

## *A Man Born Blind (1)*

by Paul Baker

Jesus was nearing the end of his earthly ministry. While there were many who had come to follow and love him, those who opposed him were much more in number. Because of his teaching, many of the Jews believed on him [John 8:30]. On the other side of that coin, many of the Jews wanted to kill him as well; especially the Pharisees [John 8:37, 58-59]. John chapter 9 opens with Jesus passing by and seeing a blind man [John 9:1]. The man had been born with blindness. There are six examples of Jesus healing the blind, but this man was the only one that had been born that way. The man himself testified to this very fact in John 9:32 stating, "Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." He seems to have been a familiar face among those of Jerusalem [John 9:8]. In this account we see three practical questions; (1) Who is to blame? (2) What must be done? (3) When came the blessing?

Who is to blame? [Jn.9:2-3]. The man's infirmity provoked the disciples to ask the question, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" [Jn.9:2]. These men properly called Jesus Rabbi, because they had need of spiritual guidance on this question. It was a common belief among the Jews that suffering was a punishment from God for sin. All of the disciples apparently accepted this view, but it seems as though this man's situation confused them. They must have reasoned; can a man sin before birth? On the other hand, how could a man bear such a punishment for the sin of his parents. This concept has never been the case. These men had drawn the same wrong conclusion of the friends of Job, and his wife; that if you are righteous God will never let anything bad happen to you in this life. One of the many problems with this reasoning is James 1:2-5. If we are never tried (tested) we will not gain patience, and when patience has had her perfect work, we will be complete, lacking nothing (including wisdom). So, for a man to be wise, he must suffer a little while, which is in complete contradiction to the beliefs of the Jews.

Jesus responded by explaining to them that sin was not the cause of his blindness [Jn.9:3]. He did not say that they were sinless, but that his blindness was not a punishment for sin. There are some sins that will have consequences in this life to both the mind and body, but this is not the case here. Jesus goes on to say that, while God did not strike this man blind; he would use his blindness to show the works of God and be glorified through his healing [Jn.9:3].

(continued next week)