

MAN'S EYE OPENED (PART II)

THE STAGES OF SPIRITUAL SIGHT

JOHN 09:08–41

Introduction

The blind man had been delivered from darkness and given sight by the compassion of the Lord Jesus. In this passage the delivered man is confronted by his neighbours (vv. 8-12), by the Pharisees (vv. 13-34), and by Jesus (vv. 35-41).

The scene flows rapidly, and the man's growing knowledge of Jesus is easily seen and grasped. This passage concentrates on Jesus as seen by the man, that is, on the six stages of spiritual sight.

- I. Stage 1: seeing Jesus as a man (vv. 8-12).
- II. Stage 2: seeing Jesus as a Helper or a Healer (vv. 13-15).
- III. Stage 3: seeing Jesus as a prophet (vv. 16-17).
- IV. Stage 4: seeing Jesus as the Saviour (vv. 18-27).
- V. Stage 5: seeing Jesus as being "from God" (vv. 28-34).
- VI. Stage 6: seeing Jesus as the Son of God (vv. 35-38).
- VII. Conclusion: the lesson of Jesus' revelation (vv. 39-41).

I. John 09: 08–12 Spiritual Sight: Stage 1, Seeing Jesus Christ as a Man

The first stage of spiritual sight is *seeing Jesus as a man* (v. 11). Note: all the healed man knew was that "a man they call Jesus" had commanded him to do certain things, and he did them and received his sight.

Note what happened to the blind man.

- He was confronted by Jesus.
- He was commanded to do some things.
- He obeyed the commands of Jesus.
- He was delivered from darkness and given sight.

The blind man was blessed by Jesus despite an inadequate understanding of Christ. But note the crucial point: his heart was right toward Jesus. It was tender and willing to do what Jesus said.

The first stage in a man's spiritual journey is to *learn about Jesus*. A man must learn about Jesus before he can ever *learn of Jesus*, before he can ever come to know Jesus personally. But

once a man has learned *about* Jesus, it is imperative that he move on and come to know Jesus personally. The blind man could have stopped at any stage and failed in his spiritual journey.

Mat 11:28-29 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Thought 1. There are many men like the blind man. They know *about* Jesus, but they do not *know* Jesus, not personally: They know His name, but little else.

They have little understanding of His...

- teaching and claims
- presence and strength
- love and care
- power and promises

II. **John 09:13–15** *Spiritual Sight: Stage 2, Seeing Jesus Christ as a Helper, Healer*

The second stage of spiritual sight is seeing Jesus as a Helper or a Healer (v. 15). The delivered man was brought before the religionists (by whom we are not told) because the Sabbath law had been broken. This was a serious offense for the Jews (See *Religionists Opposed Jesus*, Jn. 5:15-16).

Note the man's answer to the religionists' question. He said that “He [the man, Jesus] put mud on my eyes...and I washed, and now I see.” He still saw Jesus only as a man, but as a man who had done a great thing by helping him and healing him. He saw Jesus as a great *Helper* and a great *Healer*. Note: this is a confession; the man was giving an answer to some questioners. He was confessing Jesus to be the great *Helper* and *Healer*.

Thought 1. Many confess Jesus just as the man confessed Him. They confess that He is a great man, a great...

- teacher
- preacher
- moralist
- helper
- martyr
- law-giver
- healer
- example

But note the critical point. This concept still comes far short of the truth. The delivered man did not yet know Jesus personally. He had not reached the stage of belief, of true salvation and worship (vv. 35–38)

Luke 4:22 *All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn't this Joseph's son?” they asked.*

Luke 4:32 *They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.*

John 7:36 *What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you will not find me,’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come’?*

JOHN 05:15–16

RELIGIONISTS OPPOSED JESUS CHRIST; RULES AND REGULATIONS

Breaking the Sabbath law was a serious matter to the Jew. Just how serious it is can be seen in the strict demands governing the Sabbath. Law after law was written to govern all activity on the Sabbath. A person could not travel, fast, cook, buy, sell, draw water, walk beyond a certain distance, lift anything, fight in a war, or heal on the Sabbath unless life was at stake. A person was not to contemplate any kind of work or activity. A good example of the legal restriction and the people's loyalty to it is seen in the women who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion. They would not even walk to His tomb to prepare the body for burial until the Sabbath was over (Mk. 16:1f; Mt. 28:1f).

It was a serious matter to break the Sabbath law. A person was condemned, and if the offense were serious enough, the person was to die.

The leaders' conflict with Jesus over religious beliefs and rules is sometimes thought by modern man to be petty and harsh, or else such conflicts are just not understood. Three facts will help in understanding why the conflicts happened and were life threatening, ending in the murder of Jesus Christ.

