

The Miracles Of Jesus Christ: Healing The Blind Man From Bethsaida

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Jesus Christ healed many blind people during His earthly ministry, and four of them are recorded in detail in the gospels. Mark alone records Jesus' miracle of healing the blind man from Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26), which happened not far from the scene of the feeding of the 5,000.

The blind man had been brought to Christ for healing by some friends or family. Before dealing with the man's blindness, Jesus separates the afflicted man from the crowd, taking him out of town away from the inhabitants. As in another healing, He uses His spittle on the man's eyes, and afterward, He commands the man not to tell others what had transpired.

This miracle illustrates important spiritual truths. Although the man may still have been able to sense light, he remained functionally blind. His blindness is a physical portrayal of spiritual or moral blindness, indicating one who is incapable of discerning the spiritual and moral truths that are plain to those whom God has called.

1. What aspect makes this miracle unique?

Comment: The healing of the blind man is unique in that it occurs in stages rather than instantaneously. Granted, the man born blind had to go to the pool of Siloam and wash his eyes (John 9), but once he did, the healing was immediate (John 9:7). Some sicknesses cannot be healed by degrees, requiring a decisive blow to end them. The exorcising of a demon, for example, must be accomplished entirely or else it is not expelled at all (Mark 1:21-28; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29). A leper is still a leper if the blemish remains (Mark 1:40-45; Luke 17:11-19). However, blindness can be healed in stages: first a glimmer of light, then more clarity, and finally perfect vision.

2. What is the spiritual significance of the blindness?

Comment: This healing by stages pictures the maturation process of a believer's spiritual understanding, the conversion process each Christian experiences. Christ asks the blind man "if he saw anything" (Mark 8:23), and he looks up, indicating a natural first inclination toward the source of light to discern images. The man's reply, "I see men like trees, walking" (verse 24), reveals that he had not been born blind. However, he could not precisely discern the shape and magnitude of the objects he recognized.

Christ's method of healing here shows that our spiritual enlightenment is a continuous process. At first, we cannot see God's truth clearly. Most of our spiritual blindness remains, but as our faith, obedience, and growth develops, Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), increases the clarity of our spiritual vision through the power of His Holy Spirit.

3. With the man's sight restored, is Christ finished with His miracle? Mark 8:24-25.

Comment: Jesus touches the man's eyes again, and this time his vision becomes completely clear. When ophthalmologists restore vision surgically today, they allow their patients only a glimmer of light at first so that the optic nerve can grow accustomed to it before being exposed to the full light of day.

Christ's significant double laying on of hands shows that His disciples, though mostly still blind (Mark 8:16-18), have begun to see. He would touch them again after His resurrection (Luke 24:44-49), opening their eyes fully to His truth. The fully restored sight proves that Jesus never leaves His work unfinished and that He performs it with excellence, the sterling attitude that should be present in all our actions and service (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

The fact of healing is seen in the simple but strong declaration, "He was restored." The wording verifies that the man was not born blind. The first exercise of his restored sight was likely to look into Jesus' face. Thus, spiritually, Christ is to be one's initial focus when God gives understanding.

4. Why does Christ place a restriction on the man after the miracle? Mark 8:26.

Comment: He says, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town," another command to keep quiet about the miracle. This was not a universal prohibition but was limited to Bethsaida. Why? Christ had done many mighty works there, but the townspeople had rejected them in unbelief. As a result, He had pronounced a woe upon them (Matthew 11:21). In Jesus' command to the healed man, Bethsaida received a mild but significant judgment for not responding to His works.

Rejection of spiritual blessing causes loss of spiritual privilege. If we do not want God in our lives, He will let us follow our free will, and He will leave. Today, the descendants of the ancient Israelites, who should know better, should beware as their legislators and courts ban God from their nations. If they continue to reject God, He will surely respond with a stern rebuke. If that happens, woe to Jacob's descendants!

We must all contemplate this judgment on Bethsaida and on all those who fail to honor their spiritual privileges. It is never too late to turn to God in repentance, even for apostate Israel. Paul writes encouragingly:

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. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Romans 11:25-26)