

## **POINTS TO PONDER**

"<sup>1</sup>As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; despite being born blind, God's works may still be revealed in him.'"

— *John 9.1-3*

"There are things we plan, and there are things in which show up unexpectedly as opportunities for the ones who are ready to make the most of them. 'As Jesus walked along' indicates Jesus was about to have one of the latter types of encounters. Those who develop their characters are able to respond well to the serendipitous events of their lives.

Like the story of the woman at the well, this story is found only in John's gospel. And like it, it is a story in which Jesus confronts yet another prejudice of his own people. Jews of that day believed that people born with infirmities, illnesses, deformities, and differing physical and cognitive capacities were so affected because of someone's sin – either their own, or their parents or ancestors. They felt it was punishment from God for someone's misbehavior, as though God would hold an innocent person accountable for another's sin or impair one for their own sin. While we recognize this is a toxic theological belief that assumes God is vindictive, and that divergencies or abnormalities in people are the result of someone's sinfulness, it is how this ancient people, before the discoveries of science, explained what they considered 'bad' things that happened to people.

Jesus, once again, tries to rid the people of this prejudicial and unloving thinking. He didn't know the science behind why things happen as they do, but he did know that blaming people for their differences and assuming God was a retributive God did not accord with a theology premised in loving one another.

Jesus asserts that the blindness of this man born this way was not due to anyone's sin. He is battling a long-held assumption and prejudice that, as we'll see, will result in people opposing him because he brings to them truths in which they neither understand, nor want to understand.

Unfortunately, he states that the man was born blind in order that God's works may be revealed through his healing. That sounds rather unseemly to postmodern ears. Why would God blind someone simply to reveal God's power in helping them, decades later, be able to see? Why make anyone endure all these years of suffering just so God can make a point? That sounds rather cruel, and pompous, of God.

Of course, we don't need to take the text literally. Even scriptures can lead us astray, as is evident when Jesus was tempted in the desert by scriptures quoted by the adversary. And whenever texts lend themselves to portraying God as less than ethical, or having us to do an unloving thing, we need to investigate other alternatives in thinking about the text. It is our sacred duty to nurture that which is truly sacred, especially when it is undermined by Biblical texts that we too often assume are sacred. To do so is take after Jesus' example when, in his sermon on the mount, he quoted scripture (viz., "You have heard it said...") only to state that which was closer to the sacred than scripture itself (viz., "...but I tell you...").

I suspect Jesus, or rather John in placing these words in Jesus' mouth, was more concerned in extinguishing a prejudice than in being concerned with creating another one. In trying to correcting one wrong, we often don't see where we go astray in creating a new one.

John likely imagined that by showing how God would work a miracle through this man in curing him of a disability revealed at birth, something that was not remedied in the ancient world, that people would release their prejudices against people so born, and give thanks to God. We'll discover that they would rather retain their prejudices than learn new truths, however; much like many people still today.

We can further imagine that Jesus/John may have wanted to turn what others saw as a curse into a blessing by having him be a shining light of God's love and grace rather than one condemned as unworthy and sinful. In saying that God's works may be revealed in one whom everyone thought of as sinful, it reveals that God's blessings can overcome even the worst of conditions considered to be sinful.

Are we willing to see that transformation can happen even to those whom we see as most sinful? Are we open to, and willing to nurture, that kind of transformation in others who are most in need of it? The people I see as most cruel, evil, and least likely to change are those who have engrained hatreds and prejudices for other people, and those who, by conscious intent or unconscious neglect, create or sustain personal and social biases in opinion, law, or attitude which harm others. But if I do not try to help such people out by pointing out where they have gone astray while encouraging them to take a more loving way, then I contribute more to the problem than the solution. Are we willing to speak out to correct the prejudices and persecutions that still remain in our society? Are we willing to help give sight to the spiritually blind, and also open our eyes from our own blindness in assuming that some people will never change? What do we need to do to better open our spiritual eyes, and commit ourselves to the work of ethical hands?"

