

Matthew 6:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Analysis

An 'evil eye' represents distorted spiritual perception—covetousness, envy, stinginess, or divided loyalty—resulting in darkness pervading the whole life. The sobering warning 'if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!' indicates that corrupted spiritual understanding leads to deepest delusion. Those who think they see but are actually blind are in worst spiritual condition. This anticipates Jesus' condemnation of Pharisees who claimed sight but were blind guides (Matthew 23:16-24).

Historical Context

Hebrew and Greek idioms used 'evil eye' to denote stinginess and envy (Proverbs 23:6, 28:22). In context, Jesus warns against covetousness and divided heart between God and money. Spiritual blindness convinced of its own sight is most dangerous form of darkness.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How can you recognize when your spiritual perception has been darkened by wrong priorities or divided loyalties?
2. What does the phrase 'how great is that darkness' teach about the danger of self-deception in spiritual matters?

Interlinear Text

ἐὰν	δὲ	ὁ	ὀφθαλμός	σου	πονηρὸς	ἡ	ὅλον	τὸ	σῶμά
if	But	G3588	eye	thine	evil	be	whole	G3588	body
G1437	G1161		G3788	G4675	G4190	G5600	G3650		G4983
σου	σκοτεινὸν	ἔσται·	εἰ	οὖν	τὸ	φῶς	τὸ	ἐν	
thine	full of darkness	shall be	If	therefore	G3588	the light	G3588	in	
G4675	G4652	G2071	G1487	G3767		G5457		G1722	
σοὶ	σκότος	ἐστίν,	τὸ	σκότος	πόσον				
thee	be darkness	that is	G3588	be darkness	how great				
G4671	G4655	G2076		G4655	G4214				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 6:22 (Light): The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

1 John 2:11 (Darkness): But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Proverbs 26:12 (Parallel theme): Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

Jeremiah 4:22 (Evil): For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

Ephesians 4:18 (Darkness): Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Romans 1:22 (Parallel theme): Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

1 Corinthians 2:14 (Parallel theme): 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.

Isaiah 8:20 (Light): To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Ephesians 5:8 (Light): For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Luke 8:10 (Parallel theme): And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.