

The Man Born Blind

“As Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”

—John 9:1,2

WHEN JESUS AND HIS DIS- ciples were walking together, they happened to pass a blind man who was begging. They learned that he had been blind from birth. In our featured scripture, John has recorded the disciples' question concerning the reason for the man's blindness. The Master then proceeded to teach important lessons in connection with sin, and the divine permission of evil.

It is apparent that the man could not have sinned before he was born, or that the tragic loss of his sight had been connected with any specific sin that either he, or his parents, had committed. Many of those who were living at that time did not understand why God would permit evil. They generally believed that their present condition of life was connected with their conduct. Even some of our Lord's followers may also have thought that the

man's blindness had been caused by some particular sin he had committed. The Master, however, dispelled any further questioning. "Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."—John 9:3

THE PERMISSION OF EVIL

The blind man and both of his parents had inherited the penalty for sin as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience to the laws of God. The calamities of sickness and disease, crime, strife, and war are part of that penalty, and ultimately culminate in death and the grave. However, under the long-promised administration of Christ's future kingdom, the penalty will be lifted, and all mankind will be given an opportunity to obey the laws of God. At that time, they will compare their present experiences under the reign of sin and death, and contrast them with the wonderful blessings that will be made available to them. All the families of the earth will be blessed by the Christ, and the arrangements of a new and better covenant.—Gen. 22:17,18

At that time, each person will be able to intelligently judge for himself whether or not he wants to serve God and righteousness, and obtain everlasting life on a perfected earth. They will come to know and appreciate our Lord who died for them. Eventually, God's glorious attributes of justice, wisdom, love, and power will be made known to all. An understanding of the permission of evil is an important part of the Heavenly Father's plan and purpose for his human creation, and their ultimate reconciliation.

The Apostle Paul has explained, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."—I Cor. 15:21-28

The Scriptures clearly teach, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."—Heb. 2:9

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Jesus had left his heavenly home and was made a perfect man to minister to, and die for, the poor groaning human creation. He had come to do mighty works in the name of his Heavenly Father. As recorded in John's gospel, he said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the

night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”—John 9:4,5

During the few short years that Jesus was upon this earth, he performed many miracles, and preached the Gospel of the kingdom. “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.” (Matt. 4:23-25) “It came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him.”—Luke 8:1

Jesus understood that the divine purpose was that he lay down his perfect human life in obedient sacrifice for the sin-sick world. When establishing his authority, we read, “He [John] was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”—John 5:35-39

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

This commission to preach the Word of Truth is also applicable to those who become disciples of Christ during this present Gospel Age. In his prayer for his faithful followers, Jesus said, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” (John 17:17-20) After his resurrection from the grave, Jesus again said to the disciples, “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”—John 20:21

During this present Gospel Age, the Lord’s consecrated people do not have the same privileges of healing, or performing miracles, that were performed by him or the apostles; however, we do have the commission to preach the Gospel of the kingdom. It is our privilege to tell the glad tidings of joy and the wonderful blessings to be realized at that time. Satan will then be bound, and the opportunity will be available to all people for attaining everlasting life, health, peace, and joy. Mankind will return to full favor with God as part of his perfect family of human sons.

Our Lord proclaimed, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:14-16) The Apostle Paul encourages us by saying, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”—I Thess. 5:5,6

THE BLIND MAN HEALED

When performing miracles, Jesus was illustrating the marvelous work that would be accomplished during his future kingdom. The giving of sight to the man who had been born blind is one of these miracles. From John’s gospel, we read, “When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”—John 9:6,7

Healing the man who had been blind since birth, pictures those whose eyes of understanding have been opened to an appreciation of the Truth and the true meaning of Jesus’ sacrificial death for the sin-sick human creation. His consecrated followers are being called from the world during this present nighttime of sin and death, and will share in blessing the poor and blind human creation during Christ’s future kingdom.

Jesus applied a mixture of the dust of the ground from which Adam had been formed, with his ‘spittle.’

“The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen. 2:7) With this clay, he anointed the eyes of the blind man, which enabled him to see.

Our Lord’s spittle represents the fruit of his lips, and the spirit of grace and truth that poured forth from his mouth. “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” (Heb. 13:15) By anointing the blind man’s eyes with the mixture of clay, Jesus illustrated that the eyes of our understanding have been opened to a deeper and spiritual perception.

THE WATERS OF SILOAM

When Jesus commanded the man who was given sight to wash in the waters of Siloam, he also taught an important lesson of faith. In order for the healing to have its proper effect, trust and obedience were required. The blind man was told to manifest his faith by obediently bathing in the Pool of Siloam. Siloam represents ‘the sending forth’ or ‘the fountain’ of Truth and blessings. It was the means by which the blind man’s eyes were literally opened. Jesus is the ‘sent of God’ and the means whereby our eyes are opened to the life-giving water of Truth. “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:17) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”—chap. 5:24

The many wonderful miracles Jesus performed during his earthly ministry portray the blessings which will be poured out without measure upon the human family by the Great Physician. The grand work of restitution will be administered by the Christ during the future kingdom of blessing. “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”—Zech. 13:1 ■