

John 9
August 24, 2025

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Does suffering/disease come upon us because of our sin? Why do you think people tend to think this way? [Let people engage]

Transition: Many of us appreciate understanding cause and effects. Today's text is a story of a man who was born blind and is healed by Jesus. This started quite a conversation in the community! Neighbors wanted to know who healed him. The Pharisees definitely want to know what happened and who healed him. But what is interesting is that it's the **disciples** who assume that sin caused the man to be born blind. So they ask Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or their parents?" And of course, Jesus gives them an answer they weren't expecting. Let's read to find out what He said!

BOOK:

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

9 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"
³ "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."
⁶ Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷ "Go," he told him, "Wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.
⁸ His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him."
But he himself insisted, "I am the man."
¹⁰ "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded.
¹¹ He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."
¹² "Where is this man?" they asked him.
"I don't know," he said.

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided.

¹⁷ Finally they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” The man replied, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸ The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s parents. ¹⁹ “Is this your son?” they asked. “Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?”

²⁰ “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. ²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. “Give glory to God,” they said. “We know this man is a sinner.”

²⁵ He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”

²⁶ Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

²⁷ He answered, “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?”

²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses! ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.”

³⁰ The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

³⁴ To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

³⁶ “Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.”

³⁷ Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”

³⁸ Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”

⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?”

⁴¹ Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

The man we met 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 Savior. It cost him everything to confess Jesus as the Son of God, but he was willing to do it. Are we willing to do the same?

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today’s Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 324-328). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

THE BLIND MAN CALLS THEIR BLUFF

John 9

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).

I am told 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 Savior. It cost him everything to confess Jesus as the Son of God, but he was willing to do it. The easiest way to grasp the message of this chapter is to note the stages in this man's growing understanding of who Jesus is.

A Man Called Jesus" (John 9:1–12)

About the only thing a blind man could do in that day was beg, and that is what this man was doing when Jesus passed by (John 9:8). No doubt there were many blind people who would have rejoiced to be healed, but Jesus selected this man (see Luke 4:25–27). Apparently the man and his parents were well known in the community. It was on the Sabbath when Jesus healed the man (John 9:14), so that once again He was upsetting and deliberately challenging the religious leaders (John 5:9ff).

The disciples did not look at the man as an object of mercy but rather as a subject for a theological discussion. It is much easier to discuss an abstract subject like "sin" than it is to minister to a concrete need in the life of a person. The disciples were sure that the man's congenital blindness was caused by sin, either his own or his parents', but Jesus disagreed with them.

the final analysis, *all* physical problems are the result of our fall in Adam, for his disobedience brought sin and death into the world (Rom. 5:12ff). But afterward, to blame a specific disability on a specific sin committed by specific persons is certainly beyond any man's ability or authority. Only God knows why babies are born with handicaps, and only God can turn those handicaps into something that will bring good to the people and glory to His name.

Certainly both the man and his parents had at some time committed sin, but Jesus did not see their sin as the cause of the man's blindness. Nor did He suggest that God deliberately made the man blind so that, years later, Jesus could perform a miracle. Since there is no punctuation in the original manuscripts, we are free to read John 9:3–4 this way:

Neither has this man sinned nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day.

Our Lord's method of healing was unique: He put clay on the man's eyes and told him to go wash. Once Jesus healed two blind men by merely touching their eyes (Matt. 9:27–31), and He healed another blind man by putting spittle on his eyes (Mark 8:22–26). Though the healing power was the same, our Lord varied His methods lest people focus on the *manner* of healing and miss the *message* in the healing.

There were at least two reasons for our Lord's use of the clay. For one thing, it was a picture of the *Incarnation*. God made the first man out of the dust, and God sent His Son as a real Man. Note the emphasis on the meaning of "Siloam"—"sent." And relate this to John 9:4, "The works

of Him that sent Me” (see also John 3:17, 34; 5:36; 7:29; 8:18, 42). Jesus gave a little illustration of His own coming to earth, sent by the Father.

The second reason for the clay was *irritation*; it encouraged the man to believe and obey! If you have ever had an irritation in your eyes, you know how quickly you seek *irrigation* to cleanse it out! You might compare this “irritation” to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit as He uses God’s Law to bring the lost sinner under judgment.

