



# The Gospel of Mark

A Living Word Independent Bible Study



# The Gospel of Mark

## Part 28

### Mark 10:32-52

A Living Word Independent Bible Study

# Mark 10:32-52

(NIV)

## INTRODUCTION

We now move into the third and final cycle in which we see:  
Jesus predicting his coming passion  
The disciples failing miserably  
Jesus taking the opportunity to teach a fundamental truth.

This time, it follows Jesus' teaching on Kingdom blessings.

Jesus often reverses typical human thinking into "kingdom logic".

We have just seen an example of human logic being inverted:  
Humans think: if you suffer loss for following Jesus, that is sad, unfortunate, tragic, and difficult to cope with.

Jesus says: If you suffer loss for following me, those losses will be repaid, gloriously!

This repayment always outstrips the loss.  
Disciples should be aware of this promise of generosity.

Jesus loves to make and fulfill these kinds of promises!

# Mark 10:32-52

(NIV)

## INTRODUCTION

But we must recognize that what the world does NOT value is HIGHLY valued by God!

Nothing done in the name of love is lost or forgotten in God's sight.

As we continue walking with Jesus, we learn more about Jesus, Jesus' kingdom values, and we actually BECOME more like Jesus!

The teaching on suffering and loss in 10:29-31 leads directly into the third passion prediction, in 10:32-34 ahead.

This third and final passion prediction is much more detailed than the previous two.

We need to recognize that Jesus knew all of these details ahead of time.

## Mark 10:32 (NIV)

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

“on their way up to Jerusalem”

The journey continues, with the disciples accompanying Jesus.

There are more than just the twelve disciples here, but they are singled out to be told the passion prediction.

They travel in a southerly direction, although the language is of going “up” to Jerusalem.

This was the common way of speaking of travel to Jerusalem, regardless of direction – it referred to going up in elevation, as well as to the high status of Jerusalem as the Jewish Holy City.

South ←



Sea of Galilee

<https://www.bible-history.com/old-testament/judah.html>

## Mark 10:32 (NIV)

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

“Jesus leading the way”

Jesus would normally have walked amongst his followers. Here, the words show Jesus in charge, the leader, and potentially the first to face whatever danger may lie ahead.

“astonished ... afraid”

The attitude of the followers is contrasted with Jesus, who proceeds confidently.

In fact, it is possible that it is Jesus' confidence in going to Jerusalem, in spite of what he has previously said awaits him there, that **MAKES** his followers astonished and terrified!

“took the Twelve aside”

This third passion prediction will be yet another private moment.

Jesus does not want Peter's initial reaction duplicated among the crowds that are with them.

“what was going to happen”

Not what **MIGHT** happen, but what **WILL** happen.

# Mark 10:33-34

(NIV)

“We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

“betrayed ... hand him over”

The same Greek word is translated two different ways here – “betrayed” and “handed over”.

Either would be a valid translation in either use. Jesus will be “handed over” twice.

First, someone will hand Jesus over to the Jewish authorities, who will condemn him to death.

Second, the Jewish authorities will hand him over into Gentile hands to be killed.

“mock ... spit ... flog ... kill”

Jesus knows the types of mistreatment he will suffer. All of these things happen explicitly in chapters 14-15.

“three days later”

Again, though, the prediction ends with the promise of resurrection.

# Mark 10:35 (NIV)

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

After each passion prediction, the disciples respond poorly, giving occasion for Jesus to teach a Kingdom truth.

The first time, Peter rebuked Jesus, and Jesus taught them to “take up your cross”.

The second time, the Twelve argued about who was the greatest, and Jesus taught them “the first must be last”.

Now, James and John come with an absurd request for the greatest authority/respect!

“James and John”

Remember, these two are brothers, and are part of the inner circle of three along with Peter.

“do for us whatever we ask”

Their request is nothing short of preposterous!

They have been with Jesus longer than almost anyone else (see 1:18), yet they have not absorbed much of Jesus thinking or heart.

They basically ask for a blank check!

# Mark 10:36-37

(NIV)

“What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

“What do you want”

Jesus first asks for clarification – what EXACTLY do you want?

“sit at your right and left”

They want the thrones beside Jesus when he becomes king.

They want to be appointed to the top positions in the new government (kingdom) they expect Jesus to establish soon – a restored Israel.

Mark 9:1 - “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power.”

While WE understand that Jesus likely meant the Transfiguration, the disciples DID expect the restored nation of Israel, and SOON.

