

“On the Way to Jerusalem”

March 30, 2025

Luke 18:31-43

I. Introduction

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 Paul wrote, “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures and that he appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve.” With that in mind, it seemed appropriate to take a break from Galatians and take time to prepare our hearts and minds for the observance of the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ in the weeks to come. So, take your Bibles and turn to Luke 18:31-43, as we consider Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem.

Everyone thought that Jesus and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. But for Jesus, it was more than that, He was going to Jerusalem to die. On the surface, nothing seemed particularly unusual, but there must have been something about Jesus’ manner that *was* different. Whatever it was, Mark wrote in his account in Mark 10:32, “They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid.” Perhaps Isaiah 50:7 describes Jesus’ attitude that day, “Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore, have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.” Whatever they saw in Jesus and whatever bits and pieces they understood about the predictions of His life and death must have led to their “astonishment.” John 11:16 described the twelve disciples attitude this way: “Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’” And the rest of those who followed were afraid. Everyone knew that the religious leaders were plotting Jesus’ death; they may have been afraid that this one they hoped was the Messiah was walking unknowingly into the deadly danger that awaited Him in Jerusalem.

This is the seventh time Luke recorded Jesus’ foretelling His death (Luke 5:34-35; 9:21-22, 44-45; 12:49-50; 13:32-33; 17:25) and the second time in Luke that Jesus told the disciples that He was going to be killed and then raised on the 3rd day (Luke 9:22). Today’s Scripture is the most complete of the Lord’s

specific predictions concerning His death recorded by Luke. Jesus knew what was going to happen. The suffering and death of Christ were not an accident or a miscalculation by Jesus about how upset the Pharisees were with Him. His suffering and death were planned by God ages before the leaders of Israel plotted Jesus' death; even Old Testament prophets, like Isaiah in [Isaiah 53](#), and others had written about what was going to happen, e.g., turn to David's Messianic Psalm, [turn to Psalm 22:1, 6-18](#). Jesus was God and He knew why He was on the earth, including every detail of His life and His death and His resurrection.

To most Jews of that day, and even today, the idea of a suffering, dying Messiah was and still is unthinkable. It contradicted everything they had been taught. Like their fellow Jews, Jesus' disciples were looking for a lion and not a lamb. They understand the part about "*ruling and thrones*" but the part of "*death and resurrection*" just didn't make sense with what they thought they knew about the Messiah. But even as He was on His way to Jerusalem and His death, Jesus had concern for others.

II. The 7th Prediction

Time was close and so that there would be no misunderstanding or blindness on their part, "**Jesus took the Twelve aside**" and told them in detail what was about to happen to Him. His coming sufferings were no surprise to Him, but rather they were the reason He came to earth—in [Mark 10:45](#) He said, "**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" The Gospels of Matthew and Mark ([Mark 10:32-34](#)) also record this prediction—[turn to Matthew 20:17-19](#).

Now, this 7th time in Luke, Jesus hid nothing from them. At Jerusalem, Jesus would be betrayed; condemned by the chief priests and teachers of the law, i.e., the Sanhedrin—the Jewish leaders; He would be transferred to a Roman court; subjected to mocking, spitting, and flogging; finally, He would be crucified and then on the third day resurrected. This may seem clear to us, but the disciples didn't understand until Jesus appeared to them in the upper room after His resurrection—[turn to Luke 24:36-45](#).

In this His last prophesy, Jesus added two new facts. One was His transfer to the Roman court; the other was the ridicule, contempt, and beating that would follow. For a Jew, the ultimate disgrace was to be rejected by his own people and to be humiliated by the Goyim, i.e., the Gentiles. Jesus knew that He would

be mocked as a king, spit on as a dog, and flogged as a criminal, as well as experience a horrific death on the cross, but nothing was going to stop Him. Jesus wanted the disciples to know what was going to happen so that they wouldn't be surprised or caught off guard. Even in His grief and concern about the coming ordeal, Jesus was concerned about others and finished with encouragement for them. He told them that the end result would be His resurrection, **“On the third day he will rise again.”**

III. Jesus Showed Compassion to Others

A. The Scene Luke wrote that Jesus and His followers **“approached Jericho”** on the way to Jerusalem for Passover. Having come from Galilee, they had followed the normal detour south through Perea, which was east of the Jordan River, to avoid traveling through Samaria. They then recrossed the Jordan near Jericho and finally prepared to make a 6-hour ascent of 3500' up to Jerusalem. Jericho was located about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem and about 5 miles west of the Jordan River. There were two cities called Jericho: the old city in ruins, and the new city about a mile away where Herod the Great and his successors had built a lavish winter palace. That there were these 2 cities of Jericho in Jesus' day may explain why **Matt. 20:29-34** and **Mark 10:46-52** state that the healing took place while Jesus was leaving Jericho, i.e., the ruins of the old Jericho, while Luke wrote that it occurred while Jesus was approaching Jericho, i.e., the new Jericho.

With Passover just days away, the road to Jerusalem would have been filled with pilgrims on their way to the Holy City. Alongside the road was another crowd—parade watchers, curiosity seekers, and those who were too poor, too sinful, too diseased, or too handicapped to make the journey to Jerusalem. Mark wrote in **Mark 10:46** that by now the group following Jesus had swelled to **“a large crowd.”** It must have been a scene filled with anticipation—the young Rabbi from Nazareth who had continually challenged the Jewish religious establishment was on His way to Jerusalem. As well as the festive week of Passover, there was a promise of confrontation in the air, and no one wanted to miss the *“sparks that would fly.”* It was in this setting that we see Jesus' compassion again.

