

Title: **GOD'S WORKS MADE MANIFEST**

Text: John 9:1-41

Subject: *The Healing of the Man Born Blind*

Introduction:

The Lord Jesus performed many, many miracles of mercy during the three years of his earthly ministry. He turned water into wine, calmed the stormy sea and multiplied the loaves and fishes. He healed the sick, made the deaf hear, caused the dumb to speak, made withered arms straight, caused the lame to walk, made the blind to see and raised the dead to life. By all these things he made manifest the fact that he is God and he is the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world (Isaiah 29:18; 35:4-10; 42:6-7; Matthew 11:4-5).

(Isaiah 29:18) "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness."

(Isaiah 35:4-10) "Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with vengeance, even God with a recompense*; he will come and save you. (5) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. (6) Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. (7) And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes. (8) And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*. (9) No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*: (10) And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs

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and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

(Isaiah 42:6-7) "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; (7) To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

(Matthew 11:4-5) "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: (5) The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

Two of the Lord's miracles stand out as being of such great importance, so spiritually instructive that they each occupy an entire chapter in the Volume of Holy Scripture. In the 11th chapter of John's Gospel, the Holy Spirit gives us the very instructive story of Lazarus being raised from the dead. At the outset of that chapter we are told that Lazarus' sickness and death was "*for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*" (John 11:4).

In the 9th chapter of John's Gospel the Holy Spirit holds before us a man who was born blind, whom the Lord Jesus healed. Here, again, the entire chapter is devoted to telling us about this great miracle. Like the resurrection of Lazarus, this man's healing is full of instruction for our souls. And, as we are told that Lazarus' sickness and death was "*for the glory of God,*" we read in John 9:3 that this man's blindness was designed and intended "*that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*" The title of my message is **GOD'S WORKS MADE MANIFEST**. May God the Holy Spirit be our Teacher. It is my prayer that he will graciously and effectually make manifest the works of God to you who hear my voice this hour, for Christ's sake.

Proposition: This great miracle is intended to illustrate and make manifest the works of God our Savior in saving his people from their sins.

"JESUS PASSED BY"

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The story of this blind man's healing begins with the Lord Jesus. How appropriate! The fact is, everything begins with God our Savior. Before we read about this man, or his blindness, or his healing, the Spirit of God tells us, "*And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man.*" It was the Lord Jesus passing by and seeing him that led to the mercy he obtained. So it is in grace. There are no advances made by sinners to the Lord, until the Lord passes by and bids the sinner live. Salvation begins with God coming to man, not with man coming to God (Ezekiel 16:1-14). If we love him, it is because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

(Ezekiel 16:1-14) "Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, (3) And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity *is* of the land of Canaan; thy father *was* an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. (4) And *as for* thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple *thee*; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. (5) None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. (6) And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live. (7) I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: *thy* breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou *wast* naked and bare. (8) Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. (9) Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. (10) I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. (11) I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. (12) And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. (13) Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou

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didst prosper into a kingdom. (14) And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it *was* perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.”

The Son of God hid himself from those Pharisees in the temple who despised him (John 8:59). He passed by them in judgment, leaving them to themselves, steeped in religion and sealed to everlasting destruction in reprobation. — **Grace is always distinct, particular and distinguishing.** — “*And as Jesus passed by*” those men in judgment, he passed by this man in mercy.

- He passed by my soul in eternal election and chose me unto salvation.
- He passed by my soul in predestination and arranged all things for my everlasting salvation.
- He passed by my soul at the appointed time of love and called me by his grace.

There’s hope for sinners when the Lord Jesus passes by! Bartimaeus understood that. — “*Jesus of Nazareth passeth by!*” — “*And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me*” (Mark 10:47).

Reach out and touch the Lord
As He passes by!
You’ll find He’s not too busy
To hear your heart’s cry.
He’s passing by this moment
Your needs to supply,
So reach out and touch the Lord
As He goes by!

“HE SAW A MAN”

Next we read, “*He saw a man which was blind from his birth.*” The word translated “saw” implies much more than you might think. It carries the idea of staring, gazing upon and watching. It also carries the idea of discerning, understanding and knowing. Blessed are those people who are under the watchful eye of the Son of God!

