

# John 9 Commentary

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Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

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## John 9:1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

BGT John 9:1 Καὶ παρὰ γωνεῖεν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἀπὸ γενέσεως.

KJV John 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

NET John 9:1 Now as Jesus was passing by, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.

CSB John 9:1 As He was passing by, He saw a man blind from birth.

ESV John 9:1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.

NIV John 9:1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.

NLT John 9:1 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.

- **He saw:** Joh 9:32

### Related Passages:

John 3:3+ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again **he cannot see** the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 4:17-18+ So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, **18 being darkened in their understanding**, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

Acts 26:18 **to open their eyes** so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

Mark 8:22-26+ And they \*came to Bethsaida. And they **brought a blind man to Jesus** and implored Him to touch him. **23 Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"** **24** And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around." **25** Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly. **26** And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

Mark 10:46-52+ Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a **blind beggar** named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. **47** When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" **48** Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" **49** And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they \*called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you." **50** Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. **51** And answering him, Jesus said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And the blind man said to Him, "**Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!**" **52** And Jesus said to him, "**Go; your faith has made you well.**" **Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road.**

## A MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH

**As He passed by, He saw a man blind ([tuphlos](#)) from birth** - He of course from the context refers to Jesus. He just happened to be passing by, but in His compassion and concern, He saw! Take heart and be comforted dear disciple, by the truth that this same omniscient, caring Jesus sees your malady, affliction, or trial! And he knows how long you've had it.

As an aside, this is the only recorded instance in the gospels of Jesus healing someone who is said to have had a congenital condition. That is, this is the only person that we know of who was "born" with a disease that Jesus healed. All of the rest of those He

healed contacted their disease in childhood or in adulthood.

**Cobb:** How did Jesus view this person compared to His disciples? We tend to see people as interruptions, problems . . . We need to see people in ways we can meet their needs

**Lowell Johnson** - Could I point out that of the 33 recorded miracles that Jesus performed, 18 were requested and 15 were initiated on His own. What that means is that it was because of our Lord's compassion and love and mercy and grace that the blind man received his sight. This man was blind. Jesus could have walked right passed him and he would never have known it. Jesus could have withheld His healing power and the man would never had known it. But Jesus stopped and met this man's need. **He does the same with us!** Of all the handicaps that can curse men and women, blindness must be one of the saddest. Blind from his birth, this man never saw the glory of a sunrise or the elegance of a sunset. He never saw the green of the trees and grass or the blue of the sky. He never saw the snow-cap mountains. He never saw the wonders of animals or the birds flying in the sky. He never saw the face of his mother or dad or the smile of a happy child. He lived his entire life in a state of total darkness. But there is something far worse than physical blindness, and that is spiritual blindness. The truth is that every person who is born, is born spiritually blind. Every one of us need a divine operation, performed by the Great Physician, so that we can see, and see clearly spiritually. The Bible often speaks of those apart from Jesus as being spiritually blind....2 Cor.4:4; John 3:3; Eph. 4:17-19 There is a great Parallel between the physical blind and the spirituality blind.

Where is Jesus at this time? In John 8 He was in Jerusalem and clearly He is still there (as His reference to **Pool of Siloam** in John Jn 9:7 testifies).

**John MacArthur** - Some connect the phrase as He passed by with the previous narrative, and place this healing immediately after Jesus left the temple (Jn 8:59). The wording, however, is general enough that the precise time and location of the healing cannot be determined. Since Jesus sent the blind man to wash at the pool of Siloam (v. 7), the incident must have taken place in Jerusalem. The temple was a prime location for beggars (cf. Matt. 21:14; Acts 3:1-10), since people coming there to worship would be more likely to give them alms. The temple was also a place where large crowds gathered. Possibly, then, the Lord encountered this man near the temple grounds. (See [John Commentary](#))

*Jesus hid himself from people with sight, but revealed himself to people without sight.*

-- D L Moody

**David Owen** - Blindness was an all too common occurrence in the ancient world (cf. Lev. 19:14; 21:18; Deut. 27:18; 28:29; 2 Sam. 5:6, 8; Job 29:15); and the uncared-for blind were reduced to begging (cf. Mark 10:46). As Isaiah 42:7 predicted that the Messiah would do, Jesus gave sight to the blind on several occasions (Matt. 9:27-28; 11:5; 12:22; 15:30-31; 20:30-34; 21:14; Mark 8:22-25; Luke 4:18).

**Adrian Rogers** applies this passage reminding us that this man's physical blindness "is an illustration of a man without the Lord Jesus Christ....he is now depraved, dead, and darkened, because he doesn't have the Lord in him any more. Does that make sense to you? That's what it means to be lost....Jesus says to every man, every woman, you're blind....Jn 3:3+ He said to Nicodemus, 'Except a man be born again he cannot **SEE** the kingdom of God.'" Now, he might see physical material things, but he can't understand spiritual things. What does Ephesians 4:18+, say of every man, woman, boy, and girl without Christ? "Having the understanding **darkened**,"—not the eyes, but the understanding darkened—"being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart." Now, there's more than one kind of blindness. There's the blindness of the of the eyes. There's the blindness of the heart. And so, this man was blind.

**Spurgeon** - The man could not see Jesus, but sight came to the man from Jesus. If there are any here who cannot look to Christ as yet, our prayer is that he may look on them as he looked on this blind man. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

The question that this passage raises is how did He know the man was **blind from birth**? We know he was begging (Jn 9:8) so perhaps he shouted out his condition (like the homeless do today explaining the reason for their sad status on cardboard placards) to induce more alms. Of course the other possibility (and I think more likely) is that Jesus knew by His omniscience, something John has alerted us to previously, especially in Jn 2:25+ where John tells us "He (Jesus) Himself knew what was in man."

**THOUGHT** - Dear reader, Jesus is **always** passing by! Jesus **always** knows your "malady." Jesus is **always** compassionate. Jesus will **always** meet your need, not your greed, but not necessarily in the way you might wish, but in a way that is best for His glory and your good (Ro 8:28+)! He is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Heb 13:8+).

**ANOTHER THOUGHT** - As an aside, there are some who teach Jesus on earth functioned just as a Man, but passages like John 2:25+ and John 9 clearly teach us He was/is the God-Man, [fully God and fully Man](#). Here is an example from [Bill Johnson associated with the popular Bethel Church movement](#) in Redding, California

([see note on many churches are singing Bethel music](#) -- Do not be deceived, music is a powerful teaching tool, so be sure it is Biblical!). In one of his books (Heaven Invades) Johnson wrote the following description of Jesus

*"He had NO supernatural capabilities whatsoever!...He performed miracles, wonders, and signs, as a man in right relationship to God...not as God."*

That might not sound so bad at first reading, but it is clearly an assault of the [Deity of Jesus Christ!](#) In these last days (2Ti 3:1-4+ and especially 2Ti 3:5+) we need to be men and women who imitate the Acts 17:11+ [Bereans!](#) We need to be like those described in Hebrews 5:14+, men and women who are taking in solid teaching, for "solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." You can mark it down, that if you are not in the Word consistently, and the Word is in you transformationally, then you are an easy mark for false teaching such as Peter described in 2Pe 2:1+ warning that there "will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce ([pareisago](#)) destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." (cf Jude 1:4+ where "Crept in unawares" is [pareisduno](#))

**NIDNTT - see page 218** For late Judaism blindness was regarded as God's punishment for human sin because it prevented study of the Law (cf. SB II 193, 196). "And any judge that takes a bribe and perverts judgment shall not die in old age before his eyes wax dim" (Peah 8:9). The benediction on seeing a blind man was "Blessed be the truthful Judge," which implies that the blindness was a just judgment by God either on the man's own sins, or on those of his parents working themselves out in their children (cf. Jn. 9:2; Exod. 20:5; Deut. 5:9; See [R. Bultmann, The Gospel of John, 1971, 330 ff](#)). Precedent for this was sought in Deut. 28:15ff. The Qumran community excluded the blind and others with physical defects from their membership (cf. 1QSa 2:5 ff.; 1QM 7:4 f.). This is probably based on Lev. 21:18ff., though the official justification of the rule is that "the angels of holiness are with their congregation."

**Steven Cole - A. W. Pink** ([Christ and the Blind Beggar](#)) points out a number of contrasts between John 8 & 9. In John 8, we see Christ as the Light exposing the darkness; but in John 9 He imparts sight (both physically and later spiritually) to one in darkness. In John 8, the Light is despised and rejected; in John 9, He is believed in and worshiped. In John 8, the Jews stoop to pick up stones to kill the Light; in John 9, the Light stoops to make clay to bring light to the eyes of the blind man. In John 8, Jesus hides Himself from the Jews; in John 9, He reveals Himself to the blind beggar. In John 8:37, Jesus' word has no place in the Jews; in John 9:7, the blind man responds obediently to Jesus' word. In John 8, Jesus is called a demoniac; in John 9, He is worshiped as Lord. ([The Light of the World in Action](#))

**Lowell Johnson** - Sometimes the clothes worn by blind people identifies them as a blind person. That was especially true during Jesus' day. You will remember that Blind Bartimaeus removed his coat when he received his sight. That coat may have marked him as a blind man. -Today, special dark glasses may mark one as a blind person, or a specially marked cane or a seeing eye dog. If you looked into the eyes of a blind person, his eyes would indicate that he was blind. As an application of this truth, a Christian notes recognizable features when he sees one who is spiritually blind. -The lost person does not see on a spiritual plane. They hate the Christ of the Scriptures. In their darken state, they abhor the mention of Jesus in public prayers; they tear down the manger scenes and try to get prayer removed from schools. The ACLU is made up of Pharisaical folks like those in Jesus' day. Until their spiritual eyes are opened, they will still refuse to believe. Only Jesus can give spiritual sight.

**ILLUSTRATION** - I once heard comedian Bill Cosby tell how he was staying in the same hotel as the blind singer, Ray Charles. He decided to stop by Ray's room and say hello. He knocked and then entered as Ray yelled, "Come in." Cosby walked in the door and heard Ray shaving with an electric razor. There were no lights on and the room was pitch black. Without thinking, Cosby blurted out, "Hey, Ray! Why are you shaving in the dark?" Then it hit him and Cosby thought, "Dumb! Dumb! Dumb!" Ray good-naturedly replied, "I do everything in the dark, brother!" I heard that story decades ago and it has always stuck with me because I'm often like Bill Cosby on that occasion. I forget that unbelievers are spiritually blind and that they live every day in that dark world. And so I relate to them as if they can see. ([The Light of the World in Action](#))

**Brian Bell** - We were probably 1st introduced to blindness when we were very young, in a very weird Nursery Rhyme called "3 Blind Mice" [now referred to as "The Tale of the 3 visually impaired small domestic rodents!"] Three blind mice, three blind mice. See how they run! See how they run! They all ran after a farmer's wife, Who cut off their tails with a carving knife. Did you ever see such a thing in your life, As three blind mice? Where did this slasher tale come from? Many nursery rhymes started out as social commentary or political cartoons in verse. In this case, the "farmer's wife" was Queen Mary I of England, so called because her estates included a lot of farmland. 1. She was displeased with 3 ratty noblemen, but she didn't dismember them as the rhyme suggests. She simply had them burned at the stake!

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**Blind** ([5185](#)) **tuphlos** from **tuphlóo** = envelop with smoke, be unable to see clearly) can refer to literal blindness (Mt

9:27, 28; 11:5; 12:22; Lk 7:21, 22; Jn 9:1, 2, 3.; Acts 13:11 Lv 19:14; Job 29:15) but more often is used to describe spiritual blindness. Figuratively then **tuphlos** picture one's mind as blind, ignorant, stupid, slow of understanding, being unable to understand, incapable of comprehending (see Mt 15:14; 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 26; Lk 4:18; Jn 9:39,40,41; Ro 2:19; 2Pe 1:9; Rev 3:17; Isa 42:16,18,19; 43:8) This sense speaks of both mental and spiritual blindness, often the result of self-deception so that one is unable to understand (spiritual truth). The Greek writers used **tuphlos** to describe those who were "mentally blind".

Tuphlos is clearly the key word in John 9 - Jn. 9:1; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:13; Jn. 9:17; Jn. 9:18; Jn. 9:19; Jn. 9:20; Jn. 9:24; Jn. 9:25; Jn. 9:32; Jn. 9:39; Jn. 9:40; Jn. 9:41; Jn. 10:21; Jn. 11:37

**Blind, Blindness** - [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, see page 370](#) - Some of the most vivid pictures of the Bible center on blindness, including the Sodomites' groping about Lot's house, the dim-eyed Isaac tricked by his son, Samson's eyes gouged out, a troupe of blinded Syrian warriors being led from their intended destination to Samaria, the drama of the man born blind healed by Jesus to the consternation of the Pharisees, the blind beggars who cried out pathetically to Jesus as he passed by and the temporary blindness of Paul at his conversion. The characters in the Bible who are physically blind are a moving spectacle of human misfortune. However, in a spiritual sense, blindness is congenital for all humans, who inherit the tendency simply by virtue of belonging to the human race. In both physical and spiritual instances, blindness is an image of terror, helplessness and despair unless reversed by God's miraculous intervention.

The physical blindness referred to in the Bible is either congenital (Jn 9:1) or acquired. In a region of dust and bright sunlight, ophthalmic diseases were common, as attested by the frequency with which blindness is referred to in Scripture (Lev 19:14; Job 29:15; Mt 9:27; Lk 14:13). Blindness is one of the several disabilities that prevented someone born into a priestly family from exercising his ministry (Lev 21:18); and although blind people deserve special consideration according to the law (Lev 19:14), blindness could be a synonym for weakness and helplessness (2 Sam 5:6; Is 59:10; Lam 4:14).

Blinding is a punishment for wrongdoing in neighboring nations (2 Kings 25:7), but never in Israel. On occasion, in order to promote his own purposes, God temporarily blinds individuals or groups of people, either totally or in regard to something they attempt to see (Gen 19:11; 2 Kings 6:18; Acts 9:9; 13:11). Physical blindness is regarded by some of Jesus' contemporaries as evidence of divine punishment, something Jesus strongly denies (Jn 9:1-3).

Figuratively, blindness refers to an inability to recognize the truth, usually a culpable condition. As such, it describes judges whose judgment is perverted because of bribes (Ex 23:8; Deut 16:19; Job 9:24), idolaters whose worship is illogical as well as wrong (Is 44:9-10) and people who simply do not want to know (Is 43:8). Such blindness to the truth and mental confusion could actually be the result of God's judgment on those who did not want to admit the truth and who therefore forfeit the ability to perceive it at their cost (Deut 28:28-29; Is 6:9-10; 29:9-10). This is true of the Israelites, both leaders (Is 56:10) and followers (Is 42:18-19). Only God in his mercy can reverse this condition (Is 29:18; 35:5; 42:16). Paul describes gradual blindness when he writes of those whose "foolish hearts were darkened" (Rom 1:21). In another vein he talks of seeing poorly now in contrast to seeing perfectly in the life to come (1 Cor 13:12).

The imagery of sight and blindness is especially prominent in the account of Jesus' earthly ministry. The high incidence of physical blindness in the world of the Gospels is attested by the frequency with which Jesus performed miracles of giving sight to the blind. It is, in fact, one of the most vivid signs of Jesus' supernatural power. Spiritual blindness is no less prominent in the Gospels. Jesus described the religious leaders and teachers of his own generation in terms of blindness (Mt 15:14; 23:16-17, 19, 24, 26). The irony of their situation is that in their spiritual ignorance they assumed that they understand perfectly. Jesus remedied spiritual as well as physical blindness (Mt 13:17; Jn 9:39). Those who rejected Jesus' words came under a judgment similar to that of Israel-a state of permanent blindness (Jn 12:40; cf. Rom 11:7-10).

Although metaphorically blindness may describe mere ignorance (Rom 2:19), it usually carries the overtones of an unwillingness to face up to the truth (Jas 1:23-24); and in the case of those who do not believe in Christ, this is the work of Satan (2 Cor 4:4). As such it requires a miracle in order to become aware of the significance of Christ. Similarly, Christian believers who revert to their pre-Christian ways are described as blind, not perceiving the contradiction expressed in their behavior (2 Pet 1:9; 1 Jn 2:11). Blindness describes the fact that they are unaware of the gravity of their condition (Rev 3:17).

See also DEAF, DEAFNESS; DISEASE AND HEALING; MAIMED, HALT AND BLIND.

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[Adrian Rogers \(p 609\)](#) tells the story of a miracle - I have a precious friend. Her name is Marilyn Ford. He is married to another one of my dear friends, A. C. Ford, and they labor here in our city as associate pastor and wife of the wonderful Broadmoor Baptist Church. What many people don't know about Marilyn is the miracle that God gave her. Marilyn became blind with a progressive, degenerative disease in her eyes. And as a young lady she had to go to the school for the blind, had to learn to tap with a cane, had to learn to live by her senses other than her sense of sight. When she went off to Tennessee Temple School, she had to take her tape recorder to class because she could not take the notes as others could take the notes. She met this fine, young man, A. C.

Ford, and they were married, and God gave them a precious child that she'd not seen with her physical eyes. She carried on her ministry as a pastor's wife over in Arkansas doing as best she could and they could with those sightless eyes. One night late at night after they'd been out, they came in. They'd prayed many times to ask God to give Marilyn her sight back. But on this particular night they had come in from a long journey. They were tired. That night, her husband, A. C. Ford, decided one more time that he would pray and ask God to heal those blind eyes. He knelt beside the bed and he said, "Oh God, we accept Your will, whatever it is, but, God, we know that You have the power to heal Marilyn. Lord, that You could open those eyes of her. And, Lord, by Your grace, through Your power, for Your glory, heal Marilyn." And when he had said those words, Marilyn said, "A. C., I can see!" He said, "What?" She said, "I can see!" He said, "Do you mean it?" She said, "Yes, A. C. I can see!" And she said, "I can see you, and you need a shave." He ran and got a newspaper and said – it had been a long time since she had read. He said, "Can you read the headlines?" She said, "A.C., I can read the fine print," and she read it to him. They didn't know what to do. Afraid to go to sleep, afraid when they waked up it would not still be so. They felt like they wanted to run up and down outside in the community and shout and wake the neighborhood, that God had done such a miracle. That story is written in a very wonderful book. I think you may get a copy in our bookstore if you want, "[These Blind Eyes Now See](#)." (BORROW THIS BOOK) And I have talked and fellowshiped with this couple so many times. And beyond the shadow of any doubt, God instantaneously, wonderfully, miraculously performed a miracle and opened those blind eyes to prove that He is still the God of might and the God of miracle. But, my dear friend, **a greater miracle** than that is the miracle of the salvation of a soul when God opens spiritually blinded eyes to see Jesus, the light of the world.

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**Norman Geisler** - JOHN 9:1—Does this verse support the doctrine of reincarnation, as the Unity School of Christianity teaches?

**MISINTERPRETATION:** In this passage we read that Jesus healed a man who had been born blind. The Unity School of Christianity teaches that this man was born blind because of the sins he committed in his previous incarnations (Ehrenborg, 77).

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** Just the opposite is the case. Jesus' disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" (John 9:2 NASB). Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him" (v. 3). If Jesus believed in the law of karma, he wouldn't have said this; rather he would have said that this man was born blind because of sin committed in a previous life.

The disciples who asked Jesus the question did not believe in reincarnation either. The Jewish theologians of that time gave two reasons for birth defects: prenatal sin (before birth, but not before conception) and parental sin. They claimed that when a pregnant woman worshiped in a heathen temple, the fetus committed idolatry as well. They also believed that the sins of the parents were visited upon the children (Exod. 20:5; Ps. 109:14; Isa. 65:6–7). Hence, when they saw this blind man, their assumption was either that his parents had committed some horrendous sin, or perhaps when he was in the womb his mother visited a pagan temple.

The New Testament speaks out clearly against reincarnation, affirming that "man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (Heb. 9:27 NIV). For more arguments against reincarnation and karma, see the discussions of Matthew 22:42 and John 3:3. ([When Cultists Ask](#).)

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**QUESTION - [Why does God allow the innocent to suffer?](#)**

**ANSWER** - There is so much [suffering](#) in the world, and it is felt by everyone to one degree or another. Sometimes, people suffer as the direct result of their own poor choices, sinful actions, or willful irresponsibility; in those cases, we see the truth of Proverbs 13:15, "The way of the treacherous is their ruin" (ESV). But what about the victims of the treachery? What about the innocent who suffer? Why would God allow that?

It is human nature to try to find a correlation between bad behavior and bad circumstances and, conversely, between good behavior and blessings. The desire to link sin to suffering is so strong that Jesus dealt with the issue at least twice. "As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus" (John 9:1–3). The disciples made the mistake of assuming that the innocent would never suffer and assigned personal guilt to the blind man (or to his parents). Jesus corrected their thinking, saying, "This happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him" (verse 3). The man's blindness was not the result of personal sin; rather, God had a higher purpose for the suffering.

Another time, Jesus commented on the deaths of some people killed in an accident: "Those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:4–5). In this case, Jesus again discounted the notion that tragedy and suffering are the result of personal sin. At the same time, Jesus emphasized the fact that we live in a world full of sin and its effects; therefore, everyone must [repent](#).

This brings us to the consideration of whether such a thing as “the innocent,” technically speaking, even exists. According to the Bible, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Therefore, no one is “innocent” in the sense of being sinless. We were all born with a [sinful nature](#), inherited from Adam. And, as we’ve already seen, everyone suffers, regardless of whether or not the suffering can be linked to a specific personal sin. Sin’s effects permeate everything; the world is fallen, and all creation suffers as a result (Romans 8:22).

Most heartbreaking of all is the suffering of a child. Children are as close to innocence as we ever see in this world, and for them to suffer is truly tragic. Sometimes, innocent children suffer because of the sin of others: neglect, abuse, drunk driving, etc. In those cases, we can definitely say that the suffering is the result of personal sin (just not theirs), and we learn the lesson that our sin always affects others around us. Other times, innocent children suffer because of what some might call “acts of God”: natural disasters, accidents, childhood cancer, etc. Even in those cases, we can say that the suffering is the result of sin, generally speaking, because we live in a sinful world.

The good news is that God did not leave us here to suffer pointlessly. Yes, the innocent suffer (see Job 1–2), but God can redeem that suffering. Our loving and merciful God has a perfect plan to use that suffering to accomplish His threefold purpose. First, He uses pain and suffering to draw us to Himself so that we will cling to Him. Jesus said, “In this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33). Trials and distress are not something unusual in life; they are part of what it means to be human in a fallen world. In Christ we have an anchor that holds fast in all the storms of life, but, if we never sail into those storms, how would we know that? It is in times of despair and sorrow that we reach out to Him, and, if we are His children, we always find Him there waiting to comfort and uphold us through it all. In this way, God proves His faithfulness to us and ensures that we will stay close to Him. An added benefit is that as we experience God’s comfort through trials, we are then able to comfort others in the same way (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Second, He proves to us that our faith is real through the suffering and pain that are inevitable in this life. How we respond to suffering, especially when we are innocent of wrongdoing, is determined by the genuineness of our faith. Those with faith in Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:2), will not be crushed by suffering but will come through the trial with their faith intact, having been “tested by fire” so that it “may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7, ESV). The faithful do not shake their fists at God or question His goodness; rather, they “consider it pure joy” (James 1:2), knowing that trials prove that they are truly the children of God. “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

Finally, God uses suffering to take our eyes off this world and turn them to the next. The Bible continually exhorts us to not get caught up in the things of this world but to look forward to the world to come. The innocent suffer in this world, but this world and all that is in it will pass away; the kingdom of God is eternal. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36), and those who follow Him do not see the things of this life, good or bad, as the end of the story. Even the sufferings we endure, as terrible as they can be, “are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

Could God prevent all suffering? Of course He could. But He assures us that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28, KJV). Suffering—even the suffering of the innocent—is part of the “all things” that God is using to accomplish His good purposes, ultimately. His plan is perfect, His character is flawless, and those who trust Him will not be disappointed.

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#### **QUESTION - [Does God cause suffering?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Human [suffering](#) exists because sin exists. When Adam and Eve disregarded God’s command and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, “the eyes of both of them were opened” (Genesis 3:7), and death, along with all the suffering the reality of death implies, came into the world (Genesis 2:16–17). The results of sin are explained in Genesis 3:14–19. Sin affected humanity’s relationship with God, with each other, and with the animals. Even the ground was cursed (see also Romans 8:20–21). Sin would specifically result in increased pain in childbearing, laborious toil in work, and contentiousness in human relationships. Ultimately, sin would result in physical death. In broader terms, sin opened the door for all kinds of suffering throughout all of creation.

Since God is the [“First Cause,”](#) He is responsible for the fact that suffering can exist. God created Adam and Eve knowing that they would sin. He knew the suffering that would exist in the world as a result. However, He also made redemption possible. God’s ultimate plan was for God the Son (Jesus Christ) to take on human flesh, live a human life complete with all the suffering of a fallen world, be crucified though He had not sinned, and rise again to life, having defeated sin and death. All who put their faith in Jesus will be saved. God’s gift of grace to us cost Him greatly. God knows the fullness of human suffering in ways we do not. And yet He also knows the fullness of joy that redemption brings. God certainly allows suffering; ultimately, He does so for His good purposes (Romans 1:18–32; 8:18–39).

God is good, and everything He does is good (1 John 1:5). God can never be the author of evil (James 1:13–17). Suffering is a direct result of sin running rampant. Humanity's sin opened the door to Satan's limited rule as god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4). We suffer due to our own sins, the sins of other people, and the general fact of living in a fallen world. Often, God allows the natural consequences of sin to play out.

It is true that God sometimes takes more direct credit for suffering. Sometimes, God causes suffering as a judgment against the wicked or as a call to the wicked to repent, such as with the [plagues in Egypt](#) or the end-times judgments described in Revelation. We see God enact consequences upon Israel for their disobedience—consequences we would call “suffering” (Deuteronomy 28; 1 Kings 17:1; 1 Chronicles 9:1). We see God more passively “cause” suffering by giving people over to their sins (Romans 1:18–32). But we know that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked; He would much rather they “repent and live” (Ezekiel 18:32; cf. 33:11). In 2 Peter 3:9 we read, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” God does not inflict suffering out of sadistic pleasure, but out of a desire to draw people to Himself. When people refuse to repent, the suffering serves as part of the due penalty for sin (Romans 6:23).

God also uses suffering to train His children and refine or test their faith (James 1:2–4; 1 Peter 1:6–9; Hebrews 12:7–11). Of course, “no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11). Whether God intentionally causes a hardship in our lives or allows a hardship into our lives, He uses it for our growth and good (Romans 8:28–30). We can and should examine our lives and ask God to reveal any sinful tendencies He is ridding us of. If needed, we should repent and seek to put those sins to death. Putting our sinful tendencies to death generally feels like suffering, but it results in life (John 15:10–11; Galatians 5:13–26; Colossians 3:5–14). Even if there's no sin associated with our suffering, God can use it in our lives to draw us closer to Him and to deepen our faith. No matter the reason for our suffering, we can bring our pains and struggles to God, knowing that He cares for us and will walk with us through the suffering (1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 43).

Another aspect of suffering is [spiritual warfare](#). God allows Satan and his demons certain latitude, such as we see in the case of [Job](#). In Ephesians 6 we read about the spiritual armor with which God has equipped us so that we can stand firm against the devil's attacks. First Peter 5:6–11 encourages us to cast our anxieties on God, resist Satan, recognize others are suffering similarly, and trust that “the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast” (1 Peter 5:10).

Too, we sometimes suffer from persecution (Matthew 5:11–12; 2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus told His disciples, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). As with any suffering, when our hardships are a result of persecution, our response is to turn to God, as only He can sustain us.

It should be noted that sometimes the source and purpose of suffering is not immediately obvious to us. Sometimes, hardship can seem like too much, or we wonder why God allows a certain person to suffer so deeply through no fault of his own. Jesus offered a glimpse at an answer when His disciples wanted to know why a man was born blind (John 9:1–12). They rushed to the conclusion that someone's sin must have caused it. “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:3). This tells us that, in part, God allows or even causes human suffering in order to bring about a greater good. Sometimes, it takes suffering to enlarge our view of God. Paul talked about being given a [“thorn”](#) in his flesh to help him not become conceited. He pleaded with God to remove it, but God told him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)). Paul said, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

An additional consideration in the question of whether God causes suffering is God's sovereignty and human free will. We know that God is in control of all things. We also know that human choice has a meaningful impact in the world. We know that God cannot be the author of evil of any kind. So, when God “causes” suffering, is He simply orchestrating the results of natural evil to work to His good purposes? Could it be that everything we deem to be “suffering” is not antithetical to good?

Suffering, no matter its cause or its precise type, is not an experience any would choose. But the more we come to know God and see His character, the more we understand how He can take even the hardship of suffering and work it for His purposes. Not only that, but we can share honestly with God about our struggles and even our doubts. Hebrews 4:15–16 says, “For we do not have a high priest [Jesus] who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” We can and should also share our struggles with others, being willing to weep together and lift each other up in love (John 13:34–45; Romans 12:9–16; 2 Corinthians 1:3–7; Galatians 6:2, 7–10; Hebrews 10:19–25). Paul encouraged, “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by



day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:16–18).

The Lord God Almighty is [sovereign](#). That means no matter how much suffering we endure, He has not relinquished control over His creation. If He were helpless to stop suffering, He would not be God. If He instigated evil, He would not be good. But when a good and sovereign God causes people to suffer, it is for their eternal benefit and His eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10). Those who know Him can live in confidence that, no matter how difficult the journey, the moment we see Him face-to-face our eyes will be opened and we will exclaim, “Now I understand why I went through that! Of course! Thank you, Father. It was the only right thing to do!”

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#### Related Resources:

- [Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?](#)
- [Why did God allow the Holocaust?](#)
- [Why do Christians suffer?](#)
- [Where is God now? Where is God when it hurts?](#)
- [Why does God allow sickness?](#)
- [Why would God allow Covid-19?](#)
- [Is it sometimes God's will for believers to be sick?](#)
- [Why does God allow people to be disabled / handicapped?](#)

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#### Rob Morgan - Four Rules of Dying

When entrusted to God, even sickness can become a tool for his glory. Asked why the man in John 9 was blind, Jesus replied, “This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life” (NIV). Paul’s illness, though a “thorn” in his flesh, displayed the sufficiency of God’s grace. William Sangster’s four rules for facing illness show us how that happens.

Sangster was born in London in 1900 and started attending a Methodist church at age nine. At 13 he became a Christian and immediately began sharing his faith with friends. Three years later he preached his first sermon on February 11, 1917. After stints in the army and in college, he began pastoring a circuit of Methodist churches, working himself to exhaustion, frequently saying, “I just can’t do enough!” His reputation as a powerful preacher and beloved pastor followed him from church to church.

In 1939 Sangster assumed leadership of Westminster Central Hall, a Methodist church near London’s Westminster Abbey. During his first worship service he announced to his stunned congregation that Britain and Germany were officially at war. He quickly converted the church basement into an air raid shelter, and for 1,688 nights Sangster ministered to the various needs of all kinds of people. At the same time he somehow managed to write, to preach gripping sermons, to earn a Ph.D., and to lead hundreds to Christ. He became known as Wesley’s successor in London and was esteemed as the most beloved British preacher of his era.

After the war Sangster headed Britain’s Methodist home missions department until he was diagnosed with progressive muscular atrophy. For three years he slowly died, becoming progressively more paralyzed, finally able to move only two fingers. But his attitude didn’t falter, for when first learning of his illness, Sangster made four rules for himself. Many people have rules for living. Sangster composed four rules for dying: “I will never complain. I will keep the home bright. I will count my blessings. I will try to turn it to gain.” He did all those things. And thus the work of God was displayed in his life, and God’s strength was made perfect in his weakness. (BORROW [On this day : 365 amazing and inspiring stories about saints, martyrs & heroes](#))

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“Extraordinary afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins — but sometimes the trial of extraordinary graces. Christ, who perfectly knew the secret springs of the divine counsels, told them two things concerning such calamities: that they are not always inflicted as punishments of sin — and that they are sometimes intended purely for the glory of God, and the manifesting of His works.” Matthew Henry

“Afflictions are often the black foils in which God sets the jewels of His children's graces, to make them shine the better. There are some of your graces which would never be discovered, if it were not for your trials. Well, Christian, may not this account for the troubles through which you are passing? Is not the Lord bringing out your graces, and making them grow? Real growth in grace is the result of sanctified trials. The heart of a Christian is Christ's garden, and his graces are as so many sweet spices and flowers, when His Spirit blows upon them, to send forth a sweet savor.” Charles Spurgeon

“Stars shine brightest in the darkest night. Afflictions ripen the saints' graces. Gold looks the brighter for scouring. Just so, afflictions are but our Father's goldsmiths who are working to add pearls to our crowns. Spices smell sweetest when pounded — and juniper smells sweeter in the fire.” Thomas Brooks

"Some graces grow best in winter. Grace withers without adversity." Samuel Rutherford

"The lowly graces of the Spirit thrive best under crosses." Daniel Rowland

"The Lord's jewels need grinding, and cutting, and polishing." R.C. Chapman

"Grievous afflictions are not always sent as a scourge for sins committed — but sometimes as preventatives from sins. Paul's thorn prevented his pride." John Leland

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**Jon Courson** - Incensed by His claim to deity, the Jews took up stones to throw at Jesus (John 8:59). But not more than a stone's throw away sat this man whose life was about to change radically and eternally.

The disciples voice the foundational question of all suffering: 'Why?' And then they give Jesus two possible answers. According to their reasoning, the blindness was the result either of the blind man's sin or his parents' sin.

'The issue is not sin,' Jesus would explain in verses 3–5. 'Rather, this man's misery gives Me opportunity for ministry.'

That's the way it always is. Misery always opens the door for ministry. If you are going through difficulty, tragedy, sickness, or a hard time, be careful that you don't become introspective and wonder what you've done wrong to deserve it. Just as He did to His disciples, Jesus would say to you today, 'Sin is not the issue.' The question is not, 'Who caused the misery?' The question is, 'Will you allow Me to use it? Will you allow Me to demonstrate My glory through it in order that a blind world might see My reality and be made whole?' (See [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#))

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Play this beautiful version (you will be blown away by some of the voices in this rendition!) of John Newton's classic hymn where spiritual blindness by grace becomes sight! Hallelujah! Thank You Jesus, the Light of the world. Amen.

### **[Amazing Grace](#)**

Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I'm found

#### **Was blind but now I see**

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed

Through many dangers, toils, and snares  
I have already come  
This grace that brought me safe thus far  
And grace will lead me home

When we've been here ten thousand years  
Bright, shining as the sun  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we first begun

Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I'm found

#### **Was blind but now I see**

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Play this old gospel song

### **[I WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE](#)**

There was a blind man, in a distant land who did not understand God's saving plan  
till Jesus saw him, had mercy on him, told him to wash and his eyes were opened

he washed the clay away, his night was turned to day  
then he heard a scoffer say, "you can't be healed this way"  
could you explain to us who is this Jesus? Is he the least of us? What can you tell us?  
And this is what he said

**Chorus:**

though I don't understand I still will stand on this promise I've received  
and i don't need to know how he made me whole to know i was blind but now i see.  
I was a blind man in a distant land i did not understand God's saving plan  
till Jesus found me, put His arms around me, said He'd gone to calvary just to prove He loved me  
He washed my sins away, my night was turned to day  
then I heard a scoffer say, "you can't be saved this way"  
could you explain and tell how you've been spared from hell?  
And how that all is well? Sounds like a fairy tale.  
So this is what i said

Though i don't understand i still will stand on this promise I've received  
and i don't need to know how he made me whole to know i was blind but now i see  
and i don't need to know how he made me whole to know i was blind but not i see  
i was blind but now i see

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**James Smith - FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT JOHN 9**

"The Light everlasting

Unto the blind is not, but is born of the eye that has vision."

—Longfellow.

It is worthy of note that it was immediately after Jesus was about to be stoned out of His Father's house that He manifested His power as the "Light of the World," by giving a man sight who had been born blind (chap. 8:59). The leading features of this chapter can be easily gathered up as we consider the story of this blind man. There was—

**I. Blindness.** "A man blind from his birth" (Jn 9:1). But this blindness has all the mystery of the origin of sin hanging about it. It was not because he or his parents had sinned in any particularly grievous form that he was born blind, as some of the Jews seemed to teach (Luke 13:2) but "that the works of God should be manifest in him." This man was born blind that the Son of God might have the opportunity of showing forth His divine power and mercy, and also that the wickedness of their own hearts might be revealed. Was not sin originally permitted to enter the world for the same reason—that the wonderful works of God's love and grace should be manifest in the incarnation and crucifixion of His Son? In the same way Lazarus was permitted to die, that the glory of God might be seen in raising him from the dead (John 11:4). It is not so much with the mystery of sin and blindness that we have to do as with the fact.

**II. Deliverance.** The method of this man's salvation was about as strange and mysterious as was the cause and origin of the disease. His eyes were anointed with clay made by a spittle, and then he was told to "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (Jn 9:6, 7). There was no virtue in the dust, nor in the spittle, nor in the clay formed, nor in the pool, nor in the washing to unseal the eyes of a man born blind, and to beget in him the gift of vision. All these were in themselves "weak things," but the eye-opening power lay in his obedience to the Word of Him who spoke as the "Light of the World." "He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." The man was not responsible for being born blind, but he was responsible for accepting or rejecting the message of grace and salvation that had come to him by Jesus Christ. If he had despised the means, he would not have been obedient to the Word, and so would have remained in his darkness. The preaching of the Gospel may be like the dust, and the spittle, and the clay to some, but it is not with the preaching, as such, that men have to do, but with Christ's Word of command, that always accompanies such weak things: "Go, wash!" It is when we believe and obey Him, putting His Word to the test by an actual definite committal, that we "come seeing." There is now no excuse for spiritual blindness. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn 8:12).

**III. Confession.** When the neighbours asked him, "How were thine eyes opened?" (for they were thoroughly convinced that they were opened) his answer was simple and honest: "A man called Jesus made clay, anointed mine eyes, and said, Go wash; and I went, I washed, I received" (Jn 9:8–12). The blind man took no credit to himself in the matter, and is not ashamed to tell out all he knows about it, and that was not much. Like a new-born soul into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, he is so filled with joyous wonder that he is a mystery to himself. How these eyes must have sparkled with delight as he uttered these most significant words: "I went, and I washed, and I received sight." He could only tell of the means used; he could not explain how the miracle was wrought. That

part belongs to Him who is the Light of the World. The change produced by the brightness of those once blind eyes was so great that they hardly knew him (Jn 9:9).

**IV. Assurance.** “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see” (Jn 9:25). He could not, as yet, explain the character of Him who opened his eyes; he knew not whether he was a man who had sinned like others or not (Jn 9:25); neither could he defend himself by argument against those philosophical, unbelieving Pharisees; but one thing he certainly did know, that a man called Jesus had opened his eyes. There are always those that are so perverse in their minds as to suppose that it must have been some other Jesus, and not Jesus Christ, who performed the wonder. There is no gainsaying the fact when a man’s inner eyes have been opened, and when the old things of darkness are passed away, and all things are become new. This is the evidence that a man is in the light of Christ, and that he is a new creature (2 Cor. 2:17). In this new power of vision he has the witness in himself. There is a joyful ring about this “I know.” It is the confidence born of a blessed experience.

**V. Testimony.** Although he knew little about the Man who opened his eyes, his faith in Him was very great. When asked what he thought about Him, he at once answered, “He is a prophet” (Jn 9:17). The man that could work such a miracle on a poor man, without seeking any personal honour or recompense, must have been sent by God. Again, after he had told them how he had been healed, in the warmth of his enthusiasm he added, “Will ye also be His disciples?” (Jn 9:27). Meanwhile there was to him but one Man in all the world, and that was the Man who opened his eyes. He was determined to know nothing among them but Jesus who opened his eyes. His creed was: “If this man were not of God, He could not have done this great thing” (Jn 9:33). It is a sure sign that Jesus Christ has become a blessed Master to that one who is most anxious that others should also become His disciples. The Name of Jesus has little power in our lives if it does not inspire us, fearlessly, to plead with others to trust and follow Him.

**VI. Persecution.** “They reviled him” (Jn 9:28). “They cast him out” (Jn 9:34). They could not bear his testimony, so they reproached and mocked him. They could not bear his company, so they cast him out of the synagogue. He speedily gained the marks of a “blessed man” in being “hated” and “separated.” For our Lord Himself hath said, “Blessed are ye when men shall hate you ... and separate you from their company ... for the Son of Man’s sake” (Luke 6:22). It is easier for the enemies of the truth to revile than to refute. In casting out the humble believer in Jesus, they cast away their own credit as honest men. Any one of them would have been as devoted to Jesus as he was if they had been born blind, and in the same way received sight. But it seems almost impossible for an ungodly man to think himself into the Christian position and experience for a moment, so that he might modify his judgment. As long as the veil of unbelief is over the heart, evidences are of little value.

**VII. Satisfaction.** After they had cast out the man, Jesus found him and talked with him, and revealed Himself to him, so that the man was constrained to acknowledge Him as Lord, and to “worship Him” (Jn 9:35–38). His being cast out brought him into closer contact with the Son of God, his Saviour. It was much better for Him to be outside with Christ than inside without Him. The Lord never fails to compensate, in some way or other, those who suffer for His sake (Isa. 66:5). We infer that he was perfectly satisfied from the fact that he worshipped Him. He felt that the Lord had done so much for him that he could only fall down and adore Him for His mighty and matchless grace. This is something more than mere thanksgiving, something deeper than prayer; it is the most God-honouring act of which any creature in Heaven or in earth is capable. We cannot live without offering our desires unto God in prayer; but why are we so seldom overwhelmed with such a sense of His greatness and goodness that we can do nothing but bow and adore? Our service in Heaven will be that of adoration; why not practise it more now?

**VIII. Judgment.** “Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind” (Jn 9:39–41). Christ came not to condemn the world by an act of judgment, but, by His coming as the “Light of the World,” could not avoid passing the sentence of death upon darkness and sin. Those words spoken by the Lord contain His own application of the spiritual meaning of the miracle, for all His miracles are typical of spiritual things. There are none so blind as those who don’t wish to see. These Pharisees said, “We see,” yet they saw not Jesus Christ as the “Light of the World,” although He opened this blind man’s eyes. They said, “We know that this man is a sinner” (Jn 9:24), although that Man said, “Which of you convinceth Me of sin” (Jn 8:46). Therefore, they were condemning themselves by preferring the darkness of ignorance and death to the light of knowledge and life. Those who are blind and know it (spiritually) shall soon have “no sin,” for they will speedily turn to Him who has come to save sinners. But those who say, “We see,” and abide in the light of those sparks of their own kindling, will find out their blindness when cast into the outer darkness of eternal doom. “Your sin remaineth” as long as you walk in your fancied light (Jn 9:41). The opening of the blind man’s eyes is a witness to Christ’s power to impart that spiritual vision that saves from sin, and a warning to those who trust to the light of their own eyes, which lead into the ditch of everlasting darkness (1 Cor. 3:18).

“All that proceeds not from spiritual regeneration, be it never so pure and brilliant in its glitter, is nothing towards salvation.—Zeisius.

“The grace of the Holy Ghost is free, not bound either to means, persons, or times.”—Majus.

“Christianity consists not in secluding oneself and locking the room, and sitting with the prayer book behind the stove, else the Lord would not have talked with the Samaritan woman.”—Quesnel.

"If God rested as the Jews would have men rest on the Sabbath, no sun would rise, no flower would blossom."—Broune.

"The Lord feeds and nourishes those who truly gather around Him."—Schleiermachers.

"The earthly mind always miscalculates."—Schultz.

"The power to draw men is greater than the power to punish."—Heubner.

## John 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"

BGT John 9:2 καὶ ῥησαν αὐτὸ μαθητὰ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες· ἀββῶ, τίς ἤμαρτεν, οὗτος ὁ γονεὺς αὐτοῦ, να τυφλὸς γεννηθῆ;

KJV John 9:2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

NET John 9:2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who committed the sin that caused him to be born blind, this man or his parents?"

CSB John 9:2 His disciples questioned Him: " Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

ESV John 9:2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

NIV John 9:2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

NLT John 9:2 "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"

- **who:** Jn 9:34 Mt 16:14

### DISCIPLES DRAW HASTY CONCLUSION

And His disciples ([mathetes](#)) asked Him, "Rabbi ([rhabbi](#)), who sinned ([hamartano](#)), this man or his parents, that ([hina](#)) he would be born ([gennao](#)) blind ([tuphlos](#))? - Here we see the **disciples** know the man had congenital blindness, but whether they know from the man or from Jesus' comments is unclear. They immediately jump to the assumption that the blindness was sin related. They see he is blind, so in their mind obviously someone has sinned! So **who sinned** Jesus? Could parents sin and a baby be born blind? Yes that can happen in [ophthalmia neonatorum](#) (see [note below](#)). However, it is not even logical, because he came out of the womb blind! How could this man have committed sins in utero? To be sure, we know of course that [every human is born in sin](#) as David explained in Psalm 51:5+ (Ps 58:3, cf Paul in Ro 5:12+), but that is not what they were referring to or they too would have been born blind!

Note that in Jn 9:8 we discover that because of his blindness, he was forced to become a beggar. [Adrian Rogers](#) reminds us "Mankind was to have dominion. But man who was created to be a king, a spiritual king, is now a blind beggar...see Rev 3:17+....What a picture of mankind without the Lord Jesus Christ."

In Jesus' day (and sadly still true today) it was a common assumption that when someone was experiencing difficulty or affliction, they had sown some seeds of sin that brought forth a harvest of adversity (which can be the case Gal 6:7-8+). In the book of Job, the oldest book in the Bible, Bildad the Shuhite comes to "comfort" Job in his affliction with these words "If your sons sinned against Him, then He delivered them into the power of their transgression." (Job 8:4)

**THOUGHT** - When bad things happen to good (God's) people, we often fall into the same mode of thinking as the disciples! What did I do? What sin did I commit that brought on this adversity? And maybe you even begin to confess sins, sins you are not even sure you have committed because you are convinced your current affliction is because of your sin, just like the disciples assumed of this man born blind. Yes, sin has consequences which can include adversity, but don't turn it around and assume every adversity you experience is due to your sin (or a sin of your parents)! Also keep in mind that adversity may provide the opportunity for God to be glorified and you to be blessed.

[Robertson](#) on parents sin passed on - That is sometimes true (Ex. 20:5+, etc.), but by no means always. The rabbinical casuists

loved to split hairs on this problem. Ezekiel 18:20 says: "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (individual responsibility for sin committed). There is something in heredity, but not everything."

**Warren Wiersbe** wrote "The disciples did not look at the man as an object of mercy but rather as a subject for a theological discussion. It is much easier to discuss an abstract subject like "sin" than it is to minister to a concrete need in the life of a person. The disciples were sure that the man's congenital blindness was caused by sin, either his own or his parents', but Jesus disagreed with them." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Lowell Johnson** - Do you believe these disciples? Instead of seeing this man in PITY, they saw him as a PUZZLE! They stand over this man and have a theological debate as to the cause of his blindness! "Lord, did he sin or did his parents sin? Who's at fault? Why was he born blind? Obviously, God is punishing him for some sin. What was it and who is at fault?" Is that the way you look at someone who is suffering or someone who has experienced some crisis or someone who has experienced some tragic loss? - "I wonder what great sin they have committed that would cause God to do that to them?" You just assume that God is punishing them for some sin. Their question reflects the idea commonly held then, as now, that illness is connected to sin. The Book of Job should have already answered that false idea, but it persists even today. Sickness may be caused by some specific sin, but not necessarily so.

**David Owen** - In the final analysis, all physical problems are the result of our fall in Adam, for his disobedience brought sin and death into the world (Romans 5:12ff). But afterward, to blame a specific disability on a specific sin committed by specific persons is certainly beyond any man's ability or authority. Only God knows why babies are born with handicaps, and only God can turn those handicaps into something that will bring good to the people and glory to His name.

**Reformation Study Bible** - Many Jews, like Job's friends, believed that every temporal misfortune was God's punishment for some specific sin. With a congenital affliction the explanation could be that the sin had been committed in the womb, or by the parents whose sinful act victimized their child. Jesus dismisses these as improper explanations (Jn 9:3), but this is not to say that certain trials are not the God-ordained punishment for certain sins (e.g., the life of David after His adultery and murder, 2Sa 12–21+). Neither does Jesus here dismiss the [biblical doctrine of original sin](#) (Ro 5:12–21+), which teaches that all suffering is the consequence of our corporate sin and rebellion in Adam. But it is unwise and uncharitable to judge that the sufferings of others are specifically punitive (Mt. 7:1+). The question put to Jesus presents a false dilemma. Only two possibilities were given as reasons for the man's affliction, his own sin or the sin of his parents. Jesus offers a third option (Jn 9:3). ([John 9:2](#))

Notice that the **disciples** address Jesus as **Rabbi** ([rhabbi](#)), which was a title of great respect for such an individual was recognized as an authoritative teacher, a usage which continues in modern Judaism. The irony is that Jewish Rabbis had a foolish, non-biblical notion that it was possible to sin while in the womb! So much for those who claim to be the teachers of other sinners! They needed to be taught by THE RABBI!

**ANOTHER THOUGHT** - Note the disciples question. The fact is that you can discern a lot about what someone believes by the questions they ask! Or stated another way, you can learn a great deal about what people assume to be true, by the content of their questions. This truism can be very helpful giving you wisdom about how to respond when you are engaged in a dialogue with skeptics, seekers, agnostics, etc.

**Brian Bell** - What's your handicap? You were born what? so the power of God could be seen in you. What's your obstacle, impairment, hinderance, disadvantage? Where do you find yourself weak, so He can show Himself strong (2Co 12:9)? Where do you find yourself utterly useless, where God wants to make you incredibly useful? Ok, so then God always heals like this man? Obviously not. Then how does God receive glory in someone, if He doesn't heal them? Ask [Joni Eareckson Tada](#) who still sits paralyzed. Ask Paul the apostle who had to live with his thorn in the flesh (2Co 12:7-10+). Ask Job who's children didn't come back to life (Job 1:13-19).

**Marvin Vincent** - It was a common Jewish view that the merits or demerits of the parents would appear in the children, and that the thoughts of a mother might affect the moral state of her unborn offspring. The apostasy of one of the greatest Rabbis had, in popular belief, been caused by the sinful delight of his mother in passing through an idol grove. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

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## For His Glory

"This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." John 9:3

"We were made to be prisms refracting the light of God's glory into all of life." —John Piper

**IN WORD** It is in the nature of man to ask why. We see tragedy in our world and we ask why. We encounter hardship in our lives, or suffer loss, and we ask why. We want to know the reason for it all, the unifying purpose behind this strange, needy world. Jesus reminds us: It is all for the glory of God. The universe exists to display His splendor.

We can see many specific examples in Scripture. The Israelites were kept as slaves in Egypt in order that God might be known as Deliverer (Exodus 11:9). He led them to near disaster at the edge of the Red Sea in order that He might gain glory (Exodus 14:4). Many psalms of David would never have been sung if not for his persecution. This man in John 9 was blind for his entire life “that the work of God might be displayed.” Paul suffered in order that Christ’s power might be seen (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

But we are slow. We can’t help but think this universe is about us, and when life is hard on us, it doesn’t make sense.

**IN DEED** If we remember that it is all about Him, we begin to see. It all makes sense. By our captivity He is known as Deliverer. By our sin He is known as Savior. By our weakness He is known as powerful. Next to our hatred, His love amazes. Every evil we can think of has the potential of being a platform for the goodness of God. It’s all about Him.

Do we suffer and question God’s goodness? Do we complain about our hardships? If so, we have forgotten that the universe is meant to glorify God, not us. Consider how His power might be made known in our trials. Redirect your prayers not to improve your situation but to have your situation demonstrate His glory. Thank Him for making Himself known. (See [The One Year At His Feet Devotional](#))

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**MEDICAL NOTE** (one of my subspecialties was infectious disease) - **CONGENITAL BLINDNESS** - Up to 48% of infants born to mothers infected with *N. gonorrhoeae* develop [ophthalmia neonatorum](#), and up to 10% of those who receive antibiotic prophylaxis still develop infection. Infants can become infected in utero, and delivery via Caesarean section, in addition to carrying higher risks for the mother, does not necessarily eliminate the risk of [ophthalmia neonatorum](#). *N. gonorrhoeae* is the prevalent cause of ophthalmia neonatorum in many low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), including Malawi. The development of this neonatal infection is compounded by the fact that 80% of women infected with *N. gonorrhoeae* show no overt symptoms, and even among the women visiting a genitourinary medicine clinic seeking treatment for a reproductive health concern, 50% are asymptomatic

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## FROM CURIOSITY TO COMPASSION

“NEITHER THIS MAN NOR HIS PARENTS SINNED,” SAID JESUS, “BUT THIS HAPPENED SO THAT THE WORK OF GOD MIGHT BE DISPLAYED IN HIS LIFE.” —John 9:3

The disciples who first followed Christ were dreadfully out of step with His heart when they pointed out a blind beggar and asked Christ who sinned—the man’s parents or he in his mother’s womb—that he should be born blind (John 9:2). No doubt they had seen this beggar many times before and may have reacted with the same kind of standoffish, theological curiosity. What they saw in Christ’s response was hardly standoffish, and it clearly demonstrated the distance between Christ and His followers in regard to responding to people’s needs. His was a response of compassion, not curiosity and judgment. He marshaled His resources to grant sight to the beggar and claimed that the blindness was actually intended to provide a moment when God could be magnified through Christ’s compassionate touch.

We are so like those detached disciples! When we hear of trouble in someone’s life, we are far more interested in the details and an analysis of what, why, when, and where than we are interested in finding out what we can do to reach out and help.

It is amazing what a listening ear, a season of prayer, a note, a hug (with no lecture about the sovereignty of God), a meal, or some free baby-sitting can mean to those who are suffering. I have had the pleasure of pastoring churches that were full of followers who went beyond curiosity to Christlike compassion. What I learned was that unsaved relatives and friends were consistently impressed with the uniqueness of a caring community. No doubt they wondered who would rally to their support if similar fates were to befall them. If we would only learn to see tragedy as a platform for the kind of compassion that reflects the power of God’s glory through us, we could have a far greater impact on our world.

Anyone can be curious. Followers are curiously compassionate.

Plan an act of compassion today! - Joe Stowell

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**Lowell Johnson** - If you read John 9:3-4KJV in the KJV, it sounds like Jesus is saying that the reason the man was born blind was so God’s work of healing might be worked upon him. That poses a problem. Did God permit this man to be born blind solely for the purpose that on this occasion He might get glory out of His healing? Did God will that this man should walk in physical darkness all these years for the purpose of healing him at this time? Such a position is contrary to the very nature of God. The Problem is a matter of punctuation. Originally the Greek text had no punctuation except question marks. So, other than question marks, the punctuation as we have it is not inspired. This was added later. The one adding it did so according to his own interpretation of the meaning. We are justified in using our own where it does not contradict the overall teaching of the Bible. Men like G. Campbell Morgan, J. Vernon McGee, and Hershel Hobbs, translate the verses like this:

“Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents.” Note the period instead of the colon (KJV) or the comma (NKJV). Jesus emphatically denied that his blindness was caused by either. As in many other cases, Jesus abruptly brushes aside false teaching. And then He continued. “But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, we must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: The night cometh when no man can work.” (Night is a reflection of death. Opportunities pass quickly. Don't waste your life away.) “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

Jesus did not say that God permitted this blindness in order that He might get glory from it. He simply recognized the fact of the man's condition and refused to debate the cause.

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**Bible Translation** - Wycliffe Bible translators Bob and Jan Smutherman were assigned to the Macuna people of southeast Colombia, South America. Progress was going well in putting the Bible into the Macuna language. The chief's son was engaged as the language helper. Each portion of the Scripture had to be checked and double-checked for meaning and clarity.

After five years of labor, the Gospel of John was being finalized for publication. Gathered together to hear the Word of God, the tribe sat patiently.

Beginning at John 9:1, the son read about Jesus' encounter with the man born blind. When he got to the verse where Jesus says that this man was born blind “in order that the works of God might be put on display,” the old chief stood to his feet. Requiring silence by his uplifted right hand, he said, “We must stop killing our babies.” To a people steeped in [animism](#), the normal process was to take their deformed babies to a desolate place. There the babies were deserted and exposed until dead.