1. The Jewish nation had been held together by their religious beliefs. Through the centuries the Jewish people had been conquered by army after army, and by the millions they had been deported and scattered over the world. Even in the day of Jesus, they were enslaved by Rome. Their religion was the *binding force* that kept Jews together, in particular...
 - their belief that God had called them to be a distinctive people (who worshipped the only true and living God)
 - their rules governing the Sabbath and the temple
 - their laws governing intermarriage, worship, and cleansing
 - their rules governing what foods they could and could not eat

Their religious beliefs and rules protected them from alien beliefs and from being swallowed up by other nationalities through intermarriage. Their religion was what maintained their distinctiveness as a people and as a nation. Jewish leaders knew this. They knew that *their religion was the binding force* that held their nation together. They therefore opposed anyone or anything that threatened or attempted to break the laws of their religion and nation.

2. Many of the religionists were men of deep, deep conviction, strong in their beliefs. Therefore, they became steeped in religious belief and practice, law and custom, tradition and ritual, ceremony and liturgy, rules and regulations. To break any law or rule governing any belief or practice was a serious offense, for it taught

loose behaviour. And loose behaviour, once it had spread enough, would weaken their religion. Therefore, in their minds Jesus was committing a terrible offense by breaking their law. He was weakening their religion and threatening their nation.

3. The religionists were men who had profession, position, recognition, esteem, livelihood, and security. Anyone who went contrary to what they believed and taught was a threat to all they had. Some religionists undoubtedly felt that Jesus was a threat to them. Every time Jesus broke their law, they felt He was undermining their very position and security. (Mt. 12:1-8; 16:1-12; 21:23; 22:15-22; 22:23-33; 22:34-40; 23:1-12.)

The error of the religionists was fourfold.

1. They misinterpreted and corrupted God's Word. A person corrupts God's Word by adding or taking away from the words of Scripture.

A person adds to God's Word by interpreting and living too strictly. Such conduct exalts the flesh and is nothing more than extreme discipline and self-control. Of course, both discipline and self-control are commendable and are qualities demanded by God's Word, but they are not an end in themselves.

A person takes away from God's Word...

- by denying sections that he does not like or understand
- by neglecting to live the whole counsel of God
- by interpreting some commandments too loosely.

God's Word is practical and leads to an abundant life, to real living. It is not cold, harsh, restrictive, monastic, unrealistic and impractical. God gave His Word to the common man. (see Rom. 9:4).

2. They committed serious sin after sin in God's eyes (1 Th. 2:15-16; see Rom 2:17-29).
3. They rejected God's way of righteousness, God's Messiah, who is Jesus Christ (see Rom. 11:28-29; 1 Th. 2:15-16; Rom. 10:1-21, esp. 1-4, 19-21).
4. They allowed religion in its tradition and ritual, ceremony and rules to become more important than meeting the basic needs of human life: the need for God and the need for spiritual, mental, and physical health. Being the true Messiah, Jesus was bound to expose such error. Therefore, the battle lines were drawn.

The Messiah had to liberate people from such enslaving behaviour. He had to liberate them so they could be saved and worship God in freedom of spirit.

The religionists had to oppose anyone who broke their law. They had to oppose Jesus because He was a threat to their nation and to their own personal position and security.

The religionists' attack took two forms.

1. First, they tried to discredit Jesus so the crowds would stop following Him (see Mt. 21:46).

Mat 12:10 And a man with a shrivelled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

Luke 6:7 The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath.

Mat 22:15-17 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

2. Second, failing to discredit Jesus, they looked for some way to kill Him.

Mat 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. (see Mt. 26:3-4)

Luke 22:2 And the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people.

John 5:18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (see Jn. 7:1; 7:19-20, 25) □

III. John 09: 16–17 Spiritual Sight: Stage 3, Seeing Jesus Christ as a Prophet

The third stage of spiritual sight is seeing Jesus as a prophet (v. 17). The man really progressed in his view of Jesus at this point. The people saw a prophet as the highest office a man could hold, the most authoritative voice among the people.

A prophet was a man chosen by God...

- to walk close to God.
- to represent God among the people.
- to proclaim the message of God (see Amos 3:7).
- to demonstrate the power of God.
- to help people by demonstrating God before them and by guiding and warning and ministering to them.

But again, Jesus was still seen only as a man, a godly man yes, but only a man. Such a concept was still short. The blind man's concept was still inadequate. He had not yet reached the stage of belief and worship (vv. 35-38).

Mat 16:13-14 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Mat 21:10-11 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Mat 21:46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

IV. John 09:18–27 Spiritual Sight: Stage 4, Seeing Jesus Christ as the Saviour

The fourth stage of spiritual sight is seeing Jesus as the Saviour (v. 25). The man now confessed the immortal words, "One thing I do know, I was blind but now I see!" (v. 25).

The man underwent the most severe questioning and attack imaginable. He should have been gripped with fear and quaking in his shoes, but instead he was giving one of the strongest confessions possible — his own personal experience with Jesus. He was blind, but now he could see. He saw the hand of God...

