

GOOD NEWS FOR THE BLIND

Walking with Jesus to the Cross in John's Gospel

February 18, 2024

*Then the [now healed man] said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.
Jesus said, "For judgement I have come into the world,
so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."
John 9:37-38*

Passion narrative begins with an encounter with blindness

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His 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. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

⁶ Having 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. This is where, in John's gospel, Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem." John foreshadows the passion with the growing tension between Jesus and the religious leaders of the day.

⁵¹ As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Luke 9:51

2. The "I am" passages largely begin here (the exception is the "Bread of Life" in John 6) reflecting that John is particularly focusing on how Jesus is revealing himself (see Luke 9:18-20):

Question 1: What is Jesus revealing about the kind of Messiah he will be?

Question 2: What is Jesus revealing about authentic or inauthentic faith?

Question 3: What is Jesus teaching his followers about walking in the light?

3. The "light of the world" and the mud are more hints from John that we need to be reading his gospel with our Bibles open to Genesis 1-3 and the Hebrew Scripture's songs about light (places like Psalm 43; Isaiah 42; 2 Samuel 23; Job 12:22-25; Psalm 4, 27:1, 118, 119:105; Isaiah 9:2, 42, 49, 60, 61; Daniel 2:20-23; Micah 7:8-10). Note John's emphasis in John 1:9, 3:19-21, 8:12; 12:35-36.

4. John allows Jesus' answer to the disciples' initial question to simply stand (see Luke 13:1-9) so that this Jesus can use this divinely ordained encounter, the Fifth Sign in the gospel, to reveal his Messianic character and announce arrival of Messiah (Isaiah 42:1-7, 61:1-11).

Answering several important questions

Question 1 from his neighbors looking for Jesus: Where is this man?

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

Question 2 from the Pharisees needing to justify their own authority: "How is it that you can see?"

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?"*

John 9

Question 3 from the formerly blind man to the Pharisees: "Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

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

Jesus' question to all of us looking for the one who can heal: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

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."*

John 9

The final question is the one we all ask! “Are we blind too?”

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?”*

John 9

Going back to John’s three questions

Question 1: What is Jesus revealing about the kind of Messiah he will be?

Question 2: What is Jesus revealing about authentic or inauthentic faith?

Question 3: What is Jesus teaching his followers about walking in the light?

1. Jesus will be the kind of Messiah who will bring light to the nations

⁶ *“I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness;*

I will take hold of your hand.

I will keep you and will make you

to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,

⁷ *to open eyes that are blind,*

to free captives from prison and

to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Isaiah 42 (Doug’s favorite Servant Song, see the rest of the song!)

2. Authentic faith is revealed when one finally encounters Jesus

But I said also (for the truth constrained me), “Yet I have been seeking Tash all my days.”

“Beloved”, said the Glorious One, “unless thy desire had been for me thou wouldst not have sought so long and so truly. For all find what they truly seek.”

Emeth and Aslan in C. S. Lewis’ *The Last Battle*

See 2 Corinthians 4:6; John reminds us of the Spirit’s role in John 3:1-21, 14:15-31;

