

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## RISING OPPOSITION TO JESUS' MINISTRY, JOHN 5:1-12:50

### JESUS' MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM, JOHN 7:10-10:42

#### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Outline of the *Gospel of John* (1:1-4:42)

1. Prologue (1:1-18)
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    - 9) Jesus proclaims His deity (48-59)
    - 10) Jesus healed a man born blind (9:1-41)

#### B. Comments on John 9

- Charles Swindoll, ... *somewhere in the old city of Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples happened upon a man born without sight. As the story unfolds, we learn that their "chance" meeting had been scheduled since the beginning of time, and the man's "meaningless" affliction had been given divine purpose from the foundation of creation.*
- Thomas Constable, *The exact time of this miracle and Jesus' resultant discourse is unclear. Evidently these events transpired sometime between the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2, 10; September 10–17, A.D. 32.) and the Feast of Dedication (10:22–39; December 18, A.D. 32.).*
- Grant Osborne, *It is a brilliantly narrated story, progressing via a series of interrogations (vv. 8–12, 13–17, 18–23, 24–34) sandwiched between an opening (vv. 1–7, narrating the healing) and a closing (vv. 35–41, narrating the blindness of the Pharisees).*
- Edwin Blum, *Isaiah predicted that in messianic times various signs would occur. The Messiah would "open eyes that are blind" (Isa. 42:7; cf. Isa. 29:18; 35:5). Jesus often healed the blind (cf. Matt. 9:27–31; 12:22–23; 15:30; 20:29–34; 21:14). This miracle in John 9 is notable because Jesus had just proclaimed Himself as "the Light of the world" (8:12). As a public demonstration of His claim, He gave sight to a man born blind.*
- Warren Wiersbe, *Our Lord performed miracles in order to meet human needs. But He also used those miracles as a "launching pad" for a message conveying spiritual truth. Finally, His miracles were His "credentials" to prove that He was indeed the Messiah. "The blind receive their sight" was one such messianic miracle (Matt. 11:5), and we see it demonstrated in this chapter. Jesus used this miracle as the basis for a short sermon on spiritual blindness (John 9:39–41) and a longer sermon on true and false shepherds (John 10:1–18).*
- Leon Morris, *There is no story of the giving of sight to the blind anywhere in the Old Testament. Nor is this function anywhere attributed to the followers of Jesus ... It is a divine function, a function for God's own Messiah, that Jesus fulfills when he gives sight to the blind.*

## JESUS HEALED A MAN BORN BLIND, JOHN 9:1-41

- A. Jesus gave physical sight to a man born blind (1-7)
1. Jesus took notice of a blind man (1), ***As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.***
    - a. Warren Wiersbe, *About the only thing a blind man could do in that day was beg, and that is what this man was doing when Jesus passed by (John 9:8). No doubt there were many blind people who would have rejoiced to be healed, but Jesus selected this man (see Luke 4:25–27).*
    - b. Thomas Constable, *Probably Jesus healed this man in Jerusalem (8:59), perhaps on the day following the events just narrated, in or near the temple. John apparently noted that the man had been blind from birth in order to prove his helpless condition, and perhaps to compare him with those who were spiritually blind from birth (cf. vv. 39–41; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1–3).*
    - c. Leon Morris, *Nothing is said as to how Jesus knew that the man had been blind from birth, which argues that he was a well-known figure ... One might have expected some mention of the disciples, in view of the following question, but John appears to mean that it was Jesus who first took notice of the man. The initiative was his.*
  2. His disciples questioned the blind man's condition (2), ***And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"***
    - a. Related verses
      - 1) John 1:38, *Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"*
      - 2) Luke 13:4, *Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?*
    - b. Comments
      - 1) Warren Wiersbe, *The disciples did not look at the man as an object of mercy but rather as a subject for a theological discussion. It is much easier to discuss an abstract subject like 'sin' than it is to minister to a concrete need in the life of a person ... Believing that sin directly caused all suffering, how could a person be born with a handicap? Therefore either this man ... sinned in his mother's womb (Ezek. 18:4) or his parents sinned (Ex. 20:5).*
      - 2) Thoms Constable, *The disciples' question reflected popular Jewish opinion of their day. Clearly the Old Testament taught that sin brings divine punishment (e.g., Exod. 20:5; 34:7; Ezek. 18:4). This cause and effect relationship led many of the Jews, as well as many modern people, to conclude that every bad effect had an identifiable sinful cause. That conclusion goes further than the Bible does (cf. Job; 2 Cor. 12:7; Gal. 4:13). Sin does lie behind all the suffering and evil in the world, but the connection between sin and suffering is not always direct or observable.*
      - 3) Leon Morris, *The man's plight provoked the disciples into asking Jesus the reason for it. It was widely held that suffering, and especially such a disaster as blindness, was due to sin ... There were grave difficulties in seeing how a man could have sinned before his birth. And it is not much easier to think that a man should bear such a terrible punishment for the sin of his parents. So the disciples put the matter to Jesus.*
      - 4) Louis Barbieri, *The disciples' question (v. 2) who sinned, this man or his parents ...? shows they had adopted the mistaken theology that all illness was the result of personal sin or parental sin. A similar erroneous concept is found in the law of karma as taught in many Eastern religions. Nevertheless, the man's physical blindness did picture every person's spiritual blindness from birth (2Co 4:4).*
      - 5) William Barclay, *One of the keynotes of the Old Testament is that the sins of the parents are always visited upon the children. It must never be forgotten that we do not live in isolation from others and we do not die in isolation from others. When we sin, we set in motion a train of consequences which has no end.*
      - 6) Grant Osborne, *It was a common Jewish view that physical deformity was the result of sin. This passage, as well as the Old Testament book of Job, shows that this is not always the case and that God often has different purposes in mind.*

- 6) Charles Swindoll, *We must not be too hard on the disciples; they merely understood the world as it had been taught to them. Their theology was the result of generations of blind men leading other blind men. Their treatment of the man born blind saddens me more than their ignorance. The disciples looked on this man as nothing more than an interesting theological case study, not as a fellow human in need of compassion. Their lack of emotion disturbs me.*
3. Jesus responded with wise instruction (3-5)
- a. He made a distinction between sin and suffering (3), **Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.**
- 1) Related verse, John 11:4, *But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”*
- 2) Comments
- a) Thomas Constable, *It is wrong to conclude that every instance of suffering springs immediately from a particular act of sin (cf. Job). Some suffering does (cf. 5:14; 1 Cor. 11:29–30), but some does not (cf. Luke 13:1–5). It is also wrong to conclude that God permits every instance of suffering because He intends to miraculously relieve it. Jesus did not reveal the reason for this man’s condition. It is a mistake to conclude that God made him blind from birth so that Jesus could give him sight ... Notice the positive viewpoint of Jesus. The disciples viewed the man’s condition as an indication of divine displeasure, but Jesus saw it as an opportunity for divine grace.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *These words do not contradict the universal sinfulness of man (cf. Rom. 3:9–20, 23). Instead Jesus meant that this man’s blindness was not caused by some specific sin. Instead the problem existed so that ... God could display His glory in the midst of seeming tragedy (cf. Ex. 4:11; 2 Cor. 12:9).*
- c) Warren Wiersbe, *Only God knows why babies are born with handicaps, and only God can turn those handicaps into something that will bring good to the people and glory to His name ... Since there is no punctuation in the original manuscripts, we are free to read John 9:3–4 this way: Neither has this man sinned nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day.*
- d) Leon Morris, *This does not, of course, mean that God made the child suffer blindness for years so that the cure might reveal his greatness. Rather, “God overruled the disaster of the child’s blindness so that, when the child grew to manhood, he might, by recovering his sight, see the glory of God in the face of Christ” (Bruce).*
- e) William Hendriksen, *If a cause must be mentioned, the sin of Adam, our representative head, would be the answer. However, Jesus is not even interested in this at the present time. For the backward look of the disciples he substitutes the forward look. They had asked, “How did it come to be?” He answers, “It happened with a purpose; namely, that the works of God (miracles in which he shows his power and his love) should be displayed in him.” All things—even afflictions and calamities—have as their ultimate purpose the glorification of God in Christ by means of the manifestation of his greatness (cf. 1:14; 5:19, 20).*
- f) Charles Swindoll, *Jesus answered the question directly and then gave the disciples a theological principle that can be applied to any instance of affliction or hardship. God did not cause the man’s affliction; the world did that. Nevertheless, the Lord gave the man’s affliction a divine purpose before anything had been created. The blind man lay at the intersection of the world’s affliction and God’s preordained choice to turn his blindness into an occasion for rejoicing; he lay waiting for the preordained moment when Christ would “happen by” and then fulfill His Father’s mission.*
- g) Kenneth Gangel, *The focus is not on the comfort of the creature but the exaltation of the Creator.*
- h) Matthew Henry, *If God be glorified, either by us or in us, we were not made in vain.*
- I) Marcus Dods, *The question for us is not where suffering has come from, but what we are to do with it.*

- b. Jesus is the light of the world (4-5), ***We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.***

