

# John 9

## Healing a Man Born Blind; Confrontation with the Pharisees

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### Day 1

### Read John 9:1-13

### A man blind from birth

1. What view did the disciples take of the man born blind? 9:2 (What did the concept of blindness often symbolize? Isaiah 42:17-19; Ezekiel 12:1; Matthew 13:13-16)
  - What purpose did Jesus give for the man's blindness? 9:3

**Food for Thought:** "The disciples' question reflected a common understanding of sin in first-century Judaism, one that is sadly common today as well. The disciples saw the man's affliction as the just penalty of someone's sin, either his own or that of his parents. It's human nature to find someone to blame...As the story unfolds, we learn that their 'chance' meeting had been scheduled since the beginning of time, and the man's 'meaningless' affliction had been given divine purpose from the foundation of creation."  
– Charles Swindoll (178)

"This passage teaches us that some of God's greatest and most glorious works are done in the most desperate of human situations. Human desperation sets the stage for the unveiling of God's awesome grace and power." – Mike Calvert

2. What was Jesus' goal? 9:4 (Cf. 4:34,35)

**For Your Information:** "The term '*day*' here refers to the life of Jesus, and to the opportunity thus afforded of working miracles. His life was drawing to a close. It was probably but about six months after this when he was put to death. The meaning is, My life is near its close. While it continues I must employ it in doing the works which God has appointed. Night here represents death. It was drawing near, and he must therefore do what he had to do soon."  
– Barnes' Notes

3. How does Jesus statement in 9:5 hint at what He is going to do? (Write out the ending phrases in 9:3, 9:5 and 9:7.)

**Food for Thought:**

**"I am the light of the world"**

"This provides a glimpse into the true significance of their encounter with the blind man. Note that this theme is repeated several times in this Gospel: 1:4; 8:12; 12:46. The point is that this man's physical blindness represented a far greater blindness, inflicting not just one man but all of humanity as well. It is the blindness of the soul that characterizes all men and women apart from the saving grace of God (2 Cor. 4:4). Therefore, what Jesus was about to do for this man would display, in some glorious and mysterious way, what He can do for all those who believe in Him. In other words, Christ's claim to be the light of the world will be powerfully verified by the miracle soon to come."  
– Mike Calvert

4. How did Jesus heal the man? 9:6 (Compare Genesis 2:7)

5. Put yourself in the blind man's place and imagine how Jesus' words and actions in 9:6-7 would have affected you. *Consider: Through what senses did Jesus communicate to the man? Why do you think Jesus involved him in the healing?*

**Food for Thought:** "In this one act, Jesus asserted His authority over disabilities, sin, bad theology, religion, the temple, the Sabbath, and even the religious authorities who opposed Him."  
- Charles Swindoll (180-181)

"The motive for the cure was compassion. Jesus had little to gain by performing the miracle, since He needed to offer no further proofs to the multitude of what He could do. He must have realized that healing this man on the Sabbath would cause an even more violent protest from the rulers than had the healing of the man at the pool earlier in His ministry. Nevertheless He did it, because of His concern for the individual."  
- Merrill Tenney (157)

6. What different opinions did the neighbors have? 9:8,9

- How would you describe their reaction to his healing?  
9:10,12,13

**Optional Digging Deeper**

Compare this healing to Mark 10:46-52. What differences do you see?

**Food for Thought:** "We see plenty of debate and hear lots of questions, but where is the excitement? Where is the joy on behalf of this man who had been miraculously healed. Instead of leading him to a celebration, they drag him to an inquisition."  
- Charles Swindoll (181)

7. What did the blind man know at this point about what had happened to him and who Jesus was? 9:11,12

**Applying the Word:** *How has God used difficulties or illnesses in your life to demonstrate His loving care for you and draw you closer to Him?*

## Day 2

### Read John 9:14-29

#### The Pharisees and the man born blind

8. What dilemma did Jesus' miracle cause for the Pharisees? 9:14

- What was the result? 9:16

**Optional Digging Deeper**

See Mark 7:5-13 for Jesus' conversation with the Pharisees about their rules/traditions.

9. How would you describe the blind man's response to being interrogated? 9:15,17

- Why do you think the Pharisees asked the blind man for his opinion of Jesus? 9:17 (Compare 4:19)

**Food for Thought:** "The man's sudden and obvious miraculous healing threw everything the Pharisees knew about God, sin, and justice into doubt...The Pharisees wanted the man to answer theologically; however, the man held tightly to the facts. While the Pharisees tried to spin the facts to fit their preconceived notions, the man wouldn't budge from his bottom-line perspective, except to say that Jesus was a 'prophet' – that is, one sent from God to proclaim His Word."  
– Charles Swindoll (182)

10. What did the blind man's parents confirm? What did they refuse to say and why? 9:20-23

11. In what position had the interrogations left the Pharisees? What was their next tactic? 9:24  
How did this approach change from 9:15. (See *Joshua 7:19* for the use of "give glory to God.")

- Why did they call Jesus a "sinner" (9:24)? (Cf 9:16a)

**For Your Information:** "This is not a search for truth. This is a deliberate sifting of facts, in which inconvenient evidence is set aside in favor of what will build a damning case against the Pharisees' enemy." – Charles Swindoll (182)

12. On what did the blind man take his stand? 9:25

**Food for Thought:** "**One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see:** The man born blind doesn't know everything about Jesus, but he does know how Jesus has touched his life. This is an irrefutable argument. How can they argue against what Jesus did in this man's life?"  
– David Guzik

13. After being asked for the third time *how* Jesus gave him sight, what problem did the blind man show the Pharisees had? 9:27 What tone do you read in the his words?

