

One of the great truths, both implicitly and explicitly taught in the Gospel of John, is the incapability of man to come to Christ or understand spiritual truth by his own power and the subsequent violent reaction to it.

The great American theologian, Charles Hodge, says in his Systematic Theology,

There are two conditions necessary for the production of a given effect. The one is that the cause should have the requisite efficiency [the cause should have the ability to do the job]; and the other, that the object on which it acts should have the requisite susceptibility [the thing acted upon should have the capability of receiving]. The sun and rain shed their genial influences on a desert, and it remains a desert; when those influences fall on a fertile plain, it is clothed with all the wonders of vegetable fertility and beauty. . . [so it is with the effects of the word of God upon the minds of men] . . . The minds of men since the fall are not in a condition to receive the transforming and saving power of the truths of the Bible and therefore it is necessary, in order to render the Word of God an effectual means of salvation, that it should be attended by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle says expressly, "The natural man *does not* accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor.2:14.) In the preceding chapter he had said, that the same gospel which to the called was the power and wisdom of God, was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. Our Lord said to the Jews: "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you *cannot* hear My word. He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God." (John 8:43, 47.) Everything that the Scriptures teach of the state of men since the fall proves that until enlightened by the Holy Ghost they are spiritually blind, unable to discern the true nature of the things of the Spirit, and therefore incapable of receiving a due impression from them (vol. 3, 473) . . .

Experience confirms this teaching of the Bible. It shows that no mere moral power of truth as presented objectively to the mind is of any avail to change the hearts of men. There once appeared on earth a divine person clothed in our nature; exhibiting the perfection of moral excellence in the form of a human life: holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; humble, disinterested, beneficent, tender, patient, enduring, and dispensing blessings on all who approached him. Yet this person was to the men of his generation without form or comeliness. He came to his own and his own received him not. They rejected him and preferred a murderer. And in what respect are we better than they? How is Christ regarded by the mass of the men of this generation? Multitudes blaspheme Him. The majority scarcely think of Him. He is to them no more than Socrates or Plato. And yet there is in Him such a revelation of the glory of God, as would constrain every human heart to love and adore Him, had not the god of this world blinded the eyes of those who believe not (vol. 3, 474). . .

These truths are evident in John 8 and 9 as well.

8:37 "I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

8:38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."

8:39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.

8:40 But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do."

8:41 "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."

The focus of this section revolves around two fathers; it makes a distinction between being Abraham's descendants (literally "seed" or "*sperma*" in Greek) and being his children. Though Jesus admits that His opponents are physically descendants of Abraham, they are not really his children. Children will have the nature and desires of their parents. People can clothe their pets like people, but the animals still act in accordance with their nature. Though the Jews were professing to be Abraham's children, they were neither thinking nor acting like Abraham (8:39).

First, Christ's word had no permanent place in them; it could not gain a firm foothold, or make advancements in their lives (8:37). This could not be said of Abraham. Abraham welcomed the messengers sent to him by God (Gen. 18:1-8), and was obedient to God's word when he heard it (Gen. 12:1-9; Jn. 8:40).

Secondly, because God's word was not received, they desired to kill Jesus; they were reflecting the behavior of their father (Jn. 8:40b-41, 43-44). There is a family likeness. If they wanted to show that they were Abraham's children, they needed to receive the One sent from God.

They respond with increased hostility. Their comment, "We were not born of fornication" may be directly reviling Jesus. They surely wouldn't have accepted the doctrine of the virgin birth. In an ancient Jewish document it says of Jesus, "I found a family register in Jerusalem and in it was written, 'such-a-one is a bastard through [a transgression of the law] thy neighbor's wife'" (Lev. 18:20) (*m. Yebam 4.13* – cited by Kostenberger, 265). If this is their intent, then they are contrasting their origins to Christ's. They had said that Abraham was their father, now they make it stronger and say that God is their Father and Christ is the one whose father is in question; He is conceived by fornication!

8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

8:43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.

8:44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Jesus doesn't just claim that God was His Father; rather, He tells them that He proceeded from God. Implicitly, He is stating His pre-existence (cf. Jn. 1:1) which He will state explicitly in John 8:58.

