

## **Spiritual Blindness Among the Religious**

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John 9:39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

John 9:40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words and said unto him, Are we blind also?

John 9:41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Jesus always had a spiritual message associated with His miracles. Sometimes in scripture, we learn the spiritual lesson by simply reading about the act of mercy that He performed; other times, we read His spoken lesson before, during, or following such works. I think there are many lessons in every miraculous act He ever did. It is for us as students of our great Teacher to ferret out those lessons and let them change our lives.

Here in our text chapter, Jesus has just set up a classic confrontation between Himself and the high and mighty Jewish religious zealots; the Pharisees. They came with all their answers and accosted the blind man who had been made to see by our Lord, and as we read about their abuse of him it becomes obvious to us that they missed the entire object lesson of both Christ's miracle and the man's testimony. Even the man saw something astounding in how they responded to the news about him now being able to see. As the legalists that they were, they considered it most offensive that Jesus had healed the man on the sabbath. It was sabbath-breaking for God to do something on that seventh day, as far as they were concerned. Have you ever noticed that when God forbade the Jews from working on the 7<sup>th</sup> day that He did not forbid Himself from working on that day, even though He did rest from creation on the 7<sup>th</sup> day? I believe there has always been self-righteous men on earth who thought God was constrained by the laws He gave to his creatures. If such were true, then God would be in violation of His own principles to hate the wicked, since He has said "love your enemies." He would be in violation of Himself when he takes a life of His creatures, because He has said "thou shalt not kill." The thing that the self-righteous forget is that it is God who makes the rules...and He makes them as a pattern for finite creatures to follow. More than that, they define righteousness and holiness for creatures. But for creatures to attempt to judge God based on their own tunnel vision is blasphemy. The nature and attributes of God dictate His divine behavior, and it is never in contradiction to who He is.

The man who was given his sight recognized the absolutely ridiculous viewpoint of these Pharisees and said so. His opinion was that since nobody had ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of the blind since the beginning of time, that whoever could do such a thing had to have come from God. He soon became acquainted with this same Jesus Christ and verified immediately that he believed that Jesus was indeed from God. (Narrate how Jesus came back to Him and asked him if he believed on the Son of God; and when Jesus identified Himself the man worshiped him).

So, what we have here is total spiritual blindness of the Pharisees contrasted against the new-found sight of the healed man. And this gave Jesus the perfect setting to preach His sermon of warning against human presumption and self-righteousness. From this we want to take our message and notice:

I. Jesus declared that His very purpose for coming into the world was to reveal the difference between the ignorantly blind and the informed blind.

- In His unveiling of the difference through the workings of salvation of souls He shows:
  - > John 9:1-3 And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. (Discuss from second person perspective)
    - As a blind creature, you are not in that condition because you sinned, nor because your parents sinned. (You sin because you are in that condition.)
  - > The contrast is the learned religious person who claims to have gone beyond this blindness and claims to understand the things of God while in total darkness
    - Jesus made this idea clear in Mat 23:16- 17: Woe unto you, *ye* blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! 17 *Ye* fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?
  - > Your blindness became an opportunity for the works of God to be revealed in you
  - > The arrogance of those blinded by their own “learning” ensures that the works of God will not be revealed in them
  - > v. 6: The first step in restoring your sight was done by Jesus:
    - A touch
    - An anointing
    - A command v. 7
  - > The sight of the willfully blind will not be restored because they reject the idea that they have such a need.
  - > The next step was a response of faith and a cleansing that was appointed and arranged: v. 7 “Go wash in the pool of Siloam (interpreted “Sent”).
    - 1Cor. 6:11 “...but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”
  - > The self-righteous religious scholar rejects the idea of needing faith or a cleansing.
  - > vv. 30-33: As an enlightened person, you understood what comes from God
  - > vv. 28-29; 34: The self-created doctrine of the religious blind rejects the idea that there is true light somewhere else:

II. His revelation about His mission helps us to see a warning about human pride in corrupted religious learning: (last phrase v. 40 and v.41)

- John 9 v. 40-41: "...Are we blind also?" 41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.
- > People steeped in their own version of religious doctrine have a level of arrogance that will not allow them to imagine they are blind.
- > If such people were truly blind as it is used by Christ here, He would open their eyes their sin would be washed away
- > But their very arrogance leaves them in their sin