

A Sign, A Wonder, and A Savior
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John 9:13-34
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Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles to John 9. We will continue to look at this miraculous work of the Lord Jesus Christ. What we've said in the previous two weeks we've looked at this passage is that what we have here is a sovereignly planned, prepared, visual parable. It is the healing of a man at a point in time in history, it really happened of course, but God had appointed this man to be exactly where he was when Jesus was exactly where He was, so that we could receive spiritual instruction about the nature of salvation, and the nature of being lost. We see this in a number ways. When we read the passage you'll see it again. Before Jesus heals him He stops and talks to His disciples. He sees the man and then He stops and tells them some things. Right after having told them this: ...***While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.*** Then He heals him. He's saying, "Look, this is a visible demonstration of what I just told you." ...***While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.*** Scripture says: "Having said this, He spat on the ground, picked up the formed clay."

Then at the end of the chapter, Jesus goes back to that spiritual purpose of this whole account when after He reveals Himself more fully to the blind man, He says to His disciples and those around Him, ...***For judgment I came into this world,...*** And judgment is separation that the Lord, in coming into the world, is separating. And He says this: ...***For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.*** Now this makes it clear He's talking about spiritual blindness, that the physical blindness of the man born blind is really a picture of the reality of spiritual blindness. This is why he was appointed for the purpose of being that picture, that Jesus has come into the world to make those who were spiritually blind able to see. Now the reality is that everybody is spiritually blind, but there are some people that don't know it. In their audacious pride, they think they see and those who think they see, when the light of God's glory shines out, it makes them all the blinder. That's the irony in this passage.

So the picture is the basic thrust of what is being said. Now I want to, before we read the text, I want to say one more word about this because I think it is important to remember the context in a broader sense of John's message. Remember that John is writing late in the 1st Century, possibly as late as 85 or 90 A.D. A lot has happened in the 50 or 60 years since Jesus has ascended into Heaven. The Gospel

is going forth throughout the Mediterranean world. It has reached the metropolises of the Mediterranean world, they've all been affected by the Gospel. It has gone all the way to Rome. What has happened as the Gospel has gone forth is that this astonishing, unexpected occurrence that the Jews, because salvation is from the Jews, Jesus said that in John 4, salvation is for the Jew first and after that the Greek, Paul says in Romans 1. Salvation, which came through the Jews, to the Jews, and then out to the world that is astonishingly, as the Gospel spreads, greater and greater numbers of Jews are rejecting it. Fewer and fewer Jews are coming to faith in the Jewish Messiah, and greater and greater numbers of Pagan Gentiles are coming.

Now John is writing late in the 1st Century with predominantly Jewish people in view. He is writing to Jews and Jewish proselytes, that are Gentile converts to Judaism that are now worshiping in the synagogues in the various cities of the Roman Empire. He realizes that they are having trouble giving a fair hearing to the claims of Christianity due to the claims of Christ because they look around them and they see all of their Jewish brethren by and large rejecting it. How could so many of them be wrong? These are people who ought to know about the Messiah, and they are saying, "No, He is not the Messiah." So John writes to cause them to reexamine Jesus Himself on His own merits.

I think this picture is a beautiful picture in there is this contrast going on. You have the man born blind who is a picture of what we all are, and it's a picture of the most unlikely person to see. He's born blind, his eyes have never processed light so that he could see anything. So he's born blind, he's the farthest from a seeing person, and what happens in the chapter is we watch him granted to have sight, and we watch him kind of go into the spotlight, and we see him progress in his sight, in his knowledge. I mean, it is astonishing. I mentioned last time, there is a real focus on this man. He speaks ten different times in the passage. I counted how many words he says, he has 187 words, I think, in the chapter, maybe 189. Jesus has 131 and I'm willing to bet he has more words than anybody in the Gospel except John the Baptist and Jesus. I think he has more than Peter. I might go ahead and check this out next week. I'm a numbers guy but it takes a long time to work through this because nobody else has done this that I can find Googling it. What's up with that? Somebody should have thought of this already, save me the time! But anyway, I think he has got more speaking parts than any other apostle in this Gospel, or it is close. Isn't that amazing?

What we see as the chapter unfolds, and I'm laying this out because I'm going to read the whole chapter to you and I want you to look for these things as we read it.