With brilliant logic Jesus exposes the inconsistency of their claim to be God's children. If they have God as their Father, why don't they listen to the message that Jesus brings from God? If God were their Father, their lack of comprehension is unexplainable.

Jesus answers His own question. They *cannot* hear because they do not recognize His voice. They only know the voice of their father, the devil. He is both a liar and a murderer. He was the one who moved Cain to kill Abel in the beginning (I Jn. 3:6-8, 15), and was the one who brought death to mankind (Gen. 3).

The devil acts in accordance to his nature; he murders because his nature is murderous, he lies because no truth is in him. So do those who are listening to Jesus. Their desires are not like children of Abraham or of God; they are like the devil himself.

8:45 "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

8:46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

8:47 He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

In verse 45, "because" is causal, introducing the reason they do not believe. The Jews do not fail to believe in Jesus' message *in spite* of its truthfulness, but *because* of it. They cannot believe it because there is no truth in them, just as there is no truth in their "father" (Jn. 8:44). They seek to kill Him, *because* His word had no place in them (Jn. 8:37).

Jesus then holds up His conduct as evidence of His unity with the Father (Jn. 8:46a). How can one who has such sinless conduct not be from God? Jesus' challenge reflects a clear conscience. It is also striking that they had no immediate comeback. If He had no sin, then He should surely be listened to. They would believe if they were of God, for God has sent the Son (Jn. 8:42), and all who are of God believe the One sent by Him. They, however, do not believe *because* they are not of God (Jn. 8:47).

8:48 The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

The Jews despised the Samaritans and half-breeds who had intermarried with Gentiles six centuries earlier and now followed their own version of the Old Testament. Calling Jesus a Samaritan was a kind of racial slur with the innuendo that His real father was unknown. And to make the insult clear, they said He had a demon.

This is the most vicious opposition imaginable. It is amazing that Jesus continues to talk to them.

***8:49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.
8:50 But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges."***

Jesus' calm, non-retaliatory response is reminiscent of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53:7 where it says, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth."

In spite of His lofty claims of having come from the Father (Jn. 8:42), He insists that He is not seeking His own glory, but He gives honor where honor is due. They do not. They dishonor the One whom the Father has chosen.

Jesus does not seek His own glory, but there is One who seeks glory; it is the One who judges all mankind. Notice the present tense verb. Judgment is a present process.

***8:51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."
8:52 The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.'
8:53 Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?"***

All that Jesus had said to those who heard Him was not for Himself, but for their benefit. His desire was that through the hearing of His word, they would not see death.

The Jews focused on physical death and knew that all people would die; even Abraham died. The prophets also died. For Jesus to insinuate that He could be greater than Abraham or the prophets was demonic! They ask, "Are you greater than Abraham?"

8:54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God';

8:55 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

Self-glory means nothing to Jesus; He only seeks the approval of the Father.

The Jews had upheld Abraham as their father and Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus' day. It is difficult to determine what Jesus is specifically referring to, but some suggest that Abraham looked forward to the day that the covenant made with him by God would be fulfilled. In Genesis 12:3 God tells him, "in you all the families of the earth will be blessed," which comes to pass in Christ.

8:57 So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

8:59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

They interpreted Jesus' words as if Jesus was saying that He was Abraham's contemporary, which to them was the talk of a lunatic, or worse. Jesus uses their words to reveal His nature; He was indeed before Abraham. He is "I am." (For more on verses 57-59 see my notes on John 8:24.)

Stoning was prescribed for blasphemy – not for simply lying. They finally understood what Jesus was saying. His unity with the Father is because He is God in human flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14).

Chapter 9

The healing of the blind man constitutes the sixth sign that Jesus performs in the Book of John. The parallels to Chapter 5 are particularly pronounced. They both take place near pools (5:2; 9:7), on the Sabbath (5:9; 9:14), and in both cases the healings are difficult by human measure (the man in chapter 5 was lame for 38 years and the man here was born blind). Furthermore, Jesus' method of healing is unconventional in both cases (5:8-9; 9:6-7). Yet the healed men's responses could not be more different (Kostenberber, 277).

