

Message #71

Matthew 20:29-34

This passage of Scripture is critical because it clearly shows that Jesus Christ is the King and that the majority of Israel rejected that reality.

PRIOR TO JESUS CHRIST ENTERING JERUSALEM, HE WAS IDENTIFIED AS KING BY TWO BLIND MEN, BUT NOT BY THE MAJORITY OF ISRAEL.

Jesus Christ is seen and recognized by two blind men.

OBSERVATION #1 – This event happened as they were leaving Jericho. **20:29a**

Now we know from 20:17 that Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem. Jericho is 10-12 miles to the northeast of Jerusalem. To get there you go out of Jericho, ascend the Mount of Olives and drop down into Jerusalem.

Jericho had two parts to it—the old part of the city and the new part of the city. We may recall that Jericho had been leveled by God, under the leadership of Joshua some 1300 years before Christ. However, Hiel, the Bethelite, rebuilt the city some 400 plus years after it was destroyed by Joshua (I Kings 16:34). In fact, this is the place where Elijah was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind (II Kings 2:1, 4-5). Herod the Great further rebuilt the city on both sides of the Jordan and built a winter palace there, about 20 years before Christ was born. According to Josephus, Herod was a great builder and architect. The reason why this is important is because Matthew and Mark (Mark 10:46) say that this event happened when they were leaving Jericho, and Luke says it happened when He was approaching Jericho (Luke 18:35). The solution to the problem is that both are true—they were leaving the Old Jericho and entering the new Jericho.

OBSERVATION #2 – A large crowd was following Jesus. **20:29b**

The problem with Israel was not the numbers following Christ; it was the numbers believing on Christ.

OBSERVATION #3 – Two blind men cry out to Jesus. **20:30**

If we compare Mark and Luke's account, which focus on one of the two, we may understand that two men were sitting by the road and cried out, but one was really crying out more than another and his name was Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46). The verb "cried out" means these men screamed with a very loud voice. This is very emotional screaming, even beyond yelling (G. Abbot-Smith, p. 255). What they specifically cry out concerning Jesus is important: 1) They identify Him as the Lord; 2) They identify Him as the Son of David; 3) They identify Him as the one who can grant mercy. Gaebelien said it was the Holy Spirit that prompted these blind men to cry out these very words. What they were saying was a rebuke to the entire nation. By screaming out that He is the Son of David, these blind men are acknowledging that this is Israel's King. In the course of Jesus' ministry, blind people always saw better than those with sight (i.e. Matt. 9:27).

OBSERVATION #4 – The crowd told the blind men to be quiet. **20:31**

The Greek word here is a synonym of the Greek word *σιγαω*, which means keep silent and secret (Smith, p. 40). Undoubtedly the crowd wanted the blind men to shut their mouths, but the motive may have been more than just silence; it may have been a conviction that the truth was being screamed about Jesus Christ and there was a desire to keep the truth secret. There is a very important point to see here—when you are communicating the truth of God to those whose hearts are religious but not right with God, they will want you to quiet down. Think what would have happened if this massive crowd really embraced the truth that Jesus was the Son of David, the King of Kings. His entrance into Jerusalem would not have ended with “crucify Him,” but “crown Him.”

OBSERVATION #5 – Jesus stops and asks the blind men what they want Him to do. **20:32**

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem to be mocked, scourged and crucified (20:17-19). This is a very heavy load to endure. Yet Jesus still had time for blind sinners. Why does Jesus ask something He already knows? God requires that sinners specifically ask Him for deliverance!

OBSERVATION #6 – The blind men ask Jesus to open their eyes. **20:33**

All they want from Jesus is something physical. They should have asked forgiveness of sins.

OBSERVATION #7 – Jesus touches their eyes and immediately they are healed. **20:34**

Now there is very important dispensational truth to glean from this verse:

- 1) When Jesus heals by physically being present and touching someone—mercy is to Israel.
- 2) When Jesus heals by not being physically present but heals by word—mercy is to Gentiles.

God heals today not by physical touch but by His Word. Whoever believes on Jesus Christ immediately is saved and receives spiritual sight. All things become new. Notice all it took was one moment of time and the healing was immediate.

The two regained their sight and followed Jesus.

There is a tremendous picture and foreshadowing here of another time when Jesus will come to Jerusalem. The next time He comes, the nation will be in blindness, but they will all be crying out to Him, for the Son of David to deliver them at the end of the Tribulation. They will, as a nation, cry out for His healing and He will grant it.

It is just a shame that Israel did not recognize this and accept this the first time Christ came. She missed so much through her rejection and rebellion.