But the illumination now led to a problem in *identification*: was this really the blind beggar, and who caused him to see? Throughout the rest of John 9, a growing conflict takes place around these two questions. The religious leaders did not want to face the fact that Jesus had healed the man, or even that the man had been healed!

Four times in this chapter people asked, “How were you healed?” (John 9:10, 15, 19, 26) First the neighbors asked the man, and then the Pharisees asked him. Not satisfied with his reply, the Pharisees then asked the man’s parents and then gave the son one final interrogation. All of this looked very official and efficient, but it was really a most evasive maneuver on the part of both the people and the leaders. The Pharisees wanted to get rid of the evidence, and the people were afraid to speak the truth!

They were all asking the wrong question! They should not have asked “How?” but “Who?” (Simply rearrange the letters!) But we are so prone to ask “How?” We want to understand the mechanics of a miracle instead of simply trusting the Saviour, who alone can perform the miracle. Nicodemus wanted to know how he could reenter his mother’s womb (John 3:4, 9). “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” (John 6:52) Understanding the process, even if we could, is no guarantee that we have experienced the miracle.

When asked to describe his experience, the man simply told what had happened. All he knew about the person who had done the miracle was that He was “a man called Jesus.” He had not seen our Lord, of course; but he had heard His voice. Not only was the beggar ignorant of Jesus’ identity, but he did not know where Jesus had gone. At this point, the man has been healed, but he has not been saved. The light had dawned, but it would grow brighter until he saw the face of the Lord and worshiped Him (see Prov. 4:18).

At least twelve times in the Gospel of John, Jesus is called “a man” (see John 4:29; 5:12; 8:40; 9:11, 24; 10:33; 11:47, 50; 18:14, 17, 29; 19:5). John’s emphasis is that Jesus Christ is God, but the apostle balances it beautifully by reminding us that Jesus is also true man. The Incarnation was not an illusion (1 John 1:1–4).

“A Prophet” (John 9:13–23)

Since the Pharisees were the custodians of the faith, it was right that the healed man be brought to them for investigation. The fact that they studied this miracle in such detail is only further proof that Jesus did indeed heal the man. Since the man was *born* blind, the miracle was even greater, for blindness caused by sickness or injury might suddenly go away. Our Lord’s miracles can bear careful scrutiny by His enemies.

But Jesus' act of deliberately healing the man on the Sabbath Day caused the Pharisees great concern. It was illegal to work on the Sabbath; and by making the clay, applying the clay, and healing the man, Jesus had performed three unlawful "works." The Pharisees should have been praising God for a miracle; instead, they sought evidence to prosecute Jesus.

When people refuse to face evidence honestly, but in fear evade the issue (see John 9:22), then it is impossible to come to a united conclusion. Once again, Jesus was the cause of division (John 9:16; also see 7:12, 43). The religious leaders were judging on the basis of one thing: nobody who breaks the Sabbath could possibly be a true prophet of God. They were "one-issue" thinkers, not unlike some religious people today. The Pharisees did not realize that Jesus was offering the people something greater than the Sabbath—the true spiritual rest that comes from God (Matt. 11:28–30).

But the beggar was not intimidated by the threats of the Pharisees. When asked who he thought Jesus was, the man boldly said, "He is a prophet!" (note John 4:19 for a parallel.) Some of the Old Testament prophets, such as Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, did perform miracles. The Jewish people would look on their prophets as men of God who could do wonderful things by the power of God.

But the religious leaders did not want to see Jesus given that kind of high designation. "This man is not of God!" (John 9:16) Perhaps they could discredit the miracle. If so, then they could convince the people that Jesus had plotted the whole thing and was really deceiving the people. He had craftily "switched" beggars so that the sighted man was not the man who had been known as the blind beggar.

The best way to get that kind of evidence would be to interrogate the parents of the beggar, so they called them in and asked them two questions: (1) "Is this your son?" And (2) "If he is, how does he now see?" If they refused to answer either question, they were in trouble; or if they answered with replies contrary to what the leaders wanted, they were in trouble. What a dilemma!

They answered the first question honestly: he was their son and he had been born blind. They answered the second question evasively: they did not know how he was healed or who healed him. They then used the old-fashioned tactic called "passing the buck" by suggesting that the Pharisees ask the man himself. After all, he was of age!

