

“Jesus Opens Blind Eyes”

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John 9:1-12

I. Introduction

Just like death and decay, sickness is a universal effect of the fall of Adam and Eve. We all experience sickness at times in our lives, it reminds us, as [Psalm 103:14](#) says, “that we are dust.” Sickness and death also remind us that, as God said in [Genesis 3:19](#), “to dust you shall return.” No matter how careful or health-conscious people try to be, times of sickness are inevitable.

The medical field has made leaps and bounds in the treatment of various illnesses and other issues. But when man thinks he has everything under control, something like Covid or Ebola comes on the scene, and we are reminded that medicine is limited in what it can do. Doing major surgery, like replacing joints, or removing organs without cutting a person open, is certainly impressive, but science can only do so much in delaying death. [Hebrews 9:27](#) reminds us that “Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.” God on the other hand is not limited at all in His ability to heal. As the awesome Creator, He has the power, as [Psalm 115:3](#) says, to do “whatever He pleases.”

At various times in history God has chosen to heal in supernatural ways. We could probably spend the morning coming up with examples like Naaman in [2 Kings 5:1-14](#), or King Hezekiah in [2 Kings 20:1-11](#), or the widow’s son at Zarephath [1 Kings 17:17-24](#), or those healed through the apostles as they proved themselves messengers of God ([2 Corinthians 12:12](#)). But the greatest number of miracles occurred during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus’ miracles were His credentials to prove that He was indeed the Messiah. [Matthew 8:17](#) says, “This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, ‘He took our infirmities and carried our diseases.’” Jesus’ miracles also demonstrated His deity—turn to [Mark 2:1-12](#). Jesus was God Incarnate.

Considering Jesus’ many miracles, there are at least six characteristics of His healing ministry. **First**, He healed with only a word or a touch. **Second**, He healed instantly; none of His healings were progressive or gradual over a number of days. Thus, there was no question that they were genuine

miracles, not natural recoveries over time. **Third**, Jesus healed completely. For example, when Jesus healed the paralytic [Mark 2:12](#) says, “He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.” **Fourth**, Jesus healed everyone who came to Him. [Luke 4:40](#) says, “When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.” **Fifth**, Jesus wasn’t limited to a particular disease or sickness, [Matthew 4:23](#) says that Jesus healed “every disease and sickness among the people.” **Sixth**, finally, unlike modern fakes, Jesus brought dead people back to life. For example, there was Jairus’ daughter in [Mark 5](#), the widow of Nain’s son in [Luke 7](#), and Lazarus in [John 11](#). Jesus raised the dead.

Jesus’ healing of the blind man in today’s Scripture cannot be explained by anything other than Jesus’ miraculous, divine power. It could not have been a natural recovery of sight, since the man had been blind from birth ([9:1](#)) and he saw immediately ([vs. 7](#)). Nor could it have been a result of medical treatment since the cure for blindness was far beyond the limited medical knowledge of the day.

John’s record of Jesus’ healing the blind man can be divided into 4 parts: the problem, the purpose, the healing, and the confusion.

II. Jesus Opened Blind Eyes

A. The Problem: Some feel that Jesus healed the blind man immediately after He left the Temple, but the wording in [verse 1](#) is so general that the precise time and location of the healing really can’t be determined. However, since Jesus sent the blind man to wash at the pool of Siloam, this incident had to take place in Jerusalem. The Temple was a prime place for beggars, since people coming there to worship would be more likely to give alms. The Temple was also a place where large crowds gathered. So, it is conceivable that when the Lord encountered this man, he was near or on the temple grounds.

Blindness was a common problem in the ancient world. Eye disease had few cures, and unsanitary conditions increased the risks considerably. In Jesus’ day blindness was so well known that He included the blind in his parables. About the only thing any blind person could do in that day was beg, and that is what this man was doing when Jesus came to him. Isaiah predicted in several places that the

Messiah would heal the blind; e.g., [Isaiah 35:5](#) says, “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.” Scripture records several examples of Jesus healing the blind ([Matt. 9:27-28](#); [12:22](#); [15:30-31](#); [20:30-34](#); [21:14](#)). In some respects, healing the blind was a trademark of Jesus’ ministry. When John the Baptist’s disciples asked if He was “the one who was to come,” Jesus replied in [Matthew 11:4-5](#), “Go back and report to John what you hear and see. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, and those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.”

This particular man “was blind from birth.” The Apostle John didn’t tell how the disciples knew that this man had been “blind from birth.” Perhaps he was a common fixture to the area, and his background was common knowledge. Or maybe the blind man told them himself. Regardless, this was the problem: *the man was blind from birth.*

B. The Purpose: to bring praise and glory to God. But the disciples didn’t look at the man as an object of mercy but rather as a subject for a theological discussion. “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Following popular Jewish doctrine about suffering, the disciples were sure that the man’s being blind from birth was caused by sin. There were only two possible explanations: either the sins of this man or those of his parents had caused his blindness. Since Jewish thought at the time was that children could sin while still in the womb, the disciples asked if this was the reason for the man’s blindness. Otherwise, they reasoned that the cause of his blindness was his parents’ sin.

