

# Seeing is Believing! Or is it?

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**2Co 5:7** *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

**2Co 4:18** *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

How many times have we heard it said...“Seeing is believing”? It is a common mantra in our day and age. It is pushed upon us by our very media centered, sensory oriented society. It is assumed to be true, and the practice of this concept has become a religion. It is the an almost total and unquestioning reliance upon the human physical senses. It was also common in the days of our Lord and the Apostles.

Paul calls it “sight”, but it actually stands for receiving information through any of the physical senses. “Sight” just seems to be the sense that is used the most and believed the best. It could be easy to mistake a sound, as Paul points out: *“And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? (1Cor. 14: 7-8).* Sounds are often hard to distinguish and are not very trustworthy. But it is not very easy to mistake something that you see. Sight is clearly the most reliable of the sensory organs. So sight has come to be the acid test for everything. If you can see it, you can believe it. Or so they tell us and want us to believe.

It is interesting to read what Jesus said twice to the people of His day and age that were caught up in this “seeing is believing” heresy. *“But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:” (Matt. 12: 39)* and also *“A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas” (Matt 16: 24).* Two times the Lord called these visually oriented Pharisees **“A wicked and adulterous generation”**. They are the ones who **“seek after a sign”**. They are the ones who refuse to believe unless they can see it. They are the ones who said : *“Master, we would see a sign from thee” (Matt 12: 38).* *“The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven” (Matt. 16: 1).* It seems pretty clear, that at least in their case, their desire to see was terribly sinful. Jesus compared it to **“adultery”** and called it **“evil”** and **“wicked”**.

A similar event is recorded in Mark 8: 11-12 *“And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily*

*I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation*". Jesus had a certain repugnancy for this who idea that "seeing is believing". He called it sinful, and when he tolerated it, it was so that He could show us a better way, and surer method to verify the truth.

## ***Doubting Thomas***

Consider the curious case of the Apostle Thomas in John 20: 24-29 He said: *"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe"* (v. 25). Jesus tolerated this kind of sinful "seeing is believing" confession from Thomas, because He wanted to illustrate a greater and more reliable method of ascertaining the truth. Hear what our Lord said when He allowed Thomas to "SEE" Him in this physical, sensory manner: *"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"* (Jn. 20: 29). Did you catch those penetrating and insightful words of the Lord? **"Blessed are they that have not seen"**. That should be sufficient to prove that faith is a faculty higher than the physical senses. And so He adds these words: **"and yet have believed"**. He acknowledged that Thomas believed when he saw...**"Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed"**. But Jesus allowed this, not so it would be an example for us to follow. He allowed it for the express purpose of telling us not to follow this example. What Thomas did was in essence a sinful act. He believed by doubting. This constitutes a wrong way of believing. Jesus permitted it only because He wanted us to learn the correct way for true believers to function. Believers function by "faith and not by sight".

## ***The Scientific Method***

*"The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal"*(2Cor. 4: 18). You will never SEE the eternal realms by looking at the temporal realms. This is an impossibility. This is the very serious mistake that many people make when it comes to the matter of science. They wrongly believe that by looking at the temporal, you can somehow SEE the eternal truths of God. This is a farce. It is a hoax. Don't believe it. The physical senses of observation, and physical examination, are not capable of revealing eternal realities. Subjectivism or empiricism, also known as "the scientific method" is nothing more than the idea that "seeing is believing".

The entire notion that you can gain true knowledge via the scientific method is fallacious. *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"* (1Cor. 2: 9). Seeing eyes, or hearing ears, are incapable of delivering the spirit realm truths. True knowledge comes by revelation not by observation. Observation always creates defective knowledge. That's why scientist have to test and re-test their hypotheses. And that's why they are always getting results that differ. So what they do is they average out the various results and whatever results occur most

are the results that they factor into their conclusions. The entire process is defective. The whole passage in 1 Corinthians 2 addresses this issue with clarity and finality. What God says here is the end of any and all theories of knowledge that are based on empiricism/subjectivism.

