



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### Sermon Notes

#### *Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind, Part 1*

John 9:1-12

October 9, 2005

#### Introduction

- Chapter 9 introduces the Sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) of the Seven (7) Signs of the Gospel of John
  - Recall: A Sign in the Gospel of John is an act of Jesus that reveals something of His character and nature that was previously hidden.
- This Chapter follows shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles and builds upon its themes.
  - Recall two of the significant rituals of the Feast of Tabernacles:
    - The Water-Pouring Ritual (taken from the Pool of Siloam)
    - The Lamp-Lighting Ritual
      - In light of this Jesus revealed that He was the Light of the World
- Now Jesus, as the Light of the World, reveals, in a different manner, this truth by giving a blind man (who was *born* blind) sight.

#### Verse 1

- This passage makes it clear that that Jesus was the one to notice the man born blind, for “As *He* passed by, *He* saw...”
  - Therefore, as in the past, John is revealing that **Jesus takes the initiative**.
- Next, John reveals that the blind man was **blind from birth**.
  - This is very significant for at least three reasons:
    1. ALL men are born spiritually dead, blind (even those called by God as His children)
    2. Secondly, as one scholar puts it, Jesus’ act in this chapter is, therefore, not “an act of restoration, but as a creative act by him who is the Light of the World” (Lindars 1972). In other words, Jesus creates sight, He doesn’t simply restore it.
    3. The miracle is all the more powerful than it would have been had he once had sight (and Jesus would have simply restored it).

### Verses 2 – 3

- The disciples, then, ask a question that reflects a common belief of First Century Jews: “Who sinned...that he would be born blind?”
- The common belief revealed by the question was that sin and suffering were directly linked. Read Job 4:7.
- There is definitely *a sense* that all suffering is, to some degree, a result of the Fall (Genesis 3).
- Further, it is clear in Numbers 12, as well as other parts of the Old and New Testament (John 5:14; 1 Corinthians 11:30) that *some* sufferings are the result of *specific* sins.
- Many rabbis of the First Century, based upon the “ante-natal” behavior of Esau and Jacob [“the children struggled together within her”], believed that unborn children possessed the capacity to sin in their mother’s womb
- Further, some rabbis believed the sin of an expecting mother could adversely implicate her unborn child [e.g. the fetus of an expecting mother who worshipped in a pagan ceremony was viewed to have participated in such activity, and, therefore, suffer as a direct result of such ‘sin’].
- However, Jesus makes it clear that, in this case, the blind man’s physical state was NOT the result of a specific sin of his or his parents’.
- Rather, Jesus explains the very reason this man was born blind: “so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”
  - One must never forget that everything in creation, whether we understand it or not (to include ALL suffering), occurs for one purpose: for **the glory of God**. For if God is completely sovereign, and He is concerned about His glory, He must therefore, work all things together for His glory (Romans 8:28).

### Verses 4 – 5

- Notice the combination of the plural and singular pronouns: “We must work the works of Him who sent Me...”
  - In other words, Jesus is emphasizing the truth that He is the **sent One**.
- The “We,” here, most definitely refers to Jesus and His disciples.
- The phrase *must work the works* implies that there are “works” that Jesus *must* perform as the “Sent One” in perfect obedience to the Father
  - In Greek, *must* is the word *dei*, **dei**, and, elsewhere in the Gospel of John connotes a “divine necessity”
- The phrase “as long as it is light” refers to the time in which Jesus is on earth.

- Although it is certainly true that we live today in a time of “light” because of the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit, one must never forget the significance and the absolute necessity of the life and works of Jesus Christ during the period of His Incarnation.
  - As the long-awaited Messiah, Jesus *must* reveal the Father perfectly through His Incarnation, life, death, and resurrection. He must perfectly fulfill the Old Testament in accordance with the will of the Father. All this *must* be done while He is in the flesh in order to accomplish His mission – to redeem His people.
- The “night,” here, which “is coming” appears to be a reference to his betrayal, trial, and crucifixion, when all of His works of revelation would be complete. At that point, there would be no more revelatory works of Jesus, for all messianic prophecies of the Old Testament [with respect to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah] **would have been perfectly fulfilled**. If someone were to look for more signs at this point, they would find none, for night had fallen.
- Verse 5 ties the present narrative back to the Feast of Tabernacles, and is Lamp-lighting Rite.
- NOTE: Verse 5 does not imply that Jesus is not the Light of the World NOW; however, the period of the Incarnation was certainly a time of *special* revelation by the Son of God.