Chapter 9 is tied thematically to John 8:12 where Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." In Chapter 9 a man born blind receives sight, graphically depicting that where the Light shines men can see. At the same time, those who think they see are blinded by the Light (Carson, 338).

As the story progresses, the blind man's faith becomes stronger while the Pharisees become increasingly irrational and resistant. The blind man moves from calling Jesus a prophet (9:17) to defending Him before the Pharisees (9:25) and correcting their doctrine (9:34), to confessing Jesus as Lord and worshipping Him (9:38). The man walks home both physically healed and spiritually alive (Kostenberber, 278).

9:1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

9:2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"

9:3 Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

9:4 We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

9:5 While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."

Jesus passes by a man who was born blind. The nature of his condition makes the miracle more spectacular and undeniable.

The rabbis generally believed in a direct cause and effect between suffering and sin. The disciples' question fits in this context. In one sense they are correct (see Jn. 5:14 notes); all suffering inevitably comes as a result of sin entering the world at the fall, but not all suffering is directly tied to a particular sin. It was hard to imagine how a man could have sinned prior to birth so they wonder if he was bearing the brunt of his parents' sin. The disciples are wrong in both assumptions: the man's condition was designed by God with a particular purpose; namely, to display the works of God through Christ. Even the effects of sin can bring glory to God.

The contrast between the way the disciples thought and the way Jesus thought cannot be overlooked. The disciples saw the man as a case study and his blindness generated theological questions in their minds. Jesus saw the man with compassion and looked at life in terms of fulfilling God's purposes and bringing glory to God. The disciples wanted answers as to why things had happened as they did. Jesus saw all things as purposeful, part of the sovereign plan of God; this is the perspective all believers should adopt.

In the culture of that day, people had to stop working when it got dark since they couldn't see what they were doing. The daylight exists while Jesus, the Light of the world, is present. But the time is short and the night is coming; Jesus will be gone and the present opportunities will leave as well. This does not mean that the light stops shining once He has ascended, but that the brightness displayed in Him while He walked the earth would no longer be visible. Those who enjoy His light will be engulfed in darkness when He leaves (Jn. 12:35). The words "we" and "must" in verse 4 are important. The "must" means that God's work is not simply advisable, but there is a compelling necessity that it gets done. The "we" shows that Jesus is not the only one doing the works of God; the disciples also have a responsibility to do the works of God in their allotted time.

Verses 4 and 5 tie this event to the Feast of Booths (Jn. 8:12) and are crucial since they signal how the healing of the blind man is to be understood. His symbol-laden miracles attest to who He is: "It is not just a miracle, it is a sign, the work of the Father, mediated through the Sent One to shed light on those who live in darkness" (Carson, 363). It pictures that what Jesus does for the physically blind, He also does for the spiritually blind.

9:6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes,

9:7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing.

“When He said this” connects the fact that He is the Light of the world to the action that He is about to perform, making the sign an illustration of what He is saying (Kostenberger, 283; Carson, 363). Jesus is the Light of the world; He will now proceed to give light to the blind. The place of the healing (the pool of Siloam) also connects the event to the Feast of Booths where the water originated for the daily pouring ceremony (see my notes on 7:25-53 and 8:12).

The reason why Jesus made mud with spit is not clear. Some see a connection to creation when man was made from the dust of the earth. Here Jesus makes new eyes. Some see it as a way to induce faith in the man. Still others think Jesus was creating double-darkness to magnify the miracle. There are other suggestions as well – the number of which make it clear that nobody really knows. The bottom line is that the man does as Jesus had asked and comes back seeing.

The name of the pool was Siloam, meaning “sent.” The name came from the fact that the water originated from a spring outside the city that was diverted by conduit so that it bubbled up within the city walls– the water was “sent” by a channel from the spring to the city. The fact that John points out the meaning of the name of the pool draws attention to it, and causes us to think of the one sent by God.

9:8 Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?"

9:9 Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one."

9:10 So they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?"

9:11 He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight."

9:12 They said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

The event causes a great stir and varied responses. It moves from “It’s him, isn’t it?” to “yes, it’s him” to “No, it’s not, but he looks like him.” The testimony of the man is also included: “It’s me!” The man sees, but the blindness of the people is slowly introduced. No matter what Jesus does, there are always those who doubt and create other explanations for His miracles. The only testimony that the man can give at this point is the bare facts; he has yet to learn the true identity of Jesus.

