

## John 9:1-41

**What was the thinking of the disciples - why did they ask Jesus why this man had been born blind (v. 2)?** The disciples had a theological problem. Their question reflected popular Jewish opinion of their day—that sickness was the result of sin (Exodus 20:5). This cause and effect reasoning led many of the Jews, like Job's friends, to conclude that every bad thing in life was caused by a person's sin. (Ultimately though, all sickness is due to Adam's sin.)

**According to Jesus, why was the man born blind (v. 3)?** So that God would be glorified. This blindness was not divine punishment for a specific sin committed by this man or by his parents. Whether God ordained the man's blindness or allowed it, God ultimately used it so He might display His work in this man's life.

**What did Jesus mean by day/night (v. 4-5)?** Day means the time period that Jesus had to do the work that the Father sent Him to do. Night is the end of that time period. In Jesus' case it was His coming death. "We" includes the disciples and by extension all believers. After His death, His disciples would be His lights (cf. Matthew 5:14; Ephesians 5:8) bringing Christ to others.<sup>1</sup>

**What was the concern of the Pharisees (vv. 6, 14)?** Jesus spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva and put it on the blind man's eyes and he was miraculously healed. That constituted working on the Sabbath which was forbidden. The miracle was perceived more as a crime than a wonderful cure. Incredibly they focused on the day of the week and overlooked the miracle. To the Pharisees, healing (unless life was in danger) and making mud were both work and thus violated the Law.<sup>2</sup>

**The Pharisees distorted the concept of the Sabbath with their man-made laws. How did Jesus clear up their misconception (Mark 2:27)?** Jesus said, "*The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.*" The Sabbath was given to the Jews to rest, worship and enjoy. They were in control of the Sabbath, not the other way around.

**When his neighbors brought the formerly blind man to the Pharisees, how did they react to his testimony (v. 16)?** Jesus polarized the Pharisees. Some believed that Jesus could not possibly be a godly man because He had broken the Sabbath. Others reasoned that if He was a sinful man, He could not perform such a wonderful miracle. Men were forced to take sides -- either for Jesus or against Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

**Why did the Pharisees call for the man's parents (v. 18)?** To disprove his story. Only his parents could affirm that he had been truly blind from birth. If he had not been born blind, the Pharisees could dispute Jesus' miracle.

**What do you make of the parents' comments (vv. 20-23)?** The man's parents were certainly aware of the Pharisees' authority and seemed to be very intimidated at the thought of being put out of the synagogue for affirming that Jesus was the Messiah. For a Jew to be put out of the synagogue meant being ostracized by everyone – not a small matter. But the testimony of his parents is tragic. Not only did they refuse to give glory to God and to bear witness to the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ, they lied about how much they knew. If that wasn't bad enough, these parents didn't stand up for their son. Their lack of courage and their dishonesty is glaring.

**How would you characterize the ex-blind man's testimony (vv. 11, 15, and 25)?** Simple and consistent, "I was blind but now I see." The former beggar's personal testimony settled the debate. No one could argue with Him.

**Application: Isn't that our testimony as well -- "I once was blind but now I see?"** Everyone is spiritually blind until we encounter Jesus and He opens our eyes to the truth. The irony is that we don't even realize we are blind until after we are saved. We think we are really "living it up," enjoying life to its fullest. We think we are free. But we are really enslaved, in bondage to sin, and we don't even know it. After encountering Jesus, we realize we are truly free. Our testimony is perhaps our most powerful tool for sharing the gospel.

**What was the Pharisees next tactic (v. 24)?** The Pharisees were demanding that God be given the glory for the miracle, and that no credit be given to Jesus. The Pharisees wrongly assumed that glorifying God and glorifying Jesus were mutually exclusive, when actually to glorify the Son is to glorify the Father. The Pharisees also accused Jesus of being a sinful man. They were hoping that the healed man would cave in to pressure and testify that Jesus was indeed a sinner.

