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Part 6

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[00:00:00] I have quite a few scriptures which I want us to look at, but we'll look at them as we go on. I don't intend reading them to us at the beginning. Now, if you were here, I think it was two months ago, as most of us were, we heard Michael Vogelsang give a very interesting talk on some scriptures, five scriptures in fact, where it tells us that the Lord Jesus looked round. Those scriptures from Mark's Gospel. The Lord looked round. Sometimes I think because the matter brought his attention was so important that we can say perhaps the Lord Jesus diverted from what he was doing, but other times he looked round to show the [00:01:02] significance of who or what was actually around him at that point. In a sense, I want to follow along a sort of similar theme. The scriptures record five different situations that the Lord Jesus was in, where he had an important message to convey, and what characterizes these five situations is the look that the Lord Jesus gave. It's not that he looked round, as it was with what Michael told us. For us, it's the sort of look he gave, and it's the same look on these five occasions, and only recorded about him for these five occasions. And these are what we're going to look at. Now, I just want to divert for a moment. There's [00:02:05] a danger, and it's a danger for us all. And that is that we'll think that we are more expert than we really are. Now, it's true in so many ways. Among others, perhaps, our understanding of the original text of the scripture, the original language of scripture, and translating scripture. Now, I don't know the Greek language of the New Testament, so what I say to you is what I understand from others, specialists in the language, what they've written. So I want you to take what I say in that light. I'm not claiming, because I'm not, to be an expert in New Testament Greek. There are many words in the original language of scripture which are difficult to translate into English, so the full flavor [00:03:06] of the word is seen in the translation. And there's one such word I have in mind. There are many Greek words that are translated by our Bibles with the word look, or something similar. Each word in the original Greek has its own emphasis, and often this emphasis is lost in the translations. The word that I want to look at, if we split it into its component parts, could be translated as in look. Well, that doesn't make a lot of sense in English. In look isn't a word. Perhaps we could say look in, that perhaps gives the flavor but it doesn't read right in English. The word seems to refer to a deliberate and [00:04:02] penetrating look. Definitely not a glance, but a deliberate look. An intense look. A look perhaps designed to draw out something from the person being looked at, or to convey some meaning to that person. I think if we think of it as a deliberate and intense look, a penetrating look, I don't think we'll go too far wrong. Now this word is used six times in the New Testament. I'm sorry, this word is used 12 times in the New Testament, six times of the Lord Jesus himself, and it's these six that I want to focus on. I'll probably

mention a couple of the others briefly as we go along. Although used six times of the Lord Jesus, it is actually only five incidents, because one instance is recorded with this word in two of the Gospels. And I believe as we look at these incidents, we'll learn [00:05:04] something from the Lord. So this is to do with the look that the Lord Jesus gives. Why does the Lord give this look, this penetrating look? And why do the Gospel writers record it for us under the direction of the Holy Spirit? Well, let's be clear about one thing. The Lord Jesus doesn't need to give this intense, penetrating look in order to understand fully the one being looked at. He knows all about us anyway. It seems to me that this look is for the benefit of the one being looked at, for him to realise that the Lord is looking at him, [00:06:01] looking deeply into him, and drawing out a response. The look was for the benefit of those being observed. And of course for our benefit as well. The Gospel writer records this look so we can learn. So let's turn to John chapter 1. John chapter 1. Actually we're going to start.

By noting this look given by someone else, not the Lord Jesus, comes right near the beginning of the Lord's public service. And we see John the Baptist introducing the Lord Jesus to two of his [00:07:02] disciples as the Lamb of God. So in verse 35 of John 1 we read, again, the next day, the next day after, John stood and two of his disciples. And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. Verse 36 starts, And looking upon Jesus. This actually is the penetrating look. This is the word that I'm focusing on. It's one of those times when the word is used of somebody else other than the Lord Jesus. It's John the Baptist's look at the Lord Jesus. And it indicates, I believe, that John would be given a deep understanding of who the Lord Jesus is. And two of John's disciples were [00:08:03] there. And they did, it seems, notice that look. A look of penetration and understanding. And they took John seriously. John's statement about the Lord Jesus here was not a casual remark. It was based on an understanding of him, shown by that deliberate look. And the disciples turned, turned away from John, in fact, to follow Jesus. And one of the disciples was Andrew. He spends time with the Lord Jesus, gets an understanding of who the Lord Jesus is, and brings his brother Simon along, telling him that he's found the Messiah. And then the Lord Jesus gives Simon that penetrating look. Verse 40. John 1 verse 40. One of the two which heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, [00:09:03] Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, thou art Simon, the son of Jonah. Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone. So this word that's been translated here in the King James Version as beheld, is this word. It's our word. It's that word for an intense or penetrating look. And the Lord Jesus gives Simon that look and then tells him that he'll be called Cephas. Cephas was the Aramaic word for stone.