9:13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind.

9:14 Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

9:15 Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

9:16 Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them.

9:17 So they said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet."

The “they” who brought the man to the Pharisees are the man’s neighbors whose intentions are not necessarily hostile toward Jesus (Beasley-Murray, 156). There would be no reason for them to believe that

the man would be expelled from the synagogue for having been healed. In the face of such an outstanding miracle, the people expected comment from the local authorities as to its meaning and significance (Carson, 366).

The response is so typical that it is predictable. The miracle itself is of little concern to the Pharisees; they are more concerned that it was done on the Sabbath (9:16), than the great victory of light over darkness.

According to their understanding of Sabbath keeping, they could have deduced that Jesus was a Sabbath breaker for a number of reasons: (1) Jesus "worked" by healing on a day that was supposed to be used for rest, (2) He made a mixture of salvia and mud which could be perceived as "kneading" which was also forbidden, and (3) later Jewish tradition mentions that it was not permissible to anoint eyes on the Sabbath, though we do not know if that was in effect in Jesus' day (Kostenberger, 285, 286).

Earlier, the crowds had been divided over Jesus (Jn. 7:40-43), now the leaders were. Their logic illustrates what Jesus had concluded about the group as a whole; in John 8:15 He had said, "You judge according to the flesh," that is, they assessed things by the human logic of fallen humanity. Fallen men never arrive at the truth behind a spiritual act. The fact that they even resorted to asking the man's opinion of who Jesus was shows the confusion and disunity the group had in deciding the significance of Jesus' actions.

When asked, the healed man replied like the Samaritan woman – "he is a prophet." It must be remembered that the man had no idea who Jesus was and a prophet would be the highest place he could assign a man of God (Morris, 486).

9:18 The Jews then did not believe it of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight,

9:19 and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"

9:20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;

9:21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself."

9:22 His parents said this because 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.

9:23 For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

Next, they sent for the man's parents, probably to seek for discrepancies or to clarify the truthfulness of what had been reported; but when the parents appear, the Pharisees start by challenging them over the absurdity of their son's claim. The leaders conclude that Jesus could not have done such a miracle and, therefore, this miracle did not happen (Morris, 486, 487). Faced with intimidation, the parents simply admit that it is their son, he was born blind, and now he sees. Beyond that they had nothing to report. They may not have been there when the healing took place, but John is clear that the brevity of what they said was primarily motivated by fear; the Jews had already agreed that anyone who testified in Jesus' favor would be put out of the synagogue – that is, they would be excommunicated – and it was clear that the Pharisees were not in the

mood to hear any type of a positive testimony. In spite of their attempts to stay in a good standing with the authorities, the parents had provided testimony that a notable miracle had occurred.

9:24 So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner."

9:25 He then answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

9:26 So they said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

9:27 He answered them, "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?"

9:28 They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

9:29 "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from."

9:30 The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes."

Verses 24-34 are the most spirited part of the chapter. "The Jews press the healed man, and he withstands them with some vigor. They take their stand on their preconceived ideas, he on the simple facts that he knows. It is not possible to argue a man out of his position when he can say, 'one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see'" (Morris, 490).

The Pharisees didn't get very far with the parents of the man, so they decide to question the healed man again. They exhort him to give glory to God. That is, they want him to "tell the truth" and make a confession that Jesus is a sinner, in agreement with what they had already concluded. Their only desire is to discredit Jesus; the veracity of the miracle is not even a concern.

The man leaves it up to the theologians to decide if Jesus is a sinner; he just restates what had happened (9:25). The Jews are at a loss so they decide to cross-examine him again (9:26). The questioning is relentless, but the man is emboldened by it: "I have already told you and you do not listen."

The man realizes that the interrogation is nothing but a show so he asks, "You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" Since the question he asks in Greek assumes a negative answer, we can assume that it shouldn't be taken at face value. As Carson says, "with a show of innocence he asks if their desire to hear a repetition of his testimony is bound up with a secret desire to become disciples of Jesus themselves" (Carson, 373). The "also" is significant; the man had already aligned himself as one of Jesus' disciples.