Here this man who could not see, had no hope of seeing, comes to see physically, and he comes to know. There are several key words in the chapter that emphasize the staggering nature of the miracle. First thing, the word *'blind'* occurs 13 times. The word *'born'* with *'blind'* or *'blind from birth'* six times of those 13. It is *'blind from birth'*, *'born blind'*, to just show the exceeding nature of the darkness he was in. Then you have the words *'see'*, *'saw'*, *'receive sight'* 15 times. You have the word *'eyes'* mentioned nine times, and the phrase *'eyes opened'* seven times. This man born blind, his eyes are opened. You keep having that repetition of that phrase and John recording it. We know when he records conversations, as all the Gospel writers, they summarize. They don't give you every single word that was said, but what they give you is what they want you to take from it. So it is so important to observe carefully what they say, and so this is the emphasis. Then you have also the word, I want you to listen for the word *'know'*. It actually occurs 11 times in this chapter. Now there are two basic words for *'know'*, *'I know'*, that are used in Greek. There is the word *'ginosko'*. We get our English word like *'gnosis'*, or *'agnostic'* from that. It's a word for *'knowledge, to know'*. It means *'the inception of knowledge and to progress on in knowledge'*. Then you have the word *'oida'* which is rooted from the word *'see'*.

Now John uses them equally in his Gospel. Sometimes you can make too much out of a word here, a word there. Sometimes you just use different words for variety, you know? If I say to my wife, I say something to her, and I might say another word. She doesn't say, "Hey, why did you use that word? You used a different word earlier." "Well, I just didn't want to be so redundant." Sometimes it is that and so you've got to be careful about this. But what's interesting, and I think it warrants this observation here, is that though John goes back and forth with the two words for *'know'* throughout his Gospel, *'ginosko'*, and *'oida'*, back and forth. In Chapter 9 *'ginosko'* does not occur, it is only *'oida'* all 11 times. This is unprecedented for his Gospel. I think he did this partly to show this, there is this transition, there is this contrast, comparison, between the man born blind and the Pharisees. The man born blind is the person least likely to be able to see. I mentioned the word *'oida'*, *'oida'* is actually the word *'know'*, that word that is used 11 times in this chapter, is from the word *'to see'*. It's actually the perfect tense of the word *'to see'*. It means *'I have seen'*. It meant *'know'* when they said it this way, but the original etymology was to say *'I have seen'*, and that came to mean *'I know'*. *'Oida'* is to have seen so that you know from your own knowledge. Do you see that? Experiential, full knowledge. So every time it says *'I know'*, it literally, in the text is: *'I have seen'*. So I think he uses that word to emphasize, "Look, seeing is the issue and knowing is related to seeing." Who has spiritual sight? It is that one that has knowledge. So who is the least likely to have spiritual

sight in this chapter? The man born blind who they believe must have been conceived in sin. It must have been that his mother went to an idol temple when he was in the womb. This was the kind of theology they had, that if somebody had a congenital birth defect there must have been a sin of the mother or the child in the womb. Maybe the child, when he was in the womb, they were in an idol temple and he worshiped the idol. This was the kind of thinking they had.

So the least likely person to see spiritually is the man born blind, and the contrast is with the most likely because they take him, after he is healed, to the Pharisees. They don't take him to the priests because those are Sadducees. The Pharisees were the ones that had the most knowledge of the law, the most knowledge of the Scripture. They were revered to be the most holy people in Israel. They take him to them and they examine him, and what happens is you see a progress in knowledge on the part of the least likely, so that he sees and he knows. You see those who thought they see, show that they really don't know anything. To show that ironically, they are the ones who are spiritually stone blind. That is the basic outlook of this chapter. So let's read it together.

John 9:

*1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." 6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing. 8 Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?" 9 Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." 10 So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is He?" He *said, "I do not know."*

*13 They *brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them. 17 So they *said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet."*

18 The Jews then did not believe it of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, 19 and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?" 20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. 23 For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24 So a 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." 25 He then answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26 So they said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" 28 They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from." 30 The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. 32 Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you." 38 And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. 39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." 40 Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

Let's pray together.

Father, we ask that You would speak to us through Your Word, that You would grant us increased spiritual vision. That for those who have not yet seen at all that You might make today the day they see. That Jesus might reveal Himself to them. That all of us might have our eyes opened to see His glory. We pray this in His Name, Amen.

