

## ***The Church of the Servant King***

### **Survey of the Bible Series – The Gospel of John (SB\_JN9\_The Healing of the Blind Man on the Sabbath)**

#### **Setting**

The setting for this chapter is in close proximity to the events of chapters 7 and 8. As you may recall, in chapter 7 we find Jesus delaying His attendance of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem until a few days after it had started. The Feast of Tabernacles was held in our late September or early October time period and was about six months after the Passover of chapter 6. Therefore, chapters 6, 7 & 8 leading up to chapter 9 contain events within the year preceding our Lord's death on the Cross and provide a picture of the crescendo of hostility toward Jesus that first began in chapter 5 when Jesus healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda (5:16-18).

The focus of chapter 7 is upon events associated with the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The focus of chapter 8 is on Jesus' encounter with religious Jews (Pharisees, scribes, etc.) on the following morning as He attempted to teach those who were believing in Him as they gathered around Him on the Temple grounds. As you recall, the religious Jews rudely interrupted Jesus as He was teaching, attempted to trick Him using a woman accused of adultery, and then attempt to discredit Jesus with a series of hostile questions. After effectively countering each of their attempts, Jesus departs from their presence. As He departed and went on His way from the Temple grounds, the events of chapter 9 begin to unfold.

#### **Introduction**

It is interesting that John chose to include this significant miracle at this point in his Gospel narrative. He devotes an entire chapter to the miracle and the response that it drew from the religious leaders. None of the other Gospel writers included it in their narratives which is consistent with the fact noted in our introduction to the Gospel of John that there is less than 10% agreement between the content of John's Gospel and the Synoptic writers' accounts. It is one example of the way in which God the Holy Spirit inspired men to record Scripture without overriding their personalities in the process.

Chapter 9 follows a chapter in which Jesus declared Himself to be the light of the world (8:12). John probably chose to include this miracle in order to contrast the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees which was a product of their own volition with the physical blindness of this man who of no choice of his own had been blind from birth. The Pharisees professed to see God's truth (9:30-41) while the man who had been physically blind knew that he was in a hopeless condition. The blind man illustrates principle of spiritual blindness from birth (2 Co 4:4; Eph 2:1-3). This entire chapter is designed by John through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to illustrate that the Light (Jesus) had come into the world, thereby creating a division between the children of light (the man physically blind from birth) and the children of darkness (the Pharisees). The story of this man's healing is also unique in that it represents the only miracle recorded in John's Gospel where the person healed had been afflicted from birth.

Not only does John use this chapter to illustrate the dawning of spiritual light, but it serves a purpose in the disciples' lives as well. Jesus' disciples were to some extent (as we all are) a product of their societal and cultural setting. The blind man's "fate" was one of the mysteries that bewildered them. At least three different and significant groups in Israel during this period held different views about "fate." The *Pharisees* believed that all events are predestined, but some are shaped by volitional choices of man. The *Sadducees* rejected any intervention of God in human affairs. The *Essenes* attributed everything to divine predestination.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Frank E. Gaebelin, general editor, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Reference Software, 1989-1998).

## Jesus Encounters a Blind Man and Addresses a Common Myth (vv. 1-5)

The blind man that Jesus encountered was one of the many beggars who sat at the gates to the Temple looking for a handout from a compassionate soul. This particular man was evidently well known since the disciples all knew about him.

It is interesting to note that Jesus had just escaped the threat of a terrible death by stoning and Jerusalem was filled with those who hated Him and sought to destroy Him. Nevertheless, Jesus was not filled with anger and self-righteous indignation at those who were rejecting Him and His message. Neither was He filled with self-pity because of the injustice that was being extended toward Him. Had He been, He probably would not have given attention to and extended gracious treatment toward the man who had been blind from birth. To the contrary, Jesus continued to only be concerned with the spiritual needs of those around Him. The man's physical dilemma presented a two-fold opportunity for Jesus: 1) show compassion upon a man's physical plight; and 2) through the grace extended to that man, extend an offer to address his spiritual plight.