- He saw who he was.

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- He saw where he was.
- He saw what he was.
- He saw all that he had done.
- He saw all that he had been.
- He saw that he was blind.
- He saw all that he would do for this man!

I recall another place where we see these words. Turn back to the 15th chapter of Luke's Gospel.

(Luke 15:11-20) “And he said, A certain man had two sons: (12) And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living. (13) And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and **there wasted his substance with riotous living.** (14) And when he had **spent all**, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he **began to be in want.** (15) And he went and **joined himself to a citizen of that country;** and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. (16) And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and **no man gave unto him.** (17) And **when he came to himself,** he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! (18) I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, (19) And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. (20) And he arose, and came to his father. But **when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him,** and **had compassion,** and **ran,** and **fell on his neck,** and **kissed him.**”

The sovereignty of God in the exercise of his grace is exemplified in this 9th chapter of John's Gospel. The Savior saw the man; the man did not see him. The man did not call upon the Lord to have mercy upon him; the Lord was the one to take the initiative. That is the way it always is!

“BLIND FROM BIRTH”

This man, we are expressly told by God the Holy Spirit, “*was blind from his birth.*” There is much to be learned from what is here stated about this man's blindness.

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(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.”

The disciples thought, like most people, that bodily afflictions come upon people because of sinful behavior, that sickness is an indication of Divine displeasure and disapproval.

The Lord's words in verse 3 do not suggest that the man and his parents were not sinners; for both were guilty of original sin, and both had committed actual transgressions (Romans 3:23; 5:12). The Master was simply declaring that it was not his parents' particular sin nor his own that was the cause of his blindness. We know, of course, that all sickness and death are the result of sin. Were there no sin, there would be no sickness and no death. But the assumption that sickness is an indication of God's judgment is a display of proud ignorance.

- That was the error of Job's three friends.
- Modern fake-healers teach the same thing.

The fact is, this man's blindness, we are specifically told, was for the purpose of God's works being made manifest in him.

- His blindness was designed for his mercy.
- His blindness was an act of God's prevenient grace.
- His blindness was by the special arrangement of divine providence (Romans 8:28).
- The fact is, for God's elect, all our afflictions are designed and brought to pass for our everlasting benefit (2 Corinthians 4:17-5:1; 1 Peter 1:2-7).

(2 Corinthians 4:17-18) “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; (18) While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.”

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(2 Corinthians 5:1) “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

(1 Peter 1:2-7) “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (3) Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (6) Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Let us never imagine that anything comes to pass by accident, or without divine design. Many seem terribly confused by the fact of the Fall and of sin's entrance into the world. They seem to think that Adam's fall took God by surprise, and that the Creator lost control of his creation when sin entered. But that is not the case at all. When Lucifer fell it was by divine purpose; and when Adam fell it was by divine purpose (Isaiah 14:12-14, 24, 26-27; Psalm 76:10).

(Isaiah 14:12-14) “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! (13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

(Isaiah 14:24) “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall it stand:”

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(Isaiah 14:26-27) “This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. (27) For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”

(Psalms 76:10) “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”

(Romans 11:33-36) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”

Just as this man’s blindness made a way for God to display his works in him, the sin and fall of our father, Adam, and the ruin of the human race in Adam’s fall were designed by our God to make a way for the manifestation of his works of grace in Christ, of whom Adam was a type (Romans 5:14), to the praise of the glory of his grace.

(Romans 5:12-21) “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (13) (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. (14) Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (15) But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. (16) And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. (17) For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) (18) Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto

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justification of life. (19) For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (20) Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (21) That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

And this man's blindness represents the spiritual blindness of all men by nature. This man's blindness of body, gave occasion for the works of God to be made manifest in him; so the blindness of soul, affords opportunity for God in Christ, to be magnified in the works of grace. We are all born in a state of spiritual blindness, a blindness from which we can never be delivered except by the Son of God.

- Blind to the knowledge of God the Father!
- Blind to his everlasting love!
- Blind to the Person, work, grace, mercy, favor, and all the ten thousand beauties, and excellencies which are in God the Son, in his Mediator-character, as Head, and Husband of his Church, and people!
- Blind to everything relating to the eternal Power and Godhead of the blessed Spirit, both in his own essence and glory; and in his grace and mercy to chosen sinners! Blind to our own utterly lost, ruined and undone condition.
- Blind to our need of a Savior.
- Blind to our blindness!