- in his own life
- in the feelings within his heart
- in the touch of Jesus
- in the beauty of nature

He was confessing his personal experience: he was blind, but now he could see. He could not answer the theological question: Is Jesus a mere man as all other men, or is He of God? But he could answer one thing: his own personal experience.

The point is this: he had progressed in his view of Jesus. He saw that Jesus may be more than a mere man like other men, but he could not say for sure. Just like a child, he did not know the theological terms nor how to express the nature of Jesus, but he did know one thing: Jesus had delivered and saved him from blindness. Jesus was his Saviour and Deliverer from blindness to sight.

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

John 3:17 "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

1 Tim 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst.

V. *John 09:28–34 Spiritual Sight: Stage 5, Seeing Jesus Christ as Being from God*

The fifth stage of spiritual sight is seeing Jesus as being “from God” (v. 32-33). This was the man’s final answer to those who questioned his confession of Jesus. He confessed that Jesus was “*from God.*” He reasoned that...

- helping and delivering a blind man was God’s will.
- Jesus delivered him. God heard Jesus’ prayer for him and empowered Jesus to heal him.
- Jesus was bound to be “*from God.*”

The man knew that the works of Jesus were proof that He was from God. Therefore, Jesus was not a liar and a deceiver; Jesus was not an evil man. He was bound to be who He claimed to be; He was bound to be “from God.” (Jn. 7:25-31.)

John 6:38 “*For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.*”

John 7:28-29 *Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.”*

John 8:42 *Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.”*

VI. *John 09:28–34 Spiritual Sight: Stage 6, Seeing Jesus Christ as the Son of God*

The sixth stage of spiritual sight is seeing Jesus as the Son of God. Note two points.

1. Jesus was the One who did the seeking. He sought the man who had been thrown out.

Thought 1. Anyone can throw a person out — a business, a church, a family, neighbours, friends. But Jesus seeks the person who is thrown out and rejected. He always does, no matter who the person is or what the person has done.

2. The climactic stage of spiritual sight is clearly demonstrated by the man’s experience.

- a. It is seeing Jesus as the Son of God (Jn. 1:1-2; 1:34).

Mat 14:33 *Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”*

Mark 1:1 *The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

John 1:34 *I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.*

John 3:16-18 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

John 10:36 “What about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?”

John 11:27 “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”

Heb 10:29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

1 John 4:15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

- b. It is believing Jesus to be the Son of God worshipping Him (See *Saving Belief*, Jn. 2:24).

John 3:15-16 That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

Rom 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

VII. *John 09:39–41 Conclusion*

The lesson of Jesus’ revelation. Note two significant points.

1. Jesus stated that His mission upon earth was to bring judgment. Jesus judges man - all generations of men.
 - a. He judges the man who knows he is spiritually blind and wants to see. He takes the man who is spiritually blind and gives him sight — if that man really desires to see.

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 12:46 “I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.”

Eph 5:14 *For it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*

- b. He judges the man who claims to have spiritual sight apart from Him. The man who says he sees spiritually and claims to know God apart from Christ is judged to be blind. (See Jn. 14:6-9.)

Mat 6:23 *"But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"*

John 1:5 *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

John 3:19 *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

2. The religionists expected exemption from judgment. They were opposing Jesus, so they expected Him to say they were blind, but He shocked them. He said that blindness was an excuse. If they had been blind, they would have been excused; for they would have been acting in ignorance, not knowing what they were doing. (See Rom. 5:13.) But they...

- knew the law of God
- knew about spiritual things
- claimed to see
- did not recognize God's Son

They were, therefore, guilty and were judged "blind" and were to be condemned.

Mat 11:22 *"But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you."*

John 3:19 *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

Rom 2:11-12 *For God does not show favouritism. All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ■*

JOHN 02:24

SAVING FAITH: BELIEVE, COMMIT, ENTRUST

The word commit or entrust is the very same word "believe" (see Jn. 2:23). This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is - of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not just *believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Saviour just

as A J Abdul Kalam lived upon earth as the President of India. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of Abdul Kalam.

2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the *Saviour* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Saviour and Lord.
3. Saving faith is commitment - the commitment of a man's total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a man's commitment of all he *is and has* to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man's affairs. The man trusts Jesus to take care of his past (sins), his present (welfare), and his future (destiny). He entrusts his whole life, being, and possessions into Jesus' hands. He lays himself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. He follows Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of a man's whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus.

There are three steps involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage.

1. There is the step of *seeing* (Jn. 2:23) or *hearing* (Rom. 10:16). A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.
2. There is the step of *mental assent*. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behaviour to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.
3. There is the step of *commitment*. When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of *commitment*, a *personal commitment to the truth*. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits (entrusts) and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behaviour and life. ◻