

The Son of David Will Be Lifted Up in Jerusalem

Previously we were reminded that Jesus, the Danielic Son of Man, must go up to Jerusalem so that everything that is written about Him in the Scriptures might be fulfilled (**Luke 18:31; cf. Dan. 7:14f.**). Further, we were told that Jesus will be handed over to the Gentile people, who will mock Him, treat Him shamefully, even spit on Him and have Him scourged before they take Him and kill Him (**vv. 32-33**). We know still further that the manner in which these particular Gentile people will kill Jesus will be by crucifixion. Jesus describes His eminent death with these words:

"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But **for this purpose I came to this hour.**"²⁸ "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." (**Jn. 12:27-28**) [Jesus said,]³² "And I, if I am **lifted up from the earth**, will draw all men to Myself."³³ But He was saying this to **indicate the kind of death** by which He was to die. (**Jn. 12:32-33**).

Jesus is going up to Jerusalem, the city of David, **to be lifted up on high**, where He will be hung on a Roman cross, suffering and suffocating, until He takes His final breathe. But that brings us to an extremely important question for the Gospels: **why must Jesus go up to JERUSALEM for these things to happen?** Why couldn't Messiah suffer and die somewhere else like Galilee, perhaps in Capernaum (**Lk. 10:15**) or Bethsaida (**Lk. 10:13**) or what about Nazareth – those living in Nazareth wanted to throw Jesus to His death off of the cliff there (**see Luke 4:29**)? Jesus could have died anywhere else, so why the city of King David?

Well, Jesus has already let us in on part of that answer earlier in the Gospel when He said:

³³ "Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next *day*; **for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.** [**PAUSE**]"³⁴ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her!* How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen *gathers* her brood under her wings, and **you would not have it!** [*This is a concise summary of Israel's long walk with God!*] "Behold, **your house is left to you desolate;** and I say to you, you will not see Me until *the time* comes when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" (**Lk. 13:33-35**).

Jesus **must** go to Jerusalem because He has come in a long line of prophets, who themselves have suffered at the hands and have been put to death by the children of Israel within her very walls. Almost as soon as God's people entered into the city of David she has either wanted to kill or actually killed the many prophets God has graciously sent to her, offering to save her from destruction. Now Jesus knows He is entering into Jerusalem to offer them a last chance to repent before God brings final judgment on her inhabitants.

Further still, our passage this morning will emphasize that Jesus is the Son of David (**Luke 18:38-39**), which again underscores the fact that He is the promised **Messiah** sent from God, to not only be the sovereign ruler over Israel – the King of the Jews – but who will extend God's Kingdom rule over all the nations of the world. So like a “Warrior-King,” geared up for battle, Jesus has been pronouncing the warning of the coming judgment of God as He and His disciples have been approaching Jerusalem.

Of all the Gospel writers, Luke alone emphasizes the long journey up to Jerusalem where Jesus continually warns Jerusalem (along with the whole of Israel) what her fate will be if she does not repent and put her trust in the LORD's Messiah. As readers of the Gospel, we need to see that Jesus, the Messiah sent from God, is preparing for battle – but the people He is about to go to war with are the very people, whom the apostle John described:

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to **His own**, and **those who were His own** did not receive Him. (**Jn. 1:10-11**).

An interesting side note you should already be thinking about is that: In the book of Acts Luke will begin by showing how the Spirit-empowered body of Jesus will move out, away from Jerusalem, as if to say her best days were in the past AND THEN SUDDENLY towards the end of his story, Luke will follow Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, in his long journey back up to Jerusalem (**cf. Luke 23:18; Acts 22:22**) almost as if to say that the God of all mercy and grace is giving Jerusalem one last, final chance to repent and trust in her Messiah before He comes in A.D. 70 and completely destroys the city, along with her temple. Sadly, it will be clear then, after Paul arrives in Jerusalem, what we will all see by the end of the Gospel: all Jerusalem is good for is to be a fertile ground to kill God's prophets [Word], in other words, Paul will find that Jerusalem has not changed much even after she has pierced her own Messiah. **Judgment is on its way!**