The implications of the gospel became shockingly clear upon hearing of a better way. - Philip L. McKown

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## Light and Mind

In his brilliant new book, [Catching the Light](#), quantum physicist Arthur Zajonc writes of what he describes as the “entwined history of light and mind” (correctly described by one admirer as the “two ultimate metaphors of the human spirit”). For our purposes, his initial chapter is most helpful. From both the animal and human studies, we know there are critical developmental “windows” in the first years of life. Sensory and motor skills are formed, and if this early opportunity is lost, trying to play catch up is hugely frustrating and mostly unsuccessful. Prof. Zajonc writes of studies which investigated recovery from congenital blindness. Thanks to cornea transplants, people who had been blind from birth would suddenly have functional use of their eyes. Nevertheless, success was rare. Referring to one young boy, “the world does not appear to the patient as filled with the gifts of intelligible light, color, and shape upon awakening from surgery,” Zajonc observes. Light and eyes were not enough to grant the patient sight. “The light of day beckoned, but no light of mind replied within the boy's anxious, open eyes.” Zajonc quotes from a study by a Dr. Moreau who observed that while surgery gave the patient the “power to see,” “the employment of this power, which as a whole constitutes the act of seeing, still has to be acquired from the beginning.” Dr. Moreau concludes, “To give back sight to a congenitally blind person is more the work of an educator than of a surgeon.”

To which Zajonc adds, “The sober truth remains that vision requires far more than a functioning physical organ. Without an inner light, without a formative visual imagination, we are blind,” he explains. That “inner light”—the light of the mind—“must flow into and marry with the light of nature to bring forth a world.” - National Right to Life News, March 30, 1993, p. 22

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**Did Someone Sin?** - When illness strikes someone, we tend to think of it as the result of sin. Since all our woes can be traced to man's original sin, we reason that sin must also be the immediate cause of sickness. Apparently this was how the disciples analyzed the case of the man born blind. But Jesus' reply, “Neither has this man nor his parents,” undercuts all pat answers to affliction.

Perhaps emotional illness, more than any other kind of suffering, is subject to shortsighted, judgmental responses. Most physical diseases are socially acceptable, but a stigma still hangs over most psychological disorders. In her book *God's Remedy for Depression*, Vivian Clark tells of a discussion on the topic “Is Depression Sin for the Christian?” One person said, “Because it can't coexist with the fruit of the Spirit, which is joy, it must be a sin.” Another added, “There is no reason for Christians to be depressed.” Just then, a sad-faced woman slipped away from the group. For days she had been despondent and unable to gain victory. Those remarks added to her depression.

Some emotional problems may indeed be caused by wrong attitudes or secret sins. But all of us transgress, and yet not everyone breaks down. The causes of depression and mental illness are so varied and complex that we must not engage in simplistic solutions. To help someone, we shouldn't immediately ask, “Who sinned?” Rather, we should pray, “Lord, help me further Your work in this person's life.”—D J DeHaan

**Compassion invests everything necessary to heal the hurts of others**



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**Disciples** (3101) **mathetes** from **manthano** = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*" - see [matheteuo](#)) describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Another sources says mathetes is from from **math-** which speaks of "mental effort that thinks something through" and thus describes is a learner; a follower who learns the doctrines and the lifestyle of the one they follow. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf **inductive Bible study**) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher, e.g., in Jn 9:28 Pharisees claim to be disciples of Moses. **Mathetes** by itself has no spiritual connotation, for it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers. Jesus gave one strong clue as to who is a genuine disciple (believer) in John 8:31 saying "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine." THIS BEGS THE QUESTION - DO YOU CALL YOURSELF A BELIEVER? DOES YOUR ABIDING IN HIS WORD PROVE WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE OR FALSE? PROFESSION OF BELIEF IS NOT THE SAME AS POSSESSION OF BELIEF, THE FIRST ENDING IN HELL AND THE OTHER IN HEAVEN! The Lord calls everyone to grow as a disciple (a learner of Christ; cf. also Mt 11:29,30), one who lives in faith, who lives in and by His Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. Note in the Great Commission that the implication is that the disciple is **not just a hearer and a learner from another, but is a doer of what he learns** for Mt 28:20 says "teaching them to **observe (DO, OBEY)** all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always (CHRIST IN US, HIS SPIRIT IN US ENABLING US TO "OBSERVE!"), even to the end of the age."

**Mathetes in John** - Jn. 1:35; Jn. 1:37; Jn. 2:2; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:12; Jn. 2:17; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 3:22; Jn. 3:25; Jn. 4:1; Jn. 4:2; Jn. 4:8; Jn. 4:27; Jn. 4:31; Jn. 4:33; Jn. 6:3; Jn. 6:8; Jn. 6:12; Jn. 6:16; Jn. 6:22; Jn. 6:24; Jn. 6:60; Jn. 6:61; Jn. 6:66; Jn. 7:3; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:27; Jn. 9:28; Jn. 11:7; Jn. 11:8; Jn. 11:12; Jn. 11:54; Jn. 12:4; Jn. 12:16; Jn. 13:5; Jn. 13:22; Jn. 13:23; Jn. 13:35; Jn. 15:8; Jn. 16:17; Jn. 16:29; Jn. 18:1; Jn. 18:2; Jn. 18:15; Jn. 18:16; Jn. 18:17; Jn. 18:19; Jn. 18:25; Jn. 19:26; Jn. 19:27; Jn. 19:38; Jn. 20:2; Jn. 20:3; Jn. 20:4; Jn. 20:8; Jn. 20:10; Jn. 20:18; Jn. 20:19; Jn. 20:20; Jn. 20:25; Jn. 20:26; Jn. 20:30; Jn. 21:1; Jn. 21:2; Jn. 21:4; Jn. 21:7; Jn. 21:8; Jn. 21:12; Jn. 21:14; Jn. 21:20; Jn. 21:23; Jn. 21:24

**Rabbi** (4461) **rhabbi** from Hebrew [rab 07227](#) = >400x in OT - great one, master, chief) means my master (most common rendering in KJV) or my teacher. It was an respectful title of honor by which one would address a teacher who was recognized for their expertise in the Mosaic Law or Scriptures. Jesus' disciples repeatedly address Him as **Rabbi** (Jn. 4:31; Jn. 6:25; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 11:8) The suffix **-bi** signified "my master" "and was a title of respect by which teachers were addressed. The suffix soon lost its specific force, and in the NT the word is used as courteous title of address." (Vine) It is interesting that In Mt. 23:7-8 Jesus forbade His disciples to desire to use it ("do not be called **Rabbi**"). " (See article [Was Jesus a rabbi?](#))

**Rabbi** - 15x in 15v - Matt. 23:7; Matt. 23:8; Matt. 26:25; Matt. 26:49; Mk. 9:5; Mk. 11:21; Mk. 14:45; Jn. 1:38; Jn. 1:49; Jn. 3:2; Jn. 3:26; Jn. 4:31; Jn. 6:25; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 11:8. Not found in the Septuagint.

See [Wikipedia on Rabbi](#).

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## D A Carson - John 5:14; 9:1-3; 11:4

More difficult is the relationship between sin and sickness. Some scholars hold that Jn 9:1-3 is normative for the johannine viewpoint, and argue that 5:14 does not expressly condemn the cured man for past sins, but warns him about the danger of persisting in sin in the future.<sup>9</sup> However, the natural implication of 5:14 with its present tense prohibition and comparative 'nothing worse', is that some explicit behaviour was the direct cause of the thirty-eight year paralysis. Indeed, although the New Testament as a whole dissociates disasters from particular sins, several passages forbid the conclusion that there is never a direct connection (e.g. Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:30; Jas. 5:15?; 1 John 5:16).

In the case of the blind man, however, this is not the case (Jn 9:1ff.). The fact that the blindness was congenital provokes the question of 9:2. The disciples, far from being harsh, are most likely voicing opinions held by some of their contemporaries. But Jesus in this case rejects both alternatives offered him and says that this tragedy occurred 'that (hina) the works of God might be made manifest in him' (9:3). It is not clear whether hina introduces a purpose or a result. The latter view, held by few, suggests that God simply deflects the tragedy into something else; the former sees God's sovereignty operative in the tragedy itself, which has its *raison d'être* in the fact that it is about to be relieved, so that God's work might be displayed by this relief. Comparison with 11:4 renders unlikely any ecbatic view: Lazarus' illness is 'for the glory of God'. 'In any case John could not suppose that the man's birth and blindness were outside the control, and therefore the purpose, of God.' (Barrett, p. 295)

Nevertheless, Brown is right when he remarks, 'Jesus was asked about the cause of the man's blindness, but he answers in terms of its purpose.'<sup>11</sup> Jesus' reply locates the tragedy within God's control, but in terms not of mere cause-and-effect, but of purpose; and the purpose in view is the manifestation of God's works, of his glory (11:4), as a witness to the light, before men. In this sense John 9 goes beyond Luke 13:1-5, which equally refuses to forge a rigid link between personal disaster and personal sin, but which

then diverges in application: Luke 13:1–5 concludes that all men are guilty and all will perish unless they repent, while John 9 discusses what seems to be a personal disaster, in terms of God's sovereignty being exercised for purposes of God's self-manifestation. (See [Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility](#))

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**Spurgeon** - The world will still stick to its unfounded belief that if the Tower of Siloam falls upon any men they must be sinners above all sinners upon the face of the earth. A cruel doctrine, a vile doctrine, fit for savages, but not to be mentioned by Christians, who know that 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,' and even his best beloved have been taken away on a sudden. Yet I do see a good deal of this cruel notion about, and if men are in trouble, I hear it muttered, 'Well, of course they brought it on themselves.' Is this your way of cheering them? Cheap moral observations steeped in vinegar make a poor dish for an invalid. Such censures are a sorry way of helping a lame dog over a stile; no, it is putting up another stile for him so that he cannot get over it at all. Now I mark this of my Lord, that it is written of him that he 'giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not'. When he fed those thousands in the wilderness it would have been most just if he had said to them, 'Why did you all come out into the wilderness, and not bring your provision with you? What have you to do out here without something to eat? You are unthrifty, and deserve to hunger.' No, no, he never said a word of the sort, but he fed them, fed them all, and sent them home filled. You and I are not sent into the world to thunder out commandments from the top of Sinai: we 'are come unto mount Sion'. We are not to go on circuit as if we were judge and hangman rolled into one, to meet all the sorrow and misery in the world with bitter words of censure and condemnation. If we do so, how different we are from that blessed Master of ours who says not a word by way of rebuke to those who seek him. (Sermon [The Blind Man's Eyes Opened: or, Practical Christianity](#))

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### **Greg Laurie - WHO SINNED?**

And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"  
(John 9:2)

Sometimes the question comes up of whether our physical suffering on Earth is the result of sin. Who sinned? That's the question the disciples asked Jesus in John 9. Was it the blind man or his parents? Jesus responded by clearly pointing out there was no specific correlation here. In other words, the blind man wasn't being punished for his own sin or the sin of his parents.

But notice this. Jesus did not say that suffering is just a random event that has nothing to do with sin. In a broad sense, all sickness, disabilities, and the limitations that come with the physical body are a result of sin. God's original plan was that our physical bodies would never get sick, wear out, or die. God's original purpose was for this body to live forever. But because of the sin of Adam, because he disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, sin came into human life and spread to all of humanity.

But let me add this. You can experience physical hardship as a result of your own sin. If you are an alcoholic, that will affect you physically. If you're a drug addict, that will affect you physically. In a sense those physical problems could be directly linked to sin. So yes, you can bring problems into your life as a result of breaking the commandments of God.

There is a reason that He gave us these guidelines in His Word. It was for our own good. God had a plan and a purpose for each rule to protect us in life that we might live life to its fullest. Every day, we have the ability to choose between right and wrong. Choose life! BORROW - [For every season : daily devotions](#)

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### **Curiosity Or Compassion?**

[Jesus'] disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" —  
John 9:2

Today's Scripture: John 9:1-12

Why is it that when we hear about someone who is suffering, we are more interested in the details of what, why, when, and where than we are about how we can help?

When the disciples passed the blind beggar (John 9:1), their curiosity about why he was suffering outweighed the prospect of reaching out to help him. "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" they asked (v.2). Their pop-quiz for Jesus revealed that they were dreadfully out of step with their

Master's heart. In fact, lurking beneath their question was a judgmental spirit—a desire to know whom to blame—as if that would make anyone feel better!

Thankfully, Jesus modeled a compassionate response. Rather than speculation and condemnation, He marshaled His resources to help, which in this case meant complete healing. He made it clear that the man's blindness was intended to provide a moment for

God to be magnified through Jesus' compassionate touch.

Feeling curious about somebody's problem? Shift into Jesus' mode and move past the point of curiosity to his or her point of need. Reach out and touch someone's pain. Show the compassionate love of Jesus in action. By: Joe Stowell

Amid the snares misfortune lays  
Unseen, beneath the steps of all,  
Blest is the Love that seeks to raise  
And stay and strengthen those who fall.  
—Bryant

Do you want to be like Jesus? Replace curiosity with compassion.

([Click to go to the full devotional](#) including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets. Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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**Frances Jane Crosby** wrote more than 9,000 hymns, some of which are among the most popular in every Christian denomination. She wrote so many that she was forced to use pen names lest the hymnals be filled with her name above all others. And, for most people, the most remarkable thing about her was that she had done so in spite of her blindness.

"I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when he showered so many other gifts upon you," remarked one well-meaning preacher.

Fanny Crosby responded at once, as she had heard such comments before.

"Do you know that if at birth I had been able to make one petition, it would have been that I was born blind?" said the poet, who had been able to see only for her first six weeks of life.

"Because when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior."

Her love of poetry began early—her first verse, written at age 8 (THIS IS ABSOLUTELY AMAZING AND SUPERNATURAL!), echoed her lifelong refusal to feel sorry for herself:

Oh, what a happy soul I am,  
though I cannot see!  
I am resolved that in this world  
Contented I will be.

How many blessings I enjoy  
That other people don't,  
To weep and sigh because I'm blind  
I cannot, and I won't!

**John 9:3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him."**

BGT John 9:3 περὶ θη ἡσο ς· ο τε ο το ς μαρτεν ο τε ο γονε ς α το , λλ να φανερωθ τ ργα το θεο ν α τ .

KJV John 9:3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

NET John 9:3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but he was born blind so that the acts of God may be revealed through what happens to him.

CSB John 9:3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered. "This came about so that God's works might be displayed in him.

ESV John 9:3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

NIV John 9:3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

NLT John 9:3 "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.

- **Neither:** Job 1:8-12 Job 2:3-6 Job 21:27 Job 22:5-30 Job 32:3 42:7 Ec 9:1,2 Lu 13:2-5 Ac 28:4
- **but:** Jn 11:4,40 14:11-13 Mt 11:5 Ac 4:21

#### Related Passages:

Acts 28:4+ When the natives saw the creature hanging from his (PAUL'S) hand, they began saying to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."

### JESUS CORRECTS THEIR INCORRECT CONCLUSION

**Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned ([hamartano](#)), nor his parents** - Jesus does not say sin does not have consequences which may sometimes be physical, but simply that sin is not involved in the pathogenesis of this man's congenital blindness.

**but** (term of contrast) **it was so that** (purpose clause) **the works of God might be displayed ([phaneroo](#) - brought to the spotlight) in him** - Jesus teaches that this man's blindness was sovereignly allowed, so that it would provide an opportunity for men to see the miraculous **works of God**. One is reminded of the wine running out at wedding in Cana in John 2 and John's summary that " This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and **manifested His glory**, and His disciples believed in Him."

**F. F. Bruce** notes "This does not mean that God deliberately caused the child to be born blind in order that, after many years, his glory should be displayed in the removal of the blindness; to think so would again be an aspersion on the character of God. It does mean that God overruled the disaster of the child's blindness so that, when the child grew to manhood, he might, by recovering his sight, see the glory of God in the face of Christ, and others, seeing this work of God, might turn to the true Light of the World. (BORROW [The Gospel of John](#) 209)

**Guzik** - Jesus' response was "I'm not here to answer such questions, but to do the work of God in alleviating such suffering while I can." This is an answer consistent with the spirit of the book of Job. Sometimes, God intentionally leaves us without knowledge regarding the source or reason behind pain.

**John Piper** - The disciples assume a direct correlation between a specific sin and the man's disability. Either he sinned in the womb of his mother, or his parents sinned. Those are the two explanations the disciples can think of. This kind of thinking is not unlike the way Job's three friends thought about suffering. Jesus rejects both of them. He knows that suffering and sickness and disability and death are in the world because of sin (Romans 5:12–14; 8:18–25), but he rejects the explanation that specific disabilities correspond to specific sins. Another Explanation: The Glory of God. Instead, he gives another explanation. The disciples were asking about the cause of this blindness. Jesus answers their question, but the answer he gives is not about the human who the blindness came from, but what it is leading to. In other words, Jesus says the cause of this disability is not past sin, but future effects. ([Born Blind for the Glory of God](#))

**Spurgeon** - In other words, this man is not blind as the result of sin in himself, or in his parents. He is blind in order that God may have a platform for the display of his gracious power in healing him....What a very blessed way of looking at evil,—as an opportunity for God to manifest the power of his works of grace by getting rid of it! I wish that everyone here would look upon the evil within his own heart in this very hopeful light, and say, "There is something in me for God to conquer. There is some spiritual disease in me for the great Physician to heal. There is space in my poor soul for the Lord himself to work some miracle of mercy." (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

Jesus Himself had spoken of healing the blind as one of the signs of Messiah when he was questioned by John the Baptist, declaring to his men that "**the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT** and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM." (Mt. 11:5+)

**Reformation Study Bible** - Some of our sufferings, like the trials of Job, are for God's glory, either through our resulting refinement or through a spectacular healing as in the present case. God's purpose is not always presently known to us, but we have God's assurance that His purpose is good (Rom. 8:28). ([John 9:3](#))

**M. G. Pearse** said "At such a time (as they sought to kill him in chapter 8), it was very wonderful that He should see anything but the way out. His life was in peril. The plot was thickening, the pursuers were more than ever determined to murder Him. At such times

men are likely to see only what concerns themselves and their own safety. It is a blessed proof of the way in which that most gracious heart lay open to all the sorrow and needs of men. ([What the Master and What the Disciples Saw](#))

*The disciples were looking for sin; Jesus was looking at the soul.*

*The disciples saw an obstacle; Jesus saw an opportunity!*

--[David Owen](#)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - **Stedman**: Why, then, was he born blind? "That the works of God might be made manifest in him," is Jesus' response. That gives a positive reason for this kind of affliction. It is an opportunity, not a disaster, but an opportunity for certain things to be manifested in such a person's life, and in the lives of people who come in contact with that person, that would otherwise never be brought out. You can surely think of examples of that. The handicapped -- oftentimes those who are handicapped from birth -- frequently develop inner qualities of peace and joy and strength that otherwise normal people do not have. The handicapped oftentimes show a tremendous strength of spirit that is able to take on challenges and endure difficulties that other people cannot. Fanny Crosby, that dear saint of the last century who wrote "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!" was blind from her earliest babyhood as a result of an accident. When she was only eight years old she wrote this little rhyme,

Oh, what a happy child I am,  
Although I can not see.  
I am resolved that in this world,  
Contented I will be.  
How many blessings I enjoy  
That other people don't.  
To weep and sigh  
Because I'm blind,  
I cannot and I won't!

She lived to be over 90, and that beautiful, rejoicing spirit characterized her all her days. ([Daily Devotion: The Purpose of Disabilities](#))

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**Sinned** ([264](#)) [hamartano](#) literally means to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize). Hamartano means to act contrary to the will and law of God. To commit a wrong. To be in error. **Gary Hill** on [hamartano](#) - [hamartánō](#) (from **a** = "not" + **méros** = "a part, share") [ED: THIS PROPOSED DERIVATION WAS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY A. H. STRONG AND IS NOT FOUND IN MANY/MOST LEXICONS THUS ITS VALIDITY IS NOT ABSOLUTELY ESTABLISHED - IT DOES LEAD TO SOME INTERESTING APPLICATION AS HILL GOES ON TO UNFOLD] – properly, **having no share in**; to sin, which **always brings forfeiture** (eternal loss because missing God's mark). Like **hamartía**, ([hamartánō](#)) is regularly used in ancient times of an archer missing the target (Homer, Aesch., etc). Every decision (action) done apart from faith ([pistis](#)) is sin (Ro 14:23<sub>±</sub>; cf. Heb 11:6<sub>±</sub>). **Hamartanō** ("to sin") emphasizes **loss** which always results from missing God's mark (target; i.e. "His preferred will," see [thelema](#)). **Hamartánō** ("choosing sin") asserts the agenda of self, by (for) self, over God's loving plan. Ironically, this insists on bringing self-made condemnation (cf. Titus 3:11<sub>±</sub>). Reflection: **Believers experience loss every time they sin** (cf. Heb 10:26<sub>±</sub>), **as it diminishes their unique glorification awarded by Christ at His return.** ([The Discovery Bible](#))

**Hamartano** emphasizes loss which always results from missing God's mark or target, His **good and acceptable and perfect will** ([Ro 12:2](#)). Gary Hill adds that "hamartánō ("choosing sin") asserts the agenda of self, by (for) self, over God's loving plan. Ironically, this insists on bringing self-made condemnation (cf. [Titus 3:11](#) = "and is sinning, being self-condemned."). In sum, hamartánō always results in loss of reward for believers, and everlasting condemnation for unbelievers.

**Hamartano** - **37v** - commit sin(1), committed...offense(1), committing(1), sin(11), sinned(17), sinning(4), sins(8). Matt. 18:15; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 27:4; Lk. 15:18; Lk. 15:21; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 8:11; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:3; Acts 25:8; Rom. 2:12; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 5:14; Rom. 5:16; Rom. 6:15; 1 Co. 6:18; 1 Co. 7:28; 1 Co. 7:36; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 15:34; Eph. 4:26; 1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 3:11; Heb. 3:17; Heb. 10:26; 1 Pet. 2:20; 2 Pet. 2:4; 1 Jn. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2:1; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:18

**Displayed** (made manifest, disclosed, revealed) ([5319](#)) [phaneroo](#) from **phanerós** = manifest, visible, conspicuous in turn from **phaino** = give light; become visible in turn from **phos** = light) is literally "to bring to light" and primarily means "to make visible" or to cause to become visible. The basic meaning of **phaneroo** is to make known, to clearly reveal, to manifest (see Vine's below), to cause to be seen or to make something clear. **BDAG** ([borrow](#)) summarized - 1, to cause to become visible, reveal, expose publicly (w. relatively more focus on the sensory aspect than on the cognitive 2. to cause to become known, disclose, show, make known [Liddell-Scott](#) - to make manifest, N.T. II. to make known or famous:-Pass. to become so, Hdt.**Friberg** - reveal, make known, show (1) of a thing; (a) active, as a causative make known, cause to be seen, show, often as synonymous with [apokalupto](#) to

indicate God's revelation of something (Ro 1.19; 2Co 2.14); (b) passive become visible, be revealed, become known (Mk 4.22; Jn 3.21); (2) of a person; (a) active make oneself known, show or reveal oneself (Jn 7.4 ); (b) passive become known, be shown, be in true character (2Co 5.11); appear, become visible, be revealed (Jn 21.14; 1Ti 3.16) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Phaneroo** - 43v - appear(1), appeared(6), appears(3), become visible(1), becomes visible(1), disclose(1), disclosed(1), displayed(1), made...evident(2), made known(1), made manifest(2), make...clear(1), manifested(18), manifests(1), revealed(7), show(1), shown(1). Mk. 4:22; Mk. 16:12; Mk. 16:14; Jn. 1:31; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 3:21; Jn. 7:4; Jn. 9:3; Jn. 17:6; Jn. 21:1; Jn. 21:14; Rom. 1:19; Rom. 3:21; Rom. 16:26; 1 Co. 4:5; 2 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 4:10; 2 Co. 4:11; 2 Co. 5:10; 2 Co. 5:11; 2 Co. 7:12; 2 Co. 11:6; Eph. 5:13; Col. 1:26; Col. 3:4; Col. 4:4; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:10; Tit. 1:3; Heb. 9:8; Heb. 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:28; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 4:9; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 15:4

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#### Related Resources:

- [Does God cause suffering? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why does God allow people to be disabled / handicapped? | GotQuestions.org](#) - Interesting!
- [Is it true that everything happens for a reason? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why does God allow good things to happen to bad people? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### True Trust

Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. —John 9:3

Today's Scripture: John 9:1-11

If you didn't know him, you might think Nick Vujicic has everything going for him. Nick has never had a sore arm. He's never had knee problems. He's never smashed his finger in a door, stubbed his toe, or banged his shin against a table leg.

But that's because Nick doesn't have a shin. Or a toe. Or a finger. Or a knee. Or an arm. Nick was born with no arms and no legs. Before you begin to feel sorry for Nick, read his words. "God won't let anything happen to us in our life unless He has a good purpose for it all. I completely gave my life to Christ at the age of 15 after reading John 9. Jesus said that the reason the man was born blind was 'so that the works of God may be revealed through him.' . . . I now see that glory revealed as He is using me just the way I am and in ways others can't be used." Nick travels the world to spread the gospel and love of Jesus.

Nick says, "If I can trust in God with my circumstances, then you can trust in God with your circumstances. . . . The greatest joy of all is having Jesus Christ in my life and living the godly purpose He has for me."

Can we say that? Can we look beyond our limitations and have the same trust in God that transformed a man with no arms or legs into a missionary for Jesus? By: Dave Branon

Lord, shape my life as only You can,  
Guiding each day by Your loving plan;  
Take what You need and give what You will;  
My life is Yours to use and to fill.  
—Branon

Trusting God turns problems into opportunities.

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#### Handicapped for God's Glory

"Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9:3)

CHRIST came upon a man who was blind from his birth. This problem puzzled the disciples; and so they asked Christ, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). Christ's answer to the disciples' perplexity about this blind man is in our verse for today. We note the exaltation in the explanation, the experience in the explanation, and the encouragement in the

explanation.

Exaltation. "But that the works of God should be made manifest in him." The purpose of the blindness was to exalt God. And it did exalt God, for Christ was honored in healing the man of his blindness. We need to remember that glorifying God is very important. Men are interested in mostly their own glory which accounts for so much bragging by men, but we should be interested primarily in God's glory. It is important that God be honored and glorified. All that we do is to be done to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Experience. "But that the works of God should be made manifest in him." We may have to experience suffering in order that God may be glorified. That we should suffer in order for God to be glorified is no injustice to man; for after all, Christ suffered greatly on Calvary so that sinners might be saved and be glorified in heaven. If God suffered so we could obtain eternal glory, should we complain if we must suffer that God may be glorified on earth?

Encouragement. "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." This statement does not mean that this blind man and his parents had never sinned. It means that this trial in their lives was not caused by some specific sin. Every time you experience a trial does not mean you are suffering because of your sin. We should search our hearts when we are suffering a trial to see if it is because of some disobedience—and if it is, we should confess our sin. But if we honestly cannot perceive that our suffering is a result of sin, trust God to have another good reason for the suffering. - John Butler - Daily Bible Reading

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### The "Why" Question

Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. —John 9:3

Today's Scripture: John 9:1-7

The fact that some people come into the world with severe disabilities disturbs us. We feel a deep sense of compassion for them, and instinctively wonder why they must suffer in this way.

Those who believe in reincarnation say such disabilities are penalties for things done in previous lives. But this theory is completely contrary to the teaching of the Bible.

We must be careful about placing blame when someone has a disability. When Jesus encountered the man born blind. His disciples asked, "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" (Jn. 9:2). But Jesus answered, "Neither," and added, "but that the works of God should be revealed in him" (v.3). Then He did what He could to help—He healed the man.

We are not able to heal people like Jesus did, but we can make their lives more pleasant through acts of kindness. There are numerous opportunities to show love by offering practical help or a listening ear, not in a patronizing manner but in genuine friendship. When we show respect for others, we display the spirit of Christ.

Lord, help us to remember and uphold the dignity of every person. Help us to focus on what we can do when we can't explain why bad things happen. By: Herbert Vander Lugt

### Thinking It Over

How do I respond to a person with a disability?

Do I treat him or her with respect and love?

How would Christ treat them?

It's better to lend a helping hand than to point an accusing finger.

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### Why an infinitely gracious God permitted sin and suffering to enter the universe.

from [Spurgeon's sermon, "The Spur"](#). John 9:4

A young convert, after finding peace with God, was heard to say, "I rejoice that I was a lost sinner."

Strange matter to be glad about, you will say, for of all things it is most to be deplored; but here was her reason: "Because God's infinite grace, and mercy, and wisdom, and all His attributes, are glorified in me as they never could have been had I not been a sinner and had I not been lost."

God has allowed moral and physical evil to come into this world to cause His infinite wisdom, grace, power, and all His other attributes, to be the better seen by the whole intelligent universe.

Sin, somehow or other, desperate evil as it is, will be overruled to display God's goodness.

**Were there no sin there had been no Savior; if no death, no resurrection; if no fall, no new covenant; if no rebellious race, no incarnation, no Calvary, no ascension, no second advent.**

Though we do not know, and perhaps shall never know the deepest reason why an infinitely gracious God permitted sin and suffering to enter the universe, yet we may at least be encouraged this practical thought: God will be glorified in the overcoming of evil and its consequences.

**John 9:4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work."**

BGT John 9:4 μ ς δε ργ ζεσθαι τ ργα το π μψαντ ς με ως μ ρα στ ν ρχεται ν ξ τε ο δε ς δ ναται ργ ζεσθαι.

KJV John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

NET John 9:4 We must perform the deeds of the one who sent me as long as it is daytime. Night is coming when no one can work.

CSB John 9:4 We must do the works of Him who sent Me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work.

ESV John 9:4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

NIV John 9:4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

NLT John 9:4 We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work.

- **must:** Jn 4:34 5:19,36 10:32,37 17:4 Lu 13:32-34 Ac 4:20
- **as:** Jn 11:9-10 Jn 12:35 Ec 9:10 Isa 38:18-19 Eph 5:16 Col 4:5
- [Click John 8:12 Commentary](#) for more in depth notes, including multiple devotionals

#### Related Passages:

John 11:9-10 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 "But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

John 12:35 So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

Isaiah 38:18-19 "For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your faithfulness. 19 "It is the living who give thanks to You, as I do today; A father tells his sons about Your faithfulness.

Ephesians 5:15-16+ Therefore **be careful** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

Colossians 4:5-6+ **Conduct** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

**SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY**



## TO DO GOD'S WORKS

**We must** ([dei](#) - logical necessity, obligation) **work** ([ergazomai](#) in present tense) **the works** ([ergon](#)) **of Him Who sent Me as long as it is day** - There is a sense of urgency in Jesus' words. The **must** speaks of absolute necessity and the qualifier is that these works can only be performed for a finite amount of time. Jesus sounds a sense of urgency for disciples (then and now) to redeem the time left (cf Eph 5:16+, cf Col 4:5-6+, see Redeem the Time). For Jesus, He would be able to carry supernatural works as a Man for only about another 6 months before He was crucified. Jesus repeatedly alludes to the truth of God sending Him on mission. It is as if they just did not "get it" (and here it was His own disciples)!

*We must glorify God. This is necessity. All else may be—this must be!*

-- C H Spurgeon

**THOUGHT** - Jesus' words of urgency apply to all disciples. While we have not been sent in same manner as Jesus was sent, once we are born again, we are effectively placed on the mission field as God's (Gospel) ambassadors. This applies to EVERY person born again, because every person has been gifted by God for specific work (1Co 12:7, 1Pe 4:10) What are our works for which we have been given new life in Christ? Paul writes that our new birth should be accompanied by good works (saved by faith alone) explaining "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for (OUR PURPOSE) **good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+) Are you working the good works while you still have the light of day (while you are still alive on earth)? Don't miss your once in a lifetime opportunity! Redeem the time (opportunity) (Eph 5:16+).

**Marvin Vincent** - The Son sends the disciples, as the Father sends the Son. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

[Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown](#) - I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work - a most interesting statement this, from the mouth of Christ; intimating, first, that He had a precise work to do upon earth, with every particular of it arranged and laid out to Him; next, that all He did upon earth was just "the works of God" - particularly "going about doing good," though not exclusively by miracles...

*If we neglect our opportunities for service, they may be lost forever.*

-- [Guzik](#)

**Night is coming when no one** ([oudeis](#)) **can** ([dunamai](#)) **work** ([ergazomai](#)) - Present futuristic or predictive, "night will certainly come." **Night** is not literal **night** but is a metaphor to describe the time when spiritual work can no longer be accomplished. So when is this **night** that **no one can work**? As alluded to above, no one can do the works of Him and for Him once they are with Him in Heaven. We have one opportunity to accomplish these [good works](#). As the poem says "Only one life, twill soon pass, Only what's done for Jesus, Will last." (I would qualify that popular poem by changing it to only what's done "in" Jesus will last, applying the principle of Jn 15:5). When the **night** comes via death, the rapture, or the Second Coming, [good works](#) can no longer be performed.

*We have no time to be idle. Our work for eternity is great, for it is long, and our time is short*

-- Thomas Boston

**D L Moody** - It is lamentable that we should live so long a time in the world and do so little for God: and that we should live so short a time in the world and do so much for Satan.

**Spurgeon** - Think of our Lord being under the necessity of working: "I must work." Men say that "Must is for the king;" but here is the King of kings declaring that work is, by the most urgent necessity, laid upon him; so will not you, beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, come under this divine necessity? Will not you feel that you also must be doing all you can for your Divine Lord and Master?.....Our Saviour felt that he was commissioned as a servant of his Father, sent here to do a certain work, and he must be doing it. It is well for God's servants to feel a holy compulsion. It does not take away from them the freedom of their action, and their delight in the service of God; but still it exercises a powerful influence over a man when he feels, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel;" or when, like the Lord Jesus, he says, "I must work the works of him that sent me." Did the Well-beloved, the Prince of Heaven, come under compulsion? Did he put himself under that "must" which is for the king? Then you and I may well put ourselves under holy bondage for the Lord. Then, do not hinder me; do not tell me that I am too feeble in health; "I must work the works of him that sent me." (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

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**QUESTION** - [How are we to live our lives in light of Christ's return?](#)

**ANSWER** - We believe that the return of Jesus Christ is imminent, that is, His return could occur at any moment. We, with the apostle Paul, look for "the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). Knowing that the Lord could come back today, some are tempted to stop what they are doing and just "wait" for Him.

However, there is a big difference between knowing that Jesus could return today and knowing that He will return today. Jesus said, "No one knows about that day or hour" (Matthew 24:36). The time of His coming is something God has not revealed to anyone, and so, until He calls us to Himself, we should continue serving Him. In Jesus' parable of the ten talents, the departing king instructs his servants to "occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13 KJV).

The return of Christ is always presented in Scripture as a great motivation to action, not as a reason to cease from action. In 1 Corinthians 15:58, Paul wraps up his teaching on the rapture by saying, "Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord." In 1 Thessalonians 5:6, Paul concludes a lesson on Christ's coming with these words: "So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled." To retreat and "hold the fort" was never Jesus' intention for us. Instead, we work while we can. "Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4).

The apostles lived and served with the idea that Jesus could return within their lifetime; what if they had ceased from their labors and just "waited"? They would have been in disobedience to Christ's command to "go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15), and the gospel would not have been spread. The apostles understood that Jesus' imminent return meant they must busy themselves with God's work. They lived life to the fullest, as if every day were their last. We, too, should view every day as a gift and use it to glorify God.

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**Thomas Watson** - It is *night* with the devils; it is yet *day* with you. Work while it is day (John 9:4). If you lose your day, you lose your souls! This is the season for your souls. Now *God* commands, now the *Spirit* breathes, now *ministers* beseech, and as so many bells of Aaron, would chime in your souls to Christ. Oh, improve your season! This is your seed-time, now sow the seeds of faith and repentance. If when you have seasons, you lack hearts, the time may come when you have hearts and you shall lack seasons. Take time while you may; the mariner hoists up his sails while the wind blows. Never had a people a fairer gale for heaven than you of this city, and will you not set forward in your voyage? Oh my brethren, now is the time for your souls, now plead with God for mercy, or at least get Christ to plead for you. Think seriously of these things. - [The One Thing Necessary](#)

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**Charles Simeon** - We are not sent here to eat, and to drink, and to pass our time in pleasure; but to do the work assigned to us. Every moment of our time is given us for that purpose, and should be employed for that end. When we rise in the morning, we should inquire, What duties have I to perform this day? And, when we lie down again at night, we should inquire, how far we have executed the will of our heavenly Master. The performance of our work should supersede every thing else. Nothing should occupy our mind in comparison of it. To every one who would call us from our duty, we should reply with Nehemiah, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you [Note: Nehemiah 6:3.]" The conduct of Abraham's servant, when ordered to seek out from amongst the family of Abraham a wife for his son Isaac, will admirably illustrate our duty towards God. Having received his instructions relative to the conduct he should pursue, he implored of God his unerring guidance, that so he might be led to a successful issue. And when, by Divine Providence, he seemed to have attained his end, having been led to the very house of Abraham's own nephew, Bethuel, he was desired to refresh himself after his long journey. But what was his reply? It was truly memorable; and shewed how much he had at heart the execution of the trust committed to him: "There was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand [Note: Genesis 24:33.]" Here, we see, he preferred his duty "before his necessary food [Note: Job 23:12.]" This is exactly what we should do. Our blessed Lord has set us the example: and, like him, we should be able to say, "My meat is, to do the will of Him that sent me [Note: John 4:34.]"

The urgency of it— We have but a "day" to do it in—

A day is given us; and that is little enough for so great a work: yet it is time enough, if duly and diligently improved. It is, however, of very uncertain continuance. The sun of many goes down at noon; and often without the slightest warning. Yes, scarcely is the sun risen with many, before it sets. This is a truth known to all; but considered by few: else, how earnest would we be in doing the work assigned to us. We would not be putting it off until "a more convenient season;" but would improve the present hour, "not knowing what a day or an hour may bring forth." We should "walk, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, Ephesians 5:15-16."

**Our day being closed, our work is closed with it—**

"There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, Ecclesiastes 9:10." "When the night is once come, we can work no more." Our good purposes, if not carried into effect before, will then fail, and our best resolutions prove abortive. If we have lived impenitent to that hour, or have only felt remorse, without carrying our sins to Jesus, and washing them in the fountain of his blood—then we shall continue impenitent and unforgiven to all eternity. "As the tree falls, so it will lie, Ecclesiastes 11:3."

---- [Click for his full pithy sermon](#) on John 9:4 (Scroll down page)

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**Thomas Boston** - We have no time to be idle. Our work for eternity is great, for it is long, and our time is short. They who have

much work, little time to do it in, little strength to do it with, and much opposition to wrestle against, had need to lose no time, John 9:4. The shadows of the evening are stretched out; we have made but little way; let us therefore mend our pace.

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**Thomas Boston** - Now the glass is set up to you: there is much of it run, as you may see by looking to the lower end, the time you have lived: the upper end you cannot see, what time you have yet to live; how soon it may run out then, you know not. But it will never be turned for you. When the last sand runs out, the word is given, The master allows no more time for his work to you, Give account of your stewardship. [Saints and Sinners, in This World and the Next](#)

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**J C Ryle** - The great gate of salvation is yet ready to open — but the hour draws near when it will be closed forever. Let us work while it is called today, for "the night comes when no man can work." (John 9:4.) Let us tell our relatives and friends, that we have *proved* the way of life — and found it pleasant, that we have *tasted* the bread of life — and found it good.

I have heard it calculated that if every believer in the world were to bring one soul to Christ each year, the whole human race would be converted in less than twenty years. I make no comment on such a calculation. Whether such a thing might be or not, one thing is sure: that many more *souls might probably be converted to God, if Christians were more zealous to do good.* [Self-Exertion](#)

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**George Everard** - Remember that your time is a precious talent, for which you must give account by-and-by. Think over such texts as these: "Whatever your hand finds to do — do it with your might." (Ecclesiastes 9:10.) "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night comes when no man can work." (John 9:4.) "Redeeming the time." (Ephesians 5:16.)

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### Working Wisely

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day. — John 9:4

Today's Scripture: John 9:1-11

In a photo on my wall, a rusted rake leans against a post in a vegetable garden overgrown with weeds. I took the picture several months after my father-in-law died and there was no one to care for his usually well-tended garden. One afternoon, he had leaned his rake against a post, walked to the house, and never returned.

The photo says two things to me about work: First, I must do it while I can. Second, I must keep it in perspective and not make it more important than it is. Because my days are numbered, I need God's wisdom to spend each one as I should.

When Jesus healed a man born blind, He told His disciples, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:4-5).

As Jesus labored in His Father's "garden" on earth, He demonstrated how to work wisely by having a balance between work and rest. He never valued productivity more than prayer, and He never became so preoccupied with a program that He failed to help people in need.

Lord, give us the wisdom to work faithfully while it is still day. By: David C. McCasland

Lord, help me know from day to day  
The good I should pursue;  
And grant me wisdom to discern  
The things I should not do.  
—D. De Haan

Work is a blessing when it blesses others.

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### Give While You Live

As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. John 9:4

Today's Scripture & Insight: John 9:1–12

A successful businessman spent the last few decades of his life doing all he could to give away his fortune. A multibillionaire, he donated cash to a variety of causes such as bringing peace to Northern Ireland and modernizing Vietnam's health care system; and

not long before he died, he spent \$350 million to turn New York City's Roosevelt Island into a technology hub. The man said, "I believe strongly in giving while living. I see little reason to delay giving. . . . Besides, it's a lot more fun to give while you live than to give while you're dead." Give while you live—what an amazing attitude to have.

In John's account of the man born blind, Jesus' disciples were trying to determine "who sinned" (Jn 9:2). Jesus briefly addressed their question by saying, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned . . . but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me" (Jn 9:3–4). Though our work is very different from Jesus' miracles, no matter how we give of ourselves, we're to do so with a ready and loving spirit. Whether through our time, resources, or actions, our goal is that the works of God might be displayed.

For God so loved the world that He gave. In turn, let's give while we live. By: John Blase

When it comes to giving, what's one thing you've been delaying? What would it mean for you to give while you live?

Giving God, please show me places where I can give today.

Read [Celebrating God's Generosity](#).

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**Spurgeon** - There are ten thousand actions good in themselves, which it might not be right for me to choose as my vocation in life. I know a great many persons who think it is their business to preach, but who had much better make it their business to hear for a little while longer. We know some who think it is their business to take the headship of a class, but who might be amazingly useful by giving away some tracts, or by taking a seat in a class themselves for a little while. The fact is, that we are not to pick and choose the path of Christian service which we are to walk in, but we are to do the work of him that sent us; and our object should be, as there is so much work to be done, to find out what part of the work the Master would have us to do. Our prayer should be, 'Show me what thou wouldst have me to do'—have me to do in particular; not what is generally right, but what is particularly right for me to do. My servant might, perhaps, think it a very proper thing for her to arrange my papers for me in my study, but I should feel but a very slender amount of gratitude to her. If, however, she will have a cup of coffee ready for me early in the morning, when I have to go out to a distant country town to preach, I shall be much more likely to appreciate her services. So, some friends think, 'How I could get on if I were in such-and-such a position, if I were made a deacon, if I were elevated to such a post.' Go your way, and work as your Master would have you. You will do better where he puts you than you will where you put yourself. You are no servant, indeed, at all, when you pick and choose your service. (Sermon [Work](#))

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**Toys! Sports and games for children!** (Charles Spurgeon, "[The Spur](#)") [Play Audio!](#) [Download Audio](#)

"As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work." John 9:4

Some men are spending their time in making money. That is the main object of their lives. They would be as usefully employed probably if they spent all their lives in collecting pins or cherry stones!

Whether a man lives to accumulate gold coins or rusty nails—his life will be equally groveling, and end in the same disappointment.

Money-making, or fame-making, or power-getting—are mere toys, mere sports and games for children!

I once heard of a clergyman who often went hunting, and when he was reproved, he replied that he never went hunting when he was on duty. But he was asked, "When is a clergyman off duty?" And so with the Christian, when is he off duty? He ought to be always about his Father's business, ready for anything and everything that may glorify God.

We have a high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and this must have the supremacy!

Poor or rich, healthy or sick, honored or disgraced—we must glorify God. This is necessity. All else may be—this must be!

Our time in which to serve the Lord on earth is very short. If we would glorify God, we must do it now.

We resolve, sternly resolve, and desperately determine, that we will not throw away our lives on trifling objects; but by us God's work must and shall be done; each man will do his own share, God helping him.

May the ever blessed Holy Spirit give us power and grace to turn our resolves into acts.

"As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work." John 9:4

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**Spurgeon** - Jesus meant that he had an earthly lifetime in which to labour, and when that was over he would no more perform the kind of labour he was then doing. He called his lifetime a day to show us the shortness of it. We reckon life as a matter of years and we even think of the years as though they were of extreme length, though every year seems to spin round more swiftly than before; men who are growing grey will tell you that life seems to travel at a much faster rate than in their younger days. To a child a year appears a long period; to a man even ten years is a short time; to God the Eternal a thousand years are as one day. Our Lord here sets us an example of estimating our time at a high rate on account of its brevity. It is a day you have at the longest. How short is that day! Young man, is it your morning? Are you just converted? Is the dew of penitence still trembling upon the green blade? Have you just seen the first radiance which streams from the eyelids of the morning? Up, and serve your God with all your heart! Or have you known the Lord so long that it is noon with you, and the burden and heat of the day are on you? Use all diligence and make good speed, for your sun will soon decline. Or have you long been a Christian? Then the shadows lengthen and your sun is almost down. Quick, let both your hands be used. Strain every nerve; put every sinew to the stretch. Do all at all times and in all places that ingenuity can devise or that zeal can suggest to you, for 'the night cometh when no man can work.' (Sermon [The Spur](#))

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#### **Robert Hawker - John 9:4.**

Pause, my soul, over this sweet scripture, and these sweet words of thy Lord! Look at Jesus, even thy Jesus, who, in the services of mediator, as God's servant, had work to do in his day, as thou hast in thine. And oh! what a day was his! Every portion of it filled with good! Now, my soul, the night of this present day is come; and the night of the whole day of thy life upon earth will shortly follow; it may be this very night: for nearly as the month is ended, thy life may end before it: and if not this very night, it cannot be far off, and may be near indeed. How then stands thy great account? Take down thy memorandums, as merchants do their ledger at certain seasons to ascertain their stock. Hath Jesus filled up every page? Hast thou the several items of his grace, and love, and bounty? Canst thou tell of him that sent thee into the world, as he saith his Father sent him? (John 17:18.) Canst thou call to mind, from the first Bethel-visit of his love to the present hour, how he hath borne thee, and carried thee as on eagles' wings? And though it would tire the arm of an angel to write down the vast account of his mercy and grace, and in thy poor forgetful heart, thousands, and ten thousands of instances have passed away, like traces on the water, and thou canst remember them no more, yet in looking back upon the whole, canst thou say, "Jesus is mine, and I am his?" Oh! the unspeakable felicity of thy summing up months, and days, and years, when the night cometh that no man can work. Precious Lord Jesus! thou hast indeed done all for me, and wrought all in me; thou hast made, and thou dost bear. It is thou that formed me from the womb, and now hast made me in thyself: thou hast redeemed me, and washed me from my sins in thy blood; borne with me in all my unworthiness, and carried me in all my sorrows! Into thy gracious hands, Lord, I desire to fall this night, and every night, and in the night of death; under the blessed assurance, that "when my heart shall faint, and my strength shall fail, thou wilt be the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Amen.

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**F B Meyer** - We must work the works of Him that sent Me. (R.V.) -- Is not this exceedingly tender and beautiful? The Lord does not hesitate to describe Himself as specially designated to do a certain work. In every part of this Gospel He speaks of Himself as the sent One; but He graciously conjoins his disciples and friends in it, saying, We must work. It is as though He said, "I have a designated work which must needs be done; but I cannot do it alone. We must do it, you and I, together."

Fellowship with God the Father is the law of all industry. — Every crop that goldens in the summer wind is due to the summons of the God of Nature to the husbandman, "Come and let us work together, thou and I." Every achievement in factory or mill of textile fabrics is due to the combination of the Divine laws and the human agency. We must work, is God's constant appeal.

Fellowship with the Son is the law of the Kingdom. — We have been called into the fellowship or partnership of the Son of God. He does not say, Go, but come; not, Do this, but, Let us do it. He has set his heart on the glory of the Father, and He calls us to co-operate with Him in bringing back men to God. In some way we must contribute to the final result on which Christ has set his heart.

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit is the law of all successful service. — The closing words of the benediction that refer to the communion of the Holy Spirit are specially significant. "We are witnesses, and so is also the Holy Ghost." The Spirit and the Bride say Come. As Peter began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell. Oh for pure hands and a clean heart, that we may be worthy of this Divine confederacy!

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#### **The Work Of Our Hands**

The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. —Psalm 112:6

Today's Scripture: Psalm 112

One reason we're left here on earth and not taken to heaven immediately after trusting in Christ for salvation is that God has work for us to do. "Man is immortal," Augustine said, "until his work is done."

The time of our death is not determined by anyone or anything here on earth. That decision is made in the councils of heaven. When we have done all that God has in mind for us to do, then and only then will He take us home—and not one second before. As Paul put it, “David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep” (Acts 13:36).

In the meantime, until God takes us home, there’s plenty to do. “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day,” Jesus said. “Night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4). Night is coming when we will once for all close our eyes on this world, or our Lord will return to take us to be with Him. Each day brings that time a little closer.

As long as we have the light of day, we must work—not to conquer, acquire, accumulate, and retire, but **to make visible the invisible Christ by touching people with His love. We can then be confident that our “labor is not in vain in the Lord”**(1 Cor. 15:58+). By: David H. Roper

If you rely upon God’s strength  
And live a life that’s true,  
Then what you do in Jesus’ name  
Will be His work through you. —D. De Haan (Bolding added)

In God’s eyes, true greatness is serving others.

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#### QUESTION - [Why are we told to work while it is day \(John 9:4\)?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Gospel of John records a remarkable event, as Jesus heals a man who had been born blind. In John’s retelling, one of the statements Jesus makes is that “we must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4).

In the context Jesus and His disciples were traveling, and as they passed by a particular location, Jesus saw a man who was blind from birth (John 9:1). Jesus’ disciples asked Him what was the cause of the man’s blindness—whether he had sinned before birth or whether his parents had (John 9:2). They perceived that the man’s blindness had to have been caused by sin, so they inquired as to whose sin resulted in his being born blind. Jesus responded by explaining that the blindness wasn’t a result of the sin of either, but the blindness was so that the works of God might be displayed (John 9:3). As Jesus offers that vital explanation, He adds that “**we must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work**” (John 9:4). In this context it becomes apparent why we are told to work while it is day, as Jesus explains that, while He is in the world, He is the Light of the world (John 9:5).

The man in John 9 had lived in darkness all his life, being blind, but then Jesus came, bringing sight and light to this man’s life. In that same way, the world was in darkness to that point, but Jesus had come, and “in Him was life and that life was the light of men” (John 1:4). John adds that Jesus “was the true Light, which, coming into the world, enlightens every man” (John 1:9, NASB95). It seems that Jesus, by bringing sight to this individual, was illustrating how He provides light to all humanity. At the same time, He tells His listeners that we are to work while it is day (John 9:4).

Jesus is not prescribing just any kind of work; rather, He says, **“We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work”** (John 9:4). He is challenging His listeners that they should be doing the work of His Father as long as it is day—as long as Jesus is there, it is day—the Light of the world is there. He adds that there is a time coming when the work can’t be done because it will be night. It **seems** that Jesus is referring to the time coming when He would no longer be on earth, and then He would not be (personally) bringing the light to all—He was making the most of the opportunity He had to do the works that demonstrated who He was and who His Father was. In this case that meant miraculously healing this man who was born blind. The man’s blindness had been (ALLOWED) entirely for that moment, so that God’s glory could be displayed. At that moment Jesus was able to show His power over nature and to demonstrate that He *is* the Light who enlightens every person. So Jesus Himself was “working while it was day.”

The disciples were also learning that they needed to make the most of the opportunity—that they had the Light of the world with them. They needed to pay attention to Him, to learn from Him, so they could know Him and faithfully represent Him later. While we can’t “work while it is day” in the same way because Jesus is not personally here on earth (He is at the right hand of the Father awaiting His return one day), we still have been enlightened by Him—He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). Like the disciples, we should look to Him, and like the disciples were encouraged to do—and like Jesus *did*—**we should also make the most of the opportunity**. Each opportunity is provided by God for His glory (Mt 5:16), so we need to consider how we can work while it is still day. [GotQuestions.org](#) (Bold added)

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## MORNING READING: JOHN 9 - Stephen Olford

"I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day." – John 9:4

The true principle of all real service for God underlies this statement of the Lord Jesus. And since He was the perfect Servant when upon this earth, He made this principle the basis of His loyal service to God.

The Obligation of True Service. The Lord Jesus said, "I must work." The obligation of loving and loyal service to His Father compelled Him to work. Yes, right from the beginning (remember the temple when He was twelve years old?) to the end.

The Occupation of True Service. There is only one great occupation in true service – it is doing God's will. I must work the "works of Him." "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me," said the Savior (John 4:34).

The Opportunity of True Service. "While it is day." Now is the acceptable time ... "Time is short" (1 Cor. 7:29).

I can do nothing else but serve You, Lord, all of my days,  
For it is a privilege and an honor – yes, even my duty!

[According to Your Word: Morning and Evening](#)

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## The Work of Life! George Everard, 1885

"I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day. The night comes, when no man can work." John 9:4

A friend was passing by the entrance-gate of a cemetery in Italy. Over it he saw words worth remembering, "My lot today — yours tomorrow." It is a truth that comes home to us, especially as another year draws on to its close. In man's mental constitution, there is a strange power of putting out of sight the thought of our death. Perhaps in a measure this is well. If we had always a vivid recollection of the nearness of death, it might unfit us for doing life's work as heartily and joyfully as we otherwise do. Nevertheless this facility for putting the thought of death aside, needs to be corrected and supplemented by a sober, wise estimate of what life really is, of its purpose, and of the constant care needful for using it aright.

We should often recall the fact that the time is short, and that life at its best is always uncertain. The motto already named may remind us of this. "My lot today — yours tomorrow."

Today you may see a few mourners carrying with them the remains of one very dear to them. Tomorrow a similar company may leave your door, and you may be the one to be left behind in the silent grave.

Today you may pass a house where the blinds are down and where there lies one who has just passed away. Tomorrow it may be in the street where you have lived and in the house cheered by your presence — and you the one around whom all their grief has centered.

Today you may take the Times newspaper, and to your surprise notice the sudden death of one you saw yesterday. Tomorrow a friend of yours may take up the paper, and it is your name he sees in the same column.

I don't wish this thought to cast one shadow of gloom over your young days. I am convinced that truth, whatever it is, can only be for good if used aright, and this very truth may gladden and brighten every day of your life, if it makes life more worthy of the name.

Did you ever notice the two prayers of Moses in the 90th Psalm which tells most of man's frailty?

He reminds us that "a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." He reminds us that man is but as the grass which flourishes and grows up in the morning — and in the evening it is cut down and withers. Our threescore years and ten soon come to an end like a short reverie or tale. Then among others he offers these two petitions:

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." "O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

Both are linked together. It is as if he would say: "Let the remembrance of life's short day lead us to seek for heavenly wisdom. That wisdom will lead us unto You. We shall walk in Your fear. We shall taste Your mercy. So will this short life of ours be filled with true rejoicing. All our days will be brightened with the sense of Your presence, as we journey on to You our Eternal Home."

Act in the spirit of these prayers. Employ this short life to the very best advantage. Take a very high view of the possibilities of lasting blessing to yourself and others which it presents, and then strive that that blessing may never be forfeited through any fault of yours.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, and day by day act in the spirit of them: "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day. The night comes, when no man can work."

Is it full day with you? Is the sun shining overhead? Is the darkness past? Is it peace in the conscience? Is it the comfort of God's free favor received by faith in Christ? Can you look upward to the bright Heaven above you and hear a voice whispering within, "Abba, Father!" If you want life to be joyous and full of peace and usefulness — then take care that there is no cloud between you and God. If sin has been kept back, if anything has been amiss, confess it to your Father, and then doubt not that through Christ it is perfectly forgiven, and that God regards you as one very near and dear to Him.

If you remember these words of Christ, you will be no idler, no mere camp-follower — but an earnest, diligent worker in everything you take in hand. "I must work," said Christ — and so must you. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might." Let no grass grow under your feet. Let no rust be found upon your sword. Let no weeds grow in your garden.

No, no, young friend. Wage war with sloth even to the death. Be a hero in the strife. Whether in the schoolroom, in the study, or in the playground, aim high — at least in your efforts to do the very best you can.

Don't sink down to commonplace in anything. By hard, painstaking toil, plod on whether you have few talents or many, and it may be you shall reach the highest round of the ladder in your work or profession, and if you don't you will feel at least that you did your duty; and no man can do more.

Above all, if you want life to be no failure, but the very noblest possible, strive to catch the spirit of our Lord's working. Not only work, but "work the works of Him who sent you."

Desire, like Christ, to glorify God in the world. Seek great things, but not for yourself, that you may be rich, and honored, and praised by man — but seek great things for God, to exalt Him, to spread His kingdom, and to do good to as many as you can. Put your feet in the steps of Him who never thought of Himself, but ever went about doing good. And forget not the mighty power of prayer. By earnest supplications for the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, you will be able to walk after the pattern and example of Christ.

