SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

John

Chapter Nine, Verses 1–41

Once Blind, Now I See — the sixth sign: the Light of the world opens the eyes of a man born blind

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

Jesus opens the eyes of a man blind from birth, and the miracle becomes a trial: neighbors, Pharisees and parents question him, and he is thrown out of the synagogue. Then Jesus finds him, and he sees the Son of Man and worships. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind John's key words.

THE PASSAGE

John 9:1–41

sign · questioned · testimony · worship

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Four movements from a beggar by the road to a man on his knees before Jesus

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"While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." — John 9:5

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

John 9:1–41

Once Blind, Now I See — A beggar who could not see comes to worship, and the men who were sure they could see go blind

† How to Read This Study

This study walks John 9 in 4 movements, in John's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where John is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · JOHN 9:25

"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.""

† Before the Passage

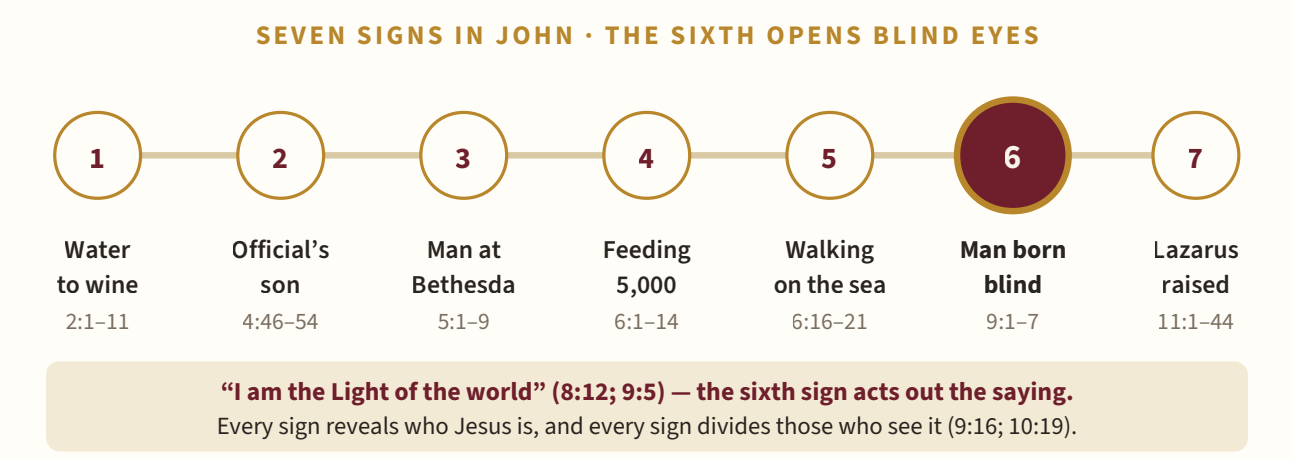
John 9 follows straight on from chapter 8. At the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus had said, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life" (8:12). The argument ended with "before Abraham was born, I am" and stones in the hands of His hearers; "Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple" (8:58–59). Chapter 9 opens "As He passed by." The Light has just been rejected in the temple, and now He shines on a beggar outside it. Verse 5 repeats the claim, and the healing acts it out.

Many readers count seven signs in John's Gospel before the cross: water into wine (2), the official's son (4), the man at Bethesda (5), the five thousand (6), walking on the sea (6), this man (9) and Lazarus (11). Each sign shows who Jesus is, and each divides the people who see it. This one is the only healing of someone blind *from birth* in the Gospels, and the man says so himself: "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind" (v. 32). The prophets had said opening blind eyes would mark the Lord's coming: "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened" (Isaiah 35:5); "The LORD opens the eyes of the blind" (Psalm 146:8).

The pool of Siloam lay at the south end of the City of David, fed by water from the Gihon Spring through the tunnel Hezekiah cut (2 Kings 20:20; Guzik). Its Hebrew name, Shiloach, is linked to the verb "send," and John translates it for his Greek readers: "Sent." The Mishnah (Sukkah 4–5) says that during Tabernacles the priests drew water from Siloam for the temple, and great lamps lit the temple courts. Whether or not the feast was still going on, water and light are both in this chapter, and the One sent from the Father sends the man to "Sent."