— *Bret S. Myers, 3/14-15/2023*

"<sup>4</sup>We must work the works of God who sent us while it is day;  
for night is coming when no one can work."

— *John 9.4*

"It may well be that Jesus is foreshadowing his own death with this verse. 'Day' represents the time in which we are alive on earth, and 'night' represents when we all die. We must, therefore, work while we are alive in doing good deeds and creating a more egalitarian society where the oppressed are made equals to others, for we will no longer be able to do these things if we don't do them while we are alive.

Another reading of this is that Jesus is insinuating that they need to work God's will in this world while they are able to do so, for as oppressed as they are now, it will only get worse. When society becomes more authoritarian, totalitarian, and fascist in its government, even what few freedoms we have now will be taken away in the night of total oppression.

Of course, both of these readings could be conjoined, as they do not contradict, but rather affirm, the societal conditions which exist and will get worse.

As like other places in John, this verse does not seem to fit well with the surrounding text; which makes me think it was either a later addition from an editor, or perhaps that John was more of a 'stream of consciousness' thinker than a more logical and coherent one. In either case, it is up to us to try to create the most positive meanings of the words rather than simply dismiss them."

— *Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023*

"<sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I will be a light for the world." <sup>6</sup>When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, <sup>7</sup>saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see."

— *John 9.5-7*

"Verse 5 can either make sense with the prior verses, or 6-7. Jesus has just expressed our need to do God's work while we live, and this is a pronouncement that he intends to do just that. On the other hand, in claiming to be a light for the world, which he encourages us all to be, he reveals how he is being that light in healing a man who was born blind – restoring not only his eyesight, but also, hopefully, his respectability within his community.

Jesus' technique in curing the man hails back to the Genesis account of how humanity and all animals were created – from the earth, amidst the primordial waters. Here Jesus mixes earth and water (the spital expelled by his breath, and the washing of his eyes in the pool, symbolize a type of baptism) to create a healing or new creation of sight for the man. The Spirit, the third element in the creation story as well as this one, will come later as the man recognizes the gift that has been given to him.

We notice the not insignificant point that after the man washed in the pool and was able to see for the very first time (a mytho-poetic allusion to his being able to spiritually recognize the compassion of Jesus, the Messiah, for him; and not only a physical healing), he 'came back' to Jesus. He did not simply go his own way, but came to be in the presence of the one who had given him sight – indicating that he had obtained not only optical, but also spiritual, vision."

— *Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023*

"<sup>8</sup>The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' <sup>9</sup>Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.'"

— *John 9.8-9*

"It is not unusual to ask questions about seeing a person transformed from one state of being to another. What is unusual, or maybe only irrational, is to see with one's own eyes the evidence of that transformed state, and then disbelieve it as fact because it doesn't accord with one's own world view. When people come to value their opinions and perspectives more than the reality right before their faces, they indoctrinate themselves into living lies rather working to discover the deeper truth.

Here we see the man's neighbors arguing with one another whether the man who now sees is the same man who was formerly blind. Some can admit to the facts and move to new understandings, perhaps ridding themselves of their prejudices of the past. But others would rather deny that it is the same man so that they don't have to do any more thinking than they have to; hanging on to long-held prejudices rather than learning how to see people differently.

It is almost comical, if not for being exasperatingly sad, that the man overhears their arguments and tells them all that it is indeed him who has been transformed. Yet, they pretend he doesn't exist and continue to argue with one another over who is right and who is wrong.

When it somehow serves us to believe that people cannot change who they are, that they cannot be transformed, we are like those who argue about who is right rather than looking at the facts themselves. It is an intentional blindness that we bring on ourselves when the way for seeing is right within our grasp if we will only listen. These arguers reveal they are the truly blind in this story, as the man who was born blind has overcome his blindness, but they are not able to overcome theirs despite the preponderance of evidence before them.