Living thus, for you there is no night. While you live Christ is with you — and when you have finished your work, you will be with Christ. Such will be real life here, and life evermore in His kingdom.

"In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality!" Proverbs 12:28

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**F B Meyer - "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."--John 9:4.**

THE UTTER restfulness which filled the heart of the Lord Jesus is beautifully manifested in the introductory verses of this chapter. At the close of the preceding one He is seen amid the heated altercation of his foes, enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself, and compelled to use some of the severest epithets that ever fell from his gracious lips. The climax of the argument was reached on his claiming to have existed before Abraham was. He appropriated the incommunicable name of Jehovah, and said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." And in a frenzy of indignation the Jews caught up the stones lying about for the repair of the temple to inflict forthwith the doom of the blasphemer.

But there was a force at work which they little understood, rendering them powerless to harm him. Was it the spell of his majestic presence? Was it the aureole of his spotless character? Was it the protecting power of his Father? Whatever it was, He passed unscathed through the midst of them; and so left the temple, and began to descend the great flight of steps, and to pass through the successive courts. On the way his attention was attracted by a blind beggar, who for years had been a familiar object as he sat and begged. And albeit that there was every need to put as far a distance as possible between Himself and the missiles of his foes, He stopped, made clay, and leisurely healed him. Is it not evident that He realized his absolute safety until his hour arrived; and that if there were an opportunity and a prompting to do God's work, there was the strongest ground also to count upon perfect immunity till the work was done?

His enemies might chafe and storm around Him; but they could not hurt Him, or penetrate with word and stone the encasing envelope of the presence of God. Secure of that protection, He was able to go and come, fearless and unharmed, serene and quiet, restful and peaceful, blessing and blessed. Oh for the quiet heart which looks from itself to God, and considers neither difficulty nor peril, because it is so absorbed in doing his work! Here the blessed Spirit broods undisturbed, amid the wild fury of earth's tumult, whispering intimations of God's will, and nerving the soul with sufficient power to perform.

#### I. THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH GOD'S WORKS ARE DONE.

The phrase "works of God," is a familiar one throughout this Gospel. To do them was to feed the Redeemer's soul (John 4:34); they



were in an ever-ascending scale (John 5:20); they were of a certain definite number, given Him to finish (John 5:36); they were the signs and seals of his mission (John 10:38); they were not his own, but wrought through Him by the Father (John 14:10); they were unique in the history of the world (John 15:24); they were definitely finished ere He left (John 17:4). But it becomes us to learn the conditions under which they were wrought, that we may be able to do those greater works of which He spoke.

(1) His heart was at rest in God.

When suddenly aroused amid the tumult of the storm, or pursued by infuriated crowds, or amid the anguish of the grave of Lazarus, or in the garden of his arrest, there was ever the same deep inner calm, which spread an awe on nature, and cast its spell on men. And it is impossible to expect any great thing to be done in the world through a man whose inner life is ever in a state of ferment.

Nature herself teaches the need of repose for the putting forth of her mightiest efforts. It is in the closet, the study, the cave, the woodland retreat, that problems have been solved, resolves formed, and schemes matured. And the river of life itself will lose its most precious properties, if it flows through the muddy and perturbed waters of restless hearts.

It is not possible for us all to have a life of outward calm. In such a world as this, with the opposition of men and the intrusion of sorrow on our most sacred moments, there is perpetual interruption. But beneath all the heart may keep its Sabbath. Trusting in God, resting on Him, rolling off to his charge its anxieties and cares before they have time to soak down poison into its springs, the inner life may thus retain its tranquility, reflecting God's heaven above, and recipient of the least impulse of God's will.

(2) He was specially endued with the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord had his Pentecost before Pentecost. In the same hour He was baptized as to his body with the waters of the Jordan, and as to his spirit with the Holy Ghost. In his address to Cornelius and his friends, the Apostle Peter lays distinct stress on this as the condition on which Jesus of Nazareth went about doing good: "He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38).

It should be a serious question with each of us, Have I claimed my share in Pentecost? On his ascension, our Lord received from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost in its fullest plenitude, that through Him the whole Church might get it. It is ours in Him; we have not to go up to Heaven or down to Hades to win it; we have not to endeavour to merit it, but only to claim it by faith. If on comparing ourselves with the symptoms of Spirit-filling given in the Acts of the Apostles, we are conscious of a grievous deficiency, let us by believing prayer dare to ask for all that is ours in the risen living Saviour.

(3) He was willing that the Father should work through Him

On the day of Pentecost, the preacher clearly emphasized this: "Jesus of Nazareth was approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you" (Acts 2:22). And this statement bears out the affirmation of the Lord Himself, "the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" (John 14:10).

Blessed are we when we learn that secret, no longer to work for God, but to let God work through us; to be brooks of Siloam, pent in given beds, instead of wandering at our own sweet will; to be clay kneaded into any shape; to be earthenware pipes, if needs be, hidden under ground, and trampled beneath the hurrying feet of men, with one end open to the reservoir, and the other to the empty cistern of human need, so that the torrent may come in with even flow on the one side, and pour out on the other with a regularity which escapes notice because it is so unbroken. It was thus that the great Apostle lived who said, "Christ hath wrought through me in word and deed to make the Gentiles obedient" (Ro 15:18, literal rendering). So are we bidden to yield ourselves to God, and our members as instruments of righteousness, that He may work in us that which is well pleasing in his sight (Ro 6:13; Heb. 13:21). "We must work," the R.V. says.

## II. THE NEED FOR THESE WORKS.

"A man blind from his birth." We have observed before that the miracles of this Gospel were evidently selected in each case with a special purpose of becoming foils to bring into prominence some characteristic feature in the ministry or teaching of Jesus Christ. Nor is this one an exception to the rule. What emblem could better set forth the condition of mankind than a born-blind beggar? That men are blind, that they are born so, and that they are destitute and bankrupt, needing gold and white linen, and eyesalve, needs no proving. But amid all, He comes who is the Light of the world, and is able to give sight to the blind, and to the poor a share in his measureless wealth.

The Jews had but two hypotheses on which to account for human suffering. "Either this man sinned" (in some previous state of existence), "or his parents, that he was born blind"; with them, special suffering was always the sign of special sin (Luke 13:1, 2, 3, 4).

There are many who argue thus in the present day. The occurrence of special disaster leads them to search for the sin which must have led to it; forgetting that it does not always follow, and that it has been the problem of the ages that so many of the worst of men

have had comparative immunity from suffering--"there have been no bands in their death"--whilst for the godly the waters of a full cup are wrung out. It is true that sin brings suffering; but there is some suffering which is not the evidence of special wrong-doing.

This is therefore a third and broader hypothesis, which our Lord suggests here. "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God may be made manifest in Him." Suffering is permitted for wise and good reasons, which we shall one day comprehend, and amongst them is this : that it may provide a platform on which the grace and power of God may manifest themselves, each new phase of evil leading to some new forth-putting of the heart of God. To how many suffering ones my the Lord Jesus send the message: "This sickness is not unto death; but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby"!

If only the sufferers who may read these words would bracket together these two texts, this spoken of the blind beggar, and that of the sickness of Lazarus, surely it would be easier to bear the long nights of weariness and the days of pain--not in punishment, not by neglect or mischance, not as the inevitable results of the mistakes or misdeeds of others, but--to give an opportunity for the works and glory of God. What works? What glory? Surely the works of humility, and patience, and gentleness, which his Spirit instils; and the glory of that lovely spirit which his Spirit begets.

But how necessary is it that, as there is the need, we who have the supply be not wanting. If there is need for the works of God to be manifested, we must be at hand, and willing at all costs to manifest them. If there is the opportunity for the glorifying of Christ, we must not be slow to seize it. Make haste! --the night is coming, in which no man can work. Life at the longest is but a day; and before we are aware the shadows have stealthily crept far across the grass, the air has become chill, and the silver crescent of the moon is rocking in the dimming light. What works await us yonder we cannot tell. But the unique work of healing blindness and enriching beggary is confined to earth; and we must hasten to do all of this allotted to us before the nightfall. He lives intensely whose eye is fixed on the fingers of the dial; as the poor sempstress works swiftly whose last small wick of candle is rapidly burning down in its socket.

### III. THE SUBJECT OF THESE WORKS.

What a contrast between the opening and the close of the chapter! The blind sees, the beggar is rich. The abject is an apologist. The intruder on the temple steps is a worshipper within the true shrine. The soul ignorant of Christ owns Him as Son of God. And all this because of the individual interest our Lord took in him.

(1) He detected what was working in his mind.

Beneath that unpromising exterior were the elements of a noble character. The power which might have run to waste, being dammed up, wrought deeper into his soul. He heard the converse of the crowds as they passed, caught the voices of the Levites chanting their majestic psalms, detected the benedictions of the priests; and awoke in him indefinable yearnings after God. Unknown to any besides, these arrested the attention of Jesus, who, unconscious of personal danger, bent over him with eager interest, as a child over the first primrose of spring.

(2) He developed the latent power of faith.

It was there, but it had nothing to evoke it; and yet it must be evoked ere Christ could give him sight. He could feel, though he could not see. So the Lord put clay on the eye-socket, awaking wonder, hope, expectation; and such was the ladder put down for his faith to climb up into the light. And then in the command to go and wash there was a still further test to his faith, to conform and strengthen it. Is it not thus that the blessed Lord still deals with us; watching the smallest spark of faith, and fanning it into a flame, giving it some very small and obvious thing to do, that it may from a thread become a cable?

(3) He found him when cast out by all besides.

His parents disowned him, and the Pharisees cast him out of their synagogue, depriving him of a highly-prized privilege; but Jesus found him. He had been cast out Himself, and knew the weariness and pain of excommunication; and thus acquired the desire and the clue to help another, suffering beneath the intolerance of the religious world. Does not Jesus always steal to our side when we are cast out, or deserted by our friends?

(4) He answered his hunger for faith.

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The question startled him; and yet it explained one of the deepest instincts of his nature, though he may have been little conscious of it, and perhaps felt only an utter dissatisfaction with all else, and an insatiable yearning after God. If we live up to what we know, at all costs, we shall most certainly be led into further discoveries of truth. If we dare to go to the pool of Siloam and wash, we shall be gladdened by great revelations and unfoldings of God in Christ. We think we are going to plough a field; and we suddenly come on a box of treasure, struck by our plough, which makes us independent of work for the rest of our lives."

And so obedience passes into worship, and we see that He who has made our life his care, tending us when we knew Him not, is the Christ of God, in whom are hid all the riches of time, all the treasures of eternity: and we worship Him.

## John 9:5 "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."

BGT John 9:5 τὸν ν τ κ σ μ , φ ρ ε μι το κ σ μου.

KJV John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

NET John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

CSB John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

ESV John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

NIV John 9:5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

NLT John 9:5 But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

- Jn 1:4-9 Jn 3:19-21 Jn 8:12 Jn 12:35,36,46 Isa 42:6,7 49:6 60:1-3 Mal 4:2 Mt 4:16 Lu 2:32 Ac 13:47 Acts 26:18,23 Eph 5:14 Rev 21:23
- [Click John 8:12 Commentary](#) for more in debt notes, including multiple devotionals - see also additional commentary here

### Related Passages:

John 1:4-9+ In Him was life, and the life was the **Light** of men. 5 The **Light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the **Light**, but he came to testify about the **Light**. 9 There was the true **Light** which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

John 8:12+ Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

## JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

**While I am in the world** ([kosmos](#)) - In context, the time phrase "while" would refer to His time on earth prior to His crucifixion. However, there is a sense in which His "I Am" would transcend time, for He will follow it up with a second **I Am** which speaks of continual activity. How is that possible? Through His Word which gives light and life and through His followers who manifest His light in their lives (see **THOUGHT** below).

**John Piper** - This signals that something more is going on here than merely healing the man's physical eyes so that he can see natural light. Jesus calls attention to the fact that he is the light this man needs to see. "I am the light of the world." Which many blind people see, and many seeing people are blind to. ([Born Blind for the Glory of God](#))

**Adrian Rogers** - And, by the way, that is the meaning of the miracle: that Jesus is the light of the world."

**D L Moody** - [Atheist David Hume](#) said to a minister, the light of nature was all he wanted. On going down stairs, Hume declined a light because the moon was high enough, and as he said it, he tumbled down stairs.

**I am the Light** ([phos](#)) **of the world** ([kosmos](#)) - It is interesting that the Greek here is not the characteristic "[ego eimi](#)" as in John 8:12+. In the context of a man who has never seen the light due to blindness from birth, Jesus describes Himself as the spiritual light to the world which is in total spiritual blindness to the things of God. The Light is to give guidance through revelation.

**THOUGHT** - How does Jesus continue to be the Light of the world? It is through you, dear disciple, as you let His light shine forth through you, like the moon reflects the sun (Mt 5:16+). And how is that seen practically? It is by us always preaching the Gospel? Clearly we must preach and teach and share the Gospel. But in Php 2:14+ one of the ways our light is seen by those around us is when we refrain (enabled to the Spirit - Php 2:13NLT+) from grumbling and disputing. The lost world sees that supernatural effect and is caught off guard wondering how we can carry out a non-grumbling attitude when circumstance would cause most people to grumble? It is in times like that that they can see the light of World, Jesus, in us, Paul writing that it is then that

we "will prove ourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we appear as **lights in the world**" (Php 2:15+). How is your (His) little light shining beloved (Mt 5:14-15+)? Is our presence bring spiritual light to this world that has been blind from birth because of Adam's sin?

**Utley** - Jesus as the "light of the world" (cf. Jn 1:4–5, 8–9; 3:17–21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46) may reflect OT Messianic implications (cf. Isa. 42:6; 49:6; 51:4; 60:1, 3).

**Spurgeon** - While Christ was here on earth, he was the great Light-Giver, and he is still the great Light-Giver; and now that his visible presence has been withdrawn from the world, his people are to be "the light of the world" by reflecting the light they have received from him. In such works as you will be unable to perform after death, you are now to give light to the sons of men. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**TSK comment** - Our Lord here claims one of the titles given by the Jews to the Divine Being. So in Bammidbar Rabba, 15, fol. 229.1, "*The Israelites said to God, O Lord of the universe, thou commandest us to light lamps to thee, yet thou art the light of the world.*" It was also a title of the Messiah (see Isa 49:6; Isa 60:1;) and in a remarkable passage of Yalkut Rubeni, fol. 6, it is said on Ge 1:4, "*From this we learn that the holy and blessed God saw the light of the Messiah, and his works, before the world was created; and reserved it for the Messiah, and his generation, under the throne of his glory. Satan said to the holy and blessed God, For whom dost thou reserve that light which is under the throne of thy glory? God answered, For him who shall subdue thee, and overwhelm thee with confusion. Satan rejoined, Lord of the universe, shew that person to me. God said, Come, and see him. When he saw him, he was greatly agitated, and fell upon his face, saying, Truly this is the Messiah, who shall cast me and idolaters into hell.*"

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#### **QUESTION** - [What does it mean that Jesus is the true light \(John 1:9\)?](#)

**ANSWER** - The apostle John opens his [Gospel](#) with a systematic, 18-verse introduction to the Lord Jesus Christ. A key aspect of Christ's nature that John highlights is that He is the bearer of light. Jesus brings the revelation of God's life and light into a dark world (verses 4–5). In John 1:6–9, the apostle explains that [John the Baptist](#) was merely a witness to the light, but Jesus is the true light: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John [the Baptist]. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world."

John the Baptist's message was illuminating, but he was not the true light. Jesus is the true light, the real thing, the genuine article—God in the flesh. He alone reveals God's glory in the world because He is God incarnate who "became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14; see also 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 1:1–2; 4:2).

By stating that Jesus is the true light coming into the world, John directly connects Him to Israel's Messiah as the prophets foretold: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2; see also Isaiah 49:6; 60:1–2; Malachi 4:2).

Jesus is "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (Hebrews 1:3). He beams forth the light, truth, and life of God to the world and into the hearts of men and women. Jesus Himself declared, "I am the [light of the world](#). Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12; see also John 9:5). At Christ's transfiguration, Peter, James, and John caught a glimpse of the true light as Jesus' "face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light" (Matthew 17:2). In the book of Revelation, John describes Jesus' face "like the sun shining in all its brilliance" (Revelation 1:16). He is the "bright Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16).

Jesus is the true light of God for those who partake of His salvation. When we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, He makes God's "light shine in our hearts" so we can "know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). Those who trust in Jesus and "believe in the light" become "children of light" (John 12:35–36, 46). As children of the light, we are called to bring His "salvation to the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47). Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Several elements are necessary to sustain human life: light, air, water, and food are among the most critical. *Jesus is the true light* means He is our essential source of life. Without light, it is impossible to sustain life of any kind on earth. If the sun ceases to shine, everything will die. Not only is Jesus our light, but He is also the spiritual air we breathe. By His Holy Spirit, He breathes on us the "breath of life" (John 3:8; 20:22). Jesus is also the "[living water](#)" who, by His Holy Spirit, becomes in us "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:10–14; 7:37–39).

Jesus declared Himself to be "the true bread from heaven" (John 6:32). He is the genuine [bread of life](#)" (John 6:35). He is our life-

giving, life-sustaining source. He fully meets all our needs and perfectly satisfies our souls. In John 15:1–17, Jesus revealed that He is “the true vine,” and His Father owns the garden. Christ’s followers are described as fruit-bearing branches. They are the true believers who “abide in the vine.” Jesus is everything we need for life because He is God, “the fountain of life” (Psalm 36:9).

*Jesus is the true light* is John’s unequivocal way of stating that Jesus Christ is the ultimate, one and only, genuine self-disclosure of God to man. The Word of God became flesh and blood, and Jesus Christ is “the light of the world.” In Him, there is “no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). His light is our “light and our salvation” (Psalm 27:1). Jesus Christ is the true light of God sent into the world to pierce through the darkness. Through His life, ministry, and message, Jesus brought the light and life of God to bear on everyone He encountered. That light continues to shine on earth through His Church (Ephesians 5:8; Philippians 2:15).

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#### **Related Resources:**

- [What does it mean that the light shines in the darkness \(John 1:5\)?](#)
  - [What does it mean that “in Him was life, and the life was the light of men” \(John 1:4\)?](#)
  - [What does it mean to walk in the light?](#)
  - [What does it mean that God is light?](#)
  - [What did Jesus mean when He said, “I am the Light of the World” \(John 8:12\)?](#)
- 

#### **The Light Of The World**

You are the light of the world. — Matthew 5:14

Today's Scripture: John 9:1-5, Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (Jn. 9:5). But what happened to the light when He ascended to heaven?

Before He physically left this earth, Jesus gave the answer. He told His followers, “You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:14,16).

As we combine the truths of these two statements, we understand that even though Jesus has left this earth, His light continues to shine through His followers. The people of the world are not able to see Christ since He ascended to heaven. Instead, we who have put our faith in Him have the responsibility to reflect His light. If we do not shine, the world will not know about Him.

Let us remember, it is not quite the entire truth when we sing, “The light of the world is Jesus.” It might be better to say, “The light of the world was Jesus.” Today you and I are to be the light of the world, reflecting His light in a dark and sin-sick place where people wander aimlessly. Unless you and I tell these wandering ones about Him, they will never know Him and experience the forgiveness of sin.

How bright are we shining? By: M.R. DeHaan

(Click to go to the full devotional [The Light Of The World](#) including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets. Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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#### **Einstein and Jesus**

Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world.” John 8:12

Today's Scripture & Insight: John 9:1-7

We remember Albert Einstein for more than his disheveled hair, big eyes, and witty charm. We know him as the genius and physicist who changed the way we see the world. His famous formula of  $E=mc^2$  revolutionized scientific thought and brought us into the nuclear age. Through his “Special Theory of Relativity” he reasoned that since everything in the universe is in motion, all knowledge is a matter of perspective. He believed that the speed of light is the only constant by which we can measure space, time, or physical mass.

Long before Einstein, Jesus talked about the role of light in understanding our world, but from a different perspective. To support His claim to be the Light of the World (John 8:12), Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth (9:6). When the Pharisees accused Christ of being a sinner, this grateful man said, “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see” (v. 25).

While Einstein's ideas would later be proven difficult to test, Jesus' claims can be tested. We can spend time with Jesus in the Gospels. We can invite Him into our daily routine. We can see for ourselves that He can change our perspective on everything.  
By: Mart DeHaan

Lord Jesus, You are the one constant in this chaotic world. Thank You for being the one true Light that the darkness can never extinguish.

Only as we walk in Christ's light can we live in His love.

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#### Related Resources:

- [See John 8:12 Commentary](#) for more in debt notes, including multiple devotionals
- See additional notes on John 8:12 (different from above)

#### John 9:6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes,

BGT John 9:6 ταταεπιενπιουσενχαμακαποησενπηλνκτοπισηματοςκαπιχρισενατοτηνπηλνπιτοσφαλμοσ

KJV John 9:6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

NET John 9:6 Having said this, he spat on the ground and made some mud with the saliva. He smeared the mud on the blind man's eyes

CSB John 9:6 After He said these things He spit on the ground, made some mud from the saliva, and spread the mud on his eyes.

ESV John 9:6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud

NIV John 9:6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

NLT John 9:6 Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes.

- **spat:** Mk 7:33 Mk 8:23 Rev 3:18

#### Related Passages:

Mark 7:33+ Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after **spitting**, He touched his tongue with the **saliva**;

Mark 8:23+ Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after **spitting** on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"

Revelation 3:18+ **I advise you to buy from Me** gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and **eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.**

### JESUS' PHYSICAL ILLUSTRATION OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH

**When He had said this** - He had just declared He was the Light of the world and now proceeds to authenticate His word with His deed.

**He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied (epichrio) the clay to his eyes** - Note that Jesus took all the

initiative in this miracle. The blind man was not asking for healing. Jesus chose different methods to carry out His miracles and this is certainly one of the more unusual. One writer surprisingly says the curative value of saliva was highly esteemed in antiquity. There is an interesting point about Jesus making clay on the Sabbath, for the additions to the law forbade **kneading** (working moistened flour or clay into dough or paste with the hands) on the Sabbath! So not only is Jesus healing on the Sabbath, He is working on the Sabbath, which reveals the ridiculousness of the human addition to God's perfect Law.

*Sometimes the Lord irritates us before He illuminates us.*

--Warren Wiersbe

**Guzik** - we can see that Jesus is using the dust of the ground and clay to do a work of creation in man, just like in Genesis. Not many people would appreciate having mud made with spit rubbed in their eyes. Some would look at how Jesus did this miracle and object, saying that it was offensive, inadequate, or even harmful to rub mud made with spit in a man's eyes.. In the same way, some feel that the gospel is offensive. It is true that it offends man's pride and human wisdom, but it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21). In the same way, some feel that the gospel is inadequate. But have all the psychiatric and political and social programs in the world done more good than the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ? In the same way, some feel that the gospel is harmful, that the free offer of grace in Jesus will cause people to sin that grace may abound. But the gospel changes our life for the good and the pure, not unto wickedness.

**John MacArthur** - Having finished His dialogue with the disciples, the Lord spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to the blind man's eyes, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." Jesus had earlier used His saliva in the healing of a deaf and mute man (Mark 7:33) and a blind man (Jn 8:23), but only here did He make clay of the spittle. Why He did so is not stated. Some of the early church fathers interpreted Jesus' actions in light of Genesis 2:7. In that case, making the clay would symbolize the Lord's creating a new, functioning pair of eyes to replace those which had never seen. But as Leon Morris notes, "Jesus performed His miracles with a sovereign hand and He cannot be limited by rules of procedure. He cured how He willed." (See [John Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - Our Lord's method of healing was unique: He put clay on the man's eyes and told him to go wash. Once Jesus healed two blind men by merely touching their eyes (Matt. 9:27-31), and He healed another blind man by putting spittle on his eyes (Mark 8:22-26). Though the healing power was the same, our Lord varied His methods lest people focus on the manner of healing and miss the message in the healing. There were at least two reasons for our Lord's use of the clay. For one thing, it was a picture of the Incarnation. God made the first man out of the dust, and God sent His Son as a real Man. Note the emphasis on the meaning of "Siloam"—"sent." And relate this to John 9:4, "The works of Him that sent Me" (see also John 3:17, 34; 5:36; 7:29; 8:18, 42). Jesus gave a little illustration of His own coming to earth, sent by the Father. The second reason for the clay was irritation; it encouraged the man to believe and obey! If you have ever had an irritation in your eyes, you know how quickly you seek irrigation to cleanse it out! You might compare this "irritation" to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit as He uses God's Law to bring the lost sinner under judgment. (BORROW [Be alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**D L Moody** - John McNeill says the blind man was made out of clay (Ge 2:7+), so clay was a good thing to mend him with. These means seem eccentric. **Such is the Gospel in the opinion of the worldly wise** They sneer at **"the blood,"** and cry for "culture," "education."

**Colin Kruse** writes that "According to the Mishnah, normal anointing such as one might do on weekdays was allowable on the sabbath, but anointing with special substances not normally used was forbidden because that constituted a healing activity that was not allowed (Šabbat 14:4)." (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**Utley** adds "Saliva was a Jewish home remedy. It was not allowed to be used on the Sabbath (cf. Jn 9:14)."

**Robertson** - Jesus was not asked to cure this man. The curative effects of saliva are held in many places. The Jews held saliva efficacious for eye-trouble, but it was forbidden on the Sabbath. "That Jesus supposed some virtue lay in the application of the clay is contradicted by the fact that in other cases of blindness He did not use it" (Dods). Cf. Mark 8:23. Why he here accommodated himself to current belief we do not know unless it was to encourage the man to believe.

**Marvin Vincent on applied** - Only here and Jn 9:11. The spittle was regarded as having a peculiar virtue, not only as a remedy for diseases of the eye, but generally as a charm, so that it was employed in incantations. Persius, describing an old crone handling an infant, says: "She takes the babe from the cradle, and with her middle finger moistens its forehead and lips with spittle to keep away the evil eye" ("Sat.," ii., 32, 33). Tacitus relates how one of the common people of Alexandria importuned Vespasian for a remedy for his blindness, and prayed him to sprinkle his cheeks and the balls of his eyes with the secretion of his mouth ("History," iv., 81). Pliny says: "We are to believe that by continually anointing each morning with fasting saliva (i.e., before eating), inflammations of the eyes are prevented" ("Natural History," xxviii., 7). Some editors read here πθηκεν, put upon, for πχρισεν, anointed. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

**Ray Stedman** - What does **clay** symbolize in Scripture? In Genesis we are told that God formed man from the dust of the ground, from the **clay** of the earth. That symbolism is used many times in Scripture. God is the Potter, we read in Jeremiah {Jer 18:4-6}. We are the **clay**. He molds us and shapes us into what he wants us to be. Believers, the Apostle Paul declares, "have this treasure in earthen vessels" {2 Cor 4:7} -- **clay** pots. And the pots are not very strong. **Clay** is not a very powerful substance. It is malleable and weak. Thus, all through Scripture, **clay** is used as a symbol of the weakness and fragility of human nature. We are all made of **clay**. We are **clay** pots. Some of us are even a little cracked! There is a science being developed here in California called "psycho-ceramics" to deal with cracked pots! This is what **clay** symbolizes. ([Believing Is Seeing](#))

**Spurgeon** - Our Lord used instrumentality. It did not appear, however, to be very likely to achieve his purpose. The clay seemed more likely to blind than to give sight, yet if the Lord chooses to use the poor and weak instruments that seem nothing better than dust and spittle, he has the glory of the grand result. If he takes the humble ministry of his servants and uses it in the pulpit, or in the Sunday School, or anywhere else, he has all the more glory, and is the less likely to be robbed of it because he uses such unlikely means. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Matthew Henry** - He could have cured him with a word, as he did others, but he chose to do it in this way to show that he is not tied to any method. He made clay of his own spittle, because there was no water near; and he would teach us not to be nice or curious. ... Christ did this to magnify his power in making a blind man to see by that method which one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind. Daubing clay on the eyes would close them up, but never open them. Note, the power of God often works by contraries; and he makes men feel their own blindness before he gives them sight.

**NET NOTE - TECHNICAL NOTE - clay** (moistened earth of a clay-like consistency). The textual variant preserved in the Syriac text of Ephraem's commentary on the Diatessaron ("he made eyes from his clay") probably arose from the interpretation given by Irenaeus in Against Heresies: "that which the Artificer, the Word, had omitted to form in the womb, he then supplied in public." This involves taking the clay as an allusion to Gen 2:7, which is very unlikely.

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Have you ever heard the toast in an old movie when someone says "[Here's mud in your eye](#)"? One online source said... This toast may have been popular with the soldiers slogging through the muddy trenches of WWI, but it did not originate with them, as many believe. It was being bandied about in U.S. saloons as early as 1890 and was popular with the English fox hunting and race horse crowd before then. Most likely it's a back-handed toast among jockeys, meaning "Here's to you losing the race." If you've ever been to a race track after a good rain, you'll note that the leading horses throw up a lot a mud and the trailing jockeys tend to get splattered from head to toe. The phrase was all the more pertinent before the introduction of goggles to the sport. Christ became a "mud-slinging" preacher here. - [David Owen](#)

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#### **QUESTION - [Why did Jesus spit for some of His miracles?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Near [Decapolis](#), some people brought Jesus a deaf man who could hardly talk. Jesus healed the man, of course, but in an interesting manner: "Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue" (Mark 7:33). Later, in the town of Bethsaida, Jesus healed a blind man. Again, the miracle was preceded by spitting: "He . . . spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him" (Mark 8:23). To heal a man born blind, Jesus "spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes" (John 9:6).

Certainly, Jesus, the divine Son of God, does not need physical props to work miracles. In many cases, Jesus merely spoke, and healing followed (e.g., Matthew 15:28; Luke 17:12-14). Yet, in three cases, Jesus used His spittle in the process of healing.

One possible reason for Jesus' use of His saliva has to do with the beliefs of His contemporary culture. Several Roman writers and Jewish rabbis considered saliva to be a valid treatment for blindness. Since the people of that day had a high view of saliva's healing properties, Jesus used spit to communicate His intention to heal. Those being healed would have naturally interpreted Jesus' spitting as a sign that they would soon be cured.

The greater need of each of those healed was the need for increased faith. Jesus recognized this spiritual need and offered a physical action as a means of raising their expectations and focusing their faith on Himself. Thus, in Mark 8, the man's spiritual sight was strengthened even as physical sight was imparted to him.

It is possible that Jesus' use of mud in John 9 was meant to parallel God's original creation of man: "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7). In other words, Jesus showed His power as the Creator by imitating the original creation of man: He used the "dust of the ground" to give the man born blind new sight. The creative power of Jesus' miracle was not lost on the man who was healed: "Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing" (John 9:32-33, NKJV).



Jesus healed many people in His ministry; in fact, there was no sickness or infirmity that He could not heal (Matthew 4:23). Significantly, the details of each miracle vary slightly. Jesus never healed the same way twice. The variety of methods used by the Lord eliminates confidence in any one technique or modus operandi. Healing is not the product of any talisman, amulet, spell, or process. Healing comes from the power of God.

When Jesus healed, with or without spit, the response was usually something like this: "This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'" (Mark 2:12). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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**Jon Courson** - The same Jesus who says, 'Anoint your eyes with eyesalve,' is the One who put mud in the blind man's eyes in John 9. The way of the Great Physician is to allow irritation to produce illumination. 'You're seeing everything in a carnal way,' He says, 'and you need to humble yourself before Me and deal with the mud.'

'Ouch,' we say. 'That mud hurts.'

But in reality, there must be an awareness of the problems in our hearts and the troubles in our souls before we can see.

'Search me, O God,' cried David, 'and see if there be any wicked way in me' (Ps 139:23,24). Listen, if you're feeling Laodicean (Rev 3:14-21), if you feel lukewarm, you need to ask the Great Physician to search you, for that will be the eyesalve which will allow you to see clearly.

*Truly, confession precedes vision as surely as irritation precedes illumination.*

How long has it been, dear saint, since you've been on your face before the Lord saying, 'Search me concerning the words on my lips, the bitterness in my heart, the thoughts on my mind'? Truly, confession precedes vision as surely as irritation precedes illumination. [A Day's Journey](#)

**John 9:7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing.**

BGT John 9:7 κα ε πεν α τ · παγε ν ψαι ε ς τ ν κολυμβ θραν το Σιλω μ ( ρμηνε εται πεσταλμ νος). π λθεν ο ν κα ν ψατο κα λθεν βλ πων.

KJV John 9:7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

NET John 9:7 and said to him, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated "sent"). So the blind man went away and washed, and came back seeing.

CSB John 9:7 "Go," He told him, "wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So he left, washed, and came back seeing.

ESV John 9:7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

NIV John 9:7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

NLT John 9:7 He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

- **Go:** 2Ki 5:10-14
- **the pool:** Jn 9:11 Ne 3:15, Siloah, Isa 8:6, Shiloah
- **Sent:** Jn 10:36 Ro 8:3 Ga 4:4
- **and came:** Jn 9:39 11:37 Ex 4:11 Ps 146:8 Isa 29:18,19 32:3 35:5 42:7,16-18 Isa 43:8 Lu 2:32 Ac 26:18

Archaeological Remains of Pool of Siloam  
See [Artist's Rendering of Pool](#)  
See [article at Biblical Archaeology](#)

**OBEDIENCE TO JESUS' WORDS  
BRINGS SIGHT TO EYES**

This title is a double entendre for obedience to Jesus' words (to believe in Him) also bring spiritual sight to one's eyes! The common saying is seeing is believing, but in the story of this blind man, the statement is changed to believing is seeing!

**and said to him, "Go, wash ([nipto](#)) in the [Pool of Siloam](#)" (which is translated, [Sent\[apostello\]](#))** - Jesus gives the man 2 commands (**go** in [present imperative](#) and **wash** in [aorist imperative](#) = JUST DO IT! DO NOT DELAY!) It is interesting that he has to go still blind. It would have been easier to obey Jesus if he had been able to see, but that was not Jesus' way to carry out this miracle. Perhaps "Sent" relates to God sending His Son (Jn 10:36, Ro 8:3Ga 4:4), but that may be a stretch.

[See page 603 for Adrian Roger's thoughts](#) on why the name of the pool may have been named '**Sent**' (clue Jn 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42, 9:4). Interesting.

**Colin Kruse** - Water for the [Pool of Siloam](#) was channelled through Hezekiah's tunnel from the Gihon spring. The [Pool of Siloam](#) was the source of the water used in the water-pouring ceremonies during the Feast of Tabernacles (see commentary on John 7:37-39). The evangelist explains that Siloam means '**Sent**'. The consonants of the Hebrew verb '**to send**' (šālah) are the same as those of the Hebrew for **Siloam** (šilōah), which allowed popular etymology to make the link. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John : an introduction and commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** on **Sent** - John's parenthetical note calls attention to the significance of the name **Siloam**, which transliterates a Hebrew word that means **Sent**. The name probably originated because of the water **sent** into the pool (via Hezekiah's tunnel) from the Gihon spring. But, as its use in the Feast of Tabernacles suggests, the name also symbolized the blessings God **sent** to Israel. Here it symbolizes God's ultimate blessing to the nation: Jesus the Messiah, the One **sent** from God. ... Sadly, just as their ancestors "rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah [Siloam]" (Isa. 8:6), so also did the people reject Jesus, the true Siloam, the One **sent** by God to save lost sinners. (See [John Commentary](#))

**So ([oun](#))** - Therefore. Term of conclusion. In light of Jesus' commands. The "conclusion" of the commands is obedience to the commands! Delayed obedience is complete disobedience. One thinks of an OT man named Naaman who objected to Elisha's call to wash in the Jordan River (2Ki 5:10-14).

'At the Pool of Siloam'  
Harold Copping (1863-1932)

**He went away and washed ([nipto](#))** - It is easy to read over this too quickly and fail to notice that he obeys without question or hesitation, doing exactly what Jesus had commanded. Clearly, we see the juxtaposition of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. Notice secondly that Jesus does not (at least John records nothing) give him any specific motivation to **go and wash**. In other words, Jesus did not actually promise the man that he would receive his sight if he obeyed the commands. Nevertheless, the man obeyed. We learn later that he did know it was Jesus Who had commanded him (Jn 9:11). What did he know about Jesus? Did he know Jesus had performed signs and wonders? Had he heard the story about the lame man Jesus had healed in a previous trip to Jerusalem? (Jn 5:6-9+) These are possibilities but the text does not allow us to be dogmatic.

One thing we can say is the man **walked by faith and not by sight** (pun intended! Cf 2Cor 5:7+), because he had no sight! Why do I say he **walked by faith**? Because faith is invariably coupled with obedience and his obedience indicates that he had some degree of belief in Jesus' words, even though it is not clear he understood what the end result would be! So while he manifested some degree of faith, it was not yet saving faith. And as the narrative unfolds we see this man eventually manifested genuine saving belief in Jesus (Jn 9:36-38+), so that not only was his physical blindness healed, but more importantly, his spiritual blindness was healed! The progression of this man's faith would suggest that often faith is a process. Recall that in John 8 we encountered Jews who had some degree of faith in Jesus (Jn 8:30-31+), but their subsequent actions (e.g., Jn 8:59+) proved their faith had not progressed to genuine saving faith. As we follow the progression of this blind man's faith, note that the radical contrast of the Jews picking up stones to throw at Jesus (Jn 8:59+), with this man throwing himself down before Jesus in worship (Jn 9:38+)!

It is interesting [Robertson](#) says Jesus used the verb [nipto](#) for washed which indicates bathing his body and not merely washing only his eyes. [Robertson](#) adds "He was tested by the demand to bathe his eyes."

**THOUGHT** - What if he had not obeyed? This is a hypothetical question, but the answer would seem clear that the man would have missed his miracle! One has to recall those times in our lives as His disciples (at least I will confess this has been true in my life) when He has commanded us to "Go" and we hesitated or even refused to go. Did we miss a "miracle" (some supernatural encounter, etc)? That is just a hypothetical question, but one we all do well to ponder as clearly from Genesis to Revelation, the Bible teaches that obedience is the way to blessing! Like the great old hymn says "[Trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey!](#)"

**NET NOTE** on **Siloam** - The pool's name in Hebrew is shiloah from the Hebrew verb "to send." In Gen 49:10 the somewhat obscure shiloh was interpreted messianically by later Jewish tradition, and some have seen a lexical connection between the two names (although this is somewhat dubious). It is known, however, that it was from the pool of Siloam that the water which was poured out at the altar during the feast of Tabernacles was drawn. **Which is translated, Sent** is a parenthetical note by the author. Why does he comment on the meaning of the name of the pool? Here, the significance is that the Father **sent** the Son, and the Son **sent** the man born blind. The name of the pool is applicable to the man, but also to Jesus Himself, Who was sent from heaven.

**Guzik** - From Genesis to John, no prophet, priest, or apostle ever gave sight to blind eyes but Jesus did this type of healing more than any other miracle. "Since healing blind eyes is the work of the Lord, Yahweh, Jehovah, it shows that Jesus is God: The LORD opens the eyes of the blind." (Psalm 146:8) "Opening the eyes of the blind was a specific work of the Messiah: The eyes of the blind shall be opened." (Isaiah 35:5+)

**Ray Stedman** - Clearly this is a description of what follows in this man's life. Our Lord has worked it out in this beautiful object lesson to indicate what it takes to open blinded spiritual eyes. Physical eyes can easily be opened by his power, but to open spiritual eyes takes a process of overcoming obstacles that lie in the way. Only as that process is completed, and men come to the place where at last they see who Jesus is, are spiritual eyes opened. This is the story of the remaining verses of this chapter. It is a story of the resistance that this man met, the obstacles to faith that he overcame, and the gradual insight that he gained as he learned more and more about Jesus until he found himself at last at Jesus' feet and his spiritual eyes were opened. It is all worked out in a most dramatic way. ([Believing Is Seeing](#))

**Shepherd's Notes** says "Jesus performed more miracles related to giving sight to the blind more than any other miracle."

**And came back seeing** - Apparently the miracle of physical sight occurred when obeyed and completed washing the clay pack off of his eyes. In other words when he had completely obeyed Jesus' instructions, he received the blessing of sight (which as far as we can discern from the text was not definitely promised to him by Jesus).

**THOUGHT**- It bears repeating that one simple secret of the Christian life is to obey when Jesus gives us a command! For us who can physically see, when you obey without hesitation, do not be surprised if you have greater spiritual sight on a given issue (e.g., including knowing His good will in a matter). Just a thought to ponder.

**John Piper** - Yes, he came back seeing natural light. Is that enough? Is that what Jesus cares about most? Do you recall back in chapter 5 when Jesus healed the man who had been crippled for 38 years? The man stood up and walked. Was that the point—mere physical healing? Yes, I say "mere" in view the infinitely more important spiritual change needed. So John 5:14 says, "Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, 'See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.'" In other words, I healed you, yes. But I have tracked you down to make sure you know holiness is the main point. That's the real healing. Go, sin no more....The most important thing is that the man see the glory of Jesus and worship him. That is what he did. This was the ultimate healing. So when Jesus said in Jn 9:3, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him," this is the work of God—that the man see natural light and that the man see spiritual light. That the man be given natural eyes, and that he be given spiritual eyes. That he see the glory of this world, and the glory of its Maker, Jesus Christ. And worship him. **From this I conclude that in every disability, whether genetically from the womb, or circumstantially from an accident, or infectiously from a disease, God has a design, a purpose, for his own glory, and for the good of his people who love him and are called according to his purpose** (Romans 8:28). Therefore, it is wrong to think that such children in the womb are unimportant, or without a unique, God-given worth in this world. And it is wrong to abort them—to kill them. ([Born Blind for the Glory of God](#)) (See also his book [Disability and the Sovereign Goodness of God](#))

**Adrian Rogers** - I used to think as a young preacher that what you had to do to get people saved was just to tell them how to be saved, just turn on the light. But it doesn't matter how much light there is; if the person is blind, he can't see it. You understand what I'm talking about? It takes more than light; it takes sight. And a person who is blind cannot see the light, no matter how strong the light is or how pure the light is. It takes more than preaching to get people saved. That's the reason I frequently say to you, I can preach truth, but only the Holy Spirit can impart truth. That is the reason we must be a praying church. That is the reason that you must be a Spirit-filled soul winner. That is the reason that we must have the anointing, because we are dependent upon God to open blinded eyes to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It takes more than light; it takes sight. We need to understand that nobody can be argued into the kingdom of heaven. Nobody can be educated into the kingdom of heaven. I'm not against letting the light shine. You must let the light shine. You must preach. But remember there is another dimension. This man was blind, and there he was face to face with the Light of the world, but he could not see.

**Spurgeon** - You notice, brethren, that the disciples wanted to know how the man became blind; but Christ removed his blindness, and gave him sight. I have known a great many puzzle themselves about the origin of evil. Christ did not come to explain that mystery; he came to put an end to evil. That, is an infinitely more practical object than that of speculating about how evil first entered

the world, or how it entered any individual soul. He will tell you how to get rid of it. What a blessed way of healing Christ used! He could have spoken, and the man's eyes would have opened at once. He who said, "Let there be light," and there was light, in the first creation, could have said the same thing to this blind man, and light would at once have entered his eyes. Instead of that, he chose to use means, and the means did not appear to be very likely to effect the cure. Jesus covered the man's eyes with clay, and bade him go and wash it off again. Is this the way to give him sight? Yes, Our Lord often uses means that seem to be very unlikely to accomplish his purpose, But he always uses the right means. Often, when he is going to open a man's eyes spiritually, he first makes him feel more blind than ever he was before in all his life. A sense of deeper darkness hangs over him just before the dawn of eternal day. Perhaps, even this very hour some words of mine, human and imperfect as they must be, may, nevertheless, have the truth in them, just as the clay was made efficacious by the spittle from the Saviour's blessed mouth; and if so, there will be healing Work wrought among blind hearts tonight. God grant that it may be so! ([The Death Of Christ For His People](#))

**Spurgeon** - Our Saviour sometimes works without means, at other times by means, and occasionally he uses means which at first sight appear not to be the best to produce the designed result. To put clay on a blind man's eyes, does not seem a very likely operation for giving him sight. And, oh! dear friends, when God uses us as his instruments, and makes us to be like this clay upon the poor blind man's eyes, I am sure that there is much about us that might make us feel as if we should rather hinder than help; and when we do the best we can, what is there in us that is of any value? I think I once saw the pen with which Milton was said to have written part of Paradise Lost. Poor pen! It could not remember the great poet, could it? Yet, he had used it to noble purpose. As I looked at it, I did not think of ascribing a single stanza of that matchless poem to the pen with which Milton wrote. So, beloved, we are the pens that the Lord uses when he means to write his messages of grace upon the hearts of saints and sinners; but we are such poor pens, such feeble instruments to be held in his hand, that we wonder he can ever make use of us. This blind man did exactly as he was bidden to do. What a blessing it was for him that he received the clay on his eyes, and simply went and washed it off again as the Saviour bade him! That was all he had to do, and then he came back seeing clearly. Oh, if sinners were only attentive to gospel directions, and then were obedient to them, without adding to them or taking from them, how many more blind eyes would be very speedily opened, and how greatly would Christ be glorified! ([Spurgeon's Exposition](#))

#### Related Resource:

- [What did Jesus mean when He told people, "Your faith has made you well"? | GotQuestions.org](#)- **Excerpt** - Another example of **someone who was healed before faith is the man born blind in John 9**. He did not ask to be healed, but from many others, he was chosen to be healed—another example of God's grace. In the case of the man born blind and in the case of the man at the pool, Jesus dealt with their physical problems separately from dealing with their spiritual need—the man in John 9 later comes to a full realization of who Jesus is and exercises faith in Him (Jn 9:38). Jesus' healing of these men was not about their faith as much as it was about His will. Everyone whom Jesus willed to be healed was healed. Sometimes He healed those who expressed their faith in Him, and He made a point of emphasizing the condition of their heart: "Your faith has made you well." Other times, in His great mercy, He healed those who had no faith and later drew them to Himself. (Bolding added)

**Lowell Johnson** - Jesus healed three blind men and He did each a different way. In Matt. 9:29 Jesus healed a blind man by touching his eyes. In Mark 8:22-26 Jesus spat on a blind man's eyes and touched his eyes Twice before he could see. Here is John 9 Jesus spat on the ground, made clay, put the clay on his eyes and told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. **Vance Havner** said if the three groups ever got together, they would each try to convert each other to the method Jesus used on them and form three different denominations: The One Touch Baptist, The Two Touch Baptist, and The Mud-in-the-Eye Baptist.

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**Wash...washed** (3538) **nipto** means to wash a part of one's body - face (Mt 6:17), eyes (Jn 9:7, 11, 15). E.g., washing of hands (Mt 15:2, Mk 7:3) and feet (1Ti 5:10) was common with the Jews. Note that **nipto** stands in contrast to two other related words - (1) **Louo** -- which means to bathe, used of washing the whole body and not just part of it (as is the case with **nipto**) (Acts 9:37, Heb 10:22, 2Pe 2:22)). Like **nipto** **louo** refers to washing of living persons. (2) **Pluno** - refers to washing of inanimate things such as garments (Rev 7:14, Rev 22:14, Ge 49:11, Ex 19:10). **Zodhiates** says that "The lesson in John 13:9, 10 symbolizes justification as the bathing of the whole body (λούō), while sanctification is the constant need of níptō, washing individual parts of the body." (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

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**Spurgeon** - The way of justification by faith is peculiarly open to criticism and is about the last that this wise world would have selected. Yet, eccentric as it may seem for Christ to heal with spittle and dust, it was the best and wisest way for his purpose. Suppose instead he had put his hand into his pocket and had taken out a gold or ivory box, and out of this box he had taken a little crystal bottle. Suppose he had taken out the stopper and then had poured a drop on each of those blind eyes and they had been opened, what would have been the result? Everybody would have said, 'What a wonderful medicine! I wonder what it was! How was it compounded? Who wrote the prescription? Perhaps he found the charm in the writings of Solomon and so he learned to distil the

matchless drops.’ Thus you see the attention would have been fixed on the means used and the cure would have been ascribed to the medicine rather than to God. Our Saviour used no such rare oils or choice spirits, but simply spat and made clay of the spittle, for he knew that nobody would say, ‘The spittle did it,’ or ‘It was the clay that did it.’ No, if our Lord seems to be eccentric in the choice of means, yet is he eminently prudent. The gospel of our Lord Jesus—and there is only one—is the wisdom of God, however singular it may seem in the judgment of the worldly wise. It may be thought strange, but it is the sum of all wisdom and those who try it find it to be so. It would be impossible to improve upon it. Its adaptation to man’s case is marvellous; its suitability to its design is matchless; it blesses man, while it gives all glory to God. (See [The Blind Beggar of the Temple, and His Wonderful Cure](#))

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#### **QUESTION - [What happened at the Pool of Siloam?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Pool of Siloam, also called the Pool of Shiloah (Isaiah 8:6), has a rich and storied history, which involves an ancient king of Judah, a famous sermon, and one of Christ’s great miracles. The word *Siloam* means “Sent” (John 9:7). Several rabbinic traditions identified the Pool of Siloam as the Messiah’s Pool. It was the only source of fresh water within the walls of ancient Jerusalem.

The Pool of Siloam was built by [King Hezekiah](#) in the 8th century BC (2 Kings 20:20) in order to provide water to Jerusalem, even in the event that the city were besieged. The pool was fed by a tunnel Hezekiah cut through almost 2,000 feet of solid rock from the Gihon Spring, also called the Virgin’s Spring. The spring, which produced a flow of water about twice a day, was located on the east side of Jerusalem, outside of the wall and on a slope leading down to the Kidron Valley. Hezekiah’s Tunnel channeled the water from Gihon to the pool, located in the southeast part of the city in the Tyropoeon Valley. The original Pool of Siloam was about 53 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 19 feet deep and was made of part hewn rock and part masonry.

Jerusalem and the Pool of Siloam were destroyed by the Babylonians about 600 BC. Seventy years later, Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and part of the job was to repair the Pool of Siloam: “[Shallun son of Kol-Hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah] also repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloam, by the King’s Garden, as far as the steps going down from the City of David” (Nehemiah 3:15).

During the reign of Herod the Great, improvements were made to the Pool of Siloam. The pool itself was enlarged, and a large arcade (a set of arches) was built around the pool. Another arcade divided the pool, probably to create separate areas for men and women. During this time, the poor and sick people would often come to the Pool of Siloam to bathe.

But it is during the time of Christ that the Pool of Siloam finds its true significance. Because the pool was near the temple, its water was used for a special ceremony during the [Feast of Tabernacles](#). Every morning during that joyful feast, a priest would take a golden vessel to the Pool of Siloam, fill it with water from the pool, and bring it back to the altar amid the shouts of the people. Then, as the crowd chanted the *Hallel* (Psalms 113—118), that priest poured out the water on the west side of the altar, and another priest poured a [drink offering](#) of wine on the east side of the altar. This ritual was probably to illustrate Isaiah 12:3, “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”

However, on the eighth and final day of the feast, the ritual was not repeated. And that is exactly when Jesus chose to make a startling announcement: “On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them’” (John 7:37–38). On the one day of the feast when no water was poured, Jesus stood up and filled the gap. The “water” He offers (the Holy Spirit, verse 39) is better than the waters of Siloam. In offering the water of life, Jesus identified Himself with the rock in the wilderness that gave water to the Hebrews (see 1 Corinthians 10:4).

In John 9, Jesus meets a man born blind. To show that He is indeed the “light of the world” (John 9:5), Jesus heals the man. But it is interesting *how* Jesus chose to heal him: “He spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ‘Go,’ he told him, ‘wash in the Pool of Siloam’ (this word means ‘Sent’). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing” (John 9:6–7). So, the blind man was *sent* to a pool called “*Sent*” by the One who was Himself *sent* by God into the world (John 3:17; 10:36).

The site of the original Pool of Siloam has been excavated, and there is still a pool there, but it is hardly the splendid place that it once was. Still, we have the biblical record of the Pool of Siloam, a place that was used by kings and priests and by the Messiah Himself. The One sent by God to be our Savior used the Pool of “Sent” to prove that He is the [Light of the World](#) and to offer the [living water](#) available only through Him. The invitation to drink of Him is still open: “Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life” (Revelation 22:17).

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#### **Greg Laurie - BELIEVE AND SEE**

And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and

came back seeing. (John 9:7)

We have all heard people say, "Seeing is believing. Show me and I will believe." But the Bible essentially teaches us that believing is seeing. When we say, "Show me and I will believe," God says, "Believe, and I will show you."

In John 9, we read that Jesus opened the eyes of the blind man in more ways than one. The man received his physical sight and, for the first time in his life, he was able to see. But he had his spiritual eyes opened as well. He was able to understand who God was, what right and wrong were, and what the purpose of life was.

Jesus also used a very unusual method to heal him. The Bible tells us that He spit in the dirt, made clay with the saliva, and placed it on the man's eyes. Then He told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Notice that Jesus didn't say, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam and you will receive your sight." That's important, because He offered this man no promise whatsoever, nor did he say that something wonderful would happen if he went. He just told him to go and do it.

Yet something activated this blind man's heart and mind and caused him to want to obey the words of Jesus as quickly as possible. And as we follow his example, we, too, can have our spiritual eyes opened.

Those who know God have come to realize that His words and commands can be trusted and immediately followed. If God tells us to do something, it's for our own good. If God says it, it's for a reason. Obey Him. Great blessings await those who wait on the Lord. BORROW - [For every season : daily devotions](#)

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### **Robert Hawker - The pool of Siloam.—John 9:7.**

It was a very gracious account given by the Holy Ghost in the writings of his servants the prophets, that in the last days, meaning gospel days, "living waters should go forth of Jerusalem;" and, saith the Lord, "it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live." (Ezek. 47:9.) And in the day of Christ's flesh we find Jesus giving life wheresoever he came: and not unfrequently, as if to testify the sovereignty of his power, he communicated his blessings in this life-giving principle of himself, by means altogether, to outward view, unpromising. The clay applied to the eyes of one born blind, and the pool of Siloam, are both directly in point. It is just so, blessed Jesus, that I would have recourse to ordinances and means of grace, and when I attend, I would desire to pass over them to the enjoyment of thyself, and the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. And if the pool of Siloam was thus attended, and the several maladies of thy people thus brought before thee, that while using the means we had an eye to the end, how should we find the deceased that were sent, returning healed. The imagination can hardly conceive any thing more interesting, than to behold souls under their different distresses, thus coming to the pool of Siloam, and thus receiving Jesus in the use of it. Am I faint? "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength." Is another walking in darkness and have no light? Jesus saith "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." Are "our bones dried," like the bones in the valley, "and our hope lost; are we cut off from our parts?" (Ezek. 37:11.) Behold, saith the Lord God, "I will open your graves, O my people, and cause you to come up out of your graves." And how doth the Lord accomplish it? He saith, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." Are they void of faith? Jesus is "the Author and Giver of faith." Are they backward to repentance? Jesus is "exalted as a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." Have they backslidden? Jesus saith, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." In short, at the pool of Siloam, neither the water nor the clay are the objects of faith, but he that sends to the pool: and while we lay our wants over against his fulness, and consider, in our need, the very suitability there is in that need for the display of Christ's grace in the supply, this is the very way of following up the divine appointments. And as every poor sinner is made blessed in receiving from Jesus, so Jesus is made glorious in giving out of his fulness; and the gracious purpose of salvation is answered in the comfort of the sinner, the glory of the Saviour, and the everlasting praise of Jehovah, in the wonders of redemption! My soul! let thine evening meditation be thus sweet in viewing the pool of Siloam!

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[Adrian Rogers](#) sees this miracle as equivalent to a sign and uses the following illustration - When I was a little boy, we used to travel over the countryside on vacations, and we always looked for the [Burma Shave signs](#). Now, if you're an older person, you remember the Burma Shave signs; if you're a youngster, you don't remember the Burma Shave signs. But Burma Shave was a shaving cream, and they would advertise Burma Shave by a series of signs, little poems, that would develop. And these signs would be in a series, and they would be maybe 50 yards apart. And there would be three or four of them. And the first one would say something like, "A peach looks good," the next sign, "with lots of fuzz," the next sign, "but man is no peach," the next sign, "and never was"; and then the last sign would say, "Burma Shave." And you would read these little signs, these little limericks—one, two, three, four, five—however many there would be, and then, at the end, it would give the conclusion. Well, the Burma Shave people may have thought they were unique with that, but God was doing it a long time ago: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven signs. At the end, it doesn't say Burma Shave; it says, Jesus Christ, Messiah, Son of God. And believe on Him and you will have everlasting

life.....Now, we've already talked about some of these signs, some of these miracles. For example, when Jesus turned water into wine—that was the first of these signs. The wine had run out, and they were disappointed. The party was failing, and Jesus came along and turned water into wine. And that shows us that Jesus is God's answer to man's **disappointments**. Then there was a nobleman who had a son, and that son was sick, and he came to Jesus, and asked Jesus to heal his son. But Jesus rebuked him at first. He said, "Except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe." This man's problem was his doubt, his unbelief. And then, Jesus simply gave His word, and the Bible says, and the man believed the word, and went his way, and the son was healed. Not only is Jesus God's answer to man's **disappointment**; Jesus is God's answer to man's **doubt**. And then, we read where there was a man who was paralyzed, waiting for the water to be moved so he could put himself in the water and be healed miraculously. And Jesus came to this man totally paralyzed, and asked him, "Will you be made whole?" And the man said, yes, and the Lord healed him—radically, dramatically healed him. And what was the message in the miracle? That Jesus is God's answer to man's **disability**. We're like that man—sinners, completely without strength, until we're touched by the power of God. And then there was a time when the crowd was hungry and there was no food. Jesus took a little lad's lunch, and fed five thousand men plus the women and children with a little lad's lunch. What is that? They were hungry. Jesus is God's answer to man's **desires**. He said, "I am the bread of life."