Now, we know that Jesus is hot on the heels of Jerusalem as He now enters into the city of Jericho (**Luke 18:35**), which was located on the major highway into Jerusalem, now only eighteen miles away. By mentioning the city of Jericho, our minds are quickly drawn back to that first city God destroyed after bringing His people into the Promised Land (**cf. Joshua 5:13-6:27**). Upon arriving in Jericho, Jesus is introduced to a poor, blind beggar who was very eager to “see” Jesus (**Luke 18:36-40**). As a poor, blind beggar we couldn't have a greater contrast from the earlier rich, young ruler (**cf. vv. 18-23**). While one had everything, the other had absolutely nothing. Even the way he was treated by the crowd, showed that his needs were not much attended to by others. Watching how the crowds tell the poor broken man to “shut up” as he is crying to Jesus for mercy, reminds us how the disciples were telling the parents who were bringing their children to Jesus to go away – after all, Jesus is far too important for all these social no-bodies! Right? Why would He, the MESSIAH, **waste** His time with them?

Now, we might find it helpful to take a moment and mirror the poor, blind beggar to some of our previous characters in the stories surrounding our current passage. (1) Let's begin with the disciples

themselves in the passage immediately preceding our own (READ v. 34). Notice what God has beautifully done here by once again buttressing these two marvelous stories up against one another. In v. 34 we have a group of Jesus' disciples **who can physically see** but who are *spiritually blind*. Though they see Jesus, they do not understand who He is and what He must do. Then when Jesus approaches Jericho, He meets a man **who is physically blind** but who *he sees very well spiritually*. Further, being that this social outcast, a poor blind beggar, is located **in Jericho** our thoughts are immediately cast back to another social outcast in Jericho, the pagan, prostitute Rahab, who also could **see very well spiritually**, much better than the previous spies who were sent into the land 40 years earlier (cf. Num. 13:25-33) – do you remember her words of trust in Yahweh, when she confessed?:

"I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. ¹⁰ "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, (Jos. 2:9-10) . . . ¹¹ "When we heard *it*, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; **for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.** (Jos. 2:11).

Now we need to remember that this spiritual "sight" or "faith" that has been displayed in these characters is ONCE AGAIN due solely to God's sovereign grace, which Jesus had prepared all of us for all the way back in **chap. 10** when, joyful in the Holy Spirit, He prayed to His Father saying:

"I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. ²² "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*." (Lk. 10:21-22).

Another character in the story is the rich, young ruler, who unlike the poor, blind beggar had everything he could possibly want – you could say he had his life together – and yet he had the audacity to actually ask Jesus, "Good Teacher, what shall I DO to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18). Once again we have a man who has physical eyes to see but is **spiritually blind** to his own **un-spiritual condition** – i.e., that he is spiritually dead before God and has NOTHING at all to offer God. The rich man was **too blind to see** how poor – in fact, spiritually bankrupt – he was before God. Oh, he might have been a very moral man, having obeyed all the commandments in relation to his neighbor (18:21), but it became crystal clear to everyone else who heard him, just how far his HEART AND SOUL was from God. **He was so rich with secondary things that he was no longer needy for the first things of God.** All Jesus has to do is offer an invitation for him to give up a tiny, lifeless idol - his money – and come and follow Jesus, LORD and Giver of all life AND **instantly** it was clear where the man's heart truly lies (18:22-23). Sadly, he was too blind to see both: the smallness of what he was unwilling to give up AND the infinitely great and eternally gracious offer of what he refused to embrace. As we will see here in a moment, while the rich man walked away from Jesus sad,

unwilling to part with his true master, the poor beggar will walk towards Jesus, receiving EVERYTHING, including eternal life, filled with marvelous joy, glorying in the grace of God.

Finally, we have the contrasting characters of the proud, self-righteous Pharisee and the humbled tax-collector, who was unable to even lift his head before God (18:9-14). The tax-collector, yet another social outcast, actually reminds us of the spiritual clarity of the poor blind beggar. He understood his spiritual bankruptcy – his spiritual need for a physician (Luke 5:31) – and he also cried out to God with a broken and contrite spirit, which God will never despise (cf. Ps. 51:17). He too could see very well. But the Pharisee – the Pharisee was **too blind to see just how unrighteousness – how sick he was before the Great Physician**, so that he failed to cry out to Jesus for mercy. His spiritual blindness, which could only be removed by God's grace, caused him to miss out on the communion and fellowship God offers to sinners.

