The Man Born Blind (John 9:1–41)

1. The man born blind episode demonstrates how one person’s test can provide instruction to a multitude of individuals.

2. Instruction opportunity #1: Jesus’ disciples (Jn. 9:1–5).
   a. The disciples were under the false-teaching perspective that all physical infirmities were consequences of sin.
      1) Sometimes blindness was an application of divine discipline (Gen. 19:11; Deut. 28:28–27; 2nd Kgs. 6:18–19; Acts 9:8; 13:11).
      2) Sometimes blindness was a consequence of demonic affliction (Mt. 12:22; Lk. 7:21).
      3) Assumption of personal guilt does not edify (Job 4:7).
   b. Children face consequent circumstances because of their parents’ sins but not divine discipline (Ex. 20:5 cp. Ezek. 18:2,19–20).
   c. Jesus taught that some afflictions are not divine discipline but rather undeserved suffering for the manifestation of God’s faithfulness (Jn. 9:3).
   d. The recognition of the Father’s ongoing work is a motivation for our own continued working (Jn. 9:4) especially when we become convicted of the shortness of our time here (Jn. 9:5).

3. Instruction opportunity #2: the man born blind (Jn. 9:6–7).
   a. The man born blind heard the title Rabbi (Jn. 9:2) and the testimony as the Light of the World (Jn. 9:5).
   b. The man’s instruction opportunity was an illustration of obedience (Jn. 9:7).
      1) A mechanism was sovereignly designated and the procedure was volitionally obeyed.
      2) The miracle came into effect upon the volitional obedience to the sovereignly designated mechanism.
   c. The man does not question who the Light of the World rabbi thinks he is (cf. Jn. 8:53), nor does he balk at the instructions he’s been given (cf. 2nd Kgs. 5:11–14).
   d. After receiving his sight, Ἄνωβλέψας * returned to find that the Light of the World rabbi had departed. *(Pastor Bob’s nickname for “one who received sight”)
      1) Ἄνωβλέψας knew that the Light of the World rabbi was a prophet (Jn. 9:17).
      2) Ἄνωβλέψας also knew that His personal name was Jesus (Jn. 9:11).
      3) Ἄνωβλέψας undoubtedly heard the Lord’s message during the feast (Jn. 8:12).

4. Instruction opportunity #3: his neighbors and associates (Jn. 9:8–12).
   a. The neighbors and others weren’t quite sure he was who they thought he was (Jn. 9:8–9).
   b. The benefit he received became the testimony he had to offer (Jn. 9:10–11).
   c. The testimony should also include guidance as to where the Lord can be found (Jn. 9:12).
   d. Remember at this point the man’s only benefit is in terms of physical health. He is still an unbeliever (Jn. 9:38).

5. Instruction opportunity #4: the Pharisees (Jn. 9:13–17).
   a. Some of the Pharisees are handicapped by their theology (Jn. 9:16a). To them, Jesus was a sabbath-breaker.
   b. Others accepted the testimony of the sign (Jn. 9:16b).
   c. As the only “eye witness” available, the man born blind was asked to evaluate the sinning sabbath-breaker (Jn. 9:17). His answer shows the incomplete & finite understanding of one who is still being brought to faith.

6. Instruction opportunity #5: his parents (Jn. 9:18–23).
   a. The parents were faithful synagogue attendees, but they feared the Jews more than they feared the Lord (Jn. 9:22).
   b. The parents knew the truth but their testimony would have consequences they were unwilling to bear (Jn. 9:23).
7. Instruction opportunity #6: the man born blind learns from the angelic conflict manipulations of the adversary (Jn. 9:24-34).
   a. The Pharisees couch their evil schemes in religious vocabulary: give glory to God (Jn. 9:24).
   b. Everybody has sinned (Rom. 3:23 ἁμαρτάνω hamartanō #2643).
      1) “Sinners” (ἁμαρτωλός hamartōlos #2684) to the Pharisees in the Gospels are characterized by a manner of life that makes no attempt to do otherwise.
      2) Those who did not observe the Law in detail and therefore were shunned by observers of traditional precepts. They are contrasted with those who are God-fearing (Jn. 9:31).
   c. Ἄναβλέψας refused to characterize Jesus’ spiritual walk, but repeatedly testified to Jesus’ spiritual fruit (Jn. 9:25).
   d. The Pharisees pursued a tactic of repeated questioning. Military police interrogation tactics call this the “repetition method.” Jesus cited the methodology positively in terms of prayer diligence (Lk. 18:1-8).
   e. Ἀναβλέψας won’t change his answer, but he tweaks the Pharisees greatly with his suggestion that they want to become disciples of Jesus (Jn. 9:27).
      1) The Pharisees angrily defend their Mosaic orthodoxy (Jn. 9:28-29).
      2) Ἄναβλέψας happily restates his testimony, and his convictions based on that testimony (Jn. 9:30-33).
      3) The Pharisees final conclusion is to evict Ἀναβλέψας from their presence (and likely ban him from synagogue participation as well) (Jn. 9:34 cf. v.22).

8. Instruction opportunity #7: the man born blind learns but the Pharisees are more blind than he ever was (Jn. 9:35-41).