The chapter is built like a courtroom drama in seven short scenes: Jesus and the disciples (vv. 1–7), the neighbors (8–12), the Pharisees (13–17), the parents (18–23), the Pharisees again (24–34), Jesus and the man (35–38), Jesus and the Pharisees (39–41). Jesus appears only at the start and the end; in between, the man stands alone. Watch two things happen at once: the man sees more of Jesus in every scene, and the Pharisees see less.

FIGURE · THE SEVEN SIGNS



John 9 is the sixth of the seven signs most readers count before the cross, and it acts out the claim Jesus made at the feast: "I am the Light of the world."

I
MOVEMENT

JOHN 9:1–7

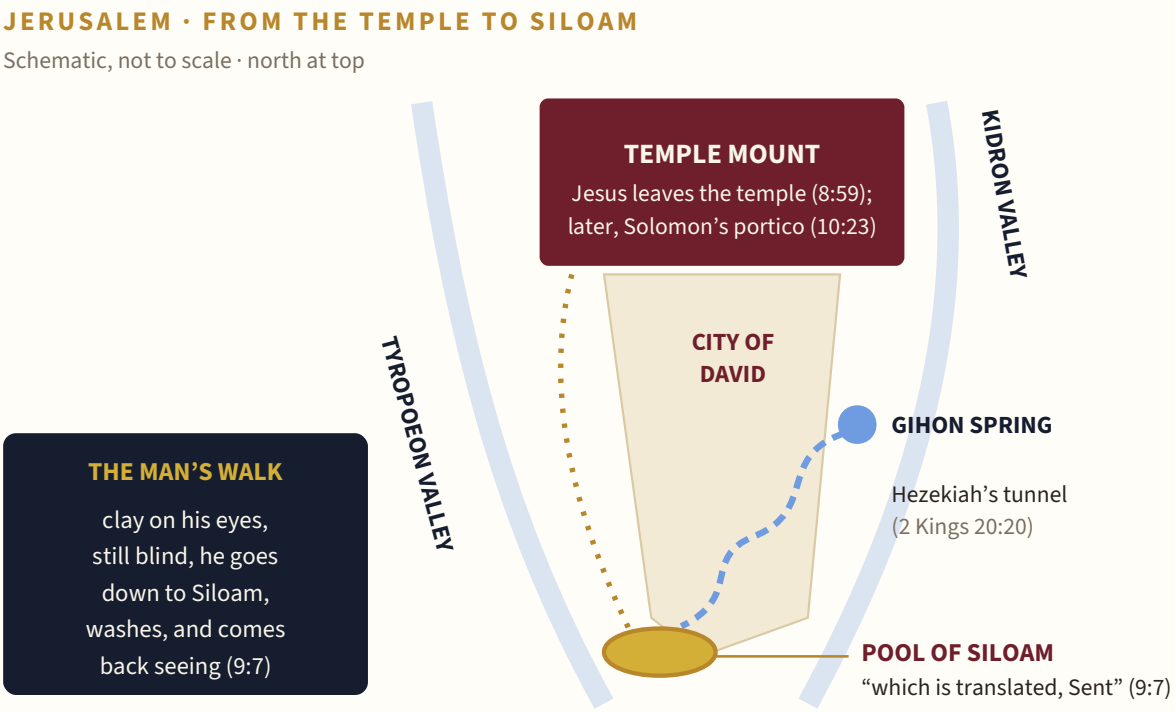
The Light Opens Blind Eyes

Not "who sinned?" but "the works of God" — clay, a command, and a man who comes back seeing

> [1] *As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.* [2] *And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"* [3] *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.* [4] *"We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.* [5] *"While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."* [6] *When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes,* [7] *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.*
>
> JOHN 9:1–7

> *"Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped."*
>
> ISAIAH 35:5

FIGURE · FROM THE TEMPLE TO SILOAM



Jesus left the temple at 8:59 and met the man on the way; the man walked, still blind, down to the pool at the south tip of the City of David, fed through Hezekiah's tunnel.

