

The Two Telescopes

Once upon a time a father gave his little girl a box and inside the box was a telescope. The father gave this gift to his dearly beloved daughter so that she might view a new dimension, a spiritual, unseen world. With the telescope was given a set of three Lens; the first Lens said "Obey", the second Lens said "Live" and the third said, "Disobey and Die". The child was very excited to receive the gift and accepted it with great joy for now she would see the world as her Father saw it, which was just and fair and right.



As instructed by her father she slid the three Lens into their respective slots in the telescope and immediately they locked into place never to be moved again for such was the nature of the instrument. The little girl ran off with the new gift to view the world. From this time on every experience, every lesson, and every human being including herself would be viewed through the telescope and the three imbedded black and white Lens.

The little girl did her very best to obey and live as the first two Lens said she must. But something was wrong for every time she looked through the telescope this is what she saw:



“Why was it so hard?” she asked herself. “After all, everything was simple - right?” Wrong! The words were black and white and as plain as could be, but the problem was - they kept going in and out of focus. Sometimes the word *Obey* seemed to be brighter than the word *Live*. At other times the word *Live* would be the clearest, but always in the end to her great dismay, all she was able to see were the words, *Disobey and Die*.

As the years continued the little girl grew up viewing everything through the telescope and its Lens. With each passing year the weak focus made the words appear in a misty gray tone rather than black and white. But perhaps that was because she wanted it to be so, she mused, for the gray seemed easier to live with than the stark black and white tones. She pushed such thoughts far from her mind and the years meandered on until at last the three Lens settled into one clear focus appearing thus:



The child had now become a young woman and though she had faithfully viewed the world through her treasured telescope she had at last become disillusioned with both the telescope and the world which she viewed through it. The gift which had promised so much color and life had brought only condemnation. The young woman lived in utter despair knowing that even with her very best efforts she

could not perfectly follow the command of the Lens - *Obey and Live* and now at last when she dared to glimpse through the telescope all she saw were the words, *Disobey and Die*.

The young woman eventually hid the telescope under her bed, but her conscience wouldn't let her live without the imprinted view. She then decided to place the telescope neatly on a shelf respecting its honor and guidance but refusing to look through its condemning Lens any longer. Finally, one day she grabbed the telescope from the shelf, took one last, long look and said resolutely,

"NO! I cannot view the world through this telescope any longer!"

But nor could she bring herself to hide the telescope or throw it out for she knew that it was a just and good instrument and once again she acknowledged that she was the one at fault. In total despair she conceded the goodness of the telescope but refused to continue to view the world through its Lens.

Thankfully, all was not lost for having come to know the goodness and fairness of her father while using the telescope she decided to return it to him remembering that he had been the one who gave it. If she could not discard it, she would simply give it back. The daughter made the journey to her father's house and handed the telescope to the one she had grown to love and respect saying,

"I am sorry father, I truly do love you, but I can no longer view the world and myself through this Instrument because all it ever does is condemn me to death."

Sadly, and reluctantly she handed the telescope to her father and then fell into His arms.

"I am so sorry father that I have failed you... and myself."

And there in his arms she cried for a good long time while her father held her. Finally, the daughter dared to peek into her father's kind face. To her great surprise instead of the expected disappointment and sorrow he was smiling. The daughter pulled back in surprise and asked,

"Why are you smiling father? I thought you would be so disappointed in me and instead you seem to be happy! I don't understand."

The father gazed lovingly at his daughter and replied,

“I’ve been waiting all your life for this day. Come with me. I have another gift for you!”

The father walked over to a large and beautifully carved door in the back hallway of the splendid house. He pulled a key out of his pocket and turned to his child once more. The young woman stood by waiting in anxious surprise and anticipation. She had often visited this door in her father’s house drawn by the perfume that floated from time to time near its entrance. She had seen her father pass freely in and out of the door many times and she knew that it was always open to her also. But every time she stepped through its portal to gaze admiringly at the vibrant light which shone from the top of the staircase she would eventually trip, and fall blinded by its brilliance or distracted from its glory by a sound or a shadow. Inevitably she would land with great pain on top of the telescope which was always in her hand. Her conscience would then bid her look through the Lens to view once more the familiar words, *Disobey and Die*. The door would slam shut and she would be left standing outside waiting for her father’s return not knowing or understanding that his presence had never left her side.

But this time the door was wide open, and the father bid her follow. As the young woman passed over the threshold the father stopped and carefully placed the telescope on a shelf saying,

“This telescope which you have so faithfully carried throughout your childhood will always be here on the shelf for you. You are free to pick it back up at any time if you wish. Indeed, there will be many times when you will seek the comfort of its demands hoping once again to fulfil them. But I warn you now, you must leave it here on this shelf if you ever hope to attain the life it promised you. Now come and follow me.”

