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“NONE SO BLIND”
John 9:1-41

☞ **There are none so blind they cannot receive sight, provided they are willing.**

☞ By the same token, **“There are none so blind as those who will not see.”**

John chapter 9 {p 1,091} reveals much about sight and blindness. It unfolds like a drama in seven scenes. The most important scenes are the first and the seventh, so we will begin with them.

☐ Scene 1 is vv 1-7. The disciples see a blind man and ask Jesus, **“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”**

○ The issue is physical blindness and how it relates to sin. The disciples’ assumption is false; but their question is not *totally* ridiculous.

Blindness *is* an indirect consequence of sin, because sin causes genetic degradation that can trigger birth defects. However, this genetic degradation is a universal condition that strikes innocent newborns as well as reprobate criminals. There is no correlation between this man’s blindness and any person’s individual sin.

Of course, physical disability *can* be a direct consequence of specific sins (hence the link between gluttony and morbid obesity, alcohol abuse and cirrhosis, sexual immorality and STDs). But there is no such connection in this instance.

So Jesus answers, **“Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”**

◆ In other words, he is innocently blind.

The Lord spits on the ground, makes mud, puts it on the man’s eyes and tells him to **“Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam.”** The man does so, and comes home with perfect eyesight.

There are none so blind they cannot receive sight, provided they are willing.

☐ Scene 7 is in vv 39-41.

○ The issue here is spiritual blindness, and the dialogue is ominous.

Jesus warns: **“For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.”**

Some Pharisees hear this and ask, **“What? Are we blind too?”**

Jesus answers, **“If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.”**

◆ In other words, they are culpably blind. They *are* to blame for their blindness. Spiritual blindness is both their offense and their punishment.

There are none so blind as those who will not see.

Let this sink in.

Jesus says the blind beggar – the man everyone assumes to be a gutter sinner (or, at best, the son of gutter sinners), the one who appears to be under God’s curse – is innocent, and He heals him of physical blindness!

Jesus says these Pharisees – the men everyone assumes to be righteous, the men who appear to be in God’s favor – are guilty, and He allows them to remain in spiritual darkness!

Why? Why is Jesus so accommodating with one man and so inflexible with the others?

Let's dig into Scenes 2 through 6 for insight about the man born blind. (It is awkward to keep saying "the man born blind," so I'll call him "Levi" for short.) Look for clues that reveal his attitude toward Jesus.

❑ Scene 2 is vv 8-12.

"Levi" comes home with 20/20 vision and his neighbors are dumbfounded. Some believe he is "**the same man who used to sit and beg.**" Others are skeptical.

✦¹ He himself insists, "**I am the man,**" and tells them how Jesus worked this miracle. Other than that, he makes no claim in regard to Jesus.

❑ Scene 3 is vv 13-17.

"Levi's" neighbors bring him to the Pharisees. They ask, "**What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.**"

✦² He replies, "**He is a prophet.**" A little time has passed and he confidently asserts that Jesus is God's spokesman.

❑ Scene 5 is vv 24-34.

The Pharisees call "Levi" in for further questioning. When they ask again, "**How did he open your eyes?**" he answers, "**Do you want to become his disciples too?**"

✦³ The word "**too**" shows that, on some level, he is starting to think of himself as a follower of Jesus.

❑ Scene 6 is vv 35-39.

The Lord seeks out and finds newly-sighted "Levi" and asks, "**Do you believe in the Son of Man?**"

"**Who is he, sir?**" he replies. "**Tell me so that I may believe in him.**"

Jesus reveals himself as Messiah. "Levi" says, "**Lord, I believe,**" and worships him.

◆ Notice the progression. "Levi's" physical eyes are blind in v 1, but by v 7 they see. Likewise, his spiritual eyes are glued shut in Scene 1, but gradually they are unsealed. By the time we get to Scene 6 they are wide open.

There are none so blind they cannot receive sight, provided they are willing.

Now about the Pharisees...

❑ Scene 3 is in vv 13-17.

The neighbors bring "Levi" to the Pharisees.

"**Some...[say], '[Jesus] is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.'** But others [ask], '**How can a sinner perform such signs?'**"

⊙¹ They are uncertain whether Jesus is from God.

❑ Scene 4 is vv 18-23.

They send for "Levi's" parents, who affirm that he *is* their son, he *was* born blind, and he *has* been healed; otherwise, they are not much help: "**How he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know,**" they say.

This is fear talking, for the authorities have given notice "**that anyone who [says] Jesus [is] the Messiah [will] be put out of the synagogue.**" They will be expelled from the covenant community and cut off from God.

⊙² The Pharisees decide, in advance, to reject Jesus as the Messiah.

❑ Scene 5 is vv 24-34.

They call "Levi" back for a 2nd interrogation.

"**Give glory to God and tell the truth,**" they say, as though he has been lying. "**We know this man is a sinner.**" A few minutes later they scream, "**You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!**" Then they ban him from the synagogue.

⊙³ The hint of openness we saw earlier is gone. They are dead-set on killing the Jesus Movement.

❑ That brings us back to those scary lines in Scene 7: "**If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.**"

◆ Notice their degeneration. At first, they show at least a little openness, in that a few wonder if Jesus might be **“from God”**; but by the end their spiritual eyes are snapped tightly shut. In order to guard their religion, their pride, and their place, they will themselves to disbelieve.

There are none so blind as those who will not see.

No wonder Jesus cries {Mt 23:16} **“Woe to you, blind guides!”** {Mt 23:17} **“Blind fools!”** {Mt 23:19} **“Blind men!”** No wonder He warns his disciples: {Mt 15:14} **“Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”**

Christ Jesus is {Jn 9:5} **“the light of the world.”** He comes into our darkness and offers us sight, not once but again and again – and when He does, we must make a choice: **will we be like the man born blind, or will we be like the Pharisees?**

Thank God, we are increasingly opting for spiritual vision! I see it in our:

- ✦ Deeper engagement in worship (even on days when attendance is down);
 - ✦ Intensifying hunger and thirst for the Scriptures;
 - ✦ Fresh dedication to authentic, *αγαπε* fellowship;
 - ✦ Greater commitment to accountability and follow through in leadership;
 - ✦ Energy to establish new ministries, like Pioneer Club and Women’s Bible Study;
 - ✦ Expanding spirit of mercy and compassion for the poor, whether they come to PADS or live in Elim, Alaska;
 - ✦ Growing sense of hospitality toward our neighbors;
- and,
- ✦ Stronger hope for the future.

In Christ, the eyes of our congregational heart are opening wider than ever. This is worth celebrating!

Nevertheless, we all have a little Pharisee in the darker recesses of our hearts. We are all tempted to protect

our religion, our pride, and our place, responding to the Lord Jesus in fear rather than trust, in unbelief rather than faith.

☞ **“There are none so blind as those who will not see.”**

☞ But that is not the last word. Praise God, **there are none so blind they cannot receive sight, provided they are willing.**