B. Jesus' Compassion In the crowd lining the road along which Jesus walked was **“a blind man sitting by the roadside.”** **Mark 10:46** wrote that his name was **“Bartimaeus, the Son of Timaeus.”** **Matthew 20:30**

adds that there were 2 blind men. Mark and Luke focused their attention on only one blind man, Bartimaeus—perhaps he was the more vocal of the two. Blindness was common in Jesus’ day and, like all those with disabilities, the blind were despised and reduced to begging since they were considered to be sinners under God’s judgment.

Matthew 20:30 says, “When they, i.e., the 2 blind men, heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!’” For the first time, Jesus was publicly called the Son of David—a title for the anticipated Messiah. In essence, Bartimaeus and his friend introduced Jesus to Jerusalem as the Messiah; they also introduced the cry for others to cheer at Jesus’ grand entrance into Jerusalem; on the day we call Palm Sunday.

Luke wrote that at first, “those that led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’” This was a cry from Bartimaeus’ heart. In asking for mercy—undeserved kindness—he acknowledged that he was a sinner. He could only ask for mercy since Jesus, the Son of God, owed him nothing. By calling Jesus the “Son of David,” Bartimaeus was calling Jesus the Messiah and the only one who could heal him physically and spiritually. It would seem that Bartimaeus’ heart had seen the light before his eyes did.

Jesus and His followers could see their goal in sight—Jerusalem, the City on the Hill—but Jesus was never too busy to be compassionate, never too much in a hurry to stop and help someone in need, never too involved and caught up in His own problems that he was insensitive to the pain of others. Jesus was on the most important mission ever to be carried out, but He stopped to attend to two blind, rejected beggars. Initially, the crowd rebuked Bartimaeus, but when Jesus stopped and called for both of the men, the crowd’s attitude changed to encouragement, Mark 10:49 says that they said, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling for you.”

C. Jesus’ Power Acting in eager faith, without doubt or hesitation, Bartimaeus reacted immediately to Jesus’ call. Mark 10:50 adds the detail that “Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and,” no doubt helped by someone in the crowd, “came to Jesus.” Jesus didn’t call him to discipleship as He did the

fishermen by the sea, but Bartimaeus responded just as rapidly as those first disciples had done. When he got to Jesus, Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?” Here was the Son of God, the Messiah, offering to serve a lowly, outcast, unworthy sinner. Jesus gave the man an opportunity to express himself and give evidence of his own faith. What did Bartimaeus really believe Jesus could do for him?

Bartimaeus responded, “Lord, I want to see.” By calling Jesus “Lord,” Bartimaeus reaffirmed Jesus’ identity, He was God, He was Lord. Bartimaeus knew he deserved nothing, so he asked for mercy to receive what he did not deserve. Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight.” Matthew 20:34 adds that “Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight.” Jesus healed their eyes. Bartimaeus and his friend were healed instantly and totally. But there was more than mere physical healing for Bartimaeus and his fellow blind man, since after healing them, Jesus said, “Your faith has healed you.” The Greek word translated “*heal*” is often translated as saved, in reference to salvation—“Your faith has saved you.” Their faith led to their salvation. This change in heart is seen in the Bartimaeus’ response.

D. The Response Bartimaeus’ and his friend’s actions demonstrated that this was more than just a physical healing. After their healing, they didn’t choose to go off on their own like 9 of the 10 lepers had done. Like every true disciple, they followed Jesus. Bartimaeus left all he had—his cloak which he used for begging as well as keeping warm, his job as a beggar—he left it all to follow his Master, his Savior. These two men, now disciples, became living, seeing, walking proof that Jesus is Servant and Savior. They “followed Jesus, praising God.” They were undoubtedly in Jerusalem for the events of Passion Week: the triumphal entry, Jesus’ cleansing of the temple, perhaps even Jesus’ trial and crucifixion. They may even have been among those gathered in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost.

Those that witnessed the miracle were as astonished as well: “When all the people saw it, they also praised God.” They may not have believed in the Messiah, but they couldn’t deny that a miracle had taken place and therefore, “they also praised God.” Their witness undoubtedly contributed to the massive outpouring of praise at the triumphal entry a couple of days later as Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a colt of a donkey.

IV. Conclusion:

In [1 Peter 2:21](#), Peter wrote, “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you and example, that you should follow in his steps.” Jesus was on the way to save the world, but because of His love for others, without complaining, He stopped to heal two outcasts, two blind men. Similarly, as we follow Jesus’ example and “Love your neighbor as yourself” ([Matt. 22:39](#)), we must be willing to stop what we are doing and, without complaining, help others when we become aware of someone else’s need. As Peter wrote earlier in [1 Peter 2:12](#), “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

Finally, as we approach Palm Sunday and Easter, be sure of this: The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was not an accident or a slip-up. In the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, in [John 1:29](#), when John the Baptist “saw Jesus coming toward him,” he said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” As well as Jesus Himself foretelling His death, there are over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah; some about His lineage, some about His birth, others about His life and death and resurrection. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ was God’s plan from the beginning. [Galatians 4:4-5](#) says, “But when the time had fully come, i.e., at the right time, at the time set by God, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under law to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.” [Philippians](#) summarizes this plan—[turn to Philippians 2:5-11](#). In these coming weeks leading up to Easter, take time to consider what Jesus did for you. And then, as [1 Peter 3:15](#) says, “In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” And remember, in [Revelation 22:12](#) Jesus said, “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give everyone according to what he has done.” The One who died on the cross for you is coming back to take you home to be with Him—at the right time, at the time set by God.