πηλός

PĒLOS · "CLAY" · G4081

Wet earth, mud — the potter's clay. It appears six times in the New Testament: five in this chapter (v. 6 twice, vv. 11, 14, 15) and once in Romans 9:21, where the potter has "a right over the clay." John repeats it because it became the charge: making clay was work, and it was the Sabbath (v. 14). Guzik links the act to creation, when "the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground" (Genesis 2:7); the One who made eyes in the beginning makes them again here. The KJV says Jesus "anointed" the eyes with clay; the NASB says He "applied" it (v. 6) and the man himself says "anointed" (v. 11).

Σιλωάμ … ἀπεσταλμένος

SILŌAM … APESTALMENOS · "SILOAM … SENT" · G4611, G649

Silōam (G4611) is the Greek form of Hebrew *Shiloach*; it appears only three times in the New Testament — the tower that fell (Luke 13:4) and twice here (vv. 7, 11). John translates it with *apestalmenos*, the perfect passive participle of *apostellō* (G649), "to send forth" — the verb behind "apostle." In verse 4 Jesus calls the Father "Him who sent Me" (there with *pempō*), a phrase that runs all through John. The Sent One sends a blind man to the pool named "Sent," and he obeys before he can see anything.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik: “The disciples regarded this man as an unsolved riddle.” They wanted to know whose sin explained him; Jesus refused the question and saw an opportunity for the works of God. “In this miracle, Jesus took all the initiative.” The man did not ask; Jesus saw him, spoke, and acted. Guzik notes that spittle was thought to have healing qualities in the ancient world and that the clay echoes creation, but he refuses to make a method out of it: “Jesus found it important to change His methods of healing so one could never make a formula of the methods.” The water of Siloam came through Hezekiah’s tunnel, and its name, “Sent,” points to the One the Father sent. The man’s part was simple obedience: he went, washed and came back seeing.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

In “Man Born Blind (Part 1),” preached 29 December 2002, Sproul calls the disciples’ question a false dilemma. Scripture does show that “God can and does visit people with afflictions when they disobey,” but we may not assume every affliction is punishment for a specific sin. He speaks of his friend Harvey: “I have no idea why Harvey has cerebral palsy, and he does not either.” What Jesus does say is that God can bring glory out of long suffering. On the clay he is blunt: “Do not think there is a chemical formula in Palestinian clay that will bring sight to blind people.” “Jesus is simply administering a touch, an object lesson.” The man went, washed and saw — “Scripture is the master of understatement.”

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In “Simple but Sound” (on v. 25) Spurgeon notices the disciples first: “We are always ready to talk. How unlike the Master! He was always ready to act.” “Christ is ever for seeking out, not the cause, but the remedy.” In “The Healing of One Born Blind” (No. 1065, 11 August 1872) he turns the uniqueness of the case into hope for anyone who thinks his own case is too hard: “Our Lord is inventive in love; he devises new modes of mercy.” “His mercy is not bound by precedents.” Spiritual blindness is inborn and no human skill can cure it — “We cannot give men eyes, but we can give them light” — for “Blindness of soul yields only to that voice which of old said, “Let there be light.””

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry begins with the words “as He passed by”: “Thus should we take occasions of doing good, even as we pass by, wherever we are.” The man’s misery was deep: “He that is blind has no enjoyment of the light, but he that is born blind has no idea of it.” On the day and the night of verse 4: “We make more haste than good speed when we out-run opportunities of doing good,” and delay “will leave many a good work for ever undone.” The means were humbling and the command was obeyed, and Henry treasures them: “Clay made of Christ’s spittle was much more precious than the balm of Gilead.” “Christ is often found of those that seek him not.”

