

Born Blind

Receiving the Gift of Sight

December 24, 2017

Welcome to where we're learning how to receive what God wants to give!

What gift do we open ourselves by trusting God to open for us?

Our eyes ... *of our heart*, that are opened/enlightened to the riches of our inheritance when cleansed by the washing of the Word. (Eph 1:18; 5:25-26)



Last week I mentioned that the man born blind was miraculously healed at the **Pool of Siloam**. This happened around Hanukkah.¹ This is where Christ sent him; and, where the masses amassed to witness the event. We're going to read the full story today, because it's clearly a *Christ-mass miracle!*



Jesus escapes a stoning after claiming to be "*the Light of the world,*" and calling the Pharisees illegitimate sons of the devil. (Jn 8:12-59) And, when He flees the Temple, He encounters a blind man *and* an opportunity to *prove* His divinity, by doing the one miracle that establishes and distinguishes the Messiah of Scripture: opening blind eyes. (Is 29:18, 35:5)



This is Saturday, the Sabbath. Nobody works till sunset. Then the market comes to life and people work into the night. But, ***before sunset, even making mud receives the death penalty.*** (Ex 35:2) **Manmade regulations were a farce of lethal legalism and loopholes.**

¹As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the **work** of God might be displayed in his life. ⁴As long as it is day, we must do the **work** of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can **work**. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷"Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. – John 9:1-7 NIV

Did you see how Jesus contradicts the Sabbath status quo: "As long as it's **day**, we must ... **work**" and "**Night** is coming, when **no one** can **work**"? He's "***the Light of the world***" and "***the Lord of the Sabbath***"; and the *Law of Moses* was never to hinder the *work of God*. And, just before He's betrayed, tried, and crucified, Scripture says: "*it was night*" (Jn 13:30)

¹ "Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem" (Jn 10:22); in Hebrew, *Dedication* is pronounced *Hanukkah*.



Know what this “work of God” is, that’ll be *displayed* (lit. made *visible*) in this man’s life *because of* his life-long blindness? **He gets eyes that can see ... *aside from the healing of his sight.*** This guy is given a confusing gift: *here’s mud in your eye!* And **he’s sent away to wash his eyes and trust that they’ll be healed.**



The stairway to the Pool was 2000’ downhill (over 1/3 of a mile). These are the actual steps the blind man was sent to descend. The entire length has been excavated. And, they were purposely made *uneven* to make the people bow their heads as they approached.



Jesus turns this man into megaphone for the masses; a walking Sabbath violation billboard! **As he gropes his way to the pool** telling how he’s gonna be miraculously healed, imagine the buzz: **“Someone made mud! That’s death or excommunication!”** Who would help him? Too dangerous! But, they’d sure follow, calling out: “Short step! Long step. Short step!” And at that pool they all see a genuine Sabbath defying, happy Hanukkah, Christ mass miracle! And, **when he goes home his countenance is so changed that he’s not recognized as the same man.**



Watch for him to inadvertently implicate Jesus.



⁸ His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some claimed that he was. Others said, “No, he only looks like him.” But he himself insisted, “I am the man.” ¹⁰ “How then were your eyes opened?” they demanded. ¹¹ He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.” ¹² “Where is this man?” they asked him. “I don’t know,” he said. – John 9:8-12 NIV



“How should I know? I was *blind* at the time! I don’t even know what He *looks like.*” They ask because they’re required to report a capital offense. Which they do. **They haul him in to face the Pharisees!** Watch for the un-blind man to omit, under oath, the *making of mud.* He’s not being dishonest; he’s in court, and can only testify to what he’s witnessed. And, he didn’t *see* it happen. *He was blind!*



¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others asked, “How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?” So they were divided. ¹⁷ Finally they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” The man replied, “He is a prophet.” – John 9:13-17 NIV

Jesus once again brings division. **There's no in-between with the Lord; either kill Him or call Him Christ ... and mean it!** They weren't sure this man was blind. And, with *that boldness*, they're now convinced that *he's a follower* and *this is a scam*.

¹⁸ The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹ "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" ²⁰ "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. ²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." – John 9:18-23 NIV



Their fear and readiness to abandon their son lends credibility to their claim; because, they're obviously willing to deny what they can to placate the Pharisees. **Blind religion denies his parents the joy of their own son's sight.**

The Pharisees don't care if God healed this man. Their concern is whether Jesus violated manmade regulations.

Healing a man blind from birth is only incidentally interesting!

Now, watch for the Pharisees to say they don't know where Jesus *comes from* (meaning, the devil or God). And remember, when they call Jesus a *sinner*, they're referring to the *making of mud*. And, watch for the man to remind them *he was blind* at the time.

And mostly watch for the work of God to be displayed in the man.

²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." ²⁵ He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" ²⁶ Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" ²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." ³⁰ The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴ To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out. – John 9:24-34 NIV

The work of God was displayed in this man's life in a powerful way in the great assembly because God's Word was in his heart.

God's work is His Word. And, He's working it into our hearts.

Jesus said **the Spirit gives you the words you need when you're in trouble; but, He gets 'em from what you've stored in your heart.** Instead of turning against God, **the man born blind allowed his suffering to push him deeply into God's Word for answers.**

Therefore, the Spirit had a rich treasury to choose from.

"... this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."

This man is a portrait of the work of God expressed in Psalm 40:

[The Lord] lifted me out of ... the mud and ... set my feet on a rock ... your law **[Word]** is within my heart. I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly ... may your love and your truth always protect me. For ... my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. ... my heart fails within me. ... O Lord, come quickly to help me. ... May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!" be appalled at their own shame. – Psalm 40 condensed

Word traveled fast that he'd stood in the assembly and proclaimed Christ, willingly losing his family, friends, and way of life. Watch for Jesus to speak as though He knows this man knows his Word. And, don't miss the *real* Christmas miracle, when He opens the eyes of the man born blind who put his trust in the Lord.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." ³⁷ Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." ³⁸ Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." ⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" ⁴¹ Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains." – John 9:35-41 NIV



Remember, **Jesus can only enter an open heart.**

Proverbs (30:12) says that those who are pure in their own eyes can see no need for their filth to be washed away.

And, Paul says we are cleansed by the washing with water through the Word. (Eph 5:25-26)

Those whose eyes are open worship Jesus with all their heart. The rest pacify themselves with blind, deaf, dumb religion. The Christmas Gift of the Son and Spirit are eyes to see.

To open our gift we must open His Word which will open our eyes. Sure, we have to grope along at first; that's to be expected. After all, we're all born blind. But, *here's mud in your eye!*

So, **open your gift.** And, **open His Word.** And, **open your eyes.** And, **wake up.**

It's Christmas.