

Jesus' Sixth Sign

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Signs / Sign; Johannine Sign; Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind; Light; See / Jn 9:1-41

The sixth sign in John 9:1-41 teaches us that Jesus is the light of the world who gives sight to the spiritually blind.

Introduction

The Apostle John wrote *The Gospel According to John*. Jesus had done thousands of miracles. John selected just seven of these miracles, which he called “signs,” to help his readers “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing [they] may have life in his name” ([John 20:31](#)).

Each of the seven signs pointed to a different truth about Jesus.

The first sign was in [John 2:1-11](#), where Jesus turned the water into wine in Cana in Galilee. That sign showed that Jesus is the Christ who initiates the new covenant.

The second sign was in [John 2:12-17](#), where Jesus cleansed the temple in Jerusalem. That sign showed that Jesus is the new temple.

The third sign was in [John 4:43-54](#), where Jesus healed the official’s son in Capernaum (although Jesus was in Cana in Galilee at the time of the healing). That sign showed that Jesus is the Son of God who grants life by the word of his power.

The fourth sign was in [John 5:1-15](#), where Jesus healed the invalid at the pool of Bethesda. That sign showed that Jesus is the Son of God who makes people spiritually whole.

The fifth sign was in [John 6:1-15](#), [22-71](#), where Jesus fed a multitude of people with a boy’s lunch of five barley loaves and two fish. That sign showed that Jesus is the bread of life who is sovereign over the gift of eternal life.

Today, we are going to look at Jesus’ sixth sign, the healing of the man born blind.

Scripture

Let's read [John 9:1-41](#):

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 was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 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 ⁷ and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

⁸ 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." ¹⁰ So they said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 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." ¹² They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

¹³ 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. 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." 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. 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."

¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. ²¹ But how he now sees we do not

know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.”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.)²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

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.”²⁵ He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”²⁷ He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?”²⁸ And they reviled him, saying, “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 comes from.”³⁰ The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.”³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”³⁴ They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

³⁵ 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?”³⁷ 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.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.”⁴⁰ 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.

Lesson

The sixth sign in [John 9:1-41](#) teaches us that Jesus is the light of the world who gives sight to the spiritually blind.

Let's use the following outline:

1. The Giving of the Sign (9:1-7)
2. The Responses to the Sign (9:8-38)
3. The Meanings of the Sign (9:39-41)

I. The Giving of the Sign (9:1-7)

First, let's examine the giving of the sign.

Jesus was in Jerusalem for this sixth sign that John gave us in his Gospel.

John said in verse 1, **“As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.”**

John did not give an exact location for where Jesus saw this blind man. One scholar suggested that “the scene may have taken place in the area south of the temple at one of the two southern gates” (Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004], 280).

John did not say how Jesus and his disciples knew that this man was **blind from birth**.

Repeating a widely-held view in that day, Jesus' disciples asked him, **“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”** (9:2).

In those days, people believed that suffering and sin were directly connected.

In one sense, they were right. In a general sense, suffering entered the world with the Fall of Adam. All people experience the effects of the Fall, and that sometimes includes suffering.

But, in another sense, they were wrong. Not all suffering is the direct result of a specific sin. Sometimes it is. For example, Paul said to the Corinthians who had abused the Lord's Supper in [1 Corinthians 11:30](#), “That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.”

Another example of when suffering is the direct result of sin is when a man gets violently angry and starts a brawl with a stranger. The stranger knocks the man to the ground causing him to break his jaw. That suffering is the direct result of sin.

Ordinarily, however, it is very difficult to tie suffering to some specific sin. And we should be wise not to do so.

Jesus affirmed that truth when he went on to answer his disciples in verse 3, **“It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”**

This blind man’s suffering was not the result of his sin. It was not the result of his parents’ sin. His blindness was instead so **“that the works of God might be displayed in him.”**

John then recorded in verses 6-7, **“Having said these things, he [that is, Jesus] spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud and said to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.”**

One interesting note is that the blind man did not ask Jesus to heal him. Nor did Jesus ask the blind man if he wanted to be healed.

Jesus simply healed the man born blind.

II. The Responses to the Sign (9:8-38)

Second, let’s notice the responses to the sign.

There were four responses to the sign of Jesus healing the man born blind.

A. The Response of the Neighbors (9:8-13)

The first response to Jesus healing the man born blind was that of the neighbors.

We are not told how old the man was who had been blind from birth.

Nevertheless, the neighbors had apparently known this man from birth. And they knew that he had been blind all his life.

They were astonished by what they saw, and they asked, **“Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?”** (9:8). The man who had been blind all his life was now seeing and the neighbors could not figure out what had happened.

Some said, “It is he.”

Others said, “No, but he is like him.”

The formerly blind man kept **saying, “I am the man”** (9:9).

I imagine the neighbors gathering in a group. Some said it was the blind man. Others insisted that it wasn't the blind man. And all the while the formerly blind man was jumping up and down and shouting, “I am the man!”

So the neighbors all turned to the man and said to him, **“Then how were your eyes opened?”** (9:10).

The neighbors were interested in *how* he had been healed.

They were interested in the mechanics rather than the miracle.

The formerly blind man told them that it was Jesus who had healed him.

The neighbors wanted to know where Jesus was but the formerly blind man did not know the whereabouts of Jesus.

So the neighbors **“brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind”** (9:13).