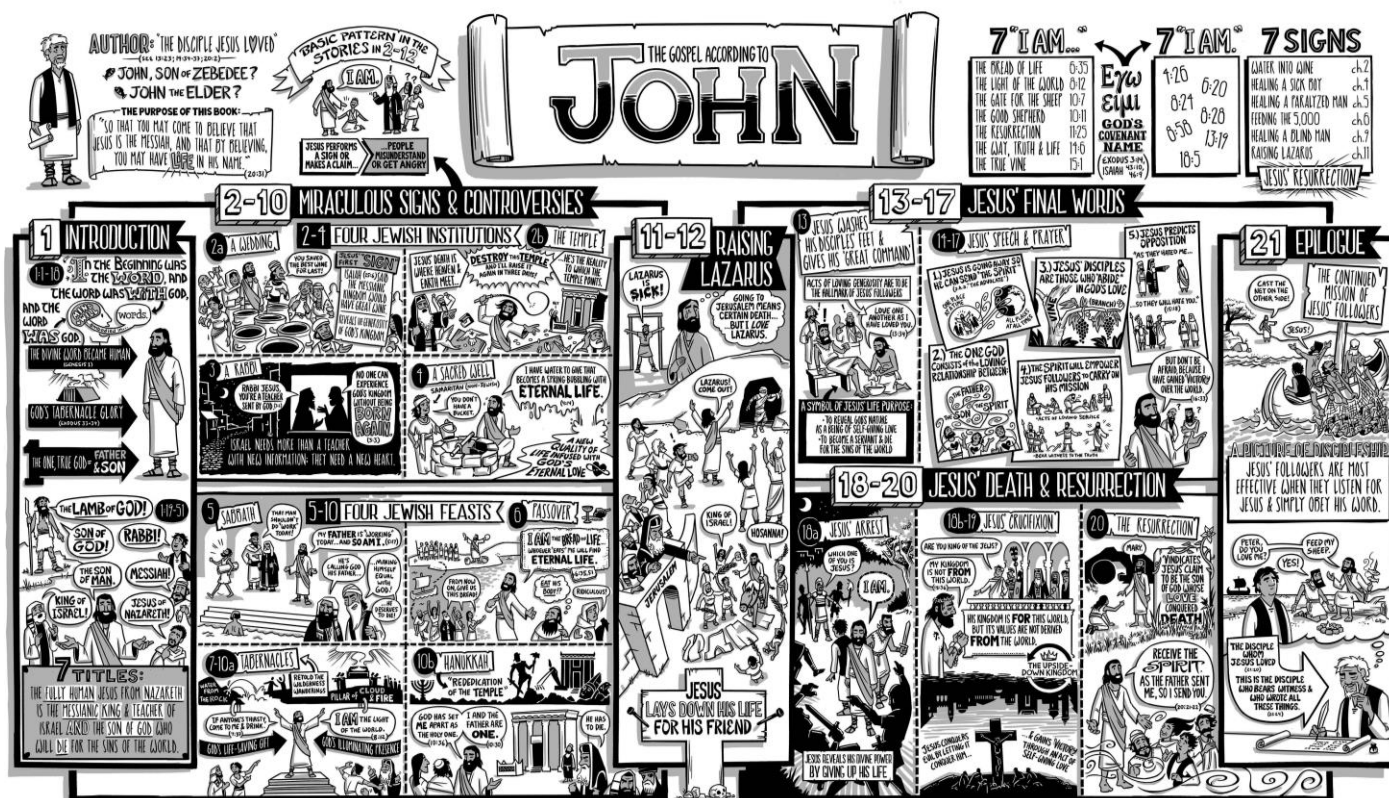
and Spurgeon’s wonderful sermon on this text at <https://www.monergism.com/sight-those-who-see-not>

3. Walking in the light starts with recognizing my blindness and ends with worship!

⁸ *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light* ⁹ *(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)* ¹⁰ *and find out what pleases the Lord.*

¹¹ *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.* ¹² *For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.* ¹³ *But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,* ¹⁴ *for it is light that makes everything visible.*

Ephesians 5



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Resources for further study

The Bible Project team does a great job of introducing John's themes even if it might be too busy at <https://bibleproject.com/downloads/posters/>

J. C. Ryle has a good commentary on 8:36 ("Freedom") at <https://www.monergism.com/freedom>

Doug has referenced these commentaries:

Hendricksen's *New Testament Commentary* (Baker, 1953)

D.A. Carson has a great commentary (Eerdmans, 1991)

Merrill Tenny's commentary in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1981)

John Newton wrote a wonderful short piece on spiritual blindness at

<http://www.gospelweb.net/JohnNewton/newtononspiritualblindness.htm>

John Piper has an interesting sermon on this text at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/i-am-the-light-of-the-world> and a take on the "who sinned" question at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/why-was-this-child-born-blind>

Spurgeon has a sermon on John 9 at <https://www.monergism.com/sight-those-who-see-not>

Bob Deffinbaugh has a good sermon series on the Gospel of John at <https://bible.org/series/you-might-believe-study-gospel-john>