The daughter followed her father up the stairs and into the light. At the top of the staircase He reached up to an even higher shelf and pulled a second telescope down. The second telescope was identical to the first, and this he handed with great ceremony and joy it to his daughter.



"I don't understand," said the daughter. "I thought I was finished with the telescope. In this light I don't need it, I can see everything perfectly fine now. Please Father, I don't want to view the black and white world and its condemnation here as I stand in your magnificent light."

The father gazed at his daughter earnestly and with deep love He replied,

"You have a way to go and there will yet be many times on your journey when the light will not be as bright as it now is. You still have great need to view the world through this instrument." He then stretched out his loving hand to her saying. "Here, you must take it."

The daughter pulled back in fear saying, "But father I can't! I just can't live that way anymore. I know the telescope is holy, just and good, but I am not. And worse than that, I must confess to you that there are times when I look through its condemning Lens and I cannot see your loving face."

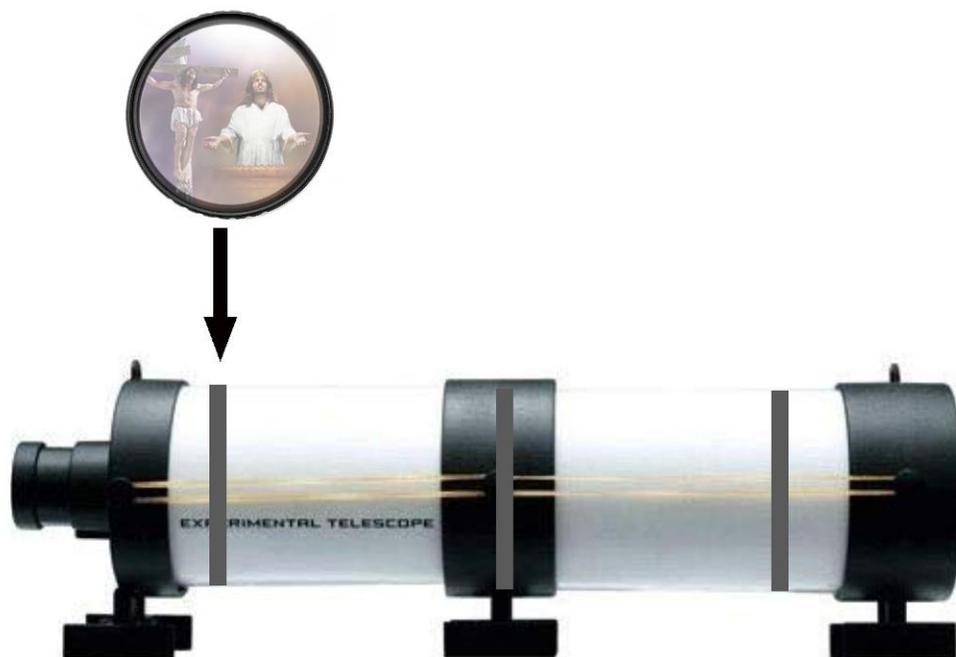
The daughter stopped and looked through tear-filled eyes at her Father and continued, "All I see now through the telescope is your justice. Please, I can't view the world through that black and white fixed Lens any longer. I just can't."

"Yes, I know my daughter, but you must trust me. Take this new telescope, for you will see a very different view through it! Even though this new telescope may look the same on the outside it has three entirely new Lens on the inside. "Here," he offered, "you must look and live."

The father then handed the new telescope to his daughter saying,

"The three black and white Lens were fixed firmly in the first telescope but in this one it is not so. The new Lens are very colorful, and their brightness may cause you to accidentally drop the telescope and the Lens may fall out, for as I said, they are not fixed. Be very careful therefore not to lose even one, for you will need all three to make it safely to the end of your journey. I will explain each Lens as you insert them, one by one into the telescope. Here is the first."

The Father handed the first of the three Lens to His daughter and she inserted it into its place in the telescope thus:



The Father explained, "This first Lens you must ever keep in the forefront of your focus. Through it you will see the greatest sacrifice I have made for you. For I so loved the world that I gave you my only begotten Son. He is your Redeemer and the only one who has ever obeyed me perfectly. That is why the first telescope could not fulfill the promise, for the promise is only found in my Son. Now look again."

The daughter held the telescope up to her eye and gasped with wonder for this is what she saw,



“Tell me, what do you see?” the father asked.

“I see Jesus on the cross with all of my sins upon Him so that there is not one now left upon me.”

“And what else do you see?” the father asked again.

“I see that Jesus ever lives for me and that all of my sins are continually covered by his life, death, resurrection and His second-by-second intercession for me. But will it always be so? Dare I hope? Must I not do my part and work at my obedience if I wish to have life both here and eternally?”

