“Taking it with you” --- November 24 Lessons

What Even a Blind Man Could See

Intro: John 9 is one of the most startling examples in scripture of how that personal bias and prejudice

 can interfere with seeing the obvious. The passage seems unique in several ways, as it high-

 lights the exchange between a man of very limited or (more likely) no education, who the

 community had only known as a blind beggar. Without any guidance of the Holy Spirit, he is

 able to draw clear and practical conclusions to the small, but yet, extremely impressive evidence

 which he “knew” firsthand. Though treated with contempt by the Jewish leaders, he courageously

 answers their foolish assertions.

Brief chapter analysis:

 --The setting (9:1-2) The disciples asked Jesus who had sinned that this man should be born blind.

 They found themselves subject to long-held belief that bad things happen to

 people because they have sinned. They made the same mistake as Job’s

 friends. A close study of Job, and many of the psalms and the book of

 Ecclesiastes shows that this idea is incorrect.

 --The man is healed (9:3—7) Jesus says no one had sinned but God would use this man to show His

 goodness. Jesus had come doing the works of His Father. (Showing the

 Father’s compassion and performing signs that would prove His identity). He

 was meant to be a “light” coming into a world of “darkness.”

 --The questions (9:8-12) Is this the man born blind? How does he now see? Where is the One who

 did this? A great number become aware that an incredible miracle has been

 done. The moment was ripe for careful consideration of what had occurred.

 --Seeking insight (9:13) The people bring the man to those who they had assumed could provide

 spiritual perspective in regard to the miracle.

 --Different opinions (9:14-16) After asking the blind man about how Jesus healed him, many of the

 Pharisees are ready to conclude that Jesus must be a sinner because He

 performed the healing on the Sabbath Day. Others asked “How can a man

 who is a sinner do such miracles?”

 --The blind man’s opinion (9:17) When the Jews ask the man who was healed his opinion of the One

 who had made him to see, he said, “He is a prophet!”

 --The attempt to dismiss the issue (9:18—21) Some of these Jews thought perhaps there had been no

 miracle. When the parents are questioned they can confirm that this man was

 their son and had been born blind, but out of fear of the Jews they do not

 claim to understand.

 (9:22-23) John provides insight into the ***wicked prejudices*** of the Jews. They

 were not willing to consider this situation objectively.

 --Trying to apply pressure (9:24) The Jews want to simply emphasize that God should be praised

 because of the miracle, but insist that Jesus should be regarded as a sinner.

 --The heart of the discussion (9:25-33) It is in this brief exchange that we see the logic of an

 honest heart powerfully refuting the stubborn spirit of men who preferred

 to remain blind regarding the truth.

 --A sad solution (9:34) These Jews were unwilling to admit their error. In self-righteous

 indignation they rebuke the man and cast him out.

 --The greater act of healing (9:35—38) In a wonderful set of verses we read of how Jesus

 seeks the man after he had been cast out and reveals Himself as the Son

 of God. The man who now sees clearly (both physically and spiritually)

 confesses his faith and worships Jesus.

 --The unfortunate contrast (9:39-41) Jesus declares that His purpose in coming was to give

 spiritual sight to those who had honest hearts, but to further inflict a

 lack of insight to those with dishonest hearts.

Conclusion: The things which Jesus said and did provide ample evidence that men should believe

 upon Him as the Son of God. His children should be seeking every day to see even

 more clearly Him who is the light of the world.

(The following notes are somewhat abbreviated from Sunday’s lesson. For fuller details on some quotes please refer to the lesson on our web-site).

Pilate’s Dilemma (Reading John 18:28-40)

Introduction: In the prayer offered up to God in Acts 4, asking that He would grant the saints courage

 to speak His Word, they make reference to the opposition which the Lord foretold to

 His Anointed (cf. Acts 4:23-28; Psalms 2:1-3). They specifically refer to Herod and

 Pontius Pilate as being used by God to fulfill His eternal purpose. Pilate, could have

 acted to save Jesus, but instead, would ultimately be the one who gave the order for His

 execution.

1. A real character carrying out real events in a real setting.
2. Pilate is mentioned several times by Josephus, as well as the writers Philo and Tacitus.
3. He was the 5th Roman governor of Palestine, appointed by Tiberius Caesar in about

26 A.D. He would serve approximately 10 years or until about 36 or 37 A.D.

1. A limestone marker was found in Caesarea in 1961 which was a memorial to Tiberius. An inscription on the marker said: “Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea.”
2. Likely an ordinary man but with great ambitions.
3. He could not have been very impressive to Caesar to have been appointed to serve in such an unimportant and troublesome place.
4. Was evidently a cruel man and wicked individual.
5. Philo mentions his crime of robbing the treasury in Jerusalem and then slaying the ringleaders among the Jews who had sparked a public outcry. Many wonder if Luke 13:1-3 is a reference to those slain in that matter.
6. Herod is quoted in regard to Pilate’s fear of the Jewish people bringing a formal complaint against him to Caesar.
7. Pilate faces a dilemma.
8. The Jews bring Jesus to him asking that He should be put to death for crimes both against Caesar and against their laws (cf. Luke 23:1-5; John 19:1f).
9. Pilate realizes that their charges were due to “jealousy” and involved their religious positions (cf. Matthew 27:18).
10. The Jews are insistent that he could be no friend of Caesar if he allows Jesus to go free.
11. Pilate knows that Jesus has done nothing worthy of death.
12. Pilate tries to resolve the dilemma, to either find Him guilty or release Him
13. Pilate declares publically that he found no fault in the man, refers to Him as a just person (cf. John 19:4, 19:6; Matthew 27:24).
14. He sends Him to Herod with hope that he might reach the conclusion of what should be done to Him (cf. Luke 23:7).
15. He has Jesus severely beaten hoping (it seems) that such a punishment would seem sufficient (John 19:1-3).
16. He offers to release a prisoner giving the crowd the choice of this innocent character and a notorious criminal (Matthew 27:15f).
17. There were things that should have helped Pilate do the right thing and recognize that Jesus was no ordinary prisoner.
18. He found no guilt in the man, and called Him a just man (John 19:4f, cf. Matt. 27:24).
19. Herod agreed he had done nothing worthy of death (cf. Luke 23:14,15).
20. Pilate’s wife told him that she had been warned in a dream that no harm should come to Jesus by her husband (Matthew 27:19).
21. In his examinations, Pilate learned that Jesus had been referred to as a king, and as the Son of God, and that every one who is of the truth hears His voice (John 18:37) . Jesus also told him that, he (Pilate), could only do what God would allow him to do (John 19:11).

Conclusion: Tragically, Pilate allowed the pressure of the Jews to make the decision to guard his

 political status rather than protecting an innocent man. He thought that he could “wash” his

 hands of the matter (Matthew 27:24f), or perhaps exact some insult upon the Jews in return

 (John 19:19f), but the fact remains that he was guilty of sending the Son of God to His

 death upon the cross.