

### INTRODUCTION

1. We are looking again this morning at John chapter 9.
2. I want to invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to John chapter 9.
3. We are looking at verses 13-41.
4. We looked at the first twelve verses in our last study and considered *the scene, the question, the answer, the miracle, and the response*.
5. And now we're looking at the next two major points and that is the meeting the healed man had with *the Pharisees* in verses 13-34 and the meeting he had *Jesus* in verses 35-41.
6. After the blind man is healed he goes back to find Jesus.
7. Not finding him, he is questioned by his "neighbors" and "those who previously saw him as a beggar" and then they "brought" him to "the Pharisees" in verse 13.
8. Realize at this point he still hasn't seen Jesus.
9. That doesn't happen until verse 35 after he is "put out" of the synagogue by the Pharisees.
10. As we look at verses 13-34, a question arises: Why did they take him to the Pharisees?

11. One commentator says it was “in earnest enthusiasm over the miracle.”<sup>1</sup>
12. Another says it was “because the miracle had happened on the Sabbath (v. 14), and they were aware that the Pharisees reacted negatively to those who violated the Sabbath (cf. 5:1–15). The people also wanted advice from their local synagogue and religious leaders.”<sup>2</sup>
13. D.A. Carson adds, “But why to the Pharisees? Why not mention the Sanhedrin, or at least the scribes and Sadducees (cf. notes on 1:19, 24)?”<sup>3</sup>
14. David Thomas says, “The Pharisees” “probably” was “the Sanhedrin, which sat daily, and the principal members of which were the leading Pharisees.”<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Jn 9:13.

<sup>2</sup> John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Jn 9:13.

<sup>3</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 366.

<sup>4</sup> David Thomas, *The Genius of the Fourth Gospel : A Homiletical Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Kregel

15. R.C.H. Lenski offers this suggestion. He says, “These Pharisees do not act as a regular court, either as belonging to the Sanhedrin, or as one of the two lesser courts in Jerusalem, each constituted of twenty-three members, or as rulers of a local synagogue. They act only as an incidental gathering of men of the influential Jewish party, just Pharisees who are bent on making their superior influence felt.”<sup>5</sup>
16. But John MacArthur says since “The Pharisees put the man out of the synagogue (v. 34) suggests that they met in some official capacity. Perhaps the Sanhedrin delegated them to investigate the incident. Whatever the technical nature of the enclave, it had an official effect.”<sup>6</sup>
17. In the minds of those who brought him it must have been official enough to warrant their response. So, John says they brought him to *the Pharisees*.
- 

Bible study classics (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). 266.

<sup>5</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961). 686.

<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 401.

**I. The Pharisees (vv.13-34)**

Here's another question we need to ask, "Who are the Pharisees?"

We have heard their name so many times but may have never asked this question.

The first century Jewish historian Josephus mentioned the Pharisees "forty-two times in three of his writings."<sup>7</sup>

The word Pharisee is transliterated from the Hebrew word meaning *one who is set apart, separatist*<sup>8</sup> and means *The Separated Ones*.

This was a sect that seems to have started after the Jewish exile.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988; 2002). 823.

<sup>8</sup> Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 397.

<sup>9</sup> James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of*

Spiros Zodhiates says, “After the resettling of the Jewish people in Judea on their return from the Babylonian captivity, there were two religious groups among them...[the] Zadikim (righteous) [and the] Chasidim (pious)...From the Zadikim the sects of the Sadducees and Karaites were derived. From the Chasidim were derived the Pharisees and the Essenes.”<sup>10</sup>

William Barclay says, “They were the men who dedicated their whole life to the careful and meticulous observance of every rule and regulation which the Scribes had worked out.”<sup>11</sup>

---

*Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996).

<sup>10</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> *The Gospel of Matthew : Volume 2*, ed. William Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, *The Daily Study Bible*, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000). 282.

During New Testament times, there were “six thousand” of them.”<sup>12</sup>

Josephus said they were the “leading sect” (BJ ii.8.14 [162]), whose views were so influential that all forms of prayer and religious service were performed in conformity with them (*Ant.* xviii.1.3 [15])...[They] were considered “the most accurate interpreters of the law” (BJ ii.8.14 [162]) and “experts in their country’s laws” (*Vita* 38 [191]).

They excelled the rest of the nation in observing religious customs (BJ i.5.2 [110]).<sup>13</sup>

This may shed light as to why they brought him to the Pharisees.

What did they think of this healing?

What did they think of this healing being on the Sabbath?

---

<sup>12</sup> *The Gospel of Matthew : Volume 2*, ed. William Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, *The Daily Study Bible*, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000). 282.

<sup>13</sup> Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988; 2002). 823.

Now in verse 14 John adds a parenthetical note stating this healing of the blind man was on “a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.”

Notice in verse 15 that the Pharisees...

A. They Questioned the Man (v.15)

1. They asked him “again how he received his sight”

They were as curious as the ones who brought him.

The man responds by saying...

