

JOHN 9 | *Man Born Blind*

Man Born Blind Sees

1 As he passed by, [Jesus] saw a man blind from birth.¹ 2 And his disciples² asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?³ 3 Jesus answered,

It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.⁴ 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming, when no one can work.⁵ 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.⁶

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 mud⁷ 7 and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which means Sent).⁸ So he went, washed, and came back seeing.⁹

Man's Testimony to the People

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? 9 Some said, It is he. Others said, No, but he is like him. He

¹ We are all blind from birth, and Jesus sees us in our blindness.

² The disciples haven't been mentioned since Jn 6:[].

³ Our suffering is not always because of sin. See v. 34. **Lk 13:2-5** 2 ...[Jesus] answered them, Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them. Do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

⁴ God desires to display his works in our suffering. **Jn 11:4** 4 ...When Jesus heard it he said, This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

⁵ **Jn 4:34** 34 Jesus said to them, My food is to do the desire of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. **Jn 11:9** 9 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. **Jn 12:35** 35 ...Jesus said to them, The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. **Ro 13:12** 12 The night is far gone. The day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.

⁶ **Jn 8:12** 12 Again Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

⁷ Jesus is the one who formed Adam from the dust of the ground. **Ge 2:7** 7 Then Yahweh God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. **Mt 9:29** 29 Then [Jesus] touched their eyes saying, According to your faith be it done to you. **Mk 7:33** 33 ... Taking him aside from the crowd privately, [Jesus] put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. **Mk 8:23** 23 ...[Jesus] took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. And when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, Do you see anything?

⁸ The Siloam Pool collects the water of the Gihon Spring. It is associated with the line of David and the coming Messiah.

⁹ It is an uphill track back up to the temple area.

kept saying, I am the man.¹⁰ 10 So they said to him, Then how were your eyes opened? 11 He answered,

The man called Jesus made mud, anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash. So I went, washed, and received my sight.

12 They said to him, Where is he? He said, I do not know.

Man's First Testimony to the Leaders

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.¹¹ 15 So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and I see. 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.¹² 17 So they said again to the blind man, What do you say about him, because he has opened your eyes? He said, He is a prophet.¹³

Parents' Testimony to the Leaders

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 19 and asked them, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see? 20 His parents answered,

We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. 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.

22 (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews. For the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess (ὁμολογέω, aor.)¹⁴ Jesus to be Messiah, he was to be put

¹⁰ **Ac 3:9-10** 9 ...All the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and recognised him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

¹¹ **Jn 5:9** 9 ...At once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.

¹² **Jn 7:43** 43 So there was a division among the people over him. **Jn 10:19** 19 There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.

¹³ **Jn 4:19** 19 The woman said to him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. **Jn 6:14** 14 When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!

¹⁴ “[T]o acknowledge someth., ordinarily in public, *acknowledge, claim, profess, praise...* of a public declaration as such...of profession of allegiance” (*BDAG*, 708).

out (ἀποσυνάγωγος, aor.) of the synagogue.)¹⁵ 23 Therefore his parents said, He is of age. Ask him.

Man's Second Testimony to the Leaders

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. 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.

26 They said to him, What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? 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 (μαθηταί)?

28 And they reviled him saying,

You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.¹⁶ 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.¹⁷

30 The man answered,

Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his desire (θέλημα), God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.¹⁸

34 They answered him, You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us? And they cast him out.

¹⁵ **Jn 7:13** 13 Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him. **Jn 12:42** 42 Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue. **Jn 16:2** 2 They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. **Ro 10:9** 9 ...If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁶ **Jn 1:17** 17 ...The Torah was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Messiah. **Jn 5:45** 45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

¹⁷ **Jn 8:14** 14 Jesus answered, Even if I do 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.

¹⁸ **Jn 3:2** 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

Man Believes and Worships

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, Do you believe into (πιστεύεις εἰς, pres.) the Son of Man? 36 He answered, And who is he, sir, that I may believe into (πιστεύσω εἰς, aor.) him?¹⁹ 37 Jesus said to him, You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.²⁰ 38 He said, Lord (κύριος), I believe (πιστεύω, pres.), and he worshiped (προσκυνέω, aor.) him.

