

# Dr. Dave Turner, John, Session 11, Tense Times in Jerusalem 3: The Blind Man and the Blind Men – John 9:1-41 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Turner, John, Session 11, John 9:1-41, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. David Turner's session on John 9:1-41** examines Jesus' healing of a man born blind in Jerusalem. The lecture explores the **cultural and religious context** surrounding blindness at the time, contrasting the disciples' assumption of sin as the cause with Jesus' declaration that it was for God's glory. Turner highlights the **irony** of the Pharisees, who possess physical sight but demonstrate spiritual blindness in their rejection of Jesus and the healed man, who gains both physical and spiritual vision. The session further considers the **symbolic nature** of Jesus' actions, such as using spit and sending the man to the Pool of Siloam, and connects the narrative to broader **theological themes** of light and darkness, sin and suffering, and the nature of true sight.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Turner, John, Session 11 – Double click icon to play in  
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]  
Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament →  
Gospels → John).**



**Turner\_John\_Session  
n11.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Turner, John, Session 11, John 9:1-41

#### Briefing Document: Analysis of John 9:1-41 ("The Blind Man and the Blind Men")

##### Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. David Turner in his analysis of John chapter 9, verses 1-41, titled "Tense Times in Jerusalem, The Blind Man and the Blind Men." Turner focuses on the narrative flow of the healing of the man born blind, the theological implications of this event, particularly concerning the relationship between sin and suffering, the paradoxical nature of spiritual sight and blindness, and the significance of Jesus as the "light of the world."

##### Main Themes and Important Ideas:

#### 1. Challenging the Superstitious Link Between Sin and Blindness:

- The chapter opens with the disciples' question: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). This reveals a prevalent worldview that attributed physical ailments, like blindness, to personal or familial sin.
- Turner emphasizes that Jesus explicitly refutes this notion: "in John chapter 9, we're going to find out that his blindness had nothing to do with any sin on his part or that of his parents. There's no punishment going on there, but it's to bring glory to God."
- He critiques the idea of God punishing a child for parental sins or for prospective sins, calling it a "strange view of God, not the God that I see described in the rest of Scripture."
- Turner notes that this sub-biblical worldview persists today, where people attribute misfortunes directly to divine punishment for specific actions.

#### 1. God's Glory Displayed Through Healing:

- Jesus heals the man born blind not as a consequence of sin, but as an opportunity to demonstrate God's glory. Turner states, "So, we see how God is going to be glorified by the way in which Jesus is taking care of this man and dealing with him."
- This event sets the stage for a deeper theological lesson about spiritual sight and blindness.

### 1. **The Narrative Flow and Rising Conflict:**

- Turner outlines the unfolding of the narrative: Jesus encounters and heals the blind man in an unusual way (using spit and mud, instructing him to wash in the Pool of Siloam).
- The healing causes immediate commotion among the neighbors, who question the man's identity and the circumstances of his healing.
- The healed man is then interrogated by the Pharisees, who are skeptical and resistant to the implications of Jesus' action, particularly because it occurred on the Sabbath.
- The parents of the healed man, fearing expulsion from the synagogue, are evasive and refuse to confirm the details of the healing.

### 1. **The Humor and Irony of the Pharisees' Resistance:**

- Turner points out the comedic elements in the Pharisees' questioning and the healed man's responses. When they repeatedly ask him how his eyes were opened, the man retorts, "I have told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" (John 9:27).
- This highlights the irony of the supposedly knowledgeable religious leaders being confronted and outwitted by a formerly blind, uneducated man.

### 1. **The Central Conflict: Disciples of Moses vs. Followers of Jesus:**

- The Pharisees' assertion, "You are this fellow's disciple; but we are disciples of Moses" (John 9:28), underscores a crucial theme in John's Gospel.
- Turner explains that John presents Jesus as the fulfillment of Moses, the one whom Moses anticipated, bringing the fullness of God's grace and truth. This echoes John 5:46-47, where Jesus states that Moses wrote about him.
- The Pharisees' rejection of Jesus stems from their adherence to their interpretation of the Law (e.g., Sabbath observance) and their refusal to recognize Jesus' divine authority.

