

Healing the Man Born Blind

John 9:1-41

Part 1

John 9:1-23

Sixth Recorded Sign In John

- Healing the blind was a common miracle of Jesus. (Matt. 9:27-31; 12:12; 20:29-34; Mk. 10:46-52; Lk. 18:35-43; Lk. 7:21; Matt. 15:30; 21:14).
- Isaiah, the prophet, had prophesied the coming Messiah would heal the blind. (Isa. 29:18; 35:5; 42:7).

Isa. 29:18 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.

Isa. 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

Isa. 42:7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

- John's account of Jesus healing a man blind from birth is unique.
- This is the only recorded case of Jesus healing a man who had been blind from birth.
- Only John recorded this miracle.

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

1. Jesus knew all things and knew the man had been blind from birth.
2. How the disciples knew this is not clear. (Jn. 9:2).
3. It is possible they asked the man when and how he became blind or Jesus or someone else gave them this information. It is even possible the blind man affirmed he had been blind from birth in his cry for alms.
4. This led them to ask the question found in the next verse. (Jn. 9:2).

Note:

1. We do not know what Jesus "passed by" except in passing by He and His disciples saw this "man blind from birth."
2. The text makes it clear they were in Jerusalem because the "pool of Siloam" was located south of the temple.
3. It seems some time had elapsed since the attempt on Jesus' life recorded at the end of John 8. (Jn. 8:58,59).

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

John 8:59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple

Jn. 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi [Teacher], who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"

1. Jews commonly believed sin was responsible for blindness and most or all suffering.
 - a. Rabbi Ami said, "There is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity. (Shabbath 55a).
 - b. Jesus had earlier healed the crippled man who was suffering because of sin. (Jn. 5:14).

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."

2. The rabbis held a child could sin in the mother's womb.
 - a. When a pregnant woman worshiped in a pagan temple, the unborn baby also worshiped the idol.
 - b. Genesis 25:22-25 was used by some to prove a child could sin in the womb.

Gen 25:22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why then am I {this way?}" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

Gen 25:23 The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger."

Gen 25:24 When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

Gen 25:25 Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau.

Gen 25:26 **Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel**, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

- 1) Some Rabbis taught Jacob tried to kill Esau in the womb.
 - 2) There is no proof this view was true.
 - 3) The name "Jacob" means "one who holds the heel, one who supplants."
 - 4) There is no evidence this was a deliberate action, but it was a symbolic action indicating Jacob would supplant his twin brother Esau.
- c. There were probably other ways they believed a baby could sin in the womb.
 - d. Though not counted as sin, John the Baptist leaped in his mother's womb. (Lk. 1:41).

Luke 1:41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped [for joy] in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

- e. Some believe this might be a reference to the doctrine of transmigration of souls.
 - 1) Some have held that man has pre-existed in another life.
 - 2) Some hold a person might be punished in the new life because of sin or sins committed in the former life.
 - 3) There is zero for this view in the word of God.
 - 4) There is no clear evidence that the Rabbi's of Jesus' day believed or taught this view.
3. They also held the sins of the parent could be the reason for a child suffering according to their fallacious thinking.

a. This can be true, but it was not always true.

1) Children sometimes suffer the physical consequences of the sins of parents.

2) God warned the Israelites that their children would suffer physical consequences if they worshiped other gods.

Deut 5:9 'You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth {generations} of those who hate Me,

Deut 5:10 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

3) Children are not held spiritually responsible for the sins of the parents. (Ezek. 18:20).

Ezek 18:20 "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.

b. There are many reasons for human suffering. See notes John 9:3.

4. The disciples of Jesus seemed to hold this man's suffering had to be explained in one of these two ways.

5. At this point their understanding of suffering was the one held by the people in general.

6. They did not know if the sins of the parents or of the unborn child caused the man to be born blind and asked Jesus to settle the matter.

Jesus Rejected Their Explanation Of This Man's Blindness

Jn. 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 [manifested] in him.*"

1. It is possible for one to suffer because of personal sins or the sins of others, but suffering is not always the result of sin.

a. Suffering can come from sin, but it can also be as the result of accidents, illness, storms, droughts, floods, etc.

b. It can be as a test of faith as with the case of Job. (Job 1:8-12).

Job 1:8 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

Job 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

Job 1:10 "Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Job 1:11 "But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face."

Job 1:12 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him." So Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

2. Jesus emphatically stressed this man was not suffering because of sin, but "that the works of God might be displayed in him."

a. "That" does not mean God caused his blindness.

b. "That" denotes his blindness would result in "the works of God" being demonstrated in him.

Jn. 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."

