

MIRACLES OF JESUS

THE BLIND MAN (JOHN 9)

The Feast of Dedication is better known as Hanukkah, which means “dedication.” Hanukkah is an eight-day celebration of the nation’s successful revolt led by the Maccabees against Syrian oppression and is still observed by Israelis today. First celebrated in 165 B.C., the Feast of Dedication is closely associated with the lighting of the menorah and is often called the Festival of Lights.

Three months earlier, during the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus had said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). He said it again during the Feast of Dedication (John 9:5). And he proved his claim to be the light by restoring the sight of a man born blind.

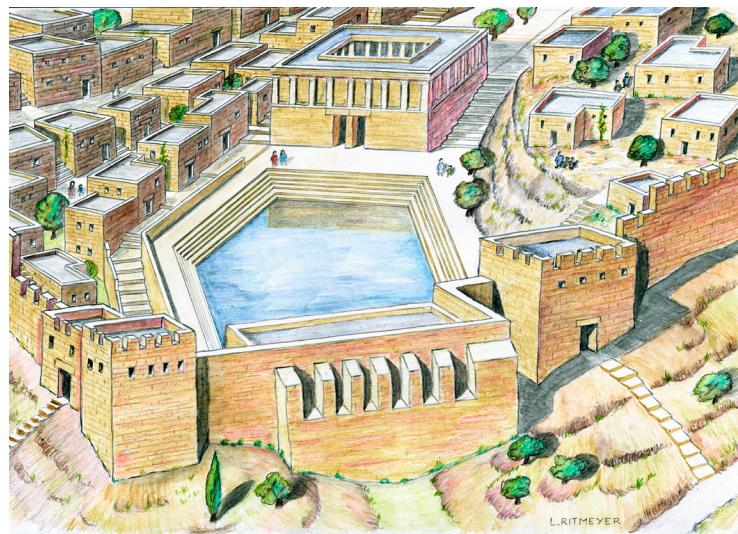
Healing of a Man Born Blind

While at the temple on the Sabbath day, Jesus and his disciples saw this man who had been born blind. Relegated to a life of begging, the blind man and others like him typically sat at the gates of the temple as people took pity on them and gave them money (Acts 3:2). But today, Jesus gave him the gift of sight.

Jesus started the healing process by spitting on the ground, making mud with the saliva and then anointing the man’s eyes with the mud. Jesus then commanded him to wash off the mud in the nearby pool of Siloam,³ less than a mile away. The blind man went to the pool still unable to see, but when he returned after washing his eyes, he was able to see.

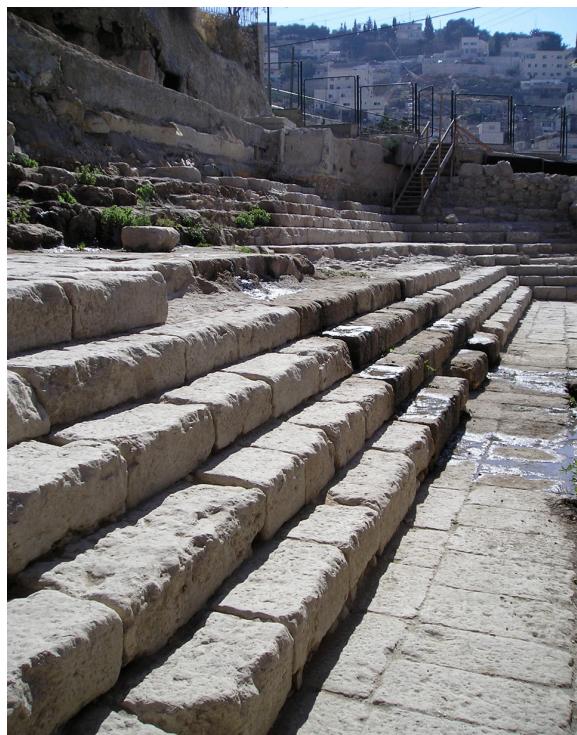
But he didn’t see Jesus. He and his disciples had perhaps gone inside the temple. Jesus would come and find the formerly blind man later (v. 35). In the meantime, this man’s faith grew exponentially as he began not only to see physically, but also to perceive spiritually (**Figure 2** on page 10).

Others observed that the blind man could now see. And they couldn’t believe it. In fact, some said that he must be someone else who only resembled the blind man. As they continued to talk about, he kept saying to them, “I am” (v. 9), identifying Jesus as the one who healed him.



The pool of Siloam served as one of the water reservoirs of Jerusalem. It was surrounded by five porticoes.

³ Interestingly, the name of this pool, “Siloam,” means “sent.”



Steps leading to the Pool of Siloam (discovered in 2004).

The Growing Faith of the Blind Man

Action Taken	Citation
Takes Jesus at his word and washes his eyes in the pool of Siloam	v. 7
Refers to Jesus as “the man called Jesus”	v. 11
Says that Jesus is a “prophet”	v. 17
Denies that Jesus could be a “sinner”	v. 25
Proclaims that Jesus is “from God”	v. 33
Declares his faith in Jesus and worships him	v. 38

Figure 2.

The Pharisees began their own interrogation of the man. Instead of rejoicing that this blind beggar could now see, the Pharisees were angry with Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. But instead of siding with them, the formerly blind man defended Jesus.

“Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ...If this man were not from God, he could do nothing” (John 9:30–33).

Because he had allied himself with Jesus, the man was soundly rejected by the Pharisees. They expelled him from synagogue worship. It was then that Jesus came and found him (v. 35). By now, his spiritual sight was nearly complete. Jesus asks him, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” Free from the shackles of the religious leaders, he openly confessed, “Lord, I believe.” And then, he worshiped Jesus.

The blind man could now see physically and spiritually. The religious leaders, however, could see physically but not perceive spiritually. They refused to accept that Jesus was the Messiah. He had just restored the eyesight of a man born blind, which was one of the miracles that was supposed to occur in the age of the Messiah (Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:7). But they were willfully blind to what was right in front of them.

Why Make Mud?

Jesus healed other blind people, but never with mud (Mark 8:22–26; Matt 20:29–34; John 5:8–9). The word “mud” (or “clay,” (N)KJV, NASB) is mentioned five times in four verses (John 9:6, 11, 14, 15). Notice also that Jesus made the mud immediately after declaring, “I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). Like God, who fashioned Adam from the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7), Jesus has created new life for this man’s dead eyes. He may have been born blind, but he has now been born again—with perfect vision, both physically and spiritually.