*“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1Cor. 2: 9-16).*

## **Some Belief is Sinful**

We learn from this and other passages that some forms of belief are actually sinful. The problem is that whatever belief is created from this methodology, of sensation or empiricism, is terribly deficient and is essentially sinful. **“Evil”, “wicked” and “adulterous”** is what Jesus calls the “generation that seeketh after a sign”. The simple reason it is sinful, is because it is not of faith. *“For whatsoever is not of faith is sin”* (Rom. 14: 23). Thomas committed a sin when he believed by doubting. It is recorded as an example of the wrong way to believe. It is not acceptable to doubt God and to require physical evidence from Him. This is clearly a sin. Spiritual knowledge comes only by spiritual means (i.e. through the Holy Spirit). *“The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God”* (1Cor. 2: 11).

I know that there are people who will criticize me for saying that people can sin by believing. This sounds quite controversial, but really it is not. Not all belief is created equal. Judas for instance, clearly had a belief in Jesus Christ, but he was lost. That is because empirical knowledge is totally un-salvific. It cannot convey knowledge about God, or the unseen realms, for the exact reason that these realms are unseen. That which is unseen cannot be known by that which is seen. Knowledge comes by revelation not observation. Paul said that now, in this present state of earthly existence, *“we know in part”* (1Cor. 13: 9,12). Jesus spoke of the natural man as having *“eyes to see, they see not, and ears to hear they hear not”* (Mark 8: 18). Seeing eyes produce blindness, and hearing ears produce deafness. *“That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand”* (Mk. 4: 12). This is the way God has ordained human observation to function in this present world system. It produces darkness and

death not knowledge and life. *“He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them” (Jn. 12: 40)*. God ordained this because He also ordained the functioning of faith as a faculty higher than reason.

## ***Faith Above Reason***

Faith is not a faculty of deception, it is the primary faculty of Truth. Everything of importance to the Christian comes through this faculty of “Faith”. *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11: 1)*. Don’t fail to catch the importance of this statement about faith. God says that it is **“evidence”**. That word means “proof”, “absolute assurance”, “certainty” or “conviction”. It is translated this way in many of the more modern translations. But what is it “proof” of? It is “evidence” or “proof” of **“things not seen”**. What could be clearer than that. The absolute assurance, the ultimate proof **“of the things not seen”** comes only via the channel of **“Faith”**. It does not come by sight. It never comes by sight. It will never come by sight. The evidence of the unseen comes by the unseen. It cannot, and will not come by “seeing” or “the scientific method”.

This is so important that God has emphatically stated four times in His word that “The just shall live by faith” (Hab. 2: 4; Rom. 1: 17; Gal. 3: 11; Heb. 10: 38). Faith is the character of the Christian life. We do not operate on the world’s basis of observation, we operate on God’s basis of faith. That distinguishes us from the world and all her philosophers, scientists, and false religions. God’s system is so much better that it makes every false system crumble into meaninglessness. The principle of faith, is always the superior system. No scientist can disprove it, and no atheist can tear it down. In fact, when we operate according to this principle, we destroy them in any argument, and we cast them to the ground defeated in all of our apologetics. Our victory is sure and complete.

The Devil and his minions collapse in the presence of the truth. That’s why Satan was completely unsuccessful in tempting Christ. Christ withstood him by the truth. Christ operated completely by faith. It says that the Devil *“showed Him the kingdoms of this world” (Matt. 4: 8; Lk. 4: 5)*. This was clearly an attempt by Satan to tempt Christ using the eye-gate (observation/empiricism). This has been his favorite technique ever since it worked so effectively on Eve when *“she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes” (Gen. 3: 6)*. For Eve this “seeing is believing” philosophy which was death, because she gave into it. For Christ, on the other hand, He didn’t buy into it for one second. He immediately responded to it by saying: *“Get thee behind me, Satan” (Lk. 4: 8)*. Faith recognizes and is not ignorant of the Devil’s devices (2Cor. 2: 11). Faith’s operation is the defeat of all Satanic knowledge and false reasoning systems.