Why is it that people refuse to acknowledge the obvious, and prefer to remain ignorant? It is not wrong to be ignorant, for we are all on this learning excursion of life, and there is always more we can learn despite how much we know. But when ignorance is intentionally chosen so as to avoid changing our own perspectives and opinions, that is when it results in not only 'stupidity' (the self-chosen lifestyle of living in ignorance), but in a moral failure of using our intellects and imaginations to help us to adopt new perspectives that accord with factual evidence. We do a disservice to ourselves, as well as others, when we refuse to see that people can change for the better – even the ones that we've convinced ourselves can never change.

What does it take for us to rid ourselves of our own prejudices? Are we quick to learn, or slow to change our perspectives? What keeps us from growing in wisdom by staying stuck in our long-held perspectives?"

— *Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023*

<sup>10</sup>But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup>He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." <sup>12</sup>They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know.""

— *John 9.10-12*

"Isn't it odd that, rather than celebrating the man's new eyesight, his inquisitors become obsessed with the method by which it happened? They don't celebrate his new vision, nor do they work to undo their own prejudices and come to accept him back into the community. It is almost like they are offended that something good happened to this person that they were accustomed to seeing as less than themselves. Now that he is their equal, they seem miffed.

They continue to disrespect the man, though their own traditions tell him that they should no longer do so since he now has eyesight and is consequently not cursed by God from the perspective of their tradition. In other words, they are willing to reject their own former teachings in order to retain their sense of superiority over this man. Prejudices are often stronger than traditions, and this is seen when traditions, when revealed by the light of truth to be inaccurate, are rejected in order to maintain prejudices. Many traditions are made in order to cultivate and maintain prejudice, and even when the traditions are seen to be wrong, people will seek to keep their sense of power over others even when truth and tradition together tell them that they are in the wrong.

Hiding from their own wrongful thinking, they try to deflect the attention on their wrongful attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions by shifting blame elsewhere. Now they become intent on holding accountable the one who helped this man gain his sight; the one whose healing act of compassion made them uncomfortable in their own prejudices, and who brought to light their own toxic beliefs that further oppressed the oppressed. Having been exposed, they are now out for blood.

The man who has new sight recognizes that they are out to blame, condemn, and persecute Jesus rather than show gratitude, thanks, and praise towards him. Though he has just been to see Jesus after his healing, he doesn't reveal Jesus' location. He is not working with the powers that seek to do harm to another, but rather will lie in order to protect their intended victim. This willingness to act compassionately towards Jesus reveals that he has indeed received spiritual, as well as physical, sight. The man will not be complicit with those who seek to do evil. He will oppose them at every turn now that he sees that their motivations are impure."

— *Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023*

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." <sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided."

— *John 9.13-16*

"The Pharisees prove to be no better than the man's neighbors, and just as blind. Like the people, some of them hold tighter to their traditions than to truth. Here, they come to recognize that Jesus had healed the man on the Sabbath, which, technically, would be considered work – which is barred on the Sabbath. But another tradition, their belief that healings and other signs come from God, rather than other phenomena, throws them into confusion as Jesus and the healed man illuminate a paradox within their traditions.

The Pharisees, like the man's neighbors, focus on resolving the argument rather than rejoicing in the healing of the man. He must have thought it bizarre that they didn't want to congratulate him on his newfound vision, or celebrate the working of God as defined by their own traditions. Instead, when they

see a work of God as they've been accustomed to believe can only be from God, they ignore giving praise to God for the miracle before them and seek to argue about technicalities. The man, once again, is ignored as being the equal of other people who are used to seeing him as inferior.

Do we do all we can to celebrate the equal worth of others to ourselves; or are we more concerned with preserving our own sense of superiority despite how doing so contradicts the very things we claim we believe? Is Jesus/John revealing that loving others as we love ourselves includes accepting facts based on evidence, and opposing viewpoints that are inconsistent with the facts? How are these same behaviors of people playing out in our own nation? How can we get people to see the light of truth?"

