

John 9:1-12

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[0 : 00] Well, I'm sure that you're all familiar with this miracle. But as we begin to consider the story of the blind man born from birth, we should know, and I think you will know, that the miracles in John are signs of the kingdom.

So, this is a sign of the coming of the kingdom. This is the light coming into the world. The truth coming into the world.

So, we are principally concerned then with light. Jesus refers to himself as the light of the world. Did so in the chapter before. Elsewhere, he refers to himself as the way, the truth, and the life. He is the truth which sets us free.

From the darkness of delusion. From lies and cheating. From corruption and oppression.

[1 : 13] He is the truth which sets us free. Jesus speaking in verse 31 in chapter 8.

Verse 12, sorry. I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

And in 31, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. And you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free.

When in John 8, 58, Jesus placed himself above Abraham and saying, Before Abraham was, I am. Strange language. I am. And of course, it's the same statement that was made to Moses. When Moses said on the mountain, whom will I say to the Pharaoh sent me?

[2 : 19] I am. That I am. And this was in the synagogue in Nazareth.

And I believe that I've been in that synagogue. I think that's the original one. It's quite old now and not used. There's no Jews in Nazareth, in the lower Nazareth, in upper Nazareth, yes.

They would be afraid to come to lower Nazareth very often. Well, then we come to our text.

John 9, 1. As Jesus passed by, he saw a blind man who was blind from birth. Jesus had proclaimed himself the light of the world.

He was doing his work of bringing light, which is truth. Light, truth. Darkness, lies. His disciples wanted to enter into a theological conversation.

[3 : 29] Really about something we may call the righteousness framework of the Old Testament.

Or we could call it retribution theology. That is, if you do what is right, think Old Covenant now.

If you do what is right, you will prosper. But if you sin, disaster will come upon you. If you do what's wrong, then you won't prosper. So, the disciples are getting into the law.

And they are saying, who sinned, this man or his parents? Well, that's kind of strange, isn't it?

Because if it was this man, he would have to have sinned in the womb.

However, the rabbis did argue at the time. There was some arguing that it might be possible to sin in the womb. So, there was all sorts of possibilities for a theological discussion.

Well, Jesus answered neither. The blindness was in the purpose of God as a sign that the works of God would be revealed.

[4 : 51] We are dealing with providence here. Similar to Lazarus. Lazarus is called forth from the tomb.

Jesus delays in coming that Lazarus will die. This is the providence of God. We see here resurrection in Lazarus.

Many believed. Here, we are dealing with light. The blindness was in the purpose of God as a sign that the works of God would be revealed.

Jesus states again his point of view. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. The work of the Father is to bring light to the world.

Jesus' purpose was to give sight and sow light and truth to this poor man born blind.

[5 : 57] And he did not take part in the potential theological debate. But don't you see? He went straight to the man.

This is often the case. You say, we are singing, we waited on the Lord, well, the way I used to sing it, we waited on the Lord, my God, and patiently did bear.

We are singing that the Lord can take a long time. When the Lord's providence, when that moment comes, he acts immediately and decisively.

And we see miracles of healing from Jesus. No theological debate.

Jesus healed many others of different diseases. He similarly proclaimed to them to be healed. Do you want to be healed?

[6 : 59] He said to the man at the pool of Bethesda. He commanded a man to take up his bed. I think he was lowered through the roof.

Take up your bed and walk. Paralyzed man, a paralytic man. There were blind that Jesus came across, but different than this man.

This man was blind from birth. We don't necessarily hear that in other places. What is happening here?

Jesus goes to the man, spits in mud, and puts it on the man's eyes. What is he doing? Now, it was considered that saliva had healing properties.

So that's one aspect. But if you think of how blind people make connection, they connect by touch.

[8 : 19] Of course, by hearing, perhaps. This man didn't know Jesus. Different than blind Bartimaeus. He shouts out, son of David. He's connecting with Jesus.

This man doesn't have a connection. In Jesus touching him and putting the mud on the eyes, Jesus is making the connection with this poor, suffering man.

Well, we see dignity given to the man.

And we see dignity very often in the healing, when Jesus is healing, I mean, he said to the man at Bethesda, do you want to be healed?

He's healed. And with this man, he is giving him something to do now. Go and wash at the pool of Siloam.

[9 : 29] And they did that. So, why should he do that? Why should he believe this person that, of course, he didn't see, but didn't know?

This is just, someone came and touched his eyes. But he knew the name. He knew it was Jesus. Jesus connected. He went and washed.

And his sight returned. He could see. This man had never seen the sky.