His comment incenses them and they respond by pouring out insults upon him (9:28). "We are disciples of Moses," they say. "We know he is from God, but Jesus has no proven worth. We don't even know where He is from!"

9:31 "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him."

9:32 "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.

9:33 If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."

9:34 They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" So they put him out.

In an amazing turnaround, the man becomes the teacher and begins to reason with his skeptics on their own level. He even uses the same "we" format in verse 31 that they used in verse 29. His boldness contrasts that of his parents, and even Nicodemus (Jn. 7:50-51). "His increasing boldness and sardonic wit stem from his most uncommon gift, common sense" (Carson, 374). It is unheard of that anyone could open the eyes of someone born blind. What *is* clear is that a man who has found favor with God would have his prayers answered (Job 27:9; 35:13; Psa. 66:18; 109:7; Prov. 15:29; Isa. 1:15, etc.). His logic is complete: if Jesus is a sinner, how is it that He is able to find such extreme favor with God that He can do the most spectacular of miracles?

The authorities cannot refute his logic, so they resort to personal attack; "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" The story has come full circle. By saying that his blindness was a result of his own sinfulness, they are admitting the point that they had questioned (Morris, 493); a miracle had occurred, a man who was once blind can now see.

The authorities were at wit's end; everyone's testimony confirmed that a miracle had taken place, and their logic was so full of holes that even someone uneducated could baffle them; so they threw him out.

9:35 Jesus heard that they had put him out, and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

9:36 He answered, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

9:37 Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you."

9:38 And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him.

When Jesus heard that the man was excommunicated from the synagogue, He sought him out. The once-blind man had never seen Jesus, and had not spoken to Him since the healing.

Jesus asks him if he believes in the Son of Man. The meaning of this expression in this context is best understood by how it is used by John in this gospel. The term is used in this gospel in two ways: it is the Son of Man (1) who uniquely reveals God (Jn. 1:51; 3:13-14; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28) and (2) is assigned the responsibility to judge (Jn. 5:27). This could also be understood, though, as the Son of Man about whom Daniel prophesied who would receive the kingdom (Dan. 7:13ff.). The man is eager to believe in Him and he worships Him.

The light has had its effect on the one who could not see; it remains for us to see the effect on those who have closed their eyes to it.

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

9:40 Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?"

9:41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

Although Jesus was speaking to the man, others could hear what was being said. "Jesus' remarks in verse 39 are thus cast as a summarizing statement to the healed man of what has taken place, enabling him to grasp that the miracle that opened his eyes, and the ensuing debate with the religious authorities, constituted an acted parable about sight and blindness in the spiritual realm" (Carson, 377). The result of Jesus' coming is that blind men see (Morris, 496).

But Jesus' coming also results in judgment for men divided over Him (Morris, 496). The second half of verse 39 is a purpose clause, meaning "in order that the blind will see and those who see will become blind" (Carson, 377). The language comes from Isaiah 6:10 and 42:19. On a spiritual level, the blind who will receive sight are those in spiritual darkness *and know it*. Jesus came to open their eyes and give them light so they could see. Then there are those, like the Pharisees, who think that they can see but reject the truth of the light when it comes. Their true condition of blindness is exposed by their reaction to the light. In Matthew 6:22-23 Jesus said, "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then, the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" In other words, the eye functions as a lamp that illumines a house. As long as the eye is healthy, the person can see clearly and their life will be illumined by truth. But if the person cannot see clearly, they will be unable to dissipate the darkness. Jesus' coming brings light to the blind, and confirms those who are in darkness.

Some Pharisees standing by asked if He was speaking of them. Jesus replied by saying. "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

His answer reflects the truths observed in the narrative. Throughout the story the Pharisees were confident that they were seeing things clearly. They refused to believe the man was really healed, and they continued to believe that Jesus was a sinner and was not the one sent from God. Because they say "we see" when they don't believe in Christ, it is evident that their sin (of unbelief) remains.

The opposite is also true. The blind man knew he was blind, and believed in Christ when he received sight. His response to Christ was evidence that he could see and was no longer held by his sin.