Also, see the promises Jesus makes to them in Matthew’s Gospel:

Matthew 19:28 – “Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’”

The vision of this promise is likely based on Psalm 122 –

Psalm 122:3-5 – “Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together. That is where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, to praise the name of the LORD according to the statute given to Israel. There the thrones for judgment stand, the thrones of the house of David.”

# Mark 10:36-37

(NIV)

“What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

“sit at your right and left” (continued)

We can also reference back to Daniel 7, again:

Daniel 7:9-13 – “As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; the thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.) In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.”

So .. PERHAPS, unlike the absurd “give us whatever we ask for” request, the request for the top seats in the Kingdom is more understandable.

They HAVE been part of the inner circle and Jesus HAS promised them they will sit on thrones as judges of Israel!

## Mark 10:38 (NIV)

“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

“Can you drink the cup ... be baptized with the baptism”

The request of James and John, itself, may be legitimate, but it is naïve.

Struggle and suffering lie ahead for them, as for Jesus.

Once again, we see this picture of the struggle of the Kingdom against forces of evil as in the book of Daniel.

That entire Old Testament book concerns the struggle of Israel, supported by the heavenly hosts, against enemies who are supported by demonic forces.

The struggle and suffering have also been foreshadowed by John the Baptist.

Jesus will return to the “drink the cup” metaphor in Gethsemane.

The emphasis on the word “I” in “drink the cup I drink” and “be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with” is a reference to its contrast to John’s baptism.

James and John THINK they want what they do not yet have a full picture of.

And this is a danger all of us can fall into – assuming we see what is “obvious”. But we must recognize that what is “obvious” to US may reflect HUMAN, and not KINGDOM logic!

## Mark 10:39 (NIV)

“We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,”

“We can!”

The two respond to Jesus with an enthusiastic YES! They may not yet be convinced that Jesus’ fate is inevitable – this request comes right after Jesus has told them about it for the third time!

Their enthusiasm demonstrates that James and John are deeply confused, or self-deceptive.

They will show themselves UNABLE to “drink the cup” by fleeing at Jesus’ arrest.

They have already shown themselves not yet really aligned with Jesus’ values by arguing with each other.

We know, but they do not, that their request COULD actually be fulfilled by being crucified on Jesus’ right and left.

“You will”

Jesus assures – or perhaps, it is a warning – that they WILL share his fate (“drink his cup”).

In following Jesus, suffering and glory go together.

James was indeed martyred in the early 40’s AD, but there is no tradition of John’s martyrdom, and he is believed to have died a natural death.

## Mark 10:40 (NIV)

“but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

“not for me to grant”

This is God the Father’s prerogative, not Jesus’.

“those for whom they have been prepared”

Jesus can assure the disciples they will reign with him, but he cannot make specific appointments.

Could Jesus have had the thieves crucified beside him, on his right and left, in mind here?

He comes into his glory on the cross, and this could explain his comment, “you don’t know what you’re asking”.

## Mark 10:41 (NIV)

When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John.

“became indignant”

Why were they so angry?

Probably not because they themselves were humble, and understood what following Jesus meant.

Rather, it was probably because they were envious of James and John, and afraid they would win positions that THEY were holding out hope for!

They wonder, “Will Jesus show favoritism to these ‘insiders’?”

Interestingly, James, the brother of Jesus (known as James the Just), who has no role in the Gospels, is appointed to the highest position in the early church – see Acts 15 and Acts 21.

