

JOHN 9

JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

This story possesses an irresistible and unfailing charm! A subtle humor pervades the dialogue between the Pharisees and the man who had been born blind. Their ruffled dignity and exasperation, and his irritating irony, are little less than amusing; while against all, there stands the contrast of the majestic calm of Jesus. Witness was here given to the Divine nature of our Lord, and it is a witness of a very unusual character. This is the best attested of all Christ's miracles. A public, official investigation of the alleged cure was held; and as proof of its reality, we have not only the statements of the man and his parents and his neighbors, but also the unwilling admissions of the Pharisees themselves! This miracle is an acted-out parable of the life of spiritual illumination that results from faith in Christ, Who is the "light of the world."

As the story opens, Jesus and His disciples are touched by the pitiful picture of a beggar, seated by the wayside, who was "a man blind from his birth." The evident pity of the Master led the disciples to propose the great unsolved problem of the ages – namely, the origin of human suffering. They made the mistake of supposing that each individual case of suffering is due to some specific sin, and they were puzzled to know how to apply their rule to the case of a man who was born blind. In His reply, Jesus made it clear that the sight of human suffering should not suggest a theme for speculation or questioning as to who has sinned; but instead, it should be viewed as a call to service. We must see such things as an opportunity for God to manifest His grace. The hours of life are few and limited, and there is a task for every hour; if we neglect our opportunity for service, it will be lost forever. And Jesus' specific task for that hour was to open the eyes of the sufferer.

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world," Jesus declared. But this claim was also a promise. It very likely aroused the attention of the blind man, and possibly his hope. It was larger, however, than the limits of the man's present need. To the Savior, the blind man was a picture of "the world," in all its moral poverty and spiritual blindness; and these words were a claim that He Himself would be light and vision to all who would trust in Him. He was not merely "a prophet"; He was the Savior and the Messiah – the "Sent One of God." This marvelous claim is further emphasized by His actions. He places clay on the eyes of the blind man and bids him go to the pool of Siloam and wash. Why? John explains that the interpretation of Siloam is "sent." Jesus had continually declared that He Himself had been sent from God, and He is now declaring that He alone could heal; in other words, He fulfilled all the blessings

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Jesus miraculously gives sight to a man who was born blind – verses 1-12
- ❖ The Pharisees interrogate the man and excommunicate him – verses 13-34
- ❖ Jesus finds the man and reveals Himself to him as the Son of God – verses 35-41



which Siloam represented. Each day of the Feast of Tabernacles, a vessel of water had been brought to the Temple from that pool – thereby suggesting the gifts of God to His people. Jesus was showing that just as the waters of Siloam would wash the clay from the eyes of the blind man; so also, He – the true Siloam, the One sent from God – would also take away his spiritual blindness, and restore spiritual sight to the world!

The blind man, in faith and hope, obeyed Jesus' command; he "washed, and came seeing." And now the whole city was stirred by the report of the great wonder that had been done! It was indeed a marvelous "sign" which would go far to persuade the people to accept the claims of Jesus. And this was exactly what His enemies feared! At all costs, they were determined to demonstrate that the miracle had been a work of deception. This they attempted to do, but without success. The man who had been healed was summoned into the presence of the Pharisees, and he was carefully cross-examined.

The dilemma of the Pharisees and their mode of reasoning are amusingly (or pitifully) reproduced today by many reputed "wise men" and "scholars," who attempt to prove that Jesus is not the Divine Son of God. Instead of the religious formulas of the Pharisees, we are bombarded by the scientific axioms of skeptics and rationalists; they tell us that the supernatural cannot exist, that miracles do not occur, and that the reputed works of Jesus are mere fables. They assert that He was not born of a virgin, and that He did not rise from the dead. These "wise men" have theories, and so they reject facts; and yet ironically, many of them still praise Jesus as a "good moral teacher," but nothing more. But there is a problem with this. How could a "good moral teacher" falsely claim to have opened the eyes of a blind man, or make His disciples believe that He walked on the sea, or pretend to rise from the dead? Surely Jesus' whole ministry was a fraudulent and wicked deception – or else *He truly is the Divine Son of God!* That is why the Pharisees were in a quandary; they could not disprove the fact of the miracle, but they still denied that Jesus was indeed Who He said He was – namely, the Son of God. The man whom Jesus had healed heaps upon their reasoning the ridicule and contempt which it deserves. He states his simple, unanswerable argument: an impostor, a deceiver, and a sinner could never have done the work that Jesus had just done. "If this man were not from God," he asserts, "he could do nothing!" The works of Jesus prove that He could not have been false in His claims.

The Pharisees excommunicated this simple man of faith whom they could not answer. But behold how Jesus finds the lonely outcast, and leads him into more perfect light; and as the scene closes, we find the man worshiping Jesus as the Son of God!

We praise You, Lord Jesus, as the true Siloam – the One Who was sent from God to take away the blindness of our souls and restore spiritual sight to us! Amen.