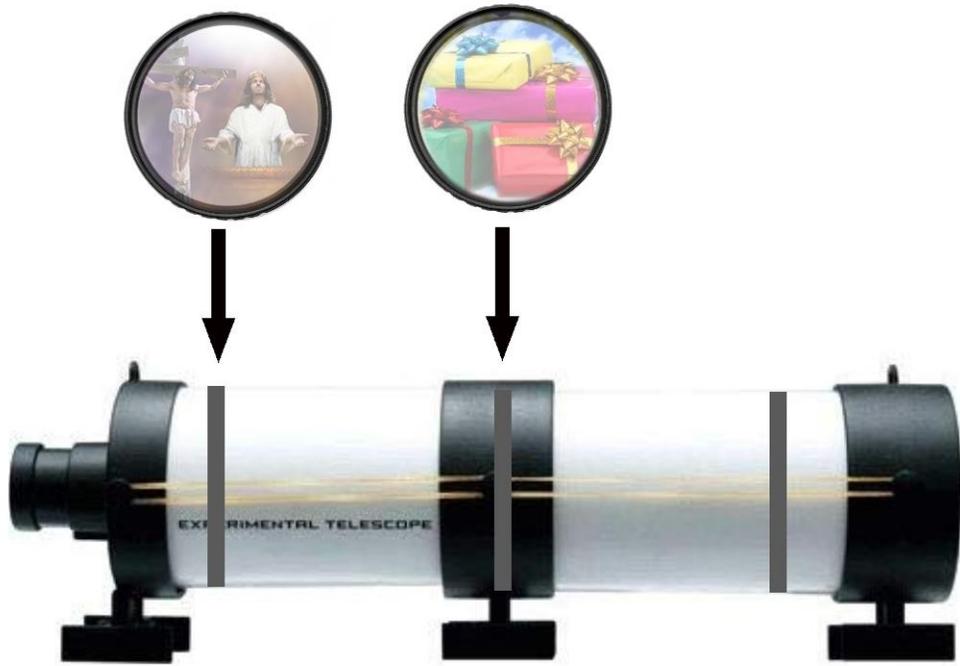
The father pointed to the bottom of the staircase and said sadly,

“There it is, the first telescope, I told you it would ever be available if you wish to use it. Would you prefer the first one back? You may have it if you wish, but please understand that you cannot have both and nor must you look through the memory of the first while holding the second. You must now choose which you will carry for the rest of your journey.”

“But don’t I need to do my part Father?” the bewildered daughter asked again.

“Oh yes, you have a part for which I first give you the grace! You are to view the world through this new telescope and Lens, and you must understand that you can be saved by no other name than the One whose likeness is imprinted here. If you lose this first Lens you will not see or understand anything clearly. Hold this new telescope close to your heart for there is an enemy within and without who will constantly seek to steal it from you or cause you to belittle it’s value by neglect. Now here is the second Lens, insert it carefully into its place within the telescope.”

The daughter carefully inserted the second Lens, looked once more and this is what she saw:



“What do you see now?” the father asked.



“I see gifts, many gifts. Wherever I turn with the telescope that’s all I see, gifts and more gifts!” she answered excitedly.

“Yes,” the Father agreed, “many, many gifts, as many as the grains of sand on the seashore for so are my thoughts toward you. You must keep this second Lens always focused. Remember that all good gifts come from my hand. If you will view the world through this Lens you will come to know the truth that there is a gift in every breath, every heartbeat, every pleasure and yes, even in every sorrow for I work all things together for your good.”

The daughter jumped for joy saying, “I see, I truly see! Everywhere I look all I see are your gifts! I am so happy because the world no longer looks so bleak and lonely! I understand now that wherever you have placed a gift there you are also.”

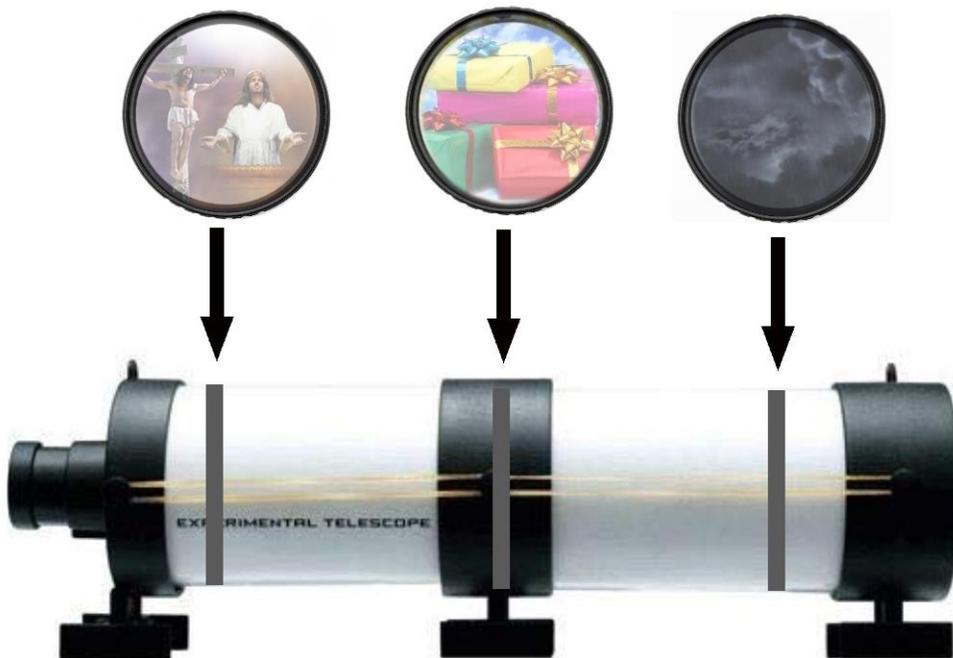
The father smiled and said quietly and somberly, “Adjust your focus for you must always see the second Lens through the first.”