In contrast to these many blind characters, we now have this poor blind beggar who clearly sees both his own brokenness – his poverty and his sickness – AND his need for a physician, Jesus, the son of David, to show him mercy (18:28). Though he is blind physically, God has opened his heart to “see” who Jesus truly is and what only He can do for him. But, before, we leave these other characters and especially in light of our upcoming Reformation celebrations, it might be helpful to point out a central theme of the Reformation that is just screaming out for attention in these texts – that is, the doctrine of justification by *sola fide*, or our salvation completed by resting and receiving in the finished work of Jesus Christ alone. That is the very idea that Jesus is teaching His disciples over and over again in these stories. He is showing all of us that our only hope of entering into the loving fellowship of God the Father is by resting our faith in Jesus Christ, His Son. Furthermore, the idea that the apostle Paul was the progenitor of the doctrine of “*sola fide*” is here forever decimated in these treasured stories of Jesus' interplay with these characters.

Finally, these stories of Jesus' interchange with these acquaintances definitely answers the question of who has access to God's glorious presence – who may ascend to His holy hill? The one who “sees” his or her desperate need for a physician and cries out for mercy. The LORD Himself tells us:

"Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? ² "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word. (Isa. 66:1-2).

There is absolutely NOTHING too difficult here to understand what God requires of us! The problem is not that we can't understand what God requires of us. The problem is simply that we refuse to do what He requires of us AND further that we can do no other unless in His mercy and grace, He opens our hearts to rest in Jesus. It is this person who rests and receives Jesus alone who is truly rich before God and who has stored up an eternal treasure in the Heavens, whom we shall soon see face-to-face!

Now, before we look at what Jesus did in answering the poor, blind beggar's request, we need to take one more look at what he called Jesus – Son of David (vv. 38-39). When he initially heard the crowd stirring, he asked what all the commotion was about and someone said that “Jesus of Nazareth was passing by” (v. 37). Now, those in the crowd may not have meant anything other than the fact that Jesus was from Nazareth. We don't get any hint of disgust or contempt from the crowd, but we do remember when Philip was called by Jesus to follow Him that Philip went and called his brother, Nathanael, saying, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” (Jn. 1:45) **AND** Nathanael replied, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). Either way, the crowd certainly “sees” Jesus as merely, “Jesus of Nazareth.” But the blind man cries out “Son of David” - a clear confession that the promised Messiah has arrived! He alone could “see” who Jesus truly was.

Now one of the main responsibilities of the “Son of David” was given in the covenant God had made with King David long ago:

“When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ **He shall build a house for My name**, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Sam. 7:12-13).

It is this “house-temple” - the place where God and His elect people can meet – that Jesus is going to the cross in Jerusalem to build. This is why one of the first things He does when He arrives is to cleanse the temple before He leaves it for destruction (cf. Luke 19:45-48; Matt. 24:1-2ff.). Remember Jesus MUST go to Jerusalem, where its inhabitants will tear down the true temple of God by turning Him over to the Gentiles to be hung from a tree and as He has promised all along, He will raise up the NEW TEMPLE within three days (cf. Lk. 9:22; 18:33; Jn. 2:19; 10:18; Matt. 26:61). Jesus, the Son of David, is going up to Jerusalem to build the promised NEW MESSIANIC TEMPLE of GOD! This then gives us the complete answer of WHY Jesus MUST go up to Jerusalem to die! It is there that the prophets have been killed and so where the ultimate prophet – God's own Son must be killed. Therefore, it is there that God will bring judgment on the OLD WINESKINS to make room for the NEW WINESKINS of a NEW TEMPLE where God's people can finally draw near to God in peace and rest through the blood of His own Son (cf. Eph. 2:11-2).

But as the WARRIOR-KING, the Messiah, Son of David, goes up to Jerusalem for battle what will His warfare with Israel look like? That is why we have this picture here this morning in Luke's Gospel (18:40-42). Watch every step Jesus takes – as He slows down, Luke the writer wants us too to slow down and notice HOW Jesus acts – this will give us a clearer insight in HOW Jesus will act when He arrives in Jerusalem and WHAT Jesus will do once He gets there.

