John 9:35-41 Commentary
New Revised Standard Version

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Study Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the *International Bible Study Forum*.

(John 9:35) Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

The parents of the man Jesus healed were afraid they might be driven out of the synagogue if they said too much in his behalf; so, they left their son to stand alone before the Pharisees and give his testimony. Perhaps the man knew and trusted in Psalm 27:10, which reads, "If my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me up." Indeed, as his parents feared, the Pharisees drove the man Jesus healed out of the synagogue and forbade him from worshiping in the temple. But the LORD "took him up." When Jesus heard he had been driven out, He sought out and found the man. Upon finding him, Jesus asked a question that He expected to hear a positive answer to from the man when He asked him. In Jesus' question, the KJV uses "Son of God" and the NASB, NIV, and NRSV use "Son of Man." The earliest Greek manuscripts use "Son of Man." The title "Son of Man" meant "Messiah." Jesus' question meant, "Do you believe in the Messiah?" The man Jesus healed would have known what Jesus meant when asked if he believed in the Messiah or "Son of Man." Through His ministry, Jesus taught that He, the Messiah, was/is the "Son of God."

(John 9:36) He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him."

The man knew that Jesus was talking about the Messiah, and the man replied that if he knew who the Messiah was, he would certainly believe in him. The man demonstrated what Jesus said in John 3:21, "Those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God." In speaking to the Pharisees, the man did what was true and spoke what was true. Perhaps the man knew Psalm 27:1, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?," for the LORD had healed his eyes so he could see the light, and the man was not afraid to tell the Pharisees, who wanted to kill Jesus, that he believed in Jesus. The man had told the Pharisees the truth about Jesus, as much as he knew about Jesus at the time—that He was a Prophet and was from God—and he told the Pharisees that he had obeyed Jesus on the Sabbath when Jesus put mud on his eyes to heal him. He was a man of truth and thus prepared to receive Jesus as the Messiah. The title "Sir" is used here as an address of respect.

(John 9:37) Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he."

Because Jesus had healed the man's blindness, the man could see Jesus as they were talking. The man knew, perhaps by recognizing Jesus' voice, that Jesus had healed him. Then, Jesus revealed to the man who He is, He is the Messiah that the Jews expected. In Luke 11:34, Jesus spoke symbolically and said, "Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light; but if it is not healthy, your body is full of darkness." Jesus had made the man's physical eyes healthy and the man was truthful. Seeing physically and spiritually, his whole self was now full of divine light. He was ready to believe in Jesus.

(John 9:38) He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

Immediately in response to Jesus' question he called Jesus his "Lord," now in the highest sense of that title as King of the universe, as God (not as "sir"). He proved that Jesus was now his Lord and his God when he

worshiped Jesus. As the Son of God and the Son of Man, Jesus accepted his worship. Whereas, in the Bible angels sent from God always refuse to let anyone worship them, Jesus accepted his worship. In word and deed, Jesus testified that He and the Father were one and He was worthy to be worshiped as Lord and Savior. In John 5:22-23, Jesus spoke of His authority: "The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him." In John 9:39, Jesus said again that He came into this world for judgment.

(John 9:39) Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind."

Jesus came to save the lost and not condemn, but in John 3:18-19, we read, "Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." Jesus is the Light of the world, but most of the Pharisees and others loved darkness because their deeds were evil. When Jesus came and shined into the world as the Light, He revealed the dark hearts of those who did not truly love the LORD but preferred to continue doing evil. Jesus said to some of the religious leaders in Luke 11:39, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness." Jesus did not come to condemn but to save; yet, Jesus knew that by teaching the truth He would bring division and those who would not believe were already condemned. He did not need to condemn them; they condemned themselves. Their wickedness condemned them. He knew He would bring division when He warned those who practiced evil to repent and turn to Him for the forgiveness of their sins. Division would come between those who accepted Him as the Messiah and Son of God and those who rejected Him and sought to kill Him. In Luke 12:51-53, Jesus said, "Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against

son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." We know from experience that in some families not everyone believes in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and some lose friendships after they turn to Jesus and Jesus saves them from continuing to do evil deeds. The man born blind knew that he did not see physically, and He knew what it was to live in physical darkness in the world. Then, Jesus enabled to him to see. The man was a man of truth who knew some things about Jesus after Jesus healed him; then, he saw Jesus and spoke to Jesus and believed in Jesus—he could also see spiritually. After professing that he believed in Jesus the Messiah, he could walk in both physical and spiritual light and follow Jesus. When the Pharisees rejected his testimony about Jesus and rejected Jesus, they remained spiritually blind.

(John 9:40) Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?"

Some of the Pharisees claimed to be able to see spiritually because they obeyed and insisted others obey their laws and traditions, but throughout the Gospel of John and the other gospels we learn that some of the Pharisees were spiritually blind—they loved wickedness and their deeds were evil no matter what they professed with their mouths. Notice: Jesus said "some of the Pharisees," for not all were evil; for example, Nicodemus told Jesus, in John 3:2, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who is come from God." He and others came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, as their Savior and Lord. In John 12:42, we read, "Nevertheless many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue." Jesus' teachings did bring division among the Pharisees and other religious authorities, and His teaching also brought division among the people.

(John 9:41) Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Some of the Pharisees were so spiritually blind they probably expected Jesus to placate them and say, "No. You are not blind." When they asked,

"Surely we are not blind?" they claimed to be able to see spiritually, but as we have seen they were spiritually blind; otherwise, they would have recognized that Jesus had been sent from God. Not all Pharisees were hypocrites, as we have seen. Notice the principle that Jesus used: evil Pharisees said they saw spiritually and knew the Scriptures, but their knowledge did not lead them to believe in and obey the Scriptures. Their laws and traditions often set aside the truths the Scriptures taught so they could selfishly take advantage of others contrary to God's Law of Love. Because they would not believe in the Scriptures that pointed to God as the Father and to Jesus as His Son, and preferred to walk in spiritual darkness, their sin remained. They would not come to Jesus and receive Him as the Savior of the world. In John 3:1-21, the Pharisees who knew they were spiritually blind; such as Nicodemus, who asked Jesus about how to be born again, eventually came to Jesus and Jesus forgave them and cleansed them from their sins.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What does it mean when Jesus calls himself the Son of God?

2. What does it mean when Jesus calls himself the Son of Man?

3. What did you learn about Jesus when you read that He went to find the man after He learned that he had been driven out of the synagogue?

4. Do you think the man responded rightly to Jesus when Jesus told him who He is? Give a reason for your answer.

5. Why did Jesus say the sins of the Pharisees remained?

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