Aramaic was the language spoken by the Lord Jesus and his disciples. Peter is the Greek [00:10:11] translation of Cephas. He'd only just met him. But of course, the Lord Jesus knew Simon through and through. The Lord Jesus didn't need to give Simon that intense look in order to understand him. He knew what it was like. He knew all about him. That penetrating look was, I believe, for Simon Peter's benefit, to know, to tell him, to show him that he thoroughly understood him. And for our benefit, to tell us that the Lord Jesus knows and understands us thoroughly. So by giving him that look, the Lord Jesus was showing that what he was about to say regarding Simon was based on his [00:11:06] knowledge of him, his knowledge of him personally. And based on what the Lord Jesus knew about him, he could change his name to something relevant to his character and the role he had for him. Now we could say, I think, that the Lord Jesus had in view the building that he, the Lord Jesus, was going to construct. Peter would be a stone in that building. And we see later on that Peter understood this idea. In chapter 2 of 1 Peter, he writes about coming to Christ, the living stone, and that we're all

living stones in God's building. The point I want to emphasize from this is the Lord Jesus knows us thoroughly. We can't hide anything from him. As David could write in Psalm 139, [00:12:03] O Lord, you have searched me and known me. We could say perhaps that's the penetrating look, you know me. As someone who just met the Lord, Simon Peter is given that look to show the Lord's complete understanding of him. Well, there are others who needed that look, but their situations are different. I want us now to turn to Luke chapter 20. Luke chapter 20. Luke 20. I'll read the first two verses to start with. And it came to pass that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the [00:13:02] scribes came upon him with the elders and spoke unto him saying, tell us by what authority doest thou these things? And who is he that gave thee this authority? So here in chapter 20, the chief priests, the scribes, the elders, they confront the Lord Jesus and ask him by what authority he was teaching. Where did he get the right? Where did he get the right to teach the people? Now, they would presumably maintain that they had the right to teach because their authority came from their religious leadership and the Israelite way of approaching God. Their religious system had originally received its authority from God himself through Moses. But where did the authority of the Lord Jesus come from? [00:14:02] And the Lord doesn't directly answer them, as he knows that they won't accept the truth. I mean, he had essentially told them already and given them enough evidence of the truth that his authority came from above. Now, let's go to verse 9. Luke 20, verse 9. Then began he to speak to the people this parable.

A certain man planted a vineyard and let it forth to husbandmen and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard. But the husbandmen beat him and sent him away empty. And again he sent another servant and they beat him also and they treated him shamefully and sent him away. And again he sent a third and they wounded him also and cast him out. [00:15:03] Then said the Lord of the vineyard, what shall I do? I will send my beloved son. It may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves saying, this is the heir. Come, let us kill him and the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy those husbandmen and he'll give the vineyard to others. This is a picture, of course, a picture of God, the owner, sending his servants, prophets, to the Israelite nation who turned away from him. They refused the prophets, killing many of them. Finally, he sent his son, an heir. And it's he, the Lord Jesus, the one who was standing there in front of them, talking to them. [00:16:02] And of course, this does answer the question regarding the authority of the Lord Jesus, the father sent him. That's where his authority, his right comes from. But of course, there's a lot more in this parable than that. He is, for example, telling the Jews that they will kill him, but it will not bring the result they want. God will deal with them in judgment. And then we find the Lord Jesus quotes Psalm 118.

So picking up again at verse 17.

And he beheld them and said, What is this then that is written?

The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner. Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. [00:17:03] And the chief priests and the scribes, the same are sought to lay hands on him. And they feared the people, for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. But verse 17, it begins, and he beheld them. He looked at them. This is our word again. The Lord Jesus gives them that penetrating look.

He's making them aware that he is saying something that is of key importance to them. He's showing he understands them and what they will do. And with this look, he gives them another picture, a picture that goes beyond the picture given by the vineyard and its owner. The picture of builders constructing a building.