Now John is basically writing to the Jews who don't believe and saying, "Look, it's not surprising that so many don't believe." I mean, it is surprising in one sense but when you understand it correctly, it's really not. This is exactly what happened when Jesus was ministering. He went to the Jews, He demonstrated His glory in the most convincing way, and those who were the closest rejected Him. This is exactly what is still happening. So don't be discouraged by the fact that so many are not believing. This has application for us. I mean, one of the things we need to understand is not to judge Jesus by the numbers. Don't judge the reality of Christ by the number of people that accept Him or follow Him in truth. In fact, if so many are, you might want to pause and reflect for a moment. The crowd usually is going the wrong way. So he is encouraging those Jews who are reading this to again consider, not based on the crowd, but look directly at Jesus Himself. Look at Him. He invites serious inquiry. There is a sense in which the whole book is written so that the reader might judge Jesus. Not at a standpoint of standing above Him, but a standpoint of looking at the evidence and saying, "My Lord and my God."

So what we have here is the person most unlikely to see comes to see with great clarity and fullness, and those who were so likely to see are blind. I want us to organize our thoughts around four points: A miraculous sign. Secondly, an amazing wonder. Thirdly, an appalling blindness. And fourthly, a magnificent Savior. A miraculous sign first, then an amazing wonder.

1) A Miraculous Sign:

Now, what we've seen is, and I've mentioned a lot of this already, so we're going to hit this point kind of quickly. The reality of what Jesus does here is staggering, and the crowd felt the impact of it. This is why they take Him to the Pharisees. They don't do that with the other people that get healed. "Let's go find the Pharisees and find out what happened to the leper that gets healed, or to the man by the Pool of Bethesda." They are not rushing off to get their input. How do we understand this? This is an earth-shattering type of healing. This is something, I mean any healing, yes, of course, but this one goes a little deeper. I mentioned that there are no Old Testament references of healing of blindness. This is a miracle that was reserved for the Messiah. The only actually there is one that is sort of, I just recognized this this week, it's not really a healing of blindness. Do you remember when Elisha is surrounded in Dothan by the Aramean army and the Lord gives them blindness? Then He prays and they get to see again. Remember after they are already in the city of Samaria, surrounded by the Israelites. So that is the only one. There are no blind people coming to sight, and certainly never one that was born blind. So here you have a miracle of the first order emphasized with all those ways – 'eyes opened', 'born blind'.

In fact, to show you the impact it had, look over at John 10:21. This is a miracle that keeps getting referred back to. Well, actually, before you go there, before you go to 10:21, let's look at Verse 16:

John 9:16 ~ ...But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?"

We need to start there. This sign is a miracle of a high order and it is important. There is this gradation of miracles that is even evident in the Old Testament. Do you remember when Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh? Do you remember when they did their first couple of miracles? The Lord said, "I want the first thing you do, to show them that you are speaking for, is to throw down your staff on the ground." Remember what happened when Moses threw his staff down? It became a serpent. What did the Egyptians do? "Well, surely you are speaking from God." No, the Egyptian magicians threw their staffs down and they became serpents. Now of course, Aaron's staff ate their staffs. They didn't get a stick back, but that convinced them this wasn't that big of a deal. "We can do that same magic." Then Moses and Aaron turned an island to blood. Then the Egyptian magicians take water and turned it into blood. What this says is there is real, spiritual power, Satan has real, spiritual power. He manifests it, there exists such things as real magic,

and real evil, and it can do great things. So don't just go blindly after the first miracle that comes along.

In fact, Deuteronomy 13 makes that point, Deuteronomy 13:1-5. The Lord mentions to His people before, at the end of the time in the wilderness, before they go into the promise land. Moses is about to die and he gives the Book of Deuteronomy, and he says, "Listen, there may be people who come and they work signs and miracles among you. Well, that's part of an authenticating thing, but you need to make sure that they don't tell you to worship other gods. If they tell you to worship other gods, then stone them. It doesn't matter if they worked miracles. So there must be consistency with what has been taught.

