

## SIGHT PROBLEMS

Our eyes are very powerful and sensitive. As we age, we develop problems as our eyes become weak. We may be nearsighted, farsighted or get objects in our eyes. We may just simply not look where we are going. Similarly, as we age spiritually, we can develop spiritual sight problems. We fail to see things properly. Here we will study examples found in the Scriptures of these sight problems.

### Nearsightedness

In Judges 9, Abimelech is made king by the Shechemites only later to be overthrown by them. Although accepting the kingship at the time seemed like a good idea, it became the means of his death. Like Abimelech, we only see the immediate future directly in front of us. We fail to see "afar off", the "big picture. It causes us to make unfavorable decisions.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man (the sinner) wants instant gratification and gets an eternity of torment. Lazarus (the Christian) suffers persecution in hope of a better future and receives an eternity of paradise (Luke 16 and John 11). This is similar to Moses' decision in Hebrews 11:25-26.

*"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."*

Nearsightedness is one of the biggest spiritual problems today. This is evident in the choices that fornicators, liars, and worldly businesspersons make.

### Something in the Eye

When something gets in the eye, everything becomes blurry, especially when the cause is a small speck. Spiritually this causes us to become critical of others, not to see correctly. We cannot even see our own errors.

*"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye*

*mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Mat. 7:1-5)*

In addition, when something is in our spiritual "eye," we do not practice what we preach. For example, we may say "Don't lie!" but we gossip, or "Don't gamble!" but we buy raffle tickets. In Romans 2:21-23, Paul writes,

*"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?"*

### Looking back

The rich young ruler looked back at what he owned.

*"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." (Mat. 19:21-22)*

Being regretful is another example of looking back.

*"And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:59-62)*

Sometimes we look back at what we were before our baptism into Christ, and we drown in shame because it reminds us of our unworthiness. However, we are all unworthy! By looking back, we cannot grow into a new creature because we are too busy looking at the old man. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new

*creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Cor. 5:17)

### The Cure

To keep from looking back, we need to be looking far ahead (not just a little ahead), like the prodigal son's father. *"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."* (Luke 15:20)

Look ahead in the Lord's Supper. There are four looks—inward, outward, backward, and forward. *"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."* (1Cor. 11:26)

Look ahead to Christ's second coming. *"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."* (Mar 13:32-33)

Work now so we can "rest" later. (Heb 4:1-11)

If we do get our eyes fixed (like putting on new glasses or vision correction surgery), we will be able to see:

► That it is useless to worry about material things.

*"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."* (Mat. 6:31-34)

► You can't take it with you!

*"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."* (1 Tim. 6:7)

► That life is brief.

*"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (Jas. 4:14)*

► That we need to be in a saved condition now

*(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) (2 Cor. 6:2).*

*"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:" (2 Thes. 1:7-8)*

► That we need to continue adding the Christian graces, adding to faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

*"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (2Pet. 1:9)*

Seeing spiritually is very important. We must understand the faithful who died:

*"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb 11:13)*

So let us press forward by looking ahead as Paul did.

*"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." (Phi. 3:13-15)*

Adapted from a sermon by RAY MCMANUS  
Deceased

## APOLOGIA

QUESTION: What does the passage in Mark 16:12 mean when it states that the resurrected Jesus appeared in "another form" to two men? Did Christ take on different forms as He presented Himself to His disciples when He was resurrected?

ANSWER: Questions concerning Jesus and His appearance both before and after His resurrection have intrigued students of the Bible for centuries. As with all questions concerning God's truth we must rely upon the Scriptures for our answers.

The doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian system. By the incarnation we are referring to the condescension of the second person of the God head to be born, to live, and to die in human form in order to provide redemption for mankind from our sins. In fact some commentators refer to it as the central miracle of all the grand and wonderful things God has ever done. One of the greatest passages on the incarnation is found in Philippians chapter 2:5-8. Before we address the question at hand concerning the form of Jesus we will turn our attention to this passage.

*"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."*

This passage in addition to the theological truth taught is also one that demands a response from all who are Christians. This passage begins by pointing to an attitude or a mind set that we as God's people must possess. It is a motivational passage given to us so that we will be motivated to live like Jesus.