### 1. **The Healed Man's Growing Understanding and Faith:**

- Initially, the healed man identifies Jesus as "the man called Jesus" (John 9:11), then as "a prophet" (John 9:17), and eventually, upon encountering Jesus again, proclaims, "Lord, I believe," and worships him (John 9:38).

- This progression illustrates a journey of spiritual enlightenment parallel to his physical healing.

#### 1. **The Paradox of Spiritual Sight and Blindness:**

- The climax of the chapter revolves around Jesus' statement: "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind" (John 9:39).
- When the Pharisees ask, "Are we blind too?" (John 9:40), Jesus confirms their spiritual blindness: "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains" (John 9:41).
- Turner emphasizes the irony: those who have physical sight and religious authority are spiritually blind to the truth of Jesus, while the formerly physically blind man gains true spiritual insight.

#### 1. **Connecting John 9 to the Context of John 8:**

- Turner highlights the link between Jesus' declaration "I am the light of the world" in John 8:12 and the healing of the blind man in John 9. The healing serves as a tangible demonstration of this claim.
- He also suggests that Jesus' departure from the temple in John 8 after declaring "Before Abraham was born, I am" might echo the departure of the Shekinah glory from the temple in the Old Testament, signifying a shift in God's presence.

#### 1. **The Significance of the Pool of Siloam:**

- Turner discusses the recent archaeological discovery believed to be the actual Pool of Siloam in the City of David.
- He notes that the name "Siloam" means "sent," adding a layer of meaning to Jesus' instruction for the man to wash there, suggesting the man was "sent" to receive his sight.

#### 1. **The Problem of Suffering and God's Glory:**

- Turner delves into the perennial question of why bad things happen to good people and vice versa. He acknowledges that Scripture occasionally links sin and suffering but emphasizes that this is not always the case.
- He cites examples like Job and Paul to illustrate that godly individuals also experience suffering.

- Turner argues that, based on John 9 and John 11 (the raising of Lazarus), God sometimes allows suffering to occur "in order to bring glory to himself" and to teach profound lessons. He cautions against automatically assuming that suffering is a punishment for sin or that prosperity signifies righteousness.

#### 1. **The Unusual Method of Healing:**

- Turner finds Jesus' use of spit and mud to heal the blind man "odd" and a "head-scratcher."
- He explores potential interpretations, suggesting it might be a symbolic reenactment of creation (God forming Adam from dust) or a test of the man's faith.
- The instruction to wash in the Pool of Siloam further adds to the unique nature of this healing.

#### 1. **Comparison with the Healing at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5):**

- Turner draws parallels and contrasts between the healing of the paralytic in John 5 and the healing of the blind man in John 9, both occurring on the Sabbath and leading to conflict with the Pharisees.
- Key differences include: the blind man's growing faith versus the paralytic's apparent lack of faith and possible alignment with the Pharisees; Jesus taking the initiative in both cases; and the explicit statement in John 9 that the blindness was for God's glory.

#### 1. **Spiritual Sight as a Metaphor:**

- Turner highlights the biblical motif of sight as a metaphor for spiritual perception. He references Isaiah 6, which speaks of people seeing and hearing without understanding, a theme echoed in the New Testament.
- He connects this to the irony in John 9, where the physically sighted Pharisees are spiritually blind, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah.

#### 1. **God's Care for the Blind in Scripture:**

- Turner briefly touches on the Old Testament's emphasis on caring for the blind (e.g., curses against those who mislead them) and the Psalms' portrayal of God as the one who opens their eyes.

- He also mentions prophetic texts like Isaiah 35, which speak of the blind seeing, often interpreted in both a physical and spiritual sense.
- However, he notes that Scripture also speaks of God striking people with blindness as a form of judgment for their sin, often referring to spiritual blindness.

#### 1. **Blindness in Paul's Ministry:**

- Turner discusses the contrasting examples of blindness in Paul's ministry: the physical blinding of Elymas the sorcerer in Acts 13 as a fitting consequence for his spiritual opposition, and Paul's commission to open the eyes of the Gentiles, turning them from darkness to light (Acts 26).
- These examples further illustrate the link between physical and spiritual blindness in the New Testament.

#### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Turner's analysis of John 9 emphasizes the profound theological truths embedded in the narrative of the healed blind man. The chapter serves to refute simplistic connections between sin and suffering, highlight God's glory revealed through Jesus' actions, and powerfully illustrate the paradoxical nature of spiritual sight and blindness. The resistance of the Pharisees underscores the danger of clinging to rigid interpretations and failing to recognize the work of God in their midst. Ultimately, the story of the blind man who comes to see both physically and spiritually serves as a powerful reminder that Jesus is the light of the world, and true sight comes through faith in him.

## 4. Study Guide: Turner, John, Session 11, John 9:1-41

### Study Guide: John 9 - The Blind Man and the Blind Men

#### Key Themes:

- Jesus as the Light of the World
- Spiritual Blindness vs. Physical Blindness
- The Glory of God in Suffering
- Faith and Sight
- The Rejection of Jesus by Religious Authorities
- The Contrast Between Belief and Unbelief
- The Significance of the Pool of Siloam
- The Problem of Connecting Sin and Suffering

#### Narrative Flow:

1. **The Encounter (9:1-7):** Jesus and his disciples encounter a man born blind. The disciples question the cause of his blindness, revealing a common superstition. Jesus corrects this notion, stating the blindness is for God's glory, and heals the man in an unusual way by making mud with his saliva and telling him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man obeys and returns seeing.
2. **The Neighbors' Inquiry (9:8-12):** The man's neighbors are astonished and question his identity and how he was healed. He insists he is the same man and recounts how Jesus healed him, but cannot say where Jesus is.
3. **The Pharisees' Investigation (9:13-34):** The neighbors take the healed man to the Pharisees. They question him repeatedly about the healing, focusing on the fact that it occurred on the Sabbath. The man's simple testimony and growing understanding of Jesus as a prophet frustrate the Pharisees. They then interrogate his parents, who, fearing expulsion from the synagogue, confirm his blindness from birth but defer to him regarding his healing. The Pharisees continue to pressure the man, who ultimately challenges their spiritual insight, leading to his expulsion from the synagogue.
4. **Jesus Finds the Man (9:35-38):** Jesus hears that the man has been thrown out and seeks him out. He asks the man if he believes in the Son of Man. The man,

still unaware of Jesus' full identity, asks who he is so that he may believe. Jesus reveals himself, and the man immediately believes and worships him.

5. **The Judgment (9:39-41):** Jesus reflects on the purpose of his coming: for judgment, that the blind may see and those who see may become blind. The Pharisees present nearby question if they are blind too. Jesus responds that if they were truly blind (unaware of their need for spiritual sight), they would not be guilty, but because they claim to see, their guilt remains.

### **Key Questions to Consider:**

- What does the disciples' question about the cause of the man's blindness reveal about the prevailing beliefs of the time?
- Why does Jesus heal the man in such an unconventional way? What might be the significance of the mud and the Pool of Siloam?
- How does the healed man's understanding of Jesus evolve throughout the chapter?
- What are the reasons for the Pharisees' opposition to Jesus' actions? How does their physical sight contrast with their spiritual blindness?
- What is the significance of Jesus' statement about judgment at the end of the chapter? Who are the truly blind and who are those who claim to see?

### **Quiz: John 9**

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What false assumption did the disciples have regarding the blind man's condition, and what did Jesus say about the reason for his blindness?
2. Describe the unusual method Jesus used to heal the blind man. What was he instructed to do after Jesus applied this?
3. How did the healed man's neighbors react to his newfound sight? What did they question about him?
4. Why were the Pharisees so concerned about the healing of the blind man? What specific issue did they raise?
5. How did the healed man's parents respond when questioned by the Pharisees? What was their primary motivation for their response?



6. Describe the progression of the healed man's understanding of Jesus' identity as revealed in his interactions with others.
7. What was the Pharisees' reaction to the healed man's logical arguments and his suggestion that they might want to become Jesus' disciples?
8. After the healed man was thrown out, what question did Jesus ask him, and what was the man's initial response?
9. Explain the irony in Jesus' statement about judgment at the end of the chapter regarding who will see and who will become blind.
10. How does the healing of the blind man connect with Jesus' earlier declaration in John 8:12 about being the light of the world?