What lay behind all of this questioning and these furtive replies? *The fear of people*. We met it at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:13), and we shall meet it again at our Lord's last Passover (John 12:42). These people were seeking the honor of men and not the honor that comes from God (John 5:44). To be sure, it was a serious thing to be excommunicated from the synagogue, but it was far more serious to reject the truth and be lost forever. "The fear of man brings a snare" (Prov. 29:25, NASB). The Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus, and the parents were trying to avoid a trap; but all of them were only ensnaring themselves! The parents should have heeded the counsel of Isaiah 51:7 and 12.

The Pharisees could present a "good case" for their position. After all, they did have the Law of Moses as well as centuries of Jewish tradition. What they failed to understand was that Jesus

Christ had fulfilled all of this ceremonial law and was now bringing in something new. In Moses, you have preparation; but in Jesus Christ, you have consummation (see John 1:17).

“A Man of God” (John 9:24–34)

Anxious to settle the case, the Pharisees did call the man in; and this time, they put him under oath. “Give God the praise” is a form of Jewish “swearing in” at court (see Josh. 7:19). But the “judges” prejudiced everybody from the start! “We know that this Man is a sinner!” They were warning the witness that he had better cooperate with the court, or he might be excommunicated. But the beggar was made of sturdier stuff than to be intimidated. He had experienced a miracle, and he was not afraid to tell them what had happened.

He did not debate the character of Jesus Christ, because that was beyond his knowledge and experience. But one thing he did know: now he could see. His testimony (John 9:25) reminds me of Psalm 27. Read that psalm in the light of this chapter, from the viewpoint of the healed beggar, and see how meaningful it becomes.

For the fourth time, the question is asked, “How did He open your eyes?” (see John 9:10, 15, 19, and 26) I can imagine the man getting quite impatient at this point. After all, he had been blind all his life, and there was so much now to see. He certainly did not want to spend much longer in a synagogue court, looking at angry faces and answering the same questions!

We admire the boldness of the man in asking those irate Pharisees if they wanted to follow Jesus! The man expected a negative answer, but he was courageous even to ask it. Unable to refute the evidence, the judges began to revile the witness; and once again Moses is brought into the picture (John 5:46). The Pharisees were cautious men who would consider themselves conservatives, when in reality they were “preservatives.” A true conservative takes the best of the past and uses it, but he is also aware of the new things that God is doing. The new grows out of the old (Matt. 13:52). A “preservative” simply embalms the past and preserves it. He is against change and resists the new things that God is doing. Had the Pharisees really understood Moses, they would have known who Jesus was and what He was doing.

The leaders were sure about Moses, but they were not sure about Jesus. They did not know where He came from. He had already told them that He had come from heaven, sent by the Father (John 6:33, 38, 41–42, 50–51). They were sure that He was the natural son of Mary and Joseph, and that He was from the city of Nazareth (John 6:42; 7:41–42). They were judging “after the flesh” (John 8:15) and not exercising spiritual discernment.

It seemed incredible to the healed man that the Pharisees would not know this Man who had opened his eyes! How many people were going around Jerusalem, opening the eyes of blind people? Instead of investigating the miracle, these religious leaders should have been investigating the One who did the miracle and learning from Him. The “experts” were rejecting the Stone that was sent to them (Acts 4:11).

The beggar then gave the “experts” a lesson in practical theology. Perhaps he had Psalm 66:18 in mind: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” The leaders called Jesus a sinner (John 9:24), yet Jesus was used of God to open the blind man’s eyes.

He added another telling argument: Jesus healed a man *born* blind. Never, to their knowledge, had this occurred before. So, God not only heard Jesus, but He enabled Him to give the man sight. How, then, could Jesus be a sinner?

Religious bigots do not want to face either evidence or logic. Their minds are made up. Had the Pharisees honestly considered the facts, they would have seen that Jesus is the Son of God, and they could have trusted Him and been saved.

Again, the leaders reviled the man and told him he was born in sin. However, he would not *die* in his sins (see John 8:21, 24); because before this chapter ends, the beggar will come to faith in Jesus Christ. All of us are born in sin (Ps. 51:5), but we need not live in sin (Col. 3:6–7) or die in our sins. Faith in Jesus Christ redeems us from sin and gives us a life of joyful liberty.

The religious leaders officially excommunicated this man from the local synagogue. This meant that the man was cut off from friends and family and looked on by the Jews as a “publican and sinner.” But Jesus came for the “outcasts” and never let them down.

