



Rev A

Adult Education Lesson 26

Blind Bartimaeus

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Mk. 10:46 - 52



Glen Miller



Much of this tract is commentary - don't take it as Gospel. It is here to encourage meditation and study. Use your gift of discernment, to find the truth.

Christ cures a believer

(Mark 10:46-52)

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, **sat by the highway side** begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, **rise; he calleth thee**. And he, **casting away his garment, rose**, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, **What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?** The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, **Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole**. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus **in the way**.

This event occurred during the journey to Jerusalem for the crucifixion. Here is one understanding - and a mystical interpretation of the story.

Many disciples had joined The Way, the name of Jesus's sect. Not all His followers were converted. Some could not yet travel with him to the passover feast, like blind Bartimaeus. Jesus gave him sight, and he travelled to the great feast of the passover following Jesus - to be raised up on the last day. He could have been among the 500 disciples who saw the Christ (after the resurrection), and so blind Bartimaeus would have received his spiritual sight.

(He had to first called of God, either from Torah study (not likely for a blind man) or from God's direct intervention - otherwise he could not **come** to Jesus)

(John 6:44) No man can **come** to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will **raise him up at the last day**.

(John 7:37) **In the last day, that great day of the feast**, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

“Highway” and “the way” are translations of a single greek word **ὁδος** hodos - a road; by implication a progress.

I read, “sat” as a metaphor for studying. And “by the highway side” as a metaphor for “The Way” the name for Jesus’s sect of Jews.

Rabboni is the meaning of the Greek word in the original text, which means teacher or prophet. If he had known it was the Christ, he would have called him “Son of the living God”, or “Holy One”.

ask and it shall be given you ... Remember the story of the importunate widow? Luke 18:1-5

Jesus went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of travellers who were on the way to the passover in Jerusalem.

A blind man, Bartimaeus, making progress in **The Way**, but still a beggar considered unclean, contaminated, and polluted, by society, knew from the conversation of the crowd, that Jesus the Nazarene was near, and he cried out to be heard by Him. The noise of the crowds smothered his cry, and some people even admonished him to keep silent.

But Jesus felt the man’s spirit calling Him. He heard the persistent plea of blind Bartimaeus. Jesus commanded that he be called. The Angels of God spoke to Bartimaeus and told him he had been called: “Be of good comfort, rise up, Jesus calleth thee.” And he, ready to believe, responded to the call, cast off the old man (symbolized by casting off his garments) and was converted (he rose - repented of his sins), and came to Jesus saying

“Rabboni (Lord), have mercy on me”,

Jesus answered “what do you want me to do to you?”

“to be sighted”.

Jesus said “go thy way, thy faith has saved thee (made thee whole)”.

His physical sight restored, and having been accepted by Jesus, he chose to follow Him in **the Way**.

Moral: even the most downtrodden person will be heard by the Lord, if he is persistent. Even though the Lord is distracted by thousands of other people demanding His attention, a continuous, demanding prayer from the depths of the heart, will be heard by the Lord. And if you truly believe, and are converted, He will “cure” whatever is your “illness”. Once He has answered your prayer, and you have experienced His divine intervention in your life, you must follow Him, no matter where he leads.

Additional Comments

Now, It has been suggested by others that Bartimaeus actually recognized Jesus as the Messiah, because he used the title “son of David”.

Argument against this:

The title “son of David” did not apply to Christ the Messiah, though Jesus the Nazarene was called this.

“Son of David” was an O.T. name that was applied to Absalom, Amnon, Solomon, Jerimoth, and the Preacher (Ec1:1). as well as Joseph who was betrothed to Mary.

Jesus was called a son of David by people who thought of Him as a healer or prophet but not a divine person.

God did not name Jesus “son of David”. Jesus never called himself “son of David”, rather He called himself “son of man”.

None of His Apostles nor any of his disciples called Him “son of David”. There is no mention of this title by Paul, nor the other writers of the Epistles. And as Jesus explains in Mt 22:41-44, the title was a misnomer. So we can be sure that the title son of David used by his followers was an honorary title given to Jesus as a prophet, perhaps also because He was the “son” of Joseph, who was a “son of David”.

In the N.T. only three people (prior to His Last Day), apart from His Mother, are mentioned as recognizing Jesus as the divine Messiah - Simon Peter, Nathanael, and the deliberately nameless “**man born blind**”. So, two Apostles, and a man born of God “who had not sinned”.

Bartimaeus’s Hebrew name meant: son of pollution, son of the unclean, son of contamination. Presumably, he had not received the Holy Ghost, so we can be fairly certain that he was not able to recognize Jesus as Christ.

(Matthew 22:41-46)
While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? ...

(1 Corinthians 12:3)
Wherefore ... no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

The man born blind (by God’s grace) was without sin (see lesson 19) (1 John 3:9)
Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1 John 5:18) We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Additional Comments

The Disciples were not all of them blind spiritually

It has also been suggested that “They (the disciples) could not recognize that Jesus was more than a fine leader, teacher, prophet... they could not see that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah.”

Argument against:

This is in error for two disciples did recognize that Jesus was the Messiah prior to the last day - Simon-Peter, and Nathanael.

Cause of spiritual blindness today.

Now, if someone is “blind” spiritually, the prime cause is that they do not believe. As a consequence of this, God has hardened that person’s heart against the truth, as He promised He would (Isa 6:10). People who believe, see the truth. People who don’t see, are not believers.

Jesus came to make unbelievers into believers, so that they could “see”. The signs that follow believers are the qualities of the blessed ones as described in the Sermon on the Mount: humility (poverty), meekness (patience), mourning (for God’s presence), hunger and thirst after righteousness, mercy towards others, a pure heart (dedicated to the one purpose of obeying God’s will), a peacemaker (promoting unity of belief), and willingness to suffer persecution for the sake of the gospel (martyrdom).

