

Seeing They Shall See, Hearing They Shall Hear

Isaiah 6:9-10

Introduction:

- I. The phrase in this passage used to turn my head for loops when I would read it. I am sure the Jews living 700 years before Christ were shocked by it as well.
 - a. What do you mean, “You will see but not see, and you will hear, but not understand?”
 - b. Jesus quoted this phrase in several places in his ministry (Mt 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10).
 - i. But what does it mean?
- II. As I have continued thinking about this statement and how it was used, and the events that followed it, I realize that one can truly see and not perceive, and hear but not understand.
 - a. Have you heard the statement, “You can’t see the forest for the trees?” In this case, the person described is seeing, but not perceiving. They do not know what they see.
 - b. I believe there are three types of people who fall into the category mentioned in Isaiah 6:9-10.
 - i. Those who do not understand the culture.
 - ii. Those who miss the point of Christianity.
 - iii. Those who simply do not care.

Discussion:

- I. Those who do not understand the culture.
 - a. Let’s say you were in a building in Brazil, when someone starts shouting in Portuguese. Everyone around you listens carefully to the crier, because he is telling them how to survive a pending natural disaster. What will happen to you?
 - i. Notice that you see the reactions of the people, but do not perceive what it is. Or perhaps you see what is going on, but you cannot do anything, because you hear, but do not understand the language spoken.
 - ii. How could you be saved?
 - b. This can be true of many people, especially those outside the church, who do not understand the meaning of what it is to be a Christian. They know *about* God, they know *of* righteousness, but they do not *know* it.
 - i. These people might see the wickedness of society, the corruption of many political systems, the degradation of the home, but they can do nothing to spare themselves from it. They are like the person who does not speak Portuguese, who recognizes the danger, but knows not how to overcome it.
 - c. However, this can also be true of Christians, who, although they believe in God, go to church, and keep their lives mostly clean from evil, simply do not understand what it means to *be* a Christian.
 - i. They know the “do” and “don’t do” lists of Christianity (Go to church, be nice, don’t curse, don’t get drunk, don’t lie).
 1. Yet they do not understand the basis of Christianity!
 - a. II Peter 1:5-7
 - i. How many things here are actions or prohibitions? NONE!
 1. However, our actions must *reflect* these things!
 2. Actions without these qualities are meaningless, just as these qualities without actions are meaningless.
 2. If you go to church your whole life, and do not recognize that you must be motivated by faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, kindness, and love, you are *seeing* and *hearing* obedience, but you do not *understand* it.
 - a. Many Christians try to make a checklist of Christianity.
 - i. Plan of salvation, church procedure, Ten Commandments.

1. These lists are easier for us, because they boil it all down for us. However, we must recognize the bases for these actions before we can truly be righteous (cf. Matt. 5:20ff).
2. We must understand the culture of Christianity!

II. Those who miss the point of Christianity.

- a. I Timothy 1:5-7 describes the decadence that follows when Christians miss the point of their calling: the aim of our command is love, faith, and good conscience.
 - i. We just discussed love, in light of what Peter said in II Peter 1:5-7). It cannot truly exist until all of those other qualities are mastered.
 - ii. “Faith unfeigned” simply means that it is a faith that is not faked. Hebrews 11 tells us about faith.
 1. Faith is substance and evidence—not blind belief (1).
 2. Faith goes hand in hand with action (2-40).
 - a. The way several of these verses are worded, “by faith,” means also, “with faith” or “because of faith.”
 - b. These people from the Old Testament period are heroes, but all they did was act on their faith! Guess what! That is what we are commanded to do today!
 3. James 2:14-26 also discusses faith.
 - a. Faith is nothing if it is not accompanied by actions (17)
 - i. This is because it is alone! (cf. 24)
 - ii. Faith must be followed by action if it is to have any effect whatsoever on a person’s salvation.
 4. This reminds me of Mark 16:15-16.
 - a. Whoever believes *and is baptized* shall be saved.
 - i. Any elementary school student can tell you what “and” means. In a math problem, “and” is the same as a plus sign. “Is” would be the same as the equals sign.
 - ii. In our verse, we have the plus sign “and” and the equals sign “be.” The answer we are trying to get is “salvation,” as the one who believes and is baptized shall be saved.
 1. Let’s take this verse and change it to a math problem, and you’ll see the importance of this.
 2. Whatever problem says “5 + 3” will be 8, but if it is missing the five, the answer will not be 8.
 - iii. He is using *assumptive language*, much like we do when we say “jumping up and down.”
 1. We assume that if someone is jumping up, they will naturally come down, so the “and down” is a natural, expected outcome. It would be strange for us if I were to jump up into the air and I did not come down!
 2. Likewise, the natural result of faith is baptism
 3. If faith does not result in baptism, the person has missed the point of faith!
 - iii. “Good conscience” refers to having no guilt or deceit. I Peter 3:21 refers to it when Peter mentions the saving power of baptism.
 1. Baptism is the way that we gain a pure conscience. Hebrews 10:22 tells us to have our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water! This is an indirect reference to baptism!
 2. It is the obedience that saves, just like Noah’s obedience saved him and his family.
- b. Without these three ‘aims,’ we miss the point of Christianity.

- III. Those who do not care.
- a. The third way that one might see and not perceive, or hear and not understand, is because they simply do not care. We call this “apathy.”
 - i. It is interesting that apathy was also the Greek word for “disobedience,” which happens when we have no care toward obeying our commands.
 - ii. II Timothy 4:1-5 – Timothy is told to preach because there will be a time when people will no longer listen.
 1. They will heap up for themselves teachers.
 - a. Media (television, magazines, internet)
 - b. Preachers who will say what their people want to hear.
 - c. Friends/Family.
 - d. Their own conscience (rather than the pure one that is given at baptism).
 - i. What if I were to write out a map to Yellowstone National Park, having never been there myself? How much trust would you put into it?
 1. How many of your friends, family, or any of the people from the media, have been to heaven, and thus know the way? What is the difference?
 - ii. “I am the way...”
 1. Don’t try to find another way. Jesus is the only one who has been there and back. He is the only one who would know, and he says there is no other way!
 2. They will turn aside to fables.
 - a. As long as I’m a good person, I’ll go to heaven.
 - b. A loving God could not send people to hell for eternity.
 - c. Hell will not last forever.
 - d. My family can pray me out of Purgatory.
 - e. As long as I believe in my heart, I can *do* what I want and be saved.
 - i. “I am the truth...”
 1. Believing these things will lead you to make Christ a liar. He said none of them, and as such they should not be trusted. They are just fables.
 3. But watch, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry.
 - a. This will lead to eternal life—the crown of righteousness that the Lord will give on that day to all who love his appearing.
 - i. “I am the life...”

Conclusion:

- I. “No man cometh to the Father but by me.”
 - a. What excuses have you been making for yourself? Do you understand how grave your situation is?
 - i. Be sure to study and know the culture, or background of the commands of Christianity.
 - ii. Be sure to understand the point of Christianity: love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.
 - iii. Be sure to care about the true gospel and ignore the false gospels from those other teachers that teach worthless fables.
 1. Turn to Christ, who is the only way to the Father, God.
 - a. “...they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.”