“The Son of God” (John 9:35–41)

The Good Shepherd always cares for His sheep. Jesus knew that the man had been excommunicated, so He found him and revealed Himself to him. Remember, the man knew our Lord’s voice, but he had never seen His face.

The man now reached the climax of his knowledge of Jesus Christ and his faith in Him. It is not enough to believe that He is “a man called Jesus,” or even “a prophet” or “a man of God.” “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1). John wrote his Gospel to prove that Jesus is the Son of God, and to present to his readers the testimonies of people who met Jesus and affirmed that He is God’s Son. This beggar is one such witness. Jesus identified Himself as the Son of God (see John 9:35; also 5:25), and the beggar believed and was saved (John 9:38). “My sheep hear My voice” (John 10:27). He did not “see and believe”; he *heard* and believed. Not only did he trust the Savior, but he worshiped Him. If Jesus Christ is not God, then why did He accept worship? Peter, Paul, and Barnabas certainly didn’t accept worship (see Acts 10:25–26; 14:11–15).

John the Baptist affirmed that Jesus is the Son of God (John 1:34) and so did Nathanael (John 1:49). Jesus stated that He is the Son of God (John 5:25; 9:35), and Peter also affirmed it (John 6:69). Now the healed blind beggar has joined this group of witnesses.

Wherever Jesus went, some of the Pharisees tried to be present so they could catch Him in something He said or did. Seeing them, Jesus closed this episode by preaching a brief but penetrating sermon on spiritual blindness.

John 9:39 does not contradict John 3:16–17. The *reason* for our Lord’s coming was salvation, but the *result* of His coming was condemnation of those who would not believe. The same sun that brings beauty out of the seeds also exposes the vermin hiding under the rocks. The religious leaders were blind and would not admit it; therefore, the light of truth only made them blinder.

The beggar admitted his need, and he received both physical and spiritual sight. No one is so blind as he who will not see, the one who thinks he has “all truth” and there is nothing more for him to learn (John 9:28, 34).

The listening Pharisees heard what Jesus said and it disturbed them. “Are we blind also?” they asked, expecting a negative answer. Jesus had already called them “blind leaders of the blind” (Matt. 15:14), so they had their answer. They were blinded by their pride, their self-righteousness, their tradition, and their false interpretation of the Word of God.

Our Lord’s reply was a paradox. “If you were blind, you would be better off. But you claim to see. Therefore, you are guilty!” Blindness would at least be an excuse for not knowing what was going on. But they *did* know what was going on. Jesus had performed many miracles and the religious leaders ignored the evidence to make a right decision.

Jesus is the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5). The only people who cannot see the light are blind people and those who refuse to look, those who make themselves blind. The beggar was physically blind and spiritually blind, yet both his eyes and his heart were opened. Why? Because he listened to the Word, believed it, obeyed, and experienced the grace of God. The Pharisees had good physical vision, but they were blind spiritually. Had they listened to the Word and sincerely considered the evidence, they too would have believed on Jesus Christ and been born again.

In what sense did the Pharisees “see”? They saw the change in the blind beggar and could not deny that he had been healed. They saw the mighty works that Jesus performed. Even Nicodemus, one of their number, was impressed with the Lord’s miracles (John 3:2). If they had examined the evidence with honesty, they would have seen the truth clearly. “If any man wills to do His [God’s] will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17, literal translation). “And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life” (John 5:40).

John 10 is actually a continuation of our Lord’s ministry to the Pharisees. The healing of the blind beggar is the background (John 10:21). In fact, the word translated “cast out” in John 9:35 is translated “puts forth” in John 10:4. The beggar was cast out of the synagogue but taken by the Good Shepherd and added to His flock! The emphasis in John 10 is on Jesus Christ, the Good and True Shepherd, as opposed to the Pharisees who were false shepherds.

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. 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).

Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 307-309) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

Isaiah predicted that in messianic times various signs would occur. The Messiah would “open eyes that are blind” (Isa. 42:7; cf. Isa. 29:18; 35:5). Jesus often healed the blind (cf. Matt. 9:27–31; 12:22–23; 15:30; 20:29–34; 21:14). This miracle in John 9 is notable because Jesus had just proclaimed Himself as “the Light of the world” (8:12). As a public demonstration of His claim, He gave sight to a man born blind.