The Greek word translated "saw" is the 3<sup>rd</sup>, person, singular, aorist, active, indicative of *ειδον*. It is closely related to the Greek word *horao*. These two words are often used to denote spiritual perception in such senses as to observe, to perceive, to experience, or to encounter.<sup>2</sup> These words are used in the LXX translation of the Old Testament in reference to prophetic visions.<sup>3</sup> In our passage, it seems that John chose the word to indicate Jesus' sympathy for this man's predicament both physically and spiritually. The religious leaders were certainly doing nothing for his physical or more importantly, his spiritual plight. Even Jesus' disciples' view of this man's situation was tainted by a common myth. Unlike those who could see Jesus and observe His miracles with their physical eyes, this man could do neither. Unlike those who had read Scripture and rejected its' teaching, this man would never be able to read. Braille was non-existent. This man's condition was truly hopeless. He would never have a chance at eternal life unless Jesus touched his life in a very personal way.

The disciples' question of Jesus in verse 2 reflects a certain degree of spiritual insensitivity that is the natural consequence of having not yet appropriated enough truth in one's soul to effect a change in one's perspective on life and people. Their theological problem derived from a myth that in turn derived from a false paradigm concerning the concept of blessing and cursing from God.

In the Hebrew mindset, if a man was blessed with material wealth and physical health, it was a sign of God's approval. This is vividly illustrated in the story of Job and the response of his friends to his suffering. If blessing was removed, then the person must have done something to offend God. Certainly Scripture is clear that all men are born under the curse of sin. Certainly there are instances in which God blesses people materially or with physical health in an extraordinary manner due to their spiritual maturity, spiritual capacity and volitional availability to be used of God. However, blessing in the temporal realm doesn't always equate to divine approval. The disciples' theological dilemma followed a logic that led to a conclusion that sin was the direct cause of all suffering. If true, then how could a person be born with a handicap? Did he sin while in the womb? Did some sin of his parents cause this?

The disciple's question of Jesus was not without any basis in the Law. It was based upon a misunderstanding of a principle in the Law found in Exodus 20:5 and 34:7.

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<sup>2</sup> Gerhard Kittel, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1985; electronic form, Logos Research Systems, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

You shall not bow down to them nor serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me. (Ex 20:5)

Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation. (Ex 34:7)

The disciples and others had construed these passages to mean that if a person suffered from any ailment, it must be related to some sin that his parents or grandparents had committed against God. Rabbinical writings seem to adhere to this perspective or view of these matters.<sup>4</sup>

*Personal observation:* Even though God has known just how utterly corrupt I am from a spiritual perspective and how undeserving I am on my own and how I do not possess any special innate abilities that will ever count me among the great of this world, He still chooses to extend His longsuffering, kindness, and compassion towards me. This is grace and it is the same grace He calls upon me to exercise towards others, even towards those who are undergoing God's judgment of self-induced misery or even warning discipline while at the same time displaying attitudes that are the product of emotional revolt of the soul and that adversely impact me. Even though I may evaluate the situation correctly, I will never know all the facts as God knows them and I am not called to be another person's spiritual judge. Instead, I should be a vehicle of God's grace toward others. Jesus extends such grace towards the blind man as He extends to all men. The disciples' view of sin and suffering makes them susceptible to a type of judgmental self-righteousness.

Jesus answered that neither this man nor his parent's had caused this affliction. In so answering, Jesus was not contradicting the principle of the universal sinfulness of man (Ro 3:9-20, 23). Jesus was very aware of the curse associated with the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He knew that in one sense, all such ailments and diseases were related to that curse. However, Jesus' response was designed to refute the idea that there was some *specific* sin that had caused this condition. Contrary to the belief of some Jewish theologians of that day that a person could be guilty of a sin even while in the womb,<sup>5</sup> Jesus indicated that God had allowed this condition so that His glory might be manifested (Ex 4:11 cf. 2 Co 12:9).

