

## **JOHN 9 - Where are we now??**

**REVIEW: What is John's vision?** John's vision was for the restoration of the Northern (Samaritan and Galilean) Israelites, as well as those residing in the Judean and Samaritan diaspora centers outside of the Land. According to John, Jesus was nothing less than the King of Israel *in its entirety*. Remember, John wrote Revelation and saw the terrible siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

**Who was John's audience?** John is calling for *all* Israelites - far and near - to be united under the leadership of God's anointed king. Jesus is the King who came to unite the descendants of both the Southern and Northern tribes, wherever they may be. (10:16) John declares an unwavering belief in the Messianic reunification of Israel **and the inclusion of the 'nations'** as promised by the prophets.

**What does John want his audience to understand?** *"But these are written, that you might believe that Yahoshua is the Messiah, the Son of Yahweh; and that believing you might have life through his name...."*

**The Temple-Garden:** At the time of John's writing, is the Jerusalem temple a place of shalom or a place of harshness? Is 'the garden' a place of blessing or a place of cursing? Is it a place of abundance and life and joy? Is it a home for *all* the children of God, or only a select few?

**The Light in the House:** According to John's account, Jesus walks into his Father's house and finds opposition, suspicion, haughtiness, callousness, envy, strife, and murderous rage. (John 1:10).

**The Living Water:** And finding few to receive him 'at home', Jesus walks outside the house gates - into exile - and a garden bursts into life! A blind man sees (9). An invalid jumps for joy (5). A well-worn and worthless Samaritan woman carries God's word (she images her King) to her entire town (4). There is rejoicing, worshiping, and new life is everywhere Jesus is.

**ego eimi** (greek) "I am" lower-case. (John 1:20, 8:12,18, 24, 28, **58**, 9:8, 19:21 etc.)

**ho on** (greek) "I AM" (Exodus 3:4; "ego eimi **ho on**") "I am (ego eimi) the I AM (**ho on**)"

(8:58) Jesus is saying: "I've existed before Abraham was born. I am above and before all the Hebrew prophets. I am God's visible word - his salvation for humankind - the Word Abraham saw and believed made flesh. I am the Messiah - the Lamb of God - and Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day"(John 1:1; 15; 30; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:16; Revelations 3:14).

**shuv** (hebrew) - "Turn around". 'Turn toward'. 'Repent'. (Deuteronomy 30)

***Ioudaioi*** (greek) All members of the Jerusalem-led temple system

***kosmos*** - (greek) “the world”; in John’s gospel, the order that opposes Israel’s God.

**John 9:1-2** JESUS + BLIND MAN + THE DISCIPLES “Who sinned?” Legalism of the first-century  
*Ioudaioi*: Harsher than necessary?

*“The person who sins is the one who will die. A son will not suffer for his father’s iniquity, and a father will not suffer for his son’s iniquity; the righteous person will be judged according to his righteousness, and the wicked person according to his wickedness.” Ezekiel 18:20*

**John 9:3** JESUS + BLIND MAN + DISCIPLES “That the works of God may be displayed in him...” **Irenaeus** (2nd Century theologian; wrote *Against Heresies* - speaking out against gnosticism): “That which the Word had omitted to form in the womb, he then supplied in public...” (Genesis 2:7)

**9:4-5** JESUS + DISCIPLES If Jesus is the Light of the world, then the *night* involves the *departure* of Jesus from the world. That departure is drawing near (note 7:34, 8:21) The Light will soon be withdrawn from the world, and darkness will reign again for a time, but not forever. Jesus: *“As long as I am here on my mission of salvation (3:17) upon which I was sent by the Father, I am the Light of the world.”*

**9:6-8** JESUS + BLIND MAN + DISCIPLES: spittle and clay - outside the temple - on the Sabbath - then go walk to the Pool of Siloam! It was far and down lots of windy steps! Can you imagine as a blind man? This is the same walk as the Priest took during the Water Ceremony. Living Water. Yeshua water. “Oh LORD save us! Oh LORD hear our prayer!”

**9:8-12** THE SEEING MAN + NEIGHBORS - Don’t even recognize him!

**9:13-17** THE *IOUDAI/OI* + SEEING MAN (back in ‘the garden’) This man is not from God. This man is a sinner (note also 9:34). A real dilemma for the *Ioudaioi*. A man who was good enough to perform the miracle would not have performed it on the Sabbath.

**9:18-23** THE *IOUDAI/OI* + THE PARENTS + THE SEEING MAN - (in the ‘garden’) the next step was to interrogate the man’s parents. Probably the man was not really born blind in the first place.

**9:24-34** THE PHARISEES + THE SEEING MAN (X2) “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. The Jews throw out the SEEING man (and reject Jesus). however, the man displays admirable tenacity when he refuses to deny the light.

**9:35-38** JESUS + THE SEEING MAN (outside the ‘garden’ or inside the garden?) The man’s response is extremely significant: he *worshipped* Jesus (and Jesus did not prevent him). John wants us to see this in its’ fullest sense: *this was something due God alone*. John uses the same verb in 4:20-25 of worshipping God - it’s the only place where he anyone in his Gospel is said to have worshipped Jesus using this term

**9: 39-41** JESUS + SEEING MAN + *Ioudaioi* + DISCIPLES John is showing that Jesus, as God’s light sent into the world, has created division between those who come *to* it and those who shrink back from it (compare especially 3:19-21). The man is outside the garden, but he has new and real life!

**What is the mission of Jesus according to John?** Jesus’ mission is to save the world. But by the very fact of the Light coming into the world, judgment is provoked (3:19-21; 8:1-11) As men respond, so they are judged.

**The presence of the Light necessitates a choice** - to come to it or to shrink back - and this choice *is* one’s judgment. **In other words, to reject Jesus is to reject the Light** - to close one’s eyes and become blind. This is the dire sin of which Jesus had warned before (8:21-24).

**Increasing insight vs hardening blindness:** Three times the blind man, who is truly gaining knowledge, humbly confesses his ignorance (12, 25, 36). Three times the Pharisees, make confident statements about Jesus what they know of him (16, 24, 29). Note: Pharaoh. Jesus’ words recall Isaiah’s: the blind receive sight (Isa 29:18, 35:5, 42:7, 42:18) while the seeing are blinded (6:10, 42:20).

#### **How might we apply the gospel found in John 9?**

1. What does it mean to believe that Jesus is the light of the world? Some hearts will harden, and some will *shut*. That is for God to judge.
2. We also will have an opportunity to harden (lead us not into temptation) or shut when the light shines in *our* most revered places. **To whom am I most harsh? To who or what am I most ardently opposed and why? Who would I be pleased to see ‘cast out’ of Eden?**
3. There is a very real chance that we will be ‘cast out’ of the garden but Jesus is there in the ‘exiled’ places making new life. **Do we want to be where he is? Are we willing to image him, our King?** What does it mean to take seriously that we are the light of the world?  
(Matthew 5:14-16)

**Matthew 5:** “*For you are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to the whole house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they might see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*”

**Isaiah 35:4-5:** "Say to those with anxious heart, 'Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; the recompense of God will come, but he will save you.' Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped."

**Isaiah 42:6-7:** "I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who dwell in darkness from the prison."