## Mark 10:42 (NIV)

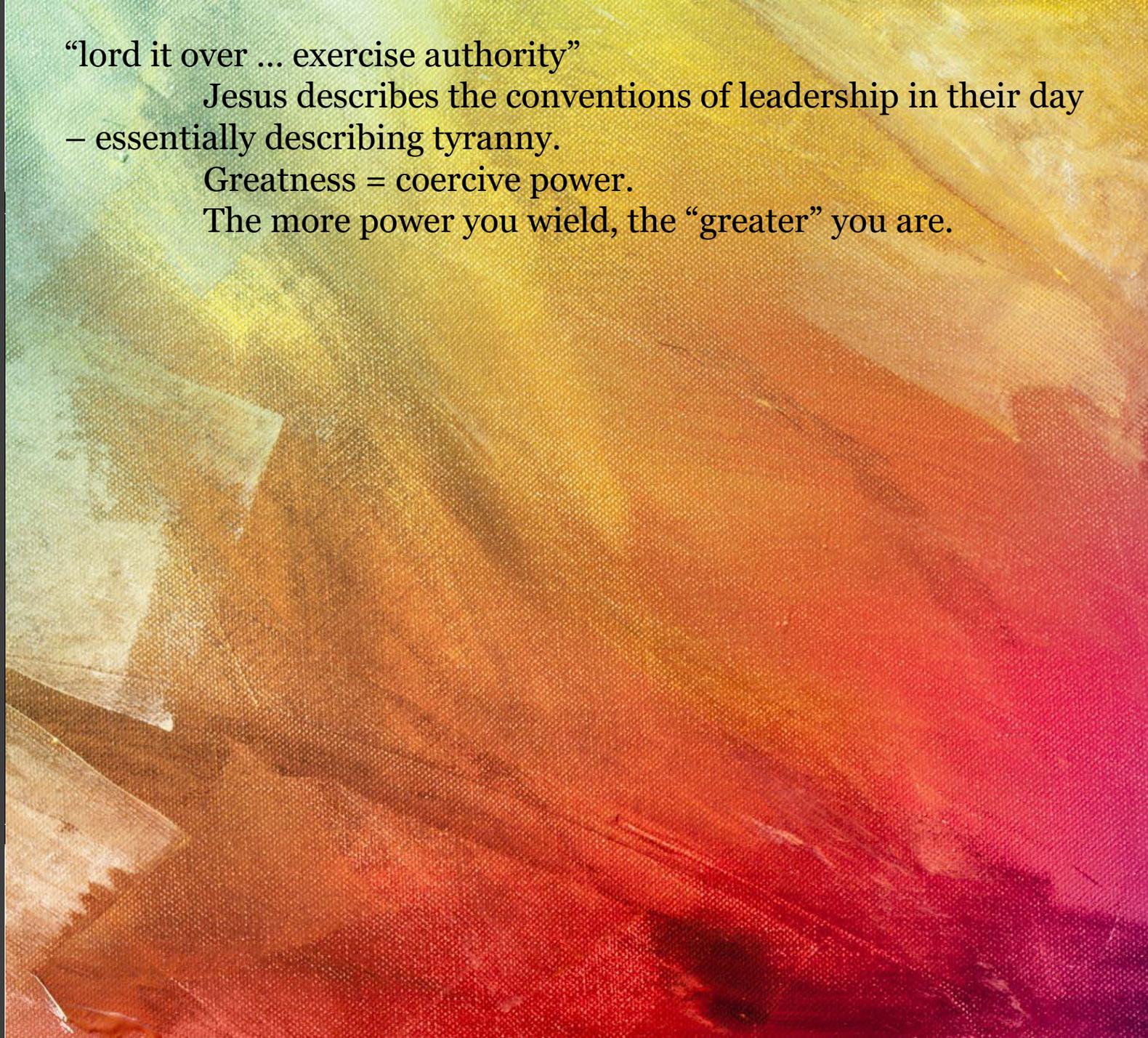
Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.”

“lord it over ... exercise authority”

Jesus describes the conventions of leadership in their day – essentially describing tyranny.

Greatness = coercive power.

The more power you wield, the “greater” you are.



# Mark 10:43-44

(NIV)

“Not so with you.  
Instead, whoever wants  
to become great among  
you must be your  
servant, and whoever  
wants to be first must be  
slave of all.”

“not so with you”

But this is emphatically NOT true in Kingdom logic!  
This is completely at odds with conventional wisdom,  
Jesus says.

“must be your servant”

The Greek word translated “servant” here is “diakonos”.  
This is, specifically, a house SERVANT, not a SLAVE  
(Greek “doulos”).

“Service” was understood as the opposite of “Happiness”.  
Plato: “How can one be happy when he has to  
serve someone?”

Servants were thought to be unhappy, and “happiness”  
was attained by having everyone do everything for you, serving  
you, rather than you serving anyone at any time.

“must be slave of all”

NOW the Greek word is “doulos”, “slave”.  
The language intensifies the image – not only willing to  
serve, but to be everyone’s SLAVE.

## Mark 10:45 (NIV)

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

“the Son of Man did not come”

This verse is the heart of the matter!

Jesus’ ministry of coming and dying for others is the model for everyone who follows him.

Not to BE SERVED, but TO SERVE.

Everything Jesus has done to this point in his ministry has embodied this teaching.

And Jesus will take it to the extreme point of DYING.

The Suffering Servant passages of Isaiah 53 are in view here.

Isaiah 53:12 – “Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

“Bore the sin of many” parallels Jesus words “give his life as a ransom for many”.

## Mark 10:45 (NIV)

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

“ransom”

But why is a ransom required?

This verse gives the clearest exposition in Mark’s Gospel of the PURPOSE of Jesus’ death.

Jesus’ proclamation, along with John the Baptist’s, called for repentance.

Israel’s leadership did NOT repent, but rejected and killed both messengers.