1) Related verses

- a) John 4:34, *Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.*
- b) John 12:35, *So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going.*
- c) John 8:12, *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

2) Comments

- a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus’ “We” probably refers to Himself alone, though He could have meant Himself plus the disciples. Jesus later spoke of His disciples continuing His work (14:12; cf. 20:21). The “day” in view is probably a reference to the spiritual daylight generated by the Light of the world’s presence on the earth. Darkness would descend when He departed the earth and returned to heaven (cf. 12:35). The nighttime when no one can work may refer to the spiritual darkness that would engulf the world after Jesus departed this earth and returned to heaven.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *Night is the limit set to do God’s works. In Jesus’ case it was His coming death. As the Light of the world Jesus gives people salvation (cf. 8:12). After His death, His disciples would be His lights (cf. Matt. 5:14; Eph. 5:8–14), bringing Christ to others.*
- c) Kenneth Gangel, *If we had only this text, we might conclude that the disciples could function in God’s work only so long as Jesus was with them in the world; then all would be darkness ... The Lord had not yet explained the role of the Holy Spirit in illuminating their future ministry. At this point he focused their attention only on him, his divine mission, and their involvement during the short period of earthly ministry. Later in this Gospel he explained that light would shine again after the resurrection and the ascension as the Holy Spirit reproduced the light of the world through them.*
- d) Leon Morris, *It is a reminder in this context also of the fact that the works in question do not originate here on earth. They are heaven-sent works that we must do. And there is an urgency about doing them, for the opportunity will not always be present ... His stay in this world is short. Therefore he must work quickly and in accordance with his character as the world’s light.*
- e) William Hendriksen, *For Jesus and for these followers (and, in a sense, for all his followers) the rule holds: while it is day we must work the works of God.*

4. Jesus gave the man sight (6-7)

- a. He anointed the man’s eyes with mud (6), ***Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud***

1) Related verses

- a) Mark 7:33, *And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue.*
- b) Matthew 9:29, *Then he touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it done to you.”*

2) Comments

- a) Edwin Blum, *Jesus placed clay (mud with ... saliva) on the man’s eyes. Interestingly man was made from this same substance—the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7). Jesus probably used the clay as an aid to develop the man’s faith, not as a medicine. Jesus’ making of clay broke the Rabbinic regulations against kneading clay on the Sabbath (cf. John 9:14).*
- b) Warren Wiersbe, *Once Jesus healed two blind men by merely touching their eyes (Matt. 9:27–31), and He healed another blind man by putting spittle on his eyes (Mark 8:22–26). Though the healing power was the same, our Lord varied His methods lest people focus on the manner of healing and miss the message in the healing.*

- c) Kenneth Gangel, *We know Jesus did not need physical substance to work a miracle, so what was the point of the mud on the man's eyes? Some interpreters point out that the Jews believed clay and spittle had some medicinal value, but that would put the power in the instrument rather than the healer ... Others argue that clay often depicts creation in Scripture. But perhaps we can find here something as simple as a man who needed some physical symbol to encourage his faith, not unlike Gideon and his fleece.*
  - d) Leon Morris, *... Jesus performed his cures with sovereign hand, and he cannot be limited by rules of procedure. He healed how he willed.*
  - e) William Hendriksen, *Just why the Lord chose this particular method we do not know ... If an answer must be given, it may be said that the Lord probably used this method in order to induce the proper attitude of heart and mind; i.e., to bring about perfect obedience, that type of submission which carries out a seemingly arbitrary command ... It must be borne in mind that he is at work here who calls himself the light of the world, and that in this particular case light is imparted not only to the body but also to the soul (9:35–38).*
  - f) Charles Swindoll, *It would be idle speculation to guess about things we don't know. We do know this: Jesus was sent by the Father, the blind man was sent by Jesus to the pool with specific instructions, the man followed Jesus' instructions to the letter, and he received sight, just as promised.*
- b. He told the blind man to wash his eyes (7) **and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.**
- 1) Related verse, Luke 13:4, *Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus then instructed the blind man to go to the pool of Siloam, in southeast Jerusalem, and wash the mud off his eyes. He obeyed Jesus, received his sight, and departed from the pool seeing. His obedience gave evidence of his faith that something good would come as a result of obeying Jesus ... It is probably significant that Jesus sent the man to that particular source of water. John interpreted the meaning of Siloam as "Sent" for his readers. Jesus had sent the man, he obeyed, and he received sight ... It was when the man went to Him who had been "sent" from the Father, which the name of the pool reflected, that he was healed.*
    - b) Leon Morris, *In this Gospel the thought of being sent is very prominent. Again and again John refers to Jesus as having been "sent" by the Father. So now blindness is removed with reference to and with the aid of the "sent." John describes the actual miracle in the simplest possible fashion. The man washed as he was told "and came home seeing."*
    - c) William Hendriksen, *Some commentators reject the idea that Jesus attached symbolical significance to the meaning of the name of this pool. Nevertheless, three facts should be borne in mind: (1) This miracle is certainly symbolical, picturing Jesus as the light of the world (8:12; 9:5). (2) In this Gospel Jesus constantly presents himself as the One who is sent by the Father (see on 3:17, 34; 5:36, 37; 6:57; 7:29; 8:18, 27, 29; etc.) ... (3) The waters of Shiloah flow from the temple-hill and are even in the Old Testament regarded as symbolical of the spiritual blessings which issue forth from God's dwelling-place (see Is. 8:6 and cf. Ezek. 47:1) ... for spiritual cleansing one must go to the true Siloam; i.e., to the One who was sent by the Father to save sinners.*
    - d) George Beasley-Murray, *This identification of Jesus with Siloam, i.e., Shilôa, may well have been suggested through the messianic interpretation of Gen 49:10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes" ... It is conceivable that the actions of Jesus, including the command to wash in Siloam, were signs to aid the blind man's faith; they undoubtedly served as evidence to the man's interrogators that he had gained his sight through Jesus, cf. vv 11, 15.*

B. Responses to the miracle (8-34)

1. Reactions by the man's neighbors and acquaintances (8-12)

a. Some weren't certain that he was the man born blind (8-9), *The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?"* 9 Some said, "It is he." Others said, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the man."

- 1) Charles Swindoll, *Try to imagine the scene. The man's community had known him well, undoubtedly because his years of begging for alms had made him a fixture at the temple. The Pharisees pitied him for his sin-inflicted malady, the Sadducees tisked in condescending approval of God's justice, a few people showed compassion, while others silenced their jingling coins as they tiptoed by. Suddenly, one day, this same man bounds into the temple without his stick and beggar's basket, marveling at the splendor of God's house. Remarkably, worshipers notice a familiar face—yet fail to see the truth of what has occurred.*
- 2) Warren Wiersbe, ... the illumination now led to a problem in identification: was this really the blind beggar, and who caused him to see? Throughout the rest of John 9, a growing conflict takes place around these two questions.
- 3) Leon Morris, *There are two groups here, the man's neighbors and those who knew him as a beggar. This is the first mention of his being a beggar, but it is almost implied in the earlier statement that he was blind. What else could a blind man do in the ancient world than beg? The one presupposes the other. The people who had lived near him and those familiar with him from his begging are probably singled out as those who knew him best.*
- 4) Thomas Constable, *John's record of the conversation of the blind man's neighbors is interesting. It shows that the change in him was so remarkable that even some people who knew him well could not believe that he was the same man. The former beggar's personal testimony settled the debate. No one could argue with that ... Evidently this man had been a beggar out of necessity rather than by choice. He later demonstrated a sense of humor, a knowledge of history and Scripture, the ability to withstand intimidation, and the ability to argue logically and effectively (cf. vv. 27, 30–32). These traits show that he was far from mentally incompetent.*
- 5) F. F. Bruce, *The man whom they now saw obviously seeing his way around was very like the well-known blind man. But it could not be he, could it? John characteristically reports the interplay of uninformed opinion (just as he has done in 7:12, 25–27, 31 when describing the variety of opinions expressed about Jesus at the feast of Tabernacles). This interplay is cut short by the man's assurance that he is the selfsame person.*
- 6) George Beasley-Murray, *The healed man's neighbors find it difficult to believe that the man who stood among them really was their neighbor, formerly so pitiable in his helplessness and poverty. Their perplexity, uncertainty as to his identity, and desire to learn what had taken place all attest the extraordinary reality that had happened to one of their number.*
- 7) Louis Barbieri, *The confusion over the identity of the blind beggar parallels the confusion of the crowds over the identity of Jesus. To identify himself (v. 9), the blind man kept saying, I am the one [ego eimi], the exact Greek phrase Jesus used (8:58) to identify Himself. If the listeners correctly recognized the blind man, they would open the door to see accurately the "I Am" who heals spiritual blindness.*

b. Interaction with the formerly blind man (10-12)

1) They asked how he gained his sight (10), *So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?"*