— *Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023*

<sup>17</sup>So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." <sup>18</sup>The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup>and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" <sup>20</sup>His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; <sup>21</sup>but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup>His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup>Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him.""

— *John 9.17-23*

"The Pharisees also come to focus on the one who healed the man rather than the man himself. They ask the man what he thinks of his healer; unconcerned with the transformation that has happened in the man. The man doesn't want to say much, but he does show his affirmative estimation of Jesus in calling him a prophet. Prophets were able to not only speak against the evils of their day, but perform miracles that further revealed, according to tradition (though not logic), that they were from God. Rather than accept that he was a prophet, the Pharisees ignore the man's words they themselves had asked him to give, and decided to deny the reality of the fact that he had been blind.

The obstinacy of maintaining one's worldview when it confronts countervailing evidence is on display in this story. It makes clear that the people don't actually seek or want the truth; but rather want to think of themselves as being right independently of whether their views are true or not. Oddly, they do investigate the situation – not, however, to discover truth, but to try to confirm their own biases. They now want to talk to the man's parents to see if they can gather any information to support their already established views. We don't know whether the man had talked to his parents before the Pharisees did. If so, then they are covering for Jesus just as he had done. If not, then they simply are speaking truthfully of what they know or don't know – which is more than the man's neighbors and the Pharisees had done, as the latter wanted only to find support for their own myopic thinking.

The parents, like the man, realize that those asking them all of these questions were doing so out of impure motives. They knew that these people were seeking to harm than to help, and so they plead ignorance of the whole situation so as to not offer any information that they may have already learned. They, too, likely know that their son has already talked to them, and that these people weren't satisfied with his answers. Their telling the hate-mongers to go ask their son was not to get their son in trouble, but was to leave them with as little information as possible so that they couldn't go find their son's healer to persecute. They feared for themselves in seeing the attitudes of these questioners, and they protected the one who they were out to get. Moreover, they had heard that Jews accepting Jesus as the Messiah would be banned from the synagogue; a clear indication of their animosity towards Jesus.

Whether they knew what Jesus did or not, the denial of knowing anything about Jesus for fear of what might happen to themselves is foreshadowing of the denial of Peter in knowing Jesus when he is imprisoned, tortured, and about to be crucified."

— *Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023*

<sup>24</sup>So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." <sup>25</sup>He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.""

— *John 9.24-25*

"If it wasn't clear already, the motives of those seeking to find and persecute Jesus for healing this man (so ironic, isn't it?) become undeniably obvious when they come back to the man to see if his story will change with their leading question. They tell the man that he needs to give glory to God and then tells him that this man who healed him is a sinner; as if his saying that the man was a sinner would be giving glory to God. This spiritual abuse and manipulation of these religious people is not about discovering truth or being thankful for a miracle; but is a ploy that reveals their actual motives of destroying Jesus.

The man, as though he were a student of Greek philosophy and logic, answers in taking their presumptuous accusation about Jesus as irrelevant to the question they claim they want to know. They have been asking how he was healed, and he has told them. But, of course, what they say is their focus is not actually their real focus. They don't like Jesus and what he represents; so they are not seeking for truth, for ways to show gratitude to God, for how to celebrate with this man his healing, or to welcome him back into their community as an equal. Their stated purpose in trying to get to the truth of the matter is all a ruse. What they want is information that will allow them to find and get rid of Jesus. And they reveal the corruption of their own hearts in trying to pressure this man in speaking ill of Jesus so they can use his coerced testimony as evidence that Jesus actually is a bad guy. Their quest for wanting to harm Jesus reveals beyond all doubt that truth has been abandoned for the objective of getting revenge for his bringing their contradictions to light.

