

Lesson 9
John 9:1-41

The sixth sign: healing a man born blind

Memory verse: "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:5 NIV)

Chapter 9 continues the theme of Jesus as the Light of the World (8:12; 9:5). When the Light shone, some received spiritual sight, as this blind man, who received both physical and spiritual sight. However, the Light blinded others (vv. 39-41). This chapter shows the continuing polarization of opinion that marked Jesus' ministry, while the differences between those who believed on Him and those who disbelieved became more apparent.

Probably Jesus healed this man in Jerusalem (John 8:59), perhaps on the day following the events just narrated in or near the temple. John apparently noted that the man had been "blind from birth" to prove his helpless condition, and perhaps to compare him with those who were spiritually blind from birth (cf. vv. 39-41; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1-3). While the Synoptics record several instances in which blind people received their sight, this is the only case of this happening to a man who was born blind. In fact, this is the only miracle recorded in the Gospels in which the sufferer is said to have been afflicted from birth.

Our Lord performed miracles in order to meet human needs. But He also used those miracles as a "launching pad" for a message conveying spiritual truth. Finally, His miracles were His "credentials" to prove that He was indeed the Messiah. "The blind receive their sight" was one such messianic miracle (Matt. 11:5), and we see it demonstrated in this chapter. Jesus used this miracle as the basis for a short sermon on spiritual blindness (John 9:39-41) and a longer sermon on true and false shepherds (John 10:1-18). The miracle also illustrates the origin and development of faith.

It appears that in the United States somebody goes blind every twenty minutes. The man we meet in this chapter was born blind; he had never seen the beauty of God's creation or the faces of his loved ones. When Jesus arrived on the scene, everything changed, and the man was made to see. However, the greatest miracle was not the opening of his eyes but the opening of his heart to the Saviour. It cost him everything to confess Jesus as the Son of God, but he was willing to do it.

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. He was casted out from his people for his faith in Jesus, and 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 KJV).

Scripture Reading: John 9: 1-12; 35-41.

To learn in this lesson: 1) The cause of physical problems 2) Progression in the understanding of Jesus 3) Seeing by Faith in the Son of God.

Discussion Questions:

1) What can we learn from the healing of the blind man by a man called Jesus in verses 1 to 12?

2) What happened to the blind man's faith during the interrogation of Jesus by the Pharisees in verses 13 to 34?

3) Review verses 35 to 41 to know how the no longer blind man receives salvation but not for the Pharisees who were not physically blind.