

## Healing Blind Bartimaeus

... a parable for today's believers  
and unbelievers alike

Jesus and the disciples had gone through Jericho and, as they were leaving the town, they passed a blind man on the wayside whose name was Bartimaeus. Poor Bartimaeus. There he sat, a symbol of all mankind: unseeing, unloved, uncared for. In Bartimaeus' day the opportunities for upward mobility in society were much less plentiful than in today's world, especially in the United States. And if a man was also blind he was locked into a societal level from which he could never extricate himself.



Like all men in a spiritual sense, Bartimaeus was

shut out from the better things in life. He could not see. He could not read. He had no one to love or who could reciprocate his love. It seems, from this perspective, that Bartimaeus had no one special in his life. People only tolerated him. Bartimaeus was a social outcast, a misfit in society. Day by day he would sit by the wayside, waiting for someone to give him a few farthings – some (a very few) from their wealth, but most (still a very few) from their own meager store.



Then one day as he sat on the wayside with his tin cup or whatever it was, and his thoughts centered on himself and his pitiful condition, Bartimaeus could

*BARTIMAEUS cont. on pg 2*

## The Sermon on the Mount

Mat. 5-7; Luke 6:20-49

In this significant sermon Jesus was giving the disciples a blueprint for holy living. We must bear in mind that this was during a transition period, a process of changing over from the old to the new. Jesus was not attempting to combine the Old Covenant with the New Covenant that would soon be in force. It was still the Dispensation of the Law. Christ had not died yet - but He was bringing in new concepts while at the same time encouraging, and even demanding, that His disciples keep the Mosaic Law. It was during the same sermon that Jesus cautioned the disciples, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments [the Mosaic Law], and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the

kingdom of heaven."

At the same time Jesus was not content with their merely observing the Law, however meticulously; that was an outward righteousness only. Jesus was calling for a righteousness that started within a person and then manifested itself outwardly.

"Ye have heard...thou shalt not kill," Jesus said to them. It was the law by which, if a man kept it, he was considered to be righteous. Yet He showed them a better way:

"But I say," Jesus thrust it at them as His own commandment, "whosoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment."

*SERMON cont. on pg 4*

sense that the Miracle Worker Jesus was passing by. Bartimaeus had heard the approaching sound of the multitude around Jesus and he had felt the excitement that was generated in the air. When he had asked the passersby what was happening — why all the noise — they had told him that Jesus was nearing Bartimaeus' vicinity.

**Jesus!** the worker of miracles. **Jesus!** the Man who had conquered every affliction known to man. **Jesus!** a man of gentleness and compassion. At this point Bartimaeus was no longer aware of the excitement in the air; the excitement was welling up inside him. He felt an electric current of hope surge strongly through his being.

The noise of the crowd was drawing even closer now, and Bartimaeus knew that Jesus was at the center of it. So, even as all believers have done when they were in their sins, Bartimaeus began bellowing:

"Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus either did not hear him or did not choose to answer right away.

"Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Those who were in the forefront of the crowd tried to silence Bartimaeus: "Hush man!...Hold your peace!"

But he (and symbolically all of us) cried out the more: "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

He would not be quieted any more than we, when we were in our tragic blindness, would still our insistent bawling. We were all blind, not loved, not cared for, sorely in need of help and taking no thought of whom we offended by our desperate cries.

"Jesus, Jesus, have mercy on me!"

Jesus could not ignore him any longer, nor did He want to.

He stopped and spoke to Bartimaeus (and Bartimaeus' soul quivered in expectation): "What do you want me to do for you?"

*Oh God, he thought, this is what I could never hope for!* Then he quickly seized the moment... "Lord, open my eyes!" he pleaded.

Jesus, moved with compassion, touched his

sightless eyes and immediately he received his sight and joined the crowd following Jesus. In like manner this same gentle, merciful Jesus has touched us all. He would not have heard us if we had not bawled loud and long. God always sees the need, but it is often the insistent plea that He answers.

God loves us, but He often makes us wait before He heeds our plaintive cries for relief from whatever mortal distress has us in its grip at the moment. We can take a cue from Bartimaeus; he actually waited all his life before receiving his sight. That was before Jesus came with a mighty rush into the desolate vacuum of his life, bringing spiritual and physical sight with Him. It was well worth the dreary days and months and years he had waited... *knowing that he would never see and that he would die in his wretched solitude.*

We who have Christ as our comfort and security while we are waiting for Him to answer our prayers for this or that worthy attainment — surely we can afford to wait as long as Jesus is with us and in our hearts and lives — no matter whatever happens in the meantime. ∞

At times you will encounter in my posts (perhaps not in this one) some text labeled "Text Reference," or "Comment on Text Reference so-and-so..." The labels are not applicable to the excerpts, but **be sure to read the text to which they apply.** I leave the labels on the excerpts so that my readers can get a reasonable idea of how Life of Christ in Five Phases is laid out for optimal learning.

As I remarked in issue #2, the current issue (#3) of Kingdom Herald is like an airliner arriving at its destination a few hours ahead of schedule... now that is a bona fide rarity! I am adjusting KH's schedule to be on a weekly basis. The next issue should be out by next weekend. In my skewed reckoning a weekend starts on Friday morning and ends Sunday evening. Even with that ramped up schedule it is possible that this airliner (KH) will come jetting in ahead of schedule as this one is now doing.

See you as often as I am able and God is willing!