"MUST WORK"

Look at verses 4 and 5. Oh, how I like what I read here! The Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, our Mediator, our covenant Surety, the sinners' Substitute speaks of the work he did upon this earth as a work that had to be done, a work that he "*must work*," a work that he must finish before he could leave this world and return to his Father and our Father, who sent him. Jehovah's Servant must finish his work (John 10:14-18).

(John 10:14-18) "I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one

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shepherd. (17) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

- Righteousness is finished!
- Satisfaction is finished!
- Redemption is finished!
- Justification is finished!
- Forgiveness is finished!
- Sanctification is finished!
- Salvation is finished!

Our message is “The Gospel,” “the good news,” not good advice! The Lord Jesus said, “*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*” (John 17:4). What could be more blessed? Redemption-work is finished. The Church of Christ is saved. Jehovah is glorified.

(Isaiah 52:7) “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

“GO WASH”

In verses 6 and 7, the Lord Jesus used very unlikely means to perform his miracle of mercy on this poor, blind man.

(John 9:6-7) “When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, (7) And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”

Our Lord used means that had no virtue or healing power in themselves, and means used were both foolish and distasteful to the natural mind. So it is that by the preaching of the Gospel, by the foolishness of preaching spiritually blind and dead sinners are made to see and live. Gospel is

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foolishness to the world; but it is the power of God unto salvation to those who are saved (1 Corinthians 1:18-24).

(1 Corinthians 1:18-24) “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. (20) Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (21) For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (22) For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: (23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

But let us understand that the means used are useless, without the blessing of God upon them. The clay and the pool of Siloam, the ordinances divine worship and gospel preaching, were merely instruments in the hand of Christ. But without him the clay would only have been a greater obstruction to sight, not a means of giving sight. So it is that that which we call the means of grace, without his blessing, tend more to increase spiritual blindness than remove it (2 Corinthians 2:15-16; Revelation 3:18).

(2 Corinthians 2:15-16) “For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: (16) To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?”

(Revelation 3:18) “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”

“DOST THOU BELIEVE?”

This man experienced an extraordinary miracle, a miracle that could not be denied. It was such an extraordinary thing that it brought him into conflict

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with the Pharisees. The Pharisees reviled him and finally excommunicated him. But he stood by his experience. He said, “Nothing like this has ever happened to anyone in the history of the world. I know that I was born blind. I know that I now see. And I know that the man who did this great work for me and in me is of God.” — But that is not salvation. It takes more than a miracle, even a notable miracle, to produce faith in the heart of a man. Saving faith is the gift of God. It comes only by divine revelation. Faith comes only by Christ revealing himself to you and in you.

(John 9:35-38) “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? (36) He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? (37) And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. (38) And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”

This man had received sight; but he must have Christ revealed to him in order to believe on him as Prophet, Priest, and King; and Christ is revealed by the hearing of the Word (Romans 10:9-17).

(Romans 10:9-17) “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (11) For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (12) For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. (13) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (15) And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? (17) So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

“MADE BLIND”

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Now, look at verses 39-41, and learn that the very gospel that God uses to cause the blind to see, he uses to make those who think they see blind.

(John 9:39-41) “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. (40) And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, 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.”

Our Lord's judgment on these Pharisees and his mercy upon the man born blind reminds me of the cloud in the camp of Israel that gave light to Israel while engulfing Egypt in darkness (Exodus 14:19-20). Christ is the Rock of ages; the sure Foundation Jehovah has laid in Zion. “*He that believeth shall never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end.*” And he is a “*stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.*” On whomsoever he shall fall, “*it will grind him to powder*” (Deuteronomy 32:4. Isaiah 28:16. 1 Peter 1:6-8. Matthew 21:44).

(Isaiah 63:1-4) “Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (2) Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? (3) I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.”

“*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*” God help you to believe. As this blind man was healed on the sabbath day (v. 14), on the day you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, your everlasting sabbath begins.

(Matthew 11:28-30) “Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.”

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Amen.