# John 9 – The Man Born Blind

Some people are rude. But no one seems to be ruder than a person who acts superior to others because they are trying to deny their own feelings of inferiority. A perfect example of this took place when I was in college. The Christian group I was part of had some of the most loving people I had ever been around. One girl, Mary, had been a paraplegic since childhood because of genetic problems exacerbated by a severe car crash. While physically disabled, she exhibited a strong faith and trust in God. Another person, I will call Chuck, started attending our fellowship who regularly told others how spiritual he was. Chuck had one of the biggest egos of anyone I had ever seen. While Chuck was small of stature and probably had a mild form of dwarfism, he would bully those around him and threaten people both verbally and physically.

One day, Chuck came up to Mary and started telling her that she needed to repent of her obvious sins. As we gathered around and tried to intervene, someone asked Chuck what right he had to accuse someone of living a sinful life. He replied that if she was not sinful and faithless that she would be able to stand up from her chair and walk.

I was proud of the group’s leadership as they responded. They told Chuck that since he had made such public accusations, he was not welcome to attend our group again until he had publicly apologized in like manner. Chuck not only never was willing to attend again, but began trying to convince others in the college that our group was not a Christian group because we did not agree with him. As time went on, Chuck also started espousing heretical statements like Jesus gave up His Godhead on the cross, Jesus was the first born again believer, that Jesus was tortured in hell, and that we can stop sinning and fulfill God’s law. In many ways we were grateful for Chuck’s outburst because his actions kept many less mature believers from accepting him as a theological authority.

If Chuck had read and understood John 9, he probably would not have acted the way he did. What’s more, he would have understood that his actions were much more like the Pharisees than he was like Jesus in both his actions and his understandings. From this passage, we can understand that sometimes hardship is Sent to Display God’s Work, that God’s Work is Questioned by those whose spiritual eyes are blind, that our Testimony will be Denied by those who don’t want to believe, that people who don’t want to be challenged will find us guilty in a Trial by Insult, that some people are most Convinced by their own Defense, and that Jesus’s Judgment can heal or condemn.

## Sent to Display God’s Work. John 9:1-7

“**1** ¶ 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.

All Sicknesses are a result of Sin. While all disease is the indirect result of the sinful nature of the world that has existed since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. All sicknesses are not a result of sins. The Bible tells us that some sicknesses are the direct result of sin. For instance, 1 Corinthians 11:30 tells us that some people are sick or even dead because of taking communion in an unworthy manor. Someone who contracts an STD, can certainly attribute it to sin, either their own or their spouse’s sin. Likewise, James 5:14-15 links healing with the forgiveness of sin. Other sicknesses have nothing to do with a particular sin. The Bible affirms the role of Physicians and Doctors. The third gospel was written by the physician Luke. One day the curse of sin and pain will be replaced, but for now sickness is a reality of life in a sinful world – Revelation 21:4.

Today most Christians recognize that physical maladies are generally due to medical causes. The exception to this is in the realm of mental health. It is amazing how many Christians blame mental and emotional health issues on sin. Now don’t get me wrong, there can be mental health issues caused by sin, but it is unjust to assume that every mental health issue is a result of sin. Some issues are the result of imbalances or problems in body systems.

The Jews also recognized that some sicknesses were natural and others were a result of sin, but their view of which sicknesses were from sin was much broader. Any sickness which did not have an obvious cause or contagion was blamed on sin, and especially congenital defects such as being born blind or deaf.

Jesus says that this sickness falls into a third category. It is not there because of physical systems, it is not there because of specific sins, it is there so that God’s work can be displayed. This is very difficult to look at because it attributes the cause of illness to God’s choice. God chose to allow, or perhaps even cause, this man to be despised and to suffer blindness for years, just so He could glorify Himself. From our limited perspective, this is emotionally difficult to accept, but it is clearly what the Bible says. In this case, God chose to display His work through healing. Other times He may choose to display His work by being by someone’s side through the suffering. We must accept that when God chooses to allow or cause illness we have to trust His plan.

## God’s Work Questioned. John 9:8-16

**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. **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.

When the blind man’s neighbors saw what had happened, it challenged their reality. Psalm 146:8 and Exodus 4:11 specify that healing the blind is a work of God. Isaiah 35:4-6 is even more specific in saying that healing the blind is a sign of the messiah. So just as turning water into wine was a sign, so too, healing the man born blind was a sign. Now these neighbors either had to accept Jesus as the messiah or condemn him as a heretic. Since they didn’t like either option, they decided to deny that the man had ever been blind. People today do similar things. Rather than attribute the miracles of the Bible to God, people try to find natural causes so they can attribute the miracles to coincidences.