I believe that a better rendering or interpretation of the Greek in verse 3 is one in which the purpose of the man's suffering is linked to Jesus' statement contained in verse 4. In other words, the translation might read interpretively – "In order that the work of God might be displayed in his life...we must do the work of Him Who sent Me." This translation seems to place the rightful focus upon the miracle as a sign of Who Jesus was. Otherwise, the translation seems to place the emphasis upon God causing the man's suffering and years of affliction rather than upon the use of it as a sign which is more in accordance with the purpose of John's Gospel.<sup>6</sup> The man's blindness was not the divine purpose, rather the divine purpose was the manifestation of the Son of God.

God the Father knew in eternity past that Jesus would encounter this specific man and included this specific circumstance within His plan for His Son to manifest His glory as the Son of God come to earth. Thus, one could say that God designed the circumstance even though He did

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<sup>4</sup> Gaebelein, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. See also John 20:30-31 – "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

not cause it. Every time a person exercises faith in Jesus as the Son of God for their eternal salvation, God is vindicated, thus glorified as such decisions become evidentiary matter in the appeal trial of Satan known as the angelic conflict. Ultimately, the significance of physical suffering on the part of one who is or who will be a member of the redeemed has eternal ramifications.

Sometimes, as in the case of Job (Job 1-2), suffering is allowed by God for a specific purpose within the context of the unseen angelic conflict. Sometimes, as in the case of Paul (2 Co 12:7-9), God specifically allows suffering so that a believer's impact might be amplified. God is glorified when the redeemed individual endures such suffering with continuing praise and faith in His Lord. Sometimes such suffering is the result of self-induced misery or divine discipline with the purpose of causing repentance (1 Co 11:30 cf. Jas 5:15-16). In the latter case, God is glorified when the redeemed individual undergoes such suffering because the Lord's essence is vindicated as He responds with perfect integrity toward unrighteousness. Regardless, whether God's integrity is responding to righteous acts of faith or unrighteous acts of unbelief, God is glorified.

**Principle:** God the Father's plan for His perfect Son included unspeakable suffering so that we might be comforted in our suffering.

**Application:** As you (and I) suffer by association with a fallen world and as you (and I) undergo other types of personal suffering (e.g. physical suffering, emotional suffering, self-induced suffering, suffering from the Lord's discipline, etc.), do you (and I) take comfort in knowing that our perfect and righteous Lord suffered unspeakably on our behalf? Do we provide proof of God's power and grace as we manifest joy in our Lord for the comfort we obtain in the midst of suffering as a result of such a spiritual perspective? How do you answer those who question the unjust nature of their suffering due to things beyond their control such as skin color, social and economic status into which they were born, and children who become adults and still suffer because of the sins of parents? Our answers to all of these questions in some way should point to the spiritual healing offered by Jesus which places us in His caring hands that can turn such suffering into a source of blessing.

### ***Whose Hands*** *(Unknown)*

A basketball in my hands is worth about \$19.  
A basketball in Michael Jordan's hands is worth about \$33 million.  
It depends whose hands it's in.

A baseball in my hands is worth about \$6.  
A baseball in Mark McGuire's hands is worth \$19 million.  
It depends on whose hands it's in.

A tennis racket is useless in my hands.  
A tennis racket in Venus Williams' hands is a championship winning..  
It depends whose hands it's in.

A rod in my hands will keep away a wild animal.  
A rod in Moses' hands will part the mighty sea.  
It depends whose hands it's in.

A sling shot in my hands is a kid's toy  
A sling shot in David's hand is a mighty weapon.  
It depends whose hands it's in.

Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in my hands is a couple of fish sandwiches.  
Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in God's hands will feed thousands.  
It depends whose hands it's in.

Nails in my hands might produce a birdhouse  
Nails in Jesus Christ's hands will produce salvation for the entire world.  
It depends whose hands it's in.

As you see now it depends whose hands it's in.  
So put your concerns, your worries, your fears, your hopes, your dreams, your families and your relationships in God's hands because...  
It depends whose hands it's in.

