

Research: Healing of the Man Born Blind

John 9:1-4, 6, 7

1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

“As Jesus passed by - As he was leaving the temple, [John 8:59](#). This man was in the way in which Jesus was going to escape from the Jews” ([www.biblehub.com](#), Barnes’ Notes).

“Of the six miracles connected with blindness which are recorded in the Gospels, this is the only case described as blindness from birth. In this lies its special characteristic, for “since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind” ([John 9:32](#))” ([www.biblehub.com](#), Ellicott’s Commentary).

“The blind man was presumably begging at the temple gates. The fact that he was ‘blind from his birth’ both emphasizes the incurable nature of the trouble.” (John 9:1, Moffatt 225).

“[The healing] is intended to illustrate the truth that Christ is ‘the Light of the world’” (Dummelow 790).

Blind in Greek is *typhlos* which means “blind, mentally blind” (Strong’s 633).

Saw in Greek is *eido* and means “to perceive with the eyes, to turn the eyes or the mind to, to pay attention to anything, to understand” (Strong’s 174). Both of these definitions have something to do with the mental nature of sight and vision, not just the physical.

Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*:

“EYES. Spiritual discernment, — not material but mental.

“Jesus said, thinking of the outward vision, ‘Having eyes, see ye not?’ (Mark viii. 18.)” (*S&H* 586)

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

“It was the current idea and popular doctrine, not only that all suffering in this life had its origin in sin, and was a witness to the damage done to our nature by sin, by the disruption of our normal relations with the living God, but furthermore that every peculiar disaster pointed to some special or particular sin” ([www.biblehub.com](#), Pulpit Commentary).

“The disciples construed this to mean that if a person suffered from any ailment, it must have been because his parents or grandparents had committed some sin against God. To this they added the thought that perhaps

he might have sinned before birth, whether as an embryo or in a preexistent state” (*EBC* 9.101).

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

“Christ shews that there is a third alternative, which their question assumes that there is not. Moreover He by implication warns them against assuming a connection between suffering and sin in. *Neither did this man sin nor his parents*. The answer, like the question, points to a definite act of sin.

“but that i.e. he was born blind *in order that*. This elliptical use of ‘but (in order) that’ is common in S. John, and illustrates his fondness for the construction expressing a purpose

“the works of God. All those in which He manifests Himself, not miracles only” (www.biblehub.com, Cambridge Bible).

“Jesus refused to accept either alternative suggested by the disciples’ question. He looked on the man’s plight, not as retribution for some offense committed either by his parents or by himself, but as an opportunity to do God’s work” (*EBC* 9.101).

4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

“While it is day - The day is the proper time for work - night is not. This is the general, the universal sentiment. While the day lasts, it is proper to labor. The term "day" here refers to the life of Jesus, and to the opportunity thus afforded of working miracles. His life was drawing to a close. It was probably but about six months after this when he was put to death. The meaning is, My life is near its close. While it continues, I must employ it in doing the works which God has appointed.

“The night cometh - Night here represents death. It was drawing near, and he must therefore do what he had to do soon” (www.biblehub.com. Barnes’ Notes.

“The growing pressure of hostility rising from unbelief warned Jesus that his time was short. The twilight of his career was beginning and the darkness would soon fall. As all the Gospels show, Jesus was working under the shadow of the coming cross (Matt 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22)” (*EBC* 9.101).

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

“To make known his intention to the blind man, Jesus made clay from dust and spittle and placed it on the sightless eyes. One scholar suggests that the use of clay parallels the creative act of God in Gen. 2:7. Since the blindness was congenital, the healing would be creative rather than remedial. . . . The touch of a friendly hand would be reassuring. The weight of the clay would serve as an indicator to the blind man that something had been done to him, and it would be an inducement to obey Jesus’ command” (*EBC* 9.101).

“Irenaeus, an early Christian author, sees here a symbol of man’s being created from the earth” (*AYB John i-*

xii.372).