We could perhaps say that the Pharisees were the national builders, busy with their religious systems building, but rejecting their Messiah. [00:18:09] But actually, the Lord tells them that he will be the most important stone in the building. They might think they'll get rid of him, but he will be the head of the corner.

This implies his resurrection, of course. Kill him they will, but death will not destroy him. He will rise again from the dead in triumph. And of course, this links back to what the Lord Jesus said to Simon that we mentioned earlier. His name was changed to Stone, Cephas, Peter, Stone. He'd be part of the building that the Lord Jesus was going to build. And he had an important role in constructing the building. But the Lord Jesus himself is the head of the corner.

[00:19:03] Moving away just for one moment from this application of the picture and considering the idea personally.

I'd like to focus just for a moment, particularly on those who are young amongst us. Perhaps those of you who are school age. There are a few of us here, aren't there? Nearly all of you have been brought up with parents who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Who've told you about him. And you've attended meetings of Christians and heard many talk about the Lord Jesus. You're young, you're building your lives. So what have you done with the Lord Jesus Christ? Is he part of the life you're building?

Have you trusted the Saviour? You know, as you get older, you'll meet more and more people who will tell you different things. There are many who've rejected Christ. [00:20:03] But the Lord Jesus will give you this penetrating look and say, think about it.

As you build your life, have you trusted in me? Are you including me as the most important part of your life? And if foolishly, you either ignore the Lord or turn around to him and say no.

Then the Lord Jesus would say to you, well you can make your choice. Sadly you may choose to reject me, but you can't get rid of me. I will triumph.

And notice this that we've read. I will judge all who've rejected me.

This of course is extremely important and extremely serious. It's a more than life and death issue. It's an eternal life and eternal death issue. And don't imagine it doesn't apply to you. [00:21:02] It does.

So, see where we're going here. We've seen the Lord's intense look at Simon Peter, showing that he knows him thoroughly. Then we've seen the Lord's look at the religious leaders. He knows their intentions. Their intention is to kill him. And he points out to them that although they may choose to reject him, he will triumph and they will be judged. Now we go to our third.

This is in Mark chapter 10.

Mark chapter 10.

This is a story that Michael, when he was here a couple of months ago, also referred to.

[00:22:04] Mark chapter 10 verse 17.

And when he was gone forth in the way, there came one running and kneeled to him and asked him, Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments, thou shalt not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother.

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him and said unto him, One thing thou lackest, go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, take up the cross and follow me. [00:23:06] And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved, for he had great possessions. So here's a young man with a real concern. He wants to inherit eternal life. He recognises that there is much more than this life.

And his attitude, of course, is very different from that of the Pharisees that we read about previously. He is now to destroy the Lord Jesus. He recognises the Lord as a teacher and he wants to learn from him. And the Lord Jesus mentioned some of the commandments of the law, as we just read. Matthew records in his gospel that the Lord also included in his list, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. This young man had clearly tried to keep the law. [00:24:02] And he considered that he had succeeded.

All these things I have kept from my youth, he says.

The Lord then looks at him.

It says then, Jesus beholding him. The Lord looks at him. This again is our word.

This is not a glance, not even an ordinary look.

This is this intense look I'm talking about. This is this in look.

And the young man should have seen that look and realised that the Lord had a thorough, a complete understanding of him. And what the Lord was about to say was exactly what he personally needed to hear at that moment. And then in what the Lord Jesus said to him, I think he was pointing out two things to this young man. [00:25:05] Firstly, in spite of what he said to the Lord Jesus about having kept the law since his youth, if he thought further about it, he would realise that actually he'd failed. He hadn't kept all these commandments concerning his relationships with others. Had he really loved his neighbour as himself? Really?

He was rich. There were others who were desperately poor. And then the Lord says to him, sell all you have and give to the poor and come and follow me. And as Michael reminded us a couple of months ago, this young man had ignored the first commandments of God's law, which concerned our relationship with God himself. The first commandment said, you shall have no other gods before me.

[00:26:01] And the Lord challenges him in what he says to consider whether his possessions were an idol to him, another God. And whatever takes the place that God should have in our lives is an idol.

What was most important in his life? His possessions or God? And tragically, he chooses his possessions. He went away.

But he went away sad. He went away grieved.

You know, if someone we love turns away from the Lord, one of our prayers, I believe, should be that they should be unhappy, that they should be sad. They should have no contentment until they turn to the Lord. So it's a good thing that this young man went away sad. It gives some hope that maybe he reflected further, perhaps changed his mind.

