



## **Jesus opens the eyes of the blind!**

**Matthew 20:29-34**

**Mark 10:46-52**

**Luke 18:35-43**

**Matthew 20:29-34**, *Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. <sup>30</sup>And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"*

<sup>31</sup> *Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"*

<sup>32</sup> *So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"*

<sup>33</sup> *They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened."* <sup>34</sup> *So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.*

Easy to understand. Not an unusual in the life of Christ.

John said, "All the books of all the world couldn't even contain them."

### **Why this incident?**

#### **Why is it here as Jesus goes to Jerusalem to die?**

Why stop in the progress of such a great event as Passover, where He is to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world?

#### **Why stop to include this two blind men?**

#### **V 34, "compassion"**

All other lessons were set aside, one great and profound truth would grab our minds is that Jesus had great compassion.

While the world wanted to silence these kinds of people, Jesus wanted to hear what they had to say. While the world wanted to make sure they didn't get in the way, Jesus wanted to be sure He stood with them.

While the world wanted to be sure they didn't interrupt anything by articulating their need, Jesus wanted not only to know their need but to meet it.

This is a demonstration of the heart of God, which is a heart of compassion.

God not only knows what pain we endure but He feels it.

The feeling of that suffering.  
The pain of that which touches His own great heart.

Remember when God allows you to suffer, He allows Himself to suffer as well.

Jesus demonstrate compassion.

Jesus would have been preoccupied with the disciples, perhaps, who were to carry on the legacy after His death which will occur in a few days. Jesus could have been distracted by the thought of dying and becoming the sacrificial Lamb.

Jesus really didn't have time, in this moment in history, to stop and take care of a couple of blind men, of which there were many such in Jericho.

In Jericho there grew balsam bushes which could be made into a special kind of medicine which was good for curing the eyes. Yet, Jesus has time.

Jesus Christ is not to buy redeeming the entire world, to give sight to two insignificant, blind men who have nothing to offer Him but their problem.

Blindness is quite common, physical blindness and spiritual blindness in the Bible.

Physical blindness occurred quite frequently in the ancient world.

- Poverty,
- lack of medical care,
- unsanitary conditions,
- brilliant sunlight,
- blowing sand,
- certain kinds of accidents,
- war,
- fighting,

All these things could cause blindness.

But most commonly, blindness was caused basically because of gonorrheal diplococcus that would find their way from a woman's body into the conjunctiva of the eye of a child at birth, and there they would form their disease, and permanent blindness could occur.

Sometimes blindness came by the infecting virus trachoma.

These days much of these things are curable because of the drugs that we have available, but then they were not.

So, it was not uncommon to be blind.

But even more common than physical blindness was spiritual blindness. The Gospels and the epistles speak often of the blindness of the heart.

**John 1:10-12**, *That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.*

**John 3:19**, *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

**Romans 11:25**, *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

**2 Corinthians 3:14**, *But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.*

**Matthew 15:14**, *Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."*

Maybe able to see physically, but blind to God.

These men they are physically blind, they appear to have unusually clear spiritual sight.

- Physically they see nothing.
- Spiritually they see very well.

They see even better when the Lord Jesus is finished with them. They will also see physically.

### **Why are people spiritually blind?**

Sin.

**Matthew 6:23**, *But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*

Satan sort of adds a double blindness by blinding the minds of them who doesn't believe.

**2 Corinthians 4:4**, *whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

God may add a triple blindness when he sovereignly makes the eye blind as Isaiah 6 indicates in a judicial punishment of unbelievers.

- Men are blind by sin.
- Doubly blinded by Satan.
- Triply blinded by God.

Into the darkness of man's spiritual blindness that Jesus comes.

**Luke 4:18**, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;*

He was primarily speaking of physical and spiritual blindness.

**John 8:12**, *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

Jesus came to give spiritual light to blind eyes.  
Sometimes He gave physical sight to blind eyes.

Jesus did that for three reasons.

**1. It was part of messianic proof.**

He was demonstrating that He was the Messiah.