Well this idea of, in this level of miracles, back to Egypt. So the second miracle they duplicate, and they are not impressed. So then the next time they go to see Pharaoh, God says, "Raise your staff and I'm going to strike the land," and He sends gnats, or insects on the land. Then the Egyptian magicians cannot duplicate that. What do they do? They say, "Surely this is the finger of God." I think that is kind of the mindset behind what these guys are saying here. "Look, this sign has a weight about it, a glory about it." You know the word 'glory' means 'weight' in the Old Testament. The abode of God is the heaviness, this weighs, and we can't dismiss it lightly. So some, even among the Pharisees, are troubled by this. This is too heavy for us to dismiss lightly.

Now, having seen what they said in John 9:16, go over to 10:21. In the next chapter, when Jesus is continuing to discuss His ministry with those in Jerusalem, it says in Verse 21, well Verse 20, many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?" These people were accusing Jesus of being demon-possessed.

John 10:21 ~ ...Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"

A demon can do some things. Demons can do things. This is what this basically is saying, but they can't open the eyes of the blind. Some things only God can do, and even these unbelievers in the crowd that yet haven't come to faith in Christ, realize that.

Now in Chapter 11:37, this is the story, the next sign of Jesus, at the raising of Lazarus. When Jesus gets there and sees the sorrow, and in Verse 35 He's weeping, the Jews in Verse 36 say, "See how they loved Him!" But look what they say in Verse 37, still affected by what happened a few months before:

John 11:37 ~ But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?"

Do you see? There was a way about the healing of this blind man. In fact, John has chosen seven signs, seven miracles, starting with the changing of the water into wine in Chapter 2, and the healing of the nobleman's son at the end of Chapter 2, and then the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem in Chapter 5, and then the feeding of the 5,000 in Chapter 6 up in Galilee, and then the walking on the Sea of Galilee also in Chapter 6. There were those five, and now He brings this sixth sign which is the healing of a man born blind, and the seventh sign is the raising of the dead. The way John shows us these glimpses, it's building. Do you see that? *Look at the glory of the Savior. Look at this man and what He does.* And so there's this building sense that He must be from God.

Now, this miraculous sign should have won the day once they established it, and the Jews go into investigative mode. They ask him in Verses 13 and following about it. Then they get from him the testimony. He basically says, "I was born blind and now I can see. This is what He did," but they are skeptical, and rightly so, at some level, and they reason among themselves. "Well, this crowd may know he's blind, and he knows he's blind, but the only people that can tell us if he was born blind are his parents." I mean, that's reasonable. I don't know what happened when I was born. I didn't start remembering things until I was 4, 5, or 6 years old. So he wouldn't know if he was born blind, but his parents would, so they call his parents and they ask them. In Verse 19, they ask them three questions:

John 9:19 ~ and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"

And they answer:

John 9:20 ~ His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;

That's really settles the deal right there. They've established, "This is our son. Yes, he was born blind and how he's seeing." Now, they're scared of the Jews, which also speaks to the Jewish readers. The people were having a hard time coming out clean with stuff, because they were afraid. There was such opposition to Jesus. So they say:

John 9:21 ~ but how he now sees, we do not know; ...

Now, they probably had heard that Jesus had healed him. News travels fast with something like that, and the people that went to get them probably told them, but they say, "We don't know. We don't want to say anything," because they were afraid of being put out of the synagogue, because that's what the Jews were doing to people who were confessing Him to be the Christ. So they have established – the Pharisees have gone into investigative mode, and they have established with certainty that this is a miraculous sign, that this is an authenticating declaration that Jesus is the Christ. That's the miraculous sign.

2) An Amazing Wonder:

There are a couple of just beautiful things that this blind man, formerly born-blind man, says. One of the most famous that's become probably the testimony of thousands through the ages is what he says in Verse 25:

John 9:25 ~ He then answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

Is that your testimony? "One thing I know, I was blind and I now see." That's one of the most powerful testimonies to the power of Jesus Christ. You were born blind and now you see. And when you say that to someone else who was born blind, what hope there is. There is a Savior. That's one of the most beautiful things he says, but really his biggest speaking part, as it were, is from Verses 30 to 33.

Now, after he says this, this is where it's clear the Pharisees have no more reason to be investigating. They have established it. They've heard him again say it. They brought him back in. "Are you going to change your testimony? Give glory to God. We know this guy's a sinner. Come clean. What did He do? Did He do some kind of magic rite? Was He some kind of evil guy? What's going on?" That's what they're saying when they say, "Give glory to God." They're not saying, "Praise God for what He did to you." They're saying, "We know He's a bad guy, so tell us the truth."

