**The Gospel of John:**

**The Blind Investigating One Who Sees**

*John 9:13-34*

**Context**

It’s hard to imagine how such an incredible miracle did not soften the hearts of the Pharisees. These verses just expose the character of their stubborn, rebellious hearts. This conversation is a clear break between the followers of Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders. Moreover, the blind man was the first known person to have suffered the consequences for believing in that he was excommunicated.

4 characteristics of unbelief

1. **It’s hostile, v13-16**

**John 9:13-16**—*They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind.****14****Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.****15****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.”****16****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.*

1. Because of the extraordinary nature of the miracle, some sought to have an explanation from the religious authorities; so, they brought the man to them
2. It was on the Sabbath that the healing took place
3. The Pharisees were asking him again to explain
   1. The man gives them all that he knows
   2. Answer: He applied clay to my eyes, I washed, and now I see
4. Their response reveals their biased conclusions before the investigation  
   1. “This man” (can’t say His name) does not keep the Sabbath
   2. Their argument: because He doesn’t keep the Sabbath (based on their “rules”), He is disqualified from being from God (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)  
      1. He made mud from His saliva and dust—that’s “working”
      2. He gave “medical treatment” on the Sabbath (unless eminent danger was present)—that’s a violation
      3. There were plenty of other times where Jesus “violated” their Sabbath regulations (Cf. **Matthew 12:1-8; 9-13; Luke 13:10-16; 14:1-6; John 5:9-18,** etc.)

**Luke 6:5**—*And He was saying to them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”*

**Mark 2:27-28**—*Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.****28****So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”*

1. Some were asking, how can a sinner perform such signs?
   1. Argument: only those who are from God can open blind eyes; Jesus opened blind eyes; therefore, Jesus is from God
   2. Result: a division occurred   
      **John 7:43**—*So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.*
2. **It’s determined, vv17-24**

**John 9:17-24**—*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.”* ***18****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,****19****and questioned them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?”****20****His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;****21****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.”****22****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.****23****For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”* ***24****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.”****25****He then answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”*

1. The evidence of the miracle was (literally) staring at them

**Deuteronomy 32:20**—*Then He said, ‘I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness.*

1. What do you think about Him?
   * + 1. This could be scorn/ridicule or straight up confusion on the part of the Jews
       2. He responds: He is a prophet! (therefore, sent from God)  
            
          **John 4:19**—*The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.*

**John 6:14**—*Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”*

**John 7:40**—*Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet.”*

“The man’s eyes are opening wider: he is beginning to see still more clearly, while the eyes of his judges are becoming clouded over with blinding, theological mist”[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. They did not believe him

**V9**—*Others were saying, “This is he,” still others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the one.”*

1. Is this mistaken identity? (To verify, let’s call in the parents, **v18**)
2. Three questions:
   * + 1. Is this your son? Yes.
       2. Was he born blind? Yes.
       3. If so, how does he now see? Ask him.  
          1. Their response is totally lame
          2. It was self-preservation (v22)
          3. They were lying

if they had not known, there would have been no need to be afraid that the Jews might put them out of the synagogue

*To be put out* (excommunicated)—to be under a ban and a curse; cut off from the religious and social life of Israel; a dreaded punishment (Cf. 12:42; 16:2).[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. The Pharisees are left with little else  
   * + 1. “*Give glory to God*”—AKA, stop lying by saying that Jesus healed you

**Joshua 7:19**—*Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me.”* 

* + - 1. A denial of the Jesus’ work would be akin to saying (as they did) that Jesus was a sinner and therefore not from God

**John 8:52**—*The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’*

1. **It’s irrational, vv25-30**

**John 9:25-30**—*He then answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”****26****So they said to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”****27****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?”****28****They reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.****29****We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from.”****30****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.*

1. Is Jesus a sinner? The man replies: IDK
2. I know what I know—I was blind and now I see

This isn’t hard to figure out folks! Why are you making this so difficult?

1. The Pharisees (left with nothing more to go on) recycle the question

Why? Perhaps they were hoping he’d get tripped up on further responses

1. This man had enough  
     
   Sarcastically responds, I told you and you aren’t listening, “do you want to be His disciple?”
2. They responded in rage
   1. They run back to Moses
   2. “This Man”—they can’t bring themselves to mention His name
   3. Jesus to them was deranged, untrained, blasphemer, with insignificant heritage, and from the despised village of Nazareth[[3]](#footnote-3)
3. …Well, here is an amazing thing [insert sarcasm]  
   1. You’re supposed to know things of God and you can’t figure out the obvious?
   2. Jesus did an extraordinary miracle and you don’t see that as an act of God?
   3. You’ve got to love this man!
4. **It’s disrespectful, vv31-34**

**John 9:31-34**—*We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.****32****Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.****33****If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.”****34****They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?” So they put him out.*

1. The Jewish leaders were haughty
2. This humble man now gives a theological lecture of truth to them  
   1. God does not hear sinners

**Psalm 66:18**—*If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear*

**Isaiah 1:15**—*So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.*

* 1. He does not hear those who do not fear Him nor work His will

**Psalm 34:15**—*The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous And His ears are open to their cry.*

**Proverbs 15:8**—*The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.*

**1 Peter 3:12***—“For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer, But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

* 1. God hears Jesus because He has power to give sight
  2. This has NEVER happened before
  3. Conclusion: He must be from God

1. *They were outraged that he would lecture them*
   1. Ad hominem attack (attack the person not the problem)
   2. Progression of an argument: intellectual, emotional, verbal, physical
   3. Their argument: He was a sinner because he was born blind
2. Note that they do concede in acknowledging the miracle (they denied in **v18**)
3. Response: they “put him out” (physical)

***Summary****:* As we share the gospel, we ought not to be surprised that people may have skepticism but regardless of the truth, they are determined to doubt. Unless the Holy Spirit moves and draws them, they will remain blind in spite of having eyes. They are spiritually blind. It’s hard to believe how the undeniable can be denied and the irrefutable be refuted.

**1 Corinthians 2:14**—*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.*

**John 6:44**—*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.*

1. D.A Carson, *The Gospel according to John,* p368. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, John 1-11*, p. 404. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid. p. 405. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)