II
MOVEMENT

JOHN 9:8–23

Questioned on Every Side

Neighbors, Pharisees and parents — a division over a Sabbath miracle, and a family afraid

> *8 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?” 9 Others were saying, “This is he,” still others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the one.” 10 So they were saying to him, “How then were your eyes opened?” 11 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." 12 *They said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."* 13 *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.* 17 *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."*

JOHN 9:8–23

σχίσμα

SCHISMA · "DIVISION" · G4978

A tear or split — used literally of a torn garment (Matthew 9:16; Mark 2:21) and figuratively of a people split in two. John uses it three times, each time over Jesus: in the crowd at the feast (7:43), among the Pharisees here (9:16), and among the Jews after the Good Shepherd discourse (10:19). Paul uses it of the Corinthian factions (1 Corinthians 1:10; 11:18; 12:25). In John the division is not a failure of the sign but its effect: the Light shows what people are. The same evidence gives two verdicts — "This man is not from God" and "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?"

ἀποσυνάγωγος

APOSYNAGŌGOS · "PUT OUT OF THE SYNAGOGUE" · G656

Literally "away-from-synagogue": excluded from the worshiping community. The word appears only three times in the New Testament, all in John — here (9:22), of the rulers who believed but would not confess "for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue" (12:42), and in Jesus' warning, "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue" (16:2). For a Jewish family it meant losing worship, friends, trade and standing. That is what the parents feared, and what their son suffered (v. 34, where John uses the plainer verb *ekballō*, "to throw out").

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

The neighbors could hardly believe it, Guzik says, and the man had to insist he was the same man. "At this point, the man knew very little about Jesus" — a name, a command, a result — and "The blind man never even saw Jesus until later in the story." The Sabbath was no accident: "Jesus chose to do this miracle on the Sabbath to challenge the petty traditions of the religious leaders." To them Jesus could not be from God because He did not fit their traditions, and so "Instead of uniting everyone, Jesus often divided men." "It was easier for the religious leaders to believe that the man was never really blind." Of the parents he is gentle — "It is instinctive and normal for parents to protect their children" — but the threat of excommunication was real.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "Man Born Blind (Part 2)" (5 January 2003) Sproul notes that the Pharisees judged the healing by their own technicalities: making clay counted as work, so Jesus "is not from God." Others could not see how a sinner could do such signs, and the man, asked what he thinks, reaches the next step: "He is a prophet." Then come the parents. They confirm what they know — this is our son, born blind — and refuse to say who healed him, because they fear being put out of the synagogue. Sproul reads their dodge aloud: "He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." Fear of man silenced the very people who knew the man best.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon, in "The Healing of One Born Blind," sees why the man's new sight made him a target. "If you will barely keep abreast with the times you may be tolerated, but if you get a little ahead of the age you must expect ill-treatment." Then, with irony: "Be blind among blind men, it is the very dictate of prudence if you would save your skin. It is a very unsafe thing to have your eyes opened among blind men, for they will not believe in your assertions." That is verse 18 exactly: "The Jews then did not believe it of him." Spurgeon is not recommending prudence; he is warning the newly sighted what the world will do.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry watches the neighbors move from doubt to certainty: "That which at first was not believed without scrutiny may afterwards be admitted without scruple." The man tells what was done for him, for "God's favours are lost upon us, when they are lost with us, and go no further." Before the Pharisees the good work is treated as a crime: "instead of being embraced as a prophet for it, he is prosecuted as a criminal." Their Sabbath rules were stricter than God's law. The parents gave way: "The fear of man brings a snare," and "Those rulers that are of a persecuting spirit shall never want ill instruments about them."

III
MOVEMENT

JOHN 9:24-34

One Thing I Do Know

The second hearing — a beggar's testimony, a theologian's argument, and the door slammed shut

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."* 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.* 31 *"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.*

JOHN 9:24-34

FIGURE · TWO DIRECTIONS IN ONE CHAPTER

THE MAN BORN BLIND sees more of Jesus in every scene	THE PHARISEES see less with every answer
v11 “The man who is called Jesus”	v16 “This man is not from God”
v17 “He is a prophet”	v18 won’t believe he was blind
v27 “His disciples too?”	v24 “this man is a sinner”
v33 “from God”	v29 “we do not know where He is from”
v38 “Lord, I believe” — worships	v41 “your sin remains”

JOHN 9:39

“… so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.”

