

THE BLIND BEGGAR, AN OBJECT LESSON FOR OUR AFFLICTIONS - [John 9:1-7](#)

John 9:1-7: "...And his disciples asked him saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents but that the works of God should be made manifest in him... as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world..."

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9 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"  
<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but, that the works of God might be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup> I must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup> When he had said this, he spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva, anointed the blind man's eyes with the mud, <sup>7</sup> and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So he went away, washed, and came back seeing. <sup>8</sup> The neighbors therefore, and those who saw that he was blind before, said, "Isn't this he who sat and begged?" <sup>9</sup> Others were saying, "It is he." Still others were saying, "He looks like him."  
He said, "I am he." <sup>10</sup> They therefore were asking him, "How were your eyes opened?"  
<sup>11</sup> He answered, "A man called Jesus made mud, anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash.' So I went away and washed, and I received sight."  
<sup>12</sup> Then they asked him, "Where is he?"  
He said, "I don't know."  
<sup>13</sup> They brought him who had been blind to the Pharisees. <sup>14</sup> It was a Sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and I see."  
<sup>16</sup> Some therefore of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he doesn't keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was division among them. <sup>17</sup> Therefore they asked the blind man again, "What do you say about him, because he opened your eyes?"  
He said, "He is a prophet."  
<sup>18</sup> The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight, <sup>19</sup> and asked them, "Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

<sup>20</sup> His parents answered them, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; <sup>21</sup> but how he now sees, we don't know; or who opened his eyes, we don't know. He is of age. Ask him. He will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup> His parents said these things because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if any man would confess him as Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, "He is of age. Ask him."

<sup>24</sup> So they called the man who was blind a second time, and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner."

<sup>25</sup> He therefore answered, "I don't know if he is a sinner. One thing I do know: that though I was blind, now I see."

<sup>26</sup> They said to him again, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

<sup>27</sup> He answered them, "I told you already, and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't also want to become his disciples, do you?"

<sup>28</sup> They insulted him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup> We know that God has spoken to Moses. But as for this man, we don't know where he comes from."

<sup>30</sup> The man answered them, "How amazing! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God, and does his will, he listens to him.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>32</sup> Since the world began it has never been heard of that anyone opened the eyes of someone born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

<sup>34</sup> They answered him, "You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us?" They threw him out.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and finding him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

<sup>36</sup> He answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?"

<sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, "You have both seen him, and it is he who speaks with you."

<sup>38</sup> He said, "Lord, I believe!" and he worshiped him.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, that those who don't see may see; and that those who see may become blind."

<sup>40</sup> Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?"

<sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

If we had to make the horrible choice of being born blind or deaf, what would be our decision? Most people would perhaps rather have sight, but it is not a simple choice. If we were to choose deafness, we would have immediately give up speech, for the ear and the tongue go together.

We once read of a 12 year old girl who was born blind, but by a skillful operation she received her sight. It took her a long time to interpret

correctly what her eyes saw. At times she would get lost in her town and could only find her way home again by the old way, she would close her eyes.

The man in our text was born blind. He knew that he lacked the wonderful sense of sight, but he did not know exactly what it was like, and no one could describe it to him. Because of his helplessness he was thrown upon the mercy of his fellow men. Daily had to raise his pitiful voice and beg for alms to keep his body and soul together. There he sat as Jesus and his disciples came by. Suddenly he became the center of their interest with his useless eyes.



## THE BLIND BEGGAR, AN OBJECT LESSON FOR OUR AFFLICTIONS

### 1. AS VIEWED BY THE DISCIPLES

#### SPECIAL PUNISHMENT?

The disciples were taught by the church leaders of their day that any special sickness or cross was an extra punishment of God for some sins of the past. Such was the view concerning leprosy, and such was the view concerning the blindness of the beggar. In verse 34 the leaders said to the blind man, "thou wast altogether born in sins." The disciples had the same erroneous view of sin and its punishment.

#### WHO SINNED?

The apostles were certain in their own minds why the man was born blind, so they did not ask, "is this blindness a punishment for sins?" The only thing which puzzled them was, "master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" A little thought on their part would show them how they were distorting the justice of God. If the parents sinned, why punish the child? If the child sinned, why punish it ahead of time for something it was going to do?

#### WRONG VIEW

Since the disciples had a wrong view of the blind man, perhaps they were secretly thankful that neither they nor their parents had committed any gross sins deserving such punishments. They may have given the beggar a cold and pitiless look because they reasoned he deserved what he got.

