

### The Lord Predicts His Death; A Blind Man is Healed

Luke 18:31-43

*Luke 18:31-34: Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. 32 For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. 33 They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." 34 But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.*

#### Background Notes

In these verses the Lord once again predicted His coming rejection and death as He and the Twelve journeyed toward Jerusalem. In Luke 9:22 the Lord told them, "*The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*" And then again in Luke 9:43-45, "*But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, 'Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.' But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.*" And notice what our Lord said in Luke 17:24-25: "*For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.*" So the Lord knew what lay in store for Him when He reached Jerusalem.

Here's a theological question: how did the Lord know these future events? Did the Lord know them because of His divine omniscience? Or did He know these things because He studied and learned the Old Testament Messianic prophecies? Or did He know these things because the Holy Spirit revealed them to Him? The answer is "Yes!" to all three!

#### Doctrinal Points

##### 1. The Lord knew about His coming death and resurrection.

When we seek to answer the question of how the Lord knew all these future events, we need to be sure that we have a proper understanding of the incarnation. First, when the eternal Son of God became Man, He did not stop being God in any way. Jesus was, and is, 100% God and 100% man. Being 100% God means that He did not give up any of His divine attributes when He became Man, including His omniscience.

Second, it must also be said that in the eternal councils of God, it was determined that God the Son would voluntarily give up the full use of His divine attributes during His earthly ministry. For example, in Mark 13:32 the Lord Jesus, *"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*

Third, the Holy Spirit came upon our Lord at His baptism, empowering Him for His earthly ministry. The Spirit certainly played an integral role in our Lord's insight into the prophetic Scriptures.

All the things mentioned here in verses 32 and 33 are in the Old Testament prophecies. In this connection, read Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. Even the fact that the Lord was spit upon is contained in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Isaiah 50:6: *"I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting."*

But there were things that our Lord knew about His coming death and resurrection that went beyond the Old Testament Messianic prophecies. He knew that Judas was the one who would betray Him. He knew that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed twice. He knew that He would be resurrected on the third day.

The Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, was never without all His divine attributes. He knew the Old Testament prophetic Scriptures, and as Man he was empowered and enabled by the Holy Spirit, and He knew all these details about His coming death and resurrection. The Lord knew about His coming death and resurrection.

## **2. The Lord hears every humble cry for mercy**

*Verses 35-43: Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging.*

**36** *And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. 37 So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. 38 And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 39 Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 40 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, 41 saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." 42 Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." 43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*

This miracle is also found in the parallel accounts in Matthew 20 and Mark 10. When we compare the three accounts, we find that there are some differing details that must be harmonized. Matthew says that two blind men were healed. Apparently Mark and Luke, who mention only one blind man, concentrated on the man who was crying out for mercy. Mark even gave us his name: Bartameus.

Matthew and Mark say that the miracle took place as Jesus and His followers were leaving Jericho, while Luke says that it happened as they were approaching Jericho (v35). This apparent disagreement can be resolved in two possible ways:

(1) The request for healing took place as they were approaching Jericho, but the miracle actually took place as they were leaving Jericho.

(2) The more likely explanation of the differences has to do with the fact there were two Jerichos at that time – Old Testament Jericho and New Testament Jericho.

The road up to Jerusalem went through both Jerichos, first alongside the abandoned tel, or ruins, of Old Testament Jericho, and then through the town of New Testament Jericho. As Jewish writers, Matthew and Mark were probably thinking of “Jericho” as Old Testament Jericho, where so many biblical events in the Old Testament took place. Luke, however, the Gentile writer, who did not grow up in the Land, probably referred to the “Jericho” that was standing at the time of Christ and at the time that Luke was writing, the New Testament Jericho that Herod the Great had built. So the miracle of healing would have taken place on the road between the two Jerichos - as they were leaving the site of Old Testament Jericho and as they were approaching the town of New Testament Jericho.

By the way, you can visit the ruins of both Jerichos today. In fact, there are three Jerichos today, all within about a five-mile radius. There is the modern city of Jericho, the Jericho that we read about often these days in the newspapers, or hear about on the news on TV. Then there is the tel, or mound of ruins, of Old Testament Jericho, where archaeologists have excavated the wall system that existed in the time of Joshua and before. And then there is the site of New Testament Jericho, where you can see the ruins of Herod the Great’s winter palace. Parts of the old Roman road on which this miracle took place can still be seen, as it winds up from all three Jerichos and on up through the Judean wilderness toward Jerusalem. Verse 43 says that the healed blind man began following Jesus up that road.

Not all blind people in Israel at the time of Christ were miraculously healed, but this blind man called out for mercy and was healed. There is no record that the Lord ever turned away from a humble cry for mercy!

The blind man cried out, *“Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me!”* This was not only a humble cry for mercy - this was a cry of faith, because this blind man recognized that Jesus was the Messiah. “Son of David” is a Messianic title, so this blind man was crying out for mercy with faith in Jesus as the Messiah. This is why Jesus said to him, *“Receive your sight. Your faith has made you well.”*

This miracle is certainly a spiritual picture of salvation, and of the humble faith that is necessary in order to be saved. Let me ask you: Have you come to that point in your life where you have recognized that you are blind because of sin, and you need to be healed? Have you cried out to the Lord for mercy? The Lord hears every humble cry for mercy!

## Practical Application

**Don't let what you *want* to believe keep you from believing what you *should* believe.**

Verse 34: *"But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken."* Why was it so hard for the disciples to believe what the Lord was telling them about His coming rejection, death and resurrection? The bottom line is, they *wanted* to believe that Jesus was the conquering Messiah who would deliver them from the oppression of Rome and set up His earthly Kingdom right then and there. They didn't want to believe in a rejected and crucified Messiah.

What they *wanted* to believe kept them from believing what they *should* believe. How true this is for many people today, including even some Christians. We don't want to believe unpleasant doctrines, for example, that deal with discipline, and pain, and suffering, and judgment. Listen - **don't let what you *want* to believe keep you from believing what you *should* believe!**