Notice in verse 4 that Jesus uses the plural "we." Believers are an integral part of God's work in this fallen world as "we" yield ourselves to His will and begin to see the world as He sees it. The "day" refers to the time while Jesus was alive in this context.<sup>7</sup> When we begin to see the world as Jesus sees it, we too will begin to seek opportunities to be a blessing to lonely, suffering, and spiritually blind people.

### **The Blind Man is Healed as a Sign (vv. 6-7)<sup>8</sup>**

This is one of three miracles in which Jesus used spittle to effect healing (cf. Mk 7:33 and 8:23). Man was originally created from the same dust of the earth that Jesus used (Ge 2:7). Jesus' use of the clay was most likely designed as a means of increasing the faith of the man rather than as any type of medicine.<sup>9</sup> The man's sight was not restored, but it was created sight, thus the connection by analogy to the original creative act and an indication of just Who Jesus really was.

The Pool of Siloam was located some distance from the Temple at the southern end of the city. In an interesting twist of irony, John notes that Siloam meant "sent." The man was "sent" by Jesus and Jesus had been "sent" by the Father. On the surface, this seems to be a foolish command to us especially in view of Jesus' demonstration of His ability to heal from a distance (e.g. the Centurion's servant in Matt 8:5-13). Why did Jesus command this man to walk with mud on his eyes to a public pool and wash the mud from his eyes? Jesus did not even tell him that he would be healed. Perhaps the man had overheard the disciples so that he knew something would happen; however, there had been no indication that he would have his sight created. Had the man not obeyed Jesus and had he allowed the years of blindness to create an apathetic indifference in him to the Lord's command, he would not have experienced the healing of Jesus.

Whatever our Lord's reason for using a two-step process in order to cause physical sight to be created in this man, one thing is clear. The Lord often used physical touch on those whose

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<sup>7</sup> Jesus knew that His time was drawing near due to the rising hostility toward Him. He was working under the shadow of the looming Cross. While He had the opportunity, Jesus wanted to let the light of His life shine in spiritual darkness.

<sup>8</sup> Contrast this healing with the manner in which Jesus healed Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52.

<sup>9</sup> Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, editors (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), 307-8.

afflictions aroused His compassion. Jesus went out of His way to touch the outcast leper from whom everyone else fled (Mk 1:41). He held the hand of Jairus' dead daughter (Mk 5:41). The physical touch of Jesus would have provided comfort and reassurance to the blind man so that the blind man would have been stimulated to obey our Lord's command. In the same way, He will use your suffering to bless others (Phil 1:12) as you respond to those commands that He has given in His Word based upon faith in those signs of His personal interest in your life that He has already supplied to you.

### **Skepticism and Cynicism Regarding the Miracle (vv. 8-34)**

#### *The Skepticism of His Neighbors (vv. 8-12)*

The man's neighbors could not believe it! Was this really the man who had been the object of their pity and the one who survived by begging? Their first thought was that this was a case of mistaken identity. However, the man replied that he was in fact the man who had been blind from birth. The man just stated the facts. He made no attempt to evaluate Jesus and he did not attempt to avoid controversy by denying that Jesus was the one Who had done this. He showed no prior knowledge of Jesus and was even unaware of Jesus' whereabouts since he was still blind at the time of the miracle.

The man's answers are typical of the experience of new believers today. Increasingly in today's society, the new believer comes from a background of complete ignorance and has little understanding of just Who Jesus was and what He had accomplished. There has been enough faith to become a believer; however, this infant believer is most likely confused and ignorant of many important doctrines, spiritual facts and principles. Their testimony is simple, but can be very powerful in its simplicity – just like this man in John 9 who has been given sight after years of blindness.

