



**I Was Blind, But Now I Can See!
The Thing About Blindness
John 9**

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It has been a rather busy week for Jesus. He began it by telling His family He would not go to Jerusalem with them for the Feast of tabernacles, but He did go intentionally arriving at the midpoint of the Feast.

This gave the religious establishment time to show their hand by searching for Him since they wanted to get Him off by Himself so they could have Him killed. That desire arising from Jesus' previous visit to Jerusalem when He healed the paralyzed man on the Sabbath. In that event He clearly communicated who He is to them.

Meanwhile, numerous former lepers continue to show up at the Temple attesting to the healing ministry of Jesus up north in Galilee.

Jesus shows up in the Temple in the middle of the week in the middle of the day and simply begins to teach. This begins several days of intentional confrontation with the leadership. The manner in which He



showed up tied their hands. So, from either day 3 or 4 of the feast, He simply shows up each day in one of the courtyards of the Temple and teaches.

Meanwhile, the Pharisees plot and scheme.

All of that apparent peace though evaporates quickly. On the last day of the feast, the big, big day with the final water libation ceremony and the big illumination ceremony, early in the morning at the water ceremony, Jesus announces to all “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” (John 7:37b–38, NASB 2020)

The Pharisees seek His arrest, but the Temple police were in awe of His teaching as were some of the people. So again, He teaches through the day going over to the Mount of Olives in the evening.

The next morning, the 8th day, which is a Torah sanctioned extra sabbath day, Jesus returns to the courtyard of the women to teach in the light of the still burning lamps from the previous evening's illumination ceremony.

At the very outset of His teaching, after He has the crowd together, the Pharisees and Scribes try their first plan to catch Him up on His words by bringing the woman caught in adultery to Him. That did not end well for the religious leaders as Jesus turned everything around forcing them to follow the law and recuse themselves for not being free from sin involving the case at hand to be valid witnesses.

Jesus, as the judge, dismisses the case due to lack of witnesses, but now the people know the Pharisees and Scribes can sin. It is at this point, that He resumes His teaching taking advantage of the still burning lamps and announcing, “I am the Light of the world; the one who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” (John 8:12, NASB 2020) He is claiming to be the Messiah, God come in the flesh and the Pharisees who are still there, object to this.

A long discussion ensues resulting in many of those listening to Him to finally decide to follow Him.

In the course of that discussion, beginning with His declaration to be the light of the world, Jesus will make three statements saying He is the “I am.”

He wraps up His discussion and teaching by making a clear undeniable statement of deity to all. John 8:58–59 “Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and left the temple grounds.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus hid and then simply left the Temple courtyard. Picking up His disciples along the way. They are leaving via the same pathway that those coming to the Temple would have marched up each morning the past week for the water libation ceremony from the pool of Siloam. As He and the team leave, a divine appointment tying right back to what He has just been saying, comes up.

It is most likely before or near lunch time. We are guessing because the scripture does not give us a time hack, but the context tells us the when this is taking place as well as the where.

Isaiah 29:18 gives us one of the ways we know when Messiah has arrived.

Isaiah 29:18

“In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.” (ESV)



That day has arrived. A clear sign of the coming of Messiah was to be the healing of the blind. But the Jews, overall, were ambivalent towards the blind.

We pick up the action in John 9:1.

We are going to meet a man who has been marginalized from birth. He has heard people talk about him, but not to him, for years.

He has had religious professionals bypass him on a regular basis even accusing him of being a horrible sinner and his parents of the same. After all, that is why he is blind.

We will also see behavior take place that still takes place in churches across our nation almost daily in dealing with marginalized, disabled, or seriously wounded people.

By the way, we have religious professionals in all of our churches today, and many of them are not members of staff or paid. But Pharisees can be found everywhere.