Humility qualifies¹⁹⁰⁸ for the possession of the kingdom of heaven; meekness qualifies for possessing the earth; mourning for consolation; hunger and thirst after righteousness for being filled; mercy for the obtaining mercy; a pure heart for seeing God.

Augustine
cf. Beatitudes Mt. 5

Matt. xiii. 11-16; Isa. vi. 10.

... but to them I speak in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not hear, understanding they may not understand; in order that the prophecy of Isaiah regarding them may be fulfilled, saying, Make the heart of this people gross and make their ears dull, and blind their eyes. ...
cf (Mark 16:17, 18) but be careful - these are metaphors.

The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.

Metaphysical Bible Dictionary	Unity	Unity

It has been suggested that the road between Jerusalem and Jericho was infamous, filled with robbers and danger. The story of the Good Samaritan is cited as a source.

But there is nothing in the gospels to indicate this was a dangerous road. Jesus many times was on this road with His disciples and with the multitudes, but never mentions any danger.

The story of the good Samaritan which suggested “thieves” on this road was an allegory told by Jesus to demonstrate, to the disciples, the hypocrisy of the law(yer). There really was no injured man, nor any Samaritan to help him, nor of course any thief. It was only a story.

In fact the Church Fathers have thought that the “Samaritan” was a metaphor for Christ, and “robbers” was a metaphor for people, false prophets, who took the truth away from the poor.

So now we understand the “den of thieves” in the Temple courts. It referred to those priests who took away the truth from the people, which is why Jesus castigated them.

(Luke 10:29, 30) *But he, ... said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*

Read the Good Samaritan pdf.

(Matthew 21:13) ... *My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

Nowthere is also a metaphorical meanings of “Jericho”:

From *The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*

The road to Jerusalem from Jericho was a metaphor for the change in man from intellectual knowledge (Hebrew meaning of the name Jericho) to spiritual understanding.

Jericho means in Hebrew: place of fragrance, his soul, his mind, his spirit, his sweet breath, his life. It signifies the intellect.

Jericho is the opposite of Jerusalem. One represents the spiritual, the other the material. We often start from Jerusalem with high spiritual resolves, but are robbed by outlaw thoughts on the way (Luke 10:30).

Jesus (I AM) passed through Jericho (the intellect) in His redemptive work.

Interesting?

Additional Comments

In general, spiritual blindness was the condition of most of Israel when Jesus “arrived”. Owing to this blindness, most Jews could not “see the gospel - that Jesus was Messiah” in the Torah. Jesus came to fix this; to make “the blind” see that He was the fulfillment of Torah. Those who saw the power of God at work in Jesus, could also “see” “the Kingdom of Heaven”.

Others, who only saw “Jesus of Nazareth”, or the “son of David” healing people, and could not see the power of God behind the work, were blinded to the truth. They did not believe that Jesus was Messiah, and they became more blind due to the “hardness of their hearts”.

Those Jews who rejected the truth, God the Father had decreed would be blinded and so they could not recognize Christ, nor understand the gospel. In John’s gospel (A.D. 90) he said that because of non-belief, people were condemned [but Jews were not lost for ever] - see John 3:18. Paul earlier had explained that Jewish unbelievers were only to be blinded by God’s grace until the “fullness of the Gentile be come in”, at which time, by the grace of God, the Jews would be able to see the truth about the Messiah, and they would be saved (Romans 11,12 - see also lesson “Blessed are the Peacemakers”).

Now Thomas Aquinas in his “Summa” wrote:

For one and the same **God [that blesses others] inflicts blindness upon those who do not believe**, but who set Him at naught; ... /but/ to those who believe in Him and follow Him, He grants a fuller and greater illumination of mind. In accordance with this word, therefore, does the apostle say, in the Second [Epistle] to the Corinthians: “In whom the **this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not**, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine [unto them].” 2 Co. iv. 4.

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae –
Glen C. Miller OSV

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Matt. xiii. 11–16; Isa. vi. 10.

“the Lord replied to the disciples, when they asked Him, “Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?”—“Because it is given unto you to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven; but to them I speak in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not hear, understanding they may not understand; in order that the prophecy of Isaiah regarding them may be fulfilled, saying, Make the heart of this people gross and make their ears dull, and blind their eyes. But blessed are your eyes, which see the things that ye see; and your ears, which hear what ye do hear.”

(John 3:18) *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Doing Theology

Jesus came to judge the elect for response to the recognition that the Son of God was in their midst. Now, if any could see God behind the ordinary and extraordinary miracles of everyday life, he had obviously been blessed by the grace of the Father and so would also recognize the Son of God, and *on that day* Christ would know him.

But if any elect was blind to the Son, and could not see God behind His miracles and healings; then he had been condemned by God already, and was dead spiritually. Only by God’s grace would the elect eventually recognize Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be saved (see previous page).

Greeks, Romans, and other pagans not among the elect, were condemned if they did not believe in the Son of God (there was no other covenant to save them).

So what must you do?

Believe that God is responsible for life, the world, and everything that is good. You must observe the commandments of Jesus and teach others to do the same - show them through your own life what it means to observe his commands, and watch their efforts; correct their mistakes and praise their understanding.

Start today with this story, and teach your friends about overcoming spiritual “blindness”.

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae– Glen C. Miller OSV

Elect - one of the children of God under the Abrahamic covenant. Most were Jews.

on that day = judgment day

Recommended Books

ISBN

Metaphysical Bible Dictionary	Unity	Unity