

## March 28, 2021 | Supplementary Study Notes

**Proverbs 5:15 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.

**John 7:37-38 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** <sup>37</sup> On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, <sup>38</sup> and let the one who believes in me drink. As <sup>[a]</sup> the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart <sup>[b]</sup> shall flow rivers of living water.’”

### Miracle of the man born blind

- In this incredibly important story John explores many complex theological concepts
- However there is one major theme he addresses with the focus of the miracle

### Spiritual Blindness

- This chapter explores the distorted world view of the pharisees and their blindness
- To see the work of the spirit through Jesus as the messiah
- However there is one more group that is spiritually blind that often gets overlooked

### The Disciples Spiritual blindness

**John 9:1-2 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** As he 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?”

The notion that a parent’s sins are visited on the children was common in Jewish reflections on the causes of suffering. Because he was blind from birth, however, any sin the man himself might have committed would need to have been committed before he was born.<sup>1</sup>

**John 9:3 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.

### Religion vs Resurrection

### Sin or Salvation

### Sickness or Signs and wonders

### Jesus wants to open our eyes to see a new way of life in the Spirit

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<sup>1</sup> O’day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 653). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

**Ephesians 1:17-18 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints,

**John 9:4-5 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** We<sup>en</sup> must work the works of him who sent me<sup>en</sup> while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

- **Uncle Jim and the burned retina**
- Unless if you remove the religious lens you will have distorted double vision

**John 9:6 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** 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,

Jesus’ making of clay takes on an additional significance in this story, because kneading was one of the thirty-nine categories of work explicitly forbidden on the sabbath (v. 14; cf. *m. Šabb. 7.2*).<sup>2</sup>

### **Genesis in the book of John**

**John 9:7**<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.

the Mishnah identifies Siloam, the water in which the blind man bathes (v. 7), as the source of the water for the water libations of the Tabernacles feast<sup>3</sup>

**John 7:37-38 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** <sup>37</sup>On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, <sup>38</sup>and let the one who believes in me drink. As<sup>[a]</sup> the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart<sup>[b]</sup> shall flow rivers of living water.’”

### **John uses the word “sent” more than any other Biblical writer**

- He is washed in the waters of the sent one and he is reborn with new eyes to see

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<sup>2</sup> O’day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 654). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>3</sup> O’day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 653). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

**John 3:5 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

**John 9:8 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** 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?”

**John 9:9 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.”

**Closing – your ministry isn’t miracles, your ministry is obedience**

**John 9:10-12 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

<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 9:13-16 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

### The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

<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 9:18-21 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

<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.”

- In what looks like an attempt to distance from their son, they actually empower him
- Stop being an enabler to your children and let them learn to use their voice

**John 9:22-23 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

<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<sup>[a]</sup> to be the Messiah<sup>[b]</sup> would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup>Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

John 9:24-25 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<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 9:26-27 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<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 9:32-34 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<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 9:35-38 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### Spiritual Blindness

<sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>36</sup>He answered, “And who is he, sir?<sup>[b]</sup> Tell me, so that I may believe 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, “Lord,<sup>[c]</sup> I believe.” And he worshiped him.

John 9:39 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<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.”

### New interpreters Bible commentary

the Mishnah identifies Siloam, the water in which the blind man bathes (v. 7), as the source of the water for the water libations of the Tabernacles feast<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> O’day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 653). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

The notion that a parent's sins are visited on the children was common in Jewish reflections on the causes of suffering. Because he was blind from birth, however, any sin the man himself might have committed would need to have been committed before he was born.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus' making of clay takes on an additional significance in this story, because kneading was one of the thirty-nine categories of work explicitly forbidden on the sabbath (v. 14; cf. *m. Šabb.* 7.2).<sup>6</sup>