“That reminds you of man being made of dust in the Second Chapter of Genesis Verse 6 and 7. Would Jesus ever mock God if he considered that was the real way that creation occurred? Yet, it almost looks like a mockery of that. He’s taking that concept of the man of dust. He’s spitting on the ground, into the dust, making clay of it, and slapping it on the eyes of the blind man” (Crisler, *Gospels* 4.52-53).

Mrs. Eddy defines the Adam man in the *Glossary* in *Science and Health*.

“ADAM. Error; a falsity; the belief in ‘original sin,’ sickness, and death; evil; the opposite of good, — of God and His creation; a curse; a belief in intelligent matter, finiteness, and mortality; ‘dust to dust;’ red sand-stone; nothingness” (*S&H* 579).

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

“He comes only after he has washed off that symbolic making or formation of man out of the dust. In a way, it might even give us a greater hint on what the true meaning of baptism is, the immersion in Spirit, nativity, and washing off every trace of the dust man” (Crisler 4.53).

“The meaning of the name in the form we have it seems to be ‘sending’ rather than ‘sent,’ i.e. ‘the sending forth of the water’ (cf. Is. 8:6). But the Evangelist interprets it as ‘sent’ for the sake of the symbolical reference to him who was ‘sent’ by the Father (6:29, 17:3, etc.). The perfection of the new life and light comes only after Christian baptism in the name of him who was ‘sent’ and who ‘came by water, blood, and Spirit’ (I John. 5:6)” (Moffatt 227).

“An antecedent for such a directive may be found in II Kings 5:10-13, where Elisha does not heal Naaman on the spot but sends him to wash in the Jordan” (*AYB John i-xii.372*).

“*Why* Jesus sent him to wash here is not known. It is clear that the waters had no efficacy themselves to open the eyes; but it is probable that he directed him to go there to *test his obedience*, and to see whether he was disposed to obey him in a case where he could not see the reason of it” (Barnes 311).

“The pool, known in Hebrew as Shiloah, was situated at the southern extremity of the eastern hill of Jerusalem, near the conjunction of the Kidron and Tyropean valleys. It was a repository for the waters from the spring of Gihon which were conducted to the pool by a canal” (*AYB John i-xii.372*).

“The Pool of Siloam was located at the southern end of the city, probably a considerable distance from the place

where the blind man was. The walk would call for some exertion. . . . The trip the man made must have been a venture of faith. Jesus had not even told him that he would be healed but had merely commanded him to wash” (*EBC* 9.101).

The healing of the man born blind has been referred to as one of the most brilliant passages in the Gospel of John. The uniqueness of this healing lies in the fact that it fully develops the character of the man. No other healing in this Gospel contains so much detail. The man does not fade into the background but remains in the foreground and the center of attention. He’s literally put on trial for being healed.

Contrary to what the material senses claim, the blind are not those who cannot see, but those who will not see. The story deals with two levels of blindness – not only the physical blindness of the man born blind, but also and more significantly, the spiritual and moral blindness of the disciples, the parents, and especially the religious leaders. They failed to recognize the works of God in their midst. The tragedy is that those who should have recognized Jesus as the “light of the world” refuse to see him in that way.

[\(not in this week’s Lesson: verse 32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.](#)

“Again the blind man pressed the pragmatic argument, and he also employed an argument of his own. Since, according to the assumption of the Jews, ‘God does not listen to sinners’, how could Jesus have performed this miracle if he were under divine condemnation? Rather, the man reasoned, the healing should be ample evidence that Jesus came from God” (*EBC* 9.105).

At the end of the narrative, the man born blind does see Jesus in his true light. In verse 35 the Master asks the man, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” In other words, Jesus might be asking, “Do you believe that I am the Messiah, sent from God?” The man responds in verse 36: “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?” Jesus answers, “Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee” (verse 37). This is a rare announcement from Jesus that he is the Messiah of prophecy. Not for one moment will the man who has just been healed be left in doubt. In verse 38 the man gives an overflowing expression of gratitude and faith: “Lord, I believe.” What more do we need to know about the man? His spiritual insight has opened his eyes as to who Jesus really is.