As we look at this passage the first point that needs to be noted is that Jesus left an exalted position to take the form of man. Paul mentions that Jesus existed in the form of God. This phrase has reference to the fact that before, during, and after His incarnation He was in His very nature eternally God. The Greek word for form is *morphe*. It refers to the outward appearance of an inner reality. The use of this word shows that Jesus is God and equal with the Father in every way. He has been and always will be divine. *Morphe* is the referring to a form that never changes. However there is another Greek word (*schema*)

that refers to the outward form that does change from time to time. For example we are all of mankind that is our form as a human being. Yet our outward appearance does indeed change all the time.

We bring this up to make sure that when we speak of the form of Jesus, we need to indicate which form we are discussing. Many errors concerning the divinity of Christ have been made by a failure to distinguish between the different words. Jesus was and is always God. However He did take another form when He came in the flesh. It is the latter that our question has reference to. We must realize that taking of the form of flesh did not in anyway alter the form He possessed as God.

Now concerning the latter, His physical form, the Bible does shed some light. We now turn our attention to some of the passages that do so.

We have a brief description of Jesus during His physical lifetime. In Isaiah 53:2,3 we read,

*"For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground, He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."*

This passage tells us that Jesus was ordinary in His physical being. In fact the writer of Hebrews tells us that,

*"Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."* (Heb. 2:17)

We conclude that He was an ordinary man that had nothing special or different about His appearance. Even after His resurrection and before His ascension He still maintained a physical body which had flesh and bones.

*"Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you'. But they were terrified and frightened and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My*

*feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."* (Luke 24:13-31)

But we must also note that the form that Jesus had during this time sometimes apparently in some way changed. For example in John 20:15-16 Mary did not recognize Him at first. Also consider John 21:4, 12-14 when He had breakfast with the disciples. As He stood on the beach they did not know that it was Jesus.

Then there is the passage that is the one referred to in our question Mark 16:12. Here we read, *"After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country."*

We have established that Jesus appeared in another form in several cases. But we ask did His actual form change or did their perception of Him change? This is of course a question that has been debated. There is a passage that tends to shed some light on the subject. In Luke 24:13-16 note what is stated.

*"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem . And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained so that they did not know Him".*

In this passage it appears that His form changed not in actuality but rather in the way the disciple saw Him. It was their eyes that were restrained and not an actual change in His appearance. The other form was in the way they saw Him rather than a physical change in His appearance.

So in answer to the question "did Christ take on different forms after His resurrection?" Yes He did. Was there an actual change in His body or did the change appear only because their perception was altered? We tend to lean toward the latter rather than the former. Now the question is why? We save that for another time.

**SAM DICK**  
(Cave City, KY)

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

## DATES

Jan 30 -  
Feb 1

## LOCATION

Taylor's Cross Roads Congregation  
Roanoke, AL

## SPEAKER

Danny Abercrombie  
(Gay, GA)

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who spoke against Moses and was stricken by God with leprosy and confined outside the camp for seven days?
2. In first Samuel when Israel was in battle with the Philistines, who went to the Philistine garrison prior to battle to see if the Lord might help them?
3. What did Solomon say no one has the power to do?
4. Who blessed the infant Jesus when Mary and Joseph took Him to the temple to be circumcised?
5. Paul said the return of Christ will be accompanied by what two things?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. During the ordination of Aaron and his sons, how long were they to remain at the entrance to the tabernacle of meeting according to Moses' commandment? SEVEN DAYS (Lev. 8:33)
2. In Judges who came to Bokim and told the people that they would suffer for turning away from the Lord? AN ANGEL OF THE LORD (Judges 2:1-2)
3. Who was David fleeing from when he wrote in Psalm 3: "*Lord, how they have increased who trouble me!*"? HIS SON ABSALOM (Psa. 3)
4. What tree did Jesus curse for having no fruit for him to eat? A FIG TREE (Mark 11:13-14)
5. Who founded the Church at Colosse? Epaphras (1:7-8)