The Fourth Evangelist's translation of the Hebrew word "Siloam" links the healing waters of Siloam with Jesus himself. Throughout the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is referred to as the one who is sent by God (e.g., 7:28–29; 10:36; 12:45). Since Siloam was the source of the water used during the Tabernacles feast, the translation of the pool's name here seems to underscore the point made in 7:37–39: Jesus is the source of Tabernacles fulfillment, not the traditional Jewish rites (see *Commentary on 7:37–39*)<sup>7</sup>

To violate the sabbath law was to challenge the laws that bound the Jewish covenant community together and the Pharisees' authority as interpreters of those laws<sup>8</sup>

Jesus' violation of a sabbath prohibition is thus seen by some of the Pharisees as evidence of Jesus' distance from God<sup>9</sup>

Blindness is not determined simply by seeing or not seeing, but by recognizing the revelation of the works of God in Jesus (cf. v. 3, 41)<sup>10</sup>

The notice that the authorities "drove out" (ἐκβάλλω *ekballō*) the man can be read in the more limited sense that they expelled him from their presence<sup>11</sup>

- As Jesus drove out demons so the religious leaders drive out the work of the spirit

Jesus' action underscores his words of 6:37: "anyone who comes to me I will never drive away [*ekballō*]"<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> O'day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 653). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>6</sup> O'day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 654). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>7</sup> O'day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 654). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>8</sup> O'day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 656). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>9</sup> O'day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 656). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>10</sup> O'day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 656). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>11</sup> O'day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 660). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>12</sup> O'day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 660). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

“Worship” (προσκυνέω *proskyneō*) is used in John to speak of the worship of God (4:20–24; 12:20). When the man worships Jesus, then, he is acknowledging the presence of God in Jesus and thus ironically fulfills the authorities’ demand that he give glory to God (v. 24)<sup>13</sup>

The metaphorical use of sight and blindness to refer to spiritual openness was well known in OT literature, particularly in Isaiah (see esp. Isa 6:10; 42:18–25; cf. also Wis 2:21; Mark 4:12).<sup>14</sup>

In John 9:1–41, narrative and theology are more seamlessly interwoven than in any of the other Johannine texts<sup>15</sup>

### Bakers commentary on John

The traditional Jewish notion, “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51:5), surfaces here in the disciples’ initial question and again in the Pharisees’ verdict on the man at the end of their series of interrogations (v. 34)<sup>16</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me. <sup>17</sup>

If a man is blind from birth, then the restoring of his sight is nothing less than a new birth. The incident becomes a case study in the experience of which Jesus had told Nicodemus: “No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” “No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit” (3:3, 5).<sup>18</sup>

Like the person mentioned in 3:21 who “comes into the light,” the man born blind will demonstrate in his experience that he is God’s child. In coming (literally) from darkness to light, he is born again.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” <sup>20</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> O’day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 661). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>14</sup> O’day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 661). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>15</sup> O’day, G. R. (1994–2004). [The Gospel of John](#). In L. E. Keck (Ed.), *New Interpreter’s Bible* (Vol. 9, p. 662). Nashville: Abingdon Press.

<sup>16</sup> Michaels, J. R. (2011). [John](#) (p. 159). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

<sup>17</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ps 51:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>18</sup> Michaels, J. R. (2011). [John](#) (p. 160). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

<sup>19</sup> Michaels, J. R. (2011). [John](#) (p. 160). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

<sup>20</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 3:21). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The man born blind is one of Jesus' "sheep" because he hears the Shepherd's voice and follows him out of the old community into the new. His response proves that God is *already* at work in his life (cf. 3:21).<sup>21</sup>

Jesus' ministry with the comment that still "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (1:5, margin)<sup>22</sup>

Such procedures were not uncommon among ancient healers, for saliva (especially when one had been fasting) was believed to have healing properties. Precisely the healing of one's eyes with saliva on the Sabbath was forbidden in the Talmud by some rabbis (*Shabbath* 108a), though the problem over the Sabbath in this case (cf. vv. 14, 16) seems to have arisen because Jesus kneaded the mud into a ball in performing the miracle (the Mishnah, *Shabbath* 7.2, lists "kneading" among 39 activities prohibited on the Sabbath; cf. 24.3).<sup>23</sup>