**2. It was part of millennial preview.**

Jesus was showing them what it was going to be like in His kingdom. All that kind of thing was turned over and there was glorious wholeness and healing in the kingdom.

**3. It was a matter of symbol or picture.**

Every time He healed someone of physical blindness, He was, in effect saying, "That's only a symbol of what I want to do to the soul."

Every time He opened the ears so that someone could hear sound, He was in effect saying, "that is exactly what I want to do to the heart, so you can hear the Word of God."

Every time He raised someone from the dead physically, He was saying, "I want to give life to the soul, as I am able to give life to the body."

That is why Jesus found it no more difficult to forgive sins than to heal someone.

Jesus showed absolute control over the physical world and the natural laws that He has control over the spiritual world and the supernatural laws.

These two blind men,  
We have messianic proof,  
We have millennial preview, and  
We have a marvelous picture of what He's able to do to the heart.

When their encounter with Jesus was over, these two blind men are saved. They see it physically and spiritually.

They demonstrate to us that no matter how involved our Lord is, His heart of compassion reaches out to those who cry for His help.

**V 29, *Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him.***

Jesus had finished His ministry in Galilee.  
He finished His ministry in Perea. Perea is the area east of the Jordan.

Jesus had crossed the Jordan, near the Sea of Galilee, and descended the eastern side of the Jordan River in that area known as Perea.

He has finished His ministry of a few weeks there, and now He was on His way to Jerusalem.

Jesus probably crossed at about five miles north of Jericho. Jericho's the first city you see when you cross the Jordan from the east.

In Jesus' time, there was the Old Testament Jericho, which was ruins, and then a little south of that was the New Testament Jericho that flourished at this time, and it was a beautiful place.

In those days, it was so beautiful a place that Herod built himself a wonderful fort and palace there, and that was his winter home.

Josephus say that when there was snow in Jerusalem, they were wearing linen because it was so warm in Jericho.

The distance between these towns was only about 15 miles as the crow flies. But it's so far down into that desert that it stays warm.

It was known as the City of Palms.

There was a lovely valley known as the Sharon Valley. Then the mountains rise up known as the Carmel Mountain range.

At the southern end is this massive plateau of Jerusalem. From there, descend straight down to the desert.

From the seacoast it rises to the mountains and then descends to the desert.

Jericho was a lovely place in the winter and even in the spring, because the crops all came in early in Jericho.

Mark tells us it was not yet fig-picking time in Jerusalem, but it would have been in Jericho because of the warmth.

There were citrus trees everywhere, because Jericho was endlessly fed by some beautiful springs. Potable water, pure and clear. This water was channeled by irrigation all through that area around Jericho so that it flourished.

There were palm trees everywhere and citrus trees, and then this balsam bush which had some multiple uses that was growing there.

It would have been a very lovely place. It was also a place that must have on the minds of Jesus because He would no doubt remember a very special woman from that city by the name of Rahab, the prostitute. She hid the spies who came to spy out the land. As a result, and the grace of God, she was given a place in messianic genealogy. She has been listed as an ancestor of the Messiah Himself in **Matthew chapter 1**.

Jesus stood on the edge of the Jordan River, ready to go south about five miles maybe to the New Testament city of Jericho.

He would have looked straight ahead to a cliff of mountains that rises straight up into the sky white, limestone like parapet over the city of Jericho. He would have remembered that that was very likely the place where He was tempted for 40 days and 40 nights by the devil.

Jesus' mind is literally filled with things. Around Him is pressing a huge crowd moving now from crossing the river down to Jericho, passing through the ruins of Old Testament Jericho which ruins.

In the midst of all of this, the tremendous anticipation of His own death only days away. He was only 4 to 6 hours' walk, from Jerusalem, six miles north of the Dead Sea.

As Jesus comes into the city, naturally the mob presses Him on all sides. He can heal.

The Lord had to tell the disciples not to take any money, because they could have made literally a fortune in a day selling healings.

The people pile all around Jesus, His teaching, His preaching, the magnetism of His personality, His ability to raise the dead and heal people from any disease.