#### *The Skepticism and Cynicism of the Religious Crowd (vv 13-34)*

The neighbors thought that perhaps the Pharisees could explain this miracle and they took the man to them. There are interesting parallels and contrasts between the healing of this blind man in chapter 9 and the healing of the man with an infirmity in chapter 5.<sup>10</sup>

- ❑ Both occurred in a public pool
- ❑ Both involved cases that were apparently incurable, thus hopeless
- ❑ Both occurred on the Sabbath, thereby creating controversy
- ❑ The man in chapter 5 reported voluntarily to the Pharisees and identified Jesus afterward
- ❑ The man in chapter 9 did not go to the Pharisees on his own and did not know Jesus' whereabouts
- ❑ In chapter 5, Jesus implied that the man had some sin and exhorted him to cease from it
- ❑ In chapter 9, Jesus indicates that there is no sin
- ❑ There is no conclusive evidence that the man of chapter 5 became a believer
- ❑ The man of chapter 9 demonstrated growing faith

As this scene begins to unfold, we see the character of each of the main players unfold. The Pharisees willfully chose to reject Jesus' sign of healing this blind man. It was contrary to their preconceived ideas of how the Messiah would look and act when He came. If they accepted Jesus, it threatened their power structure and the pseudo-political/religious alliance with Rome. They immediately found a technicality by which they could dismiss the fact that this miracle was of God. Jesus had violated one of the rabbinical laws (not the Mosaic Law, e.g. Exodus 20:10, but one of the traditional interpretations of the Mosaic Law).<sup>11</sup> The fact that there was division among

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<sup>10</sup> Gaebelein, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*.

<sup>11</sup> The Mosaic Law found in Scripture was accompanied by a large body of oral tradition, interpretations, and commentaries throughout the centuries that were recorded by various groups

the Pharisees indicates that some were perhaps more objective than others and were not predisposed against Him. Nicodemus may have been among those who desired to give Jesus a fair hearing. Another may have been Joseph of Arimathea.

In the face of such antagonism, the blind man demonstrates courage. After all that he has been through in his life, what are they going to do to him? He was just stating the facts, not debating theology. As he is pressured, he doesn't cower, but he grows increasingly bold in his answers. First, Jesus was perhaps a "prophet" since God often validated their message with miracles. Later, the man becomes impatient with such questioning and in a bit of humorous sarcasm asks them if they desire to become Jesus' disciples. He also demonstrates irrefutable logic because of its simplicity.

The man's parents demonstrate what many today would characterize as political savvy, yet in reality, it is nothing more than expediency. They only desire to preserve their standing with the religious leaders. By not declaring that they knew how their son was healed or by Whom he was healed, they passed this responsibility to their son. They feared the reaction of the religious leaders.

Eventually, the Pharisees display their lack of spiritual sensitivity and attempt to belittle the man (v. 34) as they wrap themselves up in their self-righteous cloaks. They even cast him out of the synagogue. In so doing, they would isolate him from family and any friends and disbar him from employment.<sup>12</sup> The Jews had three types of excommunication: 1) thirty days during which time the person could not come within six feet of anyone else; 2) indefinite period of time during which the person was excluded from all fellowship and worship; 3) permanent expulsion. During each of these periods, no one could conduct business with the person who had been excommunicated.<sup>13</sup>

Notice Jesus' reaction upon hearing that the man had been excommunicated. Jesus immediately searched for the man. Jesus had met the physical need of the man; however, the man's spiritual condition had not been addressed. Everything up to this point had prepared the man to have his spiritual need met. He had manifested a receptive soul by enduring the attacks of the powerful religious leaders. Not only did he endure their attacks, he pushed them back on

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of scribes. The *Sopherim* (or scribes) were the Jewish scholars who preserved the Hebrew text between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries B.C. The *Zugoth* (or "pairs" of scholars) followed the Sopherim in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Centuries B.C. The third group were the *Tannaim* (repeaters or teachers) whose work extended to A.D. 200. The *Masoretes* were scribes who worked from the 6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. to the 10<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. They added the vowel points and punctuation marks to the Hebrew text.