1. The "we" included both Jesus and His followers who had an obligation to do "the works" of God.
2. "Must" means it was the obligation of both Jesus and His disciples to do the works of God "as long as it is day."
 - a. "Must" is from "dei" [day] meaning "it is binding, it is necessary, it behooves."
 - b. The Greek here literally has "it is necessary us to work."
3. "Day," in this context, has reference to the time Jesus and His followers are in the world.
 - a. Jesus' time left in the world was very short.
 - b. These disciples' and all other disciples' time left in the world is uncertain and can come at anytime.
4. "Night" [death] would mean the end of the opportunity to work for God.
5. As we apply this today, we must work while we have life since the time will come when death comes and we will no longer have the opportunity to work and accomplish God's will on earth.
 - a. Death could come soon or in the future. (Prov. 27:1).
 - b. It will come. (Eccles. 3:2; Heb. 9:27).
 - c. Those wishing to please God and who wish to spend eternity with Him will devote their lives to doing God's will.
6. The work God has assigned us is of eternal importance, and He expects us to abound in His good works. (1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9,10).

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

- "while I am in the world" speaks of the time of Jesus' incarnation.
 - This was a very short time - about 32 ½ to 33 ½ years depending on how one interprets the number of Passovers in Christ's ministry. See notes Jn. 5:1.
 - Jesus was about 30 years of age when He began His ministry. (Lk. 3:23).
1. Jesus had earlier exclaimed, "I am **the light** of the world." (Jn. 8:12).
 - a. He was God's Son who came to show us the way to heaven.
 - b. No one will enter heaven apart from Jesus. (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12).
 - c. Jesus died on the cross that those trusting in Him would have eternal life. (Jn. 3:16, 36).
 2. Jesus would not be in the world much longer, and He still had much to accomplish before His death.

Jesus Healed The Blind Man

Jn. 9:6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay [mud] of the spittle [saliva], and applied the clay [mud] to his eyes,

- “pelos” [pay lahs] means “moist earth, mud, clay.”
- “ptusma” [ptoo smah] means “saliva, spit.”

1. Jesus had on another occasion applied spittle to the eyes of a blind man at Bethsaida. (Mk. 8:22-26).

Mk. 8:22 And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Jesus and implored Him to touch him.

Mk. 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?"

Mk. 8:24 And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around."

Mk. 8:25 Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly.

Mk. 8:26 And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

2. He had also applied spittle to the tongue of a mute man after restoring his hearing. (Mk.7:32-35).

Mk. 7:32 They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him.

Mk. 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;

Mk. 7:34 and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!"

Mk. 7:35 And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly.

Jn. 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.

- The “pool of Siloam” is only mentioned here in the New Testament.
- The Hebrew word “Siloam” was translated “Sent” in Greek. It seems to have originally had reference to the fact that water was sent into the pool by a channel.
- It is interesting that the One sent from God sent this blind man to a pool translated “Sent.”

1. The blind man was instructed to go and wash his eyes “in the pool of Siloam.”

2. Because he was willing in faith to be sent, he “came *back* seeing.”

3. He received his sight because he had an obedient faith in Jesus whom he did not know.

- a. He did not say “this makes no sense.” How can applying mud and water give me my sight?
- b. Though it made no sense he did exactly what Jesus directed him to do.
- c. Saving faith is a faith that obeys God. (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:9; Jn. 15:14).
- d. What Jesus requires of us may or may not make sense to us, but it our duty to obey what He asks us to do.
- e. It is not our place to question, ignore, explain away or disobey His commandments.

Response Of Neighbors

Jn. 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?"

1. We learn this man was a beggar like the blind Bartimaeus. (Mk. 10:46-52).

Mk. 10:46 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.

Mk. 10:47 When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Mk. 10:48 Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Mk. 10:49 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."

Mk. 10:50 Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus.

Mk. 10:51 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!"

Mk. 10:52 And Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road.

2. Begging was about the only way a blind man could survive unless his family was willing and able to support him.

3. It should not come as a surprise that John informed his readers that this blind man was "a beggar."

4. Two groups are mentioned here - "the neighbors" and "those who previously saw him as a beggar."

Jn. 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."

1. Others were unsure he was the blind man they had seen begging.

2. His appearance would have been slightly changed when he received his sight, and he could now freely and quickly move about.

3. The man removed any doubt about his identity by saying "I am the man."

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

1. They accept this is really the blind man who could now see.

2. They wanted to know how.

Former Blind Man Explains

Jn. 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."

1. The man gave Jesus the credit for restoring his sight.

2. The blind man called Jesus "the man."

3. He did not yet know Jesus was God's Son (Jn. 9:36), but his faith in Jesus quickly grows as he learns more about Jesus and has the opportunity to converse with Him.

John 9:36 He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

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

1. It appears he did not really know where Jesus was.
2. His answer did not satisfy them (Jn. 9:8,9), and they brought him to the Pharisees.

Neighbors Bring The Man To Pharisees

1st Meeting Between This Former Blind Man And The Pharisees

9:13-17

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

1. The "they" are not clearly identified by John, but the pronoun likely refers to those who were indecisive about the identity of the former blind man.
2. Pharisees had a lot of power over the people and they were eager to please them.
3. Likely some or all of these Pharisees were members of the Sanhedrin - the supreme court of the Jewish nation.
4. Bringing him to them they viewed as the right thing to do to gain the favor of the Jewish leaders and perhaps to please God.