He says, “This is what I know. Whether He’s a sinner, I don’t know, but I know this. I was blind but now I see.” Then they ask him again, “Well, what did He do? How did He open your eyes?” and he says, “I told you already. I mean, do you really want to go through this again?” And I think he’s being sarcastic when he says, “You don’t want to become His disciples too, do you?” I think he sees right through that they are not really openly, honestly investigating. An open, honest investigation is already closed. Jesus has done it, and they may have some problems with understanding the Sabbath, but if they were thinking correctly, they would realize Jesus has healed a man born blind.

Based on the Old Testament, that can only happen according to the Old Testament prophecies when the Messiah comes. “Is He the Messiah? We need to give Him more hearing, and listen to what He said and rethink things. Maybe our interpretation of the Sabbath is wrong,” and of course it was. But they don’t do that, and so they ask him again, and he knows they’re just trying to trip him up, just hoping they can find something to discredit him. He sees right through it, and he says, “Are you guys asking because you want to be His disciples too?” And then they show their true colors. They revile him. They don’t say, “We’re looking into it.” They revile him and say, “There’s no way. We’ve already decided about Him. We don’t care. Our minds are made up. Don’t confuse us with the facts,” and they say:

John 9:28-29 ~ They reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from.”

They’re not talking about in a metaphysical sense. Neither one of them understands that Jesus is God yet. That comes at the end of the chapter. In fact, the blind man, if you see the progression with him, it’s interesting. I mentioned watching the word ‘no’. Look with me back at Verse 12. When he’s first giving his testimony to the crowd, finally he had to keep saying, “I’m the one. I’m the one. Hey, I’m the guy that was blind.” “I don’t know. You look like him.” “No, I’m the one.” “Well, what happened? How did He open your eyes?” and he tells them about it. And after he tells them about it, they said to him, “Well, where is He?” speaking of Jesus, and he says, “I do not know.” And why did John record that? Why do we have to know that? It’s part of the fact that this man doesn’t know yet where Jesus is or where He’s from, but his eyes have been opened, and then the Pharisees ask him in Verse 17:

John 9:17 ~ So they said to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?” And he said, “He is a prophet.”

He's processing. This man has been awakened and he's processing who Jesus is, and he says, "He must be a prophet. He must be the prophet, because God's speaking through Him. God's got to be." He's authenticated with this amazing sign. They come back in Verse 24, and they set before him, they lay out for him, a tripping up question. "We know this man's a sinner. Give glory to God," and he's saying, "I've not been around Him. Whether He's a sinner or not, I don't know." He's going to prove very shortly that he knows He's not a sinner, but this progression is happening.

John 9:25 ~ He then answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

Even in saying that, it's coming clear to him even more. Isn't it funny how as you say something some time, maybe if you've been teaching or you're talking to someone about the Lord, and as you say it, it's like you suddenly believe it more than you ever did before? In the speaking of it you understand it more. That's the Spirit of God working, opening your eyes even clearer, clarifying your vision. That's what's happening here. So he says, "I do know this." They say to him, "What did He do?" and he asked that question, "Do you want to be His disciples?" and they revile him in Verse 28 and 29, and they say, "We do not know where He is from."

Here is the most ironic statement in the chapter. He says: "***Well, here is an amazing thing...***" This word that's translated *amazing thing* is a very important word. The King James translates it *marvelous*. "Well, this is a marvelous thing." The NIV says *remarkable*. The word is a word which means to be filled with wonder. In fact, this word is used throughout the Gospel of Mark, and actually through much of the synoptics. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic Gospels. Mark uses it the most, though, because when you read Mark's Gospel, Jesus does a sign and Mark will always tell you about the effect of the sign.

In fact, the word *sign*, I didn't explain this when I was looking at the first point, *A Miraculous Sign*, but the word that they used in Verse 16, ***...a sinner perform such signs...*** is a key word in John's Gospel. A sign is a miracle that authenticates something. It's an authenticating mark. It's almost like a signature, but it's a miraculous signature. How does the bank know you signed this check? There's your signature, your mark. And the word *sign* used here is the one John uses

throughout the Gospel when he says in John 2, “This was the first sign Jesus did in Cana of Galilee. This was the second sign Jesus did in Cana of Galilee,” in John 2 with the healing of the nobleman’s son. And then John 20:31, he says, “Many more things could have been written, but these are written...”

