

Commentary on John 9:1-17

International Bible Lessons

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, April 29, 2012**, is from **John 9:1-17**. Five **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse by verse **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** below. The **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, which are also available on the **[Bible Lesson Forum](#)**, will aid teachers in class preparation and in conducting class discussion. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **[International Bible Lessons Commentary Index](#)**. The weekly **[International Bible Lesson](#)** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **[The Oklahoman](#)** newspaper.

International Bible Lesson Commentary **John 9:1-17**

(John 9:1) As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth.

As Jesus traveled with His disciples, God arranged for Him to meet a man born blind. God arranged this meeting so Jesus could heal him; and by healing him, Jesus could do the work of God. The blind man would receive his sight, and Jesus would reveal the compassion and power of God through His words and works.

(John 9:2) His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

The disciples saw the man as an object for theological discussion. They assumed, as did most people in Jesus’ day, that disease and suffering were the direct result of someone’s sins. They wanted to know if either of his parents or both had sinned, or if the blind man had sinned while in the womb. Some Gentiles believed that a person could sin in a former life, but the Bible does not teach this belief.

(John 9:3) Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.

Jesus refused to make this man an object for theological discussion, and denied that anyone’s sins were the cause of this man’s problems. Jesus taught that disease and suffering are not always God’s punishment or the natural result of human sin. God’s works can be revealed in the life of any person with a disability. God did have compassion for the man and through Jesus would heal him.

(John 9:4) We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

Rather than condemn someone or try to discover the sin that caused their suffering, Jesus wanted His followers to leave those questions with God. Instead, Jesus' followers should commit themselves to doing the works of God while they have the time and opportunity, to bringing a compassionate, healing touch and word as Jesus would do to help those suffering. Believers can do God's work when helping in a person with a disease or disability. There will be times when times are so bad that this will be almost impossible (as when Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried prior to his resurrection and the empowering of His disciples to continue His work in the power of the Holy Spirit).

(John 9:5) As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

As long as Jesus was conducting His earthly ministry with His disciples, He himself was the light and truth of the world. He showed the way. The world was darkened when Jesus was in the tomb. After He rose from the dead, He was once again the light, life and truth for His disciples, and He explained the Bible and His work to them.

(John 9:6) When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes,

The man born blind most likely did not know that he was the object of observation and discussion by Jesus and His disciples. What Jesus did for the man, He first explained to His disciples was the work of God. Jesus' work was similar to that of a medical doctor making a medicine that He could use to work a miracle. The work of doctors and medicine can be a work of God as Jesus shows.

(John 9:7) saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

Jesus initiated this healing. However, the blind man needed to respond with faith in order to be healed. John may have written a condensed version of what Jesus said to the man, but in faith the man had to go publicly to a pool to wash his eyes. He did not go home in disbelief to wash his eyes. Instead, he obeyed Jesus exactly as Jesus said; therefore, he was healed and able to see for the first time.

(John 9:8) The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?"

God's works began to be revealed to more than just the blind beggar when he returned to where he used to sit and beg. When he returned, he could see. And this raised questions, because his neighbors and those who saw him before did not see Jesus heal him. If they were to learn about Jesus healing the man, he would need to tell them as the witness to the healing.

(John 9:9) Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man."

Some could not believe that a man born blind could be healed; so, they said the man was someone else. Others who had actually paid attention to the beggar, other than just pass him by and not see him as a person, saw that indeed he was the beggar born blind who could now see. The man confirmed this fact.

(John 9:10) But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?”

Both groups of people, both the believing and the unbelieving, wanted to know how the man could see now. Jesus had worked so quietly that they had not observed what Jesus had done when He spoke to the man and put His medicine on His eyes. They only learned about Jesus healing the man after the man returned to the place where he had begged and was now able to see. Jesus also worked quietly when He turned water into wine at the wedding in Cana.

(John 9:11) He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.”

The man born blind told exactly what happened. He is an example of a trustworthy witness. Because he was blind, he had not seen Jesus, but he knew the man who touched and spoke to him was Jesus. The man testified that he had obeyed Jesus exactly as he was told, and the result was receiving his eyesight. What he described was Jesus making a medicine, that he had to wash off at a certain pool of water before he could be healed.

(John 9:12) They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

Since the man did not know what Jesus looked like, and since Jesus chose to go on His way, no one there knew where Jesus had gone. Jesus had worked a miracle to do the work of God in this man’s life. He did not work a miracle to draw a crowd or compel belief in Him. Jesus knew that over time the man who obeyed Him would learn more about Him; that is the situation with everyone who wants to learn more about Jesus. Loving and obeying Jesus will result in learning more about Jesus.

(John 9:13) They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

Rather than praise God for healing the man through Jesus’ medicine and Jesus’ command to the man to go wash his eyes, some in the crowd wanted to make the man a matter for theological discussion and judgment. Therefore, they took the man who had been born blind to the Pharisees, who were the enemies of Jesus.

(John 9:14) Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

Jesus consistently put love and obedience to God in first place. Jesus consistently chose to do the works of God; what His heavenly Father wanted Him to do. Rather than follow the human traditions of the religious leaders of His day, whenever He had the opportunity, Jesus consistently took compassionate action to help others.

(John 9:15) Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.”

The man told the Pharisees that Jesus had practiced medicine on the Sabbath – their most holy day. The Pharisees applied the law of Moses so strictly with their traditions and restrictions that they made healing someone or performing an act of mercy on the Sabbath illegal. The man told them that he had obeyed Jesus and therefore he could see

(John 9:16) Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided.

Some of the Pharisees had so distorted the teachings of Moses and the Old Testament that they condemned Jesus. They made disobeying their manmade laws the same as disobeying God and the Scriptures. Others, knowing that sinners cannot work miracles or do the work of God while sinning simply, could not believe that Jesus was not from God.

(John 9:17) So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

Since they were divided in their theological dispute, they asked the man who he thought had healed him. He testified that a man of God, a prophet, had healed him. He would most likely have known about many healings in the Hebrew Scriptures that were done by the prophets. So, he concluded from the evidence of his healed eyes and examples from Scripture that Jesus was a prophet. In the future, he would learn even more about Jesus (see John 9:35-38).

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How might Jesus' attitude and response toward the man born blind be a good example for His followers today when we remember that Jesus said, **“He was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him”** (John 9:3)?
2. Can you think of some examples from history or your own experiences when and where it was easier to do the work of God rather than at a later time and place? What does this teach you and your church?

3. What are some works of God that followers of Jesus can do today that they might not be allowed to do later “when night comes”?
4. Why do you think Jesus made a paste to heal the man’s eyes rather than simply touch his eyes and heal him at the moment He spoke to him?
5. What good example or examples does the blind man give us when he washed his eyes at the pool of Siloam and was able to see after he washed them?

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