The note that the water by which the man receives his sight is **Sent** (as Jesus is "sent" from God) suggests that the water represents the Holy Spirit. The man born blind is now reborn "of water and the Spirit" (cf. 3:5).<sup>24</sup>

- **He is baptized in the waters of the sent – we are baptized in the waters of Jesus**

**Exodus 20:5** <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,<sup>25</sup>

the view proposed by certain rabbis that a child in the womb was already involved in sin (see, e.g., Genesis Rabbah 63, 6 [*Midrash Rabbah* (London: Soncino Press, 1961), vol. 2, pp. 559–60] based on Gen. 25:22 and Ps. 58:3).<sup>26</sup>

The etymology of **Siloam** as **Sent** is not artificially created for the sake of the author's symbolism. The water in the pool was, after all, literally, **sent**, or conducted, from the Gihon Spring by way of Hezekiah's tunnel (cf. 2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:30)<sup>27</sup>

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The question of the disciples is typical of the outlook of the ancient world (cf. Job's friends and their addresses to him)<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Michaels, J. R. (2011). *John* (p. 160). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

<sup>22</sup> Michaels, J. R. (2011). *John* (pp. 160–161). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

<sup>23</sup> Michaels, J. R. (2011). *John* (p. 161). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

<sup>24</sup> Michaels, J. R. (2011). *John* (p. 162). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

<sup>25</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Ex 20:5). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>26</sup> Michaels, J. R. (2011). *John* (p. 163). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

<sup>27</sup> Michaels, J. R. (2011). *John* (p. 164). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

<sup>28</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, p. 154). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

That the sins of parents could be “visited” on children is contained on the Decalogue (Exod 20:5 = Deut 5:9)<sup>29</sup>

The Jerusalem Targum on Deut 21:20 bids parents who bring a rebellious boy to the elders to say: “We have transgressed the Memra [word] of Yahweh, *therefore* this our son has been born to us, who is unruly and rebellious...”<sup>30</sup>

The possibility of a child sinning before birth was discussed by the rabbis, not in respect of a pre-existent life (Wisd Sol 8:19–20 reflects Alexandrian, not Palestinian Judaism), but of life in the womb. Gen 25:22, telling of the twins Jacob and Esau struggling in Rebecca’s womb<sup>31</sup>

R. Bekehja said in the name of R. Levi: “When she [Rebecca] walked past synagogues and houses of instruction, Jacob struggled to get out, in accordance with Jer 1:5: ‘Before I formed you in your mother’s womb I knew you.’ And when she passed idol temples Esau ran and struggled to get out, in accordance with Ps 58:4, ‘The godless go astray from the womb’ ” (*Gen. Rab.* 63:[39c]; see further Str-B 2:527–29).<sup>32</sup>

Saliva was regarded as having healing properties—under certain circumstances (cf. B. Bat. 126b: “The saliva of the firstborn of a father heals [diseases of the eye], but the saliva of the firstborn of the mother does not heal”). But the frequent connection of saliva with magical practices caused its use to be forbidden by later rabbis (so explicitly Akiba, Tos 12:10, Str-B 2:15).<sup>33</sup>

The making of “clay” from the earth was frequently compared by early Church Fathers with the creation of man from the earth in Gen 2:7<sup>34</sup>

Genesis 2:7<sup>7</sup> then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature<sup>35</sup>

As Bultmann perceived, the healing *on the sabbath* made what was a source of amazement a source of offense, and the Pharisees were faced with a dilemma: on the one hand the miracle shows Jesus as a man accredited by God, but on the other the breach of the Sabbath shows him to be a sinner (334).<sup>36</sup>

stated in J. Abod. Zar. 14d that fasting spittle must not be put on eyes on the sabbath. And Šabb 7.2 prohibits kneading on the sabbath; Jesus’ mixing a paste out of saliva and earth would fall in this category<sup>37</sup>