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### **P G Matthew - "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam." —John 9:7**

John 9 speaks about Jesus healing the man born blind. Let us look closely at the command that Jesus gave to this man: "Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam" (v. 7). Notice first, that this command was specific. When God speaks to us, he expects obedience, so he makes his commands very clear. Jesus was telling him to go to the pool on the southern part of Jerusalem and wash—not just in any pool, not just in any body of water—but specifically in this particular pool called Siloam.

When a professor gives an assignment, he is specific. He does not want his students to go and read books that they choose. No, he tells them what to read and what assignments to do. The Holy Spirit is also very specific. The word of God is very specific. When God speaks to us, he speaks with clarity. We hear that still, small voice speaking to us: "This is the way, walk ye in it." God is not a God of darkness, but of revelation.

This command was also simple. Jesus Christ did what was most difficult—he came down from heaven and died on the cross for our sins. The man's part was so simple—he was to go and wash in the waters of Siloam. In Isaiah, the gently flowing waters of Siloam stand for the power of the God of Israel (Isa. 8:6). In other words, we are to turn away from self and look to God for salvation. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

This command was also personal. The man himself had to go; not his mother, father, or neighbor. He had to wash in the pool that Jesus has specified.

Finally, this command required immediate obedience. When the word of God comes to us, we dare not say, "I'll think about it and decide later." No, Jesus Christ requires obedience now. Postponement is the same as not acting.

What was the result of the man's obedience to Jesus' command? Hear his testimony: "Jesus told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went, I washed, and I came back seeing." May God help us to respond to the specific, simple, personal commands of God in the same way. If we do, we too shall be saved.

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### **QUESTION - [What happened at the Pool of Siloam?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Pool of Siloam, also called the Pool of Shiloah (Isaiah 8:6), has a rich and storied history, which involves an ancient king of Judah, a famous sermon, and one of Christ's great miracles. The word *Siloam* means "Sent" (John 9:7). Several rabbinic traditions identified the Pool of Siloam as the Messiah's Pool. It was the only source of fresh water within the walls of ancient Jerusalem.

The Pool of Siloam was built by [King Hezekiah](#) in the 8th century BC (2 Kings 20:20) in order to provide water to Jerusalem, even in the event that the city were besieged. The pool was fed by a tunnel Hezekiah cut through almost 2,000 feet of solid rock from the Gihon Spring, also called the Virgin's Spring. The spring, which produced a flow of water about twice a day, was located on the east side of Jerusalem, outside of the wall and on a slope leading down to the Kidron Valley. Hezekiah's Tunnel channeled the water from Gihon to the pool, located in the southeast part of the city in the Tyropoeon Valley. The original Pool of Siloam was about 53 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 19 feet deep and was made of part hewn rock and part masonry.

Jerusalem and the Pool of Siloam were destroyed by the Babylonians about 600 BC. Seventy years later, Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and part of the job was to repair the Pool of Siloam: "[Shallun son of Kol-Hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah] also repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloam, by the King's Garden, as far as the steps going down from the City of David" (Nehemiah 3:15).

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But it is during the time of Christ that the **Pool of Siloam** finds its true significance. Because the pool was near the temple, its water was used for a special ceremony during the [Feast of Tabernacles](#). Every morning during that joyful feast, a priest would take a golden vessel to the Pool of Siloam, fill it with water from the pool, and bring it back to the altar amid the shouts of the people. Then, as the crowd chanted the *Hallel* (**Psalms 113—118**), that priest poured out the water on the west side of the altar, and another priest poured a [drink offering](#) of wine on the east side of the altar. This ritual was probably to illustrate Isaiah 12:3, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."

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**John 9:8 Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?"**

BGT John 9:8 Ο ο υ γ ε τ ο ν ε ς κ α ο θ ε ω ρ ο ν τ ε ς α τ υ τ π ρ τ ε ρ ο ν τ ι π ρ ο σ α τ η ς ν λ ε γ ο ν · ο χ ο τ ς σ π ι ν κ α θ μ ε ν ο ς κ α π ρ ο σ σ α ι ν ;

KJV John 9:8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

NET John 9:8 Then the neighbors and the people who had seen him previously as a beggar began saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?"

CSB John 9:8 His neighbors and those who formerly had seen him as a beggar said, "Isn't this the man who sat begging?"

ESV John 9:8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?"

NIV John 9:8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?"

NLT John 9:8 His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?"

- **Is not:** Ru 1:19 1Sa 21:11
- **sit:** 1Sa 2:8 Mk 10:46 Lu 16:20-22 18:35 Ac 3:2-11

**THE MIRACLE  
SPREADS**



**Therefore** ([oun](#)) - Therefore. Term of conclusion.

**The neighbors** ([geiton](#)), and those who previously ([proteros](#)) saw ([theoreo](#)) him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg (Lit = "the one sitting and begging") - He was not just a blind man, but he was a begging man. Their question in Greek expects an affirmative answer. **Beggar** is the rare word *prosaïtes*, one who approached others with supplications (only other use Mk 10:46+). **Beg** is present tense, indicating this man had his regular place and was thus a very familiar figure to the populace in that area. The miracle stirs the neighbor's curiosity. They can hardly believe their eyes (pun intended) regarding his eyes!

Recall Jesus had stated this man's blindness was "so that the works of God might be displayed in him." It follows that John 9:8 is a sad commentary on the response of the **neighbors** who fall far short of giving glory to God for this great miracle.

Spiritual blindness makes beggars of us all  
-- Adrian Rogers

**THOUGHT**- It is notable that John never gives us this man. I wonder how we will recognize him when we get to Heaven? Since Peter, et al recognized Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration, I don't think we will have any difficulty recognizing this man. Won't it be fascinating to talk with him about what he did the rest of his life now as a man who could physically and spiritually see!

[Brian Bell](#) on the nosey neighbors (Nearby Nearsighted Neighbors who Need to Know!) - Hey wait, you look different. We gave money to you & you're not blind? Were you ever blind? I think it's him?

[David Owen](#) - Their response reminds me of what John Wayne's character said to Forest Tucker's character in the old western movie, "Chisum." He said, "We may have to be neighbors, but I don't have to be neighborly." That seems to have been the attitude of these neighbors towards the man born blind.

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[D. Thomas, D. D](#) noted several interesting things about how these neighbors responded to the man...

As a stone cast into a lake throws the whole mass of water into agitation, producing circle after circle to its utmost bounds, this healing threw into excitement the whole social sphere in which it occurred. "No man liveth unto himself." What affects one will affect many. Society is a chain of which every man is a link, and the motion of one link may vibrate through the whole chain. Society is a body of which every man is a member; the pulsation of one heart will throb through every limb. The feelings produced in this case were various. Note, concerning inquiries of the class we here deal with -

I. THEIR LACK OF EARNESTNESS. They related --

1. To the identity of the man. The question (ver. 8) seems to have been asked out of mere curiosity. Their difficulty (ver. 9) arose partly from the change the opened eye would make in his countenance, giving it a new character; and partly from the unaccountableness of the result.

2. To the method of his restoration (ver 10). In this there is no ring of earnestness, only curiosity.

3. To the whereabouts of the Restorer (ver. 12). But what is He? All they meant was we should like to see this wonder worker. Those who have a mere speculative interest in Christianity are constantly asking such questions with no genuine thirst for truth.

II. THEIR LACK OF GENEROSITY. They utter no congratulatory word. Had they been true men, the event would have touched them into the enthusiasm of social affection. But there is not one spark of it. Their intellect seems to move in ice. So is it ever with this class. There is no heart exultation over the millions Christianity has blessed, only a cold inquiry about details.

III. THEIR LACK OF INDEPENDENCY (ver. 13). They brought Him to the judicial court to try the question of His identity. They were not in earnest enough to reach a conclusion that would satisfy themselves. Conclusion: How lamentable that there should be a class only speculatively interested in the wonderful works of Christ. What these men saw should have led them to hearty acceptance and consecration.

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**Neighbors** ([1069](#))([geiton](#) from [ge](#) = earth, land) means literally one "of the same land," one living nearby and sharing ethnic and cultural similarities. Always used in plural. Synonym = plesion.

**Gilbrant** - The adjective "neighboring" oftentimes gives this word a locative sense as in the English "neighborhood." However, in the few times it is used in the New Testament, *geitōn* is more broadly used to mean "human relationships" which pass beyond the limits of geography. This is especially true in Luke 14:12

and Luke 15:6,9 where the term is used with adelphos, "brother." ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Geiton** - 4x in NT - Lk. 14:12; Lk. 15:6; Lk. 15:9; Jn. 9:8. **Lxx** = Ex. 3:22; Ex. 12:4; Ru 4:17; 2 Ki. 4:3; Job 19:15; Job 26:5; Ps. 31:11; Ps. 44:13; Ps. 79:4; Ps. 79:12; Ps. 80:6; Ps. 89:41; Jer. 6:21; Jer. 12:14; Jer. 49:10 - Lxx uses frequently in context of "reproach to one's neighbors."

**Saw** (beheld, looked, observed, watched) ([2334](#)) **theoreo** from **theaomai** = to look at closely or attentively or contemplatively - even with a sense of wonder; cp **theoros** = a spectator) (Gives us English = theater, theorize) usually refers to physical sight but can also refer to perception and understanding. It means to gaze, to look with interest and purpose, to carefully examine with emphasis on or attention to details. To behold intensely or attentively. Our English word *scrutinize* conveys this sense, for it means to examine closely and minutely. To be a spectator and thus to understand or perceive. To contemplate (Heb 13:7). **Theoreo** in some contexts can include the idea of to behold with amazement. For example, in Mark 5:15 **theoreo** is not translated merely "**see**" but "**observe**" for as **Vincent** explains..."(theoreo) was more than simple seeing. The verb means looking steadfastly, as one who has an interest in the object, and with a view to search into and understand it: to look inquiringly and intently." (**Ed Note:** And even with a sense of amazement.)

**Theoreo in John** - Jn. 2:23; Jn. 4:19; Jn. 6:19; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:62; Jn. 7:3; Jn. 8:51; Jn. 9:8; Jn. 10:12; Jn. 12:19; Jn. 12:45; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 14:19; Jn. 16:10; Jn. 17:24; Jn. 20:6; Jn. 20:12; Jn. 20:14

**John 9:9 Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one."**

BGT John 9:9 λλοι λεγον πι ο τ ς σπιν, λλοι λεγον· ο χ , λλ μοιος ατ σπιν. κε νο ς λεγεν τι γ ε μι.

KJV John 9:9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

NET John 9:9 Some people said, "This is the man!" while others said, "No, but he looks like him." The man himself kept insisting, "I am the one!"

CSB John 9:9 Some said, "He's the one." "No," others were saying, "but he looks like him." He kept saying, "I'm the one!"

ESV John 9:9 Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man."

NIV John 9:9 Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

NLT John 9:9 Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!" But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"

## DIVISION OVER THE MIRACLE

**Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him."** - Others were vigorously denying (imperfect tense over and over) this was a miracle. The miracle aroused disagreements. Again we see that Jesus' presence and power often stirred passions which often led to divided opinions, as here and with the Pharisees in John 9:16.

**Lowell Johnson** - These friends and neighbors who had known him a long time; maybe saw him every day, began to argue among themselves. Some said, "He's the same man." Others said, "No, it just looks like him." The man said, "It's me!" Have you ever been around someone that just met Jesus and Jesus made such a change in their life that folks wonder if it's the same person? "Well, it sure looks like him/her, but they sure are different. He/She don't talk the same... Speech is different... They talk about things they've never talked about before. "Their interest is different. They were never interested in the Bible or the church or the things of God before; now, that's all they're interested in." What happened?

**He kept saying, "I am the one."** - Short and to the point. A great testimony! Note **saying** (above) and **Kept saying** are both the vivid imperfect tense signifying that he was repeatedly questioned and he repeatedly testified that he was the "miracle man!" It appears they finally acquiesced to his claim to be the one they had known as a blind beggar.

**Utley** has an interesting observation of the phrase "**I am**" (ego eimi) used by the beggar - This is the same Greek idiom Jesus uses in Jn 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8. This context shows that this form (ego eimi) did not automatically have divine connotations.

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**HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO WHAT JESUS HAS DONE?** In chapter 9, we see four different reactions to Jesus.

1. The neighbors revealed surprise and skepticism;
2. the Pharisees showed disbelief and prejudice;
3. the parents believed but kept quiet for fear of excommunication;
4. the healed man showed consistent, growing faith.

**John 9:10 So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?"**

BGT John 9:10 λεγον ο ν α τ · π ς [ο ν] νε χθησ ν σου ο φθαλμο ;

KJV John 9:10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

NET John 9:10 So they asked him, "How then were you made to see?"

CSB John 9:10 Therefore they asked him, "Then how were your eyes opened?"

ESV John 9:10 So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?"

NIV John 9:10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded.

NLT John 9:10 They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?"

- Jn 9:15,21,26 3:9 Ec 11:5 Mk 4:27 1Co 15:35

## HOW CAN YOU NOW SEE?

**So (oun)** - Therefore. Term of conclusion. The neighbors finally come to a consensus that this man is the one who was the blind beggar and who can now see. Now they want to know the **how** of this miracle. It would have been better if they had wanted to know the **"Who?"**

**They were saying** (imperfect tense over and over) **to him, "How then were your eyes opened (anoigo)?"** - They is not the Pharisees, but they will enter the picture in John 9:13. **"Eyes opened"** is an idiom referring to restoration of sight. Apparently convinced of the miracle, they now seek the solution.

*They were all asking the wrong question!*

*They should not have asked "How?" but "Who?"*

**Warren Wiersbe** - Four times in this chapter people asked, **"How** were you healed?" (John 9:10, 15, 19, 26) First the neighbors asked the man, and then the Pharisees asked him. Not satisfied with his reply, the Pharisees then asked the man's parents and then gave the son one final interrogation. All of this looked very official and efficient, but it was really a most evasive maneuver on the part of both the people and the leaders. The Pharisees wanted to get rid of the evidence, and the people were afraid to speak the truth! They were all asking the wrong question! They should not have asked "How?" but "Who?" (Simply rearrange the letters!) But we are so prone to ask "How?" We want to understand the mechanics of a miracle instead of simply trusting the Saviour, who alone can perform the miracle. Nicodemus wanted to know **how** he could re-enter his mother's womb (John 3:4, 9+). **"How** can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (John 6:52+) Understanding the process, even if we could, is no guarantee that we have experienced the miracle. (BORROW [Be alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

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**Opened (455) anoigo** from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open, to open up, to open again, to give access to. To open one's eyes causing them to see (Acts 26:18). To open one's mouth that they might begin to speak (Mt 5:2). Figuratively, to open a "door" meaning to make possible (Col 4:3). Luke records the parallel passages (Lk 11:9, 10). Of heavens open = have the heavens opened or divided so that celestial things become manifest - Mt 3:16; Lu 3:21; Jn 1:51; Acts 7:56; 10:11; Rev 19:11; (Lxx of the following passages) Isa 64:1; Ezek 1:1; Ps 78:23. In 2 Cor 6:11 the idea is to pour out one's mind, open one's heart, to speak fully and frankly. Anoigo is used in NT and Lxx of Jesus not opening His mouth - Not to open one's mouth = not to utter complaints (Acts 8:32; Isa 53:7 cp Ps 38:14; 39:9)

**Anoigo uses in John's writings** - Jn. 9:10; Jn. 9:14; Jn. 9:17; Jn. 9:21; Jn. 9:26; Jn. 9:30; Jn. 9:32; Jn. 10:3; Jn. 10:21; Jn. 11:37 Rev. 3:7; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:20; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 5:2; Rev. 5:3; Rev. 5:4; Rev. 5:5; Rev. 5:9; Rev. 6:1; Rev. 6:3; Rev. 6:5; Rev. 6:7; Rev. 6:9; Rev. 6:12; Rev. 8:1; Rev. 9:2; Rev. 10:2; Rev. 10:8; Rev. 11:19;

**John 9:11 He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash"; so I went away and washed, and I received sight."**

BGT John 9:11 πεκρθη κενοσ· νθρωποσ λεγμενοσ ησοσ πηλν ποησεν κα πχρισν μου τοσ φθαλμοσ κα επνμοι τι παγεεσ τν Σιλωμ κα νψαι· πελθν ον κα νιψμενοσ ν βλεψα.

KJV John 9:11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

NET John 9:11 He replied, "The man called Jesus made mud, smeared it on my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and was able to see."

CSB John 9:11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So when I went and washed I received my sight."

ESV John 9:11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight."

NIV John 9:11 He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

NLT John 9:11 He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!"

- man: Jn 9:6,7,27 Jer 36:17

## MAN CREDITS JESUS FOR THE MIRACLE

**He answered, "The Man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed([epichrio](#)) my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash ([nipto](#))'; so I went away and washed ([nipto](#)), and I received sight ([anablepo](#))."** - **The Man** is not derogatory in this context ([see below](#)). He did not yet know that **Jesus** was the Messiah (cf Jn 9:36+). **The man** indicates that in fact it was **THE MAN**, not **THE MUD!** **Jesus** did not compose a mud pack with healing power, but He **anointed** the blind man's eyes, utilizing His supernatural healing power. Yes, **Jesus** had [emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives](#), but clearly He retained His supernatural power. The preposition "ana" in [anablepo](#) has the idea of restoration to a proper state and does not mean that he had seen before, since we know he had been blind from birth.

**Spurgeon** - That was short and sweet; and when you have to deal with Pharisees, do not give them much. They are not worth it, and they are sure to misuse it. When he spoke to the common people, he enlarged, and gave them details; but now that he comes to talk to these pragmatists, he cuts it down to as few words as possible. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Warren Wiersbe** - At this point, the man has been healed, but he has not been saved (ED: HEALED PHYSICALLY BUT NOT SPIRITUALLY!). The light had dawned, but it would grow brighter until he saw the face of the Lord and worshiped Him (see Prov. 4:18). At least twelve times in the Gospel of John, Jesus is called "a man" (see John 4:29; 5:12; 8:40; 9:11, 24; 10:33; 11:47, 50; 18:14, 17, 29; 19:5). John's emphasis is that Jesus Christ is God, but the apostle balances it beautifully by reminding us that Jesus is also true **man**. The Incarnation was not an illusion (1 John 1:1-4). (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

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**Anointed** ([2025](#)) is **epichrío** (epí = upon + [chrio](#) = to anoint) occurs only in John 9:6 and John 9:11. In reality, it was not the mud that brought healing to this blind man. It was God's miraculous grace and power. In order to qualify this nonmedicinal healing element of the mud, the verb **epichrío** is used. If [aleipho](#) were used, meaning just to smear on without the element of divine power, it would have led both the blind man and others to believe that there was miraculous healing power in the mud. This impression the Lord wanted to avoid giving. Epichrio is used in a report of healing and also to describe the wax that receives the impression of the seal.

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**D L Moody** - HE told a straightforward story, just what the Lord had done for him. That is all. That is what a witness ought to do—tell what he knows, not what he does not know. He did not try to make a long speech. It is not the most flippant and fluent witness who has the most influence with a jury.

This man's testimony is what I call "experience." One of the greatest hindrances to the progress of the gospel to-day is that the

narration of the experience of the Church is not encouraged. There are a great many men and women who come into the Church, and we never hear anything of the Lord's dealings with them. If we did, it would be a great help to others. It would stimulate faith and encourage the more feeble of the flock. The apostle Paul's experience has been recorded three times. I have no doubt that he told it everywhere he went: how God had met him; how God had opened his eyes and his heart; and how God had blessed him.

Depend upon it, experience has its place; the great mistake that is made now is in the other extreme. In some places and at some periods there has been too much of it—it has been all experience; and now we have let the pendulum swing too far the other way.

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### **J J Knapp - Made Clay John 9:11**

While some of the neighbours held the cured born-blind man for someone who resembled him and others saw the same person in him, the graced one declared calmly and determined: "I am he." This excluded doubts concerning the identity. However, then they started an investigation into the manner in which he had obtained his sight, and he answered unpretentiously in truth: "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight."

What strikes us in particular in this report, is not only the perfect glory, that makes him say concerning Christ just as much as he knew of Him, calling Him the man Jesus, while he would only later acknowledge and confess Him as the Son of God; but it is in particular the mention of the miraculous eye-salve, that Christ anointed his eyes with. It had happened like that indeed. Christ had, to cure the blind one, not waited for a more convenient opportunity, but had served Himself of the most prevalent, the most common and the simplest as a means to help this person: a handful of dust moistened with some saliva,—that had been all; and exactly the insignificance of the means made it to be felt and tasted that the curing power had proceeded from Christ Himself, and made it clear that He deserved the honour.

This also applies to the opening of the eye of the soul.

Certainly, the preaching of the Word is commonly the royal way along which the grace of God comes near the sinner's heart. However, do not suppose that the gospel must always be brought in the solemn gatherings of the congregation on the Day of Rest to reveal its healing power to born-blind sinners. It happens often that the Lord puts our beautiful sermons to the side, as if they were useless; that He leaves our stirring language, of which we ourselves expect maybe too much, unused, and allows our glorious singing of psalms, that is not seldom a vehicle of His grace, to go aimlessly over the heads without it making a sanctifying impression.

Then He makes clay. A woman who sings two lines of a song, oh, not with the intention to convert her husband, but just from the fullness of her heart, becomes the means to kindle a light in the heart of her partner. A child that is learning a text by heart and is heard by chance; a scrap of paper found with a word from Scripture; a prayer that was overheard, a glance, a hidden tear,—insignificant things, is it not, but to which the power of grace is added to make the born-blind to see, so that the power is not ours, but of God.

### **John 9:12 They said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."**

BGT John 9:12 κα ε παν α τ · πο στιν κε νος; λ χει· ο κ ο δα.

KJV John 9:12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

NET John 9:12 They said to him, "Where is that man?" He replied, "I don't know."

CSB John 9:12 "Where is He?" they asked. "I don't know," he said.

ESV John 9:12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

NIV John 9:12 "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

NLT John 9:12 "Where is he now?" they asked. "I don't know," he replied.

- **Where:** Jn 5:11-13 7:11 Ex 2:18-20

## **SEEKING JESUS FOR CONFRONTATION**

**They said to him, "Where is He?"** - They do not state specifically why they seek Jesus' whereabouts. Most likely they had some

ailments that they wanted healed. Sadly Jesus was almost never sought for the Savior and Redeemer He had come to be for Israel and all mankind. In Lk 19:10+ Jesus says "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." This is the same question as in Jn 7:11+ "So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, **Where is He?**"

**He said, "I do not know (eido)." -** He had absolutely no idea **where** Jesus went.

**Spurgeon** - Enough for him to know what he did know — that his eyes were opened, and how it was done. So sometimes I have known persons come upon the new convert with a question which has rather baffled him, and he has been troubled, because he could not answer it. Do not let it trouble you. **You are not expected to know everything.** The very best and most honest thing is to say, **"I know not"** (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

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**Steven Cole** ([The Light of the World in Action](#)) on John 9:1-12 - We see four things here: the great need; the great Savior; the great purpose; and, the great urgency.

### **1. The great need: The world is spiritually blind from birth.**

This blind man is a picture of the condition of everyone since the fall: everyone is born spiritually blind. This man lacked the ability to see Jesus physically, just as unbelievers lack the ability to see Jesus spiritually. The apostle Paul put it this way (2 Cor. 4:3–6+):

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Lost people don't need just a little more information so that they can make an informed decision to get saved. Rather, they need the miracle of spiritual sight that only God can give.

The disciples viewed this man as an interesting theological case study (Jn 9:2): "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" Since blind people usually have an acute sense of hearing, it was insensitive and cruel of the disciples to say this within earshot of this poor beggar. Behind their question was the common Jewish view that there was always a direct correlation between sin and suffering. That was the view of Job's "comforters": if Job was suffering, it must be because he had sinned. It's true that all suffering in the world can be traced back to Adam and Eve's original sin. And sometimes there is a direct correlation between sin and suffering (John 5:14; 1 John 5:16). But the Bible is clear that often even the righteous suffer apart from any specific wrong that they have done.

But the disciples bought into the popular view. Since this man had been born blind, either he or his parents must have sinned to result in this difficult trial. As to how they believed that the man could have sinned, there are a couple of possibilities. Based on the account of Jacob and Esau struggling in the womb, some rabbis taught that babies could sin in the womb. Also, many Jews bought into the ancient error that the soul preexists birth. Some even held to reincarnation, the view that we can come back in different lives (see Matt. 16:13–14+). But Jesus replied that this man had not sinned as the direct cause of his blindness.

The Bible does teach that children can suffer on account of their parents' sins (Ex 34:7; Jer. 32:18). We see this principle all around us. Kids born to a drug-addicted or alcoholic mother, or to a mother with AIDS, suffer physical and mental impairment. Children whose parents are verbally, physically, or sexually abusive suffer terrible trauma. The examples are endless.

But in this case, Jesus said, this blind man was not suffering because of his own or his parents' sins. But he was still very needy. He pictures all who are born in sin and spiritual darkness. We need to see all people who do not know Christ, even those who present an image of being successful and happy, as being spiritually blind and needy. For all such people, there is only one solution:

### **2. The great Savior: Jesus is the almighty Savior who can open blind eyes.**

This blind beggar did not take the initiative to cry out to Jesus for healing (in contrast to Mark 10:47–48). Rather, Jesus saw Him, and although John does not say it, I'm sure that He saw him as He saw all hurting people, with compassion. Since He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), He reached out to this helpless man and granted him the gift of sight. Think of how this man must have felt: He began the day as he had begun every other day of his dark existence, making his way to a busy thoroughfare where he could beg for alms. We don't know how the disciples knew that he had been born blind, but it's likely that to garner sympathy the man cried out all day, "I was born blind; please help!" But he ended that day seeing for the first time in his life!

Why did Jesus heal the man in this unusual way, by spitting and making mud, applying it to the man's eyes, and telling him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam? Why didn't Jesus just speak the word, as He did with the man at the Pool of Bethesda or at Lazarus' tomb? John doesn't tell us, so we don't know for sure. Some early church fathers speculated that the mention of clay made from the

ground recalls Genesis 2:7, where God formed man out of the dust of the ground. Thus this miracle would illustrate John 1:3, that Jesus is the Creator (Leon Morris, borrow [The Gospel according to John](#) pp. 480–481). Other suggestions have been made.

It seems that John wants us to see some symbolic significance in the name of the pool, since he translates it for his Greek readers (Jn 9:7, “Sent”). As we’ve seen (e.g., Jn 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42), John puts a big emphasis on the fact that Jesus was sent by the Father. As we’ve also seen, at the Feast of Tabernacles the priest would get water from the Pool of Siloam and pour it out at the base of the altar in commemoration of God’s providing water from the rock when Israel was in the wilderness. That water also pictured the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the all-sufficiency of Christ (Jn 7:37–39). So this blind man had to wash in the Sent Pool to gain his sight. If the spiritually blind wash in the One sent by God, they will receive their sight.

The unique way that Jesus performed this miracle also teaches us that each person is an individual and therefore requires an individual approach with regard to how we deal with them spiritually (J. C. Ryle, [John 9 Commentary](#)). There’s nothing wrong with using means or methods in presenting the gospel. Jesus here used the clay and the pool as a means toward healing. But Jesus never used the same means or method twice. While it’s helpful to memorize a basic presentation of the gospel, be sensitive to tailor it to each person.

But there is another reason that Jesus performed this miracle in this manner. We read in Jn 9:14, “Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.” By doing this, Jesus deliberately violated several of the man made additions to the Law of Moses that the Jews had invented (Morris, borrow [The Gospel according to John](#) p. 480, note 17). Making clay was a breach of a prohibition of kneading on the Sabbath. Placing the clay on his eyes violated a regulation about prohibited anointings. Healing on the Sabbath was forbidden unless it was to save one’s life. So I think that Jesus made clay, anointed the man’s eyes, and instructed him to go and wash on the Sabbath deliberately to poke His finger in the eyes of the legalistic Pharisees. They cared more about keeping their rules than they did about this poor, blind beggar receiving his sight.

As we’ll see, they got into an argument about whether Jesus was sent from God or a sinner because He broke their Sabbath rules (Jn 9:16, 24)! They should have instantly recognized that opening the eyes of the blind was a Messianic activity.

In the Old Testament, there are no stories of sight being restored to the blind. But there are numerous verses that show that only the Lord can cause the blind to see and that the Messiah, who is the Lord, would do this. Psalm 146:8 proclaims, “The Lord opens the eyes of the blind.” Isaiah 29:18 states, “On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.” In Isaiah 35:5+, after saying that God will come to save His people, the prophet says, “Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.”

When John the Baptist was languishing in prison, he began to wonder, “If Jesus is the Messiah, then why am I, His messenger, in this dungeon?” So he sent messengers to Jesus to ask (Matt. 11:3+), “Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?” Jesus answered (Mt 11:4–5+), “Go and report to John what you hear and see: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.” Jesus was referring to Isaiah 35+, which He fulfilled.

Also, in Isaiah 42:6–7, God is speaking to His Servant (Isa 42:1), the Messiah:

“And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes ....” It’s interesting that of all the recorded miracles that Jesus performed, giving sight to the blind has more than any other category. The Jewish leaders, who knew the Old Testament, should have concluded, “Jesus is the promised Messiah.”

But the point is, it takes a great Savior to open blind eyes physically. But the great physical miracle points to the greater spiritual miracle. He opens spiritually blind eyes through the gospel as God shines “in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). If you get an opportunity to share the gospel with someone, keep the focus on Jesus. People will try to divert the conversation to all sorts of peripheral issues, like evolution or why God allows suffering or whatever. While you may need to respond briefly to those issues, steer things back to who Jesus is. He is the mighty Savior who can open their blind eyes. And, as you’re sharing, pray that He will do that with the person you’re talking to.

So this story shows us the great need: the world is born into spiritual blindness. But we also see the great Savior who can open blind eyes.

### **3. The great purpose: The primary aim of the gospel is to display the glory of God.**

In response to the disciples’ theological question, Jesus answers (Jn 9:3), “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” Some have a problem with the view that God would allow this man to be born blind and suffer all these years just so that his healing would display the works of God. But I think that those people have too

big a view of man and too little a view of God. If our suffering can bring glory to God and display His infinite worth to others, then it takes on ultimate meaning and significance. Paul put it like this (2 Cor. 4:17+), “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.”

Jonathan Edwards argued that God created the world for His own glory ([“The End for Which God Created the World.”](#); see John Piper, [God’s Passion for His Glory](#)). Since He is infinitely glorious, it would be wrong for Him not to seek His own glory. Also, as Edwards argues, there is no disparity between God’s seeking His own glory and at the same time seeking our ultimate happiness. As John Piper has pointed out, we glorify God the most when we are most satisfied in Him. God may be glorified in us through physical healing (as with this blind man) or through our experiencing the sufficiency of God’s grace through our suffering, as was the case with Paul’s thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7–10+).

But the healing of the blind man pictures what happens whenever God saves a soul through the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:4–6+). He gets the glory and we get the blessing. Our happiness in what He has done for us contributes to His glory. But my point is, the gospel isn’t mainly about how Jesus can give you a happy life for your own sake. It’s about how He can give you a happy life so that you can proclaim His excellencies as you tell others how He called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9+).

This blind man did that. He was obviously a changed man. In fact, some of his neighbors thought that he must be someone else who looked like the blind man (Jn 9:9). But he kept saying, “I am the one.” So then they wanted to know how it happened. He didn’t know much at this point. He refers to Jesus as “the man who is called Jesus.” Remember, he still hasn’t even seen Jesus and he doesn’t know where He’s at. He will argue with the Pharisees that Jesus is a prophet (Jn 9:17). Later, when he sees Jesus, he will believe in Him and worship Him as Lord (Jn 9:38). But his obviously changed life and his simple witness brought glory to God (Jn 9:24). So should our changed lives and our verbal witness. That leads to the last point:

#### **4. The great urgency: We should labor to point people to Jesus for God’s glory while we still have time.**

The best manuscripts of John 9:4 read, “We [not I] must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.” Jesus includes the disciples among those who must work God’s works. That includes all of us who have put our trust in Christ. This is the harvest mindset that we saw Jesus emphasizing with the disciples back in chapter 4, when He was talking with the woman at the well. Their focus was on getting Jesus to eat His lunch so that they could get on the road. His focus was on doing the Father’s will and accomplishing His work (Jn 4:34). And that should be the focus of all who follow Him.

Note the little word “**must**” ([dei](#)) in Jn 9:4. It’s a word of divine necessity. We saw it back in Jn 4:4, where it says, “And He had to pass through Samaria.” “**Had**” ([dei](#)) is the same word in Greek: It was necessary for Him to go through Samaria so that He could give living water to the immoral woman and to her entire village. Here, although the Pharisees were threatening to kill Jesus and His death was just months ahead, He must work the works of the Father who sent Him.

Do you sense that necessity in your life? It’s not just that the Lord would like to use you to accomplish His works if you’ve got some spare time and don’t have anything better to do. Serving the Lord is not only for the super-dedicated. It’s a necessity for all who have been bought with the blood of the Lamb. If you belong to Jesus, you’re a member of His body and every part has a necessary function for the proper working of the whole body. And if you think, “Well, I’m not a very important part,” remember the parable of the talents. It was the guy who was given just one talent who buried it and didn’t use it for his master’s purposes. The master had some rather frightening things to say to him (Matt. 25:26–30)!

But note, also, the urgency of doing the Lord’s work: Jesus says (Jn 9:4), “Night is coming when no one can work.” He was referring to death. His “night” was coming soon, when He would be betrayed into the hands of sinners (Jn 13:30). But night is coming soon for all of us. None of us are guaranteed of even another day. But even if we live a long life, it goes by all too quickly. As James 4:14+ says, “You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.” Paul says (Eph. 5:15–16+), “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.” “Making the most of your time” could be translated, “Buying up the opportunities.”

My parents had a familiar plaque on the wall when I was growing up: “Only one life, ’twill soon be past; only what’s done for Christ will last.” Are you looking for and taking advantage of the opportunities that the Lord gives you to point people to Jesus and to help them grow in Him?

#### **Conclusion**

When he was twelve, Robert Louis Stevenson was looking out into the dark from his upstairs window, watching a man light the street lanterns. His governess came into the room and asked what he was doing. He replied, “I am watching a man cut holes in the darkness.”



That's our task in this dark world. Point blind people to the Light of the world who can open their eyes for God's glory. Tell them what Jesus has done for you. He can use you to do His works before night comes, when no one can work.

### Application Questions

1. Why is it important to understand that people are born spiritually blind? What practical implications does this have when you present the gospel?
2. Some argue that salvation is a joint effort: God does His part, but sinners must do their part (repent and believe). While there is some truth in this, there is also a fallacy. What is it? Why is it important?
3. Discuss: All Christians are in the ministry, but only some get their living from the ministry. How would viewing yourself as being in the ministry change your weekly schedule?
4. How can we know whether it is God's will to heal (physically) or to be glorified as we trust Him in our affliction? ([The Light of the World in Action](#) - [John 9:1-12](#))

### John 9:13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind.

BGT John 9:13 γουσιβ α τ ν πρ ς το ς Φαρισα ου ς τ ν ποτε τυφλ ν.

KJV John 9:13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

NET John 9:13 They brought the man who used to be blind to the Pharisees.

CSB John 9:13 They brought the man who used to be blind to the Pharisees.

ESV John 9:13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

NIV John 9:13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind.

NLT John 9:13 Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees,

- Jn 8:3-8 Jn 11:46,47,57 Jn 12:19,42

## GOD ORCHESTRATES CONFRONTATION

**They** (the neighbors) **brought** (led) **to the Pharisees** ([pharisaioi](#)) **the man who was formerly blind** ([tuphlos](#)) - Why would **they** bring the healed blind man to the religious leaders? While the text does give us the answer, clearly God is sovereignly orchestrating Jesus' confrontation with the **Pharisees**, this time bringing about the confrontation [by proxy](#). The CSB translation brings out the irony of John's words "**formerly blind**" for it says "They brought the man who used to be (PHYSICALLY)**blind** to the Pharisees," who of course were **spiritually blind**! The stage is set for an eyeball to eyeball confrontation!

**Warren Wiersbe** - Since the Pharisees were the custodians of the faith, it was right that the healed man be brought to them for investigation. The fact that they studied this miracle in such detail is only further proof that Jesus did indeed heal the man. Since the man was born blind, the miracle was even greater, for blindness caused by sickness or injury might suddenly go away. Our Lord's miracles can bear careful scrutiny by His enemies. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Utley** - The Jewish leaders go by two different terms in John. They are usually referred to as "the Jews" (cf. Jn 9:18, 22). However, in this chapter they are called the Pharisees in Jn 9:13, 15, 16, 40.

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**Pharisees** ([5330](#)) [pharisaioi](#) is transliterated from the Hebrew [parash](#) ([06567](#) - to separate) from Aramaic word [peras](#) ([06537](#)) ("Peres" in Da 5:28+), signifying to separate, owing to a different manner of life from that of the general public. The Pharisees belonged to the Sanhedrin, not as a party, but as members of a group of men who knew the Scriptures. Josephus points to the Pharisees' influence among the people ([Josephus Antiquities 13.10.5](#); [Josephus Antiquities 18.1.4](#)) **John MacArthur** - The Pharisees were noted chiefly for their strict adherence to the Mosaic Law and their oral traditions. Though few in number (about 6,000 at the time of Herod the Great according to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus), they were the dominant religious influence among the Jewish people. With the exception of Nicodemus (Jn 3:1ff.; Jn 7:50-51; 19:39-40), the Pharisees are always hostile to Jesus in John's gospel ([Jn 4:1](#); 7:32, 45-52; 8:13; 9:13-16, 40-41; 11:46-53, 57; 12:19, 42; 18:3). (Later, some would come to believe in Him [cf. Acts 15:5]—most notably the zealous Pharisee [Acts 23:6; Gal. 1:14] Saul of Tarsus.) The Pharisees viewed Jesus' popularity with alarm. They feared both losing their influence with the people, and retaliation by the Romans if Jesus' followers started a revolt (John 11:47-48; cf. Jn 6:15). (See [John Commentary](#))

After the resettling of the Jewish people in Judea on their return from the Babylonian captivity, there were two religious groups among them. One party contented themselves with following only what was written in the Law of Moses. These were called **Zadikim**, the righteous. The other group added the constitutions and traditions of the elders, as well as other rigorous observances, to the Law and voluntarily complied with them. They were called **Chasidim** or the pious. From the Zadikim the sects of the Sadducees and Karaites were derived. From the Chasidim were derived the Pharisees and the Essenes. In I Mac2:42, among the persons who joined Mattathias against Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), about 167 b.c., are named the Asideans (Asidaíoi), who are described as voluntarily devoted to the law. The Asideans are mentioned also in I Mac 7:13; II Mac14:6. In the time of our Lord, the Pharisees were the separatists of their day, as well as the principal sect among the Jews. The Pharisees considered themselves much holier than the common people (Lu 18:11, 12). They wore special garments to distinguish themselves from others.

**PRINCIPLE TENETS OF PHARISEES:** In opposition to those of the Sadducees, and the former group maintained the existence of angels and spirits and the doctrine of the resurrection (Acts 23:8), which the latter party denied (Mt 22:23; Mk 12:18; Lu 20:27). The Pharisees made everything dependent upon God and fate (Josephus, The Jewish Wars, ii.8.14). However, they did not deny the role of the human will in affecting events (Josephus Antiquities 18.1.3).

**ZEAL FOR TRADITION:** The Pharisees distinguished themselves with their zeal for the traditions of the elders, which they taught was derived from the same fountain as the written Word itself, claiming both to have been delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai (Mt 15:1-6; Mk 7:3-5). See also *parádosis* (3862), tradition, and *éntalma* (1778), a religious precept versus *entole* (1785), commandment. ([See more detailed notes from William Barclay](#))

**NIDNTT - See Page 810** - OT Pharisaioi is the Hellenized form of the Aram. word *peršayyā'* (Heb. *pārūš*; from *pāraš*, to divide, separate), and means "the separated ones". It denotes the representatives of an influential religious group in Judaism. The designation is only attested in Hellenistic Judaism up till the time of the NT, but not at all in the LXX. Rabbinic literature provides the first attestation of the word in the Aramaic-speaking world, although it is frequently found in a negative sense. The word was used in the Gk. form by Josephus and in the NT. The date of the appearance of the designation can no longer be precisely fixed. The first occurrences are from the time of Hyrcanus I (c. 135 B.C.). From the 1st cent. B.C. (under the reign of Alexandra [76–67 B.C.]) onwards, however, the Pharisees were in the public esteem, the most respected and thus the leading group of Judaism.

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**Larry Richards** - DEVOTIONAL One Thing We Know (John 9:13–25)

People who are far more intelligent than we scoff at faith in Jesus. They speak with great superiority of comparative religions, of evolution, or of the latest scholarly reinterpretation of Bible history. Or they claim that Jesus never saw Himself as Son of God. That was just foisted off on the church by the Apostles.

In short, they take the role of the Pharisees of John 9, as Jesus' critics. There the Pharisees tried so hard to ignore Jesus, and discredit the blind man's story. But every time the man responded with a truth so obvious that the foolishness of the Pharisees' position was exposed.

"We know this Man is a sinner" (v. 24), the Pharisees announced. "We know."

The blind man just shrugged and refused to be drawn into that kind of argument. "One thing I do know. I was blind, but now I see."

The Pharisees could say whatever they wanted about Jesus. But they had to face the fact that He gave sight to a man born blind. Today too people can pass any judgment they wish on Jesus. But if they are honest they have to face the fact that millions testify to Jesus' transforming work in their lives. John Newton, once a slave trader, in personal bondage to the most vile practices, experienced a transformation expressed in this hymn he later wrote:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound—  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear

The hour I first believed.

One thing we know. Once we were blind. Now we can see. Once we were in bondage to sin. Now we love and serve Jesus Christ. No argument that the Pharisees or scholars of this world can marshal against our faith can stand before our experience of this reality.

Personal Application -- We do not merely hope. We know.

Quotable -- "I've never gotten over the wonder of it."—Gipsy Smith (BORROW [The 365 day devotional commentary](#))

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### Steven Cole - [How Do You Know?](#)(John 9:13–34)

Every college philosophy major has to take epistemology, which deals with the questions, "How do you know what you know? How can we be sure about what we think we know?"

One day one of my philosophy professors pontificated, "We all know, of course, that Jesus never claimed to be God." By adding that little phrase, "of course," she was insinuating, "Anyone with half a brain would know that what I am saying is true." Or, perhaps you've heard a professor state, "We know, of course, that evolution is a fact."

When anyone authoritatively states, "We know," the obvious question is, "How do you know?" Often, when you examine the evidence, you discover that there are knowledgeable people on both sides of the issue. So the obvious question remains, "How do you know what you think you know?"

When it comes to spiritual truth, the common view today is that there is no such thing as absolute truth in the spiritual realm, and so any spiritual views that you hold are just a matter of your subjective opinion or personal experience. But there isn't universal, absolute spiritual truth. If you claim that you know the truth and that all other views are wrong, you'll be labeled as a narrow-minded bigot. Tolerance and open-mindedness, especially on spiritual matters, are the prevailing values of our day.

In the story of Jesus' healing the man born blind, there are a number of comments about what the various characters claimed to know or not know. When the Pharisees called in the man's parents to try to discredit the account of his healing, they answer (Jn 9:20–21a), "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know." John explains (Jn 9:22) that their evasive answer stemmed from their fear of the Jewish leaders, who had threatened to excommunicate anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Christ.

In Jn 9:24, the Jewish leaders state, "We know that this man is a sinner." The healed blind man dodges that issue for the moment and replies (Jn 9:25), "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." In Jn 9:29, the leaders come back with, "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from." The former blind man retorts (Jn 9:31), "We know that God does not hear sinners..." He concludes (Jn 9:33), "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." At this point, the exasperated leaders have heard enough. They throw the man out of the temple.

But the dialogue raises the question, "How do you know what you know, especially in the spiritual realm?" We learn that...

True spiritual knowledge is founded on Jesus Christ opening our eyes, but sin hinders us from true spiritual knowledge.

When it comes to knowing God, there is only one sure basis, namely, His choosing to reveal Himself to us. Anything else is just speculation. For example, we could sit around and speculate on whether men from Mars have blue eyes. But we wouldn't have any basis for knowing. We're just stating our subjective opinions. But if a man from Mars came to earth and revealed himself to us, then we could say with some certainty, "I met a man from Mars and he had blue eyes."

Jesus claimed (Luke 10:22), "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." In John's Gospel, Jesus repeatedly claims to have been sent by God the Father to reveal the Father to us. In 1:18, John stated, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." In 14:9, Jesus tells Philip, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" God's revelation of Himself to us centers in the person of Jesus Christ, which we have in the written eyewitness testimony of the apostles. So true spiritual knowledge of God is founded on knowing Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent to reveal Himself to us. Anything else is mere speculation.

But sin hinders us from true spiritual knowledge. This is illustrated in this story both by the former blind man's parents and by the Pharisees:

**1. Those in spiritual darkness think that they know spiritual truth, but sin blinds them to the fact that they do not know**

## **God.**

We sometimes hear, "If I could just see a miracle, I'd believe in Jesus!" But these Pharisees saw all sorts of miracles and yet hardened their hearts against Jesus. The blind man's parents had just seen their prayers answered, in that their blind son had been miraculously healed. And yet they were afraid openly to confess Jesus as Lord. The Pharisees and the blind man's parents reveal four factors, which are either sinful in themselves or they stem from sin, that keep unbelievers from true spiritual knowledge. These factors also can hinder growing in spiritual knowledge among us who do believe in Jesus.

### **A. The fear of men hinders true spiritual knowledge.**

In the context, "they" (Jn 9:13) seems to refer to the man's neighbors. We're not told why they brought him to the Pharisees, but here's my guess: In that culture, the religious leaders exercised control over the people through intimidation. We read (Jn 9:22), "For the Jews [the religious leaders] had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue." In a culture of fear, people keep their distance from anything that would get them in trouble with the authorities. That's how Communist regimes operate. If you know that your neighbor is criticizing the government and you don't report him, the authorities will come after you. If you do report him, you'll get extra credit for supporting the state. So the neighbors hear that Jesus, whom the religious leaders were trying to get rid of, has healed this beggar. They think, "We need to take him to the Pharisees so that we don't get into trouble!"

The Pharisees ask him how he received his sight and he tells them how Jesus applied clay to his eyes, he washed, and he now sees (Jn 9:15). This sparks a debate among the Pharisees (which we'll look at more in a moment), but in frustration they turn again to the blind man and ask for his opinion about this Sabbath-breaker, Jesus, hoping that he may have changed his mind or his story. But he ups the ante by replying (Jn 9:17), "He is a prophet."

At this point, they wonder if this is a hoax. So they call the man's parents and ask (9:19), "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?" They reply (Jn 9:20–21), "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." Their answer was not truthful. It's inconceivable that their son had not told them what he had told the neighbors, namely, that Jesus had healed him and how He had healed him. But John explains (Jn 9:22) that they replied as they did because they feared the Jews, who had threatened to put out of the synagogue anyone who confessed Jesus as the Christ.

There were different levels of excommunication, and we can't be sure which level is indicated here (see Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* [Eerdmans], 2:183–184). But being excommunicated at any level was a serious penalty in that tight-knit, religious community. Eventually it would have meant being cut off socially from your neighbors, who would also be kicked out of the synagogue if they associated with you or helped you in any way. You couldn't buy or sell, because if your neighbors engaged in business with you, they would get into trouble. You couldn't escape by moving to the next town, because the rabbis there would enforce the Sanhedrin's ban. For a poor family, being excommunicated would result in social and financial devastation.

So while we can understand the intense pressure on the man's parents, it's too bad that they feared these spiritual bullies more than they feared God. They could have let the facts speak for themselves by saying, "Jesus opened the eyes of our son, who has been blind from birth." But instead, they dodged the issue.

It's a problem that has plagued many down to our day: People fear what others will think more than they fear what God thinks. Perhaps a family member has met Jesus and is obviously changed. But it embarrasses or threatens the other members of the family. They'd rather not talk about it. Or, if it comes up and Jesus is named as the cause of their loved one's change, they downplay it by saying, "Yes, that seems to work for him!" Then they change the subject. They've received a powerful testimony of the power of Christ, but as long as they fear what others think, they will not experience Christ's power in their own lives. The fear of men hinders true spiritual knowledge.

### **B. Wrong presuppositions based on religious rules hinder true spiritual knowledge.**

Here we move from the parents to the religious leaders, whom John calls "the Jews." John almost offhandedly mentions the crux of the problem (Jn 9:14), "Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes." As I mentioned last time, this violated at least three rabbinic Sabbath regulations: (1) You could not knead on the Sabbath, but Jesus kneaded the saliva and dirt into clay; (2) there were rules against anointing on the Sabbath; (3) you could not heal on the Sabbath, unless it was to save a life. These rules were not in the Law of Moses, but had been added by the religious leaders.

Their wrong presupposition was: "Our rules are equal to God's law." The minor premise was, "Jesus violated our rules." Their conclusion was, "Thus Jesus violated God's law, and He is a sinner." But their presupposition was faulty.

Some of the Pharisees disagreed with this reasoning, so a debate ensued among them (9:16). This may have been Nicodemus or

Joseph of Arimathea, both of whom were on the Council, but later took bold action to provide for Jesus' burial. Earlier (3:2) Nicodemus had admitted to Jesus, "No one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." So, here they register disagreement by asking (9:16), "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" But their view did not prevail.

It's easy to confuse religious traditions or rules with biblical mandates to the point where you assume that your traditions or rules are equal with Scripture. But you can end up denying a miracle, even if he's standing right in front of you! Back in the hippie era, when most people dressed up in their nicest clothes to go to church, many older church members could not accept that a bearded, long-haired guy in tattered jeans, a T-shirt, and bare feet had really been converted. Why doesn't he look like us and dress like us? But they never stopped to question what the Bible says about how a Christian should look and dress. Wrong presuppositions based on religious rules hinder true spiritual knowledge.

### **C. Always seeking more evidence while discrediting the evidence you already have hinders true spiritual knowledge.**

The Pharisees had the evidence of the neighbors, the parents, and the man himself that he had been born blind and that Jesus had healed him on the Sabbath. But they still wanted more evidence, or more truthfully, they wanted evidence that would refute the evidence that they had been given, which they didn't like. So, they called the man a second time and said (9:24), "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner."

What they're saying is, "Come on, your story must be wrong! Tell us the truth! We know for a fact that this man is a sinner!" (See Josh. 7:19 for the expression, "Give glory to God," meaning, "Tell the truth.") But John wants us to see that the man really is glorifying God by testifying to the truth about Jesus. He won't change his story. So, they ask him again (Jn 9:26), "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" They aren't looking for more evidence so that they can believe. Rather, they're trying to find something to discredit the evidence that they have.

Now the man reveals both his sense of humor and his fortitude to stand up to these feared religious leaders. He says (Jn 9:27), "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" They revile him and take their stand as disciples of Moses. They state what they know (Jn 9:29): "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from." Back in 7:27, they had written off Jesus by claiming that they did know where He was from, namely, from Nazareth. But here they're discrediting Jesus as a religious upstart from who-knows-where. I love the former blind man's reply (Jn 9:31-33):

"We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."

At this point, the Pharisees are so beside themselves that they put the man down and then put him out (Jn 9:34). They weren't genuinely seeking evidence to clear up their doubts. Rather, they were just looking for ways to discredit the evidence that they already had been given. They would not come to know the truth. Always seeking more evidence while discrediting the evidence you already have hinders true spiritual knowledge.

### **D. Pride hinders true spiritual knowledge.**

The Pharisees put down this man's testimony (Jn 9:34), "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" They held to the view that the disciples reflected (Jn 9:2), that either the man or his parents must have sinned for him to be born blind. But they prided themselves on their spiritual knowledge because they thought that they knew the Scriptures. So how could this former blind beggar, who was probably illiterate, teach them anything? Again, John is using irony: He couldn't teach them anything and neither could Jesus, because of their spiritual pride.

In Jn 9:40, these Pharisees challenge Jesus by asking, "We are not blind, too, are we?" Jesus replies (Jn 9:41), "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains." He means, "If you would admit your spiritual blindness, I would forgive and heal you. But because you arrogantly insist that you can see, you remain in your sins." Spiritual pride is one of the main reasons people do not come to Christ. They think that their good works will commend them to God, so they don't see their need for the Savior. But the starting point for true spiritual knowledge is to admit that you're a sinner and need Jesus to save you.

So, the fear of men, wrong presuppositions based on religious tradition, always seeking more evidence while discrediting the evidence you already have, and spiritual pride, will hinder true spiritual knowledge.

## **2. The foundation for true spiritual knowledge is for Christ to open your eyes.**

Unlike his parents and the Pharisees, who both begin by claiming certain knowledge, the man begins by admitting that there is much that he doesn't know. He didn't know where Jesus was when his neighbors asked him (Jn 9:12). He didn't know much about Jesus at the point of his healing, although he soon came to surmise that He was a prophet. He didn't know enough to comment on the

theological debate about whether Jesus was a sinner or not because He had broken the Sabbath (Jn 9:25). But there was one thing he knew for certain, and it was a glorious fact (Jn 9:25): “One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

In this, the man is a type of everyone who truly knows Jesus. A new believer doesn't know much. He probably can't state the biblical doctrine of the trinity. He won't understand how God's sovereignty and human responsibility tie together. He may not be able clearly to articulate the two natures of Christ. There are many theological controversies that he is clueless about. But one thing he knows truly: I was blind, but now I see!

To put it another way, when God causes you to be born again, He changes your heart and you know it. He changes your desires. Formerly, the Bible was both confusing and boring if you ever tried to read it. But now, it's food for your soul. You long for it like a newborn baby longs for his mother's milk (1 Pet. 2:2). Before, you shrugged off sin as no big deal. Many sins you didn't even recognize as sin. “Everybody does that! Every guy looks at porn sometimes! Everyone loses his temper! Everyone uses swear words at times! Everyone cheats on his taxes!” Etc.

But after God opens your eyes and you begin to feed on the Word, the Holy Spirit begins to convict you of things that you formerly did without a twinge of conscience: “The way you just spoke to your wife was not loving. The way you looked at that woman was lustful. The way you covered your tracks was not truthful.” So you begin to call sin what it is and to walk in daily repentance. You begin to want to know Christ more deeply. The foundation for this new desire for spiritual knowledge is that Christ opened your eyes to your own sin, to God's absolute holiness, and to the provision that Christ made for you at the cross.

### **3. From the foundation of Christ opening your eyes you grow in spiritual knowledge.**

The man begins by only knowing Jesus as “the man who is called Jesus” (Jn 9:11). He progresses to calling Him a prophet (Jn 9:17). Later he acknowledges Him as one worthy of being followed (“disciples,” Jn 9:27–28). He moves on to argue that Jesus had to come from God (Jn 9:33). And finally, when he sees Jesus for the first time, he believes in Him and worships Him as Lord (Jn 9:38).

The Bible pictures the Christian life as a growth process from birth (John 3:3) to infancy (1 Cor. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:2), childhood, young adulthood, to spiritual fatherhood (1 John 2:12–14). But time alone does not insure spiritual growth. We have to be actively engaged in the process. Daily we need a healthy diet of spiritual food from the Word. We need to talk with our Heavenly Father and take all our cares to Him in prayer (1 Pet. 5:7). We need to spend time with our brothers and sisters in the family of God, helping each other to grow. We need to be judging and turning from the sins that hinder spiritual growth.

When it comes to true spiritual knowledge, we still need to be careful. As Paul warned (1 Cor. 8:1, my translation), “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.” Or (1 Tim. 1:5), “The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

### **Conclusion**

Billy Graham told the story of an English actor who was honored with a banquet. In the course of the evening, he was asked to give a reading, and he chose Psalm 23. He read it in a moving way that brought out the beauty of the Psalm. His friends applauded. Later in the evening, an aged pastor was asked to speak. He too quoted Psalm 23. His voice rang with assurance and was vibrant with love. When he concluded, there was no applause, but there were not many dry eyes in the room. The actor stepped over to the pastor, grasped his hand, and said, “Sir, I know the Psalm—but you know the Shepherd!”