He had never seen the trees. He'd never seen the grass. He had not seen mountains or sand. He had not seen even his mother's face.

His eyes were opened and he could see. This is, it's almost like shouting out hallelujah at this point.

[10 : 37] In the words of the great hymn, amazing grace, I was blind, but now I see.

We're seeing the grace of God. We're seeing the compassion of the suffering servant, the Lord Jesus, who went about healing.

Most of the miracles were to do with healing. Walking on the water is to do with power over the elements, of course. The neighbors were astonished by the miracle.

They asked him, how were your eyes opened? And he told them the story beginning with the words, the man named Jesus.

Isn't this how we would begin? if you are converted tonight, and I believe, I hope all of you are, you could say, the man named Jesus became my Lord and Savior.

[11 : 53] Paul on the Damascus road could say, the man named Jesus. What would you have me do, Lord, said Paul, who was on his way to persecute the Christians.

Well, a problem arose now. And this was from the viewpoint of the law. We saw with the disciples the tendency to go to the law.

Well, of course, they were Jews. This happened on Shabbat, the Sabbath.

It happened on Saturday. That's the Sabbath, Shabbat. Jesus had broken the Sabbath. A very serious sin which would have been punished by the death penalty.

Jesus had already been accused of blasphemy by claiming to live before Abraham and to pronounce his superiority over Abraham.

[13 : 05] And now he had broken the Sabbath. According to who? Or to whom? Well, the Pharisees. The rulers of the law. There's something like 200 laws controlling controlling Sabbath

day observance.

The Pharisees had about 631, I think it was. All laws added by them.

The Jews were in bondage to the law of their religious leaders. and they come at Jesus again.

I want to tell you a little story about how Jews can really get, it seems too light to say, hung up on the law.

But they are, they are, they have great fear about not conforming with the law. Me and I, now this story is in Scotland, me and I were driving along in Glasgow, and we came to traffic lights and there was a car at the traffic lights, doors open, and a woman outside screaming and waving her arms and everything.

[14:28] So we said, what's the problem? She said, it's Shabbat, it's just started, and I can't drive my car.

And not only that, we're going to the synagogue, and I've got the food for the synagogue. Well, we overcame that.

May drove her car with her in it. No, I drove her car. She came in, I think I'm not remembering this one. Okay, you drove the car.

this woman was terrified. And this is what the law does. You know, one of the things Jesus is doing in the gospel is setting us free from the bondage to the law.

It doesn't mean that you don't obey the law. It just means you do it from the inside out. You do it from love in your heart.

[15:34] Not one jot or tittle passes from the law. But the law is not there to place us in bondage. It's to show us we need a savior, among other things.

It's actually the basis, the proper basis of ethics and of Christian ethics. Well, the Jews just couldn't believe that this miracle had happened.

So they called for the man's parents and asked them if this was their son born blind. How does he see, they said.

It's the Pharisees now going to the parents. And the parents said, they don't know how their son's eyes were opened. But they do know that the one who opened them, but they feared the Pharisees and so said, our son is of age, ask him.

Means at least he was 13. Now I'm reading from John 9, 24 to 34 now.

[16:53] So the Jewish leaders called the man who had been born blind. They told him to come in again. They said, you should honor God by telling the truth.

We know that this man is a sinner, talking about Jesus. The man answered, I don't know if he is a sinner, but I do know this, I was blind, and I can see.

They asked, what did he do to you? How did he heal your eyes? He answered, I have already told you that. But you would not listen to me.

Why? Do you want to hear it again? Do you want to be his followers too? At this they shouted insults at him and said, you are his follower, not us.

We are followers of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from. And the man who could now see, said, this is really strange.

[17:55] You don't know where he comes from, but he healed my eyes. We all know that God does not listen to sinners, but he will listen to anyone who worships and obeys him.

This is the first time we have ever heard of anyone healing the eyes of someone born blind. This man must be from God. If he were not from God, he could not do anything like this.

The Jewish leaders answered, you are born full of sin. Are you trying to teach us? And he told the man to get out of the synagogue and stay out.

He is excommunicated. Of course, his parents were worried about this. to be actually put out of the Jewish community had serious economic implications apart from anything else.

How would they live? How would they be shamed? All manner of evil now could come upon them. Look at the courage of this young man.

[19:10] He's saying to the Pharisees, the ones who had the power. He's saying, do you want to be his follower too? I've already told you. I've told you the story, you're still questioning me.

Amazing. Making me think of Peter when he stood on the temple steps after healing a lame man and speaking out to the Jews, saying, you, you crucified the Lord effectively.

