

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

### Ch. 9

Jesus' confrontations with the Jewish sect of 6,000 Pharisees is turning nasty as they seek to silence Him once and for all. They strictly interpret the Law and oral traditions. Sadducees hold that God is in total charge, and man is a puppet. Essenes believe man can actually sway God's behavior. Pharisees cede to God overarching authority to do as He pleases, while giving man his free will. Where do you come down on this?

The Jews want a Messiah/Liberator who will oust their Roman oppressors. They *assumed* He'd do miracles. Thus, when Jesus multiplied a few loaves and fish to feed 5,000 men (plus women and children) in Galilee, throngs lobbied Him to be their political savior who'd usher in "heaven on earth."

Jesus' "signs" always had a message, tied to His teachings about life and death. His was a nonsense mission, i.e., to suffer and die to save all people from their sins, *not* to liberate the Jews from their Roman overlords. Many who witnessed Jesus' miracles and hung on His every word believed in Him. Others call Him a blasphemer and plot to kill Him.

### Back To The Garden

Let's read John 9:1-41.

#### DISCUSS:

Childhood religious training had conditioned Jesus' disciples to think that human sin was the direct cause of suffering. Here we get a glimpse behind another all-time myth that goes, "An all-loving, all-powerful God would never let His creatures suffer."

Sin entered the world in that perfect, unpolluted paradise called Eden. Adam and Eve's fall to temptation took a bite out of our own shot at sinless living. Since then, the Bible says each screaming tot has entered the world "*born* in sin." God didn't create Earth like this. Not His plan. Lucifer, that power-craving, fallen angel, corrupted our Eden.

Jesus is clear: this beggar's congenital blindness is neither the product of his nor his parents' sin. The disciples opined that this beggar, 'though *born* blind, could've caused his own blindness by sinning. Yup, Jewish rabbinical tradition states that an unborn fetus can sin! Crazy.

Jesus declares that this nameless soul's visual handicap has a higher purpose -- to display the work of God in his life. The Lord spits on the ground, forms a mudball and dabs it on those

useless eyes. In Genesis God formed Adam from the earth. Jeremiah sees God as the Potter who shapes us into the vessels He has in mind. Clay denotes human weakness, and blindness signifies our sinful nature, unable to see spiritual Truth.

Next, Jesus sends him off: “Go wash in the pool of Siloam.” He doesn’t promise healing, but the poor chap returns HEALED!

## **DISCUSS:**

### **Lights, Jesus, Action!**

Returning, the beggar sees Jerusalem for the first time. All these years he’s smelled, felt and heard the sounds of this bustling city but never seen it. Zion hadn’t changed, but he had.

You’d think *everybody* would be dancin’ in the streets. They’d noticed this penniless pauper for years. Now he has sight. But the Pharisees are hacked because Jesus pulled this off on the Sabbath, breaking their rules: (1) Making mud is work. You can’t work on the Sabbath. (2) Healing people is “work.” And (3) saliva was thought to be medicine, and using meds is work. And you claim to be God!?? But some Pharisees knew better, saying, “No way could a sinner pull off these miracles!”

When the leaders press the beggar about his benefactor’s identity, he replies, “He’s a prophet.” He knows that some Old Testament prophets had performed miracles. The Pharisees press harder, sending for this guy’s parents to shake them down. But facing interrogation, they lie, sfearing if they fingered Jesus as the Messiah, they’d face excommunication from the synagogue.

The beggar is pressured to credit God, *not Jesus*, with his sight because obviously this faux Messiah is a sinner. The freshly-sighted man’s retort: “All I know is ... I was blind, but now I can see.” But this lynch mob is not seeking truth. You may be new in your walk with Jesus. Standing up for Him is merely telling others what He’s done in your life.

The Pharisees admit they don’t know where Jesus is from. With thousands trailing Jesus all over the country, how could they *not* know where this amazing carpenter out of Nazareth is from? So the beggar has ‘em dead to rights: “Nobody’s ever healed a blind person. If Jesus *weren’t* from God, He could never do this! I see better than all of you!”

## **DISCUSS:**

### **Light’s Out!**

Tired of the vagrant's incriminating testimony that laughed at their irrational accusations, the Pharisees evict him from the synagogue. Jesus seeks out His new, sighted friend and asks, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" This new, although unintentional celebrity *wants* to believe in Him. When Jesus says, "I'm He," the man wilts and says, "Lord, I believe!" And he begins to worship his Messiah.

Seizing the moment, Jesus positions Himself as the providential Pivot on which all destiny turns, saying, "I've come to earth to give sight to the blind, and to confound those who just *think* they can see."

Jesus is saying, if you acknowledge your blindness, you can be forever forgiven of your sin. But if you, knowing what you know about Me, still claim to see, despite your spiritual darkness, there's no hope for you.

There's nothing we can do to earn God's forgiveness. It's His free gift, waiting for you and me to accept it. Tolerance and political correctness have become America's religion of choice. But Jesus is not offering us religion. He wants to be in an unending relationship with us!

Just say, "Father, by faith I believe Jesus gave His life to pay the penalty for my sins, blotting them out forever. I receive Your forgiveness and give you my heart and life. I want to follow You, Jesus. Thank You. Amen."

His Deal

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