

Title: THE BLIND WHO SEE, JOHN 9.  
(Chatham, NJ; 04/03/11, AM) [E – Inductive Narrative]

Theme: Through the events surrounding the healing of a blind man, John exposes the blindness of those who think they see.

Purpose: To demonstrate that people are blind and that only those touched by Christ can see.

Introduction:

1. Through the experience of a blind man we learn about spiritual blindness and what it takes to gain our sight.
2. In six different settings (scenes) John 9 demonstrates the darkness that blinds every human soul.
3. Only in Christ can this blindness be removed.

#### I. Scene 1 – A Man Blind from Birth (1-7)

- “As he passed by...”
- The question: who sinned, this man or his parents? Who is at fault?
- Answer: God is going to use this man to display his works (3).
- Jesus doesn’t answer the deeper issue of guilt and fault-finding.
- Jesus applies mud (made with his saliva; why this?) and has him wash.
- What was it like when he saw for the first time?
- John does not even go into this. It is only secondary to the events about to unfold.

#### II. Scene 2 – In His Neighborhood (8-12)

- Is this the blind man that we know?
- It’s me.
- How is it that now you can see?
- Jesus healed me.
- Where is he?
- I don’t know.
- Surprise and confusion characterize this scene.
- How do we act when we encounter a friend who has been changed in some way?
- Their reactions are neutral, without prejudice or anger, but we also don’t see any joy for his new-found sight!

#### III. Scene 3 – Before the Religious Authorities (13-17)

- They brought him to the Pharisees. Did the religious leaders demand to see him?
- Sabbath regulations become the issue; his healing takes second place. How odd?
- They have to hide the real issue behind a secondary one.
- The leaders interrogate him.
- They are divided over Jesus: some reject him for not keeping the Sabbath, but some correctly wonder how a “sinner” can do such things.
- They only ask the question, but they never concede the answer.
- They throw the issue back to the man. “What do you say?”
- “He is a prophet.” Only he has the courage to draw the correct conclusion.

#### IV. Scene 4 – Interrogating the Parents (18-23)

- “How then does he see?”

- His parents equivocate. Like the leaders, afraid to admit the plain truth regarding his healing, they defer to their son.
- Everyone dumps the responsibility for concluding who Christ is on his shoulders.
- John comments on the intimidation dynamic at work, verse 22.
- His parents are afraid; even the leaders who see something in Jesus are afraid.
- Jesus has become a flashpoint of division.
- As John seeks to demonstrate, he has exposed the blindness of humanity.

#### V. Scene 5 – Back in the Interrogation Room (24-34)

- “We know this man is a sinner.” (Because he healed on the Sabbath?)
- “I was blind, but now I see.”
- They persist in going down the same road; once again they ask how he was healed.
- Now he is unafraid; he stands up to them (and we begin to cheer?).
- His comments in verses 30-33 don’t tell them anything new. These are things they know but refuse to admit.
- They are blinded by their own preconceptions and sinful hearts.
- They react the way many people react when they are wrong but refuse to admit it: they revile and mock the one who told the truth.

#### VI. Scene 6 – Jesus Returns (35-41)

- Jesus has been absent from this drama except for his role in the beginning.
- The man believes in and worships him.
- The whole purpose of this was to demonstrate the power of Jesus’ actions to bring about more than physical sight.
- This entire episode has revealed the darkness around men’s souls and the power that the darkness has over them.
- Jesus came to pierce the darkness, but for those who think they already are enlightened their guilt remains (39-41).

#### Conclusions:

1. The man’s blindness served a particular purpose in God’s plan (3): the works of God were on display.
2. The rest of the play illustrates reactions to what God is doing.
3. Piercing the darkness shakes things up.
4. The one man who sees clearly is the man who was blind; even his answers demonstrate more enlightenment than the neighbors, his parents, and the leaders.
5. In essence this is Jesus’ message and work: to give sight to the blind.
6. One of the paradoxes of our faith is that if we admit our blindness by coming to Christ we gain true vision, but if we refuse, not only do we remain blind but we also remain in our guilt. Only the truth will set us free.
7. See the truth about your blindness; believe in Jesus; regain your sight.