- a) Thomas Constable, *When questioned about the miracle, the former blind man could only report the facts of his case, and the name of Jesus, whom he had not yet seen. The crowd obviously wanted to find Jesus. The man's description of Jesus gives no indication that he was a true believer. Jesus did not perform this healing because the man believed that He was God's Son or even the Messiah. It was simply an expression of God's grace that became an opportunity for teaching.*
- b) Warren Wiersbe, *They should not have asked "How?" but "Who?" (Simply rearrange the letters!) But we are so prone to ask "How?" We want to understand the mechanics of a miracle instead of simply trusting the Saviour, who alone can perform the miracle. Nicodemus wanted to know how he could reenter his mother's womb (John 3:4, 9). "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (John 6:52) Understanding the process, even if we could, is no guarantee that we have experienced the miracle.*
- c) Leon Morris, *This brings the eager question, "How then were your eyes opened?" ... The man responds with a succinct account of the miracle.*

- 2) He declared that Jesus gave him sight (11), ***He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.”***
  - a) Thomas Constable, *Jesus had not accompanied the man to the pool, so he could not point Him out to the crowd as his healer. Here is further evidence that Jesus was not promoting Himself in order to gain glory but was simply doing the work that God had given Him to do.*
  - b) Edwin Blum, *He gave a simple and factual account of how the miracle occurred. He referred to the Lord as the Man they call Jesus.*
  - c) Warren Wiersbe, *At least twelve times in the Gospel of John, Jesus is called “a man” (see John 4:29; 5:12; 8:40; 9:11, 24; 10:33; 11:47, 50; 18:14, 17, 29; 19:5). John’s emphasis is that Jesus Christ is God, but the apostle balances it beautifully by reminding us that Jesus is also true man. The Incarnation was not an illusion (1 John 1:1–4).*
  - d) Louis Barbieri, *Few things are more convincing than a simple testimony of our personal encounter with Christ.*
  
- 3) They asked about Jesus (12), ***They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”***
  - a) Edwin Blum, *Since he was blind at the time of the miracle, he had no idea where Jesus went.*
  - b) Warren Wiersbe, *Not only was the beggar ignorant of Jesus’ identity, but he did not know where Jesus had gone. At this point, the man has been healed, but he has not been saved. The light had dawned, but it would grow brighter until he saw the face of the Lord and worshiped Him (see Prov. 4:18).*
  - c) William Barclay, *Having been cured, he had some difficulty in persuading the people that a real cure had been effected. But he stoutly maintained the miracle which Jesus had performed. Jesus is still doing things which seem to the unbeliever far too good and far too wonderful to be true.*
  
2. The Pharisees’ first interrogation of the healed man (13-17)
  - a. The healed man was brought before the Pharisees (13-14), ***They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.***
    - 1) Thomas Constable, *The formerly blind man’s neighbors probably brought him to their religious leaders just to hear their opinion of what had happened to him ... John now introduced the fact that Jesus had healed the man on a Sabbath, because it became the basis for much of the discussion that followed. Most of the Pharisees would have regarded Jesus’ action as inappropriate work that violated traditional Sabbath ordinances (cf. 5:9, 16; 7:21–24). He had, after all, made clay, anointed the man’s eyes, and healed the man.*
    - 2) Edwin Blum, *Since this miracle was so unusual, the people brought the man to the Pharisees, who were highly respected in religious matters. To the Pharisees, healing (unless life was in danger) and making or kneading clay violated the Sabbath Law.*
    - 3) Grant Osborne, *The man’s neighbors take him to the local religious experts, the Pharisees, so they can better understand the remarkable event that had occurred (v. 13). They have no idea what will be unleashed by this innocent act. There is no intent to cause a legal situation, and no need to take him to the priests, since no ritual uncleanness (like with leprosy) was involved. They have never seen a miracle like this and simply go to the Pharisees so they can make sense of it.*
    - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *Since the Pharisees were the custodians of the faith, it was right that the healed man be brought to them for investigation. The fact that they studied this miracle in such detail is only further proof that Jesus did indeed heal the man. Since the man was born blind, the miracle was even greater, for blindness caused by sickness or injury might suddenly go away.*
    - 5) Kenneth Gangel, *The neighbors brought the man to the Pharisees. John raised the red flag when he pointed out in verse 14 that the day in which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. The neighbors were still confused, but the Pharisees offered their standard legalistic condemnation: anyone who did not keep the Sabbath could not heal.*
    - 6) Leon Morris, *It is possible that the Pharisees were acting as official representatives of the Sanhedrin. Hendriksen argues cogently that they were an official body, possibly even “the minor Sanhedrin or synagogue-court, of which there are said to have been two in Jerusalem.” If this is the case, it will explain such things as the fear of the parents in the face of interrogation.*

- 7) William Hendriksen, *Why was he brought before the Pharisees? Was it because he had violated the sabbath-regulations which were esteemed so highly by the religious authorities? That is possible, but nothing with reference to the sabbath is mentioned before the time of the judicial inquiry. From the connection between verses 13 and 14 it would seem as if the Pharisees themselves bring up this point. ... Another reason suggests itself: the Pharisees had been telling the people that Jesus was a deceiver. In fact, already the people were aware of the fact that a decision had been made by the Sanhedrin that anyone who should confess Jesus to be the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue (9:22). But what were the Pharisees going to say now? Did not this great miracle speak louder than any verdict of the Sanhedrin? Let the man in question be brought before the Pharisaic judges, so that they can hear the story from his own lips. Then will they still persist in their opinion about Jesus? Or has some fraud been committed which they are able to uncover and expose?*
  - 8) William Barclay, *It was the Sabbath day on which Jesus had made the clay and healed the man. Undoubtedly Jesus had broken the Sabbath law, as the scribes had worked it out, and done so in fact in three different ways ... (1) By making clay, he had been guilty of working on the Sabbath, when even the simplest acts constituted work ... (2) It was forbidden to heal on the Sabbath. Medical attention could be given only if life was in actual danger ... (3) It was quite definitely laid down: 'As to fasting spittle, it is not lawful to put it so much as upon the eyelids' ... The Pharisees are typical of the people in every generation who condemn anyone whose idea of religion is not theirs.*
- b. The Pharisees asked the man how he received his sight (15), ***So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."***
- 1) Leon Morris, *The Pharisees question the man. The verb denotes a continuing process and not a simple invitation to rehearse the matter. They were evidently persistent. Again the man relates what happened. He has a gift for succinct utterance and puts the essence of the matter in one terse sentence.*
  - 2) William Hendriksen, ... 'again,' for this was not the first time the question had been asked. He had been bombarded with it. First it had come from the lips of the neighbors, who had voiced it again and again (9:10). And now also the Pharisees confront him with it ... Already the man appears to be wary. He weighs his words. Note how the report of the miracle is becoming more and more concise; cf. verses 6, 7; then 11; then 15b.
  - 3) Charles Swindoll, *When asked how he had received his sight, he merely recounted the events, which establishes the pattern for the balance of their interaction. The Pharisees wanted the man to answer theologically; however, the man held tightly to the facts.*
  - 4) F. F. Bruce, *The man is interrogated as first witness, and when his witness proves inconclusive (from their point of view) they summon other witnesses (verse 18).*
- c. There was division among the Pharisees concerning Jesus (16), ***Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.***
- 1) Related verses
    - a) John 7:29, *I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me."*
    - b) Matthew 12:2, *But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."*
    - c) John 10:19, *There was again a division among the Jews because of these words.*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) Thomas Constable, *Some of the Pharisees, offended by Jesus' violation of traditional Sabbath laws, concluded that He could not represent God, who had given the Sabbath laws ... Others found the evidence of a supernatural cure most impressive, and they decided that Jesus must not be a common sinner, but someone special who could do divine acts ... the second group had the weaker argument, since miracles do not necessarily prove that the miracle-worker is from God. Still, their conclusion was true, whereas the conclusion of the first group with the stronger argument was false.*
    - b) Warren Wiersbe, *Perhaps they could discredit the miracle. If so, then they could convince the people that Jesus had plotted the whole thing and was really deceiving the people. He had craftily "switched" beggars so that the sighted man was not the man who had been known as the blind beggar.*