**Answer Key: John 9**

1. The disciples assumed the man's blindness was a result of sin, either his own or his parents'. Jesus corrected this by stating that the blindness was so that the works of God might be displayed in him, emphasizing God's glory rather than punishment.
2. Jesus spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and applied it to the blind man's eyes. He then instructed the man to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam, after which the man was able to see.
3. The neighbors were incredulous and questioned whether he was the same man who had been blind. Some doubted his identity, while others wondered how his eyes had been opened.
4. The Pharisees were concerned because Jesus had performed the healing on the Sabbath, which they considered a violation of their religious law. They focused on whether Jesus was from God given this apparent transgression.
5. The healed man's parents confirmed that he was their son and had been born blind, but they refused to speculate on how he had gained his sight. They were afraid of being expelled from the synagogue if they acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah.
6. Initially, the healed man only knew that a man named Jesus had healed him. He then identified Jesus as a prophet to the Pharisees. Finally, after encountering Jesus again, he recognized him as the Son of Man and worshipped him as Lord.

7. The Pharisees became angry and hurled insults at the healed man, claiming that he was Jesus' disciple while they were disciples of Moses. They dismissed his arguments and ultimately expelled him from the synagogue.
8. Jesus asked the man, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" The man replied that he did not know who the Son of Man was, asking Jesus to tell him so that he could believe.
9. The irony lies in the fact that those who had physical sight and considered themselves spiritually enlightened (the Pharisees) were shown to be blind to the truth about Jesus, while the man who was physically blind came to see and believe in him.
10. The healing of the man born blind serves as a powerful demonstration of Jesus being the light of the world. Just as he brought physical light to the man who had lived in darkness, he also brings spiritual light and understanding to those who follow him.

### **Essay Format Questions: John 9**

1. Analyze the contrasting perspectives on blindness presented in John 9. How does the chapter challenge the common understanding of physical and spiritual sight?
2. Discuss the role of the Pharisees in John 9. What motivates their actions, and how does their interaction with the healed man contribute to the theological message of the chapter?
3. Explore the significance of Jesus' method of healing the blind man and the instruction to wash in the Pool of Siloam. What symbolic or theological meanings might these actions convey?
4. Trace the development of the healed man's faith in John 9. What factors contribute to his growing understanding and ultimate worship of Jesus?
5. Examine the theme of judgment in John 9:39-41. How does Jesus' statement about the purpose of his coming illuminate the spiritual condition of different groups within the narrative?

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Rabbi:** A Jewish teacher of the Law. The disciples address Jesus as Rabbi.
- **Sabbath:** The seventh day of the week, observed by Jews as a day of rest and worship, commemorating God's rest after creation. Jewish law prescribed strict regulations regarding activities permitted on the Sabbath.
- **Pharisees:** A Jewish religious and social movement known for their strict adherence to the Law and traditions. They often clashed with Jesus over interpretations of the Law.
- **Synagogue:** A Jewish house of worship and community center. Exclusion from the synagogue was a significant form of social and religious ostracism.
- **Pool of Siloam:** A significant water source in Jerusalem, possibly connected to ritual purification. Its name means "sent."
- **Messiah:** The promised deliverer of the Jewish people, a concept that Jesus claimed to fulfill.
- **Prophet:** A person believed to be inspired by God to speak his messages.
- **Son of Man:** A title Jesus frequently used for himself, drawing from Old Testament prophecy and carrying connotations of both humanity and divine authority.
- **Glory of God:** The manifestation of God's power, presence, and character. Jesus states that the blind man's condition was for the glory of God to be displayed.
- **Spiritual Blindness:** A metaphor for the inability or unwillingness to recognize and accept spiritual truth, particularly regarding Jesus' identity and mission.