Jesus came into the city, with the press of the crowd, there was one little guy who really wanted to see Him. Zacchaeus was the number one public enemy. He was a Jew who sold out to Rome for money. He became chief tax collector. He exacerbad tax out of Israel to the point of a fault. He defrauded them. He stole them blind, and he pocketed it all for himself.

They hated him. Not only was he a traitor, but he was a crook.  
But he was fascinated by Jesus.

### **How did he know about Him?**

It hadn't been long before this that Jesus made a short trip to Bethany.

When He was there, He raised Lazarus from the dead.

The word went like wildfire. Bethany was the town between Jericho and Jerusalem just up the hill. It is very likely that everybody would have known who Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. They would have known who they were.

Of course, the whole city was in an uproar when He raised him from the dead. His enemies pursued Him that He had to go back on the other side of the Jordan for a while for safety's sake.  
So, they knew.

Jesus had practically banished disease from Palestine, and so, everybody knew who He was. They were all there.

Zacchaeus wanted a view of Him. Since he couldn't see, like a little kid at a parade, he crawled up in a tree.

Jesus came along, and He stopped and said to him come down from the tree. I am coming to your house. I am going to spend the night. Which would have damaged His popularity of Jesus, superficially, because this was the most hated man in town.

But He had a wonderful evening with Zacchaeus.  
Jesus transformed him. He redeemed him.

The man was totally transformed. The reason we know that was he said to Jesus, just before the dawn he said that he was going to give everything back to the poor and everything I have ever taken from anybody fourfold.

Jesus said, "Surely salvation has come to this house."  
He is the perfect opposite of the rich, young ruler.

As the morning breaks and Zacchaeus is running around town, settling his account, giving everybody back four times what he took and saying it's all because of Jesus.

The crowd perhaps even swelled greater. The whole place is lined with people.

Now, Jesus is ready to leave; he spent the night. He was going to Jerusalem. He must move to the Passover.

## **1. Plight.**

**V 30**, *And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"*

**V 29**, as they departed from Jericho this happened.

**Mark** says, "As they were leaving Jericho."

**Luke** says, "As He came near Jericho."

**How do you harmonize this?**

Two have Him leaving, one has Him coming.

There was Old Testament Jericho and New Testament Jericho.

It is possible that He was leaving Old Testament and entering New Testament Jericho.

**Why would He stay overnight in the ruins?**

Maybe Zacchaeus lived over there.

Beggars of the Bible, usually hung around the thoroughfares where the people were. Usually, they are always there near the temple at Jerusalem.

As Jesus is moving with this multitude, and they come to the gate, the crowd, the noise and all that's going on. They pass out the gate, then suddenly, the cries of these blind men are brought to His attention.

Each Gospel writer is not intimidated by what the other says; therefore, they are not copying some extraneous source. They are, rather, writing from their own heart under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus moves along, moving directly west up that incredible incline to the plateau of Jerusalem, it is brought to His attention that these blind men are crying after Him.

**V 30**, "Behold,"

A term of exclamation. Here is not because of the blind men.

It wasn't that they were sitting they always sat.  
It wasn't they were along the road they were always there.

The reason they put a "behold" in there is because of what they said.

They said, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, son of David."  
They call by his messianic title.

Mark says who were begging.  
Luke says sitting by the wayside.  
Matthew says, screaming out the messianic title.

**Where did these guys come off as such consummate theologians?**

**Where did they get their information and faith?**

That's the exclamation.

Not that they were blind, or that they were there, or that they were begging, or that they were yelling, but it was what they were saying.

Luke only discusses one of the two, the more prominent one, but never says there was only one.

Mark goes a step further, he only discusses one of the two, and he gives us his name. His name is **Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus**. We could wonder why he bothers to name him.

Matthew just wants us to see the majesty of Christ.

Luke emphasizes the same.

But Mark touches the real human cord by naming this man.

Perhaps this is because he was well known at later so that when Mark pens the Gospel, and the letters are written to the Church to read about the account of the life of our Lord, when they can sit down and read this, they will have there the story of the conversion of one who, by now, they greatly love.