- c) Leon Morris, *The man's statement divides the Pharisees. The more doctrinaire seize on the breach of the Sabbath as they saw it. If a man did not keep the Sabbath according to their understanding of Sabbath keeping he could not possibly be from God. It was as simple as that. Others, however, were more open-minded. They took their stand on another principle, a principle neatly stated by the formerly blind man (v. 31). Jesus was doing "signs" (note the plural; they were not confining their attention to this one miracle) of such a kind that they could not envisage him as being a sinner ... The group speaking tentatively in favor of Jesus must have been a small one. We do not hear of them again after this verse, and throughout the rest of the chapter the narrative proceeds as though the other group were the only one to be considered.*
- d. The Pharisees asked the healed man what he thought of Jesus (17), ***So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."***
- 1) Related verses
    - a) John 4:19, *The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.*
    - b) John 6:14, *When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) Thomas Constable, *Faced with having to decide if Jesus was from God or not, the healed man concluded that He was a prophet similar to other miracle-working Old Testament prophets (e.g., 2 Kings 2:19–22; 4:18–44; 5:1–14). This was an advance over his previous description of Jesus as simply "the man who is called Jesus" (v. 11). His faith was growing.*
    - b) Leon Morris, *It is a measure of the Pharisees' perplexity and division that they ask the man what he thinks of Jesus. Normally they would not have dreamed of putting a question on a religious issue to such a man. But after all he did know what had happened. So they ask for his opinion ... The man is definite. "He is a prophet." If this seems to us inadequate we must remember that the man had no way of knowing that Jesus was more. His contact with the Lord had been very brief. And for him "prophet" was probably the highest place he could assign to a man of God; his answer puts Jesus in the highest place he knew.*
    - c) William Hendriksen, *The man is advancing in knowledge. He also shows courage. He knew that, through Jesus, God had revealed himself to him by means of this miracle. And surely one who in such a remarkable manner reveals God must be a prophet!*
    - d) George Beasley-Murray, *The answer of the formerly blind man to what he thought of the one who had healed him is to be compared with the declaration of the woman of Samaria: "He is a prophet" (cf. 4:19).*
    - e) William Barclay, *It is the simple fact of Christian experience that many people may not be able to put into theologically correct language what they believe Jesus to be, but in spite of that they can witness to what Jesus has done for their souls. Even when we cannot understand with our intellect, we can still feel with our hearts. It is better to love Jesus than to love theories about him.*
3. The Pharisees interrogated the parents of the healed man (18-23)
- a. They asked the parents how he could see (18-19), ***The Jews did not believe this about him—that he was blind and received sight—until they summoned the parents of the one who had received his sight. 19 They asked them, "Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"***
    - 1) George-Murray Beasley, *The authorities, in deciding to call the parents of the man before them, are doubtless actuated by a suspicion that a miracle had not actually taken place (as appears in the next paragraph).*
    - 2) Thomas Constable, *Evidently the Pharisees chose to interview the healed man's parents because they could not unite on a decision about Jesus. They wanted more information from people closer to him than just his neighbors (v. 8). Only his parents could affirm that he had been truly blind from birth.*

- 3) Warren Wiersbe, *Perhaps they could discredit the miracle. If so, then they could convince the people that Jesus had plotted the whole thing and was really deceiving the people. He had craftily “switched” beggars so that the sighted man was not the man who had been known as the blind beggar ... The best way to get that kind of evidence would be to interrogate the parents of the beggar, so they called them in and asked them two questions: (1) “Is this your son?” And (2) “If he is, how does he now see?” If they refused to answer either question, they were in trouble; or if they answered with replies contrary to what the leaders wanted, they were in trouble. What a dilemma!*
  - 4) William Hendriksen, *To believe that this man had been blind and had been cured of his blindness would have been the first step toward crediting Jesus with a remarkable miracle. This step they did not want to take. Just as one often believes what he wishes to believe, so also one often disbelieves what he wishes to disbelieve ... Verse 19 implies that the Jewish leaders had heard a rumor to the effect that these parents had been talking about the cure of their son. On the basis of this information the examiners now ask two questions. First, they wish to know whether this is that widely discussed son who by the parents was said to have been born blind; secondly, they desire information with reference to the fact and manner of his cure.*
  - 5) Louis Barbieri, *The questions (v. 19) reflected a hope on the part of the Pharisees that the situation was a case of mistaken identity. To discredit the healing was to discredit the character and identity of Jesus.*
  - 6) William Barclay, *There were the man’s parents. They were obviously uncooperative, but at the same time they were afraid. The synagogue authorities had a powerful weapon, the weapon of excommunication, whereby a man was shut off from the congregation of God’s people. Back in the days of Ezra, we read of a decree that if anyone did not obey the command of the authorities, ‘their property should be forfeited, and they themselves banned from the congregation’ (Ezra 10:8). Jesus warned his disciples that their name would be cast out for evil (Luke 6:22). He told them that they would be put out of the synagogues (John 16:2).*
  - 7) Charles Swindoll, *This is not a search for truth. This is a deliberate sifting of facts, in which inconvenient evidence is set aside in favor of what will build a damning case against the Pharisees’ enemy.*
  - 8) F. F. Bruce, *“The Jews” of verse 18 are presumably the Pharisees of verse 13 ... The people who could testify acceptably whether he was born blind or not were his parents, so they were summoned. They obeyed the summons, but were very ill at ease. It was plain that the authorities were annoyed at what had happened and, although the parents were naturally glad that their son was no longer blind, they were unhappy that he should be mixed up with someone who was in disfavor with the authorities ... Wisely, they confined their evidence to what they actually knew. They gave plain answers to the first part of the question—“Is this your son, who you say was born blind?”—but refused to indulge in speculation about his cure.*
- b. The parents did not know and fearfully suggested that they ask their son (20-23)
- 1) They confirmed the healed man was their son but did not know how he was healed (20-21), ***“We know this is our son and that he was born blind,” his parents answered. 21 “But we don’t know how he now sees, and we don’t know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he’s of age. He will speak for himself.”***
    - a. Thomas Constable, *The man’s parents confirmed that he was indeed their son and that he had been blind from birth, so they testified that a unique miracle had taken place. Yet they were unwilling to give their opinion about how their son became able to see or to identify Jesus as his Healer.*
    - b. Edwin Blum, *The parents shifted the pressure from themselves by noting that their son was of legal age to testify for himself (vv. 21, 23).*
    - c. Warren Wiersbe, *The Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus, and the parents were trying to avoid a trap; but all of them were only ensnaring themselves!*
    - d. Leon Morris, *The parents were evidently of a very different temper from that of their sturdily minded son. Their reply is characterized by timidity and a readiness to submit tamely to the authority of their questioners. They testify out of their own knowledge to the identity of the man as their son, and to the fact that he was born blind. But they say they know nothing of how or by whom he received his sight ... There is no reason for thinking that they had been present when the cure was performed, so it was inevitable that they should give some negative answers. What was not inevitable was that they should manifest such an indecent concern for thrusting the matter back on their son, with their “Ask him,” their “he is of age,” and their “he will speak for himself.” It is plain that they discerned danger and had no intention of being caught up in it with their son.*

- e. William Hendriksen, *At a decisive moment, when they should have spoken, they were guilty of “passing the buck.” Nevertheless, we must not be too hard on them. The question must always be asked, “What would we have done in similar circumstances?” The threatened punishment was most terrible!*
  - f. Charles Swindoll, *The Pharisees’ campaign of fear and intimidation was by this time well known, so the parents would offer nothing more than the barest facts while deferring to their son. They said, in effect, “He is not our responsibility; if someone is to be punished for his testimony, punish him.”*
  - g. F. F. Bruce, ... *To be admissible as a witness in court he had to be at least thirteen; this man was certainly older than that ... They confirmed that their son had been born blind, and since he had plainly recovered his sight, it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that a miracle had been performed.*
- 2) Their response was tempered by fear of the Pharisees (22-23), ***His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jews, since the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him as Messiah, he would be banned from the synagogue. 23 This is why his parents said, “He’s of age; ask him.”***
- a. Thomas Constable, *It is uncertain whether we are to understand temporary expulsion or permanent excommunication here. The most solemn form of excommunication was to put someone under the ban (Hebrew herem; Greek anathema) ... the man’s parents were sufficiently intimidated to keep their mouths shut and say nothing about Jesus, either good or bad.*
  - b. Kenneth Gangel, *From our modern perspective we can hardly imagine the horror of excommunication in Jesus’ time. Such a ban would curse these people forever from the religious life of their community. The defense of an unknown prophet, even one great enough to heal their blind son, hardly seemed worth such a risk. To avoid such punishment, the parents threw the burden of proof back on their son.*
  - c. Leon Morris, *John explains the predicament in which the parents found themselves. It is interesting that the authorities had agreed as early as this to take action against the followers of Jesus. It is difficult to know exactly what meaning is to be attached to “confessing” ... “Confess” seems rather to be interpreted in a broad sense, as of giving support to Jesus. “Put out of the synagogue” will refer to something like excommunication ... “Already the Jews had decided” does not necessarily indicate a formal decree of the Sanhedrin. It might well mean that some of the leading men had agreed among themselves to take action against the supporters of Jesus, perhaps to exclude them from synagogues, perhaps to initiate proceedings in the Sanhedrin.*
  - d. William Hendriksen, *The one who was unsynagogued was virtually cut off from the religious and social life of Israel (cf. Lk. 6:22). From every point of view—social, economic, religious—the results were frightening, and this especially for people who were so poor that their son had to make his living by begging! Hence, although we cannot justify these parents in shirking their duty, we can understand them. How often has not courage been lacking in the case of those who should have shown it when the Sanhedrin or its equivalent under some other name threatened to put out those who were defending the truth of God!*
  - e. Louis Barbieri, *Although there is no extrabiblical evidence that an official Jewish ban against those confessing Christ was established at this time, the severe persecution of Christians in the rest of the NT (e.g., the book of Acts) supports the apostle’s interpretive remark.*
  - f. William Barclay, *There were two kinds of excommunication. There was the ban, the cherem, by which a man was banished from the synagogue for life. In such a case he was publicly denounced. He was cursed in the presence of the people, and he was cut off from God and from society. There was sentence of temporary excommunication which might last for a month, or for some other fixed period. The terror of such a situation was that a Jew would regard it as shutting him out not only from the synagogue but also from God. That is why the man’s parents answered that their son was quite old enough to be a legal witness and to answer his own questions.*