14. What kind of defense were the Pharisee reduced to at this point? (Whom did they attack?)

- 9:28 (Contrast 5:45-47)
- 9:29

**Applying the Word:** *The man stood on the reality that: "Once I was blind, now I can see." Every Christian can say that. How would you explain the sight that Jesus Christ has brought into your life?*

### Day 3

#### Read John 9:30-34

#### The blind man's testimony

15. Paraphrase what the man maintained about Jesus and His work:

- 9:30
- 9:31 (Cf. 8:46; 11:42)
- 9:32
- 9:33 (Cf. 3:2)

**For Your Information:** *"Why, this is a marvelous thing":* The healed man says this about their unbelief, not about the miracle of Jesus...This was a completely unique miracle in the Scriptures. 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...Opening the eyes of the blind was a specific work of the Messiah: 'The eyes of the blind shall be opened.' (Isaiah 35:5)" - David Guzik

"The man takes up the word the Jews had made use of, and applied to Christ (9:24) and suggests, that had Jesus been a sinner, that is, an impostor, God would not have heard him, or have assisted him in doing a miracle, to support an imposture, or cover and encourage a fraud; but that he was heard and assisted, was a plain case" - Gill's Exposition of the Bible

"Good reasoning from an unschooled man."

- NIV Study Bible (1615)

16. How did the Pharisees respond to the man's testimony? 9:34 (Cross-reference 9:22)

- What had Jesus said about this? Luke 6:22-23

**For Your Information:** "The Jews had three types of excommunication: one lasting 30 days, during which the person could not come within six feet of anybody else; one for an indefinite time, during which the person was excluded from all fellowship and worship; and one that meant absolute expulsion forever. These judgments were very serious because no one could conduct business with a person who was excommunicated." - Nelson Study Bible (1780)

"By the end of the inquisition, the Pharisees had no option but to set aside the facts and then play their trump card: their superior position of power. In my experience, it is a clear admission of defeat when someone starts quoting from his or her resume in the midst of a debate. It's even clearer when that person resorts to the use of power to silence his or her opponent. The Pharisees essentially admitted, 'We don't have an answer, so we'll excommunicate him.'"

- Charles Swindoll (183)

17. How would you explain the fear of the Pharisees who were the ruling elite versus the courage of a beggar?
18. What does the Pharisees' reliance on the law to make themselves righteous and acceptable to God say about their need for a Savior? See Galatians 2:21; 3:24
- Why would Jesus pose a threat to their system of religion?

**For Your Information:** "This miracle illustrated clearly the consequences of belief and unbelief. Persistent faith brought healing and progressive enlightenment. As the blind man acted on the simple imperative of Jesus, he progressed from one step of faith to another, until Jesus' voluntary revelation of Himself brought the man to its highest attainment and reward.

The unbelief of the Pharisees began with misunderstanding both of the law and of the person of Jesus. The law was for them a tradition to be kept, a dead letter, not a living voice. The result of this attitude was a prejudice that blinded the Pharisees to anything but their own preconceived opinion and so made them ignorant of the full truth...Pride prevented their learning any more, and their bigotry caused them to drive away the very man from whom they might have taken lessons in faith...Their inability to discern their own failure as evinced by their complacent assumption of spiritual sight aggravated the situation and made their sin all the more lasting. While the blind man gained physical and spiritual light through faith, the Pharisees lost the light they had and lapsed into complete spiritual darkness." - Merrill Tenney (160,161)

19. What kind of actions and/or judgments toward others did the Pharisees' self-righteousness produce? Luke 11:42,52

- What adjective did Jesus use to describe these actions? Matthew 23:13

**Optional Digging Deeper**

Fill in information about the 6<sup>th</sup> sign on the chart "Signs in the Gospel of John."

**Applying the Word:** Has your faith in the Lord ever caused you to be excluded from an activity or group? How did that impact you?

## Day 4

### Read John 9:35-41

#### Jesus and the man born blind

20. How did Jesus respond to the man's excommunication and what was His main concern for him? 9:35b

21. What does the question in 9:36 reveal about the man's heart?

- Compare the man's response in 9:38 to the Jews' in 8:59, 9:34.

**Food for Thought:** "The man had been thrown out of the place of the synagogue, the place of worship, but now he is face to face with the object of worship Himself."  
- Africa Bible Commentary (1273)

22. Record the growing recognition the blind man had of Jesus.

- 9:11
- 9:17 (Compare 4:19)
- 9:32,33
- 9:38

23. What does Jesus do for those who are "blind" (i.e. who admit their spiritual need)? 9:39a (Compare Matthew 9:12-13)

- What happens to those who say they "see" (i.e. who won't admit their spiritual need/their blindness)? 9:39b

**Optional Digging Deeper**

Read through John 8 & 9.  
What are some examples of the Pharisees' blindness?

24. What didn't the Pharisee want to admit? 9:40 (Contrast Matthew 15:14)

- What verdict was pronounced on them? Why? 9:41 (Compare John 15:22-25)

**Optional Digging Deeper**

Memorize John 9:25b

**For Your Information: "Are we blind also?"** "They did not recognize their own blindness. If they had recognized it, they would have seen the need to believe in Jesus, the light of the world. Believing in Him would have rendered them not guilty of sin. However, their claim to see kept them from coming to Jesus, and so they were still living in sin."  
- Africa Bible Commentary (1273)

**Applying the Word:** What are some of the characteristics of the people that turned to Jesus? (the Samaritan woman, the woman caught in adultery, the man born blind...) What are some characteristics of the people that rejected Him? What characteristics do you think the Lord finds pleasing in you?