

Jesus' Encounter with a Blind Man

Since ancient times, all humans have understood the concept of opposite poles of a struggle between the forces of light and darkness.

Ancient civilisations saw this as a constant struggle between equal opposing forces.

The Handbook For Life, the Christian Bible, does **not** portray light and darkness as having qualities of equal force where the slightest wind can sway the ultimate outcome.

Genesis 1:1-5 [NIV] *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day", and the darkness he called "night". And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day."*

God recreated the earth and turned darkness and chaos into light and order.

John 1:1-3 [NIV] *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."*

The apostle John understood the cosmic and spiritual significance of the creation story and used it as evidence in his story of the redemption [salvation] of humanity.

John 1:4-9 [NIV] *"In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. **The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.**"*

Who was this true light?

John 1:10-11 [NIV] *"He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."*

A direct reference to the Messiah that the Jews were waiting for but did **not** recognise when He came.

John 1:12-13 [NIV] *"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."*

Talking about a rebirth, a total change, that we all have to make to become the created children of God.

John 1:14 [NIV] *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

The light that came into the world was Jesus Christ [Messiah or Saviour] who was the Son of God.

John 1:15-18 [NIV] *"John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" From the fulness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."*

Jesus Christ came as The Light who would reveal to all humanity the reason for our creation, why we were born.

Jesus Christ is the spiritual “light” with which we are able to see and believe in our Creator God.

This belief is the key to salvation and eternal life, and there are no close competitors to Him, only beaten foes.

John 9:1-2 [NIV] *“As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*”

This recorded incident illustrates how Jesus the “Light” can take us out of the “darkness” of ignorance and death.

The blind man must have been well-known for the disciples knew all about him.

The disciples took the opportunity to put to Jesus the problem of suffering and sin, a problem that the Jews had and many people still have.

John 9:3-5 [NIV] *“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. **As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me.** Night is coming, when no-one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

Jesus gave a straight answer, there is **no** direct connection between physical suffering and sin. This man being born blind was **not** the result of his parents or his own sin.

Jesus then used this situation to show a spiritual principle.

This was part of the work that Jesus Christ was sent into the world to do by the Father.

Jesus Christ was the “Light” that revealed God the Father while He was on earth, but the fact that He said “we” must do this work refers directly to His commission for His disciples, His followers.

Matthew 5:14-16 [NIV] *“**You are the light of the world.** A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**”*

The followers of Jesus Christ, Christians are commanded to reflect the light that Jesus Christ brought into the world.

Both physical light by our personal example and spiritual light by broadcasting the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

John 9:6-7 [NIV] *“Having said this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.”*

The use of spittle seems to us as a strange, repulsive and unhygienic but in the ancient world and in the animal world it is used for healing.

A mammal’s spittle has antiseptic and healing properties.

Notice how naturally any injured mammal will lick its wounds.

John 9:8-12 [NIV] *“His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” Some claimed that he was. Others said, “No, he only looks*

like him.” But he himself insisted, “I am the man.” “How then were your eyes opened?” they demanded. He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.” “Where is this man?” they asked him. “I don’t know,” he said.”

The blind man did **not** know what Jesus looked like, he only knew His name and what Jesus had done for him.

John 9:13-16 [NIV] “They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “**This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.**” But others asked, “How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?” So they were divided.”

The Pharisees, the strict keepers of the whole law, including that added by Sadducees, considered that Jesus Christ healing this man, that mixing dust with spittle was work and it had been on the Sabbath, therefore it was a sin.

The Pharisees and Sadducees who were born with sight are now made blind by their own legalism.

Jesus was cultivating this man born blind, through a process of understanding and transformation.

John 9:17-29 [NIV] “Finally they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” The man replied, “He is a prophet.” The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s parents. “Is this your son?” they asked. “Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?” “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. “Give glory to God,” they said. “We know this man is a sinner.” He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered, “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?” Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.”

Even after this new disciple of Jesus Christ is healed of blindness, he does **not** meet Jesus face to face until after he has given his unrelenting and unwavering testimony to his neighbours and his community leaders.

The former blind man is **not** even sure who Jesus is, other than He must be from God, perhaps a prophet, because of the miracle of his receiving sight.