So what do you know? I hope that you know the Shepherd and that He has opened your eyes to the truth of who He is. I also hope that you want to know Him more. Let's press on to know our risen Savior (Phil. 3:8–14)!

### **Application Questions**

1. Of the four hindrances to spiritual knowledge mentioned in our text, which gives you the most trouble? How can you fight it?
2. Give some modern examples of religious rules that often take on a status equal to Scripture. Are all such rules bad? Why/why not?
3. What are some specific ways that we as evangelicals are prone to fall into spiritual pride?
4. In what sense does God not hear sinners (John 9:31) when they pray and in what sense does He hear sinners (Rom. 10:13)? Cite other Scriptures on both sides of this matter. [How Do You Know? \(John 9:13-34\)](#)

**John 9:14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.**

BGT John 9:14 ν δ σ ββατον ν μ ρ τ ν πηλ ν πο ησεν ησο ς κα ν ξεν ατο το ς φθαλμο ς.

KJV John 9:14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

NET John 9:14 (Now the day on which Jesus made the mud and caused him to see was a Sabbath.)

CSB John 9:14 The day that Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes was a Sabbath.

ESV John 9:14 Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

NIV John 9:14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath.

NLT John 9:14 because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him.

- Jn 5:9,16 Jn 7:21-23 Mt 12:1-14 Mk 2:23-28 Mk 3:1-6 Lu 6:1-11 Lk 13:10-17 Lu 14:1

#### Related Passages:

John 5:9; 16+ Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day....16 For this reason **the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.**

John 7:21-23+ Jesus answered them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel. 22 "For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man. 23 **"If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?"**

### JOHN'S PARENTHETICAL EXPLANATION IN PREPARATION FOR CONFRONTATION

**Now it was a Sabbath ([sabbaton](#)) on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened([anoigo](#)) his eyes** - It is no accident that a number of Jesus' miracles took place on the **Sabbath**. "To the Pharisees this fact was a far more important matter than whether or how the thing was done" ([Robertson](#)) John wants his reader to understand that Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath, for this truth will "catalyze" (so to speak) the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees culminating in the Cross. Note that John credits **Jesus** with the miracle not the **clay (Jesus...opened his eyes)**

[Utley](#) on **Sabbath** - The Jewish leaders' traditional rules (the Oral Traditions codified in the [Talmud](#)) took precedent over this man's need (cf. Jn 5:9; 9:16; Matt. 23:24).

[Brian Bell](#) - Rabbis taught you could spit on a rock, but not on the ground, for that would be working (i.e. it might roll on the dirt & make mud [ED: OR "PLOW A FURROW!"]). By this time, years of legalistic accretion had encrusted the original Sabbath laws like barnacles. (William Barclay)

[Warren Wiersbe](#) - Jesus' act of deliberately healing the man on the **Sabbath** Day caused the Pharisees great concern. It was illegal to work on the Sabbath; and by making the clay, applying the clay, and healing the man, Jesus had performed three unlawful "works." The Pharisees should have been praising God for a miracle; instead, they sought evidence to prosecute Jesus. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

[Spurgeon](#) - You may be sure that the Pharisees would be in high dudgeon because Christ did that; for, according to their stupid superstition, to make clay with spittle was a kind of brick-making which must not be done on the Sabbath-day, and they would, for that reason, condemn Christ as a breaker of the Sabbath. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

[Adam Clarke](#) - "Works of necessity and mercy never could be forbidden on that day by him whose name is mercy, and whose nature is love; for the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; were it otherwise, the Sabbath would be rather a curse than a blessing."

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**Sabbath** ([4521](#)) [sabbaton](#) ([SEE MUCH LONGER "DEFINITION"](#)) from **shabath** - [07676](#) = to cease from work, intermission - see note on [shabath](#)) has two main meanings: (1) **Sabbath**, the seventh day of the week, held sacred by the Jews and (2) **week**. The **Sabbath** was a sign between the Lord and the nation of Israel—the sign of the Old Covenant (the Law)—that they might know He is the Lord Who sanctifies them, sets them apart. Israel was to observe the **Sabbath** because it was holy, set apart, for them. The one who profaned the **Sabbath**, did not treat it as holy, was put to death. The **Sabbath**, the seventh day, was to be a day of complete rest. Israel was to keep it throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. But after the captivity arose the school of the Pharisees, and by them the attractive (positive) character of the Sabbatical observances was destroyed. In place of the joy, they imposed upon the people the yoke of a scrupulous, slavish sabbatarianism which made the Sabbath an END instead of a MEANS, hampered the spirit of true worship, and laid greater stress upon a punctilious obedience to mere human regulations than

upon God's commands in the Law. **Some of their ridiculous Sabbath prohibitions included:** walking in the grass on the Sabbath because its bruising effect would constitute a kind of *threshing*; wearing nailed shoes because they would be viewed as *carrying a burden*. It was against this absurd perversion of the commandment that the Lord Jesus protested. He refused to sanction Pharisaical legalism and vigorously defended His Sabbath miracles (see table below). Jesus kept the **Sabbath** in the highest sense of the term. He observed every [jot and tittle](#) of the Mosaic Law in the freedom of the spirit. He taught us that acts of necessity and mercy are to be performed always (as in this story in Lk 13:10-17), even on the **Sabbath**, and worldly occupations are to be put as far as possible out of our thoughts. In the Christian church the first day of the week (Sunday) has been substituted for the last day (Saturday) as a day of worship and rest. This, however, is in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. Christians are to do what the New Testament says. Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial, sacrificial part of the Old Testament law when He died on the cross (Hebrews 10:7-10). He told Peter that the dietary laws no longer applied to the church (Acts 10). True believers keep the moral part of God's laws as they live by His Spirit (Ro 8:1ff -see [notes](#))

**Sabbaton - 62v** - Matt. 12:1; Matt. 12:2; Matt. 12:5; Matt. 12:8; Matt. 12:10; Matt. 12:11; Matt. 12:12; Matt. 24:20; Matt. 28:1; Mk. 1:21; Mk. 2:23; Mk. 2:24; Mk. 2:27; Mk. 2:28; Mk. 3:2; Mk. 3:4; Mk. 6:2; Mk. 16:1; Mk. 16:2; Mk. 16:9; Lk. 4:16; Lk. 4:31; Lk. 6:1; Lk. 6:2; Lk. 6:5; Lk. 6:6; Lk. 6:7; Lk. 6:9; Lk. 13:10; Lk. 13:14; Lk. 13:15; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 14:1; Lk. 14:3; Lk. 14:5; Lk. 18:12; Lk. 23:54; Lk. 23:56; Lk. 24:1; Jn. 5:9; Jn. 5:10; Jn. 5:16; Jn. 5:18; Jn. 7:22; Jn. 7:23; Jn. 9:14; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 19:31; Jn. 20:1; Jn. 20:19; Acts 1:12; Acts 13:14; Acts 13:27; Acts 13:42; Acts 13:44; Acts 15:21; Acts 16:13; Acts 17:2; Acts 18:4; Acts 20:7; 1 Co. 16:2; Col. 2:16

#### Related Resources:

- **Sabbath** - article in the [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery - see page 2510](#) - Excerpt - The imagery surrounding the seventh day of the Jewish week conveys a sense of the day's being special and sacred, but beyond that several distinct motifs emerge. The earliest references to the sabbath focus on the motif of repose or cessation from exertion. At the original sabbath, after "God finished the work" of creation, he "rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done" (Gen 2:2 NRSV). When observance of the sabbath became one of the Ten Commandments, the example of God's rest after six days of work remained prominent (Ex 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15). During the exodus, the sabbath as a day of cessation from work became institutionalized for the Hebrew nation, as the people were prohibited from gathering manna on the seventh day (Ex 16:23-30), with the implication that the sabbath is to draw a boundary around the acquisitive urge. The motif of God's and Israel's ceasing from work on the sabbath is naturally related to being "refreshed" (Ex 31:17)—the motif of renewal as part of sabbath rest. The sabbath is also said to be "a delight" (Is 58:13). The motif of sabbath rest is turned to metaphoric use in Hebrews 4:9, which views heaven itself as "a sabbath rest." ([Click for full article](#))
- [Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Does God require Sabbath-keeping of Christians? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the Sabbath day? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are some Bible verses about sabbath? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why does Exodus 35:2 require the death penalty for working on the Sabbath? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is working on Sunday a sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the Lord's day? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Did Constantine change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**John 9:15 Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see."**

BGT John 9:15 π λιν ο ν ρ τω ν α τ ν κα ο Φαρισαοι π ς ν βλεψεν. δ ε πεν α το ς π η λ ν π θη κ ν μου π το ς φθα λμο ς κα νι ψ μην κα β λ π ω.

KJV John 9:15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

NET John 9:15 So the Pharisees asked him again how he had gained his sight. He replied, "He put mud on my eyes and I washed, and now I am able to see."

CSB John 9:15 So again the Pharisees asked him how he received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," he



told them. "I washed and I can see."

ESV John 9:15 So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

NIV John 9:15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

NLT John 9:15 The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, "He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!"

YLT John 9:15 Again, therefore, the Pharisees also were asking him how he received sight, and he said to them, 'Clay he did put upon my eyes, and I did wash -- and I see.'

- **the Pharisees:** Jn 9:10,11,26,27

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 42:18 **Hear** (Lxx = [akouo](#) in [aorist imperative](#) , you (SPIRITUALLY) deaf (TO THE VOICE OF GOD FROM HIS PROPHETS AND/OR HIS WRITTEN WORD)! And **look** (Lxx = [anablepo](#) in [aorist imperative](#) - RECEIVE SPIRITUAL SIGHT!), you (SPIRITUALLY) blind, that you may see.

### THE INQUISITION INITIATED BY THE MEN OF INIQUITY

**Then** ([oun](#)) is also translated **so** or **therefore**. The preposition marks progression in the narrative, and as we shall soon see the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees begins to heat up even though Jesus Himself is not physically present.

**THOUGHT** - When we mention the Name Jesus today in almost any secular setting, we can almost always see the hackles rise on the neck of the scoffers and we can sense their enmity toward us because of His Name. The point is He is not physically present, but His Name when used in a sacred sense often brings conflict and division. It did in the first century so we cannot expect it to be any different for us as His followers in the 21st century. This guaranteed antagonism demands what we be continually filled with and emboldened by His Spirit (Eph 5:18+, see Acts 4:31+).

**The Pharisees** ([pharisaios](#)) **also were asking** ([erotao](#)) **him again how he received his sight** ([anablepo](#)) - This statement suggests that they initially accepted the premise that this man had previously been blind. The verb **asking** is in the vivid imperfect tense which suggests that the inquisitors were repeating asking (pressing) him for an answer. The verb [erotao](#) was used in legal circles for examining a witness and that is likely the sense in this context.

**And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed**([nipto](#)), **and I see** - He does not hesitate to answer. He gives a simple, honest answer without any interpretation of how he had actually received his sight. He fully followed the instructions of the One Who applied **clay** to his **eyes** and his complete obedience was blessed with full eyesight. Note that the healed man identified the Man as Jesus in Jn 9:11. The text does not say he informed the Pharisees of the Man's Name, but one has to assume that either those who brought him or he himself did speak the Name. The subsequent reactions of the Pharisees leaves little doubt that they knew Jesus was responsible for this miracle.

**Spurgeon** - He is shorter with them. Some tales grow in telling. His gets shorter. Now that he has to deal with Pharisees, he will not waste a word upon them. The more often he tells the story, the shorter it becomes. That is not the usual rule with stories; they generally grow like snowballs as they roll along until, at last, you would hardly recognize the original story. So much has been added to it as it has been told again and again. But this honest, straightforward man cuts the story down to the barest details, and yet tells it well. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Marvin Vincent** - A Rabbinical precept declares, "It is forbidden to apply even fasting-spittle to the eyes on the Sabbath." The words in v. 14, made the clay, also mark a specific point of offense. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

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**Asking** (question, request) ([2065](#)) [erotao](#) from [éromai](#) = ask, inquire) means to ask for, usually with implication of an underlying question. The verb does not carry the note of an authoritative command but rather that of a friend making an urgent appeal to a friend. The term suggests that those making the request stand in a position of familiarity with those being treated. Friberg says [erotao](#) is used of (1) of inquiry in general - ask, put a question, inquire (MK 9.32, 33) (2) as a legal technical term - interrogate, examine, question (Acts 5.27); (3) as seeking to know God ask after, desire to know (RO 10.20); (4) as making a request for

something ask for, demand (Mt 16.1) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) )

**Ertao in John - note especially chapter 9** - Jn. 1:19; Jn. 1:21; Jn. 1:25; Jn. 4:31; Jn. 4:40; Jn. 4:47; Jn. 5:12; Jn. 8:7; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:15; Jn. 9:19; Jn. 9:21; Jn. 9:23; Jn. 12:21; Jn. 14:16; Jn. 16:5; Jn. 16:19; Jn. 16:23; Jn. 16:26; Jn. 16:30; Jn. 17:9; Jn. 17:15; Jn. 17:20; Jn. 18:19; Jn. 18:21; Jn. 19:31; Jn. 19:38

**Received sight (308) anablepo** from **ana** = up, again + **blepo** = to look, to perceive and so discern) means to look up or direct one's vision upward (Of Jesus "**looking up** toward heaven, He blessed the food," = Mt 14:19; Mk 6:41, Lk 9:16; Of Jesus "and **looking up** to heaven with a deep sigh" = Mk 7:34, Of man who regained his sight "**he looked up** and said, "I see men..." = Mk 8:24; "at that very time I **looked up** at him" = Acts 22:13) To regain one's sight or recover from blindness and thus see again ("the **BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT**" = Mt 11:5; "'Rabboni, I want to **regain my sight!**" = Mk 10:51; "so that he might regain his sight" = Acts 9:12, 17, 18). Of one born blind **anablepo** means to gain sight, become able to see, receive sight ("I went away and washed, and I received sight." = Jn 9:11, 15, 18). **Gilbrant** - Three basic uses of **anablepō** are found among classical writers: "to look up," "to see again, regain sight," and metaphorically "to revive." "Looking up" is particularly a mark of confidence (Liddell-Scott). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Anablepo - 23v** - note 3 uses in John 9 (Jn 9:11, 15, 18) Mt. 11:5; Matt. 14:19; Matt. 20:34; Mk. 6:41; Mk. 7:34; Mk. 8:24; Mk. 10:51; Mk. 10:52; Mk. 16:4; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 9:16; Lk. 18:41; Lk. 18:42; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 19:5; Lk. 21:1; Jn. 9:11; Jn. 9:15; Jn. 9:18; Acts 9:12; Acts 9:17; Acts 9:18; Acts 22:13

**John 9:16** Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.

BGT John 9:16 λεγον ο υ κ τ υ Φαρισα ων τιν ε ς ο κ στιν ο το ς παρ θεο νθρωπο ς, τι τ σ ββατον ο τηρε . λλοι [δ ] λεγον· π ς δ ναται νθρωπο ς μαρτωλ ς τοια τα σημε α ποιε ν; κα σχ σμα ν ν α το ς.

KJV John 9:16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

NET John 9:16 Then some of the Pharisees began to say, "This man is not from God, because he does not observe the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such miraculous signs?" Thus there was a division among them.

CSB John 9:16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for He doesn't keep the Sabbath!" But others were saying, "How can a sinful man perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.

ESV John 9:16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

NIV John 9:16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided.

NLT John 9:16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath." Others said, "But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?" So there was a deep division of opinion among them.

YLT John 9:16 Of the Pharisees, therefore, certain said, 'This man is not from God, because the sabbath he doth not keep;' others said, 'How is a man -- a sinful one -- able to do such signs?' and there was a division among them.

- **This man:** Jn 9:24,30-33 3:2 5:36 14:11 15:24
- **And there:** Jn 7:12,43 Jn 10:19 Lu 13:31-33 Ac 14:4

#### Related Passages:

John 5:10; 16; 18+ So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the **Sabbath**, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet." (5:16) For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the **Sabbath**.....(5:18) For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more

to kill Him, because He not only was **breaking the Sabbath**, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 6:52+ (JESUS BRINGS DIVISION) Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

John 7:12+ (JESUS BRINGS DIVISION) There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray."

John 7:43+ (JESUS BRINGS DIVISION) So a **division** ([schisma](#)) occurred in the crowd because of Him.

John 10:19+ (JESUS BRINGS DIVISION) A **division** ([schisma](#)) occurred again among the Jews because of these words.

Matthew 10:34-39+ (JESUS BRINGS DIVISION) "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 "For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; 36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. 37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39" "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

## **JUMPING TO CONCLUSION CONCERNING JESUS**

**Therefore** ([oun](#)) - Term of conclusion. Based upon the man's testimony, they [jump to their conclusion](#).

**Some of the Pharisees** ([pharisaios](#)) were saying, "This man (disparaging, contemptuous) **is not from God, because** (introduces their faulty, hypocritical logic) **He does not keep** ([tereo](#)) **the Sabbath** ([sabbaton](#))" - Note **some** but not all (compare **others**). Note also **this man** which is almost certainly meant to be derogatory and denigrating and substantiates that they most likely knew that this was Jesus. Their foolish conclusion is Jesus was **not from God**, even though He has repeatedly told them He was sent from His Father. (See [multiple passages that describe Jesus sent from God](#)). Their reason for stating Jesus was **not from God** is that He was not keeping the ridiculous rules which men required on the **Sabbath**. Once again the legalists missed the true significance of the **Sabbath**, for Jesus had clearly stated "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." (Mk 2:27). A day that was to have been for rest had become an onerous, burdensome day because of all the legalistic minutiae added by the Jews.

**Warren Wiersbe** - The religious leaders were judging on the basis of one thing: nobody who breaks the Sabbath could possibly be a true prophet of God. They were "one-issue" thinkers, not unlike some religious people today. The Pharisees did not realize that Jesus was offering the people something greater than the Sabbath—the true spiritual rest that comes from God (Matt. 11:28–30). (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Robertson** - He violates our rules about the Sabbath and therefore is a Sabbath-breaker as charged when here before (Jn 5:10, 16, 18). Hence he is not "from God"

**But** - Term of contrast marks a change in direction, an "about face" (to use a military metaphor - [pix](#)) in this case one that is very clearly stated.

**Others were saying**, "How can a man who is a sinner ([hamartolos](#)) perform such signs ([semeion](#))?" - Some writers take their use of **sinner** to mean one who is "mortal." This group is attributing the miracle of healing to Jesus and referring to it as a sign! They were accurate, but sadly (for the most part) they were spiritually blind and unable to see the significance of the sign of physical sight to a blind man!

**Utley** on **such signs** - The Pharisees might have been basing their judgement of Jesus on Deut 13:1–5+.

Recall a similar argument by another Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus, who "came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for **no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.**" (John 3:2+)

**And there was a division** ([schisma](#)) **among them** - We see throughout the Gospels that Jesus brings division. He did then and He does today. Mention His Name in a conversation and watch the tone of the conversation (often) change!

**Reformation Study Bible** - Rather than question their own understanding of the law, they rejected Jesus and His ministry. ([John 9:16](#))

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**Signs** (4592) **semeion** from **sema** = sign) a sign is something that serves as a pointer to aid perception or insight. In the NT a sign speaks of a token which has behind it a particular message to be conveyed. In other words, in John's Gospel (where semeion is most concentrated) the apostle recorded certain miracles not for the wonder (cf "wonders") they produced, but because of the message they taught (Jn 20:31). A sign directs attention away from its unusual nature to the meaning and the significance it points to. It speaks of outward compelling proof of divine authority. In John a sign is generally a "miraculous sign" that points to some deeper spiritual significance in connection with the event (Jn 2:11, 18). Semeion describes a miracle whose purpose is that of attesting the claims of the one performing the miracle to be true.

Semeion in John's Gospel - Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:18; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 3:2; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:54; Jn. 6:2; Jn. 6:14; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 10:41; Jn. 11:47; Jn. 12:18; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 20:30

**Division** (4978) **schisma** from **schizo** = to cleave, split) literally a split, a rift, and in a garment a tear or rent. Figuratively, of doctrinal differences and divided loyalties within a group schism, division of opinion, discord (Jn 7.43; 1Co 12.25) **BDAG** - 1. the condition resulting from splitting or tearing, tear, crack in a garment Mt 9:16; Mk 2:21; 2. the condition of being divided because of conflicting aims or objectives, division, dissension, schism fig. ext. of #1 - Jn 7:43; 9:16; 10:19; 1Co1:10; 11:18; 12:25.

**Schisma** in NT - division(4), divisions(2), tear(2). Mt. 9:16; Mk. 2:21; Jn. 7:43; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 10:19; 1Co. 1:10; 1Co. 11:18; 1Co. 12:25

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### **QUESTION - [Did Jesus break the Sabbath law?](#)**

**ANSWER** - gospels record several instances when Jesus healed a person on [the Sabbath](#):

1. Simon Peter's mother-in-law in Peter's home (Mark 1:29–31).
2. A man with a withered hand in the synagogue (Mark 3:1–6).
3. A man born blind in Jerusalem (John 9:1–16).
4. A crippled woman in a synagogue (Luke 13:10–17).
5. A man with dropsy at a Pharisee's house (Luke 14:1–6).
6. A demon-possessed man in Capernaum (Mark 1:21–28).
7. A lame man by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1–18).

Whenever Jesus publicly healed someone on the Sabbath, the [Pharisees](#) accused Him of breaking the Sabbath law (Matthew 12:10; Mark 3:2; John 5:14; 9:14–16). Jesus' response was that He was working just as His Father was working, an answer that did not appease the religious leaders: "For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18). **Breaking the Sabbath would have been a sin, so we must ask the question: did Jesus actually break the Sabbath law?**

**The short answer is "no," but here is some background:** God instituted the Sabbath for the Israelites when He gave Moses the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8–11). On the seventh day of the week, the Israelites were to rest, remembering that God created the universe in six days and then "rested" on the seventh day (Genesis 2:1–3). The Sabbath was given for the benefit of the people (Mark 2:27) and as a sign of the Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 31:13). Over time, however, perspectives on the Sabbath changed. By Jesus' time, the religious leaders had added burdensome rules and traditions for keeping the Sabbath and had elevated their own rules to the level of God's instructions. It was so bad that, when Jesus' disciples picked and ate some heads of grain as they walked through a field, the Pharisees accused them of breaking the Sabbath because they were supposedly "harvesting" and "threshing" (Luke 6:1–2).

Jesus did not break the Sabbath, as outlined by God under the Old Covenant. As He publicly stated, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17). The Pharisees had so conflated their own standard of holiness with God's that they accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath law. They were furious over Jesus' actions, yet it was only *their* Sabbath law He did not keep. Jesus kept God's law, and He had done nothing to violate the Sabbath.

Many Pharisees opposed Jesus. He taught with authority unlike the scribes (Matthew 7:29). He called out their hypocrisy, saying, "They do not practice what they preach" (Matthew 23:3). He also equated Himself with God (John 5:18). In the incident involving the man with the withered hand, the Pharisees asked Jesus, accusingly, if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:10). Jesus' response was full of logic: "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:11). Jesus applied God's principle of desiring mercy not sacrifice (verse 7), referring back to Hosea 6:6. This infuriated the Pharisees, and they plotted how they might kill Him (Matthew 12:14). Yet Jesus came to do the will of the Father (John 5:19) not to follow the man-made

religious rules.

Jesus referred to Himself as the [Lord of the Sabbath](#) (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5). In doing so, Jesus proclaimed that He is greater than the law and has authority even over the laws that govern the Sabbath day. Jesus is the One who made all things (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16), and He instituted the Sabbath day. He had the authority to overrule the Pharisees' traditions and regulations that they had placed on the Sabbath. By [healing on the Sabbath](#), Jesus showed God's goodness, revealed the Pharisees' hardness of heart, and gave a glimpse of the full healing from sin that would soon be made possible by His sacrifice on the cross.

Jesus did not break the Sabbath law, although He did act against the Pharisaical *interpretation* of the law. He broke the Pharisees' laws, and they couldn't stand it. Jesus healed on the Sabbath to help people, to glorify God, and to remind people that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Just as the Sabbath was originally instituted to give people rest from their work and to turn people to God, so Jesus came to provide us rest from attempting to achieve salvation by our own labors. His sacrifice on the cross made a way for the law to be fulfilled and for righteousness and rest to come to all who trust in His finished work. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Larry Richards** - The Pharisees struggled to force the square peg of this miracle into the round holes of their theology. It just wouldn't fit. Jesus had performed the miracle on the Sabbath, and in the process had made mud (vv. 6, 14). This was "work" according to earlier rabbinical rulings, and forbidden on the Sabbath. Theology demanded they classify Jesus a "sinner." But reality demanded they acknowledge a miracle that required the exercise of God's creative power. There's an important lesson for us here. Christian experience will never violate the Scriptures. But it may run contrary to our interpretation of the Scriptures! When a person gives evidence of a work of God in his or her life, we need to reexamine our understanding of the Word of God. (BORROW [The 365 day devotional commentary](#))

**John 9:17 So they said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet."**

BGT John 9:17 λ γουσιβ ο ν τ τυφλ π λιν· τ σ λ γεις περ α το , τι ν ξ ν σου το ς φθαλμο ς; δ ε πεν τι προφ της σ τ ν.

KJV John 9:17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

NET John 9:17 So again they asked the man who used to be blind, "What do you say about him, since he caused you to see?" "He is a prophet," the man replied.

CSB John 9:17 Again they asked the blind man, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" "He's a prophet," he said.

ESV John 9:17 So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

NIV John 9:17 Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet."

NLT John 9:17 Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, "What's your opinion about this man who healed you?" The man replied, "I think he must be a prophet."

YLT John 9:17 They said to the blind man again, 'Thou -- what dost thou say of him -- that he opened thine eyes?'

- **He is:** Jn 4:19 Jn 6:14 Lu 24:19 Ac 2:22 Acts 3:22-26 Acts 10:38

#### Related Passages:

John 4:19+ The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are **a prophet**.

John 6:14+ Therefore when the people saw the **sign** ([semeion](#)) which He had performed, they said, "This is truly **the Prophet** who is to come into the world."

Luke 24:19+ And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was **a prophet** mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people,

Acts 3:22+ "Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU **A PROPHET LIKE ME** FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you.

## **PHARISEES PRESS HIM TO CALL JESUS A PROPHET**

**So** ([oun](#)) - Term of conclusion. NET has "so again..." What's the context? Confusion and division. So they conclude by pressing harder on the healed man.

**They said to the blind** ([tuphlos](#)) **man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened** ([anoigo](#)) **your eyes?"** - There now seems to be a clear consensus among the Pharisees that a miracle has occurred at the hands of "Him" (they refuse to use His Name). So now they want to know who the blind man thinks Jesus is.

[Robertson](#) quips "The doctors disagree and they ask the patient whose story they had already heard (John 9:15)."

**And he said, "He is a prophet** ([prophetes](#)) - To reiterate the Pharisees actually attributed the miracle to the Man, not the mud. They pressed the man whose eyes had been opened for an answer and he responds that Jesus was a **prophet**, much like the words of the Samaritan woman in Jn 4:19+. Note he does not refer to Jesus as **THE** prophet as the people did in Jn 6:14+ when He performed the "bread" sign, there alluding to the One foretold by Moses (Dt 18:15, 18+). Nevertheless, he is growing in his understanding of Who Jesus is.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Some of the Old Testament prophets, such as Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, did perform miracles. The Jewish people would look on their prophets as men of God who could do wonderful things by the power of God. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

[Adam Clarke](#) adds "Now, according to a Jewish maxim, a **prophet** might dispense with the observation of the Sabbath. See Grotius. If they allow that Jesus was a **prophet**, then, even in their sense, he might break the law of the Sabbath, and be guiltless."

**Spurgeon** - He felt that he could safely go as far as that, for Jesus could not have wrought such a miracle as that if he had not been a prophet sent by God. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

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**Prophet** ([4396](#)) [prophetes](#) from [próphemi](#) = literally to tell beforehand in turn from [pró](#) = before, in front of, forth, on behalf of + [phemí](#) = speak, tell) is primarily a forth-teller or one who speaks out God's message, primarily to their own generation, usually always calling the people to God's truth for them at that moment, often using the phrase "Thus saith the Lord." The prophet is one who speaks before in the sense of proclaim, or the one who speaks for, i.e., in the Name of (God). "As distinct from the sacral figures of pagan antiquity the biblical prophet is not a magician. He does not force God. On the contrary, he is under divine constraint. It is God Who invites, summons, and impels him--e.g., [Jer 20:7](#)" (Lamorte and Hawthorne) Although we commonly think of the prophet as predicting future events (foretelling) generally this was secondary to his work of forth-telling. When they functioned as predictors or prognosticators, the Biblical prophets foretold the future with 100 percent accuracy. And so if they were correct on the first coming of Messiah, they will be correct on His second coming and on the coming of the antichrist. In sum, forth-telling dealt with current events and fore-telling with future events, but in both the goal is the same -- to call us to trust the Lord and submit to His will for our lives, living in conformity with His Word. **Lexham Bible** - Prophetes is someone who is specially endowed or enabled to receive and deliver direct revelation of God's will.

**Prophetes in John's Gospel** - Jn. 1:21; Jn. 1:23; Jn. 1:25; Jn. 1:45; Jn. 4:19; Jn. 4:44; Jn. 6:14; Jn. 6:45; Jn. 7:40; Jn. 7:52; Jn. 8:52; Jn. 8:53; Jn. 9:17; Jn. 12:38

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### **QUESTION - [Was Jesus a prophet?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Prophets are presented in the Bible as having several functions. First, prophets are spokesmen for God. When the people of Israel asked the prophet Samuel for a king, God told Samuel, "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king" (1 Samuel 8:7). Samuel was responsible to relay the Word of God to the people of Israel, and God states that He was the source of Samuel's authority and words. Thus, Samuel the prophet was God's representative.

Many other passages in the Old Testament have statements such as "the word of the Lord came to," indicating that the source of the message was God and not the prophet (e.g., 2 Samuel 7:4; 2 Kings 20:4; Jeremiah 1:4; Ezekiel 3:16; and the opening verses of Hosea, Joel, Micah, Jonah, and Zephaniah). Similarly, Jesus taught a heavenly message: "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me" (John 7:16). He also stated that He spoke "just what the Father has taught me" (John 8:28). In Jesus' High Priestly Prayer, He says, "I gave them the words you gave me" (John 17:8). Thus, Jesus clearly fulfilled the role of a prophet, as He

was a spokesman for God.

The second primary function of a prophet in the Bible is what people commonly think of when they hear the term *prophecy*, and that is foretelling or predicting future events through divine revelation. Foretelling, though not the prophets' most common task, is another form of their primary role. In speaking on God's behalf, sometimes the message would include predicting the future. Jesus predicted the future when He told His disciples "that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (Matthew 16:21). This prophecy is recorded as fulfilled in all four Gospel accounts (Matthew 27—28; Mark 15—16; Luke 22—24; and John 18—20). Jesus also predicted that, shortly after His ascension, the disciples would receive power at the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Acts 2 records the fulfillment of the prophecy: the apostles received the Holy Spirit and spoke in languages they did not know to proclaim the gospel to at least fifteen different language groups present in Jerusalem for Pentecost. Thus, Jesus clearly fulfilled the role of a prophet, as He spoke predictively.

A third function of some of the prophets was healing and miracles. Moses performed many miracles, including parting the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21–22). Elijah performed a miracle when he called fire down from heaven to burn up a sacrifice (1 Kings 18:36–38). Elisha performed a miracle when he made the ax head float in the water (2 Kings 6:6). All four Gospel accounts record Jesus performing many miracles and healings (e.g., Matthew 8:14–15; Mark 1:40–45; Luke 8:42–48; and John 6:16–21).

The title "prophet" is used many times in the Gospels when other people refer to Jesus (Matthew 21:11; Luke 7:16; John 4:19). Jesus also alluded to Himself as a prophet in Mark 6:4.

God had told Moses that someday He would send another prophet to Israel, "and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18). Jesus was the prophet who fulfilled that prophecy (see Acts 3:22; 7:37). Jesus fulfills all the requirements for a prophet in title, word, and deed. He is the ultimate prophet in that He is the very Word of God Himself (John 1:1). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**John 9:18 The Jews then did not believe it of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight,**

BGT John 9:18 Ο κ π στευσαν ο ν ο ουδα οι περ α το τι ν τυφλ ς κα ν βλεψεν ως του φ νησαν το ς γονε ς α το το ναβλ ψαντο ς

KJV John 9:18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

NET John 9:18 Now the Jewish religious leaders refused to believe that he had really been blind and had gained his sight until at last they summoned the parents of the man who had become able to see.

CSB John 9:18 The Jews did not believe this about him-- that he was blind and received sight-- until they summoned the parents of the one who had received his sight.

ESV John 9:18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight

NIV John 9:18 The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents.

NLT John 9:18 The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents.

NRS John 9:18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight

YLT John 9:18 and he said -- 'He is a prophet.' The Jews, therefore, did not believe concerning him that he was blind and did receive sight, till that they called the parents of him who received sight,

- Jn 5:44 Jn 12:37-40 Ge 19:14 Isa 26:11 53:1 Lu 16:31 Heb 3:15-19 Heb 4:11

#### Related Passages:

John 5:44+ "How can you **believe**, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that

is from the one and only God?

John 12:37-40+ But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet **they were not believing in Him**. 38 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?**" 39 For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, 40 "**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.**"

## JEWS DISCOUNT "EYEWITNESS" TESTIMONY

**The Jews** ([loudaios](#)) then did (absolutely) not believe ([pisteuo](#)) it of him, that he had been blind ([tuphlos](#)) and had received sight ([anablepo](#)) - NET - "Now the Jewish religious leaders refused to believe that he had really been blind." In this context **the Jews** clearly refers to the antagonistic Jewish leaders.

**Marvin Vincent on the Jews** has an interesting thought - Notice the change from the Pharisees. The Pharisees had already divided on this miracle (Jn 9:16). The Jews represent that section which was hostile to Jesus. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

**Tasker** adds "Unable to explain this unprecedented phenomenon of a man born blind being enabled to see, they will not admit that it has really happened." (Borrow [The Gospel According to St John](#) page 124)

Recall that John frequently uses "**Jews**" to denote those hostile to Jesus, especially among the religious leaders (John 2:18, 20; 5:16, 18; 6:41, 52; 7:1, 15, 35; 8:22, 48, 52, 57-59; 10:24, 31, 33; 19:38; 20:19)

**Until** ([until](#)) they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight ([anablepo](#)) - This is somewhat of a parenthetical explanation by John which serves to introduce us to the following dialogue between the Pharisees and the parents. **Until** ([until](#)) means that the leaders were unbelieving of the miracle up to the point in time when they questioned the man's parents. The implication is that then they began to believe this was a genuine miracle. Sadly although the Pharisees come to **believe** in the reality of the miracle (once they heard the testimony of his parents), they still refused to believe in the Redeemer Who worked the miracle, in contrast to the blind man's genuine belief (Jn 9:35, 36, 38).

**THOUGHT** - Once again we see that those who are most receptive to the Gospel of Jesus are those who are generally "down and out" not religious people. Religion can sadly shield one from the truth of their desperate need for a true relationship with Jesus. In my experience of frequently sharing the Gospel, one group that almost invariably is resistant and even at times antagonistic are those who are religious, thinking their practice of sacraments, ritual prayers, etc, makes them acceptable before a holy God. They will be among the "many" in Mt 7:21-23+ who tragically hear from the lips of Jesus "I never knew you; **DEPART** ([aorist imperative](#)) FROM ME, YOU WHO (present tense - continually) PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS."

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**Believe** (4100) [pisteuo](#) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To accept the word or evidence of. [pisteuo](#) can refer to an "**heart belief**" (saving faith, genuine belief that leads to salvation, this believing involves not only the consent of the mind, but an act of the heart and will of the subject) or an **intellectual belief** (mental assent, "head" knowledge, not associated with bringing salvation if it is by itself), both uses demonstrated by Jesus statement in John 11, "Everyone who lives and **believes** (refers to genuine saving faith) in Me shall never die. Do you **believe** (intellectually) this?" (John 11:26) Regarding belief that saves a soul from hell, W E Vine has an excellent definition of [pisteuo](#) - (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Th 2:11+ -"in order that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [[pisteuo](#)] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.") (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12+ "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [[pisteuo](#)] in His name") and (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender (cf "obedience of faith").

**Pisteuo is a major verb in the Gospel of John** - Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:12; Jn. 1:50; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 2:24; Jn. 3:12; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:21; Jn. 4:39; Jn. 4:41; Jn. 4:42; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:50; Jn. 4:53; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:38; Jn. 5:44; Jn. 5:46; Jn. 5:47; Jn. 6:29; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 6:35; Jn. 6:36; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:64; Jn. 6:69; Jn. 7:5; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 7:38; Jn. 7:39; Jn. 7:48; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:30; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 8:45; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 9:18; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 9:36; Jn. 9:38; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 10:26; Jn. 10:37; Jn. 10:38; Jn. 10:42; Jn. 11:15; Jn. 11:25; Jn. 11:26; Jn. 11:27; Jn. 11:40; Jn. 11:42; Jn. 11:45; Jn. 11:48; Jn. 12:11; Jn. 12:36; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 12:38; Jn. 12:39; Jn. 12:42; Jn. 12:44; Jn. 12:46; Jn. 13:19; Jn. 14:1; Jn. 14:10; Jn. 14:11; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 14:29; Jn. 16:9; Jn. 16:27; Jn. 16:30; Jn. 16:31; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 17:20; Jn. 17:21; Jn. 19:35; Jn. 20:8; Jn. 20:25; Jn.



**John 9:19 and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"**

BGT John 9:19 κα ρησαν ατο ς λγοντες· ο τ ς σιν υ ς μ ν, ν με ς λγετε τι τυφλ ς γενν θη; π ς ο ν βλπει ρτι;

KJV John 9:19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

NET John 9:19 They asked the parents, "Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"

CSB John 9:19 They asked them, "Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

ESV John 9:19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

NIV John 9:19 "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

NLT John 9:19 They asked them, "Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?"

YLT John 9:19 and they asked them, saying, 'Is your son, of whom ye say that he was born blind? how then now doth he see?'

- **Is this:** Jn 9:8,9 Ac 3:10 4:14

## PHARISEE GRILL THE PARENTS

To [grill someone](#) means to question them intensely and even relentlessly.

**And questioned ([erotao](#)) them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind ([tuphlos](#))?"** - Like prosecuting attorneys they press the parents to tell the truth about his blindness from birth.

**Then how does he now see?** - Now the Pharisees are faced with the reality of a miracle, so they desperately sought an explanation. Recall that John had just explained that the religious leaders did not believe that the man had truly been born blind, but that they did believe when they called his parents.

**John 9:20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;**

BGT John 9:20 πεκρθησαν ο ν ο γονε ς ατο κα επαν· ο δαμεν πι ο τ ς σιν υ ς μ ν κα τι τυφλ ς γενν θη·

KJV John 9:20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

NET John 9:20 So his parents replied, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind.

CSB John 9:20 "We know this is our son and that he was born blind," his parents answered.

ESV John 9:20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind.

NIV John 9:20 "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind.

NLT John 9:20 His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind,

YLT John 9:20 His parents answered them and said, 'We have known that this is our son, and that he was born blind;

## THE PARENTS ATTEST SON'S CONGENITAL BLINDNESS

**His parents answered them and said, "We know ([eido](#)).that this is our son, and that he was born blind([tuphlos](#))** - The **parents** respond using the verb [eido](#) for **know**, which speaks of absolute, beyond a shadow of a doubt knowledge. The Pharisees would have had no difficulty understanding the parent's statement testifying to their son's congenital blindness.

[Robertson](#) - These two questions the parents answer clearly and thus cut the ground from under the disbelief of these Pharisees as to the fact of the cure (verse 18). So these Pharisees made a failure here.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Perhaps they (PHARISEES) could discredit the miracle. If so, then they could convince the people that Jesus had plotted the whole thing and was really deceiving the people. He had craftily "switched" beggars so that the sighted man was not the man who had been known as the blind beggar. The best way to get that kind of evidence would be to interrogate the parents of the beggar, so they called them in and asked them two questions: (1) "Is this your son?" And (2) "If he is, how does he now see?" If they refused to answer either question, they were in trouble; or if they answered with replies contrary to what the leaders wanted, they were in trouble. What a dilemma! They answered the first question honestly: he was their son and he had been born blind. They answered the second question evasively: they did not know how he was healed or who healed him. They then used the old-fashioned tactic called "passing the buck" by suggesting that the Pharisees ask the man himself. After all, he was of age! (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**John 9:21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself."**

BGT John 9:21 π ς δ ν ν β λ π ρ ι ο κ ο δ α μ ε ν , τ ς ν ο ι ξ ε ν α τ ο τ ο ς φ θ α λ μ ο ς μ ε ς ο κ ο δ α μ ε ν · α τ ν ρ ω τ σ α π τ ε , λ ι κ α ν χ ρ ε ι , α τ ς π ε ρ α υ τ ο λ α λ σ ε ι .

KJV John 9:21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

NET John 9:21 But we do not know how he is now able to see, nor do we know who caused him to see. Ask him, he is a mature adult. He will speak for himself."

CSB John 9:21 "But we don't know how he now sees, and we don't know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he's of age. He will speak for himself."

ESV John 9:21 But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself."

NIV John 9:21 But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself."

NLT John 9:21 but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself."

YLT John 9:21 and how he now seeth, we have not known; or who opened his eyes, we have not known; himself is of age, ask him; he himself shall speak concerning himself.'

### **PARENTAL "TWO STEP" HOW? & WHO?**

**but** - Term of contrast. They knew their son was born blind but now they begin to stutter and vacillate, verse 22 explaining why they choose this evasive tactic.

**How he now sees, we** (absolutely) **do not know** ([eido](#)) **or who opened** ([anoigo](#)) **his eyes, we do not know** ([eido](#)) - They agree that he **sees** but **how** they deny that they **know**. More significantly, they deny they knew **who** performed the miracle. So clearly they know it was a "**Who**", but out of fear of excommunication, they were not about to utter a name. Note they use the same verb for **know** ([eido](#)) modified by an absolute negative (ouk). In short, they absolutely deny knowing who **opened his eyes**. Had their son mentioned His Name (their son clearly knew - Jn 9:11)? We can't say for certain, but personally I think they knew the Name and would rather lie outright than to be put out of the synagogue.

**Ask** ([erotao](#)) **him; he is of age, he will speak for himself."** - **Ask** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#). One has to believe this "**ask**" was somewhat muffled. And so the first step was deny knowledge and the second step is [to punt](#) which is an American idiom that means to consider, devise, or undertake a different course of action in an attempt to resolve an undesirable situation,

specifically incurring the ire of the religious elite!

**Spurgeon** - You working men, if you were all to speak up for Christ, what an effect would be produced: what an influence you would have on others like you. Of course when they hear us preach, they say, 'Oh well, you know, he is a parson. He says it professionally. It is his business to say it.' But when you tell of what the Lord has done for you, it becomes the talk: it is repeated over and over again. I know what Tom says when he gets home. He says to his wife Mary, 'What do you think of that Jack that I have been working with? Why, he has been talking to me about his soul, and he says his sin is forgiven him, and he seems such a happy man. You know that he used to drink and swear the same as I do, but he is a wonderfully different man now; and I should say, from what I see, there must be something in it. Well, he asked me home the other night, and his place is so different from ours.' 'There, you hold your tongue,' Mary will answer up pretty sharply: 'if you brought your wages home to me regularly every week, I could lay them out for you better.' 'Ah' says he, 'and that is what I have been thinking. It is just because he is a religious man that he does bring his wages home, and I think there is something real about his conversion. He does not drink as I do. He does not get mixed up with all manners of larks and follies. I should not have thought so much of it had the parson spoken to me. But now I really do think there is something good and genuine in the grace he talks about. You and I had better go next Sunday evening to the Tabernacle, or somewhere else, and hear about it for ourselves.' There are many, many souls brought to Christ in that way. We cannot do without your testimony, Jack, because your conversation is suitable to your own class. (Sermon [Speak for Yourself. A Challenge!](#))

**John 9:22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.**

BGT John 9:22 τα τα ε παν ο γονε ς α το τι φοβο ντο το ς ουδα ους· δη γ ρ συνετ θειντο ο ουδα οι να ν τις α τ ν μολογ σ χριστ ν, ποσυν γωγος γ νηται.

KJV John 9:22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

NET John 9:22 (His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jewish religious leaders. For the Jewish leaders had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.)

CSB John 9:22 His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jews, since the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him as Messiah, he would be banned from the synagogue.

ESV John 9:22 (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)

NIV John 9:22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.

NLT John 9:22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue.

YLT John 9:22 These things said his parents, because they were afraid of the Jews, for already had the Jews agreed together, that if any one may confess him -- Christ, he may be put out of the synagogue;

- **because:** Jn 7:13 Jn 12:42-43 Jn 19:38 Jn 20:19 Ps 27:1,2 Pr 29:25 Isa 51:7,12 57:11 Lu 12:4-9 Lk 22:56-61 Ac 5:13 Ga 2:11-13 Rev 21:8
- **he was to be put out** Jn 9:34 12:42 16:2 Lu 6:22 Ac 4:18 5:40

#### Related Passages:

John 12:42-43+ Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, **for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue** 43 for (EXPLAINS THEY LOVED MEN'S APPROVAL, NOT GOD'S) they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

John 16:2 (JESUS WARNING HIS DISCIPLES OF WHAT WAS COMING) **They will make you outcasts from the synagogue**, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.

John 19:38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one **for fear of the**

**Jews**, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.

John 20:19 So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, **for fear of the Jews**, Jesus came and stood in their midst and \*said to them, "Peace be with you."

Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.

Ezra 10:8 (OT EXAMPLE OF EX-COMMUNICATION) and that whoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the leaders and the elders, all his possessions should be forfeited and he himself excluded from the assembly of the exiles.

## **PARENTHETICAL EXPLANATION FOR PARENT'S RESPONSE**

**His parents said this because they were afraid ([phobeo](#)) of the Jews ([loudaios](#))** - John explains why the parents **pass the buck** to their son! It is sad when religious leaders cause fear in their flock rather than confidence and comfort.

**For** - Term of explanation. What is John explaining? Clearly John now gives the reason for the parent's fear **of the Jews ([loudaios](#))** .

**The Jews ([loudaios](#)) had already agreed ([suntithemi](#) in perfect tense = settled) that if anyone confessed ([homologeō](#)) Him to be Christ ([Christos](#) - the Messiah) - IF is a third class condition which potential action or that which may or may not happen. Supposition where the reality of the issue is uncertain. The Pharisees had "huddled up" and come to a firm agreement regarding what to do with anyone who **confessed ([homologeō](#))** that Jesus was the Messiah. This does not appear to be confession of Jesus as Savior, but just as Messiah. The implication is that the Pharisees knew that Jesus was held to be Messiah by some of the Jews.**

**THOUGHT** - Have you confessed Jesus as the Christ? Or as Paul would say, if you confess "with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." (Ro 10:9-10+) Is fear of what others will think, say or do to you, keeping you from confessing Jesus as the Christ, your Redeemer? Jesus said "whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:35-36) Better to suffer a little temporal persecution for His Name, rather than suffer eternal punishment for rejecting His Name!

**Marvin Vincent** on agreed - The sense is, had formed an agreement in order to bring about this end, viz., that the confessor of Christ should be excommunicated. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - What lay behind all of this questioning and these furtive replies? The fear of people. We met it at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:13), and we shall meet it again at our Lord's last Passover (John 12:42). These people were seeking the honor of men and not the honor that comes from God (John 5:44). To be sure, it was a serious thing to be excommunicated from the synagogue, but it was far more serious to reject the truth and be lost forever. "The fear of man brings a snare" (Pr 29:25). The Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus, and the parents were trying to avoid a trap; but all of them were only ensnaring themselves! The parents should have heeded the counsel of Isaiah 51:7 and Isaiah 57:12. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Robertson** - Jesus had made confession of Himself before men the test of discipleship **ED: AS AN ASIDE [EVERY TRUE BELIEVER IS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS](#)**) and denial the disproof (Mt 10:32+ = Lk 12:8+). We know that many of the rulers nominally believed on Jesus (Jn 12:42+) and yet "**did not confess him because of the Pharisees**", for the very reason given here, "that they might not be put out of the synagogue".... Small wonder then that here the parents cowered a bit....There were three kinds of excommunication (for thirty days, for thirty more, indefinitely).

**He was to be put out of the synagogue ([aposunagogos](#))** - The punishment for acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah expulsion from the Jewish synagogue. The leaders did expel the healed blind man from the synagogue when he confronted them (Jn 9:34).

**Utley** on **put out** - This procedure may go back to Ezra (cf. Ezra 10:8). We know from rabbinical literature that there were three types of exclusions: (1) for one week; (2) for one month; or (3) for life.

**MacArthur** adds "Contrary to what they told the Pharisees, the man's parents evidently did know that Jesus had healed their son. Had they not known that, there would have been no reason for them to be **afraid** that the **Jews** might **put them out of the synagogue** because of Jesus. The term **aposunagogos**, unknown to secular writers, meant to be excommunicated or put under a ban and a curse, a banishment that meant being cut off from the religious and social life of Israel; it was therefore a dreaded

punishment (cf. Jn 12:42; Jn 16:2)." (See [John Commentary](#))

**Marcus Dods** on **ex-communication** - Of excommunication there were three degrees: the first lasted for thirty days; then followed 'a second admonition,' and if impenitent the culprit was punished for thirty days more; and if still impenitent he was laid under the Cherem or ban, which was of indefinite duration, and which entirely cut him off from intercourse with others. He was treated as if he were a leper."

**Marvin Vincent** on **put out of synagogue** - The literal rendering cannot be neatly given, as there is no English adjective corresponding to *ποσυν γωγος*, which means *excluded from the synagogue*: as nearly as possible—that *He should become banished from the synagogue*. The adjective occurs only in John's Gospel—here, Jn 12:42; 16:2. Three kinds of excommunication were recognized, of which only the third was the real cutting off, the other two being disciplinary. The first, and lightest, was called *rebuke*, and lasted from seven to thirty days. The second was called *thrusting out*, and lasted for thirty days at least, followed by a "second admonition," which lasted for thirty days more. This could only be pronounced in an assembly of ten. It was accompanied by curses, and sometimes proclaimed with the blast of the horn. The excommunicated person would not be admitted into any assembly of ten men, nor to public prayer. People would keep at the distance of four cubits from him, as if he were a leper. Stones were to be cast on his coffin when dead, and mourning for him was forbidden. If all else failed, the third, or real excommunication was pronounced, the duration of which was indefinite. The man was to be as one dead. No intercourse was to be held with him; one must not show him the road, and though he might buy the necessaries of life, it was forbidden to eat and drink with him. These severer forms appear to have been of later introduction, so that the penalty which the blind man's parents feared was probably separation from all religious fellowship, and from ordinary intercourse of life for perhaps thirty days. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

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**Agreed** (4934) **suntithemi** from **sun** = together + **tithemi** = to place, put) means literally to put together side by side. The three uses in the NT (Lk. 22:5; Jn. 9:22; Acts 23:20) are all in the middle voice which conveys the meaning "to agree with," to work out a joint arrangement or as the KJV renders it "to covenant with," which suggests the coming together ("side by side") of two parties to form a pact or agreement.

**Confessed** (acknowledged, professed, admitted) (3670) **homologeō** from **homos** = one and the same or together with+ **legō** = to say; confess from **con** = together, **fateor** = to say.) literally means to say the same thing as another and so to agree in one's statements with, to acknowledge, to admit the truth of (an accusation). **Vincent** writes that "The fundamental idea of **confess** is that of saying the same thing as another; while **profess** (**pro** = forth, **fateor** = to say) is to declare openly. Hence, to **profess** Christ is to declare Him publicly as our Lord: to **confess** Christ is to declare agreement with all that He says. When Christ confesses His followers before the world, He makes a declaration in agreement with what is in His heart concerning them. Similarly, when He declares to the wicked "I never knew you" ("then will I profess"), a similar agreement between His thought and His declaration is implied. The two ideas run into each other, and the Rev. is right in the few cases in which it retains **profess**, since **confess** would be ambiguous. See, for example, Titus 1:16.

**Put out** (656) (**aposunagogos** from **apo** = from + **sunagoge**) literally means to be expelled from the synagogue. **Friberg** says it is "a religious technical term relating to Jewish disciplinary measures in varying degrees of severity expelled from the synagogue; (completely) excommunicated; cut off from the rights and privileges of a Jew; put under the ban or curse (Jn. 9:22; Jn. 12:42; Jn. 16:2). (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#)) Not in the Septuagint.

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#### QUESTION - [How is the fear of man a snare \(Proverbs 29:25\)?](#)

**ANSWER** - Proverbs 29:25 says, "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe." A snare is a lure or a trap. Fishermen sometimes use snares to catch fish. Hunters use various kinds of snares to trap game. And Satan uses snares to trap human beings (Jeremiah 5:26). One of those snares is the fear of man.

The fear of man can be both physical and psychological. Jesus said to His followers, "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him" (Luke 12:4–5). Jesus was preparing the disciples for the physical persecution that would follow His resurrection (Luke 21:12; Acts 8:1). They would be beaten, stoned, flogged, and imprisoned (2 Corinthians 11:24–27). Many of them would be killed. Yet He warned them not to let the fear of man stop them from proclaiming the gospel. Even though His followers would undergo tremendous physical suffering for His sake, the trials would be brief and temporary (2 Corinthians 4:17). The moment they left the earth, they would forever reap [rewards](#) for their faithfulness. Wicked men could hurt them no longer (Revelation 3:5).

But a threat more prevalent to most Christians, especially those in Western and free nations, is the psychological fear of man. This fear is an anxious need to receive affirmation from those around us. The fear of man manifests as people-pleasing, compromised values, peer pressure, and a choice not to [share our faith](#). The fear of man can be a snare when we allow it to influence our

decisions. Rather than obey the voice of the Holy Spirit (John 10:27), we opt for avoiding unpleasant interactions. It's easier to heed the fear of man than to invite the possibility of consequences. Consider the bold words of Peter when he and the other apostles were ordered to stop preaching in the name of Jesus: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). The first disciples did not allow the fear of man to keep them from doing what God had called them to do.

The **fear of man** is a snare in that it supplants the **fear of God** in our lives. Since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ([Psalm 111:10](#)), the fear of man sets us on the road to foolishness.

The fear of man has replaced biblical conviction in some so-called Christian circles today. Public opinion has overridden the clear teaching of Scripture on many social issues. **Entire denominations are caving to the fear of man, and it has become a snare to them. The desire to be viewed by the world as [progressive](#), enlightened, [tolerant](#), or [politically correct](#) is a snare Satan has used to reel people into his way of thinking.** The need to be liked and accepted has become more important than the Word of God to many professing believers, thus proving the truth of Proverbs 29:25.

Romans 8:31 points us away from the ensnaring fear of man: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" While Christians should always be sensitive to current social issues and be compassionate and kind to all, we must never allow the fear of man to determine our course. Thousands of martyrs could have avoided death had they only remained silent about their loyalty to Christ. If they had allowed the fear of man to silence them, they may have won the world's applause but lost heaven's. While Satan cannot steal the salvation of those born again into God's kingdom (John 1:12; 3:3), he can and does use snares to steal our victory, our witness, and our opportunities to store up treasure in heaven by magnifying the fear of man (John 10:10; Luke 12:33). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**John 9:23 For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."**

BGT John 9:23 δι το το ο γονε ς α το ε παν τι λικ αν χει, α τ ν περωτ σατε.

KJV John 9:23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

NET John 9:23 For this reason his parents said, "He is a mature adult, ask him.")

CSB John 9:23 This is why his parents said, "He's of age; ask him."

ESV John 9:23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

NIV John 9:23 That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

NLT John 9:23 That's why they said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

YLT John 9:23 because of this his parents said -- 'He is of age, ask him.'

- **He is:** Jn 9:21

### JOHN REPEATS THE PARENT'S RESPONSE

**For this reason** - This phrase should always prompt you to pause and ponder, asking at least "What reason?" This serves as a term of explanation and (weak, cowardly) justification for the action of the parents. Clearly, they saw the ["writing on the wall"](#) and that they might be caught ["in the cross hairs"](#) of the religious leaders!

**His parents said, "He is of age; ask ([erotao](#)) him** - after his parenthetical explanation John repeats what he had stated in Jn 9:21 and just as in that verse, the parent's **ask** is in the [aorist imperative](#). Here we have the added detail that there son is **of age**, indicating he is fully able to speak for himself.