I don't think the neighbors had any malicious intent in taking the formerly blind man to the Pharisees. They were completely blown away by what they were witnessing.

They simply wanted an expert opinion on what had happened.

B. The Response of the Pharisees (9:14-17, 24-34)

The second response to Jesus healing the man born blind was that of the Pharisees.

Throughout the Gospels, the Pharisees regularly misunderstood what Jesus was doing. That was true again in this case.

John noted in verse 14, **“Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.”** It bothered the Pharisees more that Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath rather than celebrate a miracle of sight.

After the man explained to the Pharisees how Jesus had healed him, some of them 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?”**

John noted, **“And there was a division among them”** (9:16).

So, the Pharisees asked the man who he thought Jesus was since he had healed the man.

The man said, **“He is a prophet”** (9:17).

The man had told the neighbors that it was Jesus who had healed him. Now, he said that he was **a prophet**, indicating that he thought that Jesus was sent from God.

After meeting with the man’s parents, the Pharisees again talked with the formerly blind man. They pressed him even harder to tell them what had happened.

But the Pharisees rejected the man’s explanation because they insisted that Jesus was some kind of religious charlatan.

The formerly blind man gave a marvelous reply to the Pharisees in verses 31-33:

“We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

Now the formerly blind man affirmed that Jesus was **from God**.

But still the Pharisees would not believe him.

C. The Response of the Parents (9:18-23)

The third response to Jesus healing the man born blind was that of the parents.

The Pharisees seemed to be getting frustrated. They could not figure out how the man had been healed.

So, they called in the man's parents and asked them, **“Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”** (9:19).

The parents were terrified. They did not want to get into trouble with the Pharisees.

So, they punted. They agreed that he was their son. But, as to how he had been healed, they said, **“Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself”** (9:21).

The parents were too fearful about what might happen to them if they learned the truth about how their son had been healed.

D. The Response of the Formerly Blind Man (9:35-38)

And the fourth response to Jesus healing the man born blind was that of the formerly blind man.

The Pharisees expelled the formerly blind man from the synagogue. Somehow Jesus learned about this.

Jesus found the formerly blind man and asked him, **“Do you believe in the Son of Man?”** (9:35).

This was the first time that the man had actually seen Jesus. Earlier, Jesus had put mud on the man's eyes and told him to go and wash them in the pool of Siloam. By the time he had done so and could see, Jesus was gone.

But Jesus was now standing in front of him. In response to Jesus' question, the man said, **“And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”** (9:36).

Then, in a wonderful moment of self-disclosure, Jesus said to him, **“You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you”** (9:37).

I love the way Jesus directed the man's newly-given sight to say to him, **“You have seen him.”**

Surely, after having spent decades not seeing and now seeing for only a few hours, every sight was wonderful to the man. But the most precious sight of all was seeing Jesus.

The formerly blind man's response to Jesus was wonderful. **He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him** (9:38).

III. The Meanings of the Sign (9:39-41)

Finally, let's see the meanings of the sign.

There are two meanings to this sign of Jesus healing the blind man.

A. That the Blind May See (9:39a)

The first meaning of the sign is that the blind may see.

Jesus said in verse 39a, **“For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see.”**

Jesus came to grant spiritual sight to the spiritually blind.

The granting of physical sight to a blind man was a sign that Jesus could also grant spiritual sight to the blind.

Sadly, many people missed that truth. The Pharisees especially missed that truth, as one commentator notes about the Pharisees:

So convinced are they that Jesus is at best a charlatan, at worst a dangerous sinner, that they do not remember the ancient promises that one of the signs of the dawning of the messianic age is the restoration of sight to the blind ([Is. 29:18](#); [35:5](#); [42:7](#)) (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary [Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991], 375).

For example, we read in [Isaiah 29:18](#), “In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness *the eyes of the blind shall see.*”

Jesus came so that the blind may see.

B. That the Seeing May Become Blind (9:39-41)

And the second meaning of the sign is that the seeing may become blind.

Jesus went on to say that the reason he came into the world was that **“those who see may become blind”** (9:39b).

The Pharisees asked Jesus if they were also blind.

Jesus affirmed that they were spiritually blind because they were not able to see that he was the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of sinners.

Conclusion

The sixth sign in [John 9:1-41](#) teaches us that Jesus is the light of the world who gives sight to the spiritually blind.

When I was a student at the University of Cape Town, I used to work in a gold mine during my vacations.

I used to go a mile underground each day. One of my jobs was to get rock samples that would be tested later for the quality of the gold in that area of the mine.

Sometimes I got my work done quickly and had up to an hour before I could catch the elevator back to the surface of the mine.

On several occasions, I remember going to a tunnel and turning off the lamp on my helmet.

I could not believe how dark it was. I could not see a thing. I put my hand in front of my eyes and I could not see it.

I had never experienced such darkness in my life.

I suppose that was something similar to what a blind person must experience.

Now, after a short while, I could turn on my lamp and see again what was before me.

But a blind person cannot do that—unless he experiences a miracle.

The truth is that spiritually every single person in the world is utterly blind. We are completely incapable of seeing any spiritual truth.

We need a miracle to help us see any spiritual truth.

And that is where Jesus comes in.

Jesus will grant spiritual sight to anyone who desires to know the truth.

Simply ask Jesus to grant you spiritual sight so that you can see and believe him.

Do so today. Amen.