

New Testament 16
I Was Blind, Now I See
(John 9-10)

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(This material shows **why we need to see to be good shepherds**)

- I. Jesus heals a blind man (John 9:1-34).
 - A. Jesus then uses this event of healing to demonstrate the spiritual blindness of those who claimed to be shepherds over Israel.
 - B. He obtains a testimony from the formerly blind man who now sees, not only physically but **spiritually, for he sees Jesus is the Son of God** (John 9:35-38).
 - C. Jesus then clarifies that He and His Father deliberately set up situations by which men's hearts could be judged.
 1. **"For judgment I am come into this world, that they which [can't] see might see; and they which [think they] see might be made blind"** (v. 39).
 2. That is, His coming will cause some who are physically blind to spiritually see. For others the reverse would occur.
 3. **"If ye were [physically] blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin [of spiritual blindness] remaineth"** (v. 41).
 - D. While the blind man now saw that Jesus was the Son of God (v. 38), the leaders for the most part refused to accept Christ in spite of all the miracles He had done. **Thus, though physically seeing these miracles, they remained spiritually blind, and became sinners due to their unbelief.**
- II. The Savior then seems to change the subject, suddenly speaking of Himself as "The Door" (John 10:1-10).
 - A. And for that reason, those who inserted chapter divisions did so here. But there is actually a relationship to these concepts. The concepts would have been clearer if there had been no chapter separation.
 - B. Just before the destruction of the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah, **those who refused to receive the messages of warning became blind, so that they could not find The Door to their salvation.** "And [the Lord] smote the men that were at the door of the house **with blindness...** so they wearied themselves to find the way (Gen. 19:11)."
 - C. Those in Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Due to their blindness they had not found The Door to salvation. Jesus elsewhere used the destruction of those cities as a warning symbol for His time as well as the last days (Luke 17:28-32).
 1. For soon, terrible destruction would come upon the blind of Jerusalem as well (In 70 A.D. when Romans burned Jerusalem, killing or taking its people captive).
- III. Jesus further identifies Himself as the Son of David (Messiah), being a Good Shepherd like David. For He had come to lead and save those lost sheep of Israel who would hearken to His voice (John 10:11-18). **A good shepherd always led the sheep through the door of the shelter for sheep.**
 - A. These teachings develop similar themes. For it is difficult not only for the blind to find the way but to be good shepherds.

1. The artist, James Tissot, who visited the Holy Land and recreated its scenes, drew one of several blind men walking single file by clinging onto the shoulders of each other. Tissot showed in his drawing how the blind following the blind inevitably leads to disaster --- they did indeed all fall into a ditch.
- B. Jesus additionally taught that not only were those particular leaders blind (Ch 9), but thieves, robbers, and only hirelings (John 10).
- C. He further witnesses that He, in contrast, as a Good Shepherd, had come to lay down His very life for His sheep (v. 15, 17-18).
- D. He also reveals He has other sheep not of that fold whom He will also serve and save (v.16).
 1. This is an important testimony that Jesus' love extended beyond the sheep of Judea. **Latter-day Saints realize this is His testimony that He had other people whom He also loved, and would visit, as is testified to in The Book of Mormon.**
 2. While He also loved the Gentiles, He would send His disciples to teach them.

IV. The Latter-days are another time for God's Judgments. It is another time when men will be tested as to whether they will see or whether they will remain blind.

- A. **Those who do not recognize Christ's works of salvation in the Latter-days, are as blind as those who did not recognize His works in the Meridian of Time.**
- B. On the other hand, those who accept the Restored Gospel receive His New Light, His New Revelation, and will See!
- C. In fact, Seeing or "Receiving Revelation" is one of the great significant distinction of Christ's Latter-day Church.
- D. The whole foundation of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints rests upon the Rock of Revelation --- on spiritually seeing.

V. A great part of this blessing of Latter-day revelation is revelation to the Shepherds of Israel, so that they may see clearly to heal Christ's sheep.

- A. The lives of the prophets, including President Monson's today, are full of incidents when they have been guided by revelation to bless and heal Christ's people.
 1. Multiple examples can be found in his talks or his biography, *To the Rescue*. Similarly, other examples can be found in the lives of other prophets.
- B. **President Monson says that one of the greatest sources of revelation has been in the calling of stake patriarchs. This is very significant, for in turn those patriarchs reveal important guidance, comfort and counsel to individual church members.**
- C. All leaders must be very careful to judge wisely. Joseph Smith at one time made judgments against the Twelve, due to reports given to him by others. When he next saw the Twelve, and asked for and heard their side of the story, he realized his first judgments were in error. **He then said that never again would he judge by hearing just one side of the story.** For in truth, doing so is judging while partially blind. **[However, the Lord's judgment will really fall upon those who bore false witness.]** It is usually wisest to bring both sides together, and to hear both in tandem, before a final judgment can be rendered.

VI. In conclusion: Here is a choice example of a church leader being guided by revelation to bless the life of an individual member.

- A. This is a true account of which I am personally aware. I have asked the person involved to let me share it because I feel it is a perfect example of how “Seeing” (that is, being responsive to the revelatory spirit) allows us to be Good Shepherds.

Mary, a friend of mine from California, had experienced a serious crisis in her life. She had gone to Salt Lake City to visit her daughter in the midst of the turmoil, and on Sunday, attended her church with her.

Relief Society meeting was the first meeting of the day. The conducting sister shortened the lesson because that morning Sister Bonnie Parkin, the Relief Society General President, had surprised them by being in attendance, and they provided time for her to speak. Afterwards, during Sunday School, Mary felt a great need for a drink of water, and went out into the hall to find a water fountain. Passing through the hallway, she ran into Sister Parkin. Sister Parkin stopped her and asked her if she was enjoying the ward. Mary told her she was just visiting. Sister Parkin then asked, “And how are you doing?” Because her question showed great sincerity, Mary could not help but begin to cry.

Sister Parkin put her arms around her and led her into a separate room where they could have some privacy. Mary shared the sources of her heartache during the next half of an hour. Sister Parkin listened carefully and comforted her both emotionally and physically, with her arms and gentle touches.

In the end, Sister Parkin was able to bless Mary very much. A lot of what she did was listen. Mary later realized there was not a person in the church that she could have told what the issues were that would have understood them to the extent that they needed to be understood. Before parting, Sister Parkin told Mary that she had not originally planned to attend this particular ward, but when she awoke that morning she felt the impression, “I need to attend the _____ ward because there is something there I need to learn.”

She had felt when she spoke in Relief Society the reasons she was there would become apparent. But they had not. She had mingled with the sisters afterwards, still hoping to discover why she was there, but still did not find her answer. Finally, she left, and got as far as the outside door, when the spirit stopped her and told her to return. She again went back to the Relief Society Room. But she saw no one there she felt she needed to talk with. It was only the second time through the hallway that she met Mary.

This experience for Mary was an enormous blessing, in more ways than one. It helped her know of a surety that the Lord loved her. She has since been continually grateful that Sister Parkin was guided by the spirit to minister, and that she listened to that spirit. She was grateful that Sister Parkin came in the meek spirit of wanting to learn. The result was that a deeply wounded soul was personally and greatly blessed.

This event clearly demonstrates the challenge of being a good shepherd. It shows that we must do all that we can to see --- clearly! We are very blessed to be led by many Good Shepherds.