The Blind and the Seeing

39 Jesus said,

For judgment I came into this world,²¹ that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.²²

40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, Are we also blind?²³

41 Jesus said to them,

If you were blind, you would have no guilt, But now that you say, We see, your guilt remains.²⁴

¹⁹ **Ro 10:14** 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

²⁰ **Jn 4:26** 26 Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.

²¹ **Jn 5:22** 22 ...The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

²² **Mt 9:13** 13 Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. **Mt 13:13** 13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. **Mk 4:12** 12 ...So that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven. **Lk 4:18** 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.... **2 Co 2:16** 16 ...To one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

²³ **Ro 2:19** 19 ...And if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness....

²⁴ **Jn 15:22-24** 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ...²⁴ If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

Biblical Worldview

1. Our undeserved suffering is Jesus' opportunity.

- a. We must not assume we know why a person suffers.
 - (1) The disciples assumed the man or his parents had sinned.
 - (a) **Jn 9:1-3** 1 As [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.
 - (2) So did the Jewish leaders.
 - (a) **Jn 9:34** 34 [The Jewish leaders] answered [the man], You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?
 - (3) Suffering isn't always due to sin. It is often undeserved. See *Suffering*.
- b. Our undeserved suffering is God's opportunity to display his works in us.
 - (1) **Jn 9:3** 3 Jesus answered, It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.
- c. The suffering of others is our opportunity to be like Jesus and work the works of God.
 - (1) **Jn 9:4-5** 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.
 - (2) We work the works of God when we alleviate the suffering of others.
 - (3) Time is running short for us to work the works of God.
- d. Jesus is the solution to our undeserved suffering. He is the light of the world.
 - (1) **Jn 9:5-7** 5 As long as I [Jesus] am in the world, I am the light of the world. 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 7 and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which means Sent). So he went, washed, and came back seeing.
 - (2) We need Jesus, God the Son, the Creator himself, to alleviate our suffering.
 - (3) The solution to our suffering world is a person, not a philosophy or programme.

2. The Christian faith is based on real-world historical evidence and testimony.

- a. John 9 is one trial in four stages.
 - (1) First, the formerly blind man testifies to the Jewish people (vv. 8-12).
 - (2) Second, the man testifies to the Jewish leaders (vv. 13-17).
 - (3) Third, the man's parents testify to the Jewish leaders (vv. 18-23).
 - (4) Fourth, the man again testifies to the Jewish leaders (vv. 24-34).
- b. At issue is:
 - (1) Whether the man really was given sight (vv. 8-9, 18-20, 25).
 - (2) How he was given sight (vv. 10-11, 15, 21, 26).
 - (3) Who gave him sight (vv. 11-12, 15-17, 21, 25, 30).
 - (4) What this means in terms of Jesus' identity (vv. 16-17, 22, 24, 29, 33).
- c. Although there is a division among the Jewish leaders (v. 16), their general verdict is against Jesus and the formerly blind man (v. 24, 34).
- d. Principles.
 - (1) Jesus' sign miracles indicate his identity as the God-man, the Messiah.

- (2) Jesus' identity is subject to historical verification. It isn't so otherworldly it can't be tested. Our faith bridges the supernatural and the natural.
- (3) God doesn't ask us to exercise blind faith but reasonable faith.
- (4) People don't reject Jesus because of lack of evidence. They reject him because they desire to reject him.

