

If the Blind Lead the Blind

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

In Matthew 15:3-9, we read that Jesus rebuked some Pharisees and scribes for their hypocrisy in putting their own teachings and traditions above the word of God. Apparently, they did not like what was written in the word of God about honoring one's father and mother, so they invented their own teaching to rationalize a way around what was written in the Scriptures. Jesus continued His rebuke with a reference from Isaiah 29:13, saying that they were a people who honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him, and they worshipped Him in vain, teaching the doctrines of men instead of the doctrines of God's word.

After this, Jesus' disciples came to Him and told Him that the Pharisees were offended by what He had said. Jesus then replied to His disciples with an answer that many of us may find to be baffling, when He said: "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. ***Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.***" (Matthew 15:13-14, emphasis added.)

Some will insist that Jesus loves everyone, and that He wants everyone to see the truth, believe in Him, and be saved. And they might question why Jesus did not seem to care that these blind Pharisees, and those whom they might mislead with their erroneous teachings, would both "fall into a pit". To better understand Jesus' apparent lack of concern for these "blind guides" and the other "blind" individuals whom they might mislead, we can look at some of the other teachings given to us in God's word and interpret our passage in Matthew 15:13-14 in the light of those teachings.

In John 12, we read:

But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” ***For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, “He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them.”*** (John 12:37-40, emphasis added.)

So we see from this passage in John 12 that some Pharisees and others in the crowds had witnessed many miraculous signs that Jesus had done before them, demonstrating that He was in truth the Messiah. But despite this clear evidence, they still did not believe in Him.

John explained in verse 38 that their unbelief fulfilled a prophecy of Isaiah the prophet given in Isaiah 53:1. And in verses 39-40, John quoted from Isaiah 6:10 to explain that ***the reason they did not believe, and in fact could not believe,*** was because God Himself “has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them.”.

The teaching in John 12:38-40 is clear. God Himself prevents some individuals from being able to see the truth about His Son, Jesus Christ, that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the God the Father, except by Him (John 14:6). And because God has blinded them from seeing the truth and hardened their hearts against the Gospel message, they cannot believe in Christ and be saved. By contrast, others have not been hardened, but they have received mercy, in that they have been blessed to see and hear the truth of the Gospel message (Matthew 13:16, Romans 9:16-18).

These who have been given eyes to see and ears to hear the truth are God’s elect, who were chosen before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless before Him (Ephesians 1:4-5). And God ultimately will not allow His elect to be deceived about the truth of the Gospel message (Matthew 24:24); they will all be brought to faith in Christ, in His time, and none will be lost (John 6:37).

God’s elect are symbolized by the “good soil” in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23). Only where the “seed” of the word of God falls on the “good ground”, which is to say where the words of the Gospel message are heard by

God's elect, will individuals be saved. These elect individuals will all be brought to faith in Christ through the hearing of the word of God (Romans 10:17), and they will all bear fruit: some thirty, some sixty, and some 100 times what was sown (Matthew 13:8), thereby demonstrating that they are in truth Jesus' disciples (John 15:8).

After Jesus had given the Parable of the Sower to the crowds, His disciples asked Him why He spoke to the people in parables. He replied to them saying: "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, ***but to them it has not been granted.***" (Matthew 13:11, emphasis added). To God's elect it has been granted to see, to hear, and to understand the truth of His word, but to all the others it has not been granted. And no one can come to Jesus unless it has been granted to them by the Father (John 6:65).

Jesus taught that if the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into a pit. He was not concerned about those whom God has blinded from seeing the truth of the Gospel message, because He knew that some have been appointed to eternal life, whereas others have been appointed to the doom of disobedience (Acts 13:48, 1 Peter 2:8-10). The choice and the decision for both were made by God before they were even born and had done anything good or bad (Romans 9:11-13), and in fact God's decision for both was made before the creation of the world.

Jesus also taught that God is sovereign over His creation, and nothing, not even the death of one sparrow, occurs apart from His sovereign will (Matthew 10:29). When an individual has been blinded to the truth, they have been blinded by God Himself, according to His sovereign will. And when another individual has been blessed to see, to hear, and to understand the truth of God's word, they have received His mercy, according to His sovereign will. As Paul taught in Romans 9:18, God has mercy upon whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.