4. The Pharisees interrogated the healed man a second time (24-34)
  - a. They declared that Jesus was a sinner (24), ***So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.”***
    - 1) Related verses
      - a) Joshua 7:19, *Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.”*
      - b) John 9:16, *Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them.*
    - 2) Comments
      - a) Charles Swindoll, *The Pharisees struggled to build a case against Jesus, which drove them to desperation. Their opening statement at the man’s second inquisition reveals their predetermined conclusion, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.*
      - b) Grant Osborne, *The parents have dodged their questions and become a dead end, so the Pharisees have to return to the man himself. They no longer want his opinion. It is too dangerous to their cause. Instead they try to put words in his mouth, couching the demand for a lie in pious terms: “Give glory to God by telling the truth.... We know this man is a sinner.”*
      - c) Thomas Constable, *The Pharisees, who considered themselves enlightened, now tried to badger the formerly blind man into denying that Jesus was a good man ... They had already decided that Jesus was not the Messiah, but they had to admit that He had done a remarkable miracle. Having failed to prove Jesus a sinner, they now hoped that the healed man would cave in to pressure from the authorities and testify that Jesus was a sinner ... The Pharisees assumed that glorifying God and glorifying Jesus were mutually exclusive, when actually to glorify the Son is to glorify the Father.*
      - d) Edwin Blum, *The authorities tried to pressure the healed man into withdrawing his testimony about Jesus: Give glory to God (cf. Josh. 7:19; 1 Sam. 6:5; Jer. 13:16) was a call to admit his guilt in siding with Jesus, whom they called a sinner. When they said We know, they were pressuring him. Unbelief often claims to be scientific, but here it was just stubborn and willful.*
      - e) Warren Wiersbe, *Anxious to settle the case, the Pharisees did call the man in; and this time, they put him under oath. “Give God the praise” is a form of Jewish “swearing in” at court (see Josh. 7:19) ... But the “judges” prejudiced everybody from the start! “We know that this Man is a sinner!” They were warning the witness that he had better cooperate with the court, or he might be excommunicated. But the beggar was made of sturdier stuff than to be intimidated. He had experienced a miracle, and he was not afraid to tell them what had happened.*
      - f) William Hendriksen, .... *so reason these Pharisees, that Jesus did actually cover the eyes of this man with mud and that he sent him to Siloam. When the man came to Siloam and washed the mud off his eyes, it was God—not Jesus—who performed the miracle. Hence, the man should give God the glory!*
  - b. The healed man said clearly that the supposed sinner gave him sight (25), ***He answered, “Whether or not He’s a sinner, I don’t know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!”***
    - 1) William Hendriksen, *As the story progresses it becomes increasingly clear that this man is not an ordinary individual. He is not easily shaken. Evidently the vaunted knowledge of these eminent judges has failed to impress him.*
    - 2) Thomas Constable, *The healed man refused to speculate on Jesus’ sinfulness. He left that to the theological heavyweights. But he also refused to back down and deny that Jesus had given him sight ... Regardless of a believer’s understanding of Christology, he or she can always testify to the change that Jesus Christ has effected in one’s own life.*
    - 3) Warren Wiersbe, *He did not debate the character of Jesus Christ, because that was beyond his knowledge and experience. But one thing he did know: now he could see. His testimony (John 9:25) reminds me of Psalm 27.*
    - 4) Leon Morris, *The man has a sturdy independence, as his answer shows. He does not go into the theoretical question of whether Jesus was a sinner or not. He sticks to the facts of which he has certain knowledge, and thus produces an answer that is a classic.*

- 5) George Beasley-Murray, *Of the alleged sinfulness of Jesus he knows nothing; but one thing he does know, and not even the Pharisees can shake its certainty: once he was a blind man, and now he can see. And as he and they know perfectly well, that sets in question the assertion that Jesus is a sinful man.*
  - 6) Grant Osborne, *The man's response is curt, but it is truth. He states what he knows and what he doesn't know. He has no idea if they are right that Jesus is a sinner. What he does know is simple: "I was blind but now I see." The Pharisees have not escaped from their dilemma—how can a sinner perform so great a miracle?*
  - 7) F. F. Bruce, *The man's testimony has been repeated innumerable times by men and women who have found in his words the means of communicating their own experience of deliverance from spiritual blindness through the in-shining of the light of the world—"I know one thing: I was blind and now I see."*
- c. The Pharisees asked the healed man how Jesus opened his eyes (26), ***Then they asked him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"***
- 1) Warren Wiersbe, *I can imagine the man getting quite impatient at this point. After all, he had been blind all his life, and there was so much now to see. He certainly did not want to spend much longer in a synagogue court, looking at angry faces and answering the same questions!*
  - 2) Thomas Constable, *The Pharisees hoped that, as the man repeated his story, he would either contradict himself or in some other way discredit his own testimony. This is the fourth time that the Pharisees asked how the miracle had happened (vv. 10, 15, 19, 26). People are often more curious about the mechanics of miracles than they are about the person who performs them. Likewise, people are often more concerned about identifying whom they can blame than they are in really helping people.*
  - 3) William Hendriksen, *Clearly, the Pharisees are being crowded against the wall. Having come out second best in their interview with the parents, they have failed even more wretchedly in their conversation with the son! They seem to be in a quandary ... Having exhausted their mental resources, they now return to the questions asked previously (see on 9:15), perhaps because they can think of nothing else to do. It is also possible that they were trying by means of this procedure to weary the man, so that by forcing boredom upon him they might cause him, in an unguarded moment, to make an inconsistent statement.*
  - 4) Louis Barbieri, *The Pharisees had finally come to believe that the blind man was healed (cf. v. 18). But they still held that anyone who broke the Sabbath was a sinner (v. 24).*
- d. The man scolded the Pharisees for the repeated request (27), ***"I already told you," he said, "and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to become His disciples too, do you?"***
- 1) Thomas Constable, *The restored blind man refused to review the obvious facts. He now knew that the Pharisees did not want the truth but information that they could use against Jesus. They had not listened to him in the sense of believing him the first time (cf. 5:25). He sarcastically suggested that perhaps the reason they wanted to hear about Jesus—one more time—was because they wanted to follow Him as His disciples. This response indicates that the man felt no intimidation from his accusers. He knew that he stood on solid ground with his testimony, so much so that he could mock his examiners with a bit of humor.*
  - 2) Warren Wiersbe, *We admire the boldness of the man in asking those irate Pharisees if they wanted to follow Jesus! The man expected a negative answer, but he was courageous even to ask it.*
  - 3) Leon Morris, *This is not to the taste of the healed man. Forthrightly he reminds them that he has already answered these questions. Therefore the questioners can surely not be seeking information? What then are they trying to do? ... The man did not really expect that people so plainly opposed to Jesus were changing their minds, but he was quite ready to bait them. His "too" is significant. He was now counting himself among Jesus' disciples.*
  - 4) William Hendriksen, *Clearly, the man is losing his patience. He is becoming disgusted with this stalling procedure. That, in itself, is not at all surprising. What is surprising is the fact that he is not at all afraid to express his marked displeasure in words that are clear and forceful. He had not inherited his parents' timidity. Moreover, he brandishes the weapon of irony—so delicious to him, but so distasteful to them—and he does it in such a manner that the intended victims would never forgive or forget.*

