

The Miracles Of Jesus Christ: Healing A Man Born Blind (Part Three)

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Despite the joy of Jesus Christ healing the man born blind (John 9:1-41), the Jewish leaders conspicuously resist. Divided into two camps, some Pharisees reason that Jesus could not be of God because He had broken the Sabbath, while others assert that a sinner could not do such miracles. The ensuing questioning of the healed man exposes a telling contrast between the Pharisees' "we know" (verse 24) and the man's "I know" (verse 25).

Amid all the wrangling, however, the healed man applies his common sense: "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing" (verse 33). The man's progress of knowledge about his Healer is interesting, speaking of Jesus as a Man (verse 11), a Prophet (verse 17), and the Son of God (verses 35, 38). He believes, confesses, and worships (verses 35-38). The man's implicit faith, his fearless confession of his healing, his utter disregard of consequences, his brave confession, his simplicity in confounding the "wise," and his belief in and worship of Christ are beyond commendable.

1. What part does knowledge play in the man's healing? John 9:12, 20-21, 24-25, 29-31.

C omment: The theme is suggested by the fact that each of the parties claim both to know and not to know something. Since the claims and the reasons for them differ, the contrasts highlight their various types of knowledge. By their questioning, the Pharisees try to discredit the man's testimony, attempting to find a cause to brand the healing a fraud and attack Jesus (verse 19). They imply that the parents should stop lying and come clean (verses 20-21). Yet, the parents affirm two facts: that the healed man was indeed their son and that he was born blind. They knew this, and they were not afraid to affirm it.

Conversely, they denied knowing how he came to see and who did the miracle. Why do they not acknowledge what they know of Christ's role in the healing? "They feared the Jews." They know that the leaders would excommunicate anyone who confessed Jesus as the Messiah. The parents simply did not want to get involved. They were afraid to acknowledge what had been revealed to them.

This is an accurate picture of many today. The truths of Christianity have been proclaimed to them—perhaps by parents, friends, or the church. Intellectually, they know and even believe these truths, but they will not admit them. They are afraid to acknowledge Christ for fear of the consequences.

2. Are the Pharisees and the parents lying about knowing Jesus? John 9:18-30.

C omment: The Pharisees, unable to extract damaging testimony from the parents, begin to interrogate the healed man more thoroughly. Apparently, he had been absent during

the questioning of his parents, because the Pharisees attempt to finesse an admission out of him by pretending that they had learned the true story from them (John 9:24). In the ensuing exchange, they amplify their position (John 9:29).

The Pharisees also claim both to know and not to know something. They claim to know that Jesus is a sinner and that God had spoken through Moses. They claim not to know Christ's origin. Yet, what they claim and what they deny contradict (John 9:29; 7:27)—they are lying! Unlike the parents, who know the truth but will not admit it, these men think they know the truth but are actually ignorant of it.

Sadly, this also describes many people today, particularly those pseudo-scholars and pseudo-leaders who claim to know all about Christ and Christianity but who have never really come to know Him personally.

3. What makes the testimony of the healed man different? John 9:25-29.

Comment: The healed man readily acknowledges his ignorance but then adds, “One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25). Despite not knowing of Jesus, he is certain that He had changed him. In this, he becomes a type of the genuine Christian. They do not know everything, but what they know they truly know because they have met and accepted Jesus personally as Lord and Savior.

Unlike the others, the man humbly begins with his limitations in knowledge. Both the parents and Pharisees say “we know” first and only after they declare what they do not know (see verses 20-21, 24-29), revealing their cowardice or ignorance. The man first admits his ignorance but then affirms what he knows as the result of God's revelation.

In his humble state, he easily recognizes the lack of knowledge in others, in this case, the greater ignorance of the “educated” leaders of the people. Having eliminated false self-confidence as well as any unjustified confidence in the Pharisees, all that remains is what he truly knows: He could now see. Thus, he takes his stand on the certainties.

As Christians, beginning in ignorance and sin, we confess both our spiritual dependence and our failings. We realize that, unless God chooses to reveal Himself—which He does in His Word and in Christ—we can know nothing. No one can know God by means of human reasoning or by any other human instrument (Job 11:7; I Corinthians 2:14). Spiritual knowledge is not revealed even through religious tradition, but it comes through the intervention of God in history, in His written Word, and the opening of the mind by the Holy Spirit—and only to those whom God calls.

Jesus says to the once-blind man, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” Having been blind, do we now entrust our spiritual well-being to Jesus Christ?