The man comes to Jesus' defense in part. He doesn't directly call out the inquisitors as hypocrites, as Jesus has done, but he doesn't fall for their enticement of having him speak ill of Jesus. He claims he doesn't know if Jesus is a sinner, though he likely doesn't think he is. But he does restate the fact that would put the burden of proof back in their court: he knows for a fact that he was blind, and that he now sees. He has come to terms with these two facts that the authorities refuse to believe in order to maintain their own skewed view of reality. He well knows that according to their own traditions that they would need to affirm Jesus was of God if he did such a wonderful act. This, of course, only increases their antagonism towards them, as he has seen through their manipulations and isn't falling for any of it."

— *Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023*

<sup>26</sup>They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" <sup>27</sup>He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"

— *John 9.26-27*

"The inquisitors are incredulous that this once blind person now seems to have the insight and wisdom to see through their ploys. They ask what Jesus did to him, knowing full well that he had cured his physical blindness, but now perturbed that he also seems to have cured any intellectual and spiritual blindness that the man might have had. These first two questions out of their mouths reveal John's penchant for multiple meanings in a single phrase. They reveal that the man has been healed spiritually and physically by Jesus. And the more credence that Jesus garners, the more they detest him; and any who supports him.

Now the man assumes the tactics of Jesus himself in throwing their question back to themselves. He states the obvious, and then implies that which they don't want to have implied: that maybe they are actually looking to be disciples of Jesus themselves – an insinuation that would likely have made their blood boil; which, based on their response, it did. In comical fashion, after they had given him a leading question to try to influence how he thought about Jesus, he now offers them a leading question to do the same, only



in reverse. It is a masterful retort that turns the whole conversation on its head from what they had connived to make it. Truth has won out; at the ire of those who opposed truth."

— *Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023*

<sup>28</sup>Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." <sup>30</sup>The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup>We know that God does not listen to sinners, but God does listen to one who worships and obeys God's will. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. <sup>33</sup>If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." <sup>34</sup>They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out."

— *John 9.28-34*

"When people see they have lost an argument, they either admit it and learn from their mistakes, or they seek to deny they lost at all and double down on their untruths while attacking the character of the ones who revealed their untruths. The religious inquisitors, unfortunately, do the latter.

They become outwardly hostile towards the healed man. John says they "reviled" him. They then cast aspersions to try to convince themselves, or anyone else listening, that they are still in the 'right' by claiming that they are disciples of Moses and that he is a disciple of Jesus. The man has never explicitly admitted this, but they seek to accuse and condemn him with these words in which they put in his mouth. They try to make a case for themselves in confusing any would-be observers by forgetting about the healing of the man completely and using the distraction of creating another issue where none really exists; saying that we don't know where Jesus comes from (curiously the same tactic used by Donald Trump when he led a campaign about whether Barack Obama was born in America).

The more they revile him and try to lead him to speak negatively about Jesus, the more the man refuses to do so. Moreover, having been hounded continually by their inane questions and suggestions, he gains the courage of his convictions in now pointing out their contradictions in front of everyone. Knowing their own belief system, he uses it against them to show how far they have departed from their own stated views in order to seek revenge on a man who simply tries to help people who are oppressed or disadvantaged. Their beliefs say that good things only come from God, and so, by definition, Jesus' healing of the man must have been from God. They call Jesus a sinner, but the man points out that they believe that God doesn't listen to or empower sinners. They believe that God listens to those who do God's will, and the logical conclusion under these assumptions (false as they may be) is that Jesus must be one who does God's will. And he doesn't stop with these three points, but goes on to add that the miracle of helping a person born blind to see has never occurred in recorded history at that time, and that, according to their own theology, must mean that it was an act done from God. And finally, he adds that, again according to their own views, that if Jesus were not from God then he wouldn't be able to do any such miracle.

The former blind man has shown them how blind they are. They have no comeback. But rather than admitting it, they throw him out of their presence in the Temple. This, too, foreshadows a later event in the Temple where Jesus throws out the moneychangers and those who sell animals for unfair profits. The difference being that the religious leaders throw out people who speak truth and do good deeds, and Jesus throws out people who speak lies and do evil deeds.

