

### Lessons from the Gospel of John (9):

#### The Need of the Blind in Religion—Life's Sight and Life's Shepherding

##### **Bible reading**

*You may find it helpful to also read the entire case found in John 9:1-41.*

##### **John 9:1, 5-7**

**1** And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

**5** While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

**6** When He had said this, He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed his eyes with the clay,

**7** And He said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is interpreted, Sent). He went therefore and washed and came away seeing.

##### **Introduction**

Because of man's indwelling sinful nature, every person is born a sinner. Consequently, man is born spiritually blind and has no capacity in his natural condition to know God or perceive spiritual things. The eighth case in the Gospel of John of a man born blind unveils our need of Christ as the light of the world to open our inner eyes, dispel the darkness in our heart, and fully restore our sight. The man needed the anointing of his blind eyes through the mingling of the life-giving word and through obedience to go and wash away his oldness in order to receive sight and enjoy the divine light.

##### **Bible study reading**

*Please prayerfully read through the following portions of ministry related to this lesson.*

Blindness, as sin in the previous chapter, is a matter of death. A dead person surely is blind. "...the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving." So they need "the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ" to shine forth to them (2 Cor. 4:4), "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18). In the principle set forth in chapter two, this is also the changing of death into life. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 21, section 1)

When the Lord Jesus saw this blind man, He said, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (9:5). The Lord is the light of life (8:12). Blindness comes from the shortage of the light of life. Every dead person is a blind man. Undoubtedly, the dead cannot see anything. Therefore, blindness indicates the lack of life. If you have life, then you have sight, for light opens your eyes. So, first of all, the Lord pointed out that the blind man needed the light of life...Verse 6 is very interesting. "When He had said this, He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed his eyes with the clay."...What He did was very strange. No one likes to touch a person's spittle. But the Lord Jesus mixed His spittle with the ground and made clay. Then He used the clay to anoint the man's eyes. The Gospel of John is a book of pictures, and this incident is a picture. We should not understand it merely according to the black and white letters.

The clay in 9:6, as in Romans 9:21, signifies humanity. Man is clay. We all are clay. What is the spittle? Spittle here, as something "that proceeds out of the mouth" (Matt. 4:4) of the Lord, signifies His

“words which...are spirit and life” (John 6:63). Figuratively speaking, the spittle is the Word, which is spirit and life, that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. The Word that proceeds out of the mouth of Christ is spirit. Thus, to mingle spittle with the clay signifies the mingling of humanity with the Lord’s living Word. The word “anointed” proves this, because the Lord’s Spirit is the anointing Spirit (Luke 4:18; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 1 John 2:27). (*Life-study of John*, msg. 21, section 2)

There are three steps which we must follow in order to receive sight for our eyes. First of all, the clay must both receive and be mingled with the spittle. In other words, you, the old man, the clay, must receive the Lord’s Word as the spittle and be mingled with the Lord in His Word. Then the second step will follow—that is, after you have received the Lord in His Word, you will have the anointing. Finally, the third step follows the anointing: the demand to put the old self to death. The old clay must be put into the water of death. By these three steps your eyes will be opened. You will then have the sight and will always be in the light. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 21, section 3)

## Going deeper

*Please read or listen to these materials for an in-depth study of this lesson.*

### Further reading:

[\*Life-study of John\*, msg. 21](#)

### Radio broadcast link:

Broadcast 26, [\*The Need of the Blind in Religion—Life’s Sight and Life’s Shepherding \(1\)\*](#)

### Footnotes from Recovery Version of the New Testament:

John 9:1, footnote 2

John 9:2, footnote 1

John 9:6, footnote 1

John 9:7, footnotes 1 and 3

### Questions for personal or corporate study:

*References in brackets indicate readings or broadcasts that may be helpful in answering the questions.*

- What are the spiritual significances of the man’s blindness, the clay, the spittle, and the anointing in John chapter 9?
- What is mingling? (*Life-study of John*, msg. 21, section 2)
- In your own experience, how have you received light from the Word and the Lord?

## Next week

### The Need of the Dead—Life’s Resurrecting

The second negative condition of man shown in John chapters 8-11 is blindness, issuing from the darkness of man’s sin. Blindness and darkness are also matters relating to death. After regeneration, if we are in a proper condition, we should always receive light from the Word by touching the Spirit in the Word and obeying the Lord’s inner commands. Next week we shall see the third negative condition, the issue of sin, which is death, and how the main function of the working of Christ as life is to resurrect man, bringing him completely out of death and into life as a new creation.

## Works Cited

Lee, Witness. *Life-study of John*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1985. [www.ministrybooks.org](http://www.ministrybooks.org)

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Bower House, Orange Tree Hill, Romford, Essex, RM4 1PB