

“The Blind See”
February 28, 2021
Luke 18:31-43

I. Introduction

Jesus and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. For Jesus, this was His “Farewell Tour”—He was going to Jerusalem to die. In less than 2 months He was going home. 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](#)”— their fear and, perhaps, admiration. This may have bordered on being fatalistic—in [John 11:16](#) we read, “[Thomas \(also known as Didymus\) said to the rest of the disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’](#)” The rest of those who followed were afraid—they may have been confused as to why this one they hoped was the Messiah was walking into the deadly danger that faced Him in Jerusalem. Everyone knew that the religious leaders were plotting His death.

This is the seventh time Luke has 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—[turn to Psalm 22:1, 6-8, 12-18.](#) Jesus 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. He wanted them to be prepared, so He told the Twelve one more time of His death and resurrection.

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 to remind them that what was about to happen to Him was God's plan. His coming sufferings were no surprise to Him, but rather they were the reason He came to earth—[Mark 10:45](#) says, “**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; 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](#).

Two new facts are introduced in this prophesy of Jesus' Passion that weren't included in the others. One is the transfer to the Roman court; the other is the ridicule, contempt, and beating that would follow. For a Jew, the ultimate disgrace is to be rejected by his own people and 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 He was not to be deterred.

Jesus wasn't trying to upset them or get them to look at Him with different or strange looks. He wanted them 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. The Blind Are made to see

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 to Jerusalem. Jericho was located about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem and about 5 miles west of the Jordan River. Actually, 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 two cities of Jericho in Jesus’ day may explain why [Matthew 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 states that it occurred while Jesus was approaching Jericho, i.e., the new Jericho.

With Passover approaching, 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 after Jesus had swelled to “[a large crowd.](#)” It must have been a scene filled with anticipation, maybe even a bit of triumph—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 a blind man’s faith.

B. A Blind Man’s Faith In the crowd lining the road along which Jesus walked was “[a blind man sitting by the roadside.](#)” [Mark 10:46](#) says 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—what 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's interesting, 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 an important errand, but He stopped to become a servant 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." And then we see the Savior's power.

C. The Savior's 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 wanted to give the man an opportunity to express himself and give evidence of his own faith. What did he 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 says 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 him the Lord told him, “Your faith has healed you.” The Greek word translated “heal” or in other versions “well” is a word that is often translated as saved, in reference to salvation—a healed heart so to speak. 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, 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 the 120 gathered in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost.

There’s the response of Bartimaeus and his friend and there is the response of the people: “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.

IV. Conclusion:

From this miracle and the others in Scripture, there are some generalizations we can make.

1) *Healing does not always come easily for those whom Jesus heals.* Bartimaeus had to overcome the crowd's rebuke to be quiet. In [Luke 5:18-26](#) the paralyzed man's friends had to force their way through a crowd and a roof to get him to Jesus. Later in [Luke 8:41-56](#) Jairus had to ignore the mockery of the mourners that Jesus could do nothing for his dead child. It's almost like God expects us to put feet to our prayers. [Turn to James 2:14-18.](#) We need to walk in faith; we need to be ready to do what God calls us to do regardless of the outside pressures—[Romans 12:2](#) says, “**Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

2) *One must not hesitate to come to Jesus.* [Isaiah 55:6](#) says, “**Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.**” Bartimaeus didn't hesitate—if he had, he would probably never have had seen Jesus again. If Jairus had waited, his opportunity would have been lost, too. [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#) reminds us to “**Pray without ceasing.**”

3) *Jesus' response shows that He does not ignore those who cry out to Him for mercy.* Jesus said in [Luke 11:9](#), “**Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.**” In [Matthew 11:28](#) Jesus said, “**Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.**” As Jesus' disciples, we, too, must be willing to stop, to listen, and to respond—helping others in mercy.

4) *Although Jesus Christ has absolute power over disease, he didn't come merely to heal the sick—* [Luke 19:10](#) says, “**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.**” It is good to help those in need, but our prime directive is found in the Great Commission in [Matthew 28:19-20](#), “**Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.**” We must never let the good choice of helping others trump the best choice of sharing the Gospel with others—thankfully, these two choices often work hand-in-hand.