2. ““He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see.””

He uses the pronoun “He” when referring to Jesus rather than stating “the man who is called Jesus” like he did to his neighbors in verse 11.

It is obvious from verse 16 that the Pharisees knew “who” he was referring to that healed him.

Because this was a Sabbath when Jesus healed the man...

3. They began to express their opinions of Jesus rather than examine the man who had been formerly blind

Some of them said, “This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.”

Josephus stated that the Pharisees had passed on (Gk *parédosan*) regulations to the people “handed down by the fathers” (Gk *ek patérōn diadochēs*) that are not written in the laws of Moses.<sup>14</sup>

Because of this, they “had enumerated thirty-nine specific types of work that were illegal on the Sabbath day.

One of the Sabbath prohibitions set forth by the Pharisees was the kneading of dough to make bread. It may be that the Pharisees concluded that Jesus had violated the Sabbath prohibitions by mixing spittle and dust, then presumably kneaded it to make clay.”<sup>15</sup>

Further, according to the Pharisees, It was forbidden to heal on the Sabbath.

---

<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988; 2002). 823.

<sup>15</sup> R.C. Sproul, *John* (Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2008). 179.



Medical attention could be given only if life was in actual danger. Even then it must be only such as to keep the patient from getting worse, not to make him any better.

For instance, a man with toothache might not suck vinegar through his teeth. It was forbidden to set a broken limb. “If a man’s hand or foot is dislocated he may not pour cold water over it.”

Clearly the man who was born blind was in no danger of his life; therefore Jesus broke the Sabbath when he healed him.<sup>16</sup>

So some of the Pharisees set aside the miracle Jesus had performed because they thought He had broke the Sabbath regulations.

“But others were saying, ‘How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?’ And there was a division among them” (v.16).

R.C. Sproul says, “In most instances, when Jesus performed miracles during His earthly ministry,

---

<sup>16</sup> *The Gospel of John : Volume 2*, ed. William Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000). 45.

there were widely varying reactions. As a general rule, some believed in Him and glorified God when they saw His signs, others refused to accept that the miracles substantiated His claim to be the Son of God, and still others questioned the veracity of the miracles themselves. Jesus' healing of the man born blind was no exception in terms of the reactions it caused."<sup>17</sup>

Now in verse 17 they ask...

4. The opinion of the healed man regarding Jesus

They ask, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes? And he said, "He is a prophet."

While the blind man saw clearly that Jesus was more than a mere man, the sighted but obstinate Pharisees were spiritually blind to that truth (see v. 39).<sup>18</sup>

D.A. Carson says, "He knows that a work of God was done in his life (*cf.* vv. 25, 32–33), and

---

<sup>17</sup> R.C. Sproul, John (Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2009). 178.

<sup>18</sup> John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Jn 9:17.

therefore the human agent must be an extraordinary individual, a prophet, someone sent with God's word. This man's eyes are opening wider: he is beginning to see still more clearly, while the eyes of his judges are becoming clouded over with blinding, theological mist."<sup>19</sup>

The Pharisees ignored his statement of Jesus being a prophet and dismissed his claims of being healed of his blindness until they had questioned his parents.

So verses 18-23 we hear the Pharisees...

B. They Question the Parents (vv.18-23)

1. They asked two questions in verse 19:

- a) Is this your son, who you say was born blind?
- b) Then how does he now see?

2. The parents respond in verses 20-21:

They said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind, but how he now sees, we

---

<sup>19</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 368.

do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.”

In verses 22-23 John tells us why the parents answered the way they did.

Verse 22 says, “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.”

That might not sound like a good reason to say, “He is of age, ask him” (v.23) but it was if you understood their culture.

The synagogue authorities had a powerful weapon, the weapon of excommunication, whereby a man was shut off from the congregation of God’s people.

Away back in the days of Ezra we read of a decree that whosoever did not obey the command of the authorities “his property should be forfeited and he himself banned from the congregation” (Ezra 10:8).

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 anathematized. He

was cursed in the presence of the people, and he was cut off from God and from man. 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 from God.<sup>20</sup>

So, saying “He is of age, ask him,” meant he is old enough to give legal testimony himself, *i.e.* at least thirteen<sup>21</sup> and it identified their fear of what this group might do.

That’s the fear you and I have to address every time we testify of Jesus.

Jesus told His disciples in **Luke 6:22 (NASB)**  
"Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

---

<sup>20</sup> *The Gospel of John : Volume 2*, ed. William Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 2000). 47.

<sup>21</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 369.

He also told them in **John 16:2 (NASB)** "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.

Even when many of the rulers in Jerusalem believed in Jesus they were afraid to say so "because they would be put out of the synagogue" (Jn.12:42).

Now...

C. They Question The Man A Second Time (vv.24-34)

They said to him in verse 24, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner."

1. "Give glory to God" means "Before God, own up and admit the truth."<sup>22</sup>

The "truth" they want confessed, of course, is that Jesus is a sinner, a transgressor of the law<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 372.