3. We need Jesus to open our eyes.

- a. This man was physically blind from birth (vv. 1, 8, 13, 20). Because of his blindness he was considered a sinner (v. 2) had to beg (v. 8). He was a social outcast through no fault of his own (v. 3).
- b. We, too, are spiritually blind from birth.
 - (1) See *Total Depravity*.
- c. The Old Testament prophets predicted the Messiah would open the eyes of the blind.
 - (1) **Is 42:6-7** 6 I [Yahweh] will take you [Messiah] by the hand and keep you. I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.
 - (2) **Is 42:16-18** 16 ...I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know. In paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them. ...18 Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see!
- d. Jesus came to give sight to the blind.
 - (1) **Jn 9:4** 4 We must work the works of [the Father] who sent me [Jesus] while it is day. Night is coming, when no one can work.
 - (2) **Jn 9:6-7** 6 ...[Jesus] spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which means Sent). So he went, washed, and came back seeing.
 - (3) **Jn 9:11** 11 ...The man called Jesus made mud, anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash. So I went, washed, and received my sight.
 - (4) **Jn 9:14-15** 14 ...It was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened [the man's] eyes. 15 So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and I see.
 - (5) **Jn 9:25** 25 ...Whether [Jesus] is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.
 - (6) **Jn 9:30** 30 The man answered, Why, this is an amazing thing! You [Pharisees] do not know where [Jesus] comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.
- e. This is something totally unique, something only Messiah can do.
 - (1) **Jn 9:32** 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.
- f. If we don't see our own spiritual blindness, Jesus won't give us sight.
 - (1) **Jn 9:39-41** 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. 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, Are we also blind? 41 Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no guilt. But now that you say, We see, your guilt remains.

- (2) Claiming to see, independent of God, is negative volition. Admitting blindness is positive volition.
- (3) The worst thing we can do is to say to ourself, “I see,” independent of God.
 - (a) See *Epistemology*.

4. Testifying factually about Jesus will lead to social ostracism.

- a. Anyone who confessed Jesus as Messiah was to be put out of the synagogue.
 - (1) **Jn 9:22** 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 Messiah, he was to be put out (ἀποσυνάγωγος) of the synagogue.)
- b. The formerly blind man was cast out.
 - (1) **Jn 9:34** 34 ...[The Pharisees] cast out (ἐκβάλλω, aor.) [the formerly blind man].
- c. Illustration: Israel Folau’s social media paraphrase of 1 Corinthians.
- d. But Jesus finds those who are “cast out” and reveals himself to them.
 - (1) **Jn 9:35-37** 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, Do you believe in the Son of Man? 36 He answered, And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him? 37 Jesus said to him, You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.
- e. Principles.
 - (1) The peer pressure not to testify to the truth of Jesus is enormous.
 - (2) Those who testify to the truth of Jesus will be expelled from polite society.
 - (3) Being expelled opens up the opportunity to know Jesus more intimately.
 - (4) John 4 has already made clear believers are able to worship God anywhere.
 - (a) **Jn 4:21-24** 21 Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

5. Justification is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone.

- a. Jesus makes the issue believing into the Son of Man.
 - (1) **Jn 9:35** 35 Jesus heard that they had cast [the formerly blind man] out, and having found him he said, Do you believe into (πιστεύεις εἰς, pres.) the Son of Man?
- b. The man, too, understands the the issue is believing into the Son of Man.
 - (1) **Jn 9:36** 36 [The formerly blind man] answered, And who is he, sir, that I may believe into (πιστεύσω εἰς, aor.) him?
- c. All the man says is, “I believe” (v. 38). The content of his belief is clear from the context. That the man worships Jesus (v. 38) indicates he understands him to be God the Son.
- d. Notice:
 - (1) Sin is not mentioned. The man does not sorrow for sins, confess his sins, or promise not to sin.
 - (2) Repentance is not mentioned (the term is not used at all in *John*).

- (3) The man does not promise to make Jesus the Lord of his life. Rather, he acknowledges Jesus is the Lord.
 - (a) **Ro 10:9-10** 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
- e. This encounter is very similar to Paul's encounter with the Philippian jailer (Ac 16:30-34).
 - (1) **Ac 16:30-34** 30 ...[The Philippian jailer] brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on (Πίστευσον ἐπὶ, aor.) the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household. 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds, And he was baptised at once, he and all his family. 34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.