Still unwilling to believe him, they take the man to the pharisees. The passage makes it seem that He was taken without his choice. The pharisees don’t seem to care whether he was blind or not, they question the miracle because it wasn’t done according to their rules. Healing is work and you can’t work on the Sabbath, so they assert anyone who heals on the sabbath is against God’s plan.

Even so, some of the people, and perhaps even the pharisees, recognize it is a miraculous sign and that doing such a sign is significant. Are you taking time to recognize God’s miraculous work for what it is? When someone has recovered from an illness, do we thank God that He healed or breath a sigh of relief that their health has naturally improved. If we fail to give God glory, we are questioning His work, just as surely as the pharisees did.

## Testimony Denied. John 9:17-23

**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."

The man born blind gives a rather weak testimony. He doesn’t know much about Jesus but thinks He must be a prophet. Even this weak testimony was rejected by the Jewish leaders, so they called his parents to testify. They stand up for their son enough to say that he is their son, but they refuse to support his claim on how he was healed. They could have said, “we believe what he said but we weren’t there.” Instead they said, “He’s an adult ask him and leave us out of it.” It was not that they denied their son’s testimony, but that they were afraid of the consequences of agreeing with him.

Many times, when someone denies your testimony, or any other testimony about God, it is often more the presence of fear than the absence of belief. It may be fear of what their friends will think. It may be fear of giving up a favorite activity. It may be fear of losing control. Hebrews 10:31 tells us that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Obviously, this is true in terms of God’s judgment, but it can also be true in terms of His grace. Psalm 130:3-4 says “If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.”

## Trial by Insult. John 9:24-29

**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."

When people don’t want to admit truth or recognize the viability of someone else’s argument, they often devolve into insults. Look at today’s political arena. How often do you see political commentators calling people names? I am not advocating for or against any of these statements, but I guarantee you have heard these on the news in the last few weeks. Trump is a womanizer. Biden is senile. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez is brainless. Amy Coney Barrett only adopted her children as show pieces. None of these accusations address what these people believe, they are character assassinations. None of them argue whether the person’s plans or beliefs are correct.

The Jews make similar accusations against Jesus…”we know that this man is a sinner,” “you are his disciple,” “we don’t even know where he comes from.” They don’t address His miracles, they don’t address His teachings, they call Him names. Then they ask the man born blind how it happened. It is like they expect him to change his story now that they have authoritatively declared Jesus is a sinner. It would be like expecting my wife to stop liking Chocolate because Godiva Chocolates is named after someone who liked to ride horses au naturel. The insults have nothing to do with facts but are a distraction from thinking.

## Convinced by Defense. John 9:30-34

**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.

Like many times when someone argues from insult, the Jews’ actions backfired. In their insults, they forced the blind man to think about who Jesus really is. In answering their accusation that “we don’t know where he comes from” they triggered him to think about the folk beliefs that they wouldn’t know where the messiah comes from. Their accusations contrasted with his experience. Calling him a sinner made him realize that Jesus could not have healed him if Jesus wasn’t sent by God. When we defend against ridiculous accusations with the truth, we become more sure of what we believe. The man still doesn’t know if Jesus is the messiah, but he recognizes that the slanders of the Jewish leaders are not consistent with the man he knows. The man born blind is now one step closer to seeing Jesus for who He is because the false accusations were so biased.

## Jesus’s Judgment. John 9:35-41

**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.” (Joh 9:1-41 NIVUS)

Eventually we will all have to answer the question, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” This man answers by saying He wants to but doesn’t know who He is. Jesus shows Himself to the man and the man immediately believes. If you want to believe in Jesus, Jesus will show himself to you. We cannot want to believe unless the Father calls us. John 6:44, Romans 9:18

Do you want to believe because He calls or does He call because you want to believe? While I believe the Bible addresses this, ultimately the motive of God’s calling is God’s business, not ours. But if you now hear Him calling, will you answer?

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All sicknesses are \_\_\_\_\_\_ a result of sins.

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of sin and pain will be replaced. Revelation 21:4

When God chooses to allow or cause illness we have to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ His plan.

## God’s Work \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. John 9:8-16

If we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to give God glory, we are questioning His work.

## Testimony \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. John 9:17-23

It is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:31

But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 130:3-4

## Trial by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. John 9:24-29

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