## **5. FAQs on Turner, John, Session 11, John 9:1-41, Biblelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions: John 9 - The Blind Man and the Blind Men**

#### **1. What was the common belief in Jesus' time about the cause of congenital blindness, as illustrated by the disciples' question?**

The disciples asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" This question reveals a prevalent belief that physical ailments, including congenital conditions like blindness, were a direct consequence of sin committed either by the afflicted individual or their parents. This perspective suggests a direct cause-and-effect relationship where suffering was seen as divine punishment for wrongdoing.

#### **2. How did Jesus respond to the disciples' question about the cause of the man's blindness, and what theological point was he making?**

Jesus directly refuted the prevailing notion, stating that neither the man nor his parents had sinned in a way that caused his blindness. Instead, Jesus declared that the man was born blind "so that the works of God might be displayed in him." This response highlights a crucial theological point: suffering and hardship are not always the result of sin. God can use such situations to demonstrate his power, glory, and purposes in the world.

#### **3. Describe the unusual method Jesus used to heal the blind man and what possible significance might this action have held?**

Jesus spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and applied it to the man's eyes before instructing him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. This method was unconventional and might seem peculiar. One possible interpretation suggests a symbolic reenactment of creation, where God formed humanity from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2). By using mud, Jesus, whom John's Gospel identifies as the agent of creation (John 1), might be symbolically recreating the man's sight. Additionally, the act of applying something seemingly unclean (spit) could be a way of challenging conventional notions of purity and uncleanness, or simply a test of the man's willingness to obey.

**4. What was the significance of Jesus telling the man to wash in the Pool of Siloam, and what does the name "Siloam" mean?**

Jesus instructed the healed man to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The Gospel of John itself provides an editorial note explaining that the name "Siloam" means "sent." This is significant because it connects Jesus' act of sending the man to the pool with the idea that Jesus himself was sent by God. The healing then becomes linked to obedience to the one who was sent, reinforcing Jesus' divine authority and mission.

**5. How did the healed man's understanding of Jesus evolve throughout his encounters with the neighbors and the Pharisees?**

Initially, the healed man simply knew that "the man called Jesus" had healed him. When questioned by the Pharisees, he progressed in his understanding, suggesting that Jesus must be a prophet, reasoning that such a miraculous healing was not ordinary. As the interrogation intensified and the Pharisees rejected Jesus, the man defended him, implying he was a righteous man because God listens to those who do his will. Finally, when Jesus personally revealed himself as the Son of Man, the man immediately declared, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped him, demonstrating a complete recognition of Jesus' divine identity.

**6. What was the central point of contention between the Pharisees and the healed man, and how did this highlight the theme of spiritual blindness?**

The Pharisees' primary objection was that Jesus had performed the healing on the Sabbath, which they considered a violation of Jewish law. They refused to acknowledge the miracle because it conflicted with their interpretation of religious regulations. In contrast, the healed man, despite his former physical blindness, increasingly gained spiritual insight into who Jesus was. This stark contrast illustrates the central irony of the chapter: those who possessed physical sight and claimed to be religious authorities were spiritually blind to the work of God in Jesus, while the formerly physically blind man came to see and believe.

**7. How does the account of the healed blind man relate to Jesus' statement, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind"?**

This statement encapsulates the paradoxical nature of Jesus' mission as portrayed in John 9. The physically blind man, representing those who recognize their need for God, received both physical and spiritual sight through Jesus. Conversely, the Pharisees, who believed they already possessed spiritual understanding and were the guides of the people, demonstrated their spiritual blindness by rejecting Jesus and the evidence of his divine power. Jesus' coming thus served as a judgment, revealing who truly had spiritual insight and who did not.

**8. What broader theological implications can be drawn from the healing of the blind man regarding suffering, faith, and spiritual perception?**

The healing of the blind man challenges the simplistic notion that suffering is always a direct punishment for sin. It reveals that God can use suffering to bring about his glory. The man's healing was not explicitly tied to his prior faith but rather led to his eventual belief and worship of Jesus. This highlights that divine grace often precedes and enables faith. Furthermore, the narrative underscores the crucial distinction between physical sight and spiritual perception. True understanding of God and his works requires more than just outward observation; it demands a willingness to believe and recognize God's presence and actions in the world, something the physically sighted but spiritually blind Pharisees lacked.