## ***The Television Principle***

We live in the most technologically advanced society in world history. But it is very interesting just how much of that technology centers around the conveyance of images and sounds. Cameras, television, radio, videos, telephones, computers, I-pods, DVD's and the list goes on and on; all these things present images (seeing) and sounds (hearing), the very things that has God designed to be ineffective for the conveyance of spiritual realities (Matt. 13: 13-17; Mk. 4: 12; Lk. 8: 10; Jn. 12: 37-41; Acts 28: 25-27; Rom. 11: 8-10; Deut. 29: 4; Isa. 6: 9-10; Isa. 44: 18; Jer. 5: 21).

We are inordinately occupied with images and sounds (the television principle), in our day and age. It functions for us in education, in entertainment and now even in church. Almost every church now has a "big screen" up front where images and sound can be displayed. Even the church has come to depend upon the worlds system for processing information. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying that technology is bad. I use it every day. I think it's wonderful. It is no different than any of the other of the worlds technologies. I ride in cars, fly on planes, and get operated on in high tech hospitals. But just because I use their technology, and trust that God won't let anything bad happen to me in the process, does not mean that I accept any of their faulty scientific principles or Godless philosophies. Obviously you are reading this because of this technology. What I am saying, however, is that the philosophy behind the technology, (the idea that visible people communicate through visible means and process truth empirically by observation), that idea, that philosophy, is seriously flawed and defective. The notion that man can discover truth apart from God is totally false.

Yes, the church can use these technologies to convey the truth and the gospel message. Bible verses appear on the big screen, and they appear on my web site. But images, pictures, sounds and movies can never in and of themselves produce Faith. They cannot produce the knowledge of God. Only God can produce that kind of knowledge, and it can only be produced by "the word of God". This explains why men reject the gospel message...because even though they hear and see it, they don't really hear and see. Physical observation does not produce faith. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world"* (Rom. 10: 17-18). Faith comes by hearing the very exact, very precise, revelational "word of God". Even though the sounds and sights go out "into all the earth and unto the ends of the world", and they land in peoples ears and eyes, *"the things which are seen"* are still *"temporal"* (2Cor. 4: 18). They cannot produce faith. They do not produce faith. They are incapable of producing faith. Only God gives faith (Jn. 6: 65; Jn. 10: 26-27; Jn. 12: 37-41; Eph 2: 8; Phil. 1: 29; 1Tim. 1: 14; Heb. 12: 2; James 1: 16-18). True faith is a supernatural production in the hearts of men. It is not produced by anything that a man does, sees or hears. It only comes through the active, and alive ,

revelational word of God (Heb. 4: 12).

## ***Miracles Produce Unbelief***

If you have not yet read the article on this topic of “miracles producing unbelief” by Bob Enyart it is on the “Library” page. You should read it. You can download it for free at [RevEarlJackson.com](http://RevEarlJackson.com) One of the effects of miracles, is that they produce unbelief. It is no different when people see miracles than it is with any other sort of sensory stimulus. The seeing does not produce “belief”, but in most cases it actually hardens peoples hearts in unbelief.

I want to talk for a minute about visual miracles, because you can see supposed miracle workers, healers and people supposedly evidencing the miraculous gifts Of the Holy Spirit on TV, on the internet and in Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches, every day of the week. But I have warned for years, that these visual miracles, now commonplace, are (in almost all cases), false deceptions by the agency of Satan, and they are not true displays of God’s wonder working power. Just because you see these things, just because vast crowds are flocking to them, does not mean that there is one ounce of truth in them. When it comes to the gifts of the Holy Spirit especially the gift of healing, there are clearly visible manifestations of the gift. In the case of the gift of healing, the first visible manifestation is that HEALING HAS TO ACTUALLY TAKE PLACE. If there is no healing, there is no healer, no matter what they say. A healer heals.