As if Mark is saying, "you know who one of those guys was? It was none other than your friend Bartimaeus."

Mark picks up a little history of one of the beloved brothers in the Church by the time the Gospel would be read by some.

It's not unusual for one Gospel writer to mention two, and the others to focus on one.

We will find the same thing in the maniac across the **Sea of Galilee at Gadarenes**. where some writers note two, and some concentrate on the healing of one.

## **2. Persistence.**

**V 30,** *And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"*

The word "cry" here is *krazō* means to scream.

It is used in the New Testament of the screeching and screaming of demon-possessed people, Mark 5.

It is used of the screaming of insane people and epileptics.

It is used of the loud, anguished cry of a mother giving birth to a child.

The idea of the form of the text here is there was constant screaming. They were yelling at the top of their voices.

*"Have mercy on us."*

A cry of anguish and a cry of desperation.

A cry of pain.

They know that if Jesus gets out of the hearing of their voices, that they are doomed to blindness the rest of their life.

They know this is the only one who can do this.

Their desperation is powerful.

You can imagine the shrieking and screaming of two men who know they have got one moment in time or the rest of their life they are to be blind as stones.

They recognized that they needed mercy.

Take pity on us. Look at our sad situation. Sense of humility in that that speaks of the Mark of someone with true humility.

They wail with an intense desire to be healed, but they make no demands. They make no claim to worthiness. They are so persistent that they refused to be forced into silence by the indifferent crowd.

**V 31,** *Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"*

The world always tries to keep people from getting to Jesus.

People get disgusted with beggars.

*"Have mercy on us take pity."*

They felt their deep need.

They knew they deserved nothing.

They cried for mercy. There is no merit in mercy.

There is no merit to be given to one who seeks mercy. They were quite different than the Pharisees who sought no mercy because they believed based on merit, they possessed a right to everything.

When the crowd tried to shut them up, they just kept screaming louder. These two blinds wanted to get to Jesus.

### 3. Perception.

As blind as they were physically, they were equally able to see spiritually because of something they said.

**V 30**, "O Lord, son of David,"

**V 31**, "O Lord, son of David,"

The Messianic Title.

They had come to the place where they believed that He was the Messiah.

They wouldn't have been screaming as frantically as they were. There wasn't any doubt in their mind that this was their only chance.

When they said, "O Lord," there must have been something in that. I don't know whether they assumed Him to be God. Or whether they were giving Him a title of honor and respect, which indicated that He was a sovereign and a Lord of some kind.

But when they said, "son of David," they were identifying Him as the Messiah.

**Matthew 1:1**, *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:*

The most common Jewish term for the coming King.

**2 Samuel 7:12-13**, *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

God gave the covenant and promised that there would come a greater king than David, it would be David's greater son.

So, "son of David" became the title by which Messiah was designated.

Jesus was the son of David, for Joseph his father had come in the Davidic line.

Mary His mother had also come in the Davidic line.

Jesus, indeed, was the son of David.

**Luke 1:32-33**, *He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. <sup>33</sup> And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.*

They called Jesus with His messianic name.

**Matthew 21:9**, *Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!"*

**Matthew 21:11**, *So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."*

So, they are saying, "Jesus of Nazareth from Galilee, a prophet, is none other than son of David, the one who comes in the name of the highest.

An act of double faith.

- They have faith in His power to heal.
- They have faith in His person as Messiah.

Maybe it was due to the resurrection of Lazarus.

Maybe it was due to the ministry of John the Baptist a few years before, for they would have been in the proximity of the Jordan River out there.

They may well even have known the Old Testament Prophecy.

**Isaiah 29:18**, *In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.*

They had enough faith to know that they were in need of mercy and to believe that this was the one who could do for them what they needed done, and that He was Lord, and that He was Messiah.

The faith of the blind rose to the full height of divine possibility.

#### **4. Plea.**

**V 32**, *So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"*

Jesus stood still.