9:1. **As He went along** in the city of Jerusalem, Jesus **saw a man** with congenital blindness. Jesus’ choice of this individual is significant (cf. 5:5–6). He is Sovereign in His works. That the man was **blind from birth** pointed out his seeming hopelessness. This illustrates man’s spiritual blindness from birth (9:39–41; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1–3).

9:2–3. The **disciples** faced a theological problem. Believing that sin directly caused all suffering, how could a person be *born* with a handicap? Therefore, either **this man ... sinned** in his mother’s womb (Ezek. 18:4) **or his parents** sinned (Ex. 20:5). **Jesus** therefore answered, **Neither this man nor his parents sinned**. These words do not contradict the universal sinfulness of man (cf. Rom. 3:9–20, 23). Instead, Jesus meant that this man’s blindness was not caused by some *specific* sin. Instead, the problem existed **so that ... God** could display His glory in the midst of seeming tragedy (cf. Ex. 4:11; 2 Cor. 12:9).

9:4–5. **Day** means the time allotted for Jesus to do God’s will (to **do the work of Him who sent Me**). **We** includes the disciples and by extension all believers. **Night** is the limit set to do God’s works. In Jesus’ case it was His coming death. As **the Light of the world** Jesus gives people salvation (cf. 8:12). After His death, His disciples would be His lights (cf. Matt. 5:14; Eph. 5:8–14), bringing Christ to others.

9:6–7. Jesus placed clay (**mud with ... saliva**) **on the man’s eyes**. Interestingly man was made from this same substance—the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7). Jesus probably used the clay as an aid to develop the man’s faith, not as a medicine. Jesus’ making of clay broke the Rabbinic regulations against kneading clay on the Sabbath (cf. John 9:14). Jesus then **told** the man, **Wash in the pool of Siloam (this word means Sent)**. This is located at the southeast corner of Jerusalem (see the map), where Hezekiah’s tunnel channeled water inside the city walls from the Gihon Spring. The man was “sent” there and Jesus was the One “sent” by the Father. **The man ... washed and went home seeing!**

9:8–9. People argued over whether he was **the same man who used to sit and beg**. If so, it was incredible that he could see. Perhaps, they said, it was a case of mistaken identity. **But he himself insisted, I am the man.**

9:10–12. But if he were the same man, **how** was this possible? He gave a simple and factual account of how the miracle occurred. He referred to the Lord as **the Man they call Jesus**. Since he was blind at the time of the miracle, he had no idea **where** Jesus went.

9:13–14. Since this miracle was so unusual, the people **brought** the man **to the Pharisees**, who were highly respected in religious matters. To the Pharisees, healing (unless life was in danger) and making or kneading clay violated the **Sabbath** Law.

9:15–16. When **the Pharisees ... asked him** about his situation, he briefly told what happened (cf. v. 11). **The Pharisees** believed that since Jesus “violated” the Sabbath He was a false prophet turning the people away from God (Deut. 13:3–5). So they concluded, **This Man is not from God**. Later they said Jesus was “a sinner” (John 9:24). **Others** concluded that the **signs** were so impressive that **a sinner** could not do them. (Of course a false prophet could do deceptive signs [cf. 2 Thes. 2:9].) The Pharisees then **were divided** (cf. John 7:43; 10:19).

9:17. **The** healed **blind** man’s opinion was that Jesus **is a prophet**. Old Testament prophets sometimes performed miracles which marked them out as God’s men.

9:18–20. **The Jews still could not believe** this man **had been blind**. Surely some mistake had been made. So **they sent for his parents**, who affirmed that **he** was their **son** who had been **born blind**.

9:21–23. But the **parents ... were afraid** to hazard any opinions about the cure or the Healer. The Pharisees and other Jewish authorities (**the Jews**) had **already ... decided that** Jesus was not the Messiah. Those who held such a heresy would be excommunicated from **the synagogue**. (Some scholars argue that this verse was added later by an editor, but there is nothing unthinkable about this kind of persecution during Jesus’ ministry.) The **parents** shifted the pressure from themselves by noting that their son was **of legal age** to testify for himself (vv. 21, 23).

9:24. The authorities tried to pressure the healed **man** into withdrawing his testimony about Jesus: **Give glory to God** (cf. Josh. 7:19; 1 Sam. 6:5; Jer. 13:16) was a call to admit his guilt in siding with Jesus, whom they called **a sinner**. When they said **We know**, they were pressuring him. Unbelief often claims to be scientific, but here it was just stubborn and willful.