#### Verse 6

- The words “When He had said this...” tightly link the events of Verse 6 with the words of Verse 5, namely, that Jesus is the Light of the World (which links the current passage to the Feast of Tabernacles).
- The actions of Jesus in this Verse [(1) spitting on the ground, (2) making clay, and (3) applying it to the eyes of the blind man] are very significant:
  1. Jesus takes the initiative. The blind man does not cry out to Jesus, the Lord simply acts in mercy.
  2. Finally, the Old Testament Law revealed that bodily fluids, such as saliva and blood, were forms of ceremonial pollutants, or dirt. Read Leviticus 15:8. “Thus, blood and saliva generally pollute, but in certain contexts blood cleanses and saliva cures” (Andreas Kostenberger). Therefore, by using something that is normally a pollutant (saliva) to heal a man, Jesus is claiming a degree of spiritual authority with respect to the Law. Read, also, Matthew 8:1-4.

Through His actions, Jesus is not asserting that He is “above the Law,” but, rather, that as the “fulfillment of the Law,” He possesses the authority to properly interpret the Law and understand its intended meaning and significance.

NOTE: The blind man was healed, in part, by the saliva of Jesus. Today, we are cleansed spiritually by His blood He shed on the Cross.

3. John Calvin, in his Commentary on the Gospel of John, notes that by placing clay on the eyes of the blind man, Jesus “in some respects doubles the blindness”

in order to magnify the works of Christ. This is not too dissimilar to the pouring of water on Elijah's altar on Mt. Carmel in 1 Kings 18:34.

4. Many of the early church Fathers viewed Verse 6 as an allusion to Genesis 2:7. In this Verse, God creates man "of dust of the ground." In Verse 6, then, Jesus, in an **act of creation** [not simply restoration], used dirt of the ground to create sight for a man born blind.

It should also be noted that Jesus Christ is the agent of Creation, for through Him, God [the Father] "made the world." **Through Him and by Him all things are Created and sustained for Him.**

### Verse 7

- Then, Jesus commands the blind man to wash in the pool of Siloam.

In the Old Testament, Hezekiah cut a tunnel through the rock in the city to bring waters from the spring of Gihon in the Kidron Valley. He did this, prior to 701 B.C., to ensure the city had water in the event of an military attack or siege of the city. John comments that "Siloam" means *sent*, as the water from the Gihon was *sent* to the Upper Pool of Siloam within the City, and then, possibly, to the Lower Pool.

- What is further significant, here, is that Isaiah 8:6 states, "these people have rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah."

One of the primary points of revelation in the Gospel of John is that Jesus Christ is the **Sent One** of God. Therefore, the rejection of the waters of Shiloah in Isaiah 8 is seen as the rejection of the Messiah in John 9.

- Also, the water for the Water-Pouring/Drawing ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles was taken from the Pool of Siloam.
- Finally, this passage is, to some degree, viewed by many as the fulfillment of **Genesis 49:10**.
- However, one must never view the water of the Pool as "mystical" or "sacred" itself. As John Calvin wrote concerning this passage:

Unquestionably, there was not, either in the clay, or in the water of Siloam, any power or fitness for curing the eyes; but Christ freely made use of those outward symbols, on various occasions, for adorning his miracles, either to accustom believers to the use of signs, or to show that all things [as the Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the Universe] were at his disposal, or to testify that every one of the creatures has as much power as *He chooses* to give them.

### Verses 8 – 12

- Once he had been given sight, some of the neighbors of the [formerly] blind man could not believe that it was him. Yet, he kept asserting, "I am the one."
- Notice, in Verse 11, how the people, and later the Pharisees, were so interested in *how* the man was healed.

- When asked *how* he was healed, all the man could do is describe *who* it was who healed him: “The man who is called Jesus.”
- This seems to indicate that the blind man had heard of the person and works of Jesus from the talk of the day.
- The crowd, then, asks, “Where is He?”
  - This could indicate a positive and sincere desire to meet this man who had performed such a miracle.