**After much back and forth badgering (vv. 24-26), how did the man respond to the Jews' question (v. 27)?** The ex-blind man got impatient. He had already told them how he was healed (v. 15), but they did not listen to him, i.e. they rejected his testimony. He sarcastically asked if their request for him to repeat his report indicated that they had changed their hearts. Were they now interested in becoming Jesus' disciples?<sup>4</sup>

**How did the Pharisees respond to the beggar's question (vv. 28-29)?** The idea of this illiterate beggar sarcastically suggesting they were interested in becoming Jesus disciples was more than their pride could take. They insulted him and then claimed that they were Moses' disciples. Jesus to them was an unknown. "*We don't even know where He comes from.*" Yet they claimed to know Moses who, Jesus said, wrote about Him (5:46; [Deuteronomy 18:15](#)).<sup>5</sup> If they knew and believed the writings of Moses they would have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. They were either ignorant of or chose to ignore the link between Moses and Jesus.

**As the confrontation escalated, how would you characterize the man's comments (vv. 30-33)?** The healed man was getting very weary of this questioning. He was simply going over the same facts time and time again. His response did not resemble that of his parents in any way. He was not intimidated by these Pharisees. His eyes were opened to their hypocrisy. Their unbelief, in view of the miraculous evidence, was incredible to him.

**How did the Jews respond to the comments from the man born blind (v. 34)?** With condescension and insult. Scorn often serves as a final resort when evidence fails. Upstaged by a beggar, they could only insult him again and throw him out of the synagogue (cf. v. 22).<sup>6</sup>

**What was Jesus' intention in finding the man and speaking to him (vv. 35-38)?** Jesus had healed the blind man's physical blindness; now He now needed to address his spiritual blindness. This was to be a call to commitment.

The man still had much to learn about the full identity of Jesus and its implications, as all new believers do. **Starting from a place of unbelief, what were the stages of illumination the blind man went through in the progression of realizing who Jesus is to placing his faith in Him?**

- He is a man called Jesus ([John 9:11](#))
- He is a prophet ([John 9:17](#))
- He is a man from God ([John 9:33](#))
- He is Lord ([John 9:38](#))

The process of bringing someone to Christ usually involves multiple stages of illumination.

**When Jesus identified Himself as the Son of Man How did the beggar respond (v. 38)?** At this, the man simply and sweetly placed his faith in the Lord Jesus and fell down and worshiped Him. He was now a saved soul as well as a healed man. What a great day this had been in his life! He had received both physical and spiritual sight.<sup>7</sup>

**How do you reconcile v. 39 with John 3:17 (*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him*)? Did Jesus come to save or judge/condemn?** Judging was the result of His coming, not the reason for it. It is not the purpose of the sun's shining to cast shadows but when the sun shines, shadows are inevitable. His coming inevitably involved exposing the spiritual blindness in people so they might recognize their blindness, turn to Jesus in faith, and see. Judgment is the other side of salvation. It is the inevitable result for all who fail to receive Him.

**How did the Pharisees respond when they overheard Jesus' conversation with the restored man (v. 40)?** They suspected that Jesus might be referring to them when He spoke of the spiritually blind (v. 39). They wanted to make sure that Jesus was not accusing them of spiritual blindness, since they considered themselves the most enlightened among the Jews.<sup>8</sup>

**What did Jesus mean (v. 41)?** The Lord's answer may be paraphrased as follows: "If you admit that you are blind and sinful, and that you need a Savior, then your sins can be forgiven you, and you can be saved. But, you profess that you are in need of nothing. You claim that you are righteous and that you have no sin. Therefore, there is no forgiveness of sins for you."<sup>9</sup>

**Application: Who are the (spiritually) blind people in your life today? Pray for a divine appointment!**

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin A. Blum, "[John](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 307.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 308.

<sup>3</sup> William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1522.

<sup>4</sup> Edwin A. Blum, "[John](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 308.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1523.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 275.

<sup>9</sup> William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1524.