Stopped.

Here was a great moment in which three things could occur generally: messianic proof again, millennial preview, and a marvelous picture of what He would do with a heart.

It was a time to demonstrate His credentials all over again, but it was more than that. It was a moment of tender compassion on behalf of two needy people.

Jesus called them.

### **How did He call them?**

Mark's account, it seems as though He called them with a messenger. Someone ran back.

**Mark 10:49-50**, *So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."*<sup>50</sup> *And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.*

Once he heard that Jesus had gotten the message, he just threw away his garment and took off.

*"What do you want Me to do for you?"*

This is to evoke out of their hearts a greater expectation.

This is to confirm in the crowd exactly what He was doing.

**V 33**, *They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened."*

They confess that they are blind.

Leads to their supernatural privilege.

## **5. Supernatural privilege.**

**V 34**, *So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.*

Jesus had compassion.

The real message of this wonderful incident.

He felt their need.

He felt their pain.

He felt the hurt for them.

A tenderness in Him.

He reached out, and He touched their eyes.

Instantly, all physical laws were set aside.

Just as God creates something out of nothing, Christ created seeing eyes.

They were made to see again.

I have always felt that those who have lost their sight have a greater pain to bear than those who were born blind and do not know what they have missed.

Jesus restores to them their sight again out of compassion, touching and speaking.

Jesus used many methods.  
Sometimes He touched.  
Sometimes He didn't.  
Sometimes they touched Him.  
Sometimes He spoke.  
Sometimes He merely thought a thought and they were healed.  
Sometimes He put fingers in ears.  
Sometimes He used clay.  
Sometimes He used spittle.  
He healed many ways, but always His healings were total, complete, instantaneous, and defied any natural explanation.

A person who may be crippled and full of pain can be made in the euphoria of a moment and the hype of their own mind and the energy of a situation and in a strong act of confident faith in some healer to stand up and take a few steps, but none of that stuff's going to make a person without eyeballs see.

## **Conclusion:**

**V 34**, *So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.*

They pursue.

*"They followed Him."*

Mark says, "Jesus said to them, 'Go your way.'"

When He said, "Go your way," what way did they go? Their way was His way from now on.

**Mark 10:52**, *Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.*

The word there, "Your faith has made you whole," is not *iaomai* healed you but it's *sōzō*.

"Your faith has saved you."

**Sozo** is the classic New Testament word for to be saved.

**Mark 10:52** to these blind men was this, "You are redeemed."

You do not have to have faith, in the New Testament record, to be healed. There were plenty of people healed in the New Testament who didn't have faith.

Dead people don't have faith.

There are a lot of people healed in the New Testament that didn't have faith.

You can look through all kinds of illustrations of that. But you can find all kinds of healings where there was no faith, but you will never find salvation without faith.

Faith is not necessary for healing,

Faith is necessary for salvation.

Jesus said, "Your faith hath saved you," there was physical wholeness there, and they did have faith in that. But it was more than that.

**Luke 17**, ten lepers came, and Jesus said, "Go, show yourself to the priest," and on the way, all ten were cleansed – *katharizō*, a form of healing. They were all *katharizō*, cleansed of leprosy.

**How many came back?**

One!

To the one Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you."

There were ten healed and one saved.

These two blinds had a transformed life. It says, "*They followed Him.*"

Luke, "They followed, glorifying God." Glorifying God.

**Luke 18:43**, *And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*

By the time they got to Jerusalem it was what we call the Palm Sunday. Jesus touched that city from top to bottom. He hit the richest person, Zacchaeus, and a couple of poor beggars, the most despised down-and-outers. He got them all.

Final messianic display that swept the crowd into the hosannas of Palm Sunday.

We can all say with the blind man in John 9 that once we were blind, and now we see when we have been touched with the saving grace of Christ.

We thank You for that our Lord, for whereas we were blind, we do see.

We thank You that Jesus is compassionate, that He is never too busy in the matter of redeeming the universe to stop to hear the cry of those in need, and that His heart is touched deeply with compassion for that heart.