

John 9

Light of the World

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Overview

Back in Part I of John's Gospel, chs 2-4, we noted that John organises his material around the 'signs' that Jesus does. In ch 2 and ch 4 the signs at Cana introduced and concluded the section.

Jesus turned the water into wine in Chapter 2 and healed the official's son in Chapter 4... both signs are fulfilments of Isaiah 25:

- Jesus, the promised Messiah of Isaiah 25... God's King.
- The Bridegroom from God who had come to give eternal life....conquering death!

In the middle section we saw that eternal life came to the Samaritans and that even the deeply religious Nicodemus needed to be "born again"!

Part II of John's Gospel is also bracketed by signs:

In ch 5, the Sabbath sign of the healing of the paralysed man at the Pool of Bethesda, followed by Jesus' discussion with his Jewish opponents...

... is matched by the Sabbath sign of the healing of the man who was born blind in John 9

...and the discussion that follows in John 10.

- Both signs are on the Sabbath and Jesus is doing 'his work' – the very reason he came to earth!
- Both signs show Jesus doing the work of the Father.
- Both are done on the Sabbath, and show Jesus able to bring true Sabbath "REST" - a restoration of man to God.
- They both generate intense hostility and force the issue of our sin and our true spiritual state.
- Throughout the section (chs 5-10) we are shown Jesus continually offering LIFE and REST to his people ...not because of who they are or what they do ...but only out of his free gift of GRACE.
- The Sabbath was ALL about "REST"... ENJOYING GOD – in his perfect paradise – Heaven – which equals enjoying his presence.
- The 'Promised Land' is referred to in the Bible as "God's rest"
- So... being healed on the Sabbath, with one's sins forgiven, creates a picture of one being made right with God... at rest with him – exactly what the Sabbath was made for!

Now read John ch 9...

Illumination!

Twice in this chapter Jesus explains WHY he is doing this sign... the purpose of the miracle:

Read v 3: *Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."*

- Displaying the works of God

Read v 39: *Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."*

- This is a difficult verse but Jesus seems to be suggesting that his work is to "blind" those who are full of religious self-confidence and think they can 'see' spiritually, and, at the same time, to give sight to those who are 'blind'!

...It seems that the miracle is a physical picture of what Jesus is doing spiritually, and what his work is achieving.

Moths and bats...

Two different responses illustrate the impact of Jesus' work. Let's look at what happens spiritually to each party through this chapter:

1. The man born blind

How do we witness the man gradually gaining his spiritual eyesight? Just look at the titles he gives Jesus and the REASONS he gives for calling Jesus these names:

- vs 8-12: Simply... ***"The man called Jesus"***
- v 17 By this point... ***"A prophet"***
- v 25: ***"Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."***
- vs 30-33: "Just look at the evidence!"
v 33: ***"If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."***
- He finally realises Jesus is "the Son of Man":

Read v 38: *He said, "Lord, I believe", and he worshipped him.*

- So the blind man starts viewing Jesus as just (v11) ***"the man called Jesus"*** and ends up reviled/abused... but believing in Jesus!

We'll see that this man is a picture of growing faith. Let's read back through this passage and try to work out what was going on in this blind man's mind... as he worked through the logic and came to his conclusions.

Read v 11: *He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight."*

- He knows he was healed by Jesus

Read v 15: *So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."*

- He knows how Jesus did it

Read v 17: *So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."*

- He knows that Jesus must therefore be very special

Read vs 8-9: *The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?"⁹ Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man."*

Read vs 18-20: *The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind."*

- His parents know he's been blind all his life...in fact, everyone in the village must have known it!

Read v 25: *He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."*

- He's quite sure he's been healed

Read v 30: *The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes."*

- He can "see" the absurd position of the Jews

Read vs 35-38: *Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"³⁶ He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you."³⁸ He said, "Lord, I believe", and he worshipped him.*

- He knows there is only one option if he is to follow the logic of the evidence

The man born blind... who acts in line with his reason...

He is a picture of growing faith:

- He obeys Jesus' word
- He is willing to stand out from the crowd because of what he knows about Jesus
- He believes Jesus to be God and Lord and so turns to worship him

2. The Jews /Pharisees

The Pharisees and Jews are a picture of increasing blindness. Let's read back through this chapter and try to work out what was going through their minds as they followed their "logic"...

Just look at what they say about Jesus, the man born blind... and his parents..!

➤ About Jesus

Read v 16: *Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.*

➤ About the man

Read v 18: *The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight.*

➤ The threats and intimidation that the Jews had made to the people about Jesus

Read v 22: *(His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)*

➤ About Jesus

Read v 24: *So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner."*

➤ Ignoring the fact of the evidence, they revile the man born blind

Read v 28: *And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses."*

➤ Their wilful ignorance about Jesus

Read v 29: *"We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."*

➤ Through their wilful, deliberate, refusal to face the facts of the miracle before them ... they arrogantly decide to abuse and persecute

Read v 34: *They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.*

In short:

- They do not want to accept the natural conclusions from their interviews...before they even commence them!
- They have made up their minds, despite evidence to the contrary...
- In fact – because they will NOT allow the natural conclusions, they are forced into burying the evidence by threat, intimidation, abuse and persecution!!

The Pharisees are a picture of growing blindness:

- Blinkered
- Sceptical
- Refuse to accept the evidence before them
- Stubbornly arrogant

Conclusions

Let's step back and look at the "case" as it is presented in ch 9:

- We can either follow the evidence where it leads - in which case we will end up recognising Jesus for who he is... submitting to Jesus and worshipping him as did the man born blind.....or
- We can delude ourselves that we "see"... in which case our hearts are hardened to the evidence set before us!
- And as we do thatwe will be shown up in our true colours!!!

v 39 explains this perfectly as the summary verse:

Jesus said, "For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."

And v 41 provides God's verdict upon us if we will not accept Jesus:

Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see', your guilt remains.

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¹ As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud ⁷ and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

⁸ The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." ¹⁰ So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight." ¹² They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. ²¹ But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." ²² (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) ²³ Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶ They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" ²⁸ And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰ The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴ They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." ³⁸ He said, "Lord, I believe", and he worshipped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, "For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see', your guilt remains.