John 20:30-31 ~ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

So the word *sign* is authenticating. It’s an authenticating sign, a miraculous, authenticating sign, and the recipient of that sign, the guy whose eyes now are seeing, he’s in his first hour of vision. Can you imagine what he’s thinking? *That’s what flowers look like. That’s what people look like. That’s what that mangy dog looks like.* He’s seeing everything, right? He’s never seen it before. It’s all new. He’s filled with wonder over what God has done to him, and then his wonder at what God has done to him is surpassed only by one thing: The unbelief of the seeing.

Literally in the Greek what it says here in Verse 30 is, “Here is the amazing thing.” The definite article is there. “Well, here is the amazing thing.” In comparison to what? “I was healed. A blind man born blind from birth was healed, something that’s never happened since the beginning of time, but that’s not the most amazing thing. The most amazing thing is that you don’t believe. That is the surprising thing. That’s the amazing wonder.” The effect of Jesus’ miracles ought to be to bring faith, to bring a sense of wonder and worship, but the astonishing thing to this man is that those who know their Old Testaments are dismissing Jesus out of hand. “That is the amazing thing. You do not know.”

Remember the word *know*. “You have not seen. That’s the amazing thing.” Here you have this man born blind, and as they’re going to say at the end of the chapter when they finally dismiss him, “You were born entirely in sins (Verse 34). When they’re putting him out, they say, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?” There’s an irony there. They acknowledge in saying, “You were born entirely in sins,” they’re authenticating the fact they believe he was born blind. They’re certifying it. “Yeah, we know you were born blind, and you’re teaching us?” But look at the man’s argument. This is the amazing thing.

John 9:30 ~ The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes.

And then he with great clarity presents his case. “I mean, think about this, guys,” is what he’s saying.

John 9:31 ~ We know that God does not hear sinners;...

“The Lord is not going to listen to the prayers of sinful people to do miracles like that.”

...but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.

“The effectual prayer of a righteous man avails much,” is essentially what he’s saying. “So this can’t be a sinful charlatan to do a miracle like this. It’s just obvious.” And then he reminds them of the significance of the miracle in Verse 32:

John 9:32 ~ Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.”

What a great sermon. He has made the claim, an irrefutable argument, and they will not see. Back to the beginning of the chapter, remember we talked about: Why did God let this guy be born blind? That was the first thing the disciples said.

John 9:2 ~ And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?”

That was a popular theology of the day that I’d discussed earlier.

John 9: 3 ~ Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

This man was given this mission. This was God’s plan for him. In the womb, God didn’t form his eyes. He let this man be born with completely unable to see the light of day. He wasn’t someone that had sight and then lost it. He never ever saw. He’s a picture of weakness. It’s emphasized in the text he was one they used to see begging. “Isn’t he the one we used to see sitting and begging?” Those are the words of the friends that see him. “Yeah, he’s the guy we pass by, and he’s always

sitting over there and he's begging." What can he do? He can only sit and beg in complete helplessness. He has no sight. He is helpless and he is hopeless. But the Lord gave him however many years it was of that helplessness and hopelessness and despair. His parents know, "Look, son, you've got to do something. You need to go by the temple and beg, because you can't do anything else around here to help us take care of you." So he goes, and his daily work is begging for people to give him something, and yet that is one of the most noble creatures that God ever made in the sense that He's going to show His glory in that man. God is going to put on display. That word *displayed* means to shine the light upon. His works. God's going to make the light of His glory blaze in this man. That's why he was appointed. That's why he was born blind. So many of our afflictions, that's the purpose of them. The Lord wants to show His glory. It's an opportunity to see something that no one else can see, and this man comes to see something that no one else around him saw, or very few around him saw. He comes to see the beauty of the Savior.

His logic is compelling. "Only God can do this." What hope there is in that. The reality back to the spiritual teaching of this passage, is every one of us is born blind spiritually. The Scripture makes this clear. We were conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity. We're born alienated from God. We read earlier from Colossians before the baptism that we were enemies of God, strangers. We don't know God. We don't come into the world knowing God. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says that the god of this age has blinded the eyes of unbelievers so they can't see the light of the glory of God. They're blind. Our mind is darkened.

1 Corinthians 2:14 ~ But the natural man does not understand the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned.