- 5) Charles Swindoll, *The man's response (v. 27) highlights the absurdity of the questioning, which angered the Pharisees, who then resorted to intimidation.*
  - 6) Grant Osborne, *In his answer the man seems to have realized the absence of any search for truth on their part and goes on the offensive ... so he responds with biting irony, "Do you want to become his disciples too?" (v. 27). It is quite possible the man has started to think of himself as a disciple and so is mocking their attempt to put words in his mouth.*
- e. The Pharisees scorned Jesus because He was not following their tradition (28-29), ***They ridiculed him: "You're that man's disciple, but we're Moses' disciples. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses. But this man—we don't know where He's from!"***
- 1) Related verses
    - a) John 5:45, *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope.*
    - b) John 8:14, *Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) Thomas Constable, *The Pharisees saw nothing funny in the man's reply, however. They were deadly serious in their attempt to gather enough information so that they could execute Jesus. They undoubtedly realized that this former beggar had seen through their veiled attempt to condemn Jesus unjustly ... They turned his charge back on himself and presented following Jesus as irreconcilable with following Moses. Of course, the Pharisees were not the disciples of Moses that they claimed to be. Ironically, Jesus was. Failure to know where Jesus came from amounted to failing to know where He received His authority. Moses had come from God, but Jesus' critics claimed not to know whether He came from God or from Satan (v. 16; cf. 7:27). Most of them suspected the latter.*
    - b) Warren Wiersbe, *The Pharisees were cautious men who would consider themselves conservatives, when in reality they were 'preservatives.' A true conservative takes the best of the past and uses it, but he is also aware of the new things that God is doing. The new grows out of the old (Matt. 13:52). A 'preservative' simply embalms the past and preserves it. He is against change and resists the new things that God is doing.*
    - c) Edwin Blum, *The idea of this illiterate beggar sarcastically suggesting they were interested in Jesus was more than their pride could take. They insulted him and then claimed that they were Moses' disciples. Jesus to them was an unknown. We don't even know where He comes from. Yet they claimed to know Moses who, Jesus said, wrote about Him (5:46).*
    - d) Leon Morris, *They stop arguing and abuse the man, then contrast their position with his. He, they say, can claim only to be Jesus' disciple; they are Moses' disciples. This gives them a sure basis, they think. They speak out of certainty. Whatever be the case with the rabble, such men as they know that God spoke to Moses. They regard their ignorance of Jesus' origin as damaging to his cause. But some Jerusalemites have argued that when the Christ comes no one will know where he is from (7:27), so that ignorance of his origin could be urged in favor of his messiahship. Their argument is less convincing and less consistent than they may have thought. Had they considered its implications they might have been led to the truth.*
    - e) William Hendriksen, *Under the circumstances this reaction of the Jewish leaders is entirely understandable. They were not the kind of people who would admit defeat. Moreover, they feel deeply insulted and humiliated. A mere beggar has defied their authority. He has made sport of their dignity and superior position. What, they about to become disciples of Jesus? His very name is poison to them, so that they refuse to take it upon their lips. They prefer to call him "that one" or "that fellow."*
    - f) George Beasley-Murray, *Here we have the heart of the opposition of Judaism to Christianity: Moses and the Law are set over against Jesus and his teaching; the authority of Moses is indisputable, the authority of Jesus is spurious.*
    - g) Louis Barbieri, *On their part, they claimed to be disciples of Moses and to lack knowledge of Jesus' earthly identity. Misunderstanding His earthly identity (cf. 7:41-42; Mt 2:5-6; Lk 2:15) made them ignorant of His heavenly origin as well.*

- h) Grant Osborne, *The Pharisees cannot answer the man. It is obvious that he has correctly judged their intentions, so they too go on the offensive. They now show their true colors as they begin to insult and curse him for exposing a truth they don't want to face ... They assume that this man could not follow Jesus and Moses at the same time. God revealed his law to Moses, and Jesus was a contrary upstart and heretic. Yet Jesus had already stated that belief in Moses mandated belief in him, for Moses "wrote about" him (see 5:46). Their tragic error was a failure to accept the truth about Jesus' origins.*
- I) F. F. Bruce, *Naturally they do not appreciate the man's irony; it is too evident that he has seen through their plan to trip him up. They therefore have recourse to abuse. Who would be a disciple of someone whose origin was unknown and whose authority was disallowed by those in a position to judge such matters? An ignoramus like the man who stood before them might know no better than to take such a person seriously; they were better informed. Moses was their teacher; they were his disciples.*
- f. The man rebuked the Pharisees for not believing what a great thing Jesus did (30-33)
- 1) He affirmed that God only listens to those who fear God (30-31), ***"This is an amazing thing," the man told them. "You don't know where He is from, yet He opened my eyes! 31 We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He listens to him.***
- a) Thomas Constable, *The healed man not only possessed a sense of humor and courage but also common sense. It seemed amazing to him that the Pharisees could not see that Jesus had come from God ("not know where He is from"). Their unbelief, in view of the evidence, was incredible to him. The proof that Jesus had come from God was His ability to perform such a powerful and constructive miracle as giving sight to a man born blind.*
- b) William Hendriksen, *The idea that God hears the prayers of the righteous but rejects the prayers of the wicked is found everywhere in the Bible: 1 Sam. 8:18; Job 27:9; 35:12; Ps. 18:41; 66:18; Prov. 1:28; 15:29; Is. 1:15; 59:2; Jer. 11:11; 14:12; Ezek. 8:18; Mic. 3:4; Zech. 7:13; John 8:21; Acts 10:35.*
- c) Warren Wiersbe, *It seemed incredible to the healed man that the Pharisees would not know this Man who had opened his eyes! How many people were going around Jerusalem, opening the eyes of blind people? Instead of investigating the miracle, these religious leaders should have been investigating the One who did the miracle and learning from Him.*
- d) George Beasley-Murray, *The man on trial becomes more bold. "Here is a truly amazing thing"—not that he should believe Jesus to be a prophet, but that the religious leaders should be so ignorant of Jesus and so disbelieving! The "amazing thing" is not faith, but unbelief!*
- e) Kenneth Gangel, *The man did not understand all the theological implications of the event, but he kept a level head. His newly-found physical sight was rapidly joining forces with spiritual sight.*
- 2) Never has anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind so God must have heard Jesus (32-33), ***Throughout history no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, He wouldn't be able to do anything.***
- a) Thomas Constable, *The man was correct that Scripture recorded no former healing of a man born blind. Evidently Jesus had not healed anyone in this condition previously either ... He therefore concluded that Jesus must have come from God. Jesus did not qualify as the sinner that the Pharisees were making Him out to be.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *According to the beggar's logic, this miracle was notable and unique ... He reasoned that God grants not the requests of sinners but those of the righteous (cf. Elijah, James 5:16-18). Therefore this Man, he said, is from God. Otherwise He could do no miracles.*
- c) Warren Wiersbe, *The beggar then gave the "experts" a lesson in practical theology. Perhaps he had Psalm 66:18 in mind: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The leaders called Jesus a sinner (John 9:24), yet Jesus was used of God to open the blind man's eyes ... He added another telling argument: Jesus healed a man born blind. Never, to their knowledge, had this occurred before. So, God not only heard Jesus, but He enabled Him to give the man sight. How, then, could Jesus be a sinner?*

- d) Leon Morris, *He goes on to point out that restoration of sight to the blind is most uncommon. Indeed, it has never been heard since the age began that a man born blind has received sight. His chain of reasoning is complete. Jesus could not possibly have done such a thing, a thing unparalleled in all history, unless he were from God (cf. 3:2). For the man the proposition is incontestable.*
  - e) Kenneth Hendriksen, *The Pharisees have suffered a humiliating defeat. They have been driven into a corner. Meanwhile, the beggar has made definite progress in his confession. He is no longer saying, "Whether he (Jesus) is a sinner, I do not know" (9:25). By this time he knows that Jesus is not a sinner, but the recipient of God's favor in a very high degree.*
  - f) E. C. Hoskyns, *Jesus opened his eyes; everybody knows that God responds to the prayers of righteous men, not sinners; Jesus therefore is a righteous man, and it was God who gave him power to open his eyes. Moreover, this power was unique: to restore sight to one who had lost it was miraculous enough, but to give it to one who never had it is unheard of. This unprecedented act therefore shows that God is with Jesus in an unprecedented way.*
  - g) Louis Barbieri, *No known biblical or extrabiblical Jewish sources record the healing of a blind man. This was a power associated only with the coming Messiah (Is 29:18; 35:5; 42:7, 18; 61:1). The healed man concluded (v. 33) that Jesus could do nothing on His own initiative—the very affirmation Jesus Himself made (Jn 5:19, 30; 8:28).*
  - h) Charles Swindoll, *The religious leaders knew the Scriptures better than anyone, and they had been trained in Hebrew history and theology. Yet the man born blind (presumably because of God's punishment for sin) had no difficulty putting the facts together to arrive at an obvious conclusion. His response rested on the very theological traditions the Pharisees held most dear.*
- g. The Pharisees responded by throwing the healed man out of the synagogue (34), ***"You were born entirely in sin," they replied, "and are you trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out.***
- 1) Related verse, John 9:22, *(His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.)*
  - 2) Comments
    - a) Thomas Constable, *Scorn has often served as a final resort when evidence fails, and it served the Pharisees this way here. They implied that this man's congenital blindness was the result of a sinful condition ("You were born entirely in sins") that rendered him incapable of spiritual insight (cf. v. 2). By saying this, they unintentionally admitted that Jesus had cured a man blind from birth ... This poor man lost his privilege of participating in synagogue worship for taking his stand in support of Jesus (cf. v. 22). Many other Jewish believers followed him in this fate throughout the years since this incident happened. This is the first persecution of Jesus' followers that John recorded.*
    - b) Edwin Blum, *Upstaged by a beggar, they could only insult him again and throw him out of the synagogue (cf. v. 22). They reasoned that his blindness must have been due to some specific "sin" (they forgot the Book of Job). But they were irrational. How could anybody be steeped in sin at birth? Everybody is born with a sinful nature (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12), but a baby can hardly commit numerous acts of sin moments after it is born!*
    - c) Kenneth Gangel, *So far in this chapter we have seen two kinds of blindness. The physical blindness of the man was treatable by the power of God's Son. But the Pharisees, unwilling to acknowledge their blindness, placed themselves beyond the realm of his healing power.*
    - d) William Hendriksen, *Having lost the argument, the Pharisees resort to arrogant, glaring abuse. They answered and said to him, You were wholly born in sin, and you would teach us? But even this abuse contains the evidence of their defeat, for by implication they now admit that this man who stands before them clear-sighted was born blind.*
    - e) William Barclay, *Often we have our differences with people, and it is well that it should be so. But the moment insult and abuse and threat enter into an argument, it ceases to be an argument and becomes a contest in bitterness. If we become angry and resort to wild words and hot threats, all we prove is that our case is disturbingly weak.*

