

# The Miracles Of Jesus Christ: Healing Blind Bartimaeus

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Christ's healing of blind Bartimaeus is the only miraculous healing of blindness recorded in at least three of the Gospels (Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43). Although the accounts of the healing of Bartimaeus are similar, they contain a few significant differences. The two major ones concern the place of the miracle and the people in the miracle.

With regard to the place, Matthew and Mark report this healing to have taken place when Jesus left the city of Jericho. However, Luke writes, "Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho" (Luke 18:35). The alleged discrepancy is answered by noting that two Jerichos (a new and an old city) existed at that time, the new Jericho lying about two miles south of old Jericho. Leaving old Jericho would be the same as "coming near [new] Jericho," as Luke records it.

With regard to the people, Matthew reports two people were healed while Mark and Luke mention only one person. The latter simply focus on the healing of the prominent individual, Bartimaeus (only Mark reports his name), while Matthew reports on both individuals who were healed. This incident is one of two times that Matthew records two people involved in a miracle where the others account for only one. The second is the exorcism in Gardara (Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:27-39; Mark 5:1-20).

Mark provides the fullest detail about Bartimaeus' healing. Jesus, journeying to Jerusalem for the last time with His disciples, led a large procession of people. In less than a week He would give His life as the sacrifice for sins. Although feeling the pressure of the suffering He was about to endure, Jesus' compassion still motivated Him to tend to the needy.

## 1. Does Bartimaeus really know Jesus' significance?

**Comment:** While Bartimaeus sits by the roadside wondering, "Why all the commotion?" he is told that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. In addressing Him as "O Lord, Son of David," his crying out to Him for mercy acknowledges Christ's deity and humanity, as well as signifying his acceptance of His Messiahship as the future King of Israel. "Son of David" was a well-known designation of the expected Prophet (Ezekiel 34:23-24; Matthew 9:27; Luke 1:32), the Promised One at whose coming the eyes of the blind would be opened (Isaiah 29:18; 35:5).

## 2. Is Jesus' healing of the blind men merely physical?

**Comment:** The fact that their eyes can now see alludes not only to receiving physical sight, but also—more importantly—to their eyes being opened spiritually, verified by the words "and they followed Him" (Matthew 20:34; Mark 10:52; Luke 18:43). The world ridicules Christians for calling out to God in faith, but this is exactly what the Son of God wants us to do. Many who are spiritually blind to God's truth have a bitter attitude, disliking those whose eyes are opened to Christ, the only path to salvation.

Since Bartimaeus was blind, he likely felt a certain tension in straining to ascertain Jesus' reaction to his shout. No doubt, he felt great relief when He responded with

compassion. Most people do not realize how far they are from God and the wonderful gifts He offers to those who respond to His call. However, because they will not cast off their self-righteousness, they remain alienated from Him, at enmity with Christ (Romans 10:3). When God calls, we must lay aside every weight and enticing sin (Hebrews 12:1-3).

3. If Christ is omniscient, why does He ask, “What do you want Me to do for you?” Matthew 20:32; Mark 10:51; Luke 18:41.

**Comment:** Jesus asked similar intriguing questions in Matthew 9:28 and John 5:6: “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” “Do you want to be made well?” As the omniscient One, He knew what they needed. However, He often questioned those desiring healing, prompting them to express their need and faith in words so that, in a fuller exercise of faith, they would be prepared to receive the desired blessing. His question, then, is intended to produce a dynamic exercise of faith in the men and to be a sign that He was willing to aid them.

4. How does Bartimaeus respond to Christ’s question?

**Comment:** When Bartimaeus answers Jesus, he addresses Him respectfully. In the King James Version, all three accounts indicate that he uses “Lord.” But in Mark, the word rendered “Lord” is different than those in Matthew and Luke: *rabboni*, correctly translated in the New King James Version, meaning “My great master.” Akin to “rabbi,” it is a higher and more respectful term. It is found only in Mark 10:51 and John 20:16, where Mary Magdalene uses it of Christ after His resurrection. We must honor the One from whom we seek it.

Their earnest request is illuminating: “Lord, that our eyes may be opened” (Matthew 20:33). Unless we confess our need, showing our desire to have the need filled by Christ, He will take no action. The same is true in the matter of salvation: We must confess that we are a sinner if we expect to be forgiven and saved. The apostle John writes, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9). No confession to God means no forgiveness and no salvation.

God’s blessings, like this healing, are intended to improve our devotion to Him, but people often pervert their blessings to other uses. Many become distracted by them, leading to backsliding. We should instead follow the example of our Savior, who came, not to be served, but to serve.