John 9:1–12

“As Jesus passed by, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must carry out the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.” When He had said this, He spit on the ground, and made mud from the saliva, and applied the mud to his eyes, and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he left and washed, and came back seeing. So the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, “Is this not the one who used to sit and beg?” Others were saying, “This is he,” still others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” The man himself kept saying, “I am the one.” So they were saying to him, “How then were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man who is called Jesus made mud, and spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash’ ; so I went away and washed, and I received sight.” And they said to him, “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know.”” (NASB 2020)

A quick note, Jesus will heal many of blindness and He does not do it the same way each time. There are those today who have “healing ministries,” and they tend to formularize the Holy Spirit. In the scriptures though, there is no formula, no list of things to do in order to be used as a miracle healer. But God is still in the business of healing today, I have been a witness numerous times. He still does miracles but “our antisupernatural mindset often renders them invisible to us because we grasp at other explanations. Since miracles are therefore less meaningful to us, they are also less likely to happen (Mark 6:5–6). But miracles are also less often necessary here than in some other places. We may begin to be open to more of what God may have for us if we start by being more grateful for the gifts that God has already provided for us.” (Keener 2021, 199)

The simple fact that we are meeting today as a Church in this place is evidence that God is still in the miracle business.

When Jesus and His disciples were leaving the Temple, we have no idea if Jesus was intending to heal this man or not. But it was His disciples who had a misunderstanding of the scriptures that provide the opportunity.

Jesus told them no one sinned to have caused this birth defect. But Jesus does not deny that the sin of parents are, at times, the cause of birth defects in their children. This is why rabbis continuously exhorted



parents to repent prior to having children. In this case though, this was all to provide for the works of God to be demonstrated in this man. The book of Job also reflected that this is not always the case.

Right outside the gate to the Temple would be a place that beggars who were physically disabled would congregate in order to beg for money or food. Anyone who was blind or disabled, would not be allowed into the Temple grounds.

2 Samuel 5:8

“David told his troops, “You will have to go up through the water tunnel to get those Jebusites. I hate people like them who can’t walk or see.” That’s why there is still a rule that says, “Only people who can walk and see are allowed in the temple.” David captured the fortress on Mount Zion, then he moved there and named it David’s City. He had the city rebuilt, starting with the landfill to the east.” (CEV)

Being blind from birth made those who were, second class citizens. If all the policies in Leviticus were implemented, access into Jerusalem might have even been iffy.

The Essenes in Qumran have the following in the Temple Scroll “the temple in which I shall cause my name to dwell. Blank No blind person shall enter it all their days, and they shall not defile the city in whose midst I dwell.” (Martinez and Tigchelaar 1997-1998, 1263)

The Temple Scroll (11QT 45:12–13) prohibits the entrance of blind persons into Jerusalem for their entire life because blindness was seen as a form of impurity which could defile the sacred city. The policies in Leviticus and Qumran texts, if actually implemented, would have created a group of second-class citizens with little access to important religious and social institutions. (Avalos 2000, 193)

The fear of someone accidentally causing ritual impurity was why mercy was thrown aside.

Just another person for Jesus to set free. Our culture today also has those who become marginalized, and the church is not immune to this.

I remember in the early days of AIDS, and I was living in California and Texas at the time, some churches refused to allow babies or children into the church who were born with AIDS or had become infected due to blood transfusions. Rather than show mercy and figuring out how to effectively love and care for adults and children who had become affected, many, instead, were looking for ways to exclude.

My uncle was physically and mentally challenged. But he loved Jesus and the little church he went to, loved him. But they even began to ignore ministry to him as he aged and lived the last of his years in a facility. The good news, he is now whole, and I look forward to being able to run and play ball with him. Jesus seems to have intentionally sought people out that the culture marginalized. This blind man had been born that way, and there was sense that anyone born with a disability had been born that way either because of the sin of their parents, or their own sin in the womb.

Jewish society believed that sickness and sufferings often come because of the sins of the individuals (2 Kgs 14:6; Mark 2:5; John 5:14) or because of the sins of the parents (Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9). Therefore, the disciples ask Jesus whose sin was the cause of the man being born blind (9:2). (Kanagaraj 2013, 99)

Note the attitude of the disciples, their attitude is a reflection of the culture. This man's existence was a reason for theological discussion, and not much more. He was someone to ignore.