9:25–26. His witness was clear, and he refused to deny what he knew for certain: **I was blind, but now I see! They asked him** to go over the story again, hoping to find some contradiction in the man’s report.

9:27. The ex-blind man got impatient. He had already **told** how he was healed (v. 15), but they **did not listen** to him. That is, they rejected it. He sarcastically asked if their request for him to repeat his report indicated that they had changed their hearts. Were they inquiring because they were interested in becoming Jesus’ **disciples?**

9:28–29. The idea of this illiterate beggar sarcastically suggesting they were interested in Jesus 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).

9:30–33. The beggar proceeded to teach them since they admitted ignorance of Jesus’ origin. The irony is strong for the reader knows His origin (1:14, 18). According to the beggar’s logic, this miracle was notable and unique. He said that no one had **ever heard of ... a man born blind** receiving sight. He reasoned that **God grants not** the requests of **sinners** but those of the righteous (cf. Elijah, James 5:16–18). Therefore **this Man**, he said, is **from God**. Otherwise He could do no miracles.

9:34. Upstaged by a beggar, they could only insult him again and throw **him out** of the synagogue (cf. v. 22). They reasoned that his blindness must have been due to some specific “sin” (they forgot the Book of Job). But they were irrational. How could anybody be **steeped in sin at birth**? Everybody is born with a sinful nature (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12), but a baby can hardly commit numerous acts of sin moments after it is born!

9:35. Taking the initiative again (cf. v. 6), **Jesus** found the former blind man. **Do you** (emphatic in the Gr.) **believe in the Son of Man?** This was a call to commitment. “Son of Man” is a title of Messiah which includes a rich background (cf. Dan. 7:13; and comments on Mark 2:10).

9:36–37. The beggar responded that he was willing to **believe** but he was ignorant. **Jesus** then disclosed Himself and gave the beggar the necessary knowledge for faith. Faith involves an act of the will, based on information.

9:38. After Jesus revealed that *He* is the Son of Man, **the man** responded in faith (**Lord, I believe**) and **worshiped Him**. His worship of Jesus replaced his worship in the synagogue. The Jews had cast him out of the synagogue, but Jesus does not cast out those who come to Him (6:37). One goal of salvation is worship of the One who saves (4:23).

9:39. Does this verse contradict 3:17? According to that verse (and 12:47) Jesus was *not* sent “to condemn the world.” But here Jesus said, **For judgment I have come into this world**. Jesus meant He came to pronounce decisions on the ungodly, like a judge (cf. 5:22, 27). **The blind** who come to sight are those who, admitting their helplessness and inability, trust Jesus for salvation. **Those who see and become blind** are those whose self-trust and pride blinds them to the wonders of Jesus. He does not condemn them by *making* them blind; they blind themselves by rejecting Him and Satan contributes to that blinding (2 Cor. 4:4).

9:40–41. **Some of the Pharisees ... asked**, literally, “**We also are not blind**, are we?” They expected a negative answer because they assumed that certainly they, of all men, possessed spiritual perception. Sin constantly deceives people so they live in falsehood. **Jesus** replied, **If** the Pharisees **were blind** to spiritual things absolutely, they might have claimed ignorance as a defense. But their claims and pretensions of spiritual insight (**you claim you can see**) and leadership made them culpable. They were responsible for their sins because they sinned willfully. It is dangerous to be a teacher of spiritual truths (cf. 3:10; Rom. 2:19–24; James 3:1).

White, J. E. (1998). *John*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (pp. 477-478). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Sin and Sickness (9:1–12)

Jesus performed more miracles related to giving sight to the blind than any other miracle. Such an activity was forecast in prophecy as a messianic act (Isa. 29:18; 35:5; 42:7). Jesus came to clear the sight of human beings who had become blinded to the things of God.

The disciples of Jesus, espousing a common perspective of the day, desired to know who sinned in regard to this man's affliction. They understood that such things occurred either as a result of an individual's personal sin or because of sin in the life of one's parents. The rabbis taught that no one died unless there had been sin, and no one suffered unless there had been sin. Even a child could sin in the womb, they suggested, or even in the preexistent state prior to conception. Refuting this entire system of thought, Jesus proclaimed that neither "this man nor his parents sinned." Instead, this man was there at that moment for God to work in His life in order to glorify Jesus.