5. The priority of spiritual sight (35-41)

a. Saving faith (spiritual sight) is in Jesus alone (35-38)

- 1) Jesus asked the blind man if he believed in the Son of Man (35-36), **Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” 36 He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”**

a) Related verses

- 1} John 10:36, *do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?*  
2} Romans 10:14, *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?*

b) Comments

- 1} William Hendriksen, *Jesus, the Good Shepherd* (see chapter 10), is interested not only in the body but also in the soul of those whom he saves (see also on 5:14). So, having heard that this man had been expelled from the synagogue, the Lord seeks and finds him.  
2} Warren Wiersbe, *The Good Shepherd always cares for His sheep*. Jesus knew that the man had been excommunicated, so He found him and revealed Himself to him. Remember, the man knew our Lord’s voice, but he had never seen His face ... The man now reached the climax of his knowledge of Jesus Christ and his faith in Him. It is not enough to believe that He is “a man called Jesus,” or even “a prophet” or “a man of God.” “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1). John wrote his Gospel to prove that Jesus is the Son of God, and to present to his readers the testimonies of people who met Jesus and affirmed that He is God’s Son. This beggar is one such witness.  
3} Thomas Constable, *The healed man had responded positively and courageously to the light that he had so far, but he did not have much light. Therefore Jesus took the initiative and sought him out with further revelation designed to bring him to full faith ... Jesus’ purpose was not just to provide physical healing for the man, but to bring him to salvation. So when Jesus found him, He asked him: “Do you believe [place your trust] in the Son of Man?” Some early manuscripts and modern translations have “Son of God,” but “Son of Man” has the better support. This personal response to God’s grace is essential for salvation. “You” is emphatic in the Greek text. Jesus probably chose this title for Himself because it expressed the fact that He was the Man who had come from God (Dan. 7:13–14; cf. John 1:51; 3:13–14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28). Furthermore it connotes Jesus’ role as Judge, which He proceeded to explain (v. 39).*  
4} A. W. Pink, *How true it is that those who honor God are honored by Him. ... He [Jesus] cheered this man with gracious words. Yea, He revealed Himself more fully to him than to any other individual, save the Samaritan adulteress. He plainly avowed His deity: He presented Himself in His highest glory as ‘the Son of God [cf. 5:25; 10:36; 11:4].*  
5} Edwin Blum, *Do you (emphatic in the Gr.) believe in the Son of Man? This was a call to commitment. “Son of Man” is a title of Messiah which includes a rich background (cf. Dan. 7:13; and comments on Mark 2:10).*  
6} Kenneth Gangel, *As the text unfolds, there seems to be no question that this man became a believer. The great Bible scholar B. F. Westcott claimed this was the first time Jesus offered himself as a personal object of faith. Let us not miss the fact that Jesus looked for the man rather than the other way around. How common our terminology when we talk about “finding God” or “finding Christ.” But neither the Father nor the Son was ever lost. We are lost ones, and God finds us.*  
7} Grant Osborne, *It is Jesus the Son of Man who rewards the man’s belief with eternal life and then brings down judgment on the blind Pharisees (vv. 39–41).*

- 2) Jesus' response led the blind man to faith in Him (37-38), **Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you."** **38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.**
- a) Related verses, John 4:26, *Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."*
- b) Comments
- 1} *You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you*
- a) John Chrysostom (4<sup>th</sup> c. Bishop of Constantinople), *The Jews cast him out of the Temple; the Lord of the Temple found him.*
- b) Thomas Constable, *Jesus then identified Himself, introducing Himself ("He is the one who is talking with you") as the Son of Man (cf. 4:26) ... The man may have suspected that Jesus was his healer because of the sound of His voice, but seeing Him made the identification certain. The man had seen Him with the eyes of faith previously, but now he also saw Him physically, with recognition. Similarly modern believers see Him by faith, but in the future faith will give way to sight.*
- c) Edwin Blum, *The beggar responded that he was willing to believe but he was ignorant. Jesus then disclosed Himself and gave the beggar the necessary knowledge for faith. Faith involves an act of the will, based on information.*
- d) Warren Wiersbe, *Jesus identified Himself as the Son of God (see John 9:35; also 5:25), and the beggar believed and was saved (John 9:38). "My sheep hear My voice" (John 10:27). He did not "see and believe"; he heard and believed.*
- e) Leon Morris, *Jesus discloses his identity. His use of the verb "you have seen" must have meant a good deal to the man who until that day had seen nothing.*
- f) William Hendriksen, *In words that are almost identical to those found in 4:26 (see on that passage) Jesus reveals himself to this man as the true Messiah, even the Son of man.*
- 2} *He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him*
- a) Thomas Constable, *The man confessed his faith in Jesus, and appropriately proceeded to bow down (Gr. proskyneō) in worship before Him. This is the only place in this Gospel where we read that anyone worshipped Jesus ... This man was no longer welcome in his synagogue, but he took a new place of worship at Jesus' feet ... This man's progress, from dark unbelief to the light of faith, is very significant in view of John's stated purpose of bringing his readers to believe that Jesus is the Christ (20:31). It shows that this process sometimes, indeed usually, involves stages of illumination. It is also interesting that the problems that this man had with the Pharisees were what God used to open his spiritual eyes to who Jesus really was. It is often through difficulties that God teaches us more about Himself.*
- b) Edwin Blum, *The Jews had cast him out of the synagogue, but Jesus does not cast out those who come to Him (6:37). One goal of salvation is worship of the One who saves (4:23).*
- c) Warren Wiersbe, *Not only did he trust the Saviour, but he worshiped Him. If Jesus Christ is not God, then why did He accept worship? Peter, Paul, and Barnabas certainly didn't accept worship (see Acts 10:25–26; 14:11–15).*
- d) Kenneth Gangel, *Worship is the normal response of faith. Indeed, worship without faith is not worship at all ... His faith response of verse 38 is one of the most beautiful statements of the New Testament—Lord, I believe.*
- e) Leon Morris, *This is the climax for the man of a process that has been going on throughout the chapter ... The man sees that Jesus is the one object of a right faith and accordingly puts his trust in him. This is the only place in this Gospel where anyone is said to worship Jesus.*
- f) William Hendriksen, *... recognizing in Jesus the Messiah, the very Son of man, who is also Son of God and therefore the proper object of worship, the man falls down on his knees and renders religious worship (not merely respect or even reverence) to his Benefactor. In the Gospel of John the verb always indicates divine worship (see also 4:20, 21, 22, 23, 24; 12:20).*

- g} George Beasley-Murray, ... *this is the first time he has been able to see the face of Jesus; and he learns that he is actually looking on the Son of Man! The effect of this revelation is as overwhelming as that to the Samaritan woman: the latter runs to her village to proclaim the advent of the Messiah, the former prostrates himself before Jesus.*
- h} Louis Barbieri, *The man's knowledge of Jesus progressed from a man (v. 11), a prophet (v. 17), one from God (v. 33), and finally the Son of Man to be believed (v. 38) and worshiped like God Himself (cf. 4:21–24).*
- I} William Barclay, *To this man, there was made the great revelation that Jesus was the Son of God. Loyalty always brings revelation; it is to those who are true to him that Jesus most fully reveals himself. The penalty of loyalty may well be persecution and ostracism at the hands of others; its reward is a closer walk with Christ, and an increasing knowledge of his wonder.*
- j} Grant Osborne, *When the Pharisees looked at Jesus, they saw only a false prophet to be despised and disposed of. There is a difference between physical sight and spiritual insight. This man has the latter. He sees the face of the one who brings life and immediately cries out (v. 38), "Lord, I believe!" The scene ends with marvelous worship as this man enters the kingdom of God.*

b. Judgment is for those who are self-righteous (39-41)

- 1) The blind can gain sight but those who think they see remain blind (39), **Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind."**

a) Related verses

- 1} John 5:22, *For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,*
- 2} Matthew 11:25, *At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children;*
- 3} Matthew 9:13, *Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."*
- 4} Matthew 13:13, *This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.*
- 5} Mark 4:12, *so that " 'they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.'"*
- 6} 2 Corinthians 2:16, *to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?*

b) Comments

- 1} Grant Osborne, *The thesis of the whole story comes in verse 39, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." This narrative is an acted parable of double reversal on the theme of light and darkness.*
- 2} Charles Swindoll, ... *the true nature of good and evil are exposed when subjected to the light of Christ.*
- 3} Thomas Constable, *Jesus concluded His comments to the man by explaining something of His purpose in the Incarnation ... Jesus' primary purpose was to save some, but in doing so He had to pass judgment (Gr. kríma, cf. 3:17–21, 36; 12:47). Judging was the result of His coming, not the reason for it ... Jesus' primary purpose was to save some, but in doing so He had to pass judgment (Gr. kríma, cf. 3:17–21, 36; 12:47) ... The last part of the verse consists of two purpose clauses. Jesus was evidently alluding to Isaiah 6:10 and 42:19. His coming inevitably involved exposing the spiritual blindness of some so that they might recognize their blindness, turn to Jesus in faith, and see (cf. vv. 25, 36). Conversely, His coming also involved confirming the spiritual blindness of those who professed to see spiritually but really did not because of their unbelief (cf. vv. 16, 22, 24, 29, 34). Jesus is the pivot on which all human destiny turns. Jesus explained that what had happened to this man and the Pharisees was an example of what His whole ministry was about.*