Exodus 20:4–6

“Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth. Don’t bow down and worship idols. I am the LORD your God, and I demand all your love. If you reject me, I will



punish your families for three or four generations. But if you love me and obey my laws, I will be kind to your families for thousands of generations.” (CEV)

The Jewish culture would have assumed some ancestor of his had sinned big for him to have born this way. For the disciples, it was about to become a teaching moment about what mercy is.

The disciples were bewildered by the seeming irrationality of an affliction which had befallen the man at birth, and which could not be traced to a definite retributive judgment. They were more occupied in solving the abstract problem than in ministering to the individual that had aroused it. In short, they regarded him as a sinner who was less important than their debate. (Tenney 1976, 153)

Jesus addresses their ill-conceived notions. He is introducing them to just how different things are going to be in the Kingdom, and it is time to learn another lesson. This man appears to be well known in Jerusalem.

John 9:3–5

“Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must carry out the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.”” (NASB 2020)

Sin is not the reason this man has a birth defect. The sin of Adam and Eve, yes, but that would be it. This is the only place where Jesus heals someone born blind.

When I was in Bible school, one of the guys living next door to me in the dorm had been born blind. He liked to run and do everything anyone else would do, he just couldn't see. I asked him one day if he had ever thought about missing anything because he couldn't see. He told me not really. He could “see” what he needed to see, and not see what was ugly or painful. But he did say this, he was looking forward to the day he would see, and the first person he expected to see, was Jesus.

John 9:4–5

“We must carry out the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.” (NASB 2020)

This still stands for today as well. As we scan the cultural environment, we see that Christianophobia is becoming a thing in this country. In the past, we always thought that persecution took place only in communist or Islamic countries, but that is rapidly changing.

For the disciples, Jesus was still with them, and He is telling them that as long as He is here, there is work to be done. He is the light of the world, and there are still many who need to hear that.

He is still the light of the world today. Thanks to the internet, we are able to communicate His word globally and into locations I never thought were possible. I never expected to be invited to teach via Zoom, a group of Pastors in India or Pakistan wanting to learn more about the word. I wish I had the time to do so, but this is where I am called.

As you can tell, the opportunities for us as a church to minister worldwide already exist, and we are not even two months old yet. We too, must continue to work as long as it is day. The shadows of night are already visible.

Jesus spits on the ground and puts mud in the eyes of this man. We read that and go, eeeww. But this is not the only place where Jesus uses spit as part of the process. I have never seen someone who has a healing ministry do this. But what is really going on?



A few thousand years earlier, a pile of dust was turned into a man by the Lord. Why wouldn't He rely on this basic ingredient to create eyes and optic nerves where none had been before? He is the creator after all.

Colossians 1:16

"For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him." (ESV)

Jesus spits and makes some mud and then places the mud on the area where this man's eyes would normally be. He then tells him to go to the Pool of Siloam, about ½ mile down the hill almost in the Hinnom Valley and wash there. He doesn't say a word, but goes and does so. I mean, he did have someone just put mud on his face.

If the blind man were near the outer wall of the temple (8:59–9:1), walking to Siloam and back could have slightly exceeded a legally acceptable Sabbath day's journey. (Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* 2012, 781)

But here is the thing, he did as he was asked with no questions asked at all; and he came back seeing.

What would that ½ mile trip back up the hill be like? Seeing the familiar noises for the very first time.

Then he arrives back to where he was begging, and now those who saw him leave, notice he can now see.

This is unheard of, no one born blind has ever been healed before. He acted differently and may have even looked very different. He has been healed and those he begged with had difficulty recognizing him.

The changes to his face were apparently that severe. New bone structure, new eye sockets and new eyes, all where none had existed before. And Jesus didn't even hang around to see how things went.

He ends all of the speculation by saying that yes, he is indeed the one who had been blind until a man called Jesus made mud and put it on my eyes and said to go wash them down at the pool.

He has no idea who Jesus is, he does not even know what he would look like.

John 9:13–17

"They brought the man who was previously blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath on the day that Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied mud to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 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 dissension among them. So they said again to the man who was blind, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet." (NASB 2020)

This was so disconcerting to those who knew the man and had begged with him for years, that they take him into the Temple and take him to the Pharisees, who should be able to figure out what happened.

