

Mark 10:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

Analysis

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging (Βαρτιμαῖος...τυφλὸς προσαίτης ἐκάθητο παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν, Bartimaios...typhlos prosaitēs ekathēto para tēn hodon). Mark identifies this beggar by name—Bartimaeus (Βαρτιμαῖος), Aramaic bar-Timai meaning "son of Timaeus." Mark's inclusion of both Aramaic and Greek names suggests eyewitness testimony and that Bartimaeus became known in the early church.

The word τυφλὸς (typhlos, "blind") describes physical blindness that becomes metaphor for spiritual illumination throughout this passage. Bartimaeus "sat by the highway" (ἐκάθητο παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν)—the verb ἐκάθητο (ekathēto, imperfect tense) indicates habitual action: he regularly sat begging. The term προσαίτης (prosaitēs) means "beggar," one who asks for alms. In ancient society, blindness meant unemployment and destitution—beggars positioned themselves on roads to major cities like Jericho, where traffic and pilgrims provided almsgiving opportunities.

The phrase "by the highway" (παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν, para tēn hodon) recalls Mark's repeated use of ὁδός (hodos, "way") for the journey to Jerusalem and the cross (8:27; 9:33-34; 10:32, 52). Bartimaeus sits beside "the way"—physically on the roadside, spiritually outside the kingdom. Jesus will bring him into "the way," following Christ to Jerusalem.

Historical Context

Jericho was a prosperous oasis city 17 miles northeast of Jerusalem, approximately 825 feet below sea level—the lowest city on earth. As the gateway to Judea from the east, Jericho served as a major checkpoint for pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem for festivals. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem featured in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). Beggars positioned themselves at city gates and main roads, especially during festival seasons when pilgrims would give alms as acts of piety. Blindness was common in the ancient world due to disease, injury, and lack of medical treatment.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Bartimaeus sitting 'by the highway' symbolize those who are near the kingdom but not yet in it, observing religious activity but not participating?
2. What does Mark's inclusion of Bartimaeus's name suggest about his later significance in the early church and the transformative power of encountering Jesus?
3. Who are the 'Bartimaeuses' in your life—those on the margins, overlooked by religious crowds, whom Jesus sees and calls?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς Ἱεριχὼ καὶ ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ¹
And they came to Jericho And as he went his out of
G2532 G2064 G1519 G2410 G2532 G1607 G846 G575

Ἰεριχὼ καὶ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ὅχλου ἡκανοῦ²
Jericho And G3588 disciples his And number of people a great
G2410 G2532 G3101 G846 G2532 G3793 G2425

νιὸς Τιμαίου Βαρτιμαῖος ὁ τυφλὸς ἐκάθητο παρὰ τὴν³
the son of Timaeus Bartimaeus G3588 blind sat by G3588
G5207 G5090 G924 G5185 G2521 G3844

οδόν προσαιτῶν
the highway side begging
G3598 G4319

Additional Cross-References

John 9:8 (Parallel theme): The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

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