

John 9-Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

John 9:1-38
NLT 2004

***Transition:** Jesus had been in Jerusalem for an important religious festival which was now over. He remained in Jerusalem and talked with the religious leaders.*

John 9:1

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.

John 9:6-12

Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. He told him, "Go wash yourself in a certain pool... So the man went and washed and came back seeing! His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!"

But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!" They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?" He told them, *all that had happened.*

John 9:13-17

Then they took the man who had been blind to the *religious leaders**, because it was on the *day of worship** that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. The *religious leaders* asked the man all about it. So he told them *all that had happened.*

Some of the *religious leaders* said, "This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the *day of worship.*" Others said, "But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?" So there was a deep division of opinion among them...

John 9:18-23

The *religious* leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents. They asked them, "Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?"

His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind, but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the *religious* leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the *promised savior** would be expelled from the *house of prayer**. That's why they said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

***Transition:** The religious leaders confronted the healed man again and he repeated all that Jesus had done for him. They became so angry with him and his answers that they made him leave their house of prayer.*

John 9:35-38

When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the one* who came to reveal God and redeem man?"

The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

"You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!"

Yes, *Master**, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped* Jesus.

John 9:39-41 (optional)

Then Jesus told him, "I entered this world...to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind."

Some *religious leaders* who were standing nearby heard him and asked, "Are you saying we're blind?"

"If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see."

Why This Story?

This story has been used effectively (as part of a larger "Fear Not" story set) in new personnel orientation. This story gives an example of how to answer when confronted by authorities. Having such an example could help decrease fear, as believers can practice giving answers in the same way as this man did.

This story has also been used effectively in a *Purpose*-themed story set in which Jesus' purposes for us are always to ultimately bring God glory. Even in difficult circumstances, God can ultimately be glorified and work out His purposes in an individual's life.

Story Crafting

Because this story belongs to a "fear" story set, we have not included John 9:2-5. However, if you feel it is necessary for your theme or story set to include either the section in which Jesus says that the man was not born blind because of his parents' sin, or that Jesus said he was the light of the world, you would want to include verses 2-5.

We have omitted the name of the pool to simplify the story.

The man repeats at each confrontation all that Jesus did for him. If repetition is important in your culture, you may include this in the story.

If you use this story to deal with fear, you may want to stop at the point where the man worships Jesus. If you are using it for evangelism, you may want to continue to the end of the passage.

Day of worship , Place of prayer

We have changed the Jewish religious terms (Sabbath, synagogue) to more general terms which can be readily understood by those

not familiar with Jewish culture. "Place of prayer" is distinguished from the temple, which is called "Place of worship" in other stories. You may use any term for "place of prayer" which connotes a place where people meet together regularly to pray and study religious teachings. This is not to say that you may substitute names of specific religious places such as mosque or temple that are used in other religions.

Son of man

The title "son of man" is best understood by an audience who is familiar with the Daniel 7 prophecy of the son of man. Jesus uses this title for himself often. Because most audiences do not understand this title, we usually replace the title with "I" unless we know they are familiar with the Daniel 7 story. Because of the context of the phrase here, we cannot do that. However, we would like to include the man's confession and worship of Jesus. Therefore, the story teller has several choices for translation, based on what this title actually means:

- 1) You can use "son of man" if your audience is familiar with that title and understands its significance.
- 2) Commentators agree that in this context, Jesus was at least partially referring to the "son of man's" role as a revelation of God to man, someone whose lowliness and suffering has led to our salvation.
- 3) Commentators also agree that Jesus was identifying himself as the judge from Daniel 7 (See the very next verses in John 9 in which Jesus mentions a judging role.)

It is most likely that the man's response of worship to Jesus' confession of being the son of man himself means that he has responded to the part of the title that refers to Jesus' revelation of God and redeemer of mankind. In this case, you may want to translate this title with an explanation. For

example, you may say something like “Do you believe in the one who came to reveal God and redeem/save mankind?”

Words/Phrases to Consider

Please see the master glossary for a more complete discussion on these words.

Religious Leaders*

Both Pharisees and Sadducees were Jewish religious parties at that time. Many scribes and priests were members of one of these sects. If possible, it is best to keep these sect names as generic as possible—‘religious leaders.’ We have also used the term for ‘synagogue leader’ in the epistles story set. If you use a term for ‘religious leaders’ used in a major religion here, be sure that those names do not refer ONLY to a member of that specific religion.

Promised Savior*

‘Savior,’ as used in the New Testament, means ‘one who saves from spiritual and eternal danger.’ Often, the wholeness of man includes both physical and spiritual aspects which are difficult to distinguish, but the actual term ‘savior’ in the New Testament is used only for Jesus as a spiritual deliverer. ‘Promised Savior’ is also the word we’ve chosen to use for the English version of the stories as the term to describe who Jesus is—the Messiah, the Christ, the Promised Savior. Some languages do not have an appropriate personal noun that expresses the idea of savior, and it needs to be translated ‘the one who saves,’ or ‘the saving person.’

Followers*

If the language has an understood term for the devoted followers of a guru, you may use that term here. We’ve designated the twelve disciples as ‘closest followers’ and the other disciples simply as ‘followers.’ You may want to differentiate between the two groups in the same way, as well.

Master*

The original ‘Lord’ in the New Testament has the connotation here of ‘master,’ ‘supreme head,’ or ‘owner.’ At a surface level, this is a title for a respected man, such as ‘sir.’ In some stories, as noted in the story, the original “Lord” is an indication of the speaker’s affirmation that Jesus is God. In those cases, a word that would be used to show Jesus’ authority over us and our allegiance to him should be used.

Worship*

Worship’s foundation is the idea of ‘service,’ shown through showing awe and wonder to God (*IVP New Bible Dictionary*).

Different cultures and languages have different words for worship, some of which refer only to certain ceremonies or rituals one must do. In every story in this story set where ‘worship’ is used, it implies more than just performing rituals; it includes the heart of love, awe and wonder of the worshiper for God. Be sure that the word or combination of words you choose for worship includes this idea.

Worldview

Some cultures may be offended by the fact that Jesus spit on the mud that was placed in the man’s eyes. If this is the case, you may omit the fact that Jesus spit on the mud.

Intra-Story Cohesion

This story would be best understood by an audience who is familiar with the Daniel 7 story about the son of man.

If you include the section in which Jesus describes himself as the light of the world, it would be a good connection to also include a prophecy story in which the promised savior is described as someone who would heal the blind.

Use the same words or phrases for “religious leaders,” “promised savior,” “followers,”

“worship,” and “master” as you have used in other stories.

Story Set Themes

Fear

Purpose

Relationship

Grace

Savior

Honor/Shame