

## St John: Chapter 9

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The chapter plays out as a three act drama.

The scene: the Feast of the Tabernacles, with rituals of **water** and **light**.

The cast: Jesus and his disciples, the man born blind (the man'), his parents and the religious authorities.

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Jesus meets 'the man'. He dismisses the disciples' repetition of the age old belief that illness is the punishment for sin, adding that he works in the **light** as the **light of the world**. He uses his saliva (**water**) and earth to prepare 'the man' who then is sent to the pool of Siloam (= sent) to wash, and he obeys. He tells everyone the '**the man called Jesus**' did this for him – the first step towards recognition. (Exit Jesus)

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**Scene 1:** 'The man' is questioned by 'the authorities.' Rules have been broken – it's the Sabbath day – no 'kneading,' no 'carrying water' no 'anointing of eyes.' 'The man' tells them what happened, but they aver 'how can a sinner do this?' 'The man' moves on to his second insight in his response – '**He is a prophet.**'

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**Scene 3:** The authorities return to the attack, repeating that Jesus is a sinner. 'The man' expresses ignorance about such an accusation, but says – again - that, having been blind, now he can see. When asked to repeat his story (the usual police tactic: can he can be caught out on some detail?) he accuses them of not listening and mocking them by asking if they too want to become Jesus' disciples. This lights the blue touch paper, with the authorities making

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The verdict: ‘You are a sinner.’ Sentence: ‘Be cast out from the synagogue.’

### **Act 3: The final recognition and the acceptance, followed by the judgement**

Re-enter Jesus. He finds ‘the man’ – the rejected one – and asks him the direct question: ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ After Jesus tells him that it is he who stands before him, ‘the man’ utters just three words: ‘**Lord, I believe.**’ His eyes are finally and fully opened. He accepts and worships.

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