Read down each column: the beggar’s words about Jesus climb from “a man” to worship, while the Pharisees’ words sink from “not from God” to “your sin remains.”

οἶδα

OIDA · “I KNOW” · G1492

The perfect of *eidō*, “to see,” used as “to know” — knowledge that comes from having seen. In this chapter “know” is a battle word (the NASB has it eleven times). The Pharisees open with “we know that this man is a sinner” (v. 24) and “We know that God has spoken to Moses” (v. 29). The man answers, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know” (v. 25), and then turns their own word on them: “you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes” (v. 30); “We know that God does not hear sinners” (v. 31). The experts claim knowledge and lose it; the beggar admits ignorance and keeps the one fact that matters.

ἐλοιδόρησαν … μαθηταί

ELOIDORĒSAN … MATHĒTAI · “THEY REVILED … DISCIPLES” · G3058, G3101

Loidoreō is to abuse with words, to heap insults; Peter uses it of Christ, who “while being reviled, He did not revile in return” (1 Peter 2:23). The insult is the word “disciple” (*mathētēs*): “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses” (v. 28). The man’s “too” in verse 27 (“You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?”) shows he already counts himself one. Their last word is “You were born entirely in sins” (v. 34) — the very assumption Jesus rejected in verse 3.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik loves the simplicity of verse 25: "The man born blind didn't know everything about Jesus, but he did know how Jesus had touched his life." He applies it to believers who face mocking questions they cannot answer; no one can argue a man out of what Jesus has done for him. The man's reasoning in verses 30–33 — God does not hear sinners, no one has ever opened eyes born blind, so this man is from God — was, "At that moment, … an irrefutable argument." Then the verdict: "The religious leaders treated this man terribly." Yet "The excommunication of the blind man – difficult as it was – turned out to be a good thing," because it brought him to Jesus.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul (5 January 2003) honors the man's witness but draws a line many Christians blur. The man told what he knew — once blind, now seeing — and that was true and powerful. But it was not yet the gospel. "Do not ever confuse your personal testimony with the gospel." "Biblically, evangelism and witnessing are not synonymous." A testimony tells what happened to me; the gospel proclaims the person and work of Christ. "The gospel is not about me." "The gospel is about Him." He adds that the cost of witness has always been high, and God uses it: "Remember that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

"Simple but Sound" (MTP 51, about 1863) is Spurgeon's sermon on verse 25. He calls the man's words an unanswerable argument: personal, about a plain change, and stronger than debate. A believer need not match the skeptic's learning; experience of grace is certain knowledge. "If the gospel of God be true, it can stand any quantity of questioning." The man is a model of confession — he did not wait for eloquence or perfection, he simply told the change. And he would not bend: "That man will never move the world who lets the world move him."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads the Pharisees' second round as a trap: they wanted the man to deny Christ. Their refusal to hear was willful — "Men will not know the doctrine of Christ because they are resolved they will not believe it." When the beggar reasoned with them, pride flared: "Proud men scorn to be taught, especially by their inferiors." The man himself had the better of it, marveling at their blindness, and Henry agrees: "The unbelief of those who enjoy the means of knowledge and conviction is indeed a marvelous thing." Earlier he gave the man's rule for all of us: "let no man be ashamed of anything but sin."

IV
MOVEMENT

JOHN 9:35–41

Found, Seeing, Worshiping

Jesus finds the outcast — faith in the Son of Man, and a judgment that turns sight to blindness

> 35 *Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"*
> 36 *He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"* 37 *Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you."* 38 *And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him.* 39 *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.”* [40] *Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not ↻ blind too, are we?”* [41] *Jesus said to them, “If you were ↻ blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ ⚠ your sin remains.*
>
> JOHN 9:35–41

> *“To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.”*
>
> ISAIAH 42:7

προσεκύνησεν

PROSEKYNĒSEN · “HE WORSHIPED” · G4352

From *proskyneō*, “to bow down, prostrate oneself” in homage. John uses it most in chapter 4, where Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” (4:23). Here a man bows before Jesus and Jesus does not stop him — though Peter refused it from Cornelius (Acts 10:25–26) and the angel from John (Revelation 19:10). Verse 35’s title is a textual question: the oldest manuscripts read “Son of Man” (NASB, SBLGNT); later ones read “Son of God” (KJV). Guzik notes both point to God’s Messiah; “Son of Man” is the glorious figure of Daniel 7:13–14.

