

# A Study of the Christ

## Text

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus cures a man born blind				9:1-7
Neighbors question cured man				9:8-12
Pharisees question man and his parents				9:13-34
Jesus finds the man				9:35-39
Pharisees ask if they are blind				9:40-10:6
Jesus the good shepherd				10:7-18
Division among the Jews				10:19-21

## Overriding Principles

- God's grace, among those who have a hypercritical philosophy of religion, is commonly distorted by legalism.
- Fear often keeps otherwise well meaning people from doing what is right.
- When there are no logical defenses for a treasured belief, only illogical, inadequate attempts remain.
- Those who will not see are the most blind.
- Salvation comes only through Jesus.
- Those who truly care are willing to pay a price for their concern.
- When we are unwilling to change we often seek to discredit or destroy those who point out our hypocrisy.

## Key Verses

- Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath" (Jn. 9:16a).
- His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue (Jn. 9:22).
- They answered and said to him, "You were born entirely in your sins, and are you teaching us?" And they put him out (Jn. 9:34).

- Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains" (Jn. 9:41).
- I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture (Jn. 10:9).
- I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11).
- The Jews took up stones to stone Him (Jn. 10:31).

## **Points of History, Culture, Words, and Grammar**

### **Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind (Jn. 9:1-7)**

- The Jews commonly associated physical misfortune directly with a sin the afflicted person had committed. This was the mistake of Job's "friends." Most such unfortunate occurrences, however, are only indirectly due to sin and its consequences being part of our everyday world.
- The disciples were more concerned with a discussion of theology than with the condition of the blind man.
- There was a limited time available for doing good within the context of the light of Jesus' ministry, soon He would be gone and dark days would come (cf. Lk. 22:35-38).
- The clay smeared on the blind man's eyes and the command to wash in the pool of Siloam must have seemed foolish in itself, but a deep need looks to any thing that might benefit—Jesus had not even promised sight. Need removes rationalizations; pride creates them (cf. II Kg. 5:1-14).
- The healing of a man "born blind" was a major miracle. Other blind men were healed (Matt. 9:27-31; 12:22; 15:30; 21:24; Mk. 8:22-26; 10:46-52), but not one born blind. This made Jesus more difficult to dismiss.

### **The Reaction (Jn. 9:8-34)**

- Even some who knew the former blind man found it hard to believe that a man born blind could receive his sight.
- The man revealed that a man named Jesus was the one who had brought about his healing. From this the blind man would grow in his estimation of Jesus until he came to see Him as the "Son of Man," a Messianic title, and as "Lord," one worthy of worship (Jn. 9:35-38).

- The Pharisees are made aware of the amazing healing and immediately a problem arises. The deed was done on the Sabbath. This immediately links this miracle with the one performed in John five, the healing of the lame man. The sign of healing the lame man had been less spectacular, but more problematic in appearance regarding Sabbath law. The third of a trilogy of related signs in John is found in chapter eleven with the healing of Lazarus. That miracle is not on the Sabbath, and it is the most spectacular of the three, but it draws the strongest negative reaction. The problem is thus exposed as not really being about the Sabbath, it was about Jesus' being increasingly identified as the Messiah (cf. Jn. 9:16b; 11:45-53).
- Division among the Pharisees was adding to the problem faced by the establishment over Jesus—things were getting out of hand.
- The "Jews" (John's word for the religious establishment, commonly the Pharisees) immediately tried to prove that the man healed was not really the man born blind, but his parents stop that effort in its tracks.
- The parents of the healed man feared expulsion from the synagogue and refused to comment on the identity of Jesus. Fear was allowed to be more powerful than God—it is not!
- The man Jesus healed had no reservations, however, about speaking out in defense of Jesus. He saw with the eyes of faith, the most important sight of all (cf. II Cor. 5:7). Being expelled from the synagogue was not a concern. Truth was what mattered to the man Jesus healed (cf. Matt. 10:28).
- The Pharisees were no match for the truth offered by the man born blind. A novice put to flight the theologians. Truth does not depend on the speaker; it is its own justification (cf. Mk. 12:14).

