

## Blind and Deaf

Isa. 6:9-10

### Introduction:

1. Our eyes and our ears are the chief ways that we receive information from our environment.
2. The blind and the deaf typically develop alternative ways of receiving information.
  - a. Those who are blind develop a keen sense of hearing, and an enhanced sense of touch.
  - b. The deaf enhance their sense of sight and receive information through sign language. Illustrate: the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville.
3. But can you imagine someone having both eyes and ears yet refusing to use them? By doing this they would effectively cut themselves off from receiving incoming information critical to their life and well-being.
4. Yet this is exactly what Israel had done when she refused to listen to God and instead turned to idols.
5. What we will do in this lesson is look at this theme of being blind and deaf as it runs through the O.T. and into the N.T. We will contrast it with God's desire for His people to be seeing and hearing, and we will do a vision and hearing test on our own spiritual eyes and ears to see how well we are seeing and hearing.

### Discussion:

#### I. Israel was considered blind and deaf.

- A. In the O.T. period associated with idolatry (the period associated with the captivity).
  1. Isaiah was sent to a rebellious people (6:9-10).
    - a. Their ears were dull and their eyes dim.
    - b. Their hearts were insensitive.
    - c. There was no perceiving, nor understanding.
    - d. Thus there was no healing.
  2. Isaiah presents God as the one to lead the blind and to give instruction to the deaf (42:16-23).
  3. Israel herself was called as a witness to the fact that God was the great communicator, not the idols (43:8-13).
    - a. It is God's eternity that allows Him to predict (v. 13).
    - b. There is none like Him in that He knows the past and the future (44:6-8).
    - c. This is God's distinctive feature. He stands in contrast to all other gods in that He communicates (45:20-21).
  4. Jeremiah identifies the captivity as the result of Israel having eyes, but not seeing and ears but not hearing (5:19-20).
  5. They did not delight in the word of the Lord (Jer. 6:10).
  6. "They did not listen or incline their ears, but stiffened their neck in order not to listen or take correction" (Jer. 17:23).
- B. In the N.T. period the same imagery was used.

- A. It was in this context that Jesus identified John the Baptizer as a prophet, the messenger of God in the long line of “all the prophets and the Law” (Matt. 11:9-15).
- B. It was in this context that Jesus told the parable of the soils (Matt. 13:9, 14-17). Note the quotation from Isa. 6:9f. Cf. the parallels in Mk. 4; Lk. 8.
- C. Paul interpreted the rejection of the message of Jesus by the Jews of Rome in this light (Acts 28:23-29). He interpreted the general rejection of the message by Israel in this light (Rom. 11:7-8). **Cf. Isa. 29:10: “The Lord has shut your eyes, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, the seers.”**
- D. It is interesting to note that following Stephen’s condemnation of those he described as uncircumcised in heart and ears, who resisted the Holy Spirit, persecuted the prophets and now had become the betrayers and murderers of the Lord that they “covered their ears” and silenced him by stoning him to death (Acts 7:51-60). But the message would not be silenced and continues even today to be echoed throughout the world.

II. The great tragedy is that idolaters become like the idols that they worship (Psa. 115:3-8; cf. 135:15-18).

- A. Idolaters have eyes but cannot see, ears but cannot hear, mouths but cannot speak, etc.
- B. As evidenced in the N.T. (Rom. 1:18ff).
  1. Though God makes truth evident, they suppress it.
  2. Though they know God, they do not honor Him as God.
  3. Profess wisdom, but become fools.
  4. Exchange the natural for the unnatural.
  5. Given over to their depraved mind.
- C. God sees and hears, but idolaters do not (Psa. 94:7-14).

III. God is the great communicator.

- A. He alone is the God that communicates, because He is the only God.
- B. The uniqueness of the religion of the Bible is that it is a revealed religion.

IV. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

- A. The test. Are you listening? Is found in accepting the truth revealed by God, placing our faith in it and acting accordingly.
- B. In Revelation 2-3 the Lord communicates to the seven churches of Asia.
  1. It is obvious He has intimate knowledge of each congregation.
  2. To those congregations needing to repent He calls on them for that repentance.
  3. He gives warnings.
  4. To each congregation He says, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”
- C. If we listen to the voice of the Lord we can see what we need to do.
  1. He is the WORD of life.
  2. The LIGHT of the world.
- D. FAITH is the only appropriate response.

Conclusion:

1. Will you obey His word?
2. It is not in man that walks to direct his own steps.