Healing On Sabbath Day

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

1. This healing was a real problem for the Pharisees.
2. They taught healing a man on the Sabbath was a violation of the Law of Moses.
3. They manifested no excitement and thankfulness that this man could now see.
4. They were only concerned that the Sabbath had been violated by the labor involved in kneading the clay and spittle together.
5. The labor of applying the clay to the man's eyes was also interpreted as a violation of the Sabbath labor law. See John 5:8-10.
6. They had no problem pulling a valuable animal out of a pit on the Sabbath day.

How Healed

Jn. 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."

1. They inquired of him how he was healed of his blindness.

2. This man told them exactly how Jesus healed him, that is, what Jesus had done and instructed him to do.
3. His powerful witness of Jesus healing him led to controversy among the Pharisees.

Controversy Among Pharisees

Jn. 9:16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others [Pharisees] were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.

1. There was a dispute among the Pharisees.
2. Some automatically concluded that Jesus had to be a sinner because He had violated the Law of Moses and had healed the blind man on the Sabbath.
3. Others contended God would not have healed the blind man by using a sinner to heal him.
4. These recognized Jesus must be from God, but pressure from others and a love of power kept them from accepting this fact and following Jesus.
5. They were right God would not heal using a sinner, but they did not stop to consider they were wrong about Jesus being a sinner.

Blind Man Now Views Christ As A Prophet

Jn. 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."

1. The blind man had grown in his understanding of Jesus.
2. He now viewed Him not just as a man, but as "a prophet."
 - a. "Prophet" means "spokesman" and is used to mean "God's spokesman."
 - b. He did not call Jesus "the prophet" (Deut. 18:15-18), but "a prophet."
 - c. He had a very high conception of prophets and believed Jesus must be one.
 - d. John had reported earlier the many believed He was "the prophet" and tried to make Him king. (Jn. 6:14,15).

John 6:14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

John 6:15 So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

3. He had no thought or conception Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.
4. His conception of Jesus was growing.
 - a. He spoke of Jesus as "a man." (Jn. 9:11).
 - b. He now speaks of Jesus as "a prophet." (Jn. 9:17).

- c. He later exclaimed again that Jesus was “from God.” (Jn. 9:33).
 - d. He finally believed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. (Jn. 9:38).
5. At this point he is convinced Jesus was from God.
 6. To him there could be no other explanation of his healing.
 7. No mere man could have done what Jesus had done.
 8. Those who seriously examine the miracles of Jesus and reflect on them will come to the same incapable conclusion.

Pharisees Questioned His Parents

9:18-23

Jn. 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,

1. The Jews here are likely the ones described in John 9:16 who rejected his testimony.
2. They refused to believe this blind man who could now see was telling them the truth about his healing.

Jn. 9:19 and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"

1. It is not clear what explanation they were looking for, but likely any explanation that would not give Jesus the credit for healing the blind man.
2. They were very envious of Jesus and hated Him.
3. They were ready and eager to punish those who identified with Jesus, but could not deny the former blind man could “now see.”

Jn. 9:20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;

1. The parents showed a little courage here in the way they responded, and used the words “We know.”
2. They did not back down, but affirmed this man was their son and he had been born blind.

Jn. 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."

1. They acknowledged their son had been blind, but could now see.
2. They pleaded ignorance on how their son had been healed.
3. They shift the responsibility to their grown [adult] son to answer how he was healed. See also Jn. 9:23.
4. Their answer was out of fear of the leaders and ignorance of the details of their son’s healing.
5. They had not witnessed the healing and depended on the testimony of their son.

Parents Afraid Of Jewish Leaders

Jn. 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.

1. They were afraid of the men who had the authority to have them excommunicated.
2. The New Testament brings out some refused to confess Jesus because of this very fear.
 - a. This was a fear of even “many” of the Jewish leaders. (Jn. 12:42, 43).

John 12:42 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;

John 12:43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

- b. Jesus warned those who believed in Him would be excommunicated. (Jn. 16:2).

John 16:2 "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.

3. Being accepted in the Synagogue and not being rejected by God’s people was of foremost importance to most Jewish people.
4. Being excommunicated was about the worse thing that could happen to a person.
 - a. There were temporary excommunications that could be for 30, 60, 90 days.
 - 1) It is not certain this kind of excommunication existed at that time.
 - 2) This was not always carried out exactly the same way in different periods of history.
 - b. There was also a permanent ban from the Synagogue.
 - c. Both forms were at the discretion of the elders of the Synagogue who would be strongly influenced by the Sanhedrin.
5. In their minds it was not only a loss of fellowship with God’s people, but a loss of the soul.
6. It would also bring about economic woes living in a Jewish nation.
 - a. Loss of employment
 - b. Businesses boycotted
 - c. Hard to make purchases

Jn. 9:23 For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

1. John repeats what the parents had said in John 9:21.
2. They were really intimidated by their wicked questioners.

3. They knew what would happen to them if they infuriated the religious leaders.

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