<sup>23</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 372–373.

who had violated their traditions and threatened their influence.<sup>24</sup>

2. The healed man responds in verse 25

He says, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

William MacDonald says, “The Pharisees met failure at every turn. Every time they tried to discredit the Lord Jesus, it resulted in bringing more honor to Him. The man’s testimony here was beautiful. He did not know too much about the Person of Jesus, but he did know that though once he was blind, now he saw. This was a testimony that no one could deny.

So it is in the case of those who have been born again. The world may doubt, scoff, and sneer, but no one can deny our testimony when we say that once we were lost, and now we have been saved by the grace of God.”<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Jn 9:24.

<sup>25</sup> William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Jn 9:25.

3. So they asked again in verse 26

“What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”

At this point the healed man is exasperated by their repeated questions and obvious bias.

4. So he answers again in verse 27

And now we see the man takes full advantage of their predicament and of the weak questions they put to him.<sup>26</sup>

He answers in verse 27 and says, “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?”

Now he struck a nerve!

David Thomas says, “The man perseveres in maintaining his ground, unterrified by the dangers hanging over his head, until at last, provoked by their repeated and wearisome interrogation, he loses his patience, and puts the

---

<sup>26</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961). 694.



ironical and irritating question, whether they wish to be “this Man’s followers.”<sup>27</sup>

Using sarcasm, he knew very well that they hated Jesus, and had no desire to follow Him.<sup>28</sup>

This, of course, gets a response!

5. They respond in verses 28-29

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

It has been said, “When you have no case, abuse the plaintiff.” That is what happened here.

The Pharisees had utterly failed to shake the testimony of this man, so they began to abuse him.

---

<sup>27</sup> David Thomas, *The Genius of the Fourth Gospel : A Homiletical Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Kregel Bible study classics (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). 274.

<sup>28</sup> William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Jn 9:26–27.

They accused him of being a disciple of Jesus, as if that were the worst thing in the world! Then they professed to be Moses' disciples, as if that were the greatest thing possible.<sup>29</sup>

The word "reviled" (loidoreo) in verse 28 means to "slander,"<sup>30</sup> "insult,"<sup>31</sup> "to reproach," even "blaspheme"<sup>32</sup>

To revile is all that is left the Pharisees—a sign of complete bankruptcy.

---

<sup>29</sup> William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Jn 9:28.

<sup>30</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996). 153–154.

<sup>31</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>32</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-). 293.

By calling the beggar Jesus' disciple these Pharisees imagine that they are reviling and heaping shame and insult upon him; in reality they could offer no higher testimonial of honor and praise to him.<sup>33</sup>

6. The man is given an opportunity to answer one more time in verses 31-33

He again uses sarcasm and says, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that any one opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."

I love William MacDonald's comments. He says, "The man's sarcasm now became biting. It was something that the Pharisees didn't expect. The man said to them in effect, "You men are the rulers in Israel. You are the teachers of the Jewish people. And yet here is a Man in your

---

<sup>33</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961). 695.

midst who has the power to give sight to blind eyes, and you do not know where He is from. Shame on you!”<sup>34</sup>

John MacArthur says, “The healed man demonstrated more spiritual insight and common sense than all of the religious authorities combined who sat in judgment of Jesus and him.

His penetrating wit focused in on their intractable unbelief.

His logic was that such an extraordinary miracle could only indicate that Jesus was from God.<sup>35</sup>

It all ends here. Verse 34 says...

D. They Put the Man Out (v.34)

Their conclusion was he was “born entirely in sins” and as such were shocked that he was teaching them. “So they put him out.”

---

<sup>34</sup> William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Jn 9:30.

<sup>35</sup> John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Jn 9:30.

J.C. Ryal said, “The teaching of the Holy Ghost is more frequently to be seen among men of low degree than among men of rank and education.”<sup>36</sup>

So they admit it after all. He had been healed. He was “born entirely in sins” which is a reference to the man’s congenital blindness, not a theological statement about the universality of original sin.

So the man was born blind after all! So Jesus must have opened his eyes!

But the irony of their rage quite escapes them, so great is their own blindness (*cf.* 3:19–21; 9:39–41).

The context of John’s final comment, *And they threw him out*, suggests this was the excommunication feared by the man’s parents.<sup>37</sup>

After being put out He finally meets...

## **II. Jesus (vv.35-41)**

---

<sup>36</sup> William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Jn 9:34.

<sup>37</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 375.

**CONCLUSION**

1. We have to stop right here.
2. We'll pick up the narrative in our next time together.
3. Let me ask you a question as we close.
4. When Jesus does a work in the heart of unsaved person, are you quick to dismiss it?
5. Are you surprised that He would open the heart of a sinner to believe in Him?
6. Then why do you not talk more about Him?
7. This man in his unconverted state talked more truth about Jesus than many believers.
8. If you are saved, you know the truth. Give it to someone today.
9. Tell them about Jesus!
10. Let's pray.