Now the conclusion, the crux of the story, of course. Let's consider this young man who was healed a bit more. He has really suffered.

I think blindness, and particularly from birth, blindness must be probably the worst thing that can happen.

Our other senses are not quite as sensitive and immediate as seeing, and he can't see.

[20 : 26] He didn't know what it was to see. He had a great disability. He was, of course, a beggar. He humbly obeyed Jesus, whom he didn't know.

Went and washed his eyes at the pool of Siloam. There's an element of faith in this dignity, in the obedience, blind obedience in every way.

He stands up to the Pharisees when severely questioned and clearly takes the side of Jesus. He is strong in his answers. I have already told you, but you are not listening.

Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to be his followers? Fairly arrogant, it sounds.

Verse 35, when Jesus heard that they had forced the man to leave, expelled him, he found him and asked him, do you believe in the Son of Man?

The man said, tell me who he is, sir, so I can believe in him. Jesus said to him, you have already seen him. The Son of Man is the one talking with you now.

[21 : 52] The man answered, yes, I believe, Lord. then he bowed and worshipped Jesus. Jesus said, I came into this world so the world could be judged.

I came so that people who are blind could see, and I came so that people who think they see would become blind. The people who think they can see are, of course, the Jewish religious authorities.

And they heard Jesus and they responded, what are we blind to? And Jesus said, if you were really blind, you would not be guilty of sin, but you say that you see, so you are guilty.

Listen to this. Do you believe in the Son of Man? Tell me who he is, sir, so I can believe in him.

you have already seen him. The Son of Man is the one talking with you now. Yes, I believe, Lord.

[23 : 07] Then he bowed and worshipped Jesus. Jesus had revealed that he is the Messiah, the Son of Man.

The Son of Man reference is likely to be the mystical Son of Man of Daniel 7, which is a messianic title. This is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, Emmanuel, God with us.

And the converted young man, whose name we don't know, bowed down and worshipped the Messiah. This young man was healed, both physically and spiritually.

He received his sight. He was liberated from his sin and the bondage of the law. He was liberated from both his physical blindness and his spiritual blindness.

Through his rebirth, he could now see spiritually. The physical sight, in this case, is a symbol of the spiritual sight.

[24 : 18] light. This young man now saw both physical light and spiritual light. He was removed from the Jewish synagogue, but was given the right of entry into the kingdom of God and the early Christian church.

He is expelled from the synagogue and gets entry into the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. God, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God.

It's no loss to give up that which you can't keep, to gain that which you can't lose, said Jim Elliot. Do we remember, then, the first sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth?

Luke 4, 18, Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

[25 : 36] And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

Miracle recorded by John is a sign of this messianic work. We see the liberty of the captives and the recovery of sight to the blind.

We also see liberty from the bondage of the law and the oppression of the Jewish religious authorities. The light truly came into the world.

In this instance, it's the Pharisees and the religious authorities who are in the darkness and are dark. today in Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, in front of the cathedral, there is a large Muslim banner which says, God has no son.

This is the essential lie to the modern world, which is the root of darkness. What is the darkness in USA?

[26 : 53] What is the darkness? I'm saying USA because we hear of this man, I'll not name him. We hear of all dreadful things going on.

What's the darkness in UK? What's the darkness in Scotland? We know. We have lost the truth and we have lies.

The church of Scotland is caught up in lies about God. The Bible isn't the word of God. They're overthrowing the Bible.

It's a case of there is no king in Israel and every man sought to do what was good in his own sight. That's what we have in Britain and in Scotland. But you are the light of the apple, the apple of the father's eye.

[27 : 57] We must live in the truth. No more lies. You know, I was, I came through a period of alcoholism in my life, stopped drinking at the age of 26 and I haven't had any alcohol since I was 26.

and at that time I was converted in the free church, St. Vincent Street. No alcohol from that time. But when I was drinking, I was a terrible liar.

Alcoholics tend to be terrible liars. You're covering up for yourself. And I woke up this morning from a drunken stumer and I was going to work and I rushed out late again and I get into where I worked, which was a design office and the supervisor said, where have you been why are you late?

And I said, my granny died. And he said, you've had three grannies. I'd used that story twice before. No more lies. We're free from lies. We're free to live in the truth. The truth sets us free.

[29 : 29] If you want to be mobile and powerfully dynamic, active and active, an activity which produces fruit for the gospel, then you must live in the truth.

Amen. May God bless to us this reading reading in his word and this meditation. mitnehmen.