In addition to preserving the text of Hebrew Scripture, these "scribes" were responsible for committing the *Targums* (oral paraphrases that began as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.) to writing beginning in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D. The *Talmud* (instruction or teaching) was another product of these scribes. The *Talmud* represented the opinions and decisions of Jewish teachers from about 300 B.C. to A.D. 500 and consisted of the *Mishnah* (an explanation of traditions and oral law) and the *Gemera* (a commentary on the *Mishnah*). The *Midrash* (textual study) was a formal doctrinal and homiletical exposition of the Hebrew Scriptures collected between 100 B.C. and A.D. 300. The *Midrash* consisted of the *Halakah* (paraphrases of the Torah) and *Haggada* (commentaries on the entire Old Testament).

See Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 371, 502-503..

<sup>12</sup> Gabelein, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*.

<sup>13</sup> Earl D. Radmacher, general editor, *The Nelson Study Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1997), 1780.

their heels with his simple, but powerful responses to their interrogation. He continued to manifest a receptive spirit when asked of Jesus – “Do you believe in the Son of God?” He responded in the midst of the Pharisees who continued to reject Jesus as the Son of God (v. 40). Jesus continued to stand with the blind man and share the rejection that was really a rejection of Him.

**Principle:** When we take a stand for Jesus, we are never alone nor are we left alone. Even if the message is rejected and even if we are personally attacked, our walk and fellowship with Jesus is strengthened.

**Application:** Have you ever experienced a strengthened fellowship with the Lord as the result of taking a stand for Him?

It is interesting that Jesus’ revelation of His identity to this man was not one that was given to many others during His public ministry.

Then He said to them, ‘What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.’ Then He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and *He healed them all. Yet He warned them not to make Him known.* (Matt 12:11-16)

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’ He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him? (Jn 9:35-36)

It is my observation that the closer that Jesus got to the time of His impending death and the greater the opposition to His ministry and person, the more emphasis He began to give in His message to His identity as the Son of God. As we have observed, the gospel message of Jesus and His disciples was that “the Kingdom of God (heaven) is at hand” (Matt 10:7 cf. Lu 9:1-6). It is possible that the focus of Jesus’ early ministry was to assess or reconnoiter the spiritual lay of the land, so to speak. The purpose was to provide Israel an opportunity to manifest their spiritual condition, thus their receptivity to the message of John the Baptist, Jesus’ disciples, and Jesus. The acceptance or rejection of that message would craft the manner in which Jesus would die in order to fulfill the Scriptures regarding the need for the Messiah to propitiate the Father. Would it be at the hands of the Romans so that the “gospel of the kingdom” became a message of encouragement and hope for Israel as they endured the seven-year Tribulation while awaiting His coming to establish the Messianic kingdom? Or, would it be at the hands of His own countrymen which would constitute a blatant rejection of Him as the Son of God? In the latter case, God is still glorified as He endures with much patience the “vessels of wrath prepared for destruction” (Ro 9:22), i.e. the Jewish people and Israelite nation that history will prove how great an extent God has gone to redeem, preserve and honor His own integrity.

This miracle resulted in a judgment in a sense. Those who choose not to see and remain in a state of spiritual blindness will be subject to judgment just as the Pharisees were.

In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. (Isa 29:18-19)

Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’ And He said, ‘Go, and tell this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not

perceive. Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed. (Isa 6:8-10)

Just as in Isaiah's day, the Jews had seen and heard much until their hearts had been fully hardened. As in Isaiah's day, only the humble would respond and be given spiritual sight. To admit one's spiritual need and receive the light that Jesus gave was to receive the light of the world and see spiritually. To reject Him was to remain spiritually blind. The man born blind manifested a development of spiritual sight. First, he called Jesus "a man" (v. 11). Then, as he began to comprehend more fully the controversy, he called Him a "prophet" (v. 17) and the "Lord" (v. 38). Finally, He recognized Him as the Son of God and worshipped Him as He worshipped God.

Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at His word; your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake, said, 'Let the Lord be glorified; that we may see your joy.' But they shall be ashamed." (Isa 66:5)