The daughter did so, and this is what she saw:



“Always remember,” said the father “that all gifts come to you not because of anything you do but because of my Son. Do not try to earn them for you never can. Every good and perfect gift comes from my hand through my Son to you. You do not deserve even one because you were not able to keep my Laws which you saw so clearly through the first telescope. All the gifts you receive are just that, *gifts* and they were paid for by my Son. They are all yours without any cost to you, both now and forever”

The Father reached out his hand to his daughter and gave her the last Lens saying, “As you have done with the other two so do with this last. Insert it into the telescope.”



The daughter inserted the last Lens and then looked into the telescope and this is what she saw:



“Oh no!” cried the young woman. “Everything is dark! It’s all black and white again and I can’t even see the other two Lens. It’s just the same as the old telescope!” She turned to her Father as tears rolled down her cheeks. “I don’t understand! It was all so new and beautiful but now I have nothing again.”

“Do not fear my child,” said the father, “I am preparing you, for there will be many times even with this new telescope when all you will see is darkness. In that day and hour, you will be tempted to think that you hold the old telescope in your hand and all you will remember are its demands. But you must always keep in mind that the three Lens in this new telescope are not fixed in place. You must adjust the Lens and re-focus if you would see through the darkness once more. Do so now.” the father instructed.

The daughter did so, even though it was very hard, for she kept remembering the old telescope with its black and white demands. But finally, the Lens adjusted, and this is what she saw:



“What do you see?” asked the father again. “Is it still dark?”

“Yes... but no. Wait!” answered the daughter, “I can vaguely see the first two Lens again. I see Jesus and the good gifts but it’s hard to see through the fog and clouds of old memories and commands I failed to keep!”

“Try and focus again,” said the father, “and you will understand that even in your darkest day if you will re-focus you will be able to see beyond the things that now are to your final destination. This is a mystery but I will tell you a great secret; when the Lens appear darkest you are about to see the greatest light. There are mansions prepared for you and they will shine the brightest when your world is at its darkest. Focus again and look beyond what you now perceive.”

The daughter adjusted the focus once more and this is what she saw:



“What do you see now my child?” asked the father.

The young woman choked back a sob and said, “It’s hard to answer you! It’s very hard to even utter a word because the hope is so great and burns so brightly in my heart. But I see at this moment... Yes, I clearly see... the world beyond this one and Jesus ever in front of me with His arms open wide. I see the present and the future now... and I believe!”

The father smiled a big warm smile as tears glistened in his kind eyes. “Very good my daughter!” he said, “With this new telescope you may see the end from the beginning as I do.”

The daughter lifted the telescope once more to her eye and looked and looked again. As she viewed the glory of that better land a nagging question came to her mind - Why had her father allowed her to spend so many years gazing through the first telescope with its attending despair and death when this second one had been there all along?

The father heard the unspoken question as he always did and answered thus:

“If a father dies and leaves an inheritance for his young children, those children are not much better off than slaves until they grow up, even though they actually own everything their father has. They must

obey their guardians until they reach whatever age their father has set. So, the law was your guardian until you gave up all hope in yourself. Only then would Christ be viewed by you as all in all. You have now been given the second telescope and at last you see and understand that you are justified by grace through faith alone.

So now that the way of faith has come, you no longer need the first telescope as your guardian or trainer. And this is the lesson I teach you - the two telescopes are the two covenants. The old covenant must have it's time in every heart to teach it how evil it truly is but then the old covenant must be discarded for the new covenant. Having cast the old aside you must never pick it up again but move steadily forward ever learning to rightly exercise the truth I have given you.

The father once again took His daughter in His arms of grace and said, "Be on your way now, for you must practice using your new telescope and know that I, my Son, and the Spirit are ever with you!"

The Beginning