



JOHN 9:1-38 | THE SIXTH SIGN: THE MAN BORN BLIND

- Verses 1-4 included in session 39
- Verse 5 -
 - Jesus was talking to them directly, thus still **in the world** and serving as **the light of the world**. It was imperative that they receive rather than reject him.
 - This sixth sign is related to *blindness* and *light* and is in the “rejection period” of Jesus’ ministry. Verse 5 serves as a warning to the nation of rejection.
- Verse 6 –
 - The significance of spitting on the ground and making clay is, it seems, lost to our interpretation. My best *guess* is that the Lord was showing that He, the man **made of a woman** (Gal. 4:4), thus made to be the dust of the earth, was the cure for their blindness.
 - Like Naaman who did not want to bathe in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:10-12), there was a revulsion by the Jewish people to accept this *son of Joseph* as their Messiah.
- Verse 7 –
 - The **pool of Siloam** (in Hebrew “shiloah,” meaning **Sent**) is the pool created when Hezekiah built an underground tunnel to carry water from outside the walls to the interior of the walls. It is south of the Temple mount.
 - The man **washed, and came seeing**. Surely this is an affirmation of the message of John the Baptist.
- Verses 8-9 –
 - A disagreement arose as to the identity of the man, but the man came forth and testified, **I am he**.
 - Interpretive note: In the past I (like a parrot!) have taken the **I am** phrases of Jesus to be Messianic. One must recognize, however, that this blind man uses the same phrase. We must entertain the idea that the phrase is grammatical rather than theological, though the overall context may be theological and pointing to the Messiah. See John 8:24 for an example.
- Verses 10-12 –
 - The man knows Jesus’ name, but seems to know little else about Him.
 - There is no indication of faith in this man, simply of obedience.
 - If this man is indicative of the healing required for Israel, then this key factor cannot be dismissed.
 - If he is not a *type* of Israel but rather of the believer in the age of Grace (a position which I reject but many would embrace), then they must also answer to this glaring omission.
 - When the neighbors ask, **where is he?**, we are not given any insight into their motivation.
- Verses 13-14 –
 - The neighbors brought the man to the Pharisees. For ill-will or simply religious custom, we do not know.
 - The writer then makes a note that **it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay**. The word **made** is the key, for making something new was prohibited on the Sabbath.
- Verses 15-16 –

- The report from the Pharisees was that **This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day**. Those with discernment (i.e.: they *question the assumptions*) should ask about the truthfulness of this statement. What the statement really means is, “we reject this man because he doesn’t keep our interpretation of the sabbath.”
- The **neighbors** (v. 8) confronted one assumption with another. They assumed that a **sinner** could not **do such miracles** (v. 16). While their objection has more strength than that of the Pharisees, miracles alone should not be the deciding factor for a heavenly identity.
- As has almost always been the case in the past 2,000 years, **there was a division among them**. Indeed Jesus Christ has been the division between east and west, between families, between worldviews, and between individuals throughout the time since His arrival. He is the chief of “polarizing” figures.
- Verse 17 –
 - The blind man, like the Samaritan woman, perceived Jesus to be a **prophet**. That is, one with a direct connection with God.
 - Assuming that this man represents Israel’s potential to receive sight, his recognition of Jesus as a prophet would align with Moses’ messianic prediction of Deuteronomy 18:15 looking for a **Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me**. Perhaps, alluding to this, the words of Jesus being in **the midst of them** (Jn. 8:59) are a God-breathed clue.
- Verses 18-21 –
 - We have previously been introduced to the neighbors (vv. 8-12), then the Pharisees (vv. 13-17), and now we are introduced to **the parents** (vv. 18-23).
 - The term, **the Jews** seems to be a general reference to “the crowd.” There were no Gentiles on the scene.
 - The debate of verses 8-9 continued. The parents confirmed that **this is our son** (v. 20) but deferred to the son for testimony about his healing.
- Verses 22-23 –
 - The leadership **had agreed already** (thus unwilling to receive any further evidence) that confession of Jesus as the Christ would result in the confessor being **put out of the synagogue**. This “excommunication” from the synagogue was very serious, cutting a person off from all benefits of Jewish community life.
 - Were the parents unloving in not defending their son? I would not think so. In fact, they likely did not know any more of the identity of Jesus than their son did, thus could not give much answer. Furthermore, an adult son (even blind) should be able to defend himself.
- Verses 24-25 –
 - The Pharisees now insist that the man **Give God the praise** by calling Jesus a **sinner** (v. 24). In effect, they said, “Praise God not Jesus.” (This is the same position of Jehovah’s Witnesses, although they come from a different perspective than the Pharisees).
 - In verse 25 the formerly blind man was doing all that can be asked of anyone: say that which you know.
 - Once again it should be noted that *faith is not found within this episode*. The man was given sight by his *obedience*, not even knowing the identity of his healer. Therefore, to make any kind of evangelistic appeal from this passage would require a huge amount of selective reasoning, even more than any preacher should be willing to do.
- Verses 26-27 –
 - Congratulations to a man who is a man! Even though he has begged (v. 8), he has not lost his dignity, nor will he be pushed around.
 - In a huge show of character and strength he refuses to answer and asks, sarcastically, **will ye also be his disciples?**