**John 9:24 So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner."**

BGT John 9:24 φ νησαν ο ν τ ν νθρωπων κ δευτ ρου ς ν τυφλ ς κα ε παν α τ · δ ς δ ξαν τ θε · με ς ο δ αμεν τι ο το ς νθρωπος μαρτωλ ς σπιν.

KJV John 9:24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we

know that this man is a sinner.

NET John 9:24 Then they summoned the man who used to be blind a second time and said to him, "Promise before God to tell the truth. We know that this man is a sinner."

CSB John 9:24 So a second time they summoned the man who had been blind and told him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner!"

ESV John 9:24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner."

NIV John 9:24 A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God, " they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

NLT John 9:24 So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, "God should get the glory for this, because we know this man Jesus is a sinner."

- **Give:** Jn 5:23 8:49 16:2 Jos 7:19 1Sa 6:5-9 Ps 50:14,15 Isa 66:5 Ro 10:2-4
- **we know:** Jn 9:16 Jn 8:46 Jn Jn 14:30 Jn 18:30 Jn 19:6 Mk 15:28 Ro 8:3 2Co 5:21
- **a sinner:** Lu 7:39 Lk 15:2 Lk 19:7

### Related Passages:

John 9:16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "**How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?**" And there was a division among them.

John 8:46 "**Which one of you convicts Me of sin?** If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?"

John 18:30 They answered and said to him, **if this Man were not an evildoer**, we would not have delivered Him to you."

Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that **she is a sinner.**"

Luke 15:2 Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "**This man receives sinners** and eats with them."

Luke 19:7 When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, **He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.**"

## GIVE GLORY TO GOD NOT TO A "SINNER!"

**So (oun)** - Therefore. Because of receiving clarification from the man's parents that a miracle had indeed transpired, they call the healed man for another session.

**A second time they called the man who had been blind (tuphlos)** - The facts in Jn 9:15+ were not enough for these conniving men so they call him to take the witness stand (so to speak) a second time. Apparently he had not been present during the dialogue between the parents and the Pharisees.

**And said to him, "Give glory to God** - The religious leaders now take a different approach with this command **Give glory** in the [aorist imperative](#). They are trying to get the healed man to own up and tell them the truth (see notes below as there are two ways this can be interpreted). The interesting thing is that in a sense they have just painted themselves into a corner, for the blind man actually does **give glory to God**. That is, he associates the miracle with Jesus Who is God! While he may not yet comprehend Jesus is fully God, in the following description he is essentially giving Him **glory**!

**Warren Wiersbe** - Anxious to settle the case, the Pharisees did call the man in; and this time, they put him under oath. "Give God the praise" is a form of Jewish "swearing in" at court (see Josh. 7:19). But the "judges" prejudiced everybody from the start! "We know that this Man is a sinner!" They were warning the witness that he had better cooperate with the court, or he might be excommunicated. But the beggar was made of sturdier stuff than to be intimidated. He had experienced a miracle, and he was not afraid to tell them what had happened. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Marvin Vincent** has an interesting note on **Give glory to God** - Compare Josh. 7:19; 1 Sam. 6:5. This phrase addressed to an

offender implies that by some previous act or word he has done dishonor to God, and appeals to him to repair the dishonor by speaking the truth. In this case it is also an appeal to the restored man to ascribe his cure directly to God, and not to Jesus. Palgrave, "Central and Eastern Arabia," says that the Arabic phrase commonly addressed to one who has said something extremely out of place, is *Istaghfir Allah*, Ask pardon of God.

**MacArthur** adds that "Their exhortation to the blind man, **Give glory to God**, can also be understood as a charge to stop lying by saying that Jesus healed him and tell the truth, in the same manner as Joshua's charge to Achan, "My son, I implore you, **give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel**, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me" (Josh. 7:19-). Such a confession on the man's part would equal agreement with the leaders' conviction that Jesus was a **sinner** and not at all empowered by God (cf. John 8:52+). (See [John Commentary](#))

**Mounce** notes another interpretation of **Give glory to God** - Since it is contextually difficult to relate the statement (interpreted as a Jewish oath) with the remark that follows, some have taken it to mean, "Give glory to God, not to this man Jesus." In this case the reason is clear: "we know this man is a sinner." And according to their interpretation of the law, Jesus was technically a **sinner**, since he had broken the Sabbath by working (read "healing") on that day. (See [John Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - They wanted to see if they could catch him in his talk; so they said to him, in a very pious fashion. Does it not sound pretty from their Pharisaic lips? Arch hypocrites pretending to teach a man who knew much better than themselves! "We know that this man is a sinner. You did not know it, but we know it and as we know it, and we are doctors, you must believe it."...When men are persecuting the Son of God, yet still they take the name of God upon their lips. Did they not burn the martyrs to the glory of God? Oh! yes, and so did these men thus slander Christ by saying, "We know that this man is a sinner," and yet they spoke about giving God praise. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**We know (eido) that this man is a sinner (hamartolos)** - **We** is emphatic in the Greek text, as if they are holding themselves up as Israel's religious authorities, those who alone could conclude **this man** was a **sinner**, a law breaker! What fakes! Here we go again with these hypocrites saying **this Man**, disparaging the Name above all names (which, by the way they, will be forced to confess someday according to Php 2:9-11+, cf Rev 1:7+) In saying **we know (eido)** they are saying in essence that they knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus was a **sinner**! Amazing! Frightening! Blasphemous! It is difficult to even write a comment on their designation of Jesus as a **sinner**, for the irony is that He is not a sinner but the Savior of sinners! How blind can men be! (That's rhetorical!) These evil believed what they wanted to believe, despite all evidence to the contrary!

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## A Glimpse Of God's Love

He who glories, let him glory in the Lord. — 2 Corinthians 10:17 (But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD.)

Today's Scripture: John 9:24-34

Nadine was in the last stages of cancer when I met her. The doctor said chemotherapy would no longer help. She was a dedicated Christian and had a wonderful peace from God. She spent her last weeks making scrapbooks for her adult daughters and planning her memorial service.

Nadine's joyful spirit was inviting to be around, and people looked forward to spending time with her. She kept her sense of humor and always shared the ways that the Lord was meeting her needs. She gave everyone around her a glimpse of God's loving character.

When a man who had been born blind was healed by Jesus, he too had the opportunity to show others a glimpse of who God is (John 9:1-41). Neighbors asked, "How were your eyes opened?" (v.10). He told them about Jesus. When Pharisees questioned him, he told them how Jesus had given him sight, and concluded, "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing" (v.33).

We may wonder how we can show others what God is like. God can be clearly seen in the way we handle life's difficulties, such as problems at work or home, or perhaps a serious illness. We can share with others how He is comforting us—and let them know that the Lord cares for them too.

Who in your life needs to see the love of God? By: Anne Cetas

Believers who are Spirit-filled  
Are unaware that God may be  
Revealing through their Christlike ways  
A glimpse of His reality.  
—Hess



You can be a glimpse of God's love to someone.

([Click to go to the full devotional](#) including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets. Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

**John 9:25 He then answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."**

BGT John 9:25 πεκρθη ο ν κε νος· ε μαρτωλς σπιν ο κ ο δα· ν ο δα τι τυφλς ν ρπι βλ πω.

KJV John 9:25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

NET John 9:25 He replied, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. I do know one thing— that although I was blind, now I can see."

CSB John 9:25 He answered, "Whether or not He's a sinner, I don't know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!"

ESV John 9:25 He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

NIV John 9:25 He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

NLT John 9:25 "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

- **one thing I do know:** Jn 9:30 5:11 1Jn 5:10

### HEALED BLIND MAN TESTIFIES TO THE MIRACLE

**He then answered, "Whether He is a sinner ([hamartolos](#)), I (absolutely) do not know ([eido](#))** - The man wisely refuses to comment on the allegation of the Pharisees that Jesus is a sinner. He didn't know any more. All he knew was that he had been blind, he was born blind, he was a beggar, Jesus put spit and clay on his eyes, he went and washed in the pool whose name was Sent, and now he can see. That's all he knows. He doesn't know anything about Jesus. He's not a theologian

*"A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with only an argument"*  
-- Quoted by Brian Bell

**One thing I do know ([eido](#)), that though I was blind ([tuphlos](#)), now I see** - The man disavows any knowledge or opinion of Jesus as a sinner. To the contrary he firmly asserts that beyond a shadow of a doubt, he was once blind and yet now he can see.

**THOUGHT** - "This affirmation has been adopted by millions of believers who, while not certain about how the miraculous transformation in their lives took place, nevertheless know that once they were blind (without spiritual sight) but now are able to see (to understand the presence and power of the redeeming Christ). The fact that God has entered their lives is the central reality of their new life in Christ. No amount of theological obfuscation can undermine the strong confidence that comes from personal experience." (Mounce - [John](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - He did not debate the character of Jesus Christ, because that was beyond his knowledge and experience. But one thing he did know: now he could see. His testimony (John 9:25) reminds me of Psalm 27:1-14. Read that psalm in the light of this chapter, from the viewpoint of the healed beggar, and see how meaningful it becomes. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**F F Bruce** - "It was frustrating for his interrogators that neither of those statements could be refuted: the former statement was confirmed by the evidence of the parents; the truth of the latter they could see for themselves. Why not admit the conclusion to which these two facts pointed?" (Borrow [John Commentary](#) page 216)

**Spurgeon** - There was no driving him out of that stronghold. That which is a matter of our own personal experience is a thing about which we may well feel positively certain. I wish we had more Christian people firmly established in their faith because it is a matter

of deep, heartfelt, personal experience with them. I like to meet a man who can say, "I am willing to yield to opponents upon certain points concerning which I am not quite sure; but the fact of the efficacy of the gospel of God's grace, the power of the precious blood of Jesus to cleanse the heart and conscience, the divine operation of the Holy Spirit within the soul,—all these are truths which I cannot and will not yield. Like this man, I can say, 'One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.'"....He could not be beaten out of that. You cannot argue a man out of an experience of this kind; and if the Lord Jesus Christ has ever opened your eyes, dear friend, nobody can make you doubt that blessed fact. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Brian Bell** - Even if you are 1 day old in the Lord, & feel you don't know anything yet, you can say with assurance, "One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see!". Many are afraid of saying anything about the Lord for fear of getting into a theological argument over their head. Just witness what God has done in your life! You may not be an authority on Theology, but you are the world's greatest authority on what has happened to You! b) "A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with only an argument!" People can argue theology & interpretations but are speechless when confronted w/the reality of a changed life. a) Live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God didn't exist!2 b) Chuck Swindoll asks, "Is your life a cold monument to religious duty, or is it a living mystery?"

*The greater our focus on what the Lord is doing in our own lives,  
the less hesitant we'll be in speaking out for Him.*

-- Larry Richards (BORROW [The 365 day devotional commentary](#))

What a difference Jesus made in this man's life when He passed by (following song by Lynda Randle)...

### **Like a blind man I wandered**

So lost and undone  
A beggar so helpless  
Without God or His Son  
Then my Savior in mercy  
Heard and answered my cry  
And oh what a difference  
Since Jesus passed by

All my yesterdays are buried  
In the deepest of the sea  
That old load of guilt I carried  
It's all gone, praise God I'm free  
Looking for that bright tomorrow  
Where no tears will dim the eye  
And oh what a difference  
Since Jesus passed by

Since Jesus passed by  
Since Jesus passed by  
Oh what a difference  
Since Jesus passed by  
Well I can't explain it  
And I cannot tell you why  
But oh what a difference  
Since Jesus passed by!

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**Sinner** (268) **hamartolos** from **hamartáno** = deviate, miss the mark which some lexicons say is from a = negative + meiomai = attain -- not to attain, not to arrive at the goal) is an adjective (e.g., "*that through the commandment sin might become utterly **sinful***" - see Ro 7:13 -[note](#)) that is often used as a noun (as in this verse and Ro 5:19[\[note\]](#)) to describe those who are continually erring from the way, constantly missing God's mark, living in opposition to His good and acceptable and perfect will. Thus a sinner is one who lives in opposition to the divine will. In a more selective use, in the view of the Pharisees a **sinner** was a Jew who is one not careful in the observance of ceremonial duties (Mt 9:10ff, Lk 15:1ff, Mk 2:16). Finally, the Jews called the Gentiles sinners or despisers of God and considered them heathen or pagan, tá éthne = the nations (Mt 26:45). Jesus' purpose for coming into the world was to save sinners (Mt 9:13 1Ti 1:15)

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**Hamartolos in John - only John 9** - Jn. 9:16; Jn. 9:24; Jn. 9:25; Jn. 9:31

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## EVIDENCE

HE REPLIED, "WHETHER HE IS A SINNER OR NOT, I DON'T KNOW. ONE THING I DO KNOW. I WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE!"—John 9:25

God seeks to use our lives as living evidence of the reality of His claims.

Evidence so compelling that those who observe us will seek out the Savior they see in us. A couple in my first ministry spent time and effort to put their difficult marriage together on God's terms. The dramatic change caught the attention of their neighbors, who asked what it was that made their marriage different. They were told that Jesus had changed their lives. That night the neighbors opened their hearts to Christ as well.

But we should not be deceived into thinking that all who see the reality of Jesus in and through our lives will come to seek the One expressed in our lives. The story of the blind man in John 9 gives us the range of responses that we might expect.

Some will see God's works and remain silent. In this story, the blind man's parents feared they would be excommunicated from the synagogue (Jn 9:18–23). Today, many fear the price of claiming Christ as Savior. What will He demand? What will they lose in gaining Him? So they silently watch. They take notes in their hearts.

Then there are those who will set their hearts against what they see. No one knew more about this event than the Pharisees. They interviewed the blind man twice (Jn 9:13–17, 24–34) and his parents once (Jn 9:18–23). Yet the Pharisees refused to accept the clear evidence. Some people are so set against God they refuse to seek Him regardless of the evidence. Think of what our world did to Christ, who was a walking catalog of evidence. In the face of the dramatic display of God's credibility through Christ, they crucified Him.

We should never assume that all people will come to Christ when they see Him expressed in unique ways in our lives. We should only expect to provide the evidence and to let God do the rest.

What evidence is there in your life that God can use? - Joe Stowell

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According to Mark Mittelberg, director of evangelism at Willow Creek Community Church of suburban Chicago, "God knew what he was doing when he made you. He custom-designed you with your unique combination of personality, temperament, talents, and background, and he wants to use you to reach others in a fashion that fits your design." For example, says Mittelberg, consider these six people in the New Testament:

1. Peter's Confrontational Approach—He was direct, bold, and to the point.
  2. Paul's Intellectual Approach—He could be confrontational, but he was a well-educated man who could reason from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that Jesus was the Christ.
  3. The Blind Man's Testimonial Approach—The man in John 9 didn't know a great deal of theology, but he could say, "One thing I know: I once was blind and now I see."
  4. The Samaritan Woman's Invitational Approach—Leaving her water jug at the well, the woman in John 4 went into her village and invited her friends to come and hear the man "who told me everything I ever did."
  5. Matthew's Interpersonal Approach—In Luke 5:29 Matthew put on a big banquet for his tax-collecting buddies in an effort to expose them to Jesus. He relied on the relationships he'd built with these men and sought to further shore up their friendships, inviting them into his home and using his channels of friendship for evangelism.
  6. Dorcas' Service Approach—In Acts 9, we meet a woman who witnessed by serving others in Jesus name, making clothes for the needy and helping the poor. - Robert Morgan - BORROW [Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations & quotes](#)
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### Robert Noland - ONE THING I KNOW - [Do You Believe?: 40-Day Devotional](#):

In John 9, the story of a blind man healed by Jesus is the focus of the entire chapter. He was walking with people around him and approached this man, whom people evidently knew was born blind. As was the belief of the day, the people felt sin of the man or his parents was to blame for his condition. Jesus made it clear that neither was true, but then he took the focus off the man's problem and put it on his own presence.

Then Jesus did a very curious thing—he bent down, spat in some dirt, took the muddy substance, and placed it on the man's eyes. He then told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man obeyed, and his eyes were healed!

Now—consider the strangeness that ensued among the people and how no one seemed to recognize a man born blind suddenly and miraculously had his sight.

The people started asking if he was the same man, as if Jesus had played some game of switcheroo. But the man was insistent, telling the story of what Jesus did for him. As the man was questioned further and further, an amazing transformation started to occur in him.

The people decided to take the healed man to the Pharisees, the religious leaders. The day also just happened to be the Sabbath. When they heard the story, their focus was on a religious law being broken—Jesus had “worked” on the holy day. The Pharisees decided this fully discredited him as a healer. Next, they sent for the man’s parents to confirm the story. The parents, afraid for their reputation, essentially “pleaded the fifth” by telling them to ask their son.

The leaders and the people then demanded that the man tell the truth. But he’d finally had enough! In John 9:25, the man brought some practical truth to the insanity when he stated: “One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” (NIV) As he went on to defend Jesus, the Pharisees declared the man a born sinner, announced that they were offended, and threw him out. Jesus found out what had happened and found the man.

He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. — John 9:35–38 NIV

Try to imagine being born blind, meeting a man who gives you 20/20 vision, then suddenly being thrust into a religious debate on healing. Might you be in a state of shock too? The man came to the conclusion that he was not only healed, but the healer was the Messiah.

What about your own story? Were you in any sort of difficult physical, emotional, or mental state when Jesus found you? There are times those challenges are what humble us to see God’s hand. One thing is true of us all, though—we were spiritually blind in desperate need of our eyes being opened to God. Jesus comes and takes the blindness away, we see him for who he is, and we receive his offer of forgiveness and salvation.

Kriminal is lying in a hospital bed, handcuffed to the metal handrail. In his right hand, he clutches the small cross Pretty Boy got from the church service. Ironically, the cross is now bloodstained. His heart is reeling from all that has happened and what he is now feeling inside.

A detective walks in and asks, “You the one who calls himself Kriminal?”

Pausing, receiving, he answers, “I was ...”

No matter our background, how good or bad we perceived ourselves to be, at the point of faith being birthed in our hearts, we all share the same declaration as the blind man, “One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” and “Lord, I believe.” And then we worship ... forever.

Complete these thoughts in your journal:

- Father, some ways I was blind before you saved me were ...
- A “blind spot” where I still struggle today and need your healing is...
- Father, thank you that though I was blind, now I can see that...

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## Our Best Defense

Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see. —John 9:25

Today's Scripture: John 9:13-25

Thrown together as seatmates for an 8-hour train ride, a retired US ambassador and I quickly clashed as he sighed when I pulled out my Bible.

I took the bait. At first, we traded one-liners aimed at goading the other or scoring points. Gradually, though, bits and pieces of our respective life stories started creeping into the discussion. Curiosity got the better of both of us and we found ourselves asking questions instead of feuding. A political science major in college and a political junkie by hobby, I was intrigued with his career, which included two prominent ambassadorships.

Strangely enough, his questions to me were about my faith. How I became “a believer” was what interested him most. The train ride ended amicably, and we even traded business cards. As he left the train, he turned to me and said, “By the way, the best part of your argument isn’t what you think Jesus can do for me. It’s what He’s done for you.”

In John 9, as on that train, God reminds us that the best story is the one we know intimately: Our own encounter with Jesus Christ. Practice telling your story of faith to loved ones and close friends so you'll be able to tell it clearly to others. By: Randy Kilgore

You may be tempted to debate To change another's view, But nothing speaks more powerfully Than what Christ did in you. —Sper

People know true faith stories when they hear them.

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### **Just Be Yourself**

You, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled. —  
Colossians 1:21

Today's Scripture: John 9:1-25

For those of us who don't have the spiritual gift of evangelism, the word witness can stir up some unpleasant memories or paralyzing anxieties. In fact, I've sometimes felt like a complete failure when I tried to follow methods that were designed to make witnessing easier.

Jim Henderson, author of *Evangelism Without Additives: What if Sharing Your Faith Meant Just Being Yourself?* has made the subject less threatening for me by suggesting another way of thinking about the subject. Instead of using someone else's words or story, he suggests "just being yourself."

In courtrooms, second-hand testimony is not allowed because anything other than a first-hand account is unreliable. The same is true spiritually. The authentic story of the work Christ has done in our lives is the best testimony we have. We don't need to doctor it or dramatize it. When we tell the truth about Christ's power to save us and keep us from sin, our testimony will be credible.

If the thought of taking classes or memorizing plans has kept you from witnessing, try a different approach: be yourself! Like the blind man Jesus healed, simply say, "Though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). By: Julie Ackerman Link

### **Thinking It Through**

Write out your personal testimony of when you received Jesus as your Savior. Try including what your life was like before, and what it's like now.

If you want others to know what Christ can do for them, tell them what He has done for you.

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### **The Junkyard Genius**

One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see! John 9:25

Today's Scripture & Insight: John 9:1–11

Noah Purifoy began his work as an "assemblage" artist with three tons of rubble salvaged from the 1965 riots in the Watts area of Los Angeles. From broken bicycle wheels and bowling balls to discarded tires and damaged TV sets—things no longer usable—he and a colleague created sculptures that conveyed a powerful message about people being treated as "throw-aways" in modern society. One journalist referred to Mr. Purifoy as "the junkyard genius."

In Jesus's time, many people considered those with diseases and physical problems as sinners being punished by God. They were shunned and ignored. But when Jesus and His disciples encountered a man born blind, the Lord said his condition was not the result of sin, but an occasion to see the power of God. "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). When the blind man followed Jesus's instructions, he was able to see.

When the religious authorities questioned the man, he replied simply, "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (v. 25).

Jesus is still the greatest "junkyard genius" in our world. We are all damaged by sin, but He takes our broken lives and shapes us into His new creations. By: David C. McCasland

Lord, I thank You today for Your amazing grace!

Jesus is the restorer of life.

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### **Vital Information**

One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see. — John 9:25

Today's Scripture: John 9:1-7,13-27

You're on vacation and evening is approaching. You spot a good motel and you pull in. The clerk tells you that a room is available, and she gives you a card to fill out. Without hesitation you write down your name, address, phone number, and license number. Depending on how you pay, you may also reveal your credit card number. You have given out a lot of vital information without thinking twice about it.

Discussing this in a sermon, a pastor observed that it's so easy for us to hand over to people all kinds of vital information, yet it's often difficult for us to tell them that we are believers in Jesus Christ. But the most vital thing about us that could possibly be shared is what Jesus has done for us. We are commissioned to tell the world about our Savior.

In John 9, the man healed of blindness testified clearly what had happened to him: "Though I was blind, now I see" (v.25). Jesus is the One who had done it for him. Similarly, the Light of the world has removed our spiritual blindness through faith. He is our Savior. Now we can see.

We give out a lot of vital information about ourselves. Let's not be afraid to tell others the most important thing about us: We are believers in Jesus Christ! By: David C. Egener

### **Think About It**

Why are many believers afraid to witness?

Who told you about Jesus? What if they had not?

How does God help you as you speak on His behalf?

God longs to do for others what He has done for you.

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### **Rob Morgan - I Once Was Blind**

Recently I found an old book in a London shop—Memories of the Mission Field by Christine I. Tining, undated, published in England. It tells of a Swedish missionary, a Mr. Tornvall, who arrived in Ping-Liang, China, uninvited and unwelcome. The missionary realized he would only be accepted by providing medical help, but he had no training—only one small book and some homeopathic remedies.

He began with an old woman, nearly blind, who was carried each day to ask alms. At night she was returned to her hut where a large stone was rolled across the door to keep out wolves, and there she had to stay until friends removed the stone the next morning. Tornvall stopped daily and treated her eyes with a salve. To the surprise of all, her eyesight was restored.

A soldier was then brought to Tornvall with a frostbitten leg requiring amputation. I had no instruments except a Swedish penknife and an American saw, but I boiled them and did the best I could. I had a book on anatomy, and I kept it by me during the operation and looked at the diagrams to the leg as I cut. I did it on the verandah, and the neighbors gathered round to watch the performance. I had no ether or chloroform, but used a hot salt solution as a palliative.

The operation was successful, and afterward the young soldier dried his dismembered leg in the sun so he could carry it home to his mother.

But the city fathers, unimpressed, called a public meeting to discuss driving Tornvall from their boundaries. The tide turned when the old beggar woman faced the crowd. "Do you want good people in this city or not?" she demanded. "You all know me, you know that I was almost blind, and now I see. This man has helped me."

Her words, strangely similar to those in John 9, moved the city, and Tornvall was allowed to stay in Ping-Liang where in time he

**J J Knapp - One Thing I Know**     John 9:25

This word sounds like a shout of triumph that arose out of the heart of the cured born-blind one, now that he stood before the Jewish Council to account for the benefit that he had received of Jesus. Those smart men in the Council tried to convince the simple man to exclude the person of Christ in his cure, and declared to him with the authority that their office added, to know decidedly that Jesus was a sinner. To them it was self-evident that if able men like they were, made known their decision concerning Christ or the Bible, simple people had to respectfully remain silent! The born-blind one did not agree with this. The quarrelling counsellors and divines could not make him waver with their declarations. He experienced the power of Jesus in his own body. Even though he lacked an answer upon their hesitations, he still remained with one immovable conviction in the midst of this hostile circle: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see!"

If we only knew also that one thing in a spiritual sense! Our time is characterised by the desire to know many things, yes, to take knowledge of almost everything, although that knowledge is of course not very deep and complete. The realms of science are expanding continuously, and who does not want to remain behind, is forced to involve all his power of thinking, yes, to not allow an hour or a moment go by unused. Of course, every one cannot control everything. Nevertheless, there must be a lively interest in that which falls within the scope of our mind,—only in that way do we achieve that enrichment of life that keeps us from slow deterioration while growing older.

How painful is it that with all the knowing of our century the spiritual knowledge is so limited, and that the number is so limited of those who can confess a clear testimony founded on the experience of the soul: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." That knowledge is indispensable beyond all knowledge. It will not harm us on our deathbed if we do not know the names of the stars or the depth of the sea. However, if we do not know that one thing of the born-blind one in that decisive hour, where is our hope, where is our salvation, where is our glory?

Blessed is the man who may resemble the born-blind one.

One thing I know, that I groped around in darkness, but that in my soul a light of lights arose! One thing I know that in myself I am a deeply unholy sinner, but that Jesus is my Mediator! One thing I know that His grace has touched me, that I was blind and that now I see the glory of God!

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**Robert Hawker** - One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.—Jn 9:25. -- THIS is a great thing to say, my soul: on what foundation dost thou rest this knowledge? If the Lord Jesus hath opened thine eyes, then indeed thou canst not but discover thy former blindness; for, during that state of nature, thou literally could discern nothing. And if thy former blindness be discovered, then thy present sight hath brought thee acquainted with new objects. Pause over the review of both this morning. The blindness of nature to spiritual things is marked in scripture in strong characters. A poor blind sinner sees nothing of the light of life. The Sun of Righteousness is not risen upon him. He discerns nothing of the love of God in Christ. If he reads the scripture, the veil is upon his heart. If he hears of Jesus, he sees no beauty in him. Nothing is nearer to him than the Lord, and nothing further from his thoughts. To tell him of the sweetness of the word of God, is strange to him; for he tastes nothing of sweetness in it. To tell him of the loveliness of ordinances and the sabbaths; these are strange things in his esteem. My soul, if indeed thine eyes be opened, thou wilt know that thou wert once indeed blind, in the fullest sense of the word, to all these delightful views of sacred things which now are thy supreme pleasure and thy joy. Say, then, what hast thou seen to justify this saying, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see?" Hast thou seen the King in his beauty? Hast thou seen with the eye of faith the glories of Jesus? Yes! if so be all other objects are obscured. The sight of Jesus, as the Christ of God, hath darkened the glory and excellency of all beside. Jesus, as he is in himself, as he is in his offices, characters, relations—as he is to thee and thy happiness—is the one, the only one thing needful; and thou must count all things but dung and dross to win Christ. These, my soul, are blessed tokens that Jesus hath opened thine eyes, and brought thee out of darkness into his marvellous light. By-and-by thou shalt see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever!

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**CHRIST'S CREDENTIALS**

Whereas I was blind, now I see. JOHN 9:25

THIS OF THE GRACIOUS REVELATION of God's purpose and power in the healing of the man born blind (John 9). Think of his case, and in many another that might be named. Away back in the councils of eternity God determined to redeem the human race, putting the iniquity of us all upon the Person of His own Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. It was necessary that the Son should take upon Himself our human nature; that He should come to earth; and that He should be known and identified when He came, by the works He should do, that men might believe on Him.

And so, for your redemption, and mine, and that of the whole world, God caused this child to be born blind. The impairment brought sorrow to his parents and to himself. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year he sat there. All Jerusalem knew him; thousands of people from Judea and Galilee knew him and knew he had been born blind.

And now the reason for it all! The Son of Man has left the glory He had with the Father before the world was; He has come down to earth to suffer and die; and He is about to be identified as the Son of God and the Savior of the world. On this memorable day He is passing by the temple gate and, seeing this man, speaks to him the word of power that gives him the sight he never had. The man returns to his home, and it is known there - and in all Jerusalem and in all Judea and in all the world - that God did it to certify to the well-beloved One, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin.

Was it not worth the while of that man to have been born blind and to have suffered so? Was it not worth while for his parents to have suffered? Does God ever put suffering upon His faithful witnesses when reward does not follow it? It was well worth his while, not only for his own sake, but for that of millions of redeemed souls who have been won to God through Jesus Christ. They are in His presence now, because of the testimony he bore to Him by sitting at the temple gate until He restored his sight. JAMES M. GRAY

### John 9:26 So they said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

BGT John 9:26 ε πον ο υ α τ · τ πο ησ υ σοι; π ς νοιξ υ σου το ς φθαλμο ς;

KJV John 9:26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

NET John 9:26 Then they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he cause you to see?"

CSB John 9:26 Then they asked him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

ESV John 9:26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

NIV John 9:26 Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

NLT John 9:26 "But what did he do?" they asked. "How did he heal you?"

### **PHARISEES STOPPED DEAD IN THEIR TRACKS**

**So** ([oun](#)) - Therefore. Based on his indisputable testimony, they are now forced to try to trap the man in some inconsistency.

**They said to him, "What did He do to you?"** - They have now been forced to conclude that Jesus opened his eyes. This is the third time they asked him how this came about. It is interesting that they do not use the word "miracle," in this section. The man has already told them about the clay pack and instructions to wash (Jn 9:15). They are [grasping at straws](#) now, looking for anything the man might say to use against Jesus!

**How did He open** ([anoigo](#)) **your eyes** - "Open your eyes" is an idiomatic way of saying how did He restore your sight or restore your vision? "How did he heal you?" (NLT) The Pharisees attribute the miracle specifically to Jesus by using the pronoun "**He**."

**Warren Wiersbe** - For the fourth time, the question is asked, "How did He open your eyes?" (see John 9:10, 15, 19, 26) I can imagine the man getting quite impatient at this point. After all, he had been blind all his life, and there was so much now to see. He certainly did not want to spend much longer in a synagogue court, looking at angry faces and answering the same questions! (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

### John 9:27 He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?"

BGT John 9:27 πεκρθη α το ς ε πον μ υ δη κα ο κ κο σατε· τ π λιν θ λετε κο ειν; μ κα με ς θ λετε α το μαθητα γενεσθαι;

KJV John 9:27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

NET John 9:27 He answered, "I told you already and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You



people don't want to become his disciples too, do you?"

CSB John 9:27 "I already told you," he said, "and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to become His disciples too, do you?"

ESV John 9:27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"

NIV John 9:27 He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

NLT John 9:27 "Look!" the man exclaimed. "I told you once. Didn't you listen? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

- **I told you already** Jn 9:10-15 Lu 22:67

## **THE MAN WITH NEW SIGHT IMPLIES THEY NEED NEW EARS!**

**He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen**([akouo](#)) - They had heard his voice and his words but did not understand the truth of what he had spoken. What the healed man is saying seems to be that the Pharisees did not have spiritual ears to hear. They did not want to hear the truth and so became deaf to the truth

**THOUGHT** - Could this be an example of judicial hardening (deafness to spiritual truth)? See Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones on [Judicial Hardening](#).

**Why do you want** ([thelo](#)) **to hear** ([akouo](#)) **it again? You do not want** ([thelo](#)) **to become His disciples** ([mathetes](#)) **too, do you - NET** says "You people don't want to become his disciples too, do you?" Talk about **striking a raw nerve!** You can rest assured that they HEARD this question even though the way he asks the question calls for a negative response! Watch their immediate reaction in the next verse!

**Leon Morris** has an interesting insight on the little word **too** - The man did not really expect that people so plainly opposed to Jesus were changing their minds, but he was quite ready to bait them. His "**too**" is significant. He was now counting himself among Jesus' disciples. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Robertson** on **do not want to become His disciples too** (also), **do you** - Negative answer formally expected, but the keenest irony in this gibe. Clearly the healed man knew from the use of "also" ("too" - kai) that Jesus had some "disciples"....and that the Pharisees knew that fact. "Do ye also (like the Galilean mob) wish, etc." See 7:45-52. It cut to the bone.

**F F Bruce** - He now displays a hitherto unsuspected capacity for ironical repartee. (Borrow [John Commentary](#) page 178)

**Warren Wiersbe** - We admire the boldness of the man in asking those irate Pharisees if they wanted to follow Jesus! The man expected a negative answer, but he was courageous even to ask it. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - He carried the war into the enemy's camp, as well he might. He threw a little sarcasm into that last question. The man was a very remarkable person, a simple-hearted, honest man, but withal quite able to hold his own in any company. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Mounce** adds "Then, in what amounts to a satirical taunt, he asks why they want to hear it all again. "It couldn't be, could it," he asks, "that you want to become his disciple?" The question is asked in such a way as to expect a negative response. **Bruce** refers to the exchange as displaying "*a hitherto unsuspected capacity for ironical repartee*" on the part of the blind man." (See [John](#))

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**Want** (Wish) ([2309](#))([thelo](#)) see study of derivative [thelema](#); see synonyms [boule](#) and [boulomai](#)) is a very common NT verb (208x) which primarily refers to exercising of one's will with the underlying sense of to be willing, to desire, to want or to wish (in Jn 15:7 in context of prayer). To apply oneself to something (or to will). Thelo "expresses not simply a desire, but a determined and constant exercise of the will." (W E Vine)

The reader should realize that **thelo** is one of those Greek words that is somewhat difficult to define with absolute consistency. For example, some sources state that **thelo** refers to a thoughtful, purposeful choice, not a mere whim or emotional desire, while Kenneth Wuest says **thelo** expresses "a desire that comes from one's emotions" and "boulomai a desire that comes from one's reason." (see more detailed discussion below). W E Vine says thelo "chiefly indicates the impulse of the will rather than the tendency (boulomai). The different shades of meaning must be determined by the teaching of the Scriptures generally or by the context."

In secular Greek use *thelo* as used by Homer spoke of “readiness,” “inclination,” and “desire,” so that when one was ready for an event or inclined to undertake a course of action, **thelo** was the Greek word used.

**Thelo** in John - Jn. 1:43; Jn. 3:8; Jn. 5:6; Jn. 5:21; Jn. 5:35; Jn. 5:40; Jn. 6:11; Jn. 6:21; Jn. 6:67; Jn. 7:1; Jn. 7:17; Jn. 7:44; Jn. 8:44; Jn. 9:27; Jn. 12:21; Jn. 15:7; Jn. 16:19; Jn. 17:24; Jn. 21:18; Jn. 21:22; Jn. 21:23

**John 9:28 They reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.**

BGT John 9:28 κα λoid̄ ρησαν α τ ν κα ε πον· σ μαθητ ς ε κε νου, με ς δ το Μωϋσ ως σ μ ν μαθητα ·

KJV John 9:28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

NET John 9:28 They heaped insults on him, saying, "You are his disciple! We are disciples of Moses!

CSB John 9:28 They ridiculed him: "You're that man's disciple, but we're Moses' disciples.

ESV John 9:28 And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

NIV John 9:28 Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses!

NLT John 9:28 Then they cursed him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses!

- **they:** Jn 9:34 7:47-52 Isa 51:7 Mt 5:11 27:39 1Co 4:12 6:10 1Pe 2:23
- **but:** Jn 5:45-47 7:19 Ac 6:11-14 Ro 2:17

## TWO GROUPS OF DISCIPLES

**They reviled ([loidoreo](#)) him and said, "You are His (lit = "that man's" [contemptuous force]) disciple ([mathetes](#)), but we are disciples ([mathetes](#)) of Moses** - When confronted with logic and reason, what do many people do? They attack! Where are your credentials? Who ordained you? You didn't even attend "seminary!" (I've been accused of that one by some spiritual elites). Their response to him was meant to be loud and abusive, but proved (unbeknownst to them) to be, in a sense, a prophetic blessing! Why? Because as the story unfolds the man healed from physical blindness, was also healed of spiritual blindness in Jn 9:38, thus fulfilling their "prophetic" words by becoming a true **disciple** of Jesus! Note that the text **You are His disciple** more literally says "that man's disciple," (or "you are that one's disciple") which emphasizes the leaders' contempt for Jesus!

*"No case; therefore abuse the plaintiff."*

-- C H Spurgeon

**THOUGHT ON REVILED** - To show the strong character of the word **loidoreo**, **Moulton and Milligan** cite Calvin on the use 1Co 4:12 - "Loidoria (derived from *loidoreo* is used in 1Ti 5:14, 1Pe 3:9, "insult for insult") is a harsher railing, which not only rebukes a man, but also sharply bites him, and stamps him with open contumely (harsh language or treatment arising from haughtiness and contempt). Hence **loidoreo** is to wound man as with an accursed sting."

**Spurgeon** - It is a bad case, so abuse the plaintiff. There is nothing to be said for our side, so let us abuse the man who has had his eyes opened. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Robertson** on **we are disciples of Moses** - This they said with proud scorn of the healed beggar. All orthodox rabbis so claimed.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Unable to refute the evidence, the judges began to revile the witness; and once again Moses is brought into the picture (John 5:46). The Pharisees were cautious men who would consider themselves conservatives, when in reality they were "preservatives." A true conservative takes the best of the past and uses it, but he is also aware of the new things that God is doing. The new grows out of the old (Matt. 13:52). A "preservative" simply embalms the past and preserves it. He is against change and resists the new things that God is doing. Had the Pharisees really understood Moses, they would have known who Jesus was and what He was doing. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Mounce** quips "the only stratagem available to those who have come out second best in a debate—an abusive ad hominem....Their answer was the equivalent of the childish taunt, "My dad is better than your dad."...The Greek articles (*sy*, "you," and *hēmeis*, "we") in v. 28 mark a strong contrast. "You are a disciple of that man, but we belong to Moses." We know it was to Moses that God gave the

law (Ex 33:11; Nu 12:6–8), but we don't know where this Jesus came from and therefore who it was that authorized him to speak." The comparison was meant to show how inferior were the credentials of Jesus in comparison with those of Moses....That Isaiah had spoken of the restoration of sight to the blind as one of the signs of the **messianic age** (Isa 29:18; Isa 35:5+; Isa 42:7) simply escaped them" (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

Notice the irony in their appeal to Moses, for earlier Jesus had spoken of Moses warning the Jews "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for **he wrote about Me**. "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (Jn 5:45-47+)

Notice the little "hinge word" **but** (hinges open doors and this one is "big!"), a word which means an 180 degree change, an "about face," and in this context in a sense depicts what amounts to an impassable chasm, one that separates all mankind into either those who enter heaven forever or hell forever! In short, the contrast these Pharisees themselves describe is one that they will rue the day they made, because in a sense they are predicting their own future judgment because "by the works of the Law (MOSES) no flesh will be justified (SAVED) in His sight."

One other point to note is that this same word "reviled" is used by Peter of Jesus Who "while being **reviled**, He did not **revile** in return." As the dialogue continues, this man did not revile in return, but simply spoke truth.

**THOUGHT** - If you are a disciple of Jesus, you **WILL BE REVILED** at some point in your life! If you have never been reviled as a disciple of Jesus, then there are only two options - (1) you are not a genuine disciple or (2) you have not been bold in the Spirit to speak the truth in love. The world hates the "J" word, for Jesus **convicts** sinners of their sin (cf Jn 16:8-11+) and unless they respond and receive His Gospel, He will **condemn** them for their sin to eternal punishment (Jn 5:22-23, 26-29+, Rev 20:11-15+).

Here's what Jesus had stated earlier that relates to their claim to be "disciples of Moses" - "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me." (John 5:45-46+) So in one sense they were not even disciples of Moses, for a student follows his master teacher and this master teacher believed in the Messiah. And secondly, because of their knowledge of the truth of the law of Moses, they will experience a more severe degree of eternal punishment (cf Mt 11:21-24+)

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**Reviled** (3058) **loidoreo** from **loidoros** = reviling, railing, one who reviles as in 1 Cor 5:11) means to subject one to verbal abuse, and thus to reproach, vilify, speak in a highly insulting manner, insult strongly. **Revile** implies a scurrilous, abusive attack prompted by anger or hatred. **Rail** (against) means to scold someone using harsh, insolent, or abusive language. Only 4 uses in NT - Jn. 9:28; Acts 23:4; 1 Co. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:23.

**Marvin Vincent** - The verb means to reproach or scold in a loud and abusive manner. Calvin, on 1 Corinthians 4:12, "being *reviled* we bless," remarks: "Λοιδορ α is a harsher railing, which not only rebukes a man, but also sharply bites him, and stamps him with open contumely. Hence λοιδορε v is to wound a man as with an accursed sting." ([John 9 Commentary](#))

**John 9:29 "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from."**

BGT John 9:29 με ς ο δαμεν τι Μωϋσε λελ ληκεν θε ς, το τον δ ο κ ο δαμεν π θεν στ ν.

KJV John 9:29 We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

NET John 9:29 We know that God has spoken to Moses! We do not know where this man comes from!"

CSB John 9:29 We know that God has spoken to Moses. But this man-- we don't know where He's from!"

ESV John 9:29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

NIV John 9:29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."

NLT John 9:29 We know God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from."

- **know**: Jn 1:17 Nu 12:2-7 16:28 De 34:10 Ps 103:7 105:26 106:16 Mal 4:4 Ac 7:35 26:22 Heb 3:2-5
- **as for**: Jn 9:16,24 1Ki 22:27 2Ki 9:11 Mt 12:24 26:61 Lu 23:2 Ac 22:22
- **we know**: Jn 7:27,41,42 Jn 8:14 Ps 22:6 Isa 53:2,3

## Related Passages:

John 8:14+ Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but **you do not know where I come from or where I am going**

John 8:42+ Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I **proceeded forth and have come from God**, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but **He sent Me**.

## JEW'S DENY KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS' ORIGIN

**We know (eido) that God has spoken to Moses - Spoken** is perfect tense signifying what He spoke **to Moses** still stands (still on record), which of course refers to the words Moses recorded in the Pentateuch (e.g. at the burning bush in Ex 3:4-5). They correctly state their case that God did speak **to Moses**. That is true enough! They did not have spiritual eyes to see that Moses had spoken of Jesus in passages like Dt 18:15, 18-19+!

**But** (term of contrast) **as for this man, we (absolutely) do not know (eido) where He is from** - Again they contemptuously refer to Jesus as **this man** ("this fellow"). And again they deny knowledge of His origin, despite the fact that He has repeatedly told them He sent from heaven by His Father. They simply do not have ears to hear that truth! And there is little doubt they did know He was from Nazareth.

**Warren Wiersbe** - The leaders were sure about Moses, but they were not sure about Jesus. They did not know where He came from. He had already told them that He had come from heaven, sent by the Father (John 6:33, 38, 41-42, 50-51). They were sure that He was the natural son of Mary and Joseph, and that He was from the city of Nazareth (John 6:42; 7:41-42). They were judging "after the flesh" (John 8:15) and not exercising spiritual discernment. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - Does not that manifestation of miraculous power show where he must have come from? Could he have come from anywhere but from God? (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Spurgeon** on "as for this [*fellow*], we know not" (Jn 9:29 KJV) - The word "*fellow*" is supplied by the translators. There is no such word there, because they did not know a word bad enough with which to express their scorn. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**John MacArthur** adds "They saw Jesus as a deranged (see the discussion of Jn 8:48) and untrained (Jn 7:15+) blasphemer (Jn 19:7) from an insignificant family in the despised village of Nazareth (cf. Jn 1:46+). (See [John Commentary](#))

**John 9:30 The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes.**

BGT John 9:30 πεκρθη νθρωπος κα επεν α το ς ν το τ γ ρ τ θαυμαστ ν στιν, τι με ς ο κ ο δατε π θεν σ τ ν, κα νοιξ ν μου το ς φθαλμο ς.

KJV John 9:30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

NET John 9:30 The man replied, "This is a remarkable thing, that you don't know where he comes from, and yet he caused me to see!

CSB John 9:30 "This is an amazing thing," the man told them. "You don't know where He is from, yet He opened my eyes!

ESV John 9:30 The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.

NIV John 9:30 The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.

NLT John 9:30 "Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from?"

- **Well, here is an amazing thing:** Jn 3:10 12:37 Isa 29:14 Mk 6:6
- **and yet He opened:** Ps 119:18 Isa 29:18 35:5 Mt 11:5 Lu 7:22 2Co 4:6

## THE AMAZING IGNORANCE OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

One could subtitle this verse "The Way to Infuriate Pharisees!"

**The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing (remarkable) thing ([thaumastos](#)), that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened ([anoigo](#)) my eyes** - Why would he be amazed and astonished at the statement of the religious elite? Because here is a Man that has done something that only divine power could have accomplished and they are ignorant of His origin.

[Guzik](#) quips on **an amazing thing** that "The healed man says this about their unbelief, not about the miracle of Jesus. It as if he tells the Pharisees, "Your unbelief and ignorance in the face of the evidence is more of a miracle than my cure!"

**Leon Morris** comments "the expression seems to have a meaning like "this is the really marvellous thing; your unbelief in the face of the evidence is more of a miracle than my cure!" His "you" is emphatic and may carry some sly irony: "**You**, the religious experts, cannot work out a simple thing like this?" Borrow [The Gospel according to John](#)

[Robertson](#) - The man is angry now and quick in his insight and reply. You confess your ignorance of whence he is, ye who know everything, "and yet (adversative use of kai = again) he opened my eyes" (kai ēnoixen mou tous ophthalmous). That stubborn fact stands.

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**Amazing** (2298) [thaumastos](#) from [thaumazo](#) = to marvel, to wonder at) describes that which causes one to marvel. Synonyms include **wonderful** (that which excites the feeling of wonder), extraordinary (very unusual or remarkable, outside the normal course of events, going beyond what is usual, regular, or customary), astonishing. **Marvelous** speaks of the highest kind or quality (splendid), of that which is notably superior or of that which causes or excites great wonder or surprise. **Thaumastos** is used to describe God and/or things relating to God and thus which are beyond human comprehension (See some of the representative uses in the Lxx below) **Thaumastos** refers to what is unexpected and worthy of notice the amazing thing pertaining to being a cause of wonder or worthy of amazement, wonderful, marvelous, remarkable

Thaumastos - 6v - amazing thing(1), marvelous(5). Matt. 21:42; Mk. 12:11; Jn. 9:30; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 15:1;  
Rev. 15:3

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**Lee Strobel** - THE PREVIOUS READING ([CLICK FOR THE READING - CHRISTIANS MEET A MUSLIM](#) - FAYZ) ILLUSTRATES GOD'S LOVE FOR PEOPLE of all backgrounds. More than that, it shows how God uses a variety of Christians in ways that are natural to them. Mark Mittelberg and Bill Hybels wrote about this in the book *Becoming a Contagious Christian*,<sup>1</sup> and then Mark and I turned that into the *Becoming a Contagious Christian* training course.<sup>2</sup>

God gave everyone unique personalities, and he wants to use us to share him in ways that fit us. Let's look at six styles, identify examples from Scripture, and identify who used each of these approaches in reaching out to Fayz. As you go through these, think about which style or styles might fit you.

### 1. DIRECT STYLE.

Peter exemplified this approach, especially in Acts 2 where he boldly challenged his listeners with the gospel. Similarly, Karl was very direct in how he brought up and discussed spiritual matters with Fayz. It may have initially taken Fayz aback, but God used it to open up the conversation and to jump-start Fayz on his journey toward Christ.

### 2. INTELLECTUAL STYLE.

Paul is an example of this approach. He was a logical thinker who naturally defended and debated God's truth in Athens in Acts 17. Likewise, in spite of the awkwardness of talking over an ice cream counter, Mark was a good example of the intellectual style as he gave helpful information and answers to Fayz, and I've seen God use him in similar ways countless times.

### 3. TESTIMONIAL STYLE.

**We see this third style in the blind man Jesus healed in John 9 by miraculously giving him his sight.** Before the man had a chance to blink, he was defending himself before the religious court, saying (in so many words), "I used to be blind, and now I can see—deal with it!" This is my main style as well—using my testimony to encourage others. Even though I wasn't there in person, my testimony made a difference in Fayz's life through *The Case for Christ*, where I combine my story with logic and evidence (since my other natural approach is the intellectual style).

Have I touched on your style yet? If not, I probably will tomorrow when we'll cover three other approaches. Either way, I hope you're feeling encouraged, knowing God wants to use you in ways that come naturally.

Truth for Today God knew what he was doing when he made you. Your personality was constructed on purpose, and God wants to use you in natural ways to reach others who need him.....

#### 4. INTERPERSONAL STYLE.

We see this approach in the former tax collector Matthew, who reached out to his previous coworkers by hosting a party for them. He also invited Jesus and the other disciples to come mix it up with them as a way to foster relationships between his older and newer friends (Luke 5:29). Barbara played a similar role by inviting Fayz and his wife into their home. This allowed her and Karl to form a real friendship with them and also to deepen their conversations about spiritual matters.

#### 5. INVITATIONAL STYLE.

The woman at the well was thrilled to meet Jesus, the Messiah. So she ran to her town in Samaria and invited her friends to come to the well to hear Jesus for themselves (John 4). They did, and as a result, some of them ended up putting their faith in Christ. Similarly, Karl and Barbara, along with friends from the Sunday school class, invited Fayz and his family to visit their church. Believe me, an invitation to a well-designed service or event can have a huge impact. It's part of how God reached me!

#### 6. SERVING STYLE.

A woman named Tabitha served needy people by making clothing for them (Acts 9). She was like a first-century Mother Teresa. She served people in ways that made them realize there must be a God. Similarly, some people from the class served Fayz by introducing him to key members of the medical community, opening doors for his future career. God can use this kind of loving service to open people up to him in amazing ways.

You may not yet be active in sharing your faith, but I'll bet you can relate to at least one of these approaches in other areas of your life: direct, intellectual, testimonial, interpersonal, invitational, or serving. Or maybe you have a style that we haven't thought of yet. Regardless, let me urge you to let God use you by trying at least one of these methods to reach out to friends and family for Christ.

Truth for Today As a Christian you are a member of the church to which Jesus gave the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). So "go into all the world" while trying approaches that fit the way God made you. (BORROW [Today's moment of truth : devotions to deepen your faith in Christ](#))

**John 9:31 "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him."**

BGT John 9:31 ο ὄραμεν τι μαρτωλ ν θε ς ο κ κο ει, λλ ν τις θεοσεβ ς κα τ θ λημα ατο ποι του κο ει.

KJV John 9:31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

NET John 9:31 We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is devout and does his will, God listens to him.

CSB John 9:31 We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He listens to him.

ESV John 9:31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.

NIV John 9:31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.

NLT John 9:31 We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will.

- **we know:** Job 27:8,9 35:12 42:8 Ps 18:41 34:15 66:18-20 Pr 1:28,29 15:29 Pr 21:13 28:9 Isa 1:15 58:9 Jer 11:11 14:12 Eze 8:18 Mic 3:4 Zec 7:13
- **if anyone :** Ps 34:15 Pr 15:29
- **and does:** Jn 4:34 7:17 15:16 Ps 40:8 Ps 143:10 Heb 10:7 1Jn 3:21,22
- **him:** Jn 11:41,42 Ge 18:23-33 19:29 20:7 1Ki 17:20-22 18:36-38 2Ch 32:20,21 Ps 99:6 106:23 Jer 15:1 Jas 5:15-18

## Related Passages:

Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

Job 27:9 "Will God hear his cry When distress comes upon him?"

Psalms 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, **The Lord will not hear;**

Isaiah 1:15 "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, **I will not listen.** Your hands are covered with blood.

## GOD HEARS PRAYERS OF GODLY, OBEDIENT MAN

**We know (eido) that God does not hear (akouo - listen to) sinners (hamartolos) - ESV** = "We know that God does not listen to sinners" Using "we" he draws in the Pharisees using **know (eido)** meaning **know** beyond a shadow of a doubt. The man astutely uses a variation of the same argument some of the Pharisees used in Jn 9:16<sup>+</sup> reasoning that a man who is a sinner cannot perform such signs. There is an element of truth in his statement that God does not listen to sinners (see Job 27:9; Ps 66:18; Isa. 1:15; Isa 59:2, etc.) What is his logic? He is clearly implying that God heard this man Jesus. However, it should be noted, as [discussed below](#), that there are examples of God listening to prayers of unbelievers (**sinners**).

**Warren Wiersbe** - The beggar then gave the "experts" a lesson in practical theology. Perhaps he had Psalm 66:18 in mind: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The leaders called Jesus a sinner (John 9:24), yet Jesus was used of God to open the blind man's eyes. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - He meant men who are living in known sin, impostors and deceivers. Of course, God would not hear sinners of that stamp. The man meant, God does not open blind eyes by the hands of sinners. He does not work miracles to bear witness to the agency of ungodly men. ([Spurgeon's Exposition](#))

**Spurgeon** - "If Christ had been an impostor, it is not possible to conceive that God would have listened to his prayer, and given him the power to open the blind man's eyes." ([True and Not True](#))

**But** (term of contrast) **if anyone is God-fearing (theosebēs) and does (poieo in present tense - habitually does) His will (thelema - what God has decided), He hears him - IF** is a third class condition which describes potential action or that which may or may not happen. Then man uses Scriptural reasoning as taught in Ps 34:15 where David says "The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous And His ears are open to their cry." (cf Pr 15:29). He couples God-fearing with obedience to God's will as prerequisites for God answering a person's prayer.

**Tasker** adds that "As a well-brought-up Jew the man regards it as axiomatic that a miracle wrought in answer to prayer is proof that its worker is no sinner. No divine help is available for impenitent sinners." (Borrow [John Commentary](#) page 127-28)

**TDNT** says "The Jews themselves like the term "God-fearers" for themselves and Gentile adherents, since it implies that they are worshippers of the true God."

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**God-fearing** (2318)(**theosebēs** from **theos** + **sebo** = worship, devout) means fearing God, devout, pious, worshipping God is used only here in the NT but 4x in the Septuagint, 3 times describing the character of Job - Ex 18:21; Job 1:1; Job 1:8; Job 2:3

**Marvin Vincent** on **theosebēs** - Only here in the New Testament. The kindred word, θεοσβεία, godliness, occurs only at 1 Timothy 2:10. Compounded with Θεός, God, and σβουμαι, to worship, the same verb which appears in εσβεβς, devout (Acts 10:2, 7; 22:12), and εσβεία, godliness (Acts 3:12; 1 Timothy 2:2, etc.). See on 2 Peter 1:3. These two latter words, while they may mean reverence toward God, may also mean the due fulfillment of human relations; while θεοσεβς, worshipper of God, is limited to piety towards God  
Word Studies in the New Testament. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

**TDNT** on **theosebēs** and **theosebeia** [piety, reverence for God]- A. Usage outside the NT. 1. True piety is the point behind this compound of theo's (i.e., honoring the gods), but in a critical sense it means "superstition," and more generally it simply denotes "religion." 2. The group is rare in the LXX (though eusebeia is common in 4 Maccabees), but when used (e.g., in Job 1:1; Ex. 18:21), it has the sense of true religion. The noun occurs only in Prov. 1:29. . theosebēs may be found on a few inscriptions to describe the Jews as holding the true religion. The Jews themselves like the term "God-fearers" for themselves and Gentile adherents, since it implies that they are worshippers of the true God.

B. NT Usage. The NT avoids the group, using *theosebes* and *theosebeia* only once each. The adjective occurs in Jn. 9:31: God hears those who fear him, which is defined as doing his will (cf. Prov. 15:29; Job 27:9). The noun comes in 1 Tim. 2:10, which teaches that women professing religion (i.e., Christianity) should substantiate their confession with good deeds.

C. Early Christian Usage. The terms are still infrequent in the apostolic fathers. In Mart. Pol. 3 *theosebeia* is obviously Christianity (cf. 2 Clem. 20.4). The words are more common in the Apologists. In Justin Dialogue 110.2 *theosebeia* comes through the apostolic preaching. In Athenagoras Supplication 37.1 Christians are the true God-fearers. Diognetus charmingly describes the *theosebeia* of Christians. Origen Against Celsus 3.59 and 81 tries to bring out the uniqueness of the *theosebeia* of Jesus. In this instance, however, the use of the general term “religion” tends to surrender the point at the outset. The restricted Jewish and NT use for true worship in contrast to idolatry is thus threatened by the invasion of a more general anthropocentric use which is intrinsically alien to the biblical revelation. [G. BERTRAM, III, 123-28]

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#### **QUESTION - [Does God hear / answer the prayers of a sinner / unbeliever?](#)**

**ANSWER** - John 9:31 declares, “We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.” It has also been said that “the only prayer that God hears from a sinner is the prayer for salvation.” As a result, some believe that God does not hear and/or will never answer the prayers of an unbeliever. In context, though, John 9:31 is saying that God does not perform miracles through an unbeliever. 1 John 5:14-15 tells us that God answers prayers based on whether they are asked according to His will. This principle, perhaps, applies to unbelievers. If an unbeliever asks a prayer of God that is according to His will, nothing prevents God from answering such a prayer—according to His will.