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, <sup>2</sup> and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ <sup>3</sup> you shall not listen to the words of that

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<sup>29</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, p. 154). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>30</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, pp. 154–155). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>31</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, p. 155). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>32</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, p. 155). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>33</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, p. 155). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>34</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, p. 155). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>35</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Ge 2:7). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>36</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, p. 156). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>37</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). *John* (Vol. 36, p. 157). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.<sup>38</sup>

a miracle worker who teaches people to go after other gods and so encourages rebellion against God must be rejected and executed<sup>39</sup>

Not all prophets performed signs, and not all miracle workers were prophets, but no Jew could forget that Moses was the greatest of all prophets and that his miracles in the Exodus were the greatest of all wonders (Deut 34:10–12). It was this, linked with the promise of Deut 18:15, 18, that led to the belief that the prophet of the end time, who was associated with and even identified with the Messiah, would perform miracles like those of Moses at the Exodus<sup>40</sup>

Deuteronomy 34 <sup>10</sup> And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, <sup>11</sup> none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, <sup>12</sup> and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel<sup>41</sup>

Deuteronomy 18 <sup>15</sup> “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— <sup>16</sup> just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ <sup>17</sup> And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. <sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.’<sup>42</sup>

“He is of age” signifies that he has passed his thirteenth birthday, and so attained the age of legal responsibility (Str-B 2:534–35).<sup>43</sup>

The narrative of chap. 9, as Blank pointed out, embodies two motifs, closely interwoven, which are fundamental to this Gospel, namely, that of revelation and that of *krisis* (judgment)<sup>44</sup>

The Light by its shining accordingly creates judgment; in the very act of bringing salvation into the world, it divides the world.<sup>45</sup>

NT Wright John

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<sup>38</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Dt 13:1–3). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>39</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). [John](#) (Vol. 36, p. 157). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>40</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). [John](#) (Vol. 36, p. 157). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>41</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Dt 34:10–12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>42</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Dt 18:15–18). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>43</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). [John](#) (Vol. 36, p. 157). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>44</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). [John](#) (Vol. 36, p. 161). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

<sup>45</sup> Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1999). [John](#) (Vol. 36, p. 161). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

Thinking like this is a way of trying to hold on to a belief in God's justice. If something in the world seems 'unfair', but if you believe in a God who is both all-powerful, all-loving and all-fair, one way of getting round the problem is to say that it only *seems* 'unfair', but actually isn't<sup>46</sup>

Jesus firmly resists any such analysis of how the world is ordered. The world is stranger than that, and darker than that, and the light of God's powerful, loving justice shines more brightly than that. But to understand it all, we have to be prepared to dismantle some of our cherished assumptions and to let God remake them in a different way.<sup>47</sup>

We have to stop thinking of the world as a kind of moral slot-machine, where people put in a coin (a good act, say, or an evil one) and get out a particular result (a reward or a punishment)<sup>48</sup>

In particular, you can't stretch the point back to a previous 'life', or to someone else's sins. Being born blind doesn't mean you must have sinned, says Jesus. Nor does it mean that your parents must have sinned. No: something much stranger, at once more mysterious and more hopeful, is going on. The chaos and misery of this present world is, it seems, the raw material out of which the loving, wise and just God is making his new creation<sup>49</sup>

New creation always seems puzzling. Nobody in the story could quite figure out whether the man was the same or not. Sometimes when people receive the **good news** of Jesus it so transforms their lives that people ask the same question: is this really the same person?<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Wright, T. (2004). [\*John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10\*](#) (p. 133). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

<sup>47</sup> Wright, T. (2004). [\*John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10\*](#) (p. 133). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

<sup>48</sup> Wright, T. (2004). [\*John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10\*](#) (pp. 133–134). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

<sup>49</sup> Wright, T. (2004). [\*John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10\*](#) (p. 134). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

<sup>50</sup> Wright, T. (2004). [\*John for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-10\*](#) (p. 135). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.