



CAPITOL COMMISSION

The Blind who Saw Better than their Leaders

FEBRUARY 4, 2010

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Matthew 20:29-34 And as they were going out from Jericho a great crowd followed Him. And behold, two blind men sitting beside the way, hearing that Jesus was going by, were crying out, saying, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" But the crowd rebuked them in order that they might be quiet. But they cried out more saying, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" And standing (still), Jesus called them and said, "What are you wanting Me to do for you?" And they said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." And Jesus, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes, and immediately they saw again and followed Him.

"IF THEY HAD LET HIM PASS, THEIR CHANCE WOULD HAVE BEEN GONE FOREVER; BUT WHEN THE CHANCE CAME THEY SEIZED IT"
WILLIAM BARCLAY

What is the significance of the departure from Jericho? Why does the crowd rebuke the blind men? Was the title "Son of David" significant in that day? Why does Jesus ask them what they want? What is the motivation behind Jesus healing these blind men?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- FEBRUARY 11: MATTHEW 21:1-11 *THE HUMBLE CORONATION OF THE KING OF KINGS*
- FEBRUARY 18: MATTHEW 21:12-17 *THE KING'S FIRST ACT: PURGING THE PERVERTED TEMPLE*
- FEBRUARY 25: MATTHEW 21:18-22 *LESSON ONE: THE POWER OF PRAYER*

The city of Jericho is a beautiful oasis in the midst of the barren wilderness surrounding the Dead Sea. Known as the "City of Palms" it was the resort city of Christ's day, the lush area teeming with citrus fruit and figs and a variety of crops. Herod had built his winter palace there and it is reported by Josephus that while Jerusalem had snow, less than fifteen miles away, Jericho was warm and pleasant. There is a very large

free-flowing spring, providing abundant fresh water for the city, which was "healed" by Elisha (2 Kings 2:19-22). Albert Barns says that the size of the city was second only to Jerusalem. The balsam of Jericho provided a wonderful remedy for incipient cataracts and dimness of vision. Consequently there was an unusually large number of blind people who came there to be cured. The two blind men who cried out to Jesus may have been among hundreds who sought refuge in the area, and most likely one of them was Bartimeus (Lk. 10:46).

"BEGGARS IN THE EAST ARE ALMOST ALWAYS OFFENSIVE AND OFTEN DISGUSTING, AND IT IS HARD TO FEEL COMPASSION FOR THEM, EVEN WHEN BLIND"
JOHN BROADUS

I. SIEZING THEIR OPPORTUNITY MT. 20:29-30

As Jesus is leaving Jericho there is a large multitude who follows Him as they are making their way to the Passover feast in Jerusalem where Jesus will give Himself as the final sacrifice for mankind. To harmonize with the parallel account in Luke 18:35, Christ must have just left the old city of Jericho and is nearing the modern city of Jericho enhanced by Herod when they encounter the blind beggars sitting beside the road. Jesus probably has already passed by them before they can get an answer as to who this crowd is following. But as soon as they know Jesus is passing by, they begin to loudly shout "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" If they will get the attention of Jesus, they must be heard above the din of this great multitude. Matthew alerts us to the unusual situation with the word "behold" so that we feel the awkward cry of the blind beggars and the pitiless crowd trying to hush them and rebuke them for disturbing whatever peace a noisy crowd might claim to have. The massive multitude considered the men a public nuisance and they certainly were not ready to embrace the claim of Jesus' Messiahship that these blind beggars were

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30AM – INTERCESSORY PRAYER – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM – BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY @ 12:00NOON – BIBLE STUDY – WYTESTONE PLAZA AT 8TH & MAIN 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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advocating. The statement, “*Lord, Son of David,*” being proclaimed with shouts, pointed to the Messianic fulfillment of the great Davidic Covenant in which all Israel hoped and which was repeated more often in Scripture than any other covenant. Their shouts were very loud and persistent, because if they were not heard immediately, they might not ever have the opportunity again. In reality, it was now or never!

“THESE TWO MEN WERE ABSOLUTELY DESPERATE, REALIZING THAT THE LAST POSSIBLE HOPE OF THEIR SEEING WOULD SOON DEPART. THEY COULD HARDLY HAVE KNOWN OF JESUS’ IMPENDING CRUCIFIXION, BUT THEY SEEMED TO SENSE THAT THEY WOULD NEVER ENCOUNTER HIM AGAIN AND THAT THIS WAS THEIR LAST CHANCE. THEY WERE THEREFORE SHOUTING AT THE TOP OF THEIR VOICES, NOT CARING WHO ELSE HEARD THEM AS LONG AS JESUS DID.”

JOHN MACARTHUR

II. OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS MT. 20:31

The verb, “*rebuked*” used regarding the crowd’s actions, conveys strong disapproval. It is primarily used of our Lord rebuking evil spirits.¹ This great multitude wants to quiet them for at least four reasons: 1) they were probably anxious to get to Jerusalem and do not want to be stopped by these blind beggars; 2) they must have deemed this obnoxious shouting to be below the dignity of both themselves and Christ; 3) they do not yet fully agree that Jesus is the Messianic “*Son of David;*” and 4) they knew for sure that their leaders would not at all approve of the beggars’ proclamation. Yet the crowd’s insistence on trying to hush these beggars only served to heighten their cries. The volume and intensity used now by the blind men must have now equaled virtual screams, “*Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!*” They absolutely refused to be silenced!

¹ W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, & William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 510.

“THE CROWDS WERE MORE BLIND THAN THE BEGGARS BECAUSE THEY WERE UNAWARE OF THEIR NEED. BY CONTRAST, THE BEGGARS HAD BEGUN TO SEE SPIRITUALLY, WHEN THEY SHOUTED OUT THEIR NEED OF JESUS” DANIEL DORIANI

III. OBTAINING COMPASSION MT. 20:32-34

Suddenly Jesus stopped and stood still and the whole procession must have stopped behind him and probably a hush came over the multitude as Jesus “*called*” the beggars. Bartimeus became so excited that he threw off his mantle (Mk. 10:50) and they came to Jesus. But Jesus wanted a more specific supplication and asked, “*What are you wanting Me to do for you?*” Their blind eyes have a singular focus and they ask for the supernatural, which only God can do, “*Lord, that our eyes may be opened.*” (Psalm 146:8). This request first activates the heart of Christ in that He was “*being moved with compassion.*” This verb is a passive and it literally means “to yearn with compassion.”² Jesus was as desirous to meet their need as they were to have it met. The request also activated our Lord’s hands and He “*touched their eyes.*” Most in the multitude would have probably cringed at the thought of touching these beggars, but when Jesus was “*touched with the feeling of our infirmities*” (Heb. 4:15), He acted with his hands to meet the need. Finally their request activated His almighty sovereign power and the Creator over-ruled the course of nature and “*immediately they saw again.*” Then they “*followed Him*” and led the multitude in faith.

“THOUGH AN INDESCRIBABLY HEAVY BURDEN IS RESTING UPON HIS OWN HEART, HE HAS NOT LOST HIS SYMPATHY WITH THE NEEDS OF OTHERS” WILLIAM HENDRICKSEN

² *Ibid*, 116.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Have you seized the opportunity to be transformed by Christ?
- 2) Do you see yourself in need and are you willing to come to Jesus Christ to meet your need?
- 3) Have obstacles stopped you from knowing the power of God in your life like the rich young ruler (Mt. 19:21-26)?