Some Scriptures describe God hearing and answering the prayers of unbelievers. In most of these cases, prayer was involved. In one or two, God responded to the cry of the heart (it is not stated whether that cry was directed toward God). In some of these cases, the prayer seems to be combined with repentance. But in other cases, the prayer was simply for an earthly need or blessing, and God responded either out of compassion or in response to the genuine seeking or the faith of the person. Here are some passages dealing with prayer by an unbeliever:

The people of Nineveh prayed that Nineveh might be spared (Jonah 3:5-10). God answered this prayer and did not destroy the city of Nineveh as He had threatened.

Hagar asked God to protect her son Ishmael (Genesis 21:14-19). God not only protected Ishmael, God blessed him exceedingly.

In 1 Kings 21:17-29, especially verses 27-29, Ahab fasts and mourns over Elijah’s prophecy concerning his posterity. God responds by not bringing about the calamity in Ahab’s time.

The Gentile woman from the Tyre and Sidon area prayed that Jesus would deliver her daughter from a demon (Mark 7:24-30). Jesus cast the demon out of the woman’s daughter.

[Cornelius](#), the Roman centurion in Acts 10, had the apostle Peter sent to him in response to Cornelius being a righteous man. Acts 10:2 tells us that Cornelius “prayed to God regularly.”

God does make promises that are applicable to all (saved and unsaved alike) such as Jeremiah 29:13: “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” This was the case for Cornelius in Acts 10:1-6. But there are many promises that, according to the context of the passages, are for Christians alone. Because Christians have received Jesus as the Savior, they are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace to find help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16). We are told that when we ask for anything according to God’s will, He hears and gives us what we ask for (1 John 5:14-15). There are many other promises for Christians concerning prayer (Matthew 21:22; John 14:13, 15:7). So, yes, there are instances in which God does not answer the prayers of an unbeliever. At the same time, in His grace and mercy, God can intervene in the lives of unbelievers in response to their prayers. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **Norman Geisler - JOHN 9:31—Does God hear the prayers of sinners?**

**PROBLEM:** John said here, “Now we know that God does not hear sinners.” Yet Jesus said God heard the publican who prayed, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). Does He hear sinners when they pray?

**SOLUTION:** God hears sinners when they confess they are sinners and accept His forgiveness. For “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13). Jesus promised, “the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (John 6:37).

However, God does not promise to answer the prayers of sinners who are not serving the true God. Jesus said, “if anyone is a



worshiper of God and does His will, He [God] hears him" (John 9:31). Even so, God's grace exceeds His promise, and He apparently does on occasion respond to the prayer of an unsaved person as part of His overall providential plan to bring them to Himself (cf. Jonah 1:14–15). In this sense, God's response to the prayer of the unsaved is part of the "goodness of God [that] leads you to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). (BORROW [When critics ask : a popular handbook on Bible difficulties](#))

**John 9:32 "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.**

BGT John 9:32 κ το α νος ο κ κο σθη πι ν ξ ν τις φθαλμο ς τυφλο γεγεννημ νου·

KJV John 9:32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

NET John 9:32 Never before has anyone heard of someone causing a man born blind to see.

CSB John 9:32 Throughout history no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind.

ESV John 9:32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.

NIV John 9:32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.

NLT John 9:32 Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind.

- **the beginning:** Job 20:4 Isa 64:4 Lu 1:70 Rev 16:18

## A NEVER BEFORE EVENT

**Since the beginning of time** - Literally "from the age." He is saying that from the beginning of creation. He is saying that this has never occurred before.

**it has never been heard that anyone opened ([anoigo](#)) the eyes of a person born blind ([tuphos](#))** He is saying that this has never occurred before. He is accentuating the incredible nature of the miracle he had experienced.

**Warren Wiersbe** - He added another telling argument: Jesus healed a man born blind. Never, to their knowledge, had this occurred before. So, God not only heard Jesus, but He enabled Him to give the man sight. How, then, could Jesus be a sinner? Religious bigots do not want to face either evidence or logic. Their minds are made up. Had the Pharisees honestly considered the facts, they would have seen that Jesus is the Son of God, and they could have trusted Him and been saved. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Robertson** - This is the chief point and the man will not let it be overlooked, almost rubs it in, in fact. It was congenital blindness.

**TSK Note** - It is worthy of remark, that, from the foundation of the world, no person born blind had been restored to sight, even by surgical operation, till about the year 1728; when the celebrated Dr. Cheselden, by couching the eyes of a young man fourteen years of age, restored them to perfect vision. This was the effect of well-directed surgery; that performed by Christ was wholly a miracle, effected by the power of God. The simple means employed could have had no effect in this case, and were merely employed as symbols.

**Brian Bell** - From the mouth of babes! It's interesting that the Pharisees hostility, forced this healed man to realize the moral majesty of Jesus! So might God give you a pagan professor in college, who loves trashing Christianity...for the purpose of growing your faith roots deeper? Might God give you an ungodly co-worker, who constantly tries to shipwreck your faith... so you can learn how to make fast your anchor? God did it for this brand new believer. Suffering is permitted to fall, for wise and good reasons, which are compatible with the character of God, and it provides a platform on which the grace and power of God may manifest themselves. But this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life! (Jn 9:3) Don't look at the pain, but at its results!

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**Spurgeon** - The best declaration of truth will not of itself remove birth-blindness and enable men to look unto Jesus. Nor do I believe that even the most earnest gospel appeals, nor the most vehement testimonies to its truth will convince men's understandings. All these things have their place and their use, but they have no power in and of themselves to enlighten the understanding savingly. I bring a blind friend to an elevated spot and I bid him look upon the landscape. 'See how the silver river threads its way amid the

emerald fields. See how yonder trees make up a shadowy wood, how wisely yonder garden, near at hand, is cultivated to perfection and how nobly yonder lordly castle rises on that hill of matchless beauty.' See, he shakes his head; he has no admiration for the scene. I borrow poetical expressions, but still he joins not in my delight. I try plain words and tell him, 'There is the garden, there is the castle, there is the wood and there is the river; do you not see them?' 'No'; he cannot see one of them and does not know what they are like. What ails the man? Have I not described the landscape well? Have I been faulty in my explanations? Have I not given him my own testimony that I have walked these glades and sailed along that stream? He shakes his head; my words are lost. His eyes alone are to blame. Let us come to this conviction about sinners; for, if not, we shall hammer away and do nothing: let us be assured that there is something the matter with the sinner himself which we cannot cure, whatever we may do with him, and yet we cannot get him saved unless it be cured. Let us feel this, because it will drive us away from ourselves; it will lead us to our God, drive us to the strong for strength and teach us to seek for power beyond our own. (Sermon [The Healing of One Born Blind](#))

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**D A CARSON - FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, VOLUME 1 (BORROW [For the love of God : a daily companion for discovering the riches of God's Word](#))**

AS THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND precipitates the bread of life discourse, so Jesus' healing of the congenitally blind man in John 9 precipitates some briefer comments on the nature of spiritual blindness and sight.

Some of the authorities were finding it difficult to believe that the victim had in fact been born blind. If it were the case, and if Jesus had really healed him, then this would say something about Jesus' power that they did not want to hear. Then as now, there were plenty of "faith healers" in the land, but most of their work was not very impressive: the less gullible could easily dismiss most of the evidence of their success. But to give sight to a congenitally blind man—well, that was unheard of in faith-healing circles (9:32–33). Unable to respond to the straightforward testimony of this man, the authorities resort to stereotyping and personal abuse (9:34).

Jesus meets up with him again, discloses more of himself to him, invites his faith, and accepts his worship (9:35–38). Then he makes two important utterances:

(1) "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind" (9:39). In some ways, this is stock reversal, like the account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), or the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9–14)—a common theme in the Gospels. But this reversal is in the realm of vision. Those who "see," with all their principles of sophisticated discernment, are blinded by what Jesus says and does; those who are "blind," the moral and spiritual equivalent of the man in this chapter who is born blind, to these Jesus displays wonderful compassion, and even gives sight.

Some Pharisees, overhearing Jesus' comment and priding themselves on their discernment, are shocked into asking if Jesus includes them among the blind. This precipitates his second utterance.

(2) "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains" (9:41). Of course, Jesus might simply have replied "Yes!" to their question. But that would not have exposed the seriousness of their problem. By subtly changing the metaphor, Jesus drives home his point another way. Instead of insisting his opponents are blind, Jesus points out that they themselves claim to see—better than anyone else, for that matter. But that is the problem: those who are confident of their ability to see do not ask for sight. So (implicitly) they remain blind, with the culpable blindness of smug self-satisfaction. There are none so blind as those who do not know they are blind.

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**John 9:33 "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."**

BGT John 9:33 ε μ ν ο τος παρ θεο , ο κ δ νατο ποιε ν ο δ ν.

KJV John 9:33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

NET John 9:33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

CSB John 9:33 If this man were not from God, He wouldn't be able to do anything."

ESV John 9:33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

NIV John 9:33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

NLT John 9:33 If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it."

■ **were:** Jn 9:16 3:2 Ac 5:38,39

## A WISE SAYING AND POWERFUL LOGIC

**If this man were not from God, He could do nothing** - This statement is generally true! There is a gigantic canyon separating saying this and truly believing it, for if one believes Jesus is from God, then by "default" (so to speak) they would listen to Him and obey Him and believe in Him for eternal life (cf Jn 8:24+) What he is saying is if Jesus were not from God, He could not have performed the miracle of giving eyesight to a blind man. But by this reasoning, since Jesus did accomplish the latter, then He must be the former (from God)! "The man has scored with terrific power in his use of Scripture and logic." ([Robertson](#))

**Utley** on **if this man** - This is a SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is called "contrary to fact." It should be understood as, "If this man had not come from God, which He did, then He could not have done anything like this, but He did."

**Leon Morris** - His chain of reasoning is complete. Jesus could not possibly have done such a thing,<sup>46</sup> a thing unparalleled in all history, unless he were from God (cf. Jn 3:2). For the man the proposition is incontestable. It is not a bad chain of reasoning for one who had hitherto been a beggar all his life, and presumably a stranger to academic and forensic argument. (Borrow [The Gospel according to John](#))

**Spurgeon** - Bravo, you who used to be blind! What an irresistible thing truth is, whoever handles it! These Pharisees, keen of intellect, well instructed in the letter of the law, yet crafty, up to their eyes in self-conceit, are like chaff driven before the wind when a plain-speaking man does but handle the truth of the living God. Never be afraid or ashamed to spread the gospel of Christ, my brethren and sisters; nay,— "Speak his Word, though kings should hear, Nor yield to sinful shame." A beggar with the truth is mightier than priests and princes with a lie.....Christ could not have given sight to the blind man if he had not himself come from God. This was good reasoning, and it would have been convincing if the objectors had been willing to be convinced by the truth. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Spurgeon** - This was bravely spoken. The man did not, at that time, know the Godhead of the Saviour, but he felt that he must have come from God, that he was one of God's servants, or messengers, or prophets, therefore he avowed what he knew. Dear friends, always act up to the light you have enjoyed. If you have starlight, thank God for it, and own it before men, for then he will give you moonlight; and if you have moonlight, walk by it, thank God for it, and own it, and he will give you sunlight; and when you have sunlight, walk in it, and so, one of these days, you will come to that light which is as the light of seven days, the light of God himself. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**John 9:34 They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.**

BGT John 9:34 περὶ θησαν καὶ ἐπανατῶν μαρταῖς σὺ γεννηθῆς λόγος καὶ σὸ διδασκῆς ἡμᾶς; καὶ ἔβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω.

KJV John 9:34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

NET John 9:34 They replied, "You were born completely in sinfulness, and yet you presume to teach us?" So they threw him out.

CSB John 9:34 "You were born entirely in sin," they replied, "and are you trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out.

ESV John 9:34 They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

NIV John 9:34 To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

NLT John 9:34 "You were born a total sinner!" they answered. "Are you trying to teach us?" And they threw him out of the synagogue.

- **You were born entirely in sins:** Jn 9:2 8:41 Job 14:4 15:14-16 25:4 Ps 51:5 Ga 2:15 Eph 2:3
- **are you teaching:** Jn 9:40 7:48,49 Ge 19:9 Ex 2:14 2Ch 25:16 Pr 9:7,8 26:12 29:1 Isa 65:5 Lu 11:45 14:11 18:10-14,17 1Pe 5:5
- **And they:** Jn 9:22 Jn 6:37 Pr 22:10 Isa 66:5 Lu 6:22 3Jn 1:9 Rev 13:17
- **cast him out:** Mt 18:17,18 1Co 5:4,5,13

## PHARISEES THROW THE MIRACLE OUT OF THEIR MIDST!

**They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins ([hamartia](#)), and are you teaching ([didasko](#)) us?"** - They in effect disregard the logic of his argument. Here the Pharisees are seeking to invalidate the healed man's testimony, even though the "sign" of his restored vision should have opened their eyes and validated the fact that the Messiah was present! Their first statement they made was theologically correct but of course they meant it [pejoratively](#), for they saw it as the cause of his blindness! These hypocrites failed to realize/acknowledge the truth their great ancestor David taught that they too were "brought forth in iniquity!" (Ps 51:5+) And then they in effect say something like "*and you have the audacity to try to teach us. How dare you!*"

**Spurgeon** - Their dignity was touched; their superlative wisdom lifted them so much above this poor man that they said, with the utmost disdain, "Dost thou teach us?" What could they say to him? Nothing but more reviling and abuse. That is the last argument of all. "We cannot answer him, so let us turn him out!" (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Warren Wiersbe** - Again, the leaders reviled the man and told him he was born in sin. However, he would not die in his sins (see John 8:21, 24); because before this chapter ends, the beggar will come to faith in Jesus Christ. All of us are born in sin (Ps. 51:5), but we need not live in sin (Col. 3:6–7) or die in our sins. Faith in Jesus Christ redeems us from sin and gives us a life of joyful liberty. The religious leaders officially excommunicated this man from the local synagogue. This meant that the man was cut off from friends and family and looked on by the Jews as a "publican and sinner." But Jesus came for the "outcasts" and never let them down. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Utley** - It is interesting to note that Rabbinical Judaism has no concept of "[original sin](#)" (cf. Job 14:1, 4; Ps. 51:5). The fall of Genesis 3+ was not emphasized at all in [Rabbinical Judaism](#). The Jews asserted that there was a good and bad intent (*yetzer*) in every man. These Pharisees were asserting that this healed man's testimony and logic were invalid because obviously he was a sinner evidenced by being born blind.

**NET NOTE** - "From birth you have been evil." The implication of this insult, in the context of John 9, is that the man whom Jesus caused to see had not previously adhered rigorously to all the conventional requirements of the OT law as interpreted by the Pharisees. Thus he had no right to instruct them about who Jesus was.

**Robertson** - It was insufferable. He had not only taught the rabbis, but had utterly routed them in argument.

**Spurgeon** - Folly, ignorance, and pride go together. Cannot you hear them say it? "A blind beggar, who has just begun to see, 'Dost thou teach us?' — D.D.'s, men who are learned in the law, 'Dost thou teach us?'" Well, brethren, if a man has only one eye, he may teach those who have not any, for the old proverb says, "In the realm of the blind, the man with one eye is king." Yet there is another proverb on this subject, and that is, "In the realm of the blind, the man with one eye gets hanged." That was likely to be the case here; the blind Pharisees could not bear the man who could see. He knew too much for them.....No, great Pharisees, he does not teach you, for you will not learn. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**So they put him out ([ekbállō](#))** - They threw him out (cf Jn 9:22+), but this may not have been actual excommunication because this action required a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin. What irony. They cast him out but by contrast "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out ([ekbállō](#))." (Jn 6:37)

**Spurgeon** - Oh, how He rejoices in finding those that are cast out by the world, or by the self-righteous: (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Adrian Rogers** (p 604) - Once I was blind, and now I can see. But they shut him out, and Jesus sought him out. They are the blight of the world. He is the light of the world. Religion without Christ is a blight. But Jesus sought this man out, and Jesus begins to work with this man.

**Guzik** - The excommunication of the blind man turned out to be a good thing, because it prevented him from trying to live in two worlds. Being "put out" of our old group is undeniably painful, but it is usually spiritually helpful.

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**Put out** (thrust out) ([1544](#))([ekbállō](#) from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). To throw out of an area or object, throw out, jettison (Mt 21:39 Acts 27:18). Frequently used of casting out demons (Mt 7:22, Mt 8:16, 31,9:34, 10:1, etc). Used of casting or throwing unbelievers into outer darkness (hell). In Luke 6:22 *ekballo* means to scorn one's name ("cast it out" so to speak). Mark 1:12 "Immediately the Spirit **impelled** Him (Jesus) to go out into the wilderness."

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## Greg Laurie - THE COST OF BELIEVING

They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out. (John 9:34)

When Jesus healed the blind man, did everybody in town begin to rejoice because of what God had done? No, not everyone rejoiced. In fact, the man got in trouble with the religious authorities.

This man knew so little about Jesus. When he was questioned, all he could say was, "A man named Jesus did this for me" (see John 9:11). He didn't even know if he would ever meet Jesus again.

He also knew he was in big trouble. You see, in those times your entire life was wrapped around the synagogue. If they threw you out of the synagogue, you would be ostracized. You would probably lose your job. You would lose your friends. You might even lose your family. So you didn't want to offend these people. You wanted to stay in good with them. This man knew he was in jeopardy of these things, yet he made the choice to boldly speak out about what Jesus had done for him. He could not deny what had happened.

Never doubt it, following Jesus will cost you. But it will cost you even more to not follow Jesus! So whatever you give up to follow the Lord, it's worth it. Whatever sacrifices you make, it's worth it to follow Jesus. A million times over.

There's no getting around it. Either you're going to have harmony with God and friction with people, or you're going to have harmony with people and friction with God. The choice is yours. I think I would rather be in harmony with God. Wouldn't you? BORROW - [For every season : daily devotions](#)

### John 9:35 Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

BGT John 9:35 κουσεν ησο ς πι ξ βαλον α τ ν ξω κα ε ρ ν α τ ν ε πεν· σ πιστε εις ε ς τ ν υ ν το ν θρ που;

KJV John 9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

NET John 9:35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, so he found the man and said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

CSB John 9:35 When Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out, He found him and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

ESV John 9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

NIV John 9:35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

NLT John 9:35 When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man? "

- **Jesus heard** : Jn 5:14 Ps 27:10 Ro 10:20
- **Do**: Jn 1:49,50 3:15-18,36 6:69 11:27 20:28,31 Ac 8:37 9:20 1Jn 4:15 1Jn 5:5,10,13,20
- **the Son**: Jn 1:18,34 10:36 Ps 2:7,12 Mt 14:33 16:16 Mk 1:1 Ro 1:4 Heb 1:2-9 1Jn 5:13

#### Related Passages:

John 5:14+ Afterward **Jesus found him** in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you."

## JESUS SEEKS, FINDS & SAVES

**Jesus heard that they had put him out** (thrown out - [ekbállō](#)) - **Jesus heard** not by chance or coincidence but by providence! He **heard** they threw the miracle out! Presumably this indicates that the Pharisees in effect "excommunicated" him from the synagogue as John alluded to in Jn 9:22+. In effect, he had no need for the temporal (temporary) rituals of the Temple, for He would soon enter

an eternal relationship with the Lord of the Temple!

*The men of the Temple threw him out, but the Lord of the temple searches him out!*

-- Brian Bell

**Brian Bell** - Jesus found him!!! - Where was he cast out?...right into the arms of Jesus! Being thrown out isn't always a bad thing. [Read Is.53:3a] It is better to be cast out, or to come out(from among them) then be spewed out!

Note the progression regarding this man's faith in Jesus - He believes He's a man, he believes He's a prophet, he believes He's sent from God, but he doesn't know yet He's the Son of God, or who He is. He was a picture of Pr 4:18 "the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day." [Adrian Rogers](#) explains this proverb "At first, it's grey dawn. And then, the sun comes over the horizon, and you can see, but there are just shadows, very little color. Then, the sun gets up a little bit more; you can see, but they're long shadows. And then, finally, it is high noon, and there are no shadows. That's the way God gives us spiritual wisdom."

**And finding ([heurisko](#)) him - Finding** means finding after searching. Jesus "just happened" to find him in Jn 9:1+, and now finds him a second time. The first time was for physical healing, but this time was for spiritual healing.

**G Campbell Morgan** - If He finds and receives, what does it matter who rejects? ([John 9:1-38 Jerusalem. \(Later\) Seventh Sign - Man Born Blind](#))

Similarly **Spurgeon** quipped "He that enjoys the favor of the Son of God will not tremble at the frown of the Sanhedrin." ([The Question of Questions](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - The Good Shepherd always cares for His sheep. Jesus knew that the man had been excommunicated, so He found him and revealed Himself to him. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - What a blessed thing to be cast out, if Christ finds us! Many and many have been put out of the synagogue and treated with contempt, but then outside Jerusalem they found their Lord, for there he died without the camp, and his people need not be ashamed to go after him bearing his reproach (Heb 13:13)...Oh! if there are any of you who are suffering persecution for Christ's sake, who have been cast out of any company because of what he has done for you, I do not think you need any sweeter comfort than this one line: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out;" (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Mounce** - This illustrates one of the most profound truths of the Christian faith: it is God who pursues the needy, and not the other way around. The initiative in salvation is his, not ours. We do not seek God (Ro 3:11); he seeks us (Lk 19:10). (See [John](#))

**MacArthur** - If God did not take the initiative in salvation, no one would be saved, since sinners cannot seek Him on their own. Romans 3:10-12+ sums up the sinner's total inability: "There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one." "No one can come to Me," Jesus said, "unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:44+, cf. Jn 6:65). "You did not choose Me," Jesus told the disciples, "but I chose you" (Jn 15:16). Just as the physically blind are incapable of restoring their own sight, so also the spiritually dead and blind cannot live or see by their own will or power. Salvation depends on God's initiative, power, and sovereign grace (cf. Jn 1:12-13+) (See [John Commentary](#))

**Matthew Henry** - Because he had, to the best of his knowledge, spoken so very well, so bravely, so boldly, in defence of the Lord Jesus. Note, Jesus Christ will be sure to stand by his witnesses, and own those that own him and his truth and ways. Earthly princes neither do, nor can, take cognizance of all that vindicate them and their government and administration; but our Lord Jesus knows and observes all the faithful testimonies we bear to him at any time, and a book of remembrance is written, and it shall redound not only to our credit hereafter, but our comfort now. Besides the common regard which the righteous Judge of the world has to those who suffer wrongfully (Ps. 103:6), there is a particular notice taken of those that suffer in the cause of Christ and for the testimony of a good conscience. Here was one poor man suffering for Christ, and he took care that as his afflictions abounded his consolations should much more abound. Though persecutors may exclude good men from their communion, yet they cannot exclude them from communion with Christ, nor put them out of the way of his visits. Happy are they who have a friend from whom men cannot debar them. (2.) Jesus Christ will graciously find and receive those who for his sake are unjustly rejected and cast out by men. He will be a hiding place to his outcasts, and appear, to the joy of those whom their brethren hated and cast out.

**He said, "Do you believe ([pisteuo](#)) in the Son of Man?"** - Jesus' question in Greek expects an affirmative reply. [Son of Man](#) was the most common moniker Jesus used of Himself, clearly emphasizing His willingness to identify with lost mankind.

**Marvin Vincent on Do you believe** - The form of the question indicates the confident expectation of an affirmative answer. It is almost an affirmation, *you surely believe*; *you* (σ , emphatic) who have born such bold testimony to me that they have cast you out. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

**Merrill Tenney** - "The question 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' is a summons to commitment. The Greek pronoun *su* ('you') used with the verb makes the inquiry doubly emphatic. It demanded a personal decision in the face of opposition or rejection." (Borrow [The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) page 328)

**Matthew Henry** - The great thing which is now required of us (1 Jn. 3:23), and which will shortly be enquired after concerning us, is our believing on the Son of God, and by this we must stand or fall for ever.

**Adrian Rogers** (p 604) - Now, he's had his eyes opened, but he's not yet saved. The Lord is enabling him to believe. The Lord is giving him understanding. He is leading him from a non-saving faith to a saving faith. He is believing about Jesus before he's trusting on Jesus.

**Robertson** on **Son of man** - it is a distinct Messianic claim quite beyond the range of this man's limited knowledge, keen as he is.

**Technical note on Son of Man** - Although most witnesses (A L Θ Ψ 070 0250 f1, 13 33 lat) have θεο (theou, "of God") instead of νθρώπου (anthrōpou, "of man") here, the better witnesses (66, 75 κ B D W sys) have νθρώπου. Not only is the external evidence decidedly on the side of νθρώπου, but it is difficult to see such early and diverse witnesses changing θεο to νθρώπου. The wording "Son of Man" is thus virtually certain. ([NET NOTE](#))

**Son of man - 195x in 191 verses by far most often in Gospels-** Matt. 8:20; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 10:23; Matt. 11:19; Matt. 12:8; Matt. 12:32; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 13:37; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 16:13; Matt. 16:27; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 17:9; Matt. 17:12; Matt. 17:22; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:18; Matt. 20:28; Matt. 24:27; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 24:37; Matt. 24:39; Matt. 24:44; Matt. 25:31; Matt. 26:2; Matt. 26:24; Matt. 26:45; Matt. 26:64; Mk. 2:10; Mk. 2:28; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 8:38; Mk. 9:9; Mk. 9:12; Mk. 9:31; Mk. 10:33; Mk. 10:45; Mk. 13:26; Mk. 14:21; Mk. 14:41; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 5:24; Lk. 6:5; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 7:34; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 9:26; Lk. 9:44; Lk. 9:56; Lk. 9:58; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 12:8; Lk. 12:10; Lk. 12:40; Lk. 17:22; Lk. 17:24; Lk. 17:26; Lk. 17:30; Lk. 18:8; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 21:27; Lk. 21:36; Lk. 22:22; Lk. 22:48; Lk. 22:69; Lk. 24:7; Jn. 1:51; Jn. 3:13; Jn. 3:14; Jn. 5:27; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:53; Jn. 6:62; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 9:35; Jn. 12:23; Jn. 12:34; Jn. 13:31; Acts 7:56; Heb. 2:6; Rev. 1:13; Rev. 14:14

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#### QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man?](#)

**ANSWER** - Jesus is referred to as the "Son of Man" 82 times in the New Testament (NIV and ESV). In fact, *Son of Man* is the primary title Jesus used when referring to Himself (e.g., Matthew 12:32; 13:37; Luke 12:8; John 1:51). The only use of *Son of Man* in a clear reference to Jesus, spoken by someone other than Jesus, came from the lips of Stephen as he was being martyred (Acts 7:56).

**Son of Man is a title of humanity.** Other titles for Christ, such as *Son of God*, are overt in their focus on His deity. *Son of Man*, in contrast, focuses on the humanity of Christ. God called the prophet Ezekiel "son of man" 93 times. In this way, God was simply calling Ezekiel a human being. *Son of man* is simply a periphrastic term for "human." Jesus Christ was truly a human being. He came "in the flesh" (1 John 4:2).

**Son of Man is a title of humility.** The Second Person of the Trinity, eternal in nature, left heaven's glory and took on human flesh, becoming the Son of Man, born in a manger and "despised and rejected by mankind" (Isaiah 53:3). The Son of Man had "no place to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). The Son of Man ate and drank with sinners (Matthew 11:19). The Son of Man suffered at the hands of men (Matthew 17:12). This intentional lowering of His status from King of Heaven to Son of Man is the epitome of humility (see Philippians 2:6–8).

**Son of Man is a title of deity.** Ezekiel may have been a son of man, but Jesus is *the* Son of Man. As such, Jesus is the supreme example of all that God intended mankind to be, the embodiment of truth and grace (John 1:14). In Him "all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9). For this reason, the Son of Man was able to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6). The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). The Son of Man came to save lives (Luke 9:56; 19:10), rise from the dead (Mark 9:9), and execute judgment (John 5:27). At His trial before the high priest, Jesus said, "I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). This statement immediately ended the trial, as the court accused the Lord of blasphemy and condemned Him to death (verses 65–66).

**Son of Man is a fulfillment of prophecy.** Jesus' claim before the high priest to be the Son of Man was a reference to the prophecy of Daniel 7:13–14, "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed" (NKJV). Daniel saw glory, worship, and an everlasting kingdom given to the

Messiah—here called the “Son of Man”—and Jesus applied this prophecy to Himself. Jesus also spoke of [His coming kingdom](#) on other occasions (Matthew 13:41; 16:28). The author of Hebrews used a reference to the “son of man” in the Psalms to teach that Jesus, the true Son of Man, will be the ruler of all things (Hebrews 2:5–9; cf. Psalm 8:4–6). The Son of Man, in fulfillment of [Old Testament prophecy](#), will be the King.

Jesus was fully God (John 1:1), but He was also fully human (John 1:14). As the Son of God and the Son of Man, He is deserving of both titles. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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### **J J Knapp - When He Had Found Him**

Behold in the text of today one of these noble features, of which the story concerning the curing of the one born blind is so abounding. This blessed man experienced, that, if someone openly and decidedly chooses the side of Christ, martyrdom in one shape or another will be awaiting. The man was even summoned before the ecclesiastical authorities, who questioned him and his parents sharply and threateningly. When he did not allow himself to be moved to unfaithfulness concerning his Benefactor by these bearded men, his sentence was ready, he was shut out of the communion of Israel, because this is the meaning of the words: “And they cast him out.” Strikingly beautiful it is followed immediately by: “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” They cast him out, but Jesus found him. Where they broke with him, Jesus hurried towards him. Where they delivered him to public scorn, Jesus came to his side to purify and to strengthen his faith.

What a wealth of mercy, what a ministering faithfulness!

Maybe we know of it by experience, although it is true that as believers we are not thrown out of the synagogue in the same sense as the one born blind, when we openly confess the Name of the Lord. Seldom are slandering words thrown at us, such as were heard in the Jewish Council: yet behind our backs people do whisper that we belong to those pious ones. We are no longer openly hit by the curse of the ban, if we profess freely that Christ is the light of our eyes, the wisdom of our hearts, the life of our lives; nevertheless we are looked down upon with condescension and we are banned if possible in the name of science from the leading circles. Children are bothered at school because of their beliefs. Young men, who want to be faithful to Christ, are the butt of jokes for their fellows. How the labourer can be pestered at his work is known to everyone who is part of the world of work.

What a need! However, also here the word of our text applies. There is one ear that hears it, and there is one heart that will find us in those painful circumstances. What does it matter if the world casts us out, if because of it a more abundant stream of grace is drawn from the divine heart? So it is in truth. God’s love comes nearest us, His compassion flows most abundantly, His peace is deepest when we are persecuted because of the Lord’s Name,—when the circle of the world is shutting us out, the heavens are opened and a flood of light descends upon us.

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**Spurgeon** - There are marks and evidences of true faith by which you can readily test yourself. If you enquire, ‘Do I believe on the Son of God?’ answer this: is Christ precious to you? ‘Unto you’ who ‘believe he is precious’. If you love and prize him as the most precious thing in earth or heaven, you could not have this appreciation of him if you were not a believer. Tell me again, have you undergone the change called the new birth? Have you passed through a process which could be described as being brought ‘out of darkness into his marvellous light’? If so, your new birth is a sure evidence of faith, for these things go together: while faith is a proof of regeneration, regeneration is also a proof that you have faith in the Son of God. Again, are you obedient to Christ? Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Is it so with you? Has sin become bitter? Do you loathe it? Has holiness become sweet? Do you follow after it? I do not ask whether you are perfect, but is the whole current of your soul towards being perfect? Can you say that if you could live entirely without sin it would be the greatest delight you could have, that absolute perfection would be heaven to you? Then it shows which way your mind goes; it shows that there is a change of nature, for no unrenewed heart pines after perfect holiness. Your heart is bending towards Christ’s perfect rule and sovereignty and I am sure that you have believed that he is the Son of God. You are resting upon him with a true and living faith, if you take up his cross heartily and follow him. Again, do you love God? Do you love his people? ‘We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.’ Do you love his Word? Do you delight in his worship? Do you bow in patience before his rod, so that you take up the bitter cup and say, ‘Thy will be done’? These things prove that you have faith in Jesus. Look well to them. (Sermon [The Question of Questions](#))

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### **James Smith - DOST THOU BELIEVE IN THE SON OF GOD? John 9:35**

If ye do believe on the Son of God—

1. Then you have no doubt about His divinity (Matt. 16:16).
2. Then you have repented of your sins (Acts 20:21).
3. Then you have everlasting life (John 3:36).
4. Then you are justified from all things (Acts 13:38, 39).



5. Then your heart is being purified (Acts 15:9; Heb. 9:14).
6. Then you are a worker by love (Gal. 5:6).
7. Then you have victory over the world (1 John 5:4).
8. Then you look upon the things unseen (Heb. 11:1; 2 Cor. 4:18).
9. Then you seek for souls. "Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of souls" (1 Peter 1:9).

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**Steven Cole - [The Blind See, but the Seeing are Blind](#)** (John 9:35–41)

We've all heard "good news, bad news" jokes. Here are a couple aimed at me as a pastor (from cybersalt.org):

Good News: The Women's Guild voted to send you a get-well card.

Bad News: The vote passed 31–30.

Good News: Church attendance rose dramatically the last three weeks.

Bad News: You were on vacation.

Our text gives us good news and bad news, but it's not a joke. It's deadly serious! The best possible news is: Jesus! The worst possible news is: Jesus! For many, Jesus is good news because He opens their blind eyes and gives them eternal life. For many others, Jesus is bad news because they reject His gift of sight and they will face eternal judgment (see 1 Pet. 2:6–8 for the same truth).

In other words, Jesus always divides people into one of two camps: Those who believe in Him for salvation receive eternal life; those who reject Him are hardened in unbelief and face eventual eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46). There is no third category. So, be very careful how you respond to Jesus!

We come to the conclusion of the story of Jesus healing the man who was born blind. As we've seen, this miracle, which Jesus performed on the Sabbath, caused a division among the Pharisees: Some said (Jn 9:16), "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others argued, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" The prevailing group were those that contended that Jesus was not from God, who in a few months succeeded in crucifying Him. They couldn't refute the reasoning of the blind man, so they threw him out of the temple (9:34). Our text picks up the story when Jesus found the rejected man and asked him a crucial question, bringing him to solid faith. The story concludes by contrasting the blind man's faith with the hard hearts of the unbelieving Pharisees. The lesson is:

Jesus came to give sight to the spiritually blind,  
but also to bring those who think they see without Him to judgment.

To quote Jesus (9:39), "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." Our text falls into two sections: (1) The blind see (Jn 9:35–38); (2) The seeing are blind (Jn 9:39–41).

### **1. The blind see: Jesus came to give sight to the spiritually blind (Jn 9:35–38).**

Jesus heard that the Jewish leaders had kicked this man out of the temple, which was a serious matter in that society. His neighbors would have shunned him out of fear of having the religious police target them. Although now the man was physically able to work for the first time in his life, no one would hire a man who had been excommunicated by the religious authorities. Probably many in the marketplace would also refuse to do business with such an outcast. But it was at this time, perhaps as he was standing in bewilderment outside the temple precincts, that Jesus found him and asked him the most important question in the world (Jn 9:35), "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" (The KJV and NJKV read, "Son of God"; but "Son of Man" is almost certainly the original text.) These verses contain five important lessons:

#### **A. Jesus takes the initiative by seeking those who are blind.**

"Finding him" (Jn 9:35) implies that Jesus was looking for him. Jesus said (Luke 19:10), "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." The religious crowd had rejected this poor man. He was an outcast from society. But at that very moment, Jesus went looking for him and brought him to solid faith by asking, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" The former blind man asked (Jn 9:36), "Who is He, Sir, that I may believe in Him?" (The same Greek word may be translated either "sir" or "Lord," depending on the context. In Jn 9:36, the blind man does not yet know Jesus as Lord, so it should be translated, "sir." In Jn 9:38, he recognizes Jesus as the Lord who opened his eyes, so there it should be translated, "Lord.") Jesus' reply must have thrilled his soul (Jn 9:37): "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." The man had not yet seen very many people, but now he saw Jesus and he recognized his voice as that of the man who had healed him. And so he instantly believed in Jesus.

The Bible repeatedly stresses that if you believe in Jesus, it's not because you came up with the idea first and went looking for Him. Rather, God chose you in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). He sought you when you were dead in your trespasses

and sins and granted saving faith to you as His gracious gift (Eph. 2:1–9). Thus our salvation is “to the praise of the glory of His grace” (Eph. 1:6). If you chose Him by your own free will, then you can share the glory for your salvation. But if He chose you apart from anything meritorious in you, then He gets all the glory (see 1 Cor. 1:26–31).

### **B. Jesus alone has the power to open blind eyes.**

Opening blind eyes is a God-thing (Ps. 146:8). As the former blind man pointed out to the Pharisees (John 9:32–33), “Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.” As Jesus’ dialogue with the Pharisees at the end of this chapter shows, this miracle was also a parable about salvation. Just as opening the eyes of one born blind is something that only God can do, so saving a soul is something that only God can do. It takes His mighty power to impart new life to those who are spiritually dead in their sins.

While (as we’ll see in a moment) to be saved, sinners must believe in Jesus, they cannot believe simply by exercising their own will power. As John 1:12–13 states, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Or, to use the blindness and light metaphor (2 Cor. 4:4, 6), Satan “has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” Then, how can we gain spiritual sight? Paul continues, “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” Just as God’s power spoke light into existence, so His power opens blind eyes when He saves a soul.

### **C. To move from spiritual blindness to sight, admit that you’re blind.**

Of course, the man who was born blind had no problem admitting that he could not see. That was obvious. But the proud Pharisees thought that they were the only ones in Israel with spiritual sight. They imply this when they railed against the former blind man (9:34), “You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?” And they imply it in their sarcastic question to Jesus (Jn 9:40), “We are not blind too, are we?” But Jesus replied (Jn 9:41), “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.” In other words, if they would have admitted their blindness, Jesus would have healed them by forgiving their sins. But since they insisted that they could see, they remained in their sins.

One of the main things that keeps people from gaining spiritual sight is that they refuse to admit that they’re blind. They think that they’re good enough to qualify for heaven. They may admit that they need a little boost from God. But they minimize their sins. They won’t admit that they’re totally blind and that they don’t just need bifocals; they need sight! As the old hymn, “Rock of Ages,” put it:

Not the labors of my hands can fulfill Thy law’s demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone; Thou must save and Thou alone.

So, to move from spiritual blindness to sight, admit that you’re blind.

### **D. To move from spiritual blindness to sight, believe in Jesus for who He is.**

Jesus’ question to this formerly blind man is the most important question you can ever answer: “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” You must answer that question, either now or at the judgment, when it will be too late. Your eternal destiny hinges on answering that question rightly: “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” To answer it rightly, answer these three questions:

#### **1) Who is the Son of Man?**

The former blind man asked Jesus (Jn 9:36), “Who is He, Sir, that I may believe in Him?” That question parallels Jesus’ question to the twelve (Matt. 16:15), “Who do you say that I am?” It’s the most important question in all of life to answer correctly. Faith is only as good as its object. If you believe in a false Jesus, you cannot be saved, any more than if you believed in an idol. So this question is crucial so that you believe in Jesus for who He is.

The title “Son of Man” is used over 80 times in the Gospels, including 12 times in the Gospel of John, plus four other times in the New Testament (The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible [Zondervan], ed. by Merrill Tenney, 4:203, 5:485–486). It almost always occurs on the lips of Jesus referring to Himself. It was not an accepted or widely used messianic designation in Jesus’ day. He may have used it because it avoided the political overtones that “Messiah” carried at that time. It was a way of alluding to and yet veiling His messiahship. It shows Him to be the representative man, the last Adam, and thus has nuances of humanity in it.

But it also has overtones of deity, stemming from Daniel 7:13–14, where the Son of Man receives an everlasting kingdom where all people serve Him. At Jesus’ trial, the high priest commanded (Matt. 26:63), “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus replied, alluding to Daniel 7 (26:64), “You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you,

hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” In John’s Gospel, the term is always associated either with Christ’s heavenly glory or with the salvation He came to bring.

D. A. Carson (The Gospel According to John [Eerdmans/Apollos], p. 376) argues that in light of John’s usage of the term, “Jesus is inviting the man to put his trust in the one who is the revelation of God to man.... Jesus himself is the Word incarnate, the one who uniquely reveals God.” Carson also points out that the term in John is connected with Jesus’ role as judge (Jn 5:27), which relates to John 9:39–41.

So the correct answer to “Who is the Son of Man?” is, “He is the eternal Word who took on human flesh and offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins (John 1:14, 18; 3:13; 12:23, 32, 34). He is risen from the dead and one day He will judge all the living and the dead (5:27). He is the one in whom we must believe.

## **2) What does it mean to believe in Him?**

In a nutshell, it means to trust Jesus to do what He promised to do. He told the woman at the well that if she asked, He would give her living water (Jn 4:10). She asked and He gave! He told the royal official whose son was sick (4:50), “Go, your son lives.” He believed Jesus and left for home and found his son healed. Here, He told the blind man to go to the Pool of Siloam and wash. He went and washed and came away seeing. Jesus promises to give eternal life to whoever believes in Him (Jn 3:16). To believe in Him means that you stop believing in your own good works as the way to heaven (as the Pharisees did). To believe in Him means to admit that you’re a sinner and to trust that His death on the cross will atone for all of your sins. Trust Him as you would trust a doctor by taking the prescribed medicine. But there’s a third question that you need to answer to move from spiritual blindness to sight:

## **3) Do I believe in Him?**

This blind man had obeyed Jesus implicitly by going to the pool and washing. He miraculously experienced having his eyes opened. He had borne witness before the hostile Sanhedrin to the point that they kicked him out of the temple. But he still needed to answer this question: “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

So, don’t take the question for granted! You may think, “I grew up in the church. I’ve always believed in Jesus.” But, do you trust in Him personally as your only hope for heaven? Perhaps you have always tried to obey the Bible’s teaching and lead a moral life. Great, but do you believe in Jesus as your Savior from your sin? Maybe you’ve even preached the gospel to others. Charles Spurgeon (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit [Pilgrim Publications], 36:232) tells of a preacher he knew who got saved while preaching his own sermon! Finally, a saved person in the congregation recognized the change that had come about during the sermon and he cried, “The parson’s converted. Hallelujah!” Everyone broke out in cries of praise and they all joined in singing the doxology! So each of us needs to answer the question, “Do I believe in Jesus?”

But, how can you know if your belief is genuine? After all, we’ve seen several instances in John where people professed faith in Jesus, but it wasn’t genuine saving faith. There are other signs of new life in Christ, but this former blind man reveals these:

## **E. When you truly believe in Jesus, you gain spiritual sight, confess Jesus as Lord, and bow before Him in worship.**

He was blind, but now he saw (Jn 9:25). He testified of Jesus as Lord as best as he knew how to these intimidating Jewish leaders. As I mentioned, the Greek word in Jn 9:38 should be translated, “Lord, I believe.” He confessed Jesus as Lord. And, he bowed before Him in worship. At this point, he may not have fully understood that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. But he was giving Jesus far more honor than one would give to an ordinary man or even to a prophet (John Calvin, Calvin’s Commentaries [Baker], p. 389). Carson (p. 377) says that while it is not clear that he was yet addressing Jesus as “my Lord and my God,” as Thomas did after the resurrection, it is likely that he was “offering obeisance to Jesus as the redeemer from God, the revealer of God.”

Can you say, “One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see”? Do you openly confess Jesus as your Lord? Do you bow before Him in worship, not just outwardly, but in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:24), and not just on Sundays, but all through the week? Those are some of the marks of genuine saving faith.

But, sadly, the story does not end there, with the blind man seeing. It goes on to warn us by showing that there are some who think they see, but they’re really blind:

## **2. The seeing blind: Jesus came to bring those who think they see without Him to judgment (Jn 9:39–41).**

While the blind man illustrates those who progress in faith to the point of worship, the Pharisees show us that some regress irretrievably in unbelief to the point of judgment. Jesus has already warned them (Jn 8:21, 24) that unless they believed in Him, they would die in their sins. Now, He says (Jn 9:39), “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” When they sarcastically retort, “We are not blind too, are we?” Jesus answers (Jn 9:41), “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.” Briefly, note three things:

## **A. To stay in spiritual blindness, insist that you see on your own and thus have no need for the Savior.**

As we've seen, the way to see is to admit that you're blind. Jesus is in the business of opening blind eyes. But if you assert that you see quite well without Jesus, then He will leave you in your blindness. In other words, pride keeps you from grace. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Pet. 5:5).

## **B. To stay in spiritual blindness, reject the gift of sight that Jesus offers to you.**

Jn 9:41 is a gracious offer of salvation: "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains." Jesus is saying, "If you would admit your blindness, I would heal you and you would not come into judgment. But your stubborn rejection of Me keeps you in your sins." Rejecting the light that God graciously gives leads to further hardening and judgment.

## **C. The result of rejecting spiritual sight is to be hardened in unbelief that culminates in eternal judgment.**

There is a scary principle in the Bible: If you reject the light that God graciously gives you, He will confirm your rejection and leave you in your blindness. In Matthew 13, the disciples ask Jesus why He spoke to the people in parables. He responds (Mt 13:14–15) by citing the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9:

"In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says,  
'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand;  
You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive;  
For the heart of this people has become dull,  
With their ears they scarcely hear,  
And they have closed their eyes,  
Otherwise they would see with their eyes,  
Hear with their ears,  
And understand with their heart and return,  
And I would heal them.'"

This means that the way you respond to the question, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" has huge consequences! If you shrug your shoulders and say, "I don't know," or "I don't care," or "I'll think about it later," you're closing your eyes to the light that God is offering you. He is not obligated to give you any more light. If you keep on rejecting His gracious offer of salvation, you may keep on hearing without understanding and keep on seeing without perceiving. Your heart may grow dull and you may die in your sins, only to face eternal judgment.

Maybe you're wondering, "How can Jesus say here, 'For judgment I came into this world,' when John 3:17 states, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world would be saved through Him"? If you keep reading John 3:18–21, the concept of judgment is implicit in Jesus' coming, although it wasn't His primary purpose for coming. John 3:18–19 states, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

The purpose of the sun is to give light, but light by its very nature casts shadows. Jesus' coming as the Light of the world means that the shadow of judgment is necessarily cast on those who reject Him. So by His very nature Jesus divides all people into two camps. Some allow the light to expose their sin and ask Jesus to cleanse them and give them sight. Others hate the light because they love their sin. They reject Jesus and come under His judgment.

## **Conclusion**

So Jesus is either good news or bad news for you, and I assure you, He is no joke! Your eternal destiny hinges on your response to Jesus' question, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Join the former blind man by responding, "Lord, I believe." And fall at His feet in worship!

## **Application Questions**

1. Some argue that we should not bring up judgment or hell when we share the gospel, but only focus on God's love. Is this biblical? Why/why not?
2. Why is self-righteousness one of the greatest hindrances to believing in Christ? How can we help such people see their sin?
3. Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons claim to believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Why is their faith not saving faith?
4. Gaining spiritual sight, confessing Jesus as Lord, and worshiping Him are three evidences of genuine saving faith. What are some others (give biblical references)?

BGT John 9:36 περὶ θη· κε νοῦς καὶ ἐπεν· καὶ τὸς στίβ, κ ρίε, νὰ πιστεῖ σω ε ρ α τ ν;

KJV John 9:36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

NET John 9:36 The man replied, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"

CSB John 9:36 "Who is He, Sir, that I may believe in Him?" he asked.

ESV John 9:36 He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"

NIV John 9:36 "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

NLT John 9:36 The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

- **Who:** Jn 1:38 Pr 30:3,4 Song 5:9 Mt 11:3

### **THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION ANYONE CAN EVER ASK!**

**He answered, "Who is He, Lord (SIR - [kurios](#)), that ([hina](#) - term of purpose - in order that) I may believe ([pisteuo](#)) in Him** - The healed blind man wanted to believe but is still ignorant of the true identity of Jesus. **Lord ([kurios](#))** in this context is a polite way of addressing Jesus as "sir," as it is rendered by most of the translations. The KJV and NAS translations are less accurate in my opinion, which is surprising as both version render [kurios](#) "sir" in the story of the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:11, 15, 19+). As we shall soon see [kurios](#) quickly shifts in meaning from SIR to LORD as he believes in Him. His statement is interesting in that he does not say in order that I may know who He is, but in order to believe in Him. Clearly, his heart is progressing to genuine belief unto salvation in this dialogue.

**Spurgeon** - Note the humility of the man's tone, how changed it is from that sharpness, that acerbity to which he had been driven by his enemies. He is a lamb before Christ though he was a lion before the Pharisees. That is the true Christian character,—gentle, tender, humble, meek, in the presence of the God of mercy, but with no trembling, no giving way in the presence of the adversaries of Christ and his truth. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Matthew Henry** - He had well improved the knowledge he had, and now Christ gives him further instruction; for he that is faithful in a little shall be entrusted with more, Mt. 13:12.

**Utley** has a good summary of this man's faith - We can see the theological development of the faith of this man within the chapter, as the man moves from calling Jesus: (1) a man (Jn 9:11); (2) to a prophet (Jn 9:17); (3) to the honorific title of "Sir" (Jn 9:36); (4) to "Lord ([kurios](#))," in the full theological usage of this term (Jn 9:38). The Greek word ([kurios](#)) is the same in both Jn 9:36 and Jn 9:38. Only context can determine the connotation.

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**Spurgeon** - I saw in Pompeii on a shop door the motto, 'Buy and you shall have', and I could not help thinking that if I were walking the streets of the New Jerusalem, I should have seen a very different notice—'come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' If there could be a shop in which all the goods were to be had without money and without price, would you quarrel with the shopkeeper and petition for an Act of Parliament to shut his shop up and say it was wicked, because you would rather go on the old terms and pay for all you have? Not a bit of it. Yet why is it you stand out against free grace's golden motto, 'Trust in Christ and you shall have'? Here is instantaneous, perfect, everlasting pardon, sonship through Christ, safety on earth, glory in heaven, and all for nothing, the free gift of a gracious God to undeserving sinners who trust in Jesus! Would that men would leave their foolish reasonings and believe in Jesus Christ. Today upon this choice may hang everlasting things to many of you. The anniversary of the season has almost come round, when I was in a similar condition, when I knew myself to be ruined and undone, and heard, for the first time with true understanding, that word, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' I knew how it stood that morning. And I do trust that now many a heart will say, 'I will simply rest my soul's salvation upon Christ the Son of God, who is the only Saviour of the lost: I will never from this day hope to be a self-saved man, nor look to anything but to him who on the tree endured the wrath of God on behalf of as many as believe on him.' (Sermon [The Essence of Simplicity](#))

BGT John 9:37 ε πεν α τ η σο ς· κα ρακας α τ ν κα λα λ ν μετ σο κε ν ς σπι ν.

KJV John 9:37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

NET John 9:37 Jesus told him, "You have seen him; he is the one speaking with you."

CSB John 9:37 Jesus answered, "You have seen Him; in fact, He is the One speaking with you."

ESV John 9:37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you."

NIV John 9:37 Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

NLT John 9:37 "You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!"

- **You:** Jn 4:26 7:17 14:21-23 Ps 25:8,9,14 Mt 11:25 13:11,12 Ac 10:31-33

#### Related Passages:

John 4:25-26+ The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

### JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS "SON OF MAN"

**Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you- Have seen** is past tense, which was literally true (in my opinion) when he obeyed Jesus' instructions and "**came back** seeing." (Jn 9:7). Some writers think he saw him only with "eyes of faith." In any event now Jesus reveals His identity as the Son of Man to the man.

**Spurgeon** - I scarcely remember that, up to this time, the Lord Jesus had given such a manifestation of himself to anyone except to the Samaritan woman at the well. When she mentioned the Messiah, he said to her, "I that speak unto thee am he;" and here he reveals himself to this man as the Son of God, which was somewhat more than that woman probably meant by the term "Messias." ([Spurgeon's Exposition](#))

**Robertson** - In Jn 4:26 Jesus reveals himself in like manner to the Samaritan woman as Messiah while here as the Son of Man (or the Son of God).

**John 9:38 And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him.**

BGT John 9:38 ὁ φη· πιστε ω, κ ριε· κα προσεκ νησεν α τ .

KJV John 9:38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

NET John 9:38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

CSB John 9:38 "I believe, Lord!" he said, and he worshiped Him.

ESV John 9:38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

NIV John 9:38 Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

NLT John 9:38 "Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

- **Lord:** Jn 20:28 Ps 2:12 45:11 Mt 14:33 28:9,17 Lu 24:52 Rev 5:9-14

#### Related Passage:

John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Acts 26:18+ to open their (SPIRITUAL) eyes so that they may turn from (SPIRITUAL) darkness to (SPIRITUAL) light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

### THE GREATEST MIRACLE

## SPIRITUAL SIGHT!

**And he said, "Lord ([kurios](#)), I believe ([pisteuo](#))"** - In this context "**Lord ([kurios](#))** takes on the meaning of Jesus as **Lord**, as with "doubting Thomas" (Jn 20:28), and not just "sir." In effect, his respect (sir) has turned to reverence (Lord). **Believe ([pisteuo](#))** is in the present tense (continual) and active voice (made a choice of his will). Exercise of saving faith involves an act of one's will and is based on information (the truth about Jesus). In this particular case "seeing is believing," or better his seeing led to his believing.

*"We were made to be prisms refracting the light of God's glory into all of life"*

—John Piper

**Matthew Henry** - Believing with the heart, he thus confesses with the mouth (Ro 10:9-10); and now the bruised reed was become a cedar.

He reminds me of **Lydia** at this point...

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and **the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.**(Acts 16:14+)

**Brian Bell** - It is not enough to believe that He is a man called Jesus, or even a prophet, or a man of God. But Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

**Warren Wiersbe** - The man now reached the climax of his knowledge of Jesus Christ and his faith in Him. It is not enough to believe that He is "a man called Jesus," or even "a prophet" or "a man of God." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). John wrote his Gospel to prove that Jesus is the Son of God, and to present to his readers the testimonies of people who met Jesus and affirmed that He is God's Son. This beggar is one such witness. Jesus identified Himself as the Son of God (see John 9:35; also Jn 5:25), and the beggar believed and was saved (John 9:38). "My sheep hear My voice" (John 10:27). He did not "see and believe"; he heard and believed. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - His trust illustrates the truth that though divinely initiated, salvation is never apart from a faith response.....Acts 13:48+ sums up the interplay of divine sovereignty and human responsibility in salvation.....He exemplified the principle Jesus enumerated in Jn 7:17+: "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." (See [John Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - The healed man has an increasing awareness of who Jesus is. A man called Jesus (John 9:11) He is a prophet (John 9:17) A man from God (John 9:33) The Son of God, worthy of worship (John 9:38)

**And he worshiped ([proskuneo](#)) Him** - At that moment, he validates his belief as genuine by falling prostrate before Jesus. It is important to note that Jesus accepted the worship of this man, which is another piece of evidence that He was God in the flesh, contrary to all who say He never claimed to be God!

**Guzik** comments "The religious leaders said, "You can't worship with us at the temple." Jesus said, "I will receive your worship." When the man worshipped Jesus, Jesus received the worship. This is something that no man or angel in the Bible does. The fact that Jesus accepted this worship is another proof that Jesus was and is God, and that He knew Himself to be God. **The formerly blind man showed an increasing awareness of Jesus:**

- Jesus is a man (John 9:11)
- Jesus is a prophet (John 9:17)
- Jesus is my master, I am His disciple (John 9:27)
- Jesus is from God (John 9:33)
- Jesus is the Son of God (John 9:35-38)
- Jesus is who I trust (John 9:38)
- Jesus is who I worship (John 9:38)

**Matthew Henry** - True faith will show itself in a humble adoration of the Lord Jesus. Those who believe in him will see all the reason in the world to worship him. We never read any more of this man; but, it is very likely, from henceforth he became a constant follower of Christ.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Not only did he trust the Saviour, but he worshiped Him. If Jesus Christ is not God, then why did He accept worship? Peter, Paul, and Barnabas certainly didn't accept worship (see Acts 10:25–26; 14:11–15). John the Baptist affirmed that Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:34) and so did Nathanael (John 1:49). Jesus stated that He is the Son of God (John 5:25; 9:35), and Peter also affirmed it (John 6:69). Now the healed blind beggar has joined this group of witnesses. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - “he worshipped him.” And you, beloved, cannot help worshipping him who has opened your eyes spiritually. It is those who are still blind who will not worship him; but once let us feel the touch of his light-giving finger, once let us know that he has shed his eternal light into the darkness of our souls, and we shall not be satisfied with the mere verbal avowal of our faith, we shall add to it our reverent adoration, as this man did when he first said, “Lord, I believe;” and then “worshipped him.”...That is the way with a genuine believer, he worships Christ. Why? Because he believes him to be God. It would be idolatry to worship Christ if he were only man, and Christ would have been an impostor if he had allowed this man to worship him if he had not been God. But he was God; and we, believing him to be God, worship Christ as very God of very God, to whom be praise forever and ever! Amen. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**Robertson** adds - It is tragic to hear men today deny that Jesus should be worshipped. He accepted worship from this new convert as he later did from Thomas who called him “God” (John 20:28). Peter (Acts 10:25f.) refused worship from Cornelius as Paul and Barnabas did at Lystra (Acts 14:18), but Jesus made no protest here.