Now I am not talking about just psychological cures. It is a well documented fact that most sicknesses are caused mentally, and have no basis in physiology. These are called psychosomatic illnesses. If this is true, then obviously most healings of these psychosomatic illnesses can be caused by psychological manipulation, and they are nothing more than hypnotic suggestions. We don’t count those as healings, because in reality they are not healings, only hypnosis or the power of suggestion.

Healings are verifiable medical and physical restorations. An example would be a crippled left hand being made whole just like the right hand (Matt. 12: 13; Mk. 3: 5; Lk. 6: 10). The paralysis would be completely removed. Crooked joints and bones would be completely repaired, and it would be substantiated with e-rays, medical reports and therapeutic testimony. There is no other explanation when a genuine healing occurs. Doctors are baffled by it. It has to go in the medical books as an unexplained, spontaneous healing.

Now while I am talking about this, the term “made whole” is used 17 times in the New Testament to describe miraculous acts of healing, by both Jesus and the Apostles. In all cases it means “complete physical restoration”. This is very important. If there is not complete physical restoration, there is no healing. I have seen a man supposedly healed at a healers hand, and he walked off the stage limping, but he claimed to be healed. What’s wrong with this picture? I’ll

tell you what's wrong. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN INCOMPLETE HEALING. A healing always involves being "made whole". True healing always involves complete restoration. I challenge you to produce one example of an imperfect or incomplete healing in the Bible. Lepers were not pronounced clean in the Old Testament unless they were perfectly clean and free from all traces of the disease. God does not half-way heal. When He heals, crooked limbs are straightened, those who have never walked, get up and they not only walk perfectly, without limping, but they leap and jump and praise the Lord (Acts 3: 8, 14: 10)! New limbs are grown where there was none formerly. New hands, new eyes, new feet, new body parts and organs are all examples of true creative miracles, and we can sight examples of all of these in the Bible. I'm afraid that people have been sold a bill of goods and have been taught to expect half-way miracles by the false prophets and pseudo-healers of our day. I'm looking to see total restoration, complete with cat-scans, ex-rays and ultra-sounds to prove it.

### ***Divine Viewpoint***

Now this brings me to address the apparent contradiction in what I am saying. There are no contradictions in the Bible, not even apparent ones. But there appears to be a contradiction in what I am telling you. I just got done telling you that sensory images, "seeing" is never the basis for "believing". And that is true. But I've also told you, just now, that I refuse to believe in false miracle workers, because I "see" that their healings are imperfect and incomplete. Am I not basing my rejection of them on the empirical evidence that I "see"? That is a very good question, and if you did not ask it, in your mind, shame on you, because you should always be questioning anything anybody is trying to teach you. Don't ever just believe stuff without questioning.

Now here is the answer. In the case of the world, they make empirical subjectivism the basis for everything they believe. That is wrong. But the text's which I have selected for this study (2Cor. 5: 7; and 2Cor. 4: 18), are not addressed to the world at all, they are addressed to believers only. "*We walk by faith, and not by sight*". "*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal*". So it becomes clear then that believers walk and observe according to different rules than the world. This is very important.

If you look at all those passages where Jesus says things like "having eyes to see they see not, and ears to hear, they hear not" he is describing not just the false function of observation in unbelievers, but the true function of illumination in believers. When we observe things, because we are believers, we have eyes to see, and they do see. We have ears to hear, and they do hear. That's why we can understand the parables which Jesus spoke, but they cannot understand them. It is important not to miss this. Jesus said he spoke to the lost in parables, so that they would not see with their eyes and hear with their ears.