[00:27:06] Let's notice again the way the Lord looked at him. This is the look that draws out his motives. This is the look that says, I understand you completely. I know what you're like. I know that actually you're not as obedient to the law as you think. I know what actually is the most important thing in your life. And I'm going to point this out to you. And the Lord Jesus would challenge me and you in the same way. Until the Lord gave him that penetrating look, the young man believed he was better than he actually was. But what about us? Do we?

And what about my priorities?

I need to get rid of anything that takes God's place in my life. Idols.

[00:28:04] We're now going to turn to our fourth example.

In our fourth example, we turn to Luke chapter 22.

The Lord Jesus had been arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane in the evening away from the crowds, having been betrayed by Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples. And the Lord Jesus is taken to the palace of the high priest, the Jewish religious leader. And Peter and John follow to see what will happen to their Lord.

John was known to the high priest and he enters the courtyard of the palace. [00:29:02] Peter isn't let in, so John speaks to the girl at the gate and she allows him to go in. We get some of these details from John's Gospel. Peter and John don't stay together, it seems. So putting together the accounts in the four Gospels, this is how I think it all happened. The girl who let Peter in perhaps knew that John was a disciple. Perhaps. For whatever reason, once Peter's settled by the fire, she asks him whether he's a disciple. And Peter sees the way his Lord is being treated and he's overwhelmed with fear and he denies the Lord Jesus. Then he moves away.

But the girl was deeply suspicious and told those around. And she and they together asked him, and again denies any knowledge of Christ. [00:30:01] Then there's a gap.

God, of course, is in control of events. And it seems to me that God is giving Peter some time. Peter has about an hour now to contemplate. Time to think about what he'd just done. Time to think about what he'd just said. Time to remember what the Lord Jesus had said to him a few hours earlier, telling him he would deny his Lord. Time to think about his self-confident reply. Even if I have to die with

you, I will not deny you.

Time to repent, in fact.

Did he?

Well, after about an hour, the scriptures say another group confront him. He'd made himself prominent in the garden of Gethsemane by swinging a sword around and chopping off a man's ear. [00:31:01] And one of those there recognized him and said, and I paraphrase, Yeah, I'm sure it was you. You were the one who cut off my cousin's ear. Others said, yes, listen to him. He's not local.

He comes from up north. He's got a Galilean accent. What was he, a Galilean, doing in the high priest's palace if he wasn't one of Jesus' disciples? What he did and how he spoke gave him away.

They characterized him as having been with Jesus.

Now, picking up at verse 59, so Luke 22 and verse 59.

And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth, this fellow also was with him, for he's a Galilean. Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. [00:32:07] And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.

So Peter denied it. He denied that he was with the Lord.

And he began to curse and swear, we read. And the Lord Jesus, despite being vehemently accused and brutally treated by the high priest's acolytes, focused on Peter. He looked at him. He gives him that penetrating look.

And Peter's conscience was touched. And he went outside and wept. So picking up again in the middle of verse 61.

[00:33:03] And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, For the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

So that was the second time the Lord Jesus had given Peter personally that penetrating look. And I just wonder whether Peter thought back to that first time he noticed the look of the Lord Jesus. When he first met the Lord. And the Lord, understanding him and his character, had changed his name to Peter the Stone. Wasn't he now denying that name the Lord had given him? There was no solidity, there was no firmness. He'd given way under pressure. Enormous pressure, but he denied his Lord three times.

[00:34:02] So what do I want to draw from this? Well, the Lord Jesus would give us that penetrating look to touch our consciences.

When we deny him by what we say, or the way we live, it doesn't have to be as bold and direct as Peter's denial. Because then we aren't under the same sort of pressure that Peter was under. The way we live can deny him.

The Lord would look at us and be grieved by our behaviour and try to touch our consciences so that, like Peter, we should notice the Lord's look and repent.

So we've noticed the Lord's special look four times. To Simon Peter, the first time, shown that he completely understood him. Then to those who'd rejected him and were determined to destroy him, [00:35:04] to show that he understood their motives and to point out they couldn't succeed. Thirdly, to the young ruler who was self-satisfied.

And the Lord's look was followed by words that made him think about his priorities and who or what came first in his life.

And now, fourthly, to Peter again. He gives Peter that look after he's denied him thrice.

A look that conveys the Lord's sadness.

And it touches Peter's conscience to bring him repentance.

