

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

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The miracle of healing recorded in John 9 displays Jesus Christ giving sight to the blind. Healing is a work of the God of the Old Testament, as seen in Psalm 146:8, "The Lord opens the eyes of the blind . . ." (see also Exodus 4:10-12). Giving sight to the blind is also a work of the Messiah, as prophesied in Isaiah 35:4-5, "He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened. . . ." Jesus' healing of the man born blind, then, is another testimony of His Deity and of the fact that He is the Messiah.

In spite of this great testimony, most of the witnesses missed the miracle's message, and the religious leaders persecuted the newly healed man. Moreover, they condemned the Healer, Jesus Christ, calling Him a sinner. Greater blindness existed in their lives than in the man Christ healed; he was only physically blind but their blindness was spiritual, of the heart and mind.

1. How does the blind man respond to Christ's command? John 9:7, 11.

Comment: It is significant that the command is simple, containing only seven words: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." It was also personal, directed to the blind man alone. In addition, the command involved a test of obedience, requiring a response to Jesus. Finally, it encouraged the man, despite his not being able to see the compassion in Jesus' eyes. He somehow knew that the One whose voice he heard would help him.

Christ's command tested the man's faith, confirming and strengthening it. Without delay or reluctance, he obeyed the divine command: He went and washed and saw. Many would consider it a useless chore for a blind man to do such a simple thing to obtain his sight, but having obeyed, the man was healed. Blessing still comes through obedience. In one sense, he obeyed Christ blindly, but as a result, he immediately received his sight, beginning down a path by which he eventually also received true spiritual sight.

In the same way, the gospel that comes to us is simple. God requires us to respond in faith, and when we do—when we understand and believe that the Son of God became human to enable mankind's salvation—our spiritual blindness begins to be removed.

2. Why does Jesus heal the blind man on a Sabbath? John 9:14-16.

Comment: What is the true purpose of the Sabbath? God's instruction about the Sabbath is contained in general principles that we are to apply properly. To do this, we have to understand its purpose.

From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus instructs us on how to live His way of life using these principles. The Sabbath is so significant that His ministry formally began on one and ended on a preparation day for another. In His inaugural sermon (Luke 4:16-19), He spells out His work: setting people free from captivity. He specifically mentions

revealing His truth to the poor (that is, the weak), brokenhearted, captives, blind, and oppressed (see Isaiah 61:1-2).

The Sabbath—which, He says in Mark 2:27, "was made for man"—is a key element in this work of delivering people from oppression. God established His Sabbath law, including the weekly and annual Sabbaths, to prepare a people to come out of and stay out of spiritual slavery. Each Sabbath reminds Christians that God is their Liberator, and by keeping it, they show that they are free and want to remain free.

We need to recognize that the blind man's life was not in immediate danger, but the liberating healing Jesus performed was done to one who was chronically ill. Spiritually, we are the same, beset by lingering sins. God provides the Sabbath to free us from the chronic problems caused by the desires of our human nature.

3. Do all Christians receive opposition and persecution? John 9:8-17.

Comment: Every genuine believer in Jesus Christ will have conflict at times, and in one form or another, every Christian will be opposed for the sake of God's truth. The apostle Paul alerts us that "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (II Timothy 3:12), and that "it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29).

God will not abandon us in the conflict any more than He abandoned the once-blind man. When challenged about his opinion of Jesus, he bravely answered, "He is a prophet" (John 9:17). God has His purposes in allowing persecution, and among them are at least two seen in John 9: Opposition will 1) sharpen our testimony and 2) deepen our understanding of God's purpose and way of life. No less than the man born blind, we should be humbly bold in our testimony. If the blind man, who had merely met Jesus and knew little about Him, could be so, why should we Christians not be also in our defense of God's way of life?