Jesus suggested that there would come a time when the work of the kingdom of God will not be able to continue. That time is not the end of His life, as the "we" in verse 4 suggests, but when the consummation of the age takes place. Until that day God's people must do all they can to combat evil and do good in the name of Christ.

Power of Testimony (9:13–34)

The man who had been healed testified that his own perspective was that Jesus was a Prophet. This was not the answer the Pharisees wanted to hear. Questioning the formerly blind man again, he said "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" This simple testimony has been the incontrovertible evidence for the Christian faith for centuries. His final words carried the greatest sting: "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." The Pharisees became enraged, accused the man of being a sinner, and excommunicated him from the synagogue.

Sight Means Guilt (9:35–41)

The healing of this blind man took place on two levels: at the physical level his sight was restored. On the spiritual level he had come to faith in Christ. This man serves as a paradigm for Jesus' entire ministry. The Pharisees who witnessed this event responded only in indignation that Jesus would intimate that they were blind. Masterfully, Jesus responded that if they were truly blind, they would be guiltless, but since they claimed sight, their guilt remained.

Allen, J. P. (1972). John. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (pp. 675-676). Broadman and Holman Publishers.

A Blind Man Sees (John 9:1–41)

The passage—This chapter dramatizes Jesus' bold claim, "I am the light of the world" (8:12). Whoever asserts that he is light had better be prepared to prove it. So Jesus uses another sign. He heals a man, no question about that. But the fact of his blindness is important. Darkness fled before the sight Jesus gave him. That is the point not to miss.

The dialogue here has unusual charm. There is subtle humor and irony. See the ruffled dignity of the Jewish rulers in contrast to the majestic calm of the Master. This chapter is excellent for training in oral reading. The voice has to be used to mark the change of characters, the quotes, and the punctuation.

Special points—The blind man was probably a well-known character. About him the disciples asked Jesus what was an honest question. “Who sinned?” (v. 2, RSV), they inquired. They assumed that sin always brought specific suffering. So they were puzzled about a man who had been born under such a curse.

Jesus denied that rigid rule. The parents were not declared sinless, only that one man’s suffering was not punishment for one sin. Neither did Jesus imply that the man was born for the sole purpose of being miraculously restored. His short statement was that the sight of human suffering was a call not for speculation but for service. It was an opportunity for God to manifest his grace.

Jesus did not here explain the mystery of pain. What he did do was associate others with himself in responding to the darkness in which men live. He could give sight, and he would (v. 5). The clay pack Jesus made from spittle was used probably for several reasons. The act encouraged the man’s faith. It was something he could know was being done to him. Also there was then as always a sense of the curative powers of saliva. But chiefly it pointed up the significance of the water that washed away the clay. That water was from Siloam, “Sent” (v. 7). It was from that same pool that the drink offering had been drawn (see the comment on 7:37). Jesus sent the man to wash. But he himself had been “sent” from the Father. He constantly declared this. So Jesus fulfilled all the blessings that Siloam typified. This even enlarged the “sign.” As the waters of Siloam washed away the clay and the blindness, so he who was sent would illumine the darkness of the world.

Note now how the excitement builds. First the neighbors (v. 8) could scarcely believe. They asked the natural question, “How?” (v. 10). Much more serious issues arose when he confronted the Pharisees (v. 13). They summoned the man’s parents who were frightened (v. 22). The man was called up the second time (v. 24), but this time he was too bold for them (v. 30). They cast him out of the synagogue (v. 34).

The issue of faith is made very clear when Jesus, with great kindness, sought the man (v. 35). He believed; and Jesus drew the profound contrast between those who accept light when it is sent and those who are willfully blind (v. 39).

Truth for today—A meaningful parallel is apparent in the chapter. There is progression in the man’s confession of faith. It is a type of ours. When he first referred to his benefactor he said, “The man called Jesus” (v. 11, RSV). That was all he knew. After he had time to know and consider more facts he stated, “He is a prophet” (v. 17). More than a man; a man from God, he affirmed. Truly the man once blind has begun to see. The climax is when he has his eyes fully opened. He believed and confessed that Jesus was “the Son of God” (v. 35).

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). John 9. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.