- 4} D. A. Carson, ... *a certain poverty of spirit* (cf. Mt. 5:3), *an abasement of personal pride* (especially over one's religious opinions), *and a candid acknowledgment of spiritual blindness* are indispensable characteristics of the person who receives spiritual sight, true revelation, at the hands of Jesus ...
  - 5} B. F. Westcott, *By willfully confining their vision men lose the very power of seeing.*
  - 6} Edwin Blum, *Does this verse contradict 3:17? According to that verse (and 12:47) Jesus was not sent "to condemn the world." But here Jesus said, For judgment I have come into this world. Jesus meant He came to pronounce decisions on the ungodly, like a judge (cf. 5:22, 27). The blind who come to sight are those who, admitting their helplessness and inability, trust Jesus for salvation. Those who see and become blind are those whose self-trust and pride blinds them to the wonders of Jesus. He does not condemn them by making them blind; they blind themselves by rejecting Him and Satan contributes to that blinding (2 Cor. 4:4).*
  - 7} Warren Wiersbe, *The reason for our Lord's coming was salvation, but the result of His coming was condemnation of those who would not believe. The same sun that brings beauty out of the seeds also exposes the vermin hiding under the rocks. The religious leaders were blind and would not admit it; therefore, the light of truth only made them blinder. The beggar admitted his need, and he received both physical and spiritual sight. No one is so blind as he who will not see, the one who thinks he has "all truth" and there is nothing more for him to learn (John 9:28, 34).*
  - 8} Kenneth Gangel, *Instead of faith in the Lord, the Pharisees demonstrated the futility of faith in one's self. John 9:39 is one of the most striking verses in the Bible. Jesus made himself the pivotal point of human destiny. Surely the verse emphasizes that spiritually blind people who recognize their malady will be given an opportunity to see. But those who are spiritually blind and deny it will never know the light.*
  - 9} Leon Morris, *We must understand the concluding words to mean "those who claim to have spiritual sight (apart from me) may be shown up for the blind people that they really are" (cf. also Isa. 6:10).*
  - 10} William Hendriksen, *When Jesus sees this man on his knees in the attitude of genuine worship, and compares this humble and confiding condition of heart and mind with the hostility and stubbornness of the Pharisees, he sees that his coming into this world has two diametrically opposed effects. Some receive him with joy and are rewarded. Others reject him and are punished.*
  - 11} William Barclay, *Whenever people are confronted with Jesus, they at once pass a judgment on themselves. If they see in Jesus nothing to desire, nothing to admire, nothing to love, then they have condemned themselves. If they see in Jesus something to wonder at, something to respond to, something to reach out to, then they are on the way to God. Those who are conscious of their own blindness, and who long to see better and to know more, are men and women whose eyes can be opened and who can be led more and more deeply into the truth. Those people who think they know it all, those who do not realize that they cannot see, are men and women who are truly blind and beyond hope and help. Only those who realize their own weakness can become strong. Only those who realize their own blindness can learn to see. Only those who realize their own sin can be forgiven.*
  - 12} F. F. Bruce, *To be so self-deceived as to shut one's eyes to the light is a desperate state to be in. The light is there, but if people refuse to avail themselves of it but rather deliberately reject it, how can they be enlightened? As Jesus said, their sin remains.*
- 2) Self-righteousness does not lead to saving faith (40-41), ***Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.***
- a) Related verses
- 1} Romans 2:19, *and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,*
  - 2} John 15:22, *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.*
  - 3} John 15:24, *If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.*

b) Comments

- 1} Thomas Constable, *Some Pharisees had been listening in on Jesus' conversation with the restored man. They suspected that Jesus might be referring to them when He spoke of the spiritually blind (v. 39). They wanted to make sure that Jesus was not accusing them of spiritual blindness, since they considered themselves the most enlightened among the Jews ... Light causes some eyes to see, but it blinds other eyes. Jesus' revelations had the same effects ... The deceitfulness of sin often makes those people who are in the greatest need of divine revelation and illumination think that they are the most enlightened of human beings. Only the Spirit of God, using the Word of God, can break through that dense darkness, to bring conviction of spiritual blindness, and to create openness to the truth (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6–16).*
- 2} J. Vernon McGee, *Some of the most dogmatic people today are the atheists and the cultists. They say they see, but they are blind. They reject the Lord Jesus Christ, and so their sin remains. Although they are not walking around with a white walking stick, they are blind.*
- 3} Edwin Blum, *Sin constantly deceives people so they live in falsehood. Jesus replied, If the Pharisees were blind to spiritual things absolutely, they might have claimed ignorance as a defense. But their claims and pretensions of spiritual insight (you claim you can see) and leadership made them culpable. They were responsible for their sins because they sinned willfully. It is dangerous to be a teacher of spiritual truths (cf. 3:10; Rom. 2:19–24; James 3:1).*
- 4} Warren Wiersbe, *The listening Pharisees heard what Jesus said and it disturbed them. "Are we blind also?" they asked, expecting a negative answer. Jesus had already called them "blind leaders of the blind" (Matt. 15:14), so they had their answer. They were blinded by their pride, their self-righteousness, their tradition, and their false interpretation of the Word of God ... Our Lord's reply was a paradox. "If you were blind, you would be better off. But you claim to see. Therefore, you are guilty!" Blindness would at least be an excuse for not knowing what was going on. But they did know what was going on. Jesus had performed many miracles and the religious leaders ignored the evidence to make a right decision.*
- 5} Kenneth Gangel, *The availability of light made them guilty of rejecting relief from their blindness. Every person who realizes his or her spiritual blindness becomes a candidate for seeing; those who refuse to recognize their spiritual blindness place themselves beyond help. We might paraphrase Jesus' final words like this: "If you would only admit your blindness, you would not be guilty of sin because I could forgive it; but because you claim your own self-righteousness, your guilt remains" ... How many people enter church Sunday after Sunday thinking they must be good enough in God's eyes since they assess themselves as righteous. Yet they desperately need the light of God's truth to shine on their own wickedness so the light of the world can open their eyes and help them see his truth.*
- 6} Leon Morris, *If they really had spiritual sight they would act differently toward him. Yet they are not completely blind. His meaning is that they have enough spiritual knowledge to be responsible. Had they acted on the best knowledge they had they would have welcomed the Son of God. But they did not act on their best knowledge. They claimed to have sight and acted like the blind. Therefore their sin is not taken away. It remains with them.*
- 7} George Beasley-Murray, *... they certainly saw Jesus at work and heard his proclamation, but because they thought that they had the light, they refused to acknowledge that his works and word were from God. "Had they wished, they could have seen what they really should have seen: the presence of the revelation in Jesus Christ. Their not seeing is a guilty not wanting to see, and that is sin ...*
- 8} Louis Barbieri, *The Jewish leaders had greater accountability because of their privileged position as the leaders of the chosen people, to whom God's revelation had been entrusted (Rm 3:1).*
- 9} William Barclay, *The more knowledge people have, the more they are to be condemned if they do not recognize the good when they see it. If the Pharisees had been brought up in ignorance, they could not have been condemned. Their condemnation lay in the fact that they knew so much and claimed to see so well, and yet failed to recognize God's Son when he came. The law that responsibility is the other side of privilege is written into life.*

## SUMMARY

- Thomas Constable, *This chapter advances the revelation of Jesus' true identity, which was one of John's primary objectives in this Gospel. It also shows that, as the light of this revelation became clearer, so did the darkness, because some people prefer the darkness to the light (3:19).*
- Kenneth Gangel, *Restoring sight to the blind was one of the miracles Jews expected to see in the Messiah. After chapter 8 in which Jesus claimed equality with the Father, John offered another miracle-message event, using the healing of a blind beggar to highlight the spiritual blindness of religion without Christ.*
- Charles Swindoll, *This story of the man born blind, who received sight, and the Pharisees, who bluffed their way through blindness, reminds me of an old saying I learned as a child. "There are none so blind as those who will not see."*
- Grant Osborne, *The two sides of divine judgment also flow out of this story. The man is judged and found worthy; the Pharisees are judged and found wanting. Their blindness stems from their ability to brainwash themselves into thinking they are the paradigms of truth when in reality they are following Satan's lie and turning in unbelief against the only means anyone has of finding salvation.*