

20/20 VISION FOR 2020

Exodus 20:20

INTRODUCTION

- Losing one's eyesight can have a devastating impact on quality of life.
- Thankfully we live in a day where medicine is able to improve or preserve people's vision
- But in many cases, there is nothing that can be done to save people's eyesight
- *Seeing* is a commonly used metaphor for *understanding*
- Blindness denotes ignorance, and the opening of the eyes describes the receiving of knowledge
- In the spiritual realm, it is possible for the blind to be made to see, and for those with poor vision to improve it
- In our unregenerate state, we are in complete blindness and darkness (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 5:8)
- When the grace of God is given to a sinner, he is then (and only then) able to see and understand spiritual things (Isaiah 42:7; Luke 24:45; Acts 16:14; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 2 Corinthians 4:6)
- In this present life, we cannot have *perfect* spiritual vision (1 Corinthians 13:12)
- Yet the believer is to improve his understanding and vision as he progresses in sanctification (Ephesians 1:16-19)
- The Israelites had an incorrect understanding of God and his relating to his covenant people
- Moses needed to instruct them, to help them have a correct view of what God was doing, and what he required of them
- Likewise today, there are a multitude of false views about God that cloud people's vision to the truth
- Those with normal visual acuity (sharpness) are described as having "20/20 vision"
- As we embark into 2020, Exodus 20:20 provides us with an optical recalibration, in order that we might start the new year with 20/20 spiritual vision

I. CEASE TO RETREAT FROM GOD IN SLAVISH DREAD

- A. The ignorant fear of the Israelites drove them from God (v.19)

1. They “removed, and stood afar off”
 2. They desired that God would cease to speak to them
 3. They thought that God’s words would destroy them
 4. They seemed to forget God’s love for them in redeeming them from Egyptian bondage
- B. Many people have an impious fear of God
1. It is wrong to have *no* fear of God; yet it is also wrong to have a *false* fear of God
 2. This fear is recognised in that it drives men *away* from God instead of *to* him
 3. Such a fear causes both men (Acts 24:25) and devils (James 2:19) to *tremble* with thoughts of future judgment
 - a. They stop their ears to God’s word, hoping to remove him from their thoughts
 - b. They fail to realise that God’s word brings life and salvation (Proverbs 4:22; 2 Timothy 3:15)
 4. This is the fear of the legalist, attempting to appease God’s anger and justify himself through his own works
 5. This fear brings no peace or assurance, only torment (1 John 4:17-18)
 6. The fearful have their part in the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8)

II. COMPREHEND THE RIGHT OF GOD TO SUBSTANTIATE OUR DEDICATION

- A. God was proving/testing Israel (cf. Exodus 16:4)
1. At Mount Sinai, God gave the nation his laws
 2. They had promised to keep God’s laws (Exodus 19:5-8)
 3. Yet talk is cheap—the profession must be put to the test
- B. This life in this world is a time of testing which will determine our place in the world to come
1. Every day we are being tested
 2. Every decision, every thought, every action, proves our faith, or lack thereof
 3. There is coming a day when we must give account—for the unbeliever at the great white throne (Revelation 20:11-15); for the believer, at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

4. Many profess to follow the Lord and his commandments, but their hearts are not with him (Luke 9:57-62)
 5. A faith that has not been tested is a faith that cannot be trusted (1 Peter 1:6-9)
- C. God proves us by various means
1. By his word (Hebrews 4:12-13)
 2. Through affliction (Psalm 66:10-12; Isaiah 48:10)
 - a. Some in their affliction turn *from* God (2 Chronicles 16:12)
 - b. Some in their affliction turn *to* God (Job 1:20-21; 13:15)
 - c. The same heat which melts the wax, hardens the clay
 3. Through temptation (Matthew 4:1; James 1:12-15)

III. CULTIVATE A REVERENCE FOR GOD IN SACRED DEVOTION

- A. This is the godly fear that is required of every person
1. It is grounded upon a knowledge of God's holy nature
 2. It emanates from a renewed heart (Deuteronomy 5:29)
 3. It is with fear that true worship is offered (Psalm 5:7)
 4. It is a fear that is accompanied by humility (Romans 11:20)
 5. It is a holy fear (2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 2:12)
- B. The fear of God is to be before our faces
1. This expression means to have it always in view, continually in one's thoughts, guiding one's direction (cf. Psalm 16:8; Acts 2:25)
 2. God's law is likewise to be "as frontlets between thine eyes" (Deuteronomy 6:8)
 3. The God-fearing man continually regards himself in the presence of God, and acts in the knowledge that his eye is ever on him

IV. CONSTRAIN REBELLION AGAINST GOD IN SINFULLY DEPARTING

- A. Sin is man's greatest problem
1. Sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4)
 2. All mankind are sinners (Romans 3:23)

3. The just punishment for our sins is eternal damnation in the lake of fire (Romans 6:23)
 4. Christ died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Peter 3:18)
 5. Those who believe on him receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43)
- B. Most people have a wrong view of sin
1. Fools make a mock at sin (Proverbs 14:9)
 2. They make excuses for sin (1 Samuel 15:13-15)
 3. They blame God for their sin (Genesis 3:12)
 4. They think God cannot see their sin (Psalm 10:11)
 5. They reject God's standards of good and evil, and invent their own
- C. God demands holiness from his people
1. "Be ye holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16)
 2. His grace teaches us to be holy (Titus 2:11-12)
 3. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not" (1 John 2:1)
 4. Yet when we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, whose blood atones for our sin (1 John 2:1-2)

CONCLUSION

1. Having clear spiritual vision is far more important than physical sight
2. The most dreadful condition for a man to be in is to be blind, yet think he can see (John 9:39-41; Revelation 3:17-18)
3. When did you last cry out to God, "Open thou mine eyes!" (Psalm 119:18)
4. It is possible to be "enlightened" to spiritual things, to adopt a form of godliness, yet never be regenerated (Hebrews 6:4-6)
5. One of the greatest privileges of the Christian is to be used of God to open the eyes of the lost (Acts 26:18)
6. A. prayer for the new year:

*Help me to regard each day of my life as a test of my faith, for which I must give account on the day of judgment;
Instil in me a solemn fear and reverence for thee, and keep it ever before my face;
Show me the utter heinousness of sin, give me the same hatred of it that thou hast,
and enable me to "go, and sin no more".*