Jesus’ death would constitute the ransom that would free Israel from divine penalty for this rejection of God.

And his blood would make the hoped-for new covenant with God a reality.

The early church came to understand that the ransom was more far-reaching than just Israel, however. They understood that ALL humanity had rejected God and deserved the divine penalty, but that Jesus’ life was a ransom for ALL humanity.

## Mark 10:45 (NIV)

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

“ransom” (continued)

Sometimes we stress “Jesus died for us so we don’t have to die”.

But Jesus emphasizes following him even into death – since he died for us, we too must die WITH him.

Paul emphasizes that what Jesus expects of his followers is the death of the SELF – crucified with Christ.

Romans 6:3-8 – “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.”

To receive the gift of life in Christ, we must, paradoxically, embrace the cross, crucifying the self, dying WITH Christ, so that we can be raised to new life with and in him!

If the disciples (we) can do this, then places of honor will follow.

We are to “drink the cup” and “be baptized with his baptism”.

Doing this requires, as Jesus models, a full confidence in our identity as God’s beloved children – knowing His abundant love which we are then free to pass on to others.

## Mark 10:46 (NIV)

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging.

The large section of Mark's Gospel from 8:27 through 10:46 is bracketed, on both ends, by stories of healings of sight.

This section has contained all three passion predictions as Jesus and the disciples have traveled from Galilee to Jerusalem.

The journey has been an opportunity for the disciples to come to SEE who Jesus is.

Remember –the first healing of blindness was a 2-stage process, suggesting that coming to see SPIRITUALLY is not a one-time event, but a process as well.

Following Jesus involves truly absorbing his teaching, mind, and way of living.

We now come to the second healing story – of a blind beggar named Bartimaeus.

Blindness is often a symbol of SPIRITUAL blindness.

This is the LAST healing story in Mark's Gospel.

# Mark 10:46 (NIV)

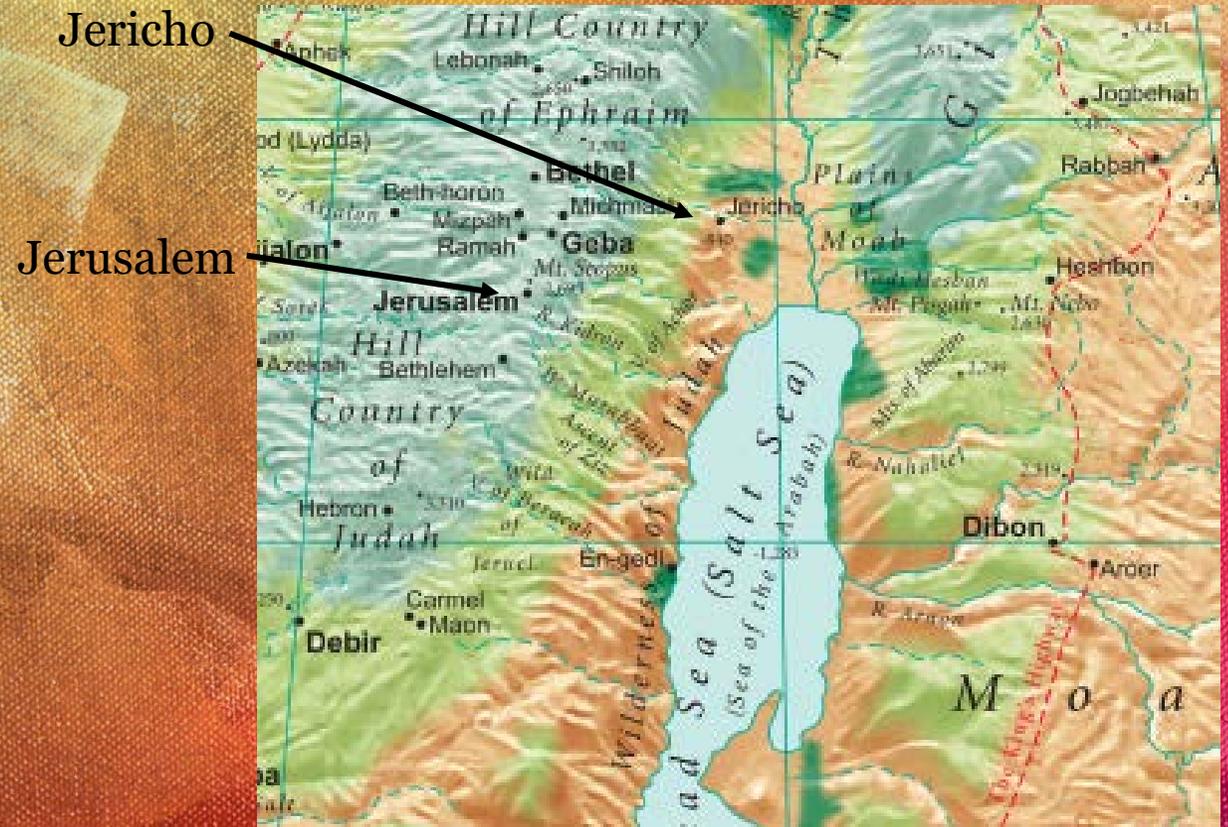
Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging.