We are told that Jesus stops in his tracks (v. 40). A king doesn't approach his subjects. Rather, the king commands his subjects to approach him. Jesus is fulfilling the man's correct understanding of Jesus – He is the King, the Son of David and therefore He commands the others to bring him to Jesus

(v. 40). He then asks the poor, blind beggar what can Jesus do for him (v. 41). Now, Jesus knows clearly what the man wants. Everyone in town knows what the man wants. Jesus doesn't ask out of a lack of understanding, but rather to help the man clarify not only what he is asking for but FROM WHOM he is asking it. As the man clarifies just what he wanted from Jesus, he along with the whole crowd no knows what Jesus must do. Think of it as when a pool player calls his pockets before he shoots. Once called, everyone's eyes are on that pocket because no matter what the shooter does, even if it goes into another pocket, he didn't do what everyone expected him to do. Once the poor, blind beggar makes clear what he is asking for – when Jesus does it, everyone will know without a doubt not only what Jesus did but who He is before them.

Just another side note here – think of how the crowd tells the man to shut up, just as the disciples earlier told the parents to go away. Everyone in these stories treat one another the way the world treats those who live on the margins of society. Part of the reason our world is sometimes such a disturbing place to live is because we don't take time to show compassion to those who cannot return the favor. Oh, we may take time to help those who are really important but what about those who can't do anything for us in return. Jesus is teaching His disciples, along with us, something very important He wants us to live by – Jesus always has time for compassion (see Acts 3:1-10). In fact, we could encapsulate His whole life as one of compassion to this whole world.

The poor, blind beggar, knowing that Jesus was the promised Son of David – the Messiah – also knows that Messiah will have the power to heal. Do you remember the first text Jesus preached from after His baptism and testing in the wilderness? Luke tells us it was from **Isaiah 61:1-2**, which read:

"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,
¹⁹ TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." (Lk. 4:18-19).

There it is right in the prophecy – He will give sight to the blind! After Jesus read the passage from Isaiah, He sat down and said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing!" (v. 21). This is how Jesus began His earthly ministry. Everything that took place after this must be read in light of this Isaianic text. Somehow, the word that Jesus is the promised Messiah of Isaiah's prophecy – the son of David – has made it back to this poor, blind beggar and in desperation for the Messianic healing of the promised new age he cries out to Jesus for mercy. He wants a taste – no, a glimpse – of the glorious eschaton that Messiah will bring!

And that's exactly what Jesus does (v. 42). He brings light into this poor man's world – the very one whom everyone else told to shut up, now has been given everything. As Zechariah, the father of John, had prophesied earlier:

Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,⁷⁹
TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To

guide our feet into the way of peace." (Lk. 1:78-79).

Zechariah prophesied about the coming light of God into the world. How will that come? Well, look at this poor, blind beggar who suddenly sees. Jesus tells him that light has flooded into the darkness of his world because he rested his faith in Jesus, the Messiah (v. 42). As God had promised through another prophet:

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." ² "But for you who fear My name, **the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings**; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. (Mal. 4:1-2).

This is that promised healing! And what Jesus does for this poor, blind beggar is what He is heading to do in Jerusalem where though He will be crucified and laid in a borrowed tomb for three days, nevertheless the "Son" of righteousness will rise with healing in "His" wings!

Finally, not only do we see this morning right kind of heart that God will not despise, we also see an incredibly beautiful picture of what it looks like when a sinner comes under the sovereign power and grace of God (v. 43). What does our life look like when God transforms our hearts by His sovereign grace and mercy and love? We follow Jesus, glorifying God, which leads others to give praise to God as well (v. 43). Isn't that an incredible picture, especially in contrast to the deep sadness by which the rich young ruler walked away from Jesus? Whereas, the rich, young ruler lost everything in the end, the poor blind beggar was given life eternal, which is "to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent" (John 17:3).

Where are you in these stories? When you look at Jesus, what do you see? What about yourself? Do you see yourself as well and in no need for a physician or do you approach God, standing afar off, even unwilling to lift your eyes before God, crying out, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"? It is that brokenness before God that He will never despise and He assures you all:

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; ¹³ for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." (Rom. 10:9-13).

Amen!
- SDG-