**Charles Spurgeon** - He acted as a believer: for “he worshipped him.” This proves how his faith had grown. I should like to ask you who are the people of God when you are happiest.... My happiest moments are when I am worshipping God, really adoring the Lord Jesus Christ.... It is the nearest approach to what it will be in heaven, where, day without night, they offer perpetual adoration unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Hence, what a memorable moment it was for this man when he worshipped Christ! Now, if Christ was not God, that man was all idolater, a man-worshipper.... If Christ was not God, we are not Christians; we are deceived dupes, we are idolaters, as bad as the heathen whom we now pity. It is making a man into a God if Christ be not God. But, blessed be his holy name, he is God; and we feel that it is the supreme delight of our being to worship him. We cannot veil our face with our wings, for we have none; but we do veil them with his own robe of righteousness whenever we approach him. We cannot cover our feet with our wings, as the angels do; but we do take his blood and his righteousness both as a covering for our feet, and as wings with which we fly up to him; and though as yet we have no crowns to cast at his dear feet, yet, if we have any honor, any good repute, any grace, anything that is comely, anything that is honest, we lay it all at his feet, and cry, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.” ([A Pressed Man Yielding to Christ](#))

**NET NOTE** on **worshipped** - Assuming the authenticity of John 9:38–39a ([see the translation note](#) following the bracket in Jn 9:39), the man’s response after Jesus’ statement of Jn 9:37 is extremely significant: He worshiped Jesus. In the Johannine context the word would connote its full sense: This was something due God alone. Note also that Jesus did not prevent the man from doing this. The verb ([proskuneo](#)) is used in John 4:20–25 of worshiping God, and again with the same sense in Jn 12:20. This would be the only place in John’s Gospel where anyone is said to have worshiped Jesus using this term. As such, it forms the climax of the story of the man born blind, but the uniqueness of the concept of worshiping Jesus at this point in John’s narrative (which reaches its ultimate climax in the confession of Thomas in John 20:28) may suggest it is too early for such a response and it represents a later scribal addition.

#### Related Resource:

- [Did Jesus say He is God? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Worshipped** (bow down) ([4352](#)) [proskuneo](#) from **pros** = before + **kuneo** = kiss or adore) means to prostrate oneself in homage before another in the full sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy. When Jesus Christ was born into this world, He was attended and worshipped by angels. (Lu 2:13f). **Proskuneo** represents the most common Near Eastern act of adoration and reverence and also carries the idea of profound awe and respect. Some believe that the root word **kuneo** may be related to **kuon** which is the Greek word for dog and which then could be picturing a dog licking his master's hand.

The word [proskuneo](#) literally means to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage, to prostrate oneself in homage, to do reverence to, to adore and so to worship and show respect. In the ancient Oriental (especially Persia) the mode of salutation between persons of equal rank was to kiss each other on the lips. When the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek. When one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, and as he was bowing down he would be throwing kisses toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that is intended by the Greek writers in the use of the verb [proskuneo](#).

**Wuest** writes that **proskuneo** means “to prostrate one’s self, to kiss the hand to (towards) one in token of reverence, to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence (to make a salam), by kneeling or prostration to do homage to one or make obeisance, either in order to express respect or make supplication.” It is used of homage shown to men of superior rank, or of homage shown to God. In Mark 5:6 it speaks of homage to God, the act of worship, for the demon recognizes



our Lord as the Son of God. Here we have a being, incorrigible in his nature, destined to be damned for all eternity, one of the cohorts of Satan, bending the knee to God the Son. This is that of which Paul was speaking when he referred to the universal adoration of the Lord Jesus, even by beings under the earth (Php 2:10<sub>±</sub>). They are even now bending the knee to the Son of God. In the last analysis, it was not the demoniac who was prostrating himself before the Lord Jesus. He was under the control of the demon, and the latter was the source of the homage paid the Son of God. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Proskuneo** - 54v - bow down(1), bow down before(1), bowed down(1), bowed down before(2), bowing before(1), bowing down(1), prostrated himself before(1), worship(32), worshiped(17), worshipers(1), worshipping(1), worships(1). Matt. 2:2; Matt. 2:8; Matt. 2:11; Matt. 4:9; Matt. 4:10; Matt. 8:2; Matt. 9:18; Matt. 14:33; Matt. 15:25; Matt. 18:26; Matt. 20:20; Matt. 28:9; Matt. 28:17; Mk. 5:6; Mk. 15:19; Lk. 4:7; Lk. 4:8; Lk. 24:52; **Jn. 4:20; Jn. 4:21; Jn. 4:22; Jn. 4:23; Jn. 4:24; Jn. 9:38; Jn. 12:20**; Acts 7:43; Acts 8:27; Acts 10:25; Acts 24:11; 1 Co. 14:25; Heb. 1:6; Heb. 11:21; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 4:10; Rev. 5:14; Rev. 7:11; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 11:1; Rev. 11:16; Rev. 13:4; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 13:12; Rev. 13:15; Rev. 14:7; Rev. 14:9; Rev. 14:11; Rev. 15:4; Rev. 16:2; Rev. 19:4; Rev. 19:10; Rev. 19:20; Rev. 20:4; Rev. 22:8; Rev. 22:9

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### **J J Knapp - Lord, I Believe!     John 9:38**

People have wondered what would become of a handful of flax, so light and so brittle, that it is consumed as soon as it smells the fire? The answer must be that the tender threads can be braided into a heavy cable, such as gigantic ships are moored with. Brittle as the thread of flax was initially the faith of the born-blind one. He knew Jesus at first only as his benefactor, who had changed his night into the day. Next he advanced a little, and confessed Him before the Jewish Council as a prophet. A little later he put the Pharisees to silence when they declared emphatically, that Jesus was a sinner, because he answered, remembering the cure that Christ had wrought in him: "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." Finally Jesus coaxed from him through many inner struggles the short confession that sprung from his heart: "Lord, I believe."

Behold here in a clear example the faithfulness of grace that heals the brittle and strengthens the weak. Still today it goes from the darkness through the dawn to the light, and where the shadow of the appearance of Christ initially only momentarily passed over us mercifully, it is the precursor of a fervent faith of the heart that flows forth in a spirited confession across the lips: "Lord, I believe."

It is a short confession. The moment in which we are touched in the heart by the grace of God, is so full of emotion that there is no opportunity to speak many words. Holy hour, blessed hour, when our whole soul expresses itself in one cry of trust, when our mouth speaks, and our heart speaks, and our moist eyes speak,—only this one word: "Lord, I believe."

It is a confession wrought in us. Whatever is learned in the mind has certainly value, but what is gained in a way of struggle, is only the pure gold of faith, and once we possess this, we are truly rich in God.

It is a confession that is made before the Lord's countenance. We are certainly called to confess our faith before man and to not be ashamed of the cross of Jesus. However, let every one be careful that we do not only raise the banner of the gospel in the world, but that the "Lord, I believe," comes forth from our heart most when we are alone with Him.

Finally, it is a confession upon our knees, because, we read it, he worshipped Him. Let it so be with us! No cold admission. No language that makes the heart to freeze. But a confession in which the skilled ear hears our humble adoration!

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### **THE POWER OF A CHANGED LIFE**

Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him. JOHN 9:38

How did you become a Christian? Did someone answer all your questions, give you a crash course in apologetics or show you the overwhelming evidence for the veracity of the Bible? Some people do come to faith in Christ that way, but most don't. We most often come to profess Jesus as Lord because someone we trust shares with us that Jesus can meet our deepest needs: forgiveness, purpose, meaning, direction, truth, companionship and peace.

This man Jesus encountered in John 9 had an obvious need — he was born blind. He wanted to see, and Jesus gave him his sight. Is it any wonder he called him "Lord" and proclaimed his belief in him? Further, his belief in Jesus was unshakeable even in the face of intense, entrenched opposition. You might let someone who is knowledgeable or powerful talk you out of or intimidate you into renouncing your allegiance to a merely intellectual proposition. But you wouldn't renounce someone who changed your life by restoring your eyesight.

How has knowing Jesus changed your life? Different values, different principles, different lifestyle, different recreations, different

ways of handling your money, time and relationships — knowing Jesus will, or should, change your life in every way. Knowing theology and apologetics is great, and you should “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). But there is no more persuasive argument for the validity of our faith than a changed life.

Take time to reflect on the past year, the past five years or even the past ten years. Thank God for the changes he has brought to your life during that time.

PRAYER Father, may my changed life be a clear testimony to your power, grace and love ...[NIV, Once-A-Day Worship and Praise](#)

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**Larry Richards** - As our faith grows, we, like the blind man, are gradually given fuller and fuller revelations of Jesus and His will. Spiritual sight becomes more acute, and we acknowledge Jesus as Lord in every area of our lives.(BORROW [The 365 day devotional commentary](#))

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## **ALL THE REASON IN THE WORLD TO WORSHIP**

Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. JOHN 9:38

John 9 describes a story of front-page significance. A man born blind received his sight—a miracle duplicated nowhere in the Old Testament. A miracle that the Pharisees found disturbing.

For the more they investigated, the more they were faced with a decision regarding the sight-giver.

They were unwilling to admit in their unbelief what the man born blind was only too willing to acknowledge, as Matthew Henry describes.

### **WALK WITH MATTHEW HENRY**

“Believing with the heart, the man professed his faith in Christ: ‘Lord, I believe you to be the Son of God.’

“He not only gave him the civil respect due to a great man and the acknowledgments owing to a kind benefactor, but he gave him divine honor, and worshiped him as the Son of God come in the flesh.

“None but God is to be worshiped, and by worshiping Jesus, the man acknowledged him to be God.

“True faith will show itself in humble adoration of the Lord Jesus. Those who believe in him will see all the reason in the world to worship him.”

### **WALK CLOSER TO GOD**

Who in your opinion is Jesus of Nazareth?

Before you answer, consider the implications of your response.

If you say he is a man (see John 9:11), then how do you explain his miracles?

If you say he is a prophet (see John 9:17), then where did he get his message?

If you say he is a man of God (see John 9:33), then where did he get his authority?

When a head of state enters a room, everyone stands. What if Jesus Christ, the Son of God, were to come into the room? What response would he deserve?

The man born blind saw clearly how to respond (see John 9:38). Let his example be the model for your response throughout the day. [NIV, Once-A-Day Walk with Jesus Devotional](#).

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## **Chambers - Have You Seen Jesus?**

“After that, He appeared in another form to two of them ...” (Mark 16:12).

Being saved and seeing Jesus are not the same thing. Many people who have never seen Jesus have received and share in God’s grace. But once you have seen Him, you can never be the same. Other things will not have the appeal they did before.

You should always recognize the difference between what you see Jesus to be and what He has done for you. If you see only what He has done for you, your God is not big enough. But if you have had a vision, seeing Jesus as He really is, experiences can come and go, yet you will endure “as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27). The man who was blind from birth did not know who

Jesus was until Christ appeared and revealed Himself to him (see John 9). Jesus appears to those for whom He has done something, but we cannot order or predict when He will come. He may appear suddenly, at any turn. Then you can exclaim, "Now I see Him!" (see John 9:25).

Jesus must appear to you and to your friend individually; no one can see Jesus with your eyes. And division takes place when one has seen Him and the other has not. You cannot bring your friend to the point of seeing; God must do it. Have you seen Jesus? If so, you will want others to see Him too. "And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either" (Mark 16:13). When you see Him, you must tell, even if they don't believe.

O could I tell, you surely would believe it!  
O could I only say what I have seen!  
How should I tell or how can you receive it,  
How, till He bringeth you where I have been?

**John 9:39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind."**

BGT John 9:39 Κα ε πεν η σο ς· ε ς κρ μα γ ε ς τ ν κ σμον το τον λθον, να ο μ βλ ποντες βλ πωσιν κα ο βλ ποντες τυφλο γ νωνται.

KJV John 9:39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

NET John 9:39 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that those who do not see may gain their sight, and the ones who see may become blind."

CSB John 9:39 Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, in order that those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind."

ESV John 9:39 Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."

NIV John 9:39 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

NLT John 9:39 Then Jesus told him, "I entered this world to render judgment-- to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind."

- **For:** Jn 3:17 5:22-27 8:15 Jer 1:9,10 Lu 2:34 13:30 2Co 2:16
- **that those:** Jn 9:25,36-38 8:12 Jn 12:46 Mt 11:5 Lu 1:79 Lk 4:18 Lk 7:21 Ac 26:18 2Co 4:4-6 Eph 5:14 1Pe 2:9
- **may become:** Jn 3:19 12:40,41 Isa 6:9 29:10 42:18-20 44:18 Mt 6:23 Mt 13:13-15 Lu 11:34-35 Ro 11:7-10 2Th 2:10 1Jn 2:11

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 11:5+ **the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT** and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.

Luke 1:79+ **TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH**, To guide our feet into the way of peace."

Luke 4:18+ "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND **RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND**, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,

Luke 7:21+ At that very time He cured many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits; and **He gave sight to many who were blind.**

Matthew 12:30+ (JESUS BROUGHT JUDGMENT) "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

Luke 11:23+ (JESUS BROUGHT JUDGMENT) "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.

Isaiah 6:9-10+ He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; **Keep on looking, but do not understand.**' 10 "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And **their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes,** Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

Matthew 13:13-15+ "Therefore I speak to them in parables; because **while seeing they do not see,** and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 "In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; **YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;** 15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND **THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES,** HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.'

## **PARADOX - BLIND SEE SEERS BLINDED**

**And Jesus ([Iesous](#)) said, "For judgment ([krima](#)) I came into this world ([kosmos](#))** - At first glance this seems to contradict Jesus' words in John 3:17+ "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." So what does Jesus mean by saying He came into the **world for judgment**? The point is that Jesus' many miracles and signs pointed to His divine origin and deity and the result was that these acts of Jesus did in fact result in a sifting, separating between those who would believe in Him and those who would reject Him. Judgment in this passage does not refer to His **final judgment** He described in John 5:22, 27+ "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son....and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." (See Rev 20:11-15+ for the final judgment).

*Our guilt is proportioned to our refusal of the light.*  
- Brian Bell

Another way to look at this seemingly contradictory statement by Jesus on judgment is to understand that while He did come to seek and save the lost (Lk 19:10+), those who refused His seeking, remained lost and in effect brought judgment upon themselves because of their rejection. There is no middle ground when it comes to Jesus. Even as He hung on the Cross, there was in a effect a "judgment" the two criminals, for He separated a saved man on one side from a condemned man on the other side. They served as a fitting picture of the fate of all mankind. You cannot remain neutral when it comes to Jesus for as Peter declared "there is salvation in (absolutely) no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must (necessity) be saved." (Acts 4:12+).

**Marvin Vincent** on **judgment ([krima](#))** - Not the *act* of **judgment**, but its *result*. His very presence in the world constitutes a *separation*, which is the primitive idea of judgment, between those who believe on Him and those who reject Him. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - John 9:39 does not contradict John 3:16–17. The reason for our Lord's coming was salvation, but the result of His coming was condemnation of those who would not believe. The same sun that brings beauty out of the seeds also exposes the vermin hiding under the rocks. The religious leaders were blind and would not admit it; therefore, the light of truth only made them blinder. The beggar admitted his need, and he received both physical and spiritual sight. No one is so blind as he who will not see, the one who thinks he has "all truth" and there is nothing more for him to learn (John 9:28, 34). (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

In John 12:47-48 Jesus explains how His coming brought judgment - "If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; **the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day!**"

**Spurgeon** - Christ is the turner of the tables. Did not the virgin mother sing, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and he hath exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away" (Lk 1:52+) So he ever does. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**John MacArthur** - To reject Jesus' peace is to receive His punishment; to reject His grace is to receive His justice; to reject His mercy is to receive His wrath; to reject His love is to receive His anger; to reject His forgiveness is to receive His judgment. While Jesus came to save, not to condemn (cf. 12:47; Luke 19:10), those who reject His gospel condemn themselves, and subject themselves to judgment (John 3:18, 36). (See [John Commentary](#))

**John Piper** - When Jesus says that he did not come to judge, he means that condemnation is not his first or his direct purpose. He

is coming to save. When he says, "For judgment I came into the world," he means that inevitably, as I save people by truth and love and righteousness, a division happens and rebellion is revealed and people are confirmed in their unbelief. It's like a doctor being called to amputate a man's arm, because of a horrible infection, in order to save his life. Just before the sick man goes under the anesthesia, he asks the doctor, "Did you come to cut off my arm," and the doctor answers: "I didn't come to cut off your arm, I came to save your life." And we would all know what he meant. Or it's like a military special forces team being airlifted behind enemy lines to rescue of POW from certain death. They have grenades and guns and knives, but the commander says, "Your mission is not to kill. Your mission is to get the prisoner out. Do what you have to do." The mission of Jesus was not to condemn. It was to save. But he saves by being the truth and speaking the truth and doing the truth. And those who are not "of the truth" (John 18:37) refuse to embrace him as Savior, and therefore are condemned. The ministry of Jesus, which aims to save, inevitably reveals and confirms the blindness and unbelief that condemns. So in the second half of verse 39, Jesus explains how he has come for judgment. He has come for judgment "that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." On the one hand, the judging sword (or scalpel) of Jesus is going to cut away the blinding calluses of the heart, and the blind will see. But on the other hand, there is a blinding effect of this saving work. Verse 39 at the end: "and those who see may become blind." (SEE full sermon [For Judgment I Came into This World](#))

**Reformation Study Bible** - The First Coming of Christ did not bring in the Last Judgment (3:17; 12:47), but He confronted people with the obligation to decide for or against Him (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23). Until the Second Coming of Christ, this is still the age of redemption during which the blind are made to see, and those dead in trespasses and sins are raised to newness of life (Eph. 2:4). ([John 9:39](#))

*The Old axiom goes, Seeing is Believing,  
but here we read that Believing is Seeing!*  
-- Brian Bell

**So that** ([hina](#) - purpose clause) **those who do not see may see**, Jesus goes on to emphasize that this was not the final judgment but that His coming did result in a judgment between men depending on their response to Him. The purpose of His coming was to heal the spiritually blind (and physically blind in some cases) so that they would see that He was indeed the Son of Man and would be saved from final judgment. The purpose Jesus says is that those who do not see spiritually and who recognize and understand the spiritual darkness of their hearts are those who are open to the Gospel to cure their spiritual blindness. They are not proud, but poor in spirit. God is opposed to pride, but gives grace to the humble, in this case the grace to believe and be enabled to see spiritually.

**And that those who see may become blind** ([tuphlos](#)) - The other purpose of His coming was to bring about judicial hardening (spiritual blindness) to those who steadfastly refused to receive Him (Jn 1:11), instead rejecting His offer to be the Savior, leaving the only alternative for Him to be their Judge (See Rev 20:11-15+ for the final judgment).

[Guzik](#) - That those who do not see may see: Those who admit their spiritual blindness can find sight in Jesus. But those who see may be made blind—that is, those who falsely claim to have spiritual sight will be made blind.

**MacArthur** - The sobering truth is that those who willfully reject the light of salvation in Christ may find themselves fixed in their condition by God (cf. Jn 12:39–40; Isa. 6:10; Matt. 13:13–15; Acts 28:26–27; Ro 11:8–10). Scripture records not only that Pharaoh hardened his heart against God (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34; 1 Sam. 6:6), but also that, as a result, God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8). Some of the Pharisees reached that same point when they rejected the full light of God's revelation in Christ and attributed His divine power to Satan (Matt. 12:24–32). (See [John Commentary](#))

**Matthew Henry** - Christ, having spoken comfort to the poor man that was persecuted, here speaks conviction to his persecutors,

[Utley](#) explains it this way - This was a double fulfillment of prophecy especially from Isaiah: (1) the proud Israelite will not understand God's message (cf. Isa. 6:10, Isa 42:18–19; 43:8; Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2); (2) the poor, outcast, physically affected who are repentant and humble will understand (cf. Isa. 29:18; Isa 32:3–4; Isa 35:5; Isa 42:7, 16). Jesus is the light of the world for all who choose to see (cf. Jn 1:4–5, 8–9).

[Robertson](#) says "Another part of God's purpose, seen in Matt. 11:25 = Luke 10:21, is the curse on those who blaspheme and reject the Son.

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**Judgment** ([2917](#)) **krima** from **krino** = to judge, the suffix **-ma** indicating the result of the judging, ie, that is, the result of making a decision) describes a judicial sentence from a magistrate (his pronouncement). The root verb **krino** means, originally, *to separate*. So Homer, of Ceres separating the grain from the chaff ("Iliad," v. 501). Thence, *to distinguish, to pick out, to be of opinion, to judge*. Thus **krima** describes one deciding a question of legal right or wrong, to determine the innocence or guilt of the accused and assigning appropriate punishment. The closely related word **krisis** refers to the **process** or **act** of judging (instead of the **result** of the judging). **Vine** adds that "**Krima** is usually the decision which results from an investigation, just as **krisis** is the process of

investigation; sometimes the two are interchanged, as in [1Pe 4:17](#), **krima**, where the process of judgment rather than the resulting decision seems to be intended. Hence **krima** is used of the estimate one man forms of another, [Mt 7:2+](#), and of the decision of human tribunals, [Lk 23:40](#), of the decisions of God, in general, [Ro 11:33](#), and in particular concerning the devil, [1 Timothy 3:6](#), and man, [Mark 12:40](#) and [Gal 5:10](#)."

#### Related Resource:

- [What does the Bible teach about Jesus as judge?](#)

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**Spurgeon** - Whoever you may be, if you hear the gospel at any time it must have some effect upon you. It will either be to your soul 'a savour of life unto life', or else 'a savour of death unto death'. It will be antidote or poison, curing or killing, softening the conscience or searing it. It will either make you see, or else, because you fancy that you see, its very brightness will make you blind, like Saul of Tarsus, who cried, 'I could not see for the glory of that light'. You cannot be indifferent to the gospel if you become a hearer of it. 'I am come', said Christ—that fact none of you can escape: 'For judgment I am come', and that judgment must take place in your mind and conscience whether you like it or not. This coming and judgment have a wonderfully marked and decided effect. It is not that of a little improvement or of slight alteration; it is the turning of things upside down, so 'that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind'. It is a very violent change from light to darkness or darkness to light. In either case it is absolute reversion of condition. Now, the gospel will do just that for you: if you live without it, it will make you die; if you feel that you are dead without it, it will make you live. 'He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.' Learn hence that there will always be some effect upon the human mind wherever Christ comes, and that this effect will be a very decided one, changing all their conditions as much as if the laws of nature were reversed. The Lord's approach to a soul will lift it into the light more and more gloriously; or else it will plunge it into deeper darkness, deeper responsibility, deeper guilt, and consequently deeper woe. (Sermon [Sight for Those Who See Not](#))

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#### Living In Darkness

Jesus said, ". . . I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see." — John 9:39

Today's Scripture: John 9:1-7,24-39

Anna Mae Pennica was born with cataracts that left her blind. But in October 1981, Dr. Thomas Pettit of the Jules Stein Eye Institute in Los Angeles removed the cataract from Anna Mae's left eye—and for the first time she could see! She even passed a driver's test.

But there is a sad postscript to this surgical triumph. The technique for correcting Mrs. Pennica's eye condition had been in use since the 1940s. She could have been enjoying 40 years of sight but instead had remained blind needlessly.

What a greater tragedy to stumble through this world with sightless souls and be lost in impenetrable night forever! That was the condition of the Pharisees when Jesus healed the man born blind (Jn. 9). They were so blinded by their slavish devotion to outward religious appearances and traditions that they could not recognize the Light of the world. Their stubborn refusal to see their own sins kept them in spiritual darkness, and they rejected the Lord's offer of forgiveness.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12). Have you let the Light of the world into your life, or are you needlessly living in darkness? By: Vernon Grounds

The powers of darkness have blinded the race,  
Closing our eyes to the glories of grace;  
But faith in the Savior brings healing and sight,  
Flooding our soul with His truth and His light.  
—DJD

When you trust God's Son, darkness gives way to light.

([Click to go to the full devotional](#) including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets. Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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**John 9:40 Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?"**

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BGT John 9:40 κούσαν κ τ ν Φαρισαίων τα τα ο μετ α το ντες κα επον α τ · μ κα με ς τυφλο σμεν;

KJV John 9:40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

NET John 9:40 Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and asked him, "We are not blind too, are we?"

CSB John 9:40 Some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and asked Him, "We aren't blind too, are we?"

ESV John 9:40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?"

NIV John 9:40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

NLT John 9:40 Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, "Are you saying we're blind?"

- **Are:** Jn 9:34 7:47-52 Mt 15:12-14 23:16-28 Lu 11:39-54 Ro 2:19-22 Rev 3:17

#### Related Passages:

John 3:19-20 This is the judgment, that **the Light** has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 "For everyone who does evil **hates the Light**, and **does not come to the Light** for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

## THE QUESTION OF THE SPIRITUALLY BLIND PHARISEES

**Those of the Pharisees ([pharisaiois](#)) who were with Him heard these things** - Recall that Jesus had already called the Pharisees blind guides who lead the blind with the result that they both fall into a pit (Mt 15:14+, cf Lk 6:39+, Mt 23:16, 24)! And so here we learn that there were clearly Pharisees present when the blind man who had been healed of physical blindness was then "healed" of his spiritual blindness. They would have witnessed his worshipful response to Jesus and the fact that he called Him **Lord** and that Jesus did not reject his worship. So surely the Spirit was convicting them of sin, righteousness and the judgment to come (Jn 16:8).

**And said to Him, "We are not blind ([tuphos](#)) too, are we** - Pharisees followed Jesus hoping to catch Him in something he said or did. Filled with pride and prejudice, they now sneer at what He had just declared. The Greek sentence (begins with negative "me") expects a negative answer, having the force of "we are surely not" where the "we" is emphatic. In other words, they arrogantly assumed they were "OK" spiritually, but they were totally deceived, because they were spiritually blind and did not even recognize their lost condition. Spiritually dead men do not realize that they are spiritually dead unless the Spirit works in their heart. They were the experts in the law and confident that they did not lack spiritual perception. But they were (spiritually) dead wrong!

**Brian Bell** notes "So now we have seen perfectly illustrated what John said in John 1:5 *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.* Well, let's just judge them by their own testimony so far: This Man is not from God (Jn 9:16a); He does not keep the Sabbath (Jn 9:16b); This Man is a sinner (Jn 9:24) and they claim to not be Jesus' disciple, but Moses' (Jn 9:28) So yeah, I'd say you're pretty spiritually blind. He doesn't condemn them by making them blind. They blind themselves by rejecting Him!

**Warren Wiersbe** - Jesus had already called them "blind leaders of the blind" (Matt. 15:14), so they had their answer. They were blinded by their pride, their self-righteousness, their tradition, and their false interpretation of the Word of God. (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**French:** The miracle ends up being a parable: the blind man sees and the seeing Pharisees are blind.

**Adrian Rogers** You know the proverb, there are none so blind as those who refuse to see. And so, those who claim to be full, Jesus sent away hungry. Those who claim to be righteous were sent away unforgiven. And those who claim to see remain blind. Man's greatest need is to see his spiritual blindness. And the Bible makes that very clear. Just as light obeyed increases light, light refused increases darkness. Listen to this scripture Romans 1:21: "Because that when they knew God,"—that is, when their eyes were opened—"they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Light obeyed increases light. Light refused increases darkness. Now, there can be no greater sin than to reject the light. Once a man hears the gospel and his heart is opened to the Word of God, if he does not act upon that light, and go from faith to faith until he believes in Jesus Christ, his condemnation is doubled, because not only is he judged for the disease, he's also judged

that he refused the cure....When God comes to judge the world, He's not going to judge the world primarily by the sin that was committed, but by the light that was rejected. And what does this miracle show? That Jesus is the Light of the world. We are born blind beggars, but those blind eyes can be opened and will be opened by the grace of God. It's not just turning on the light; the heart, the mind, has to be opened and quickened to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. And once the heart, once the mind is opened and quickened, then we live up to the light that we have, we go stepping in the light, till we come to Jesus. Man's greatest need is to admit and confess his spiritual blindness. When he says, I see, he remains blind, but when he says, God help me, I'm blind, God opens his eyes and gives him light

**Ultey** has an interesting comment - These last few verses show that this chapter was an acted-out parable of spiritual blindness which cannot be healed (the [unpardonable sin](#) of unbelief), and physical blindness, which can!

In Galilee Jesus had spoken some frightening words about the Pharisees

Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" (cf Mt 15:1-11) But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. **"Let them alone (aorist imperative);** they are **blind guides of the blind.** And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."(Mt. 15:12-14+)

**Comment** - That command **"Let them alone"** is frightening. What Jesus was saying that God would abandon them to their unbelief. The takeaway is do not refuse Jesus' offer to cure your spiritual blindness. One is reminded of Paul's words in 2Co 6:2 **"Behold,** now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," **behold,** now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION". Note the two "behold's" to make sure he has your attention!!!

**Brian Bell** The same light that leads one person, can blind another! The Gospel brings about different reactions from different kinds of hearts: The blind sinner receives the truth and sees; The self-righteous religious person rejects the truth and becomes even more blind spiritually. It is a dangerous thing to reject the light. **Believers, have you examined your spiritual eyesight lately? Any spiritual blindness that may be dimming your ability to see and follow The Light of the World? Any spiritual blind spots in your life?** There are none so blind as those who won't see! Because you are self-satisfied you are un-healable! Sometimes Religious men are often the blindest of all! Spurgeon *"It is not our littleness that hinders Christ; but our bigness. It is not our weakness that hinders Christ; it is our strength. It is not our darkness that hinders Christ; it is our supposed light that holds back His hand."* **Open our eyes, Lord. We want to see Jesus** To reach out and touch him, and say that we love him. Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen. Open our eyes, Lord. We want to see Jesus. (Bob Cull) End: Today you either claim "to see" (i.e. Understand spiritual things, but really don't); or you realize your "spiritual blindness", and have asked, or are ready to ask, Jesus to restore your sight. None come in contact w/Christ without being blinded or enlightened!

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**A.T. Robertson** writes: Graphic picture. Once in Cincinnati a blind man introduced me to his blind friend. He said that he was showing him the city.

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**Tasker:** The last three verses of chapter ix make it clear that this incident has been recorded primarily because it is an acted parable of faith and unbelief, and therefore of judgment, a theme that is never absent for long from this Gospel. When Jesus speaks, His words are truth and judgment. For though He does not deliberately take upon Himself the function of judge, yet, because He is the real Light which shows up the hidden motives and the darkest secrets of men, the inevitable consequence of His presence in the world is a separation between those who claim to have religious insight though they are in fact spiritually blind, and those who, conscious that they are blinded by sin, pray that they may be given the sight of which the sin inherent in their nature has robbed them. To awaken in men a sense of their spiritual blindness is a primary work of Jesus the Apostle of God, and the performing of it puts all who remain ignorant of their deepest need upon the defensive. Hence the indignant and touchy question of the Pharisees in verse 40, **Are we blind also?** But, as Jesus proceeded to point out to them, it is precisely when men say that they see, and because they say that they see, that their sin remaineth. They continue to be guilty men however unconscious of their guilt. (BORROW [The Gospel according to St. John](#))

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**QUESTION - [What is the significance of Jesus saying, "The blind leading the blind" \(Matthew 15:14\)?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Many of the familiar expressions we use today originated in the Bible. One such idiom, **"the blind leading the blind,"** comes from Jesus' teaching in Matthew 15:14: "Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit" (see also Luke 6:39).

As Jesus traveled around ministering in Galilee, He attracted crowds from places near and far, including Jerusalem—the authoritative center of Judaism at the time. The Gospel of Matthew records a scene in which a group of [Pharisees](#) and [scribes](#) travel from Jerusalem to confront Jesus. These religious leaders were the representatives of Judaism in that day. They were entrusted



with studying the Scriptures and guiding God's people in the ways of the Lord.

Without a doubt, these Jewish leaders were receiving reports of miracles and unconventional activities surrounding Jesus' ministry. They became alarmed that their many regulations, laws, and age-old "traditions of the elders" (Matthew 15:2ESV) were not being kept. Specifically, they had come to question why Jesus' disciples were breaking the tradition of ceremonial handwashing before meals. According to their procedures—which, in reality, were human-made regulations and not part of God's Word—Jesus and His disciples were behaving in a way that made them ritually unclean. These so-called spiritual leaders had elevated their legalistic traditions to the point of equality with the commands of God in Scripture, a transgression Jesus was now compelled to confront.

Leading up to His description of the religious leaders as **blind leaders of the blind**, Jesus pointed out how the Pharisees had broken God's commandments (Matthew 15:3–9). First, He established their [hypocrisy](#)—they regularly broke the laws of God while demanding that others follow their human-made traditions. They displayed outward piety but lacked true devotion to God and His Word in their hearts. They were rebellious toward God and blind to their spiritual emptiness.

In Matthew 15:10–14, Jesus returns to their question about handwashing. Instead of addressing the Pharisees and scribes directly, He shared a parable with the crowd. The teaching upended the Pharisee's tradition, revealing that it's not what is outside of a person that causes defilement. What makes a person unclean, Jesus taught, originates from inside the individual: "What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them" (verse 11). Christ wasn't refuting the idea that people can become unacceptable before God, only *how* it happens. Handwashing can't make a person clean if his or her heart is tarnished. And the human heart can be deceitfully wicked ([Jeremiah 17:9](#)).

Employing a second parable, Jesus calls the Pharisees "blind guides" (Matthew 15:14). He repeats this characterization in Matthew 23:16: "Woe to you, blind guides!" And again in verse 24: "You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."

When Jesus said of the Pharisees, "The blind lead the blind," He was emphasizing the foolishness of the situation. Only a person who can see ought to lead a blind person. To be a successful guide to others, one must be able to see where he or she is going. If the blind lead the blind, those leaders are arrogant, overconfident, and in serious denial about their own sightless condition. Jesus knew this was true of the scribes and Pharisees who had come to confront Him. "Guide for the blind" was a common title for Jewish teachers of that day (Romans 2:19). Jesus wasn't about to let His detractors continue claiming this title when, in truth, they needed someone to lead them.

After Christ called the Pharisees "blind leaders of the blind," He said to "leave them" in Matthew 15:14. By this, He meant for His disciples to ignore the Pharisees, to let them alone and not to try to please them. These religious leaders thought they were experts in God's law, but they were blind and ignorant of the law's true meaning. Christ revealed that they were contradicting the very laws they claimed to understand. Instead of leading their students along the right path that leads to life, they were guiding themselves and their followers straight to disaster: "Both will fall into a pit."

Christ's parable of the blind leading the blind is just as relevant today as in Jesus' day. The tendency to elevate human interpretation of Scripture and [tradition](#) to a place of equal authority with God's Word is a blindness that has afflicted people of every generation. The inclination Jesus confronted in the Pharisees is no different from the legalistic traditions and unwritten rules that many churches, denominations, spiritual leaders, and individual believers try to enforce today.

When we allow human rules and regulations to take priority over God's laws, we lead people astray from "the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3NKJV). If we become blind leaders of the blind, we heap God's judgment on ourselves: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to" (Matthew 23:13; see also Matthew 18:6).

We must be careful not to let arrogance and denial blind us to our spiritual condition. We must make sure that our vision is clear enough to guide others in their spiritual walk. Likewise, we do well to choose our leaders wisely, being careful not to follow blind guides who will lead us away from the straight and narrow path of God's Word [.GotQuestions.org](#)

**John 9:41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.**

BGT John 9:41 ε πεν α το ς ησο ς ε τυφλο τε, ο κ ν ε χετε μαρτ αν· ν ν δ λ γετε τι βλ πομεν, μαρτ α μ ν μ νει.

KJV John 9:41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

NET John 9:41 Jesus replied, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin, but now because you claim

that you can see, your guilt remains."

CSB John 9:41 "If you were blind," Jesus told them, "you wouldn't have sin. But now that you say, 'We see'-- your sin remains.

ESV John 9:41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.

NIV John 9:41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

NLT John 9:41 "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see.

- If: Jn 15:22-24 Pr 26:12 Isa 5:21 Jer 2:35 Lu 12:47 18:14 Heb 10:26 1Jn 1:8-10

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 26:12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Isaiah 5:21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight!

Revelation 3:17+ (EXAMPLE OF **since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains**) 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and **blind** and naked, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and **eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see**

### WOE TO THOSE WHO THINK THEY CAN SEE

The idea of "think they can see" is the person who thinks he/she has no need for a Savior.

**Jesus said to them, "If you were blind ([tuphlos](#)), you would have no sin** - Jesus' answer would have been confusing to the Pharisees because He mixes what to them is something physical (blind) with something that is moral (sin). Keep in mind the context of a physically blind man who is given physical sight, and yet is still cognizant of his spiritual blindness regarding who the Son of Man was. But when Jesus tells him, he believes and thereby is given spiritual sight. The Pharisees can see physically, but fail to acknowledge or realize that they are spiritually blind. If they were to recognize their spiritual blindness (as did one Pharisee named Nicodemus), they would receive the cure that Jesus would have given them. The result would be that they would have no sin that had not been paid for in full by the blood of Jesus. Yes, they were still sinners, like all believers, but their sins would have been borne away forever by the Lamb of God!

**John MacArthur** explains - Jesus' point was that if the Pharisees would confess that they were spiritually blind (thereby admitting their need for Christ, the true Light) they would have no sin, because it would be forgiven (Ps. 32:5; Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9). (See [John Commentary](#))

In his study Bible MacArthur says "Jesus had particular reference to the sin of unbelief and rejection of Him as Messiah and Son of God. If they knew their lostness and darkness and cried out for spiritual light, they would no longer be guilty of the sin of unbelief in Christ. But satisfied that their darkness was light, and continuing in rejection of Christ, their sin remained."

**John Calvin** - He is blind who, aware of his own blindness, seeks a remedy to cure his disease. In this way the meaning will be, "If you would acknowledge your disease, it would not be altogether incurable; but now because you think that you (PHARISEES) are in perfect health, you continue in a desperate state." When he says that they who are **blind have no sin**, this does not excuse ignorance, as if it were harmless, and were placed beyond the reach of condemnation. He only means that the disease may easily be cured, when it is truly felt; because, when a blind man is desirous to obtain deliverance, God is ready to assist him; but they who, insensible to their diseases, despise the grace of God, are incurable. ([John 9 Commentary](#))

**But** (term of contrast) **since you say, 'We see,' your sin ([hamartia](#)) (present tense - continually) remains ([meno](#)) - NET** = "Your guilt remains." By saying **we see**, they deceive themselves into thinking that they can **see** spiritually and fail to acknowledge that they cannot **see** spiritually. Thus they see no reason to seek the only cure for their spiritual blindness, belief in Jesus, and their sins remained on their spiritual bank account - forever owing a debt they can never repay! In effect they have brought judgment upon themselves when they could have received forgiveness.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Our Lord's reply was a paradox. "If you were blind, you would be better off. But you claim to see. Therefore, you are guilty!" Blindness would at least be an excuse for not knowing what was going on. But they did know what was going on. Jesus had performed many miracles and the religious leaders ignored the evidence to make a right decision. Jesus is the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5). The only people who cannot see the light are blind people and those who refuse to look, those who make themselves blind. The beggar was physically blind and spiritually blind, yet both his eyes and his heart were opened. Why? Because he listened to the Word, believed it, obeyed, and experienced the grace of God. The Pharisees had good physical vision, but they were blind spiritually. Had they listened to the Word and sincerely considered the evidence, they too would have believed on Jesus Christ and been born again. In what sense did the Pharisees "**see**"? They saw the change in the blind beggar and could not deny that he had been healed. They saw the mighty works that Jesus performed. Even Nicodemus, one of their number, was impressed with the Lord's miracles (John 3:2). If they had examined the evidence with honesty, they would have seen the truth clearly. "If any man wills to do His [God's] will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17, literal translation). "And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**John Piper** - Behind that little phrase, "**you say that you see,**" is the profound statement of Jesus about our accountability: In reality they do not see. In reality they are blind. And their guilt remains. And they are accountable. Which means that there is a kind of blindness—a blindness rooted in willful rebellion against the light of God. It is a moral, spiritual blindness, not a physical one. We are blind because we love the darkness (John 3:19). We are blind because we don't want to see the light or be guided by the light or have to confess our works to be works of darkness. And this blindness does not diminish our guilt or remove our accountability. It is part of our guilt. To close, return with me to verse 39: "Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.'" "There's the fork in the road at the end of this message. We all walk down one path or the other. What does he mean, "He came that those who see may become blind?" Now we know from verse 41. I take him to mean: Those who have perfectly good eyes in their heads, who can think and reason, who can see the evidences, and hear the sermons, and read the Bible, and get acquainted with Jesus, but who will not admit they are blind and need to be born again with spiritual life and light, they "become" blind—that is, their blindness is revealed and the more light that they resist, the harder and deeper becomes their blindness. Let it not be so with you. Lay hold of the first half of verse 39, and believe in Jesus. "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see." He came to give you sight. (SEE full sermon [For Judgment I Came into This World](#))

**Adrian Rogers** (p 616) - Man's biggest need is to see his need. Man's biggest need is to admit his blindness. There are none so blind as those who refuse to see. You see, when Jesus met someone who claimed to be righteous, He sent that one away unforgiven. When He met someone who claimed, ah, to be full, He sent that one away hungry. When He met someone who claimed to see, that person still remained blind. Do you know what kept these Pharisees from coming to Jesus? It was their arrogance, their dishonesty, and their abominable pride. There are many in this auditorium today who need the light, but your problem is, you sit there and say, "There's nothing wrong with me. I've got 20/20." And that's the reason you'll never get saved because you say.... Jesus looked at it. "Because you say we see, therefore your sin remaineth."

**Spurgeon on we see** - You acknowledge that you have sinned with your eyes open, and, therefore, your sin is all the greater. (Spurgeon's Exposition of John 9)

**MacArthur** - They could not plead ignorance or lack of opportunity. In particular, the **sin** in view here, and the one that always damns, is that of unbelief. (See [John Commentary](#))

**NET NOTE** - Because you claim that you can **see**, your guilt **remains**. The blind man received sight physically, and this led him to see spiritually as well. But the Pharisees, who claimed to possess spiritual sight, were spiritually blinded. The reader might recall Jesus' words to Nicodemus in Jn 3:10+, "Are you the teacher of Israel and don't understand these things?" In other words, to receive Jesus was to receive the light of the world, to reject him was to reject the light, close one's eyes, and become blind. This is the serious sin of which Jesus had warned before (Jn 8:21–24+). The blindness of such people was incurable since they had rejected the only cure that exists (cf. Jn 12:39–41+).

**Warren Wiersbe** - We never meet this healed beggar again, but surely the man followed Jesus closely and was among those who witnessed for Him. We hope that he was able to win his fearful parents to the Lord. While being excommunicated from the synagogue was certainly a painful experience for him, he certainly found in his fellowship with Jesus Christ much more spiritual help and encouragement than he could ever have found in the Jewish traditions. Even today, there are people who must choose between Christ and family, or Christ and their traditional religion. This blind beggar made the right choice, even though the cost was great. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). (BORROW [Be Alive](#) or [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Related Resource:**

- [What is the unpardonable sin / unforgivable sin? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**ILLUSTRATION**—I heard about a king who visited one of these slave galleys. You know, they didn't used to run these ships with diesel, but they would put a lot of slaves beneath the, ah, the decks. And they chained these slaves to these massive oars, row upon row of them, and they would pull at the beat of a drum. And there would be a lichter there with a great whip to make them work harder. And the drum would beat so they would row in cadence. Those were the awfulest prisons and the most horrendous torture of the day. And the king went walking through the, ah, slave galley to see these slaves. And he thought he would interview some of the prisoners. He asked one man, "Why are you here chained to this oar?" He said, "O, sire," he said, "I'm here as an unfortunate, an unfortunate set of circumstances." He said, "I was standing in a crowd when a heinous crime was committed and," he said, "I was picked up with the rest of them." He said, "I, I was doing nothing. I was an innocent bystander." He said, "I've, I've got my wife and my children at home. Sire, I'm innocent." He asked another, he said, ah, "Why are you here?" "Oh," he said, "it was a, a villous scheme." He said, "There were those who lied on me." He said, "I have been framed." He said, "I have been lied against. I've been liabled." And he said, "I have been accused of committing a, a crimes against the king. And, sire, you are my king. I pledge to you my loyalty. I would never do such a thing." "Oh," said the king, "that's terrible. That breaks my heart." He asked another, he said, "Why are you here?" The man wouldn't even lift his head. He said, "Sire, I'm paying the just debt that my sins have incurred. I have sinned against God. I've sinned against my king. I've sinned against my countrymen. I have been a wicked and a vile sinner, and I am suffering the just reward of my sin." When the king heard that, he said, "You nave, you rascal, you thief, you malevolent person. What are you doing here in the midst of so many honest men? **Guards, release him and let him go.**" - [Adrian Rogers](#)

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### Greg Laurie - SEEING AND BELIEVING

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law. Deuteronomy 29:29

Anyone who has been a Christian for more than a few weeks is familiar with the story of Jesus healing the blind man. It's one of the Greatest Hits of the Bible, if you will. But we don't always know about the conversation Jesus had with the blind man—and the Pharisees—after he gave the man his sight. In fact, it's in what happened after Jesus healed the man that we find the point of this story:

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains." John 9:35–41

The Pharisees mocked the blind man and were horrified when he suggested that they might want to follow Jesus themselves. But when "religion" turned this man away, Jesus took him in. If you've been disillusioned with religion, or tried to keep all the rules and regulations but still come up empty, then Jesus is waiting for you with open arms, ready to open your eyes.

### TRUE BLINDNESS

In telling the Pharisees, "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus was saying, in essence, "If you were blind, then you would not be held accountable for truth you were unable to see. But you claim that you can see, and yet you willfully ignore the truth of my Word. That's why you are held accountable and found guilty. You saw the light but chose to live in darkness."

We often wonder what happens to people who have never heard about God. Will they be condemned because they have not accepted a truth they never had the chance to hear? The story of the blind man gives us an answer. God is perfectly holy and perfectly just. It goes against his nature to condemn someone who is ignorant of his truth. In fact, Scripture declares that God is loving, patient, and longing for fellowship (see 2 Peter 3:9). God will judge us according to the truth we have received. We will not be held accountable for what we do not know.

This, however, doesn't excuse us from all responsibility; otherwise we might claim that ignorance is bliss. No matter where we live, we humans are born with eternity in our hearts (see Eccles. 3:11). Each of us was born with a soul—a sense that life should have meaning and purpose. But if we turn away from what little we know to be true, this shows we don't really want to know God. It isn't ignorance; it's rebellion. Like the Pharisees, we want religion, not Jesus.

### GOD REVEALED

I believe that if a person is a true seeker of God, then God will reveal himself to him or her. Jeremiah 29:13 promises, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." God doesn't hide from us. God wants us to know him and is waiting for us to open our eyes and hearts to the life he has for us.

The Bible tells us about a man named Cornelius who was very religious and prayed to God constantly. Cornelius had never heard of Jesus Christ, but he was asking God to reveal himself. God answered the prayers of Cornelius by sending Peter to him. Peter told Cornelius about Jesus and when Cornelius heard that wonderful message, he believed. That's because he was a true seeker.

#### THE SEEING SKEPTIC

There's nothing wrong with asking honest questions about God. It has been said that skepticism is the first step toward truth. But there's a big difference between skepticism and unbelief. Skepticism is open to believing, while unbelief is refusing to believe. Skepticism is honesty, while unbelief is stubbornness. Skepticism is looking for light, while unbelief is content with darkness.

An unbeliever has no intention of changing or believing. Unbelievers will offer up well-worn excuses and arguments, but even when confronted with evidence to refute their unbelief, they reject it out of hand. They don't want to believe.

Jesus put it this way: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed" (John 3:19–20).

Perhaps something has happened in your life that has caught your attention. Maybe you have been going through a time of suffering. Maybe God has been making his presence clear to you. Whatever it may be, I would encourage you to pay attention. Like the blind man, be prepared to have your eyes opened. Look around you and ask yourself what God might be trying to show you. BORROW - [Walking with Jesus : daily inspiration from the Gospel of John](#)

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#### **Guzik - [John 9 Commentary](#) John 9 paints a picture of how Jesus heals blind souls.**

- We are all spiritually blind from birth
  - Jesus takes the initiative in healing us from blindness
  - Jesus does a work of creation in us, not reformation
  - In this work, Jesus calls us to be obedient to what He commands
  - Jesus commands us to be washed in the water of baptism
  - We become a mystery to our former associates, not even seeming to be the same person
  - We display loyalty to Jesus when we are persecuted, boldly and plainly testifying of His work in our lives and confounding others
  - We pass from little knowledge to greater knowledge, and this brings us to greater worship and adoration
  - We never know the name of this man born blind. Jesus is the important One; a true disciple is content to remain anonymous if his Lord gets the glory
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#### **QUESTION - [What is spiritual blindness?](#)**

**ANSWER** - To be spiritually blind is not to see Christ, and not to see Christ is not to see God (Colossians 1:15-16; 2 Corinthians 4:6). Spiritual blindness is a grievous condition experienced by those who do not believe in God, Jesus Christ, and His Word (Romans 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:12). Those who reject Christ are the lost (John 6:68-69). Being spiritually blind, they are perishing (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Revelation 3:17). They choose not to accept the teachings of Christ and His authority in their lives (Matthew 28:18). They are blind to the manifestations of God as revealed throughout His Word and Jesus Christ (John 1:1; Acts 28:26-27). They are described as those who "do not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Peter spoke of such people as "scorners [who] will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires" (2 Peter 3:3; see also Proverbs 21:24; Jude 1:18). Those who reject Christ and His Word are spiritually blind and cannot understand the truth of the Scriptures. The truth sounds foolish to them (Isaiah 37:23; 1 Corinthians 1:18). The Bible describes those denying John 9 God as fools (Psalm 14:1; Matthew 7:26). Because of their blindness and rejection of God and His Word, they are in a perilous, unsaved condition (John 12:48; Hebrews 2:2-4).

The spiritually blind are simply unable to understand God's Word (Matthew 13:13; Deuteronomy 29:4). Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the

Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:15-17). Paul echoed this when he told the believers in Rome, “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him” (Romans 8:8-9). Those outside of Christ are not of God because their lives are steeped in the things of the world with all its passions, their eyes blind to the Spirit of God. The Apostle John said, “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” but that person’s love “is from the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

The cause of spiritual blindness is made quite clear in the Scriptures: “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Paul refers to Satan as the “god of this world.” Extraordinarily evil (John 8:44), Satan destroys the flesh (1 Corinthians 5:5), masquerades as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and is the cause of all temptations (Luke 4:2; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Corinthians 7:5). He revels in scheming against and trapping the unbelievers (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:26). Satan’s goal is to devour the weak who fall prey to temptation, fear, loneliness, worry, depression, and persecution (1 Peter 5:8-9).

Without God and left to ourselves, we easily succumb to the devil’s schemes. We can become so mired in the affairs of this world and its moral darkness that, in the end, God turns us over to spiritual blindness and eternal condemnation (John 12:40; Romans 1:24-32).

As believers, we have the Spirit of God reigning in our lives to ward off the debilitating effects of Satan’s power and the world’s influence (1 John 4:13). John tells us, “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in Him, and he in God” (1 John 4:15). Satan wars within and without us. His weapons are deceitful and crafty schemes to make us doubt and stumble (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 4:14). Yet God has provided us with powerful weapons to ward off his flaming arrows (Ephesians 6:10-18). As believers we can overcome the evil one and remain in the Light and never become spiritually blind. For, in truth, Jesus has given us His wonderful promise: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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**Blind, Blindness** (repeated from above) - [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, see page 370](#) - Figuratively, blindness refers to an inability to recognize the truth, usually a culpable condition. As such, it describes judges whose judgment is perverted because of bribes (Ex 23:8; Deut 16:19; Job 9:24), idolaters whose worship is illogical as well as wrong (Is 44:9–10) and people who simply do not want to know (Is 43:8). Such blindness to the truth and mental confusion could actually be the result of God’s judgment on those who did not want to admit the truth and who therefore forfeit the ability to perceive it at their cost (Deut 28:28–29; Is 6:9–10; 29:9–10). This is true of the Israelites, both leaders (Is 56:10) and followers (Is 42:18–19). Only God in his mercy can reverse this condition (Is 29:18; 35:5; 42:16). Paul describes gradual blindness when he writes of those whose “foolish hearts were darkened” (Rom 1:21). In another vein he talks of seeing poorly now in contrast to seeing perfectly in the life to come (1 Cor 13:12).

The imagery of sight and blindness is especially prominent in the account of Jesus’ earthly ministry. The high incidence of physical blindness in the world of the Gospels is attested by the frequency with which Jesus performed miracles of giving sight to the blind. It is, in fact, one of the most vivid signs of Jesus’ supernatural power. Spiritual blindness is no less prominent in the Gospels. Jesus described the religious leaders and teachers of his own generation in terms of blindness (Mt 15:14; 23:16–17, 19, 24, 26). The irony of their situation is that in their spiritual ignorance they assumed that they understand perfectly. Jesus remedied spiritual as well as physical blindness (Mt 13:17; Jn 9:39). Those who rejected Jesus’ words came under a judgment similar to that of Israel—a state of permanent blindness (Jn 12:40; cf. Rom 11:7–10).

Although metaphorically blindness may describe mere ignorance (Rom 2:19), it usually carries the overtones of an unwillingness to face up to the truth (Jas 1:23–24); and in the case of those who do not believe in Christ, this is the work of Satan (2 Cor 4:4). As such it requires a miracle in order to become aware of the significance of Christ. Similarly, Christian believers who revert to their pre-Christian ways are described as blind, not perceiving the contradiction expressed in their behavior (2 Pet 1:9; 1 Jn 2:11). Blindness describes the fact that they are unaware of the gravity of their condition (Rev 3:17).

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**QUESTION - [What is the greatest sin? WATCH VIDEO](#)**

**ANSWER** - No sin is greater than another sin in the eternal sense. All sin separates us from God, and all sin needs to be atoned for. Also, there is no “greatest sin” in the sense of “[mortal](#)” and “[venial](#)” sins, as the Catholic Church teaches. All sins are “mortal” sins in that even one sin makes the offender worthy of spiritual death and eternal separation from God. At the same time, the Bible does state that on the day of judgment some sins will merit greater punishment than others (Matthew 11:22, 24; Luke 10:12, 14).

Jesus also referred to one sin being a “greater” sin (although not the “greatest”) in John 19:11. Speaking to Pontius Pilate, He said that the one who had handed Him over to Pilate was guilty of the “greater sin.” He meant that the guilt of the person who delivered Him to Pilate, whether Judas or Caiaphas, was greater than Pilate’s because of the deliberate and cold act of handing Jesus over

after seeing the overwhelming evidence of His miracles and teaching, all pointing unmistakably to Him as the Messiah and the Son of God. That sin was greater than that of those who were ignorant of Him. **This could indicate that those who have been given knowledge of Jesus as the Son of God and still reject Him would be subject to a greater punishment than those who remain ignorant of Him: "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains"** (John 9:41).

These incidents, however, do not prove that one sin is the "greatest sin" of all. Proverbs 6:16–19 is a catalog of the seven sins God hates and are detestable to Him: "Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers." But none of the seven are identified as a greater sin than any of the others, and none are identified as the greatest sin.

Although the Bible doesn't name any one sin as the greatest sin, it does refer to the [unpardonable sin](#), which is the sin of unbelief. There is no pardon for a person who dies in unbelief. The Bible is clear that, in His love for mankind, God provided the means of eternal salvation—Jesus Christ and His death on the cross—for "whoever believes in Him" (John 3:16). The only condition under which forgiveness would not be granted concerns those who reject the only means of salvation. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6), making it clear that He and He alone is the path to God and salvation. To reject the only means of salvation is unpardonable and, in that sense, is the greatest sin of all.