A man born blind has just had his sight restored. This is a clear prophetic sign of the Messiah. But there is just one thing, Jesus healed the man on a sabbath and told him to wash.

"Most of the Pharisees would have regarded Jesus' action as inappropriate work that violated traditional Sabbath ordinances (cf. 5:9, 16; 7:21–24). He had, after all, made clay, anointed the man's eyes, and



healed the man.” Forget the fact that no one has ever done this in the history of the world, and that it was a sign prophesied of being characteristic of the Messiah. (Constable 2003, Jn 9:14)

To their credit, they did ask and allow this man to tell his side of the story.

The Pharisees became divided based on what they were told. Remember, they had just had a lengthy conversation with Jesus, and now He goes and heals someone on the Sabbath. How dare He.

But others, wait a minute, a man born blind now has his sight having been healed by the very same man who just claimed to be God. There might be something to this.

They cannot make of their minds, so they appeal to the man, who do you think He is? He says a prophet but they still do not believe him, so they get his parents.

John 9:18–23

“The Jews then did not believe it about him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, and they questioned them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?” His parents then answered and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 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.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already reached the decision that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be excommunicated from the synagogue. It was for this reason that his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”” (NASB 2020)

Eight days ago, they were seeking Jesus to be able to put Him to death. But apparently so many did believe that now anyone who said Jesus was indeed the Messiah, just as He claimed He is, well they would be excommunicated, kicked out of the synagogue.

For a Jew, that would also include losing your job and possibly your family as well. You would be shunned. You would be treated as if you were already dead. No wonder his parents redirected every time they were questioned here by the Pharisees. Their son had to beg, and they were poor to begin with. He was blind, now he sees, we do not know what happened.

Here their son, born blind, has had his vision given to him by Jesus. This is a time of joy and celebration, instead, they are scared out of their minds because of these religious professionals who have goals that are from the pit of hell. Yes, these folks exist in churches today.

We live in a sinful world and bad things happen, at times, to people who had nothing to do with the circumstances, they are simply victims of what others have done. But there are those churches who will not show mercy, instead, they condemn the person for being a victim and then have them removed from the fellowship.

It's bad enough that someone's spouse cheated on them and they did not know. But when it all comes out in the open and a divorce is taking place, rather than help and love the one who has been abandoned, the unthinkable happens, they are shunned and kicked out of the fellowship because of the divorce. The sad thing is, there are churches all over the United States that do this every day. I have personally counseled those that this has happened to. As we have already seen, Pharisees are still around today.

So, they bring this man back in for further questioning.



John 9:24–34

“So for a second time they summoned the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.” He then answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” So they said to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?” They spoke abusively to him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from.” The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is the amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes! We know that God does not listen to sinners; but if someone is God-fearing and does His will, He listens to him. Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and yet you are teaching us?” So they put him out.” (NASB 2020)

What is it that happens, when you simply will not say what someone, who has a hidden agenda, cannot get you to say something in agreement with their agenda? They attack you verbally.

The Pharisees have a goal, and they build a straw man that they believe this ignorant formerly blind man, one who obviously is uneducated, will simply agree with so they can move forward with searching for, arresting and killing Jesus. But he is much smarter than they think. He has no fear or respect of them, he has been a beggar all his life. He may recognize some of the voices as being the ones who always spoke bad about him.

He learned to keep his mouth closed and listen. The first false statement they believe he will agree with is one of judging Jesus as a sinner, implying that is His lifestyle. But this is a man who has been unfairly judged, in his hearing, by them for years and he responds accordingly. I do not know if he is a sinner. Then he simply tells them what Jesus has done for him. I once was blind, but now I see.

Well, they want specifics. I have heard that before. “Why is it you can’t agree with me that salvation is only for the elect and not for all.”

It really does not matter how you answer, you are wrong in their eyes, and they have already rehearsed a response to tell you why you are.

Our culture today has several narratives that you simply must agree with, even if they are false, and they all are. But if you disagree, you are marginalized, called a hater, bigot, and on and on. If you do not agree with the agenda, then you are attacked.

The Pharisees use God talk and a false premise in order to drive agreement, and they do not get it. In fact, they get a redirect and a question about discipleship that they did not expect at all from this man.