We are very thankful that the disciples' view of the blind beggar was wrong, otherwise we would never find comfort in all of our ills and troubles. If God really wanted to punish us for our sins he would have to condemn us forever in hell. God does not punish us for our sins because Jesus was punished in our stead. Of course, after Pentecost, the disciples had the correct understanding of all things and they became the errorless teachers of the church for all ages to come.

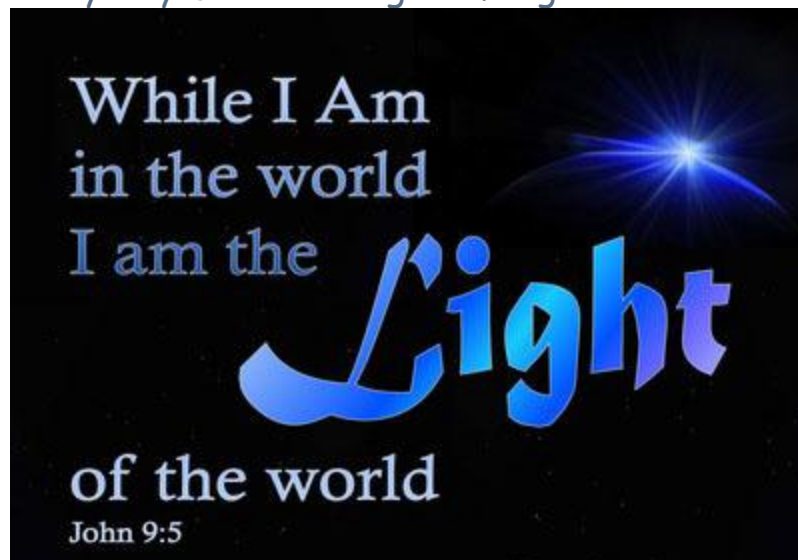
### 2. AS VIEWED BY JESUS

#### TO REVEAL GOD'S POWER

Jesus knew that the man was born blind to show forth the power and glory of God. It ought to be obvious to us that Jesus not only restored his sight, but also recreated the man's mind to receive and interpret the sight, actually a double miracle. Our Lord viewed the beggar in a different Light from that of his disciples. They thought he was a living warning against sin. Jesus states that he is to be a living testimony of the grace and power of God.

#### TO REVEAL GOD'S LIGHT

Why did Jesus come into the world? Did not his Father send him to suffer and die for the sins of the world? All who believe that fact are saved and Jesus has become for them "The Light of the world." This is the meaning of Epiphany, in order to strengthen our faith in Him as the Light, Jesus healed the blind man of physical and spiritual blindness. In every way Jesus is "Light of Light."



#### TO REVEAL GOD'S HEART

The heart of God was also revealed in this miracle. It is indeed true that all weaknesses and frailties of our bodies are the result of sin. But God does not take special delight in torturing us poor sinners with all kinds of afflictions. The parents of this man were not so evil that God caused them to have a blind child, nor did he foresee how the child would be wicked and he punished it for uncommitted sins. Such is not

the heart of our Father. God loves us with an almost unbelievable love, a love that sent His own son into the world in our behalf. The blind man is not a memorial to sin and punishment, but to the love and mercy of our gracious God.

Jesus' solution to the puzzle of the blind man is the only correct one, "neither has this man sinned, nor his parents." We are very grateful to him for the lesson; otherwise we would never be sure of the Lord's attitude towards us. When sick, we could never know whether we were being punished, or whether the father has laid a cross upon us in love.