Again, distracting others from the real issues at hand, they project new issues that take the focus off of their bad behavior by accusing another as having bad behavior; telling the blind man, who has been healed and thereby according to their own doctrines is free from sin, that what really matters is not where he has come to be but rather how he was born into sin. They take offense at him thinking he can teach them when they are the ones installed as teachers. They hide beyond all of these manufactured complaints, all because they refuse to accept the light of truth that is available to them. And so, they not only keep themselves deluded, but become agents of darkness who try to harm others."

— Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023

<sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you trust in the Child of Humanity (i.e., Son of Man)?" <sup>36</sup>He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may trust in him." <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." <sup>38</sup>He said, "Rabbi, I believe." And he revered him."

— John 9.35-38

"Jesus' compassion and respect for the healed man is revealed in his going to find the man to acknowledge what he had said and done in the Temple in defending Jesus. He asks him, essentially, whether he wants to trust and be a follower of his. The man is ready and willing to do so.

Of course, this is the ending of the story that John wants – where Jesus comes in and does a wonderful deed, helps a man to transform his life, and then is thanked and recognized as the apocalyptic figure who is to come as the one whose virtues and values provide the standard by which the entire world is to be judged in accordance with their own approximation to that standard of spirit and character.

Jesus says, when the man asks who this apocalyptic figure is, that the man has seen him and is speaking with him now. For many, this is all the testimony they need to declare that Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the one for whom we are to judge our own lives. But John may have been doing something more than this by helping his listeners understand that whenever we see anyone, Jesus, a blind person, or anyone else, doing good deeds, then we need to accept that truth rather than becoming dogmatic about what is right and wrong independently of the evidence of another's spirit and character. The bigger point is that anyone, no matter who they are or have been, is an example of how we should live our lives if they go about telling truth and living justly and compassionately. Indeed, if John was trying to claim that Jesus alone was worthy of our looking at our own behavior, then it would undermine the tacit point that even a formerly blind person can become such an agent of truth and light.

How can we each be agents of truth and light in our own time and culture? How can we stick up for good people when they are attacked by people who seek to harm them? How can we help change the thinking and motives of those who are more intent on destroying enemies than learning to love them? How can we help give sight to a world that too often has become spiritually and morally blind?"

— Bret S. Myers, 3/14/2023

<sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." <sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

— John 9.39-41

"This is, in part, John's interpretation of what this story reveals. And yet it can draw us from attending to some of the other points that we have already discovered in our analysis of the text. It would seem an odd thing for Jesus to do if we took this passage literally. In other places, he tries to help liberate everyone from the bondage of sin; but here John puts in his mouth words that seem to indicate he intended that some would see the truth and others would be blinded by it. This, in my estimation, is likely the result of John's own sense of futility in being able to convince those who simply refuse to see the light of truth revealed in Jesus' own virtues and values.

Maybe this is a colloquial saying that may have had the less antagonistic meaning of God's or Jesus' intention being to save everyone, and letting them decide whether to accept that liberation or not. To make it sound like there was a divine motive to keep some people from seeing the truth sounds like an untruth to my ears. Rather, from what I see of human conduct, people end up judging themselves by their



own choices and actions – either changing their ways to accord with truth, or denying the truth so as to stay pugnaciously stolid in thinking that their own ways are the truth.

Perhaps Jesus' point in the last verse is that ignorance is not sinful itself if one is unwilfully unaware or unintentionally uninformed, but that we acquire culpability when we investigate a situation but do not do so honestly, earnestly, with the intention of discovering truth. If a person only investigates a matter insofar as they look only for evidence to support their already held beliefs, then they are not truth-seekers but rather opinion-supporters. By being intentionally credulous when they could have investigated the truth fully, their ignorance is due to their own choice – not because the information for discovering truth was unavailable to them. Credulity is a sin against truth. It may also be the sin Jesus once said was unforgivable in that it was a sin against the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always seeks earnestly for truth and to live virtuously, something these opponents of Jesus and the healed man have refused to do."