Now, for our fifth occasion, when the Lord gives that special look, we go back to the third incidence we discussed. There the Lord Jesus looked at that rich young man and, fully understanding him and his thoughts, [00:36:04] tells him essentially that he was not the very good man he thought he was and that he was putting his riches before God. That's we've seen.

But the Lord Jesus gives that intense look again. I'm going to pick up the account from Mark chapter 10 again. Although the word is also used by Matthew when he describes this incident. So Mark chapter 10 and verse 23.

The Lord Jesus looked round about and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again and saith unto them, [00:37:01] Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus, looking upon them, saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God. For with God all things are possible.

And then Peter began to say to him, Lo, we've left all and have followed thee.

The Lord's statement, how difficult it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God. And then the example of a camel going through the eye of a needle. [00:38:03] This greatly worried the disciples, as we can see from Peter's reaction in verse 28. They didn't understand.

And in verse 27 we saw, it says, Jesus looking upon them.

This is the same look that I've been describing.

The Lord's look at them, this intense look, this penetrating look, showed that he fully recognized their problem in comprehension.

The rich were thought to be recipients of God's great blessing. And of course, God is the giver of all good. So if humanly speaking, it's impossible for those whom God has materially blessed to enter the kingdom of God. What chance is there for anyone else? What chance for them? And I think we can understand their great concern here. But what did Jesus say? What did he say? [00:39:03] With men, it is impossible.

But with God, all things are possible.

What we do can't get us into the kingdom of God. As the Lord Jesus had told Nicodemus previously, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Entrance is only through new birth.

New birth is God's work.

It's entirely of God's grace.

With man, impossible. But most thankfully, possible with God.

And this young rich man couldn't enter the kingdom of God by great gestures of philanthropy or by good works.

It can't be done. Nothing he could do could buy entry. [00:40:02] With man, it's impossible. It's all of God.

God's grace.

Totally unmerited favor for us from God.

Jesus has said that with God, all things are possible. But Peter then, rather than appealing to God's grace, in verse 28, appeals to his own self-sacrifice.

We've given up so much. Surely that counts for something. And the Lord graciously reassures his disciples, yes, they will be rewarded for this, but God doesn't work according to man's assessment. Now what I want to draw from this, this penetrating look of the Lord, is this, the Lord isn't saying to them, the Lord is saying to them, [00:41:02] you can't do it.

It's all of God's grace.

Now, I believe the Lord would encourage us, also correct us where necessary, by reminding us of what this look has shown us.

I believe he'd give us this look to remind us that he has a complete knowledge of us, that he will triumph, and those who reject him will not succeed, that he fully understands our motives, and we need to examine ourselves to make sure that he comes first in our lives, that he's grieved, and wants us to return to him if we deny him, and that salvation and all blessing are only through God's grace, [00:42:02] not through anything that we do.

And I think it's not unreasonable to consider that any time when the Lord shows us, shows me, shows

you, something from his word, or even in some other way, that is personal and relevant to us, that is similar to the Lord giving us this penetrating look we read and thought about. It's based on the Lord's personal knowledge of us, and it demands a response.

Now, I want to close by mentioning one more time that the word is used. On one occasion, the Lord Jesus told his followers to use it. Now, I appreciate that these words are spoken in the first instance to the Jews, but the principles apply to us too. [00:43:03] And the lesson from this occasion that I'm just about to read when the Lord tells us to use that look is this. We have every good reason to trust in God. He cares for us. He provides.

So if you turn over to Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6.

This, of course, is in the Sermon on the Mount. Verse 26.

And it starts with the word behold. This is our word.

Look intensely.

Verse 26.

Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. [00:44:01] Are you not much better than they?

Look at the birds of the air. Look at.

Study them intently. Think about them.

They are so unimportant compared with yourself, but God provides for them. They don't store away food. God daily supplies them with food and the ability to find it.

And then the question, are you not more valuable than they? Won't God provide for you? Yes, he will.

And, of course, this applies not just to our material needs, but to our spiritual needs also. God provides for us, but like the birds of the air, we need to gather daily, get our food from a daily quiet time with the Lord. Daily reading of the scriptures, prayer, meditation. [00:45:05] The birds of the air need to get their food every day. We need to as well.

Now I want us to close with hymn number 308.

This hymn refers to this look that the Lord Jesus gives in verse 6. "Tis the look that melted Peter." So hymn number 308.

Hast thou heard him, seen him, known him? Is not thine a captured heart? Chief among ten thousand, own him. Joyful choose the better part. 308.