### 3. AS VIEWED BY THE BLIND MAN

#### REALIZED HIS SINS

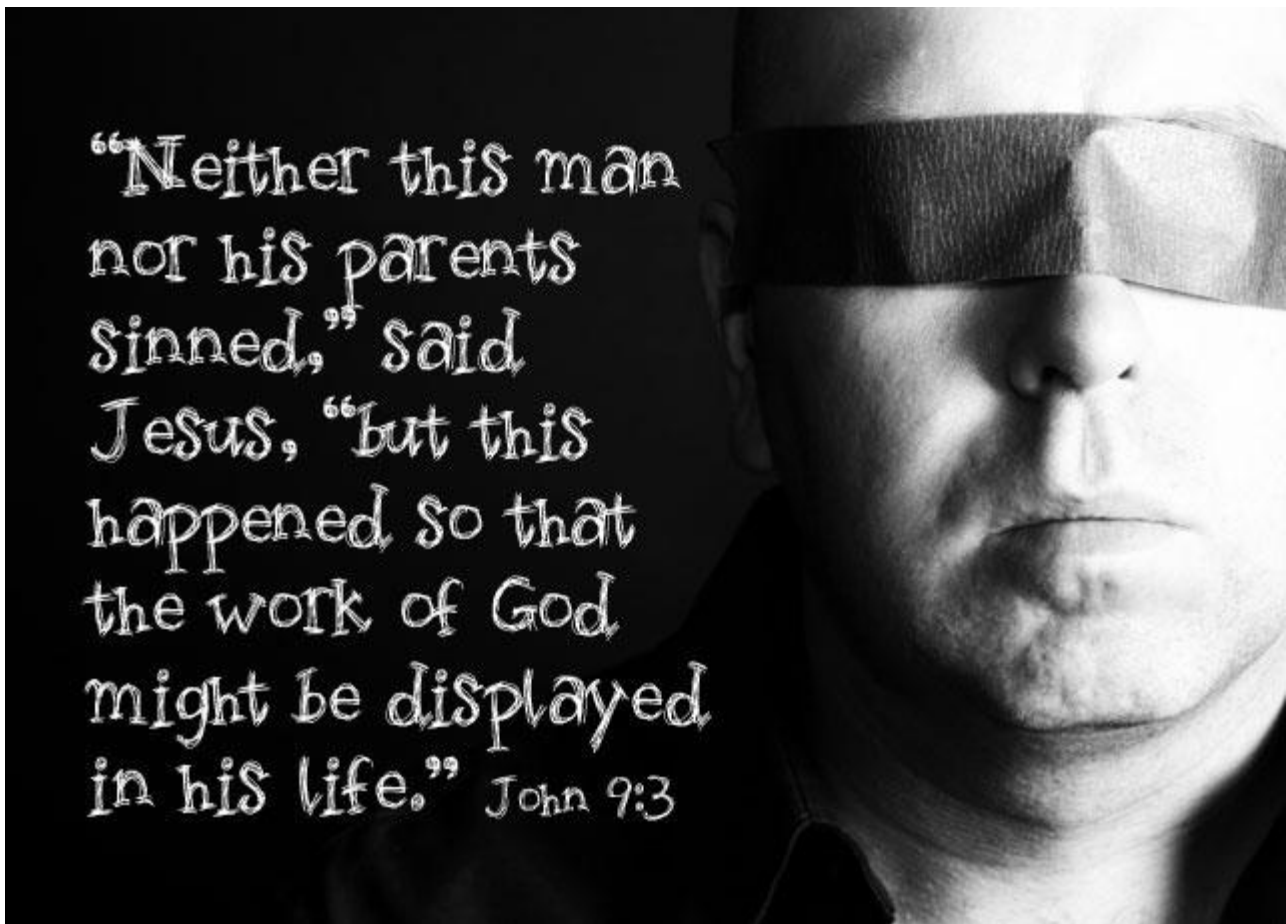
The beggar, do doubt, believe that he was receiving a special punishment from God for certain sins because the Jews and others never let him forget it. "Thou wast altogether born in sins," they reminded him in verse 34. He must have heard the question of the disciples, "did this man sin?" Surely he led a comfortless life and perhaps felt somewhat as Saint Paul, that he was the chief of sinners. Truly here was a darkened mind and a saddened soul.

#### REALIZED JESUS AS A PROPHET

In verse 17 the blind man reached the conclusion that a prophet had healed him. It was an inescapable conclusion. Had the beggar continued in this line of thought he might have drawn another inference, namely, God is no longer angry with me and the punishment for sin has been lifted. In any case he was in a happy frame of mind.

#### RECOGNIZED FULL LIGHT

In verses 35 to 38 of this chapter Jesus open the man's eyes spiritually. The beggar finally realized the love of God in sending the Messiah, the Son of God, who cured him. He accepted Jesus as we do, by calling Him "Lord", and by worshipping Him in faith. The happy man received full light, physical and spiritual. Now he certainly viewed himself In a different light, as one who has become the special object of God's love and mercy. The blind man had a very blessed Epiphany season.



“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.” John 9:3

#### APPLICATION

Is it not strange, when things go well with us, our faith is seemingly strong; but the moment we have trouble we begin to waiver and wonder? At such times the Devil comes to us and says, “see, now you are getting punished for your sins, God is angry with you,” etc. When these times come upon us, remember the lesson of the blind man. We are all objects of God’s love in Christ. In times of trouble we may read also [Hebrews 12:6](#) where we are told, “for whom the Lord loveth he chastens.”

We thank thee, Lord Jesus, that in this Epiphany season you did reveal thyself to us and all men as “light of the world.” AMEN.

PRAYER How grateful we are, O Lord, that you did look upon us and our afflictions with pity and mercy. Help us in all our trials and crosses to remember that they come from the Fatherly hand in love and not

from your anger which we so justly deserve. Above all, we are truly thankful to thee for sending our Savior into this world who has redeemed us from all our sins and open our eyes to see our light and life. AMEN