The person that has not had grace work in a saving way in his life (the natural man) cannot understand the things of God, cannot spiritually understand them. He may be able to intellectually describe them, but he can't spiritually understand them. So the mind is darkened. The affections are alienated. No man seeks God. Those who are born in sin do not seek God. They don't want God, and the will is bound.

Jesus had said the same thing, basically, to Nicodemus earlier in John's Gospel, and this is the message that John is helping his readers to see, by selectively recording these events. Look back at Chapter 3. Nicodemus was the Pharisee of the Pharisees, the teacher of the Jews, and he was one of those on the fence, saying, "Well, hey, we need to give Him a hearing, because He's doing some amazing things," but Jesus shows him the reality of what it means to be born blind. "Your

mind is darkened.” Now, this is basically three things. Your mind is darkened. Your affections and desires are disordered, and your will is defiant. Your mind is darkened. Your affections are disordered. You want the wrong things. You don’t want the right things. Your will is defiant. He says in John 3:10-12

John 3:10 ~ Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?”

And the key thing is the words *you do not*. Three times, He says *you do not* something, and He basically says, “Nicodemus, you don’t understand. That’s Him saying, “Your mind is darkened.”

John 3:10-11 ~ Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.

He’s saying, “You don’t receive it. You don’t have a desire for it. Your desires, your affections, are disordered. And finally Verse 12:

John 3:12 ~ If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

“You do not believe. You will not obey. You will not submit. Your will is defiant.” And therefore, He had told him earlier in the conversation, “I say to you, you must be born again or you cannot see the Kingdom of God. You’re blind.” That’s the appalling blindness that He’s describing here, our spiritual blindness. But the good news is we have a magnificent Savior. Jesus is the One who is able to speak life into the dead and to give sight to the blind.

In fact, I want to hit a couple of verses in Isaiah, here, to wrap this up. Turn to Isaiah 29. I mentioned earlier that if they were open, if the Pharisees were really open, they would have considered these verses. They have an authenticating sign, and now they need to examine. Look what it says in Isaiah 29:17-18. He’s talking about when the Messiah comes:

Isaiah 29

*17 Is it not yet just a little while
Before Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field,
And the fertile field will be considered as a forest?*

*18 On that day the deaf will hear words of a book,
And out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.*

That's what happens when Messiah comes. He continues this theme. This is after the desolation coming. God's going to send Messiah.

Isaiah 35

*1 The wilderness and the desert will be glad,
And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom;*

Let's skip on down to Verse 4:

*4 Say to those with anxious heart,
"Take courage, fear not.
Behold, your God will come with vengeance;
The recompense of God will come,
But He will save you."*

*5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.*

6 Then the lame will leap like a deer,...

That's what Messiah does. In Isaiah 42, speaking directly of his Messiah, he says:

Isaiah 42

*1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold;
My chosen one in whom My soul delights.
I have put My Spirit upon Him;*

(I have anointed Him, you see.)

- He will bring forth justice to the nations.*
- 2 *“He will not cry out or raise His voice,
Nor make His voice heard in the street.*
- 3 *“A bruised reed He will not break
And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish;*

Look on down to Verse 6. Speaking to His Servant, His Son, He says:

- 6 *“I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness,
I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You,
And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the nations,*
- 7 *To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the dungeon
And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.*

The reality is we're all born blind. We are hopeless and helpless, but Jesus is a mighty Savior. He is able to save any who look to Him. He is able to grant Spiritual vision, and what we have to do is acknowledge that no matter how close we are to the things of God, we're blind. That's essentially what was testified about in our baptism today. Steve White said, "I've been brought up in a Christian home, been brought up under the teaching of the Word of God, but I realized that I was still blind." God is able to save us through His glorious Son Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

Let's go to Him in prayer.

Our Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You that He is mighty to save, that He is willing to save, ready to save any who call upon Him, that He does not extinguish the smoking flax. He does not trample on the bruised reed. He doesn't deal harshly when we come humbly. Our Father, our problem is our pride. We pray that You would grant grace to see ourselves as we truly are.

For those that are here that have not yet repented and believed, show them the reality of their Spiritual blindness, and help them look only to Christ and cast themselves completely upon Him and what He's done in His death and resurrection. And for those who have truly trusted Him, may we continue to see our poverty apart from His grace, and never forget that we were blind and we can praise You now that we see. Keep showing us more and more of Your glory. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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