In their response, the Pharisees once again state they do not know where Jesus is from. This man may have overheard all of the previous discussions. I will now use a technical theological term regarding that, bologna. What was it Jesus just had an extended conversation with them about? Where He was from and why they can’t go there.

Does that mean that folks pushing their agenda will lie to you in order to get you to agree with them? Yes, it does. They will make the lie seem reasonable too.

This is a man not used to verbal gymnastics, he just speaks truth.



John 9:27–34

“The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is the amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes! We know that God does not listen to sinners; but if someone is God-fearing and does His will, He listens to him. Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and yet you are teaching us?” So they put him out.” (NASB 2020)

Being cast out means nothing to him, he was already a nobody, shunned and excluded. Now it simply is official.

Once again, the parting shot from the Pharisees, just more verbal abuse couched as God talk. Why is it that when those who are religious professionals cannot convince you of their agenda, do they have to turn to verbal abuse and God talk? Because they really do not have anything else in their arsenal.

The only thing they have left is to kick you out of the church, and yes that does happen these days. I talk with those who were so wounded on a regular basis.

Here at Calvary, none of us are perfect. We are all sinners saved by grace and prone to being hypocrites. But we love Jesus and His grace.

Jesus finds out about the conversation, and He finds this man. It appears that some of the Pharisees are now believers. They have moved from simply being religious professionals to believers. They are still learning but they are talking with Jesus.

And here is the thing, God, in the person of Jesus Christ, finds this man to love on him.

John 9:35–41

“Jesus heard that they had put him out, and upon finding him, He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered by saying, “And who is He, Sir, that I may believe in Him?” Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.” And he said, “I believe, Lord.” And he worshiped Him. And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” Those who were with Him from the Pharisees heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now that you maintain, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus dealt with this man differently than others. He took care of his physical need, and then allowed him to go through persecution. Then he called him to belief. We forget that God does not save everyone exactly like He saved you or me. We have to allow God to deal with each person as He sees fit, not as we see fit.

Jesus reveals Himself to this man and the man, who had personally experienced the Grace of God and was healed by God, before even being saved, becomes a believer and moves immediately to worship.

The Pharisees are watching, and they see Jesus, receive this worship.

What has this man experienced in this chapter.

- He meets a man named Jesus
- Jesus makes some mud and puts it on his eyes telling him to go wash
- He does and is healed
- He concludes Jesus is a prophet
- When challenged by the Pharisees, he says He is a man from God



- When He sees Him again, He learns He is the Son of God and worthy of worship
- He worships

But there is a group of people who say they see, the religious professionals.

I am using that term because we have so many different job titles these days for people who are supposed to be believers in ministry but aren't believers at all. Jesus told us the love of many in the last days would grow cold (Matthew 24:12). Most we find in the progressive church, which is neither progressive or a church.

In some cases, they aren't in a progressive church, Jude said they hide out with the sheep.

Jude 12–13

“These men are dangerous reefs at your love feasts, feasting without reverence, feeding only themselves. They are waterless clouds, carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit—twice dead, uprooted; wild sea waves, spewing out the foam of their shame; wayward stars for whom the utter depths of eternal darkness have been reserved.” (NET 2nd ed.)

In other words, blind.

All of us are blind from birth but it is Jesus who takes the initiative to heal us.

Jesus does a work of creation in us, not reformation

- In this work, Jesus calls us to be obedient to what He commands.
- Jesus commands us to be washed in the water of baptism.
- We become a mystery to our former associates, not even seeming to be the same person.
- We display loyalty to Jesus when we are persecuted, boldly and plainly testifying of His work in our lives and confounding others.
- We pass from little knowledge to greater knowledge, and this brings us to greater worship and adoration.
- We never know the name of this man born blind. Jesus is the important One; a true disciple is content to remain anonymous if his Lord gets the glory. (Guzik 2013, Jn 9:39-41)

Where are you? Do you see solely because you are relying on the only one who can give sight to us spiritually, Jesus Christ. Or are you blind still groping around in the dark. Worse yet, do you think you can see, but know you never really have had Him give sight as He promises to do?

Now is time to settle this.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives



generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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