κρίμα

KRIMA · “JUDGMENT” · G2917

A judicial decision and its result — the verdict, not the process. “For judgment I came into this world” (v. 39) sounds at first like a contradiction of 3:17 (“God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world”). But the purpose of His coming is to save; the *effect* of His coming is a verdict, because light shows things as they are. Those who admit they are blind receive sight; those who insist “We see” are confirmed in their blindness. The Pharisees’ question in verse 40 (*mē kai hēmeis*, “We are not … too, are we?”) expects the answer no.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

When the synagogue threw him out, “Jesus then made it a point to meet him and receive him.” Guzik notes the textual question in verse 35 — some manuscripts read Son of Man, some Son of God — and says both point to God’s Messiah. The man believed and bowed down: “When the man worshipped Jesus, Jesus received the worship,” which no mere man or angel in Scripture will do. Verse 39 makes Jesus the dividing line of humanity. “We are all spiritually blind from birth.” The difference is whether we admit it: “There is a great difference between the one who is blind and knows it” and the one who claims to see — and so remains in his sin.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

In “The Good Shepherd Discourse” (12 January 2003) Sproul starts with the end of chapter 9. “The man who had been healed came first to the conclusion that Jesus was a prophet. … Now, he recognizes that He is more than a prophet—He is the Son of God.” He worships, and “Jesus accepts that worship and compliments the man. But He has no compliments for the Pharisees and the scribes.” Worship belongs to God alone, so Jesus’ acceptance of it is a claim. In Part 1 he had already applied the sign to every believer: “Our eyes are blind until God, the Holy Spirit, without the help of spit and clay, opens our eyes so that we behold Him.”

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon makes much of verse 35: “But notice, when this man was put out Jesus Christ found him.” Rejection by the world can be the beginning of blessing: “It was a blessed loss for him, then, to lose the Pharisees and find his Saviour.” The faith that follows is Jesus’ own work — “No eye is ever opened to see Jesus except by Jesus” — and the newly opened eye worships. In “Simple but Sound” he turns verse 41 on his hearers who think they see well enough: “you are stone-blind, and the proof that you are so is this, that you do not know your blindness!”

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry: “Jesus Christ will graciously find and receive those who for his sake are unjustly rejected.” “Happy are they who have a friend from whom men cannot debar them.” The synagogue could shut him out, but it could not shut him out of communion with Christ. The man asks who the Son is, and Henry smiles: “Thou needest not go far to find out the Son of God.” The man worships, and “True faith will show itself in a humble adoration of the Lord Jesus.” The Pharisees resent the rebuke — “Nothing fortifies men’s corrupt hearts more against the convictions of the word” — while “Those that are convinced of their disease are in a fair way to be cured.”

V
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the first light of creation to the Light in the face of Christ

“Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

GENESIS 2:7

“The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous;”

PSALM 146:8

“Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.”

ISAIAH 35:5

“To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.”

ISAIAH 42:7

“Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.””

JOHN 8:12

> *"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 CORINTHIANS 4:6

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik links the clay to the dust of Genesis 2:7: the Creator who formed man from the ground forms new eyes for a man who never had sight.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon hears Genesis 1 behind the healing: "Blindness of soul yields only to that voice which of old said, "Let there be light."" The God who spoke light into the first darkness speaks it into a blind heart.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the scenes and asks what they teach about Jesus; Sproul draws doctrinal lines — affliction and sin, testimony and gospel, worship and deity; Spurgeon preaches the man's simple sentence to the heart; Henry turns every step into Puritan proverb. They agree on the chapter's shape, and they differ mainly in emphasis.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The sign	An unsolved riddle to the disciples; Jesus takes all the initiative; no formula.	A false dilemma; no chemical formula in the clay; an object lesson.	Christ seeks the remedy, not the cause; inventive in love.	Do good as you pass by; Christ's spittle beats the balm of Gilead.
II · Questioned	The Sabbath was deliberate; Jesus divides men; easier to deny the blindness.	Judged by technicalities; "He is a prophet"; the parents afraid.	Unsafe to have your eyes opened among blind men.	Prosecuted as a criminal; the fear of man brings a snare.
III · Testimony	He didn't know everything, but knew what Jesus did; expulsion was a mercy.	Never confuse your personal testimony with the gospel.	The gospel can stand any quantity of questioning.	Proud men scorn to be taught by their inferiors.
IV · Worship	Jesus receives the worship; all blind from birth — the difference is knowing it.	From prophet to Son of God; worship accepted — a claim to deity.	When he was put out, Jesus found him — a blessed loss.	A friend from whom men cannot debar them; convinced of disease, near the cure.

