he would have healed them of blindness and saved them from their sin. He would have repented them, given them a new mind.

^{ix} Jesus will tell us in John 14 “*Whoever has seen me has seen the Father*”
Paul tells us, “*We have seen the Glory of God shining in the face of Christ.*”
SO... if you *were to see* God or the Word of God, what would he look like?

^x Physicists argue that light actually fills all things; it is a *ubiquitous quantum field* and all we actually see are *certain disturbances in that field*.

And even if we don’t actually see light, we see everything by the Light.

In 1 John, John writes, “*God is Light*” and “*Jesus is the Light of the World.*”

SO... if we open your eyes, the Light becomes the Light of our world.

^{xi} Jim Strahan, The Brightness Around Him (Resource Publications, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015) pp.1-2

^{xii} “Cities” are what Cain is commanded not to build. But for us God has built a city, a city built not with human hands.

^{xiii} If we take Isaiah literally this is the only conclusion that we can draw from Isaiah 66. “All flesh” goes out to the edge of the New Jerusalem and look down upon the corpses of “the men that have rebelled against [him],” that is the bodies of all flesh (for all men have rebelled against him and even the Messiah has numbered himself with the “rebels”). And they all—all flesh, new flesh—begin to worship God for saving them from themselves and uniting them in one communion of Love, the body and bride of Christ (John was quite aware of this picture as he wrote the Revelation).

^{xiv} Romans 11:32

^{xv} I have a dear friend, Bill Mann, who has one of the great singing voices in the Christian church in this nation. I remember some years ago he told me about the most special concert in his life. It was after the concert was over and he returned to his dressing room. Waiting for him there was a woman who was blind, deaf, and mute. Through the lady who was with her, she asked if he would sing for her the last song he sang in the concert. "Surely," he said.

And standing only five inches from his face-and placing her fingers on his lips and on his vocal cords, he sang again, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" As he finished singing, a tear trickled down the face of Helen Keller. Indistinctly, she said, as the words were repeated by the lady with her, "I was there!"

-James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 277.