**Figure 2**

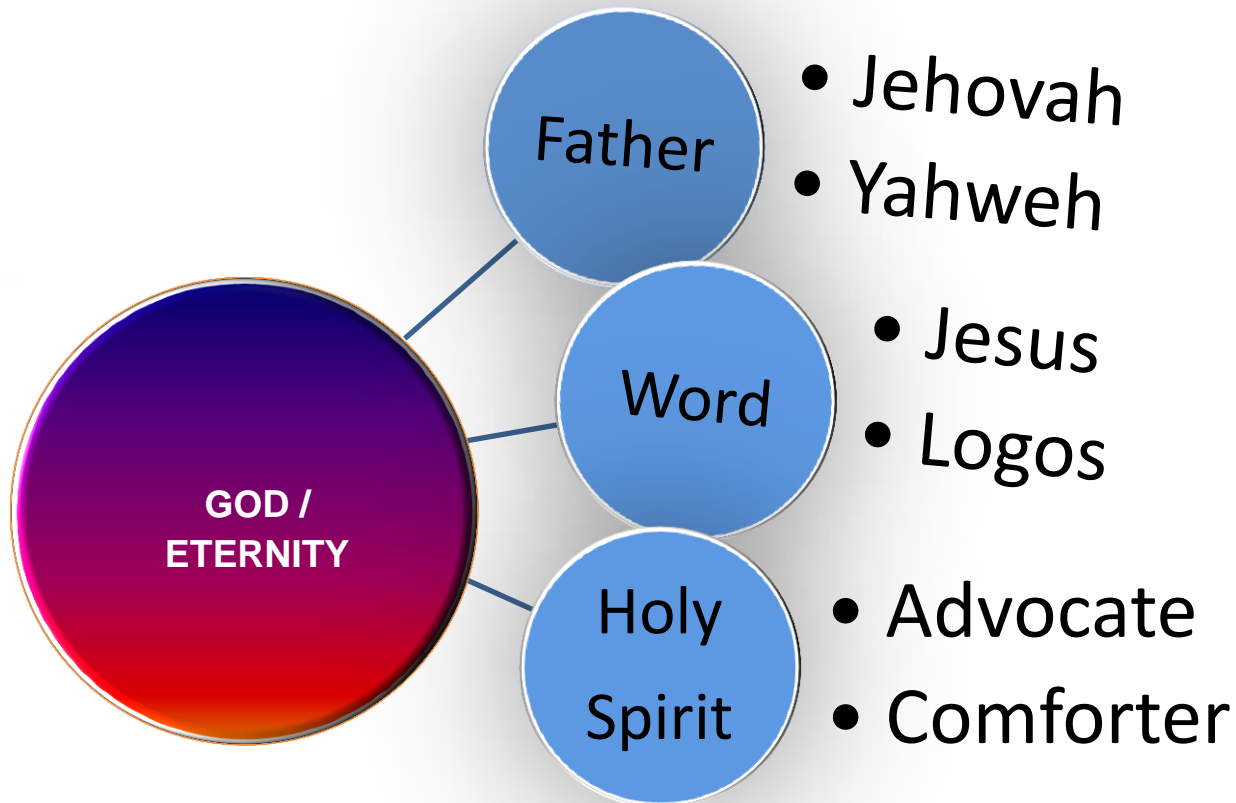


Figure 2 is intended to show God as the solid Rock He is. First, imagine that there is only ONE circle, GOD / ETERNITY, the one on the left. The other 3 circles and their accompanying names on the right are spread out to show some of the many distinguishing qualities of God. However God's oneness and His eternity of being are indisputable. In reality the 3 circles in the center column are coalesced into one mighty God (L col.) with many ancillary characteristics (R col.).

It is an intriguing thought that, because we are in Christ who is in God, we are also eternal beings, although not exclusively so, as God and the entirety of the Godhead are – God alone is fully eternal, never having begun to exist and never ceasing to exist.

There are questions at this point that I cannot articulate fully, so of course I cannot even attempt to answer them at this time.

This was a new commandment, one that went beyond the Law. Who was this Man that He should make His own law? But Jesus went even further:

"Ye have heard...thou shalt not commit adultery." Under the Law such abstinence rendered a man righteous. "But I say...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery...already in his heart."

They wondered at His daring in propounding His own law. Those who allowed His words to touch and tender their hearts wondered and yet were drawn to Him. Those who resisted the grace that was in the words, not only wondered; they hardened themselves against Him and His words. The Bible does not state that this happened in this specific instance, but we know from other occasions that it was the pattern.

Jesus was establishing the practice of doing good for righteousness' sake, not just to impress one's neighbor. This was all new and quite surprising to the disciples. Looking at the sermon as it is given in Matthew, it may be broken down broadly in the following way:

*Verses 3-11*

**The Beatitudes - Conditions That Produce a Blessing**

Blessed are:

- The poor in spirit.
- Those who mourn.
- The meek.
- Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.
- The merciful.
- The pure in heart.
- The peacemakers.
- Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

*Verses 13-16*

***Through Christ the Christian Is the Hope of the World***

- "Ye are the salt of the earth."
- "Ye are the light of the world."

*Verses 17-20*

***Admonition to Follow the Law of Moses***

- "I am not come to destroy [the law], but to fulfill."
- "Whosoever shall do and teach [the law] shall be...great in the kingdom of heaven."
- "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." (The scribes and Pharisees would often circumvent the Law.)

*Verses 21-48*

**Christ's New Commandment Goes Beyond the Old Commandment**

Figure 1

The Old: "Ye Have Heard..."		The New: "But I Say..."	
1.	Thou shalt not kill.	1.	Whosoever is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment
2.	Thou shalt not commit adultery.	2.	Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust hath committed adultery already.
3.	Whosoever shall put away his wife [must] give her a writing of divorcement.	3.	Whosoever shall put away his wife saving for fornication causeth her to commit adultery.
4.	Thou shalt not swear falsely.	4.	Swear not at all.
5.	Love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy.	5.	Love your enemies, bless them that curse you.