JOHN 9:1–41 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Jesus answers "why?" with "what now."** The disciples asked whose sin caused the blindness; Jesus said the man was there "so that the works of God might be displayed in him" (v. 3). Spurgeon: "Christ is ever for seeking out, not the cause, but the remedy." SPURGEON
- **The sign acts out the saying.** "I am the Light of the world" (v. 5) is followed by a man who had never seen light. The sixth sign is the claim of 8:12 made visible. THE TEXT
- **The man obeyed before he could see.** He walked to Siloam with clay on his eyes. The command came first, the sight second — and the pool's name was "Sent." THE TEXT
- **There is no formula in the clay.** Sproul: "Do not think there is a chemical formula in Palestinian clay." Guzik: Jesus varied His methods "so one could never make a formula." SPROUL
- **The same miracle, two verdicts.** *Schisma* — "division" (9:16; 10:19). Light does not create blindness in men; it shows who prefers the dark. THE GREEK
- **Fear of man silences people who know the truth.** The parents knew their son was born blind and now saw, but they "were afraid of the Jews" (v. 22). Henry: "The fear of man brings a snare." HENRY
- **"One thing I do know."** The man admitted what he did not know and held to what he did. Guzik: he "did know how Jesus had touched his life." GUZIK
- **A testimony is not yet the gospel.** Sproul: "Do not ever confuse your personal testimony with the gospel. … The gospel is about Him." The man's story points to a Person he had not yet seen. SPROUL

- **When the synagogue threw him out, Jesus found him.** Verse 35 is the turning point of the chapter. Spurgeon: "It was a blessed loss for him, then, to lose the Pharisees and find his Saviour." SPURGEON
- **The most dangerous words are "We see."** Verse 41: admitting blindness is the door to sight; claiming sight keeps sin in place. Henry: "Those that are convinced of their disease are in a fair way to be cured." HENRY

† Questions for the Table

1 **What hard thing in my life have I spent years asking "who sinned?" about — and what might it look like for the works of God to be displayed in it?**

Jesus refused the blame question and turned to what God would do.

9:1–3; Rom 8:28

2 **Jesus told the man to go and wash before he could see anything. Where is Jesus asking me to obey before I see the result?**

He went, washed and came back seeing — obedience before sight.

9:6–7

3 **The parents knew the truth but kept quiet for fear of being put out. Whose opinion keeps me quiet about Jesus?**

The fear of man brings a snare; the Light is worth the cost.

9:20–23; Prov 29:25

4 **What is my "one thing I do know"? Can I tell it in two sentences — and then point past it to Jesus Himself?**

Testimony is powerful, but the gospel is about Him, not me.

9:25; 1 Cor 15:3–4

5 **Have I ever been thrown out — by family, a church, a crowd — for following Jesus? How does verse 35 speak to that?**

When they put him out, Jesus found him.

9:34–35; Heb 13:12–13

6 **Where am I saying "We see" — sure I already understand — in a way that might be keeping me blind?**

Admitting blindness is the door to sight.

9:39–41; Rev 3:17–18

John 9 begins with a man nobody noticed except as a riddle, and ends with that man on his knees before the Son of Man while the experts walk away blind. The same Jesus still passes by, still sees, still sends, and still finds those the world has thrown out. Whatever else we do not know, we can know this: once blind, now I see.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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