Actually, all physical problems are the result of our fall in Adam, it was his disobedience that brought sin and death into the world. But afterward, to blame a particular disability on a particular sin committed by a particular person is certainly beyond any man’s ability or authority. Only God knows why babies are born with handicaps or people suffer with infirmities and only God can turn those handicaps into something that will bring good to the people and bring glory to His name.

Jesus’ reply exposed the error in the disciples’ thinking. There is not **always** a direct link between suffering and a person’s sin. Of course, 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 Greek, a better reading of [John 9:3-4](#) would be: *“Neither has this man sinned nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, we must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day.”* Rather than looking backward and analyzing how the blind man came to be in this condition, Jesus' concern was in moving forward—putting God's power on display for the man's benefit and for other's benefit. This was the purpose of the healing: *to bring praise and glory to God.*

The phrase *“as long as it is day”* in [verse 4](#) gives a sense of urgency. It may refer to the brief time that Jesus would still be physically present with the disciples. *“Night is coming”* might have been a reference to His death and the brief time until the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Perhaps it meant the time one has before he meets God. But *“while”* Jesus was in the world, He was the Light of the world. After His death, resurrection and ascension, His ministry and His light was carried by the disciples as commanded in the Great Commission in [Matthew 28:19-20](#). But the light shone most clearly and brightly during Jesus' earthly ministry.

C. The Healing: *the blind man was made to see.* Then there was the healing: the blind man was made to see. After teaching His disciples, the Lord turned to the blind man. The One who was the *spiritual* Light of the World would also produce *physical* light for this man who had lived his entire life in darkness. The healing was a living parable of Jesus as the Light shining in a spiritually darkened world. As [John 1:5](#) says, *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”*

Jesus' method of healing was unique—this was the only time He used this method. *“He spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ‘Go,’ he told him, ‘wash in the Pool of Siloam.’”* In [Matthew 9:27-31](#) Jesus healed two blind men by merely touching their eyes; in [Mark 8:22-26](#) He healed another blind man by putting spit on his eyes. Though the healing power was the same, perhaps Jesus varied His method so that people would focus on the message in the healing and not on the manner of the healing.

Then Jesus sent the blind man to the pool which is called Siloam; John made a point of writing that “Siloam” means “Sent.” At the Feast of Tabernacles, which had just finished, the priests had used water from the pool of Siloam to symbolize the blessings God had sent to Israel while wandering in the wilderness. The water was a symbol of the blessings from God. Now the One described by John over twenty times as the One who had been “sent” by God sent the blind man to go wash in the place called “sent,” and receive a personal blessing from God. As Jesus instructed, the blind man obediently “went and washed” in the pool, “and came home seeing.” The blind man was made to see.

D. The Confusion: *who is this man?* The healing of the blind man understandably caused a sensation and confusion among the neighbors and all who had previously known him as “*the beggar.*” The change was so amazing that verses 8 & 9 report that some were saying, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg? Some claimed he was. Others said, ‘No, he only looks like him.’” This was the confusion: *who is this man?* Some found it easier to believe in a case of mistaken identity rather than believing in a miraculous healing. The discussion was cut short by the formerly blind man himself, who emphatically asserted, “I am the man.”

At least some were convinced that this was indeed the man who had been blind and they demanded, “How then were your eyes opened?”

The man didn’t try to explain how it happened, he couldn’t. All he could do was to tell them what had happened: “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.” Wanting to meet the one who performed such an incredible miracle, the crowd asked, “Where is this man?” But the “*unblind*” man didn’t know where Jesus was, and having never seen Him, could not have identified Him in any case. Jesus had disappeared from the scene, leaving the blind man as the focal point.

III. Conclusion

This account of Jesus’ healing a blind man perfectly illustrates the salvation process. Blinded by sin, lost sinners have no capacity to recognize the Savior or find Him on their own. Turn to

Romans 3:10-12. Romans 3:23 summarizes it this way, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The blind man would not have been healed if Jesus had not sought him out from all the other beggars and healed him. So it is with salvation, if God did not reach out to spiritually blind sinners, no one would be saved. **Turn to Romans 5:6-8.**

The blind man wasn't healed because of something he did or didn't do; he was healed as a gift from God. Sinners aren't healed because of something they have done; rather they are saved as a gift of God. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” One doesn't earn a gift but merely accepts it from the giver. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.” Finally, the blind man was healed only when he obeyed Jesus' command and washed in the pool of Siloam. So also, are sinners saved only when they humbly and obediently accept and obey God's Word and make Jesus their Savior and Lord (Romans 10:9-10).

Besides the “salvation process,” there is something else in this story that applies to Christians today. In John 9:4 Jesus said, “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.” What Jesus told His disciple then applies to all believers today: “we must do the work of him who sent me” Jesus—we are all to be working. No one knows when the end—darkness—will come for an individual or the world when Christ returns in glory. We need to serve God with a sense of urgency; as Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:16, “making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” The Puritan pastor Richard Baxter put it this way, “*I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.*” Or using a more current phrase: “*Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.*” Is there someone in your life who needs to hear the way of salvation? Don't put it off—tell them today. Today may be the last opportunity you have—speak as if you were never going to speak again, as a dying man to dying men.