*“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matt. 13: 14-15).*

I would be remiss in explaining this phenomenon if I stopped here. We must read the next verse: *“But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matt. 13: 16)!* So there you have it, direct from Jesus' mouth. There is no contradiction at all. Believers are the only people who have eyes that can really see, and ears that can really hear! When we encounter visual, or any other kind of sensory phenomena, we have the light of God, the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and we can see rightly and truly. We do not look at stuff, “temporal things”, as the basis for our beliefs. We do not look at stuff, the way the world looks at stuff. When we look at stuff we see it rightly. We see it as God sees it, and we interpret it correctly, spiritually and Biblically. This is what Theologians call our “WORLDVIEW”. It's how we look at everything in the “world“, all the “temporal“ things. We see stuff through the seeing eyes of sinners who have been saved, and who have been given a radically different kind of vision.

We are in the world but not of it. So our observations of things is the only true viewpoint. The viewpoint of the lost does not count because it is wrong. That is why Cain failed to bring the right sacrifice. He had the wrong viewpoint, and he could not change it. It was so wrong in fact, that it made him the first murderer. Believers, on the other hand, put everything in correct perspective. We “view” everything (worldview) through the lens of Scripture. For our seeing eyes, it makes a supreme difference to share in God's “Divine Viewpoint” in life. That's what we have, because *“we have the mind of Christ” (1Cor. 2: 16).*

Since believers are the only ones on earth who have the mind of Christ, believers are the only ones on earth who see things the way that God sees them. Our observation of empirical data does not create faith, but it does interpret the world and everything in it, by faith. We walk by faith in everything which we see. This is what Christians do. So yes, I point out all the flaws in the observable world. I shine the light of Gods revelation on everything I see, and everyone I meet. I do what Jesus commanded, “I let my light so shine before men, that they may see my good works and Glorify God” (Matt. 5: 16). Jesus said in all this that we are “the light of the world” (Matt 5: 14) and that when that light is shining it gives light to everyone “in the house” (Matt 5: 15). What this means is that when we observe with our seeing eyes, we can then cast the true light of God and the gospel into the world which by it's very nature is blind, dead and in total darkness. We become the light of the world when we correctly express God's view of things, and when we throw the light of His Divine Revelation around the world where lost sinners sit in perpetual darkness. That's what it means when it says: *“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined”*



*(Isa. 9: 2 and also Matt. 4: 16 and Eph 5: 13-14 cf. 1Jn 1: 5-7).*

So there you have it. The Christian worldview in a nutshell. God is at work in His world and in history, but the only ones who can see it, and make the light of it shine, are believers. The unbelievers in this world (which is the majority of people), cannot see a thing. They are in perpetual darkness (Isa. 50: 10; Isa 60: 1-3; Lk. 1: 78-79; Acts 26: 18; Rom. 1: 21). They are blind, and incapable of seeing (2Pet. 1: 9; Rev. 3: 17; Jn. 9: 39; Lk. 6: 39; Matt. 23: 14, 16, 17, 19, 24, 26). Whatever they do see is false, because they do not have God in their thoughts (Rom. 1: 28). They process all information wrongly (Rom. 1: 21-23). They are, *“ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1Tim. 3: 7). *“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever”* (Jude 12-13). To be in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity (Acts 8: 23), is a horrible thing. But the poor people who are there, don't realize it, because they are *“held captive by the Devil at his will”* (2Tim. 2: 26). Imagine that, they are captives to the will of Satan. And all of them think that they have FREE-WILL! No wonder that “Free-will” is *“the god of this world”* (1Cor. 4: 4).

I trust that these comments will help enforce in your mind, if you are a Christian, just what a wonderful position the Grace of God has put you in. You are “risen with Christ” (Col. 3: 1), and you “sit together with Him in heavenly places” (Eph. 2: 6). No wonder Vincent Chueng titled his latest book “The view from above”. That is the heavenly vantage point of every believer, and that is why we see everything differently. May God give you that viewpoint. Things look wonderful from up here!

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