#### **The Conclusion (Jn. 9:35-41)**

- Jesus asked a man who has suffered for his relationship with Him if he would accept Him as the Messiah. Without hesitation, the man accepted Jesus as Lord and worshiped Him. Suffering does not compare to what faith sees as its reward (cf. II Cor. 4:16-18).
- The Pharisees **would not** see what only faith could reveal.
- Had they truly had an honest problem understanding Him, Jesus would have guided them to faith. However, since their pride would allow no such admissions, they remained blind.
- So close in proximity, yet so far away in understanding.

### **The Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:1-18)**

- Jesus is the only way (cf. Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12).
- Jesus is the Good Shepherd. A concept rich in its Old Covenant heritage (Ps. 23; Jer. 23:1-3; Ezek. 34:12, 15).
- He is the only one the Father has chosen (Matt. 17:5).
- A relationship with Jesus is one of spiritual intimacy and knowledge (Jn. 17:3).
- Only Jesus offers an abundant life (cf. Matt. 11:28-30).
- Jesus laid down His life, thus showing the level of His commitment (v. 11, 15, 17, 18; cf. Jn. 13:37-38; 15:13; I Jn. 3:16; Phil 2:8; Heb. 12:2).
- Hirelings cannot be shepherds (cf. I Pet. 5:2-3).
- One key to eternal life is whether or not we listen to Jesus. Do we recognize His voice?

### **More Controversy (Jn. 10:19-39)**

- Those who would accuse Jesus of lunacy because of His words had to give an explanation for His ability to open the eyes of the blind. They could not!
- Jesus' ministry was sorting out those who could see from those who were blind.
- Divisions were growing among the Jews and increasing tensions.
- The Feast of Dedication centered on the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus, we know it today as Hanukkah. It happened on December 25, 165 B.C.
- The Jews asked Jesus to openly tell them that He is the Messiah. Perhaps they still held out some hope that He would be a political deliverer. However, this may simply be a bold attempt to force Jesus to give them another reason to do Him in.
- Jesus makes it plain that the content of His ministry has settled the matter; they did not want to accept the evidence.
- The religious leaders were not His sheep; they did not **hear** when He spoke.
- If they wanted something to hold against Jesus, He gave it to them. He declared that He gave eternal life and that He and the Father were one! The things they were most enraged to hear were the things He was not hesitant to admit.
- They tried to stone Jesus, but He temporarily brought pause to their efforts by perplexing them with Scriptures from the Old Covenant that called men by a name given to God (Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 28; Ps. 82:6).
  - o If angels and Jewish leaders could be called "gods," how much more could one like Jesus lay claim to the name (cf. Jn. 1:1).

- The Hebrew word elohim was applied to angels and men in the Old Testament as a way of commenting on those who worked under God's authority to do His will.
- The evidence allowed but one conclusion; Jesus was who He said He was (cf. Matt. 16:13-17). He did the will of God as God alone could do.
- Jesus tried to get them to see that their reaction to Him was misplaced. If they would look at his deeds, they would realize that His words must be true (cf. Matt. 9:1-7).
- The Jews, rather than taking advantage of this moment to reassess, resorted to another attempt to seize Jesus.

### **Application to the Church**

- Tradition is not sight, neither is mere religious talk the voice of the Christ.
- Legalism is as bad as liberalism.
- Philosophy is not to substitute for service.
- Our reasons for our decisions must be defensible, not merely emotional.
- Jesus sorts out all who come in contact with Him—there is no middle ground.
- Pragmatic consequences must not rule our decisions; truth must rule.
- A “no matter what” attitude is the attitude of a disciple with regard to the truth.
- Faith grows in those who stay with Jesus; it dies in those who reject His voice.
- There is only one way to get to Heaven—through Jesus.
- Jesus is the true source of abundance, and that abundance is spiritual in nature.
- The evidence of Jesus' life demands but one verdict—He is God's Son.

### **Who is Jesus?**

- He brings true meaning to the structures and rules given by God.
- He is the enemy of traditionalism.
- He brings sight through faith (cf. Jn. 8:31-32).
- He brings hope that far outweighs the trials of life.
- He never compromises truth—no matter what.
- He inspires us to stand firm when we are tempted to waver and turn away.