

Controversy Over the Healing of the Man Born Blind [part 1] (John 9:13-23)

Scripture Text:

13. They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind.
14. Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.
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."
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.
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."
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,
19. and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"
20. His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;
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."
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.
23. For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

Outline:

- I. The Pharisees question the man who was formerly blind from birth (vv.13-15)
- II. A division amongst the Pharisees (v.16)
- III. The testimony of the man born blind (v.17)
- IV. The unbelief of the Pharisees (v.18)
- V. The testimony of the parents of the man born blind (vv.19-23)

Worksheet:

- I. The Pharisees question the man who was formerly blind from birth (vv.13-15)
 - a. Who is the "They" in verse 13 of the text? (v.8)

 - b. Why did "They" bring the man born blind to the Pharisees? (v.13) *[discussion]*

 - c. What did "They" expect of the Pharisees? _____
Why? _____
 - d. What day did Jesus make clay and open the eyes of the man born blind? (v.14)

 - e. What is the significance of naming "the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes." (v.14) *[discussion]*

 - f. Were the Pharisees asking "questions" to get answers and information or more "questioning" the answers that they had already received that was contrary to what they wanted to believe? (v.15) *[discussion]*

 - g. Can you tell the difference when someone is "questioning" you as opposed to asking you "questions"? _____ Explain:

 - h. What does this line of "questioning" suggest about the Pharisees and their pursuit of truth? *[discussion]*

- II. A division amongst the Pharisees (v.16)
 - a. What was the charge against Jesus (the Lord of the Sabbath) concerning His acts of grace and mercy that He performed on the Sabbath for the man born blind?

 - b. At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath." But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. But if you had known what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,' you

would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." (MATTHEW 12:1-8; LUKE 6:1-11; Mark 2:23-28 NASB)

- c. On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him. But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he got up and came forward. And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?" After looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did so; and his hand was restored. But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus. (LUKE 6:6-11 NASB)
- d. Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (MARK 2:27-28 NASB)
- e. "But others were saying" (v.16) What was the dilemma that faced the Pharisees and the "others" who were divided in their opinions concerning Jesus?

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- f. The Pharisees focused on their interpretation of Law of Moses concerning the Sabbath and also on what they believed constituted "work". What was more important to the Pharisees, the "letter of the Law" or the "spirit of the law"?

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- g. The "others" looked at the works of Jesus and reasoned, "how can a man who is a _____ perform such signs"?
 - h. Jesus asked on another occasion if it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath to one's neighbor or do harm to them on the Sabbath (Mark 3:4). This is the real issue at hand that the Pharisees were missing.
 - i. And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."(MATTHEW 12:11-12 NASB)
 - j. The Pharisees could not see the "good" that was being done on the Sabbath, only the "work" that was being done on the Sabbath by Jesus. In their minds the "good" was less important and less noteworthy than the supposed work that Jesus was doing.

III. The testimony of the man born blind (v.17)

- a. When the man born blind was asked, "what do you say about Him...", what was his reply? _____
 - b. What reason would the man born blind have for making such a profound statement about the identity of Jesus?
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- c. Since the man born blind had this opinion of Jesus, what kind of _____ can we suspect that the man had in mind when identifying Jesus? A false _____ or a true _____?
- d. If a true _____, then who sent Him? _____? See the logic?
- e. Why should we assume this since he did not specify?

- f. What should the Jews have assumed based on the nature of the sign and miracle that was performed by Jesus?

- g. What was their take on Jesus despite the miracle He had performed?

IV. The unbelief of the Pharisees (v.18)

- a. In the minds of the Jewish Pharisees, what was the logical explanation for this supposed miracle performed by Jesus? (v.18)

- b. Was their explanation plausible or not? *[discussion]*

- c. As we defend the faith “once delivered to the saints”, we must look at questions and explanations asked and offered by unbelievers not as points of contention, but instead as opportunities to educate and evangelize to the lost as we spread the truth of the gospel.

- d. “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” (JUDE 1:3-4 NASB)

- e. “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.” (1 PETER 3:15-16 NASB)

V. The testimony of the parents of the man born blind (vv.19-23)

- a. What three pieces of information did the Jews request of the parents? (v.19)
 - i. Is this your _____?
 - ii. Was he born _____?
 - iii. If so, then how does he now _____?

- b. The parents of the man born blind confirmed that: (vv.20-21)
- i. He was their _____.
 - ii. He was born _____.
 - iii. But, did not offer any speculation as to how he could now _____.
- c. How did the parents of the man born blind *avoid* answering the third question from the Jews? (v.21) _____
- d. Was their reasoning sound and have a legitimate basis? _____
- e. Why did the parents of the man born blind not want to say how their son came to see after being born blind? (v.22) [discussion]
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- f. The Jewish Pharisees used _____ tactics and _____ against people who didn't believe as they believed. They did not encourage people to _____ at or _____ the evidence and then go where the evidence leads them.
- g. The Jewish Pharisees started with a _____, namely that Jesus was not the _____ and then tried to find evidence to prove that He wasn't who his "works" and "words" clearly demonstrated Him to be.
- h. Upon interviewing the parents of this man born blind and receiving their testimony of not only his _____, but also his condition at _____, was the Jews' explanation for this supposed miracle likely?
[discussion: from an apologetics perspective] apologetics: reasoned arguments or writings in justification of something, typically a theory or religious doctrine.
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- i. "...the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue." (v.22)
- i. Synagogue and Temple worship was at the center of the Jewish culture and was closely tied to their identity as individuals and as a people.
 - ii. To threaten an individual with being "put out of the synagogue" was in many ways was like disassociating them from the Jewish culture, Faith, Tradition and God.
 - iii. **Excommunication:** the action of officially excluding someone from participation in the sacraments and services of the Christian Church.
 - iv. **Anathema:** a ban or curse solemnly pronounced by ecclesiastical authority and accompanied by excommunication
 - v. **Excommunicado:** Excluded or kicked out of a group, posse, gang, organization. No longer under the protection by a group.
- j. For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." (v.23)
- i. John once again leaves nothing for us to guess, imagine or assume
 - ii. John gives His added commentary to the reader under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20,21) as he writes these words between 80-90 AD, 50 some years after he witnessed the events