A person does **not** have to be a theologian to be a witness for Jesus Christ. Even if we cannot fully understand we can still feel with our heart.

It is better to love Jesus Christ the person than to love theories about Jesus Christ.

John 9:30-33 [NIV] “The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

The Pharisees were annoyed and helpless because they could **not** counter this man's arguments which were based on the scriptures they taught.

Note their confession. They were disciples of Moses, and this was blinding them to what God had foretold about the coming Messiah through the prophets, and were by this blinded as to Who Jesus was.

John 9:34 [NIV] *"To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out."*

Confronted with such a powerful argument the Pharisees resorted to abuse, insults and then threatened physical force.

John 9:35-38 [NIV] *"Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him."*

This passage of scripture tells us two great spiritual truths.

Jesus looked for the man.

The Jews cast this man out of the physical temple, but the Spiritual Temple of God found him and took him in.

Matthew 10:32-39 [NIV] *"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man's enemies will be the members of his own household." "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."*

This former blind man received revelation about God.

Loyalty to Jesus Christ will always bring revelation about God.

The penalty for being loyal to Jesus Christ may be persecution and being ostracised by our former friends and relatives.

The reward for being loyal to Jesus Christ will be an ever increasingly closer walk with Him and increasing knowledge about God.

John 9:39-41 [NIV] *"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward."*

Jesus came into this world to prepare people for judgement as well as being Saviour of the world.

Whenever we are confronted with Jesus we at once pass judgement on ourselves.

If we **don't** see in Jesus Christ someone to desire, admire, worship and love we condemn ourselves.

If we see in Jesus someone to reach out to, respond to and love then we are on the way to receiving eternal life.

John 17:3 [NIV] *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

Eternal life is a continual deeper understanding of God and an ever closer relationship.

The more knowledge a person has the more they are condemned if they do not recognise good when they see it.

The Pharisees were condemned by Jesus Christ because claiming to know so much they still failed to recognise God’s goodness [Jesus Christ] when He stood in front of them.

The same condemnation applies to Christians throughout the centuries.

Revelation 3:14-18 [NIV] *“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. **I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see.**”*

Here we see the problem of a group of professing Christians.

An attitude of indifference.

If a person is coldly detached to the point of hatred towards Christianity or if a person is intensely opposed to Christianity, the Holy Spirit can work with such minds to point them towards Christ.

The perfect example of such a conversion is the life of the apostle Paul.

Paul before he came face to face with Jesus Christ was full of cold hatred towards Christians and on fire in his desire to eradicate them all.

A meeting with Jesus Christ dramatically changed this into an intense love for Jesus Christ.

The problem with present day evangelism is **not** the hostility of hate towards Christianity.

The problem is internal, a lukewarm attitude towards evangelism that reflects in society by them considering Christianity irrelevant and treat it with complete indifference.

Such an attitude is the strongest barrier to break down, first internally then externally.

Very few legalistic Pharisees were converted by Jesus Christ.

They were too self-centred.

Jesus Christ works through people.

Those who are indifferent to the commission He has left us to continue, are **not on the way** to salvation **but in the way** of salvation of themselves and others.

What is this commission?

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV] *“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**”*

Go and make people disciples of Jesus Christ.

Mark 1:1-3 [NIV] *“The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”, “a voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”*

Prepare a people for the second coming of Jesus Christ, this time as a judge of all humanity.

How?

Mark 1:14-15 [NIV] *“After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”*

Repent and believe in Christ’s cleansing sacrifice for our sins.

Acts 2:38 [NIV] *“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Be baptised, symbolic of the death of our own will and conforming to the will of our Creator God, Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:1-10 [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”*

Crucify our old way of life and in a rebirth serve God and **not** ourselves.

Revelation 12:10-11 [NIV] *“Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

Loyal to Jesus Christ and the commission He left us to continue will be doing this in their lives.

Preaching Christ and Him crucified to cleanse the sins of all humanity and the personal witness of their own transformed lives as a result of accepting Jesus Christ into their lives.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

The Christian life is one of personal sacrifice and a new “born again” mind.

The man who was disabled by being blind from birth [spiritually no religious background] was chosen by God to give an abundant witness and light to the most hardened of unbelievers, the legalistic Pharisees.