



## Once I was blind, but now I see John 9:

### MIRACLES IN JOHN

Recap of miracles

### CHANGED IN AN INSTANT

One of the things in life that's both feared and hoped for is sudden change. 2 POSITIVE 2 NEGATIVE Feared because our whole life could be taken away from us. Hoped for because our lives could also suddenly change for the better.

Our story is about one of those occasions when a change was so radical in someone's life, and so unexpected and out of the blue that it created shock waves. It was the healing of the man born blind.

Why should it have done that?

IMPOSSIBLE?

It was because this particular miracle was and is impossible by any standard, past and present. The man was born blind. He'd never seen in his life. Yet he was cured instantaneously and had no problem seeing or perceiving people.

Just so I don't confuse you on this one, it's quite common for people who have lost their sight or born blind to have operations these days which make the blind see. We often talk about them as medical miracles. They are great testimonies to man's ingenuity. But seeing demands two skills; the ability for one's eye to operate, and the ability of one's brain to interpret the signals. Unfortunately the latter is fixed in our brains in childhood. People who are born blind and regain their sight have massive difficulties in perceiving things they see, that hitherto they only heard or felt. They receive their sight, but they struggle with interpreting the images.

The amazing thing about this miracle is that the man received his sight and seems to have been able to perceive people fine – and that's the true measure of the miracle. Sceptics can argue that it was a lucky coincidence the man suddenly received his sight, but his subsequent ability to see just fine is impossible – or a total miracle! It's a miracle of course.

But John's relating of this story isn't about the shock in this man's life that he'd been healed, but the reception he got from society; particularly the religious people, the most religious of which were the Pharisees.

### PHARISEES

Actually, John doesn't make much of the miracle, just the fallout from it. The Jews really had a problem. It was spectacular miracle – totally impossible but there it was. How did they react to it. As religious people the Pharisees should have just been amazed and worshipped. Did they? Of course not. Instead they were in confusion because it didn't fit into their world view. And it caused real problems for them: *16 Some of the Pharisees said, "The man who did this cannot be from God, for he does not obey the Sabbath law." Others, however, said, "How could a man who is a sinner perform such miracles as these?" And there was a division among them.*

As usual it was the Sabbath question that was the problem. Jesus healed on the Sabbath. It was

against Jewish law – the one they had made up to make sure they were really religious and devoted to God. It wasn't mentioned in the Scriptures and none of their law embraced the concept that God might be involved!

So they had to explain it away. I found their explanations quite contemporary, because it's the way that people, whether, atheist, agnostic or for that matter, religious, try to explain away the activity of God in people's lives.

#### HE'S FAKING IT

The first thing they tried to prove was that he was not the blind man in question and then checked with his parents that he had been blind from birth. Was all this a big con trick?

Everything checked out. He was the man born blind and he had received his sight. So they had to resort to number two.

#### IT DOESN'T FIT INTO OUR WORLD VIEW

If it did happen, then it couldn't possibly be of God, because it was done on the Sabbath and the man or his parents must have been sinners because he was blind. Both assumptions were completely wrong.

A second time they called back the man who had been born blind, and said to him, *"Promise before God that you will tell the truth! We know that this man who cured you is a sinner."* 25 *"I do not know if he is a sinner or not,"* the man replied. *"One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I see."* 26 *"What did he do to you?"* they asked. *"How did he cure you of your blindness?"* 27 *"I have already told you,"* he answered, *"and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Maybe you, too, would like to be his disciples?"* 28 They insulted him and said, *"You are that fellow's disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.* 29 *We know that God spoke to Moses; as for that fellow, however, we do not even know where he comes from!"* 30 The man answered, *"What a strange thing that is! You do not know where he comes from, but he cured me of my blindness!"*

Jesus just had to be a sinner, but here was a blind man. They just couldn't explain it. They were right weren't they – but the existence of this man who received his sight was a challenge to their whole world view.

Jesus challenges the world view of everyone in this society who doesn't know Him, and quite a few who do. And it's when we see God at work in people's lives, what do we do?

Do we rejoice and think of what our response to God should be? Or do we have a problem sit it. Do we say "is that really true? Why didn't He heal me? They must be faking it. It's all in the mind. God doesn't do that today. He was far too bad for God to be bothered with Him. How can that happen.

#### IT WASN'T CONVENIENT

In the end they just threw him out of the temple. His presence was just humiliating them. In fact Jesus' ability to do miracles, His breaking of their laws and the criticism He made of them wasn't convenient.

#### CROSS

If you are not a Christian this morning, then why don't you believe/ Is it because you have

considered all the facts and you have not made up your mind? Or is it just not convenient to trust and follow?

If you are a Christian this morning, then this passage challenges you. Jesus is immensely powerful and He wants to use each one of us in His service. He wants to endue us with power, He wants to change us and do things that we could never ask or imagine.

IN the end, the Pharisees could see physically but they were blind to so obvious a miracle. They just couldn't change. Spiritual blindness occurs when we can't see the truth of God in something. God is at work, but we just can't see it. We sang this earlier:

*I was once in darkness  
Now my eyes can see  
I was lost but Jesus sought and found me  
Oh what love He offers  
Oh what peace He gives  
I will sing forever more He lives.*

If that's your testimony this morning, that's great. But maybe you're sceptical – even as a Christian. Many Christians have the same problems as the Pharisees. We see God at work but we are perplexed. How can God possibly work in that person's life – he has so many problems. God is at work in that church – but why as the practice infant baptism. How could God work in that church, they use the New English Bible. How can God work in that church, their worship is so irreverent. How can God work in that church – their worship is so old-fashioned? How can God work in that church; they're not evangelical?

How dare we limit God! God shows grace to whom He will and it's because we are flawed and need help, mercy, forgiveness that he works in people's lives.

The miracle we read about is not something that was a piece of history, God still works in people's lives today.

### Testimony

God changes people's lives. Let me remind you of what John says of the miracles in his gospel:

*30 In his disciples' presence Jesus performed many other miracles which are not written down in this book. 31 But these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life. Christian?*

Not a Christian? God wants to change you today.

A Christian? God wants to change you today.

*12 I am telling you the truth: those who believe in me will do what I do--yes, they will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father.*