

# John 9 • The Cure, the Controversy, & the Confession

## Introduction

This is the sixth of seven miracles recorded in the Gospel of John intended to witness to the deity of Christ. The first three signs show how a person is saved: through the Word (water to wine), by faith (healing the nobleman's son), and by grace (healing the man by the pool). The last four signs show the results of salvation: satisfaction (feeding the 5,000), peace (calming the storm), light (healing the blind man), and life (raising Lazarus from the dead).

<sup>1</sup>As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"

<sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."

<sup>6</sup>When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, <sup>7</sup>and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing.

## [Read v.1-7] The Cure

**Q: What are the main characteristics of the man which have the dual meaning of describing the lost sinner?**

1. **He was blind.** The unsaved, even if extremely intellectual, can never see or understand spiritual things.
2. **He was begging.** Poor in God's sight, the unsaved are begging for something to satisfy their deepest needs.
3. **He was helpless.** Neither the unsaved themselves nor anyone else on their behalf can cure them.

*But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

1 Corinthians 2:14-16

**Q: How does the way Christ cured the blind man reflect how Christ saves sinners?**

1. **Christ comes to the man in grace.** This took place on the Sabbath (v.14) when the man could have been passed by in order to observe the Sabbath rest. While the disciples argued about the cause of the blindness, Jesus did something about it.
2. **Christ irritated the man.** Just a speck of dirt irritates the eye, so imagine how cakes of clay must have felt. But the dirt in his eyes encouraged him to wash. So it is with the preaching of the Word – it irritates sinners with conviction so that they want to do something about their sins.
3. **Christ cured the man by His power.** The man's faith was proved by his obedience to Christ's Word, the only One who can deliver from darkness of sin and hell.
4. **Christ's cure glorified God.** All true conversions are for God's glory alone.
5. **Christ's cure was noticed by others.** The man's parents and neighbors saw a change in his life. So it is with those who are born-again, others visibly take notice of the difference it makes. "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Cor. 5:17)

**Point:** Like all the signs documented in the Bible, there is a greater spiritual meaning behind what took place literally.

<sup>8</sup>Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, “Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup>Others were saying, “This is he,” still others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the one.” <sup>10</sup>So they were saying to him, “How then were your eyes opened?”

<sup>11</sup>He answered, “The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash’; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.”

<sup>12</sup>They said to him, “Where is He?”

He said, “I do not know.”

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, “He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see.”

<sup>16</sup>Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” But others were saying, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And there was a division among them.

<sup>17</sup>So they said to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?”

And he said, “He is a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup>The Jews then did not believe it of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, <sup>19</sup>and questioned them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?”

<sup>20</sup>His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; <sup>21</sup>but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” <sup>22</sup>His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup>For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

<sup>24</sup>So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.”

<sup>25</sup>He then answered, “Whether He is a

## **[Read v.8-34] The Controversy**

**Q: What was already plainly and widely known in advance to be the reaction to anyone confessing that Jesus was the Messiah?**

A: Anyone who confessed Christ openly would be cast out of the synagogue. (v.22)

**Point:** *The reaction of those rejecting Christ is well-known and never surprising, most often employing the loss of friends, family, and their immediate community – sometimes even the benefits of the religion they were raised in.*

**Q: What sometimes happens to the people closest to someone who becomes born-again?**

A: Afraid of the fall-out that may come upon their selves, it's not unusual for them to “beat around the bush” so to speak and try to remain uninvolved.

**Point:** *Coming to Christ does not provide the automatic assurance that those closest to us will be so moved by the example that they, too, embrace Him.*

*“Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”*

Luke 12:51-53

**Q: What is the initial attack by the Pharisees? How is this often the first rebuttal against a born-again experience?**

A: They begin attacking Christ by saying, “This man is not from God”. (v.16)

**Q: How did the Pharisees add to their attack the second time?**

A: In v.24 they declare Jesus “is a sinner”.

**Q: How would you characterize the man's response to the authorities' accusations?**

A: First he simply relayed what he knew (v.25); then he used common sense to show how foolish their statements were. (v.30-33)

**Point:** *The simple-hearted believer knows more spiritual truth than even the most educated, unsaved theologian.*

*O how I love Your law!  
It is my meditation all the day.  
Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies,  
For they are ever mine.  
I have more insight than all my teachers,  
For Your testimonies are my meditation.  
I understand more than the aged,  
Because I have observed Your precepts.  
I have restrained my feet from every evil way,  
That I may keep Your word.  
I have not turned aside from Your ordinances,*

sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

<sup>26</sup>So they said to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”

<sup>27</sup>He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?”

<sup>28</sup>They reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from.”

<sup>30</sup>The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup>We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. <sup>32</sup>Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. <sup>33</sup>If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.”

<sup>34</sup>They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?” So they put him out.

<sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

<sup>36</sup>He answered, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”

<sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.”

<sup>38</sup>And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him.

<sup>39</sup>And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.”

<sup>40</sup>Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?”

<sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

*For You Yourself have taught me.*

*How sweet are Your words to my taste!*

*Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

*From Your precepts I get understanding;*

*Therefore I hate every false way.*

*Psalm 119:97-104*

**Application:** *It would have been easy for the man to hide his confession in order to avoid controversy, but he fearlessly stood his ground because of the difference Christ made in his life. Everyone who has not merely met Christ but trusted Him is proven authentic by showing it openly.*

### **[Read v.35-41] The Confession**

**Q: What might be ironic about being cast out of the synagogue?**

A: The safest place for him was actually being outside the reach of false religious influences. Although cast out, Christ took Him in and thus cured Him of spiritual blindness.

**Point:** *The effect of embracing the Truth may result in “losing one’s religion” in exchange for true salvation.*

**Q: Going back through the entire passage, how did the man’s knowledge and perception of Christ change over time?**

1. The man first refers to Christ as “*the man who is called Jesus*”. (v.11)  
This is all he really knew at first..
2. The man then refers to Christ as “*a prophet*” (v.17) when initially questioned by the Pharisees.
3. The man concludes Christ is “*a man of God*” (v.31-33) by the end of his second response to the Pharisees.
4. Finally the man professes Jesus to be the Son of God by embracing the Jewish equivalent “*the Son of Man*”. (v.35-38)

**Application:** *It’s a picture of coming out of spiritual darkness into the Light of Christ.*

*But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,  
That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.*

*Proverbs 4:18*

1. A Christian is defined as someone who has light in their heart. *“For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”* (2 Cor. 4:6)
2. A Christian is someone who **IS** a light in the world. *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;”* (Mt. 5:14)
3. A Christian is someone who walks in the light. *“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”* (1 Jn. 1:6-7)
4. A Christian is someone who produces the fruit of light. *“for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),”* (Eph. 5:8-9)

**Q: How do Jesus’ concluding remarks speak to the irony of the working of the light?**

A: The same light which leads one person can actually blind another. The difference has to do with whether or not one accepts or rejects the Word of God through Christ.

**Overall Application**

*The Gospel produces different reactions from different kinds of hearts: the blind sinner receives the truth and sees, the self-righteous “religious” person rejects the truth and becomes even more blind spiritually.*

- *How does your life testify to the presence of the Light?*
- *What price have you had to pay or did you attempt to avoid paying?*
- *Why is the greater lesson here the acquisition of spiritual healing through obedience to the Word rather than merely seeking a physical miracle?*