## “Jericho”

This is the last step of the journey before Jerusalem. It is about 15 miles north of Jerusalem, 5 miles west of the Jordan River, and far below sea level.

It was founded as early as 8000 BC – the oldest continually inhabited city on earth, as far as can be known.

It was a long uphill trek from here to Jerusalem.



## Mark 10:46 (NIV)

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging.

“a large crowd”

Once again, Mark points out the crowds that are attracted to Jesus.

“Bartimaeus”

As we are told, the name means “Son of Timaeus”.

“sitting by the roadside begging”

This would be on the main road from Jericho to Jerusalem.

It would be a prime location for access to merchants, prosperous people, or pious Jews on their way to Jerusalem to worship, who might be inclined to give alms to the poor.

# Mark 10:47 (NIV)

When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

“Jesus of Nazareth”

The city of Jesus’ home has only been mentioned twice before in Mark’s Gospel, in 1:9 and 1:24.

“Jesus, Son of David”

David was Israel’s greatest king, and his sons ruled after him.

It is possible, but unlikely, that Jesus’ actual heritage was widely known.

Most likely, this name is used to identify Jesus as a hoped-for King for Israel.

The irony in the story is that though blind, Bartimaeus SEES this kingdom truth regarding Jesus’ identity!

He must have heard stories about Jesus’ power to heal, and understood it as evidence of royal status.

Solomon, “son of David”, was famous for legendary stories of his healing and exorcism abilities, as the extra-biblical “Testament of Solomon” relates.

“have mercy on me”

Such language is common in Isaiah and many Psalms.

Psalm 25:16 (David, to God) – “Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.”

## Mark 10:48 (NIV)

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

“told him to be quiet”

This seems very similar to 10:13, and the scene with the children being brought to Jesus.

The disciples may believe, as then, that Jesus has more important things to do than spend time with a blind beggar.

They assume Bartimaeus thinks that Jesus might toss him a coin or two.

Or perhaps, they just don't want the exuberance of the crowd to get out of hand so close to Jerusalem.

“but he shouted all the more”

But Bartimaeus is undeterred by their rebukes.

# Mark 10:49 (NIV)

Jesus stopped and said,  
“Call him.” So they  
called to the blind man,  
“Cheer up! On your feet!  
He’s calling you.”

“Jesus stopped”

Despite the noise of the crowd, Jesus hears and singles out this one man’s call for help.

“Call him”

Jesus tells the crowd to summon the man rather than silence him.

“Cheer up!”

This is the same phrase as that translated “Take courage!” in 6:50 when Jesus called out to the disciples when they saw him walking on the water.

The sense, in both cases, is “Take heart!” or “Be encouraged!”

# Mark 10:50 (NIV)

Throwing his cloak  
aside, he jumped to his  
feet and came to Jesus.

“throwing his cloak aside”

Is he in a hurry to get to Jesus?

Or, is he abandoning what he owns to obtain an audience  
with Jesus?

Beggars might sit on their cloak with part folded over  
their lap for people to toss coins into – was what he had collected  
that day cast aside?

“came to Jesus”

Probably, with the help of people guiding him, although  
the extent of his blindness is not explicitly stated.

Jesus has responded to his insistent, persistent, earnest  
plea for help – perhaps, a lesson for us!

## Mark 10:51 (NIV)

“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

“What do you want me to do for you?”

Notice that this echoes, EXACTLY, Jesus’ question to James and John in 10:36!

Again, Jesus wants to understand the nature of the request before taking action.

This suggests that we need to name our needs specifically, to articulate exactly what we need to Jesus.

“Rabbi”

The word here is actually “Rabbouni”, not “Rabbi”. The word is only used, other than here, in the Gospel of John, when Mary encounters the risen Christ:

John 20:16 – “Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.’ She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means Teacher).

It actually means, more completely, “my master”, NOT simply “teacher” – and it applied to ANYONE of high standing. It is a title of great honor.

“I want to see”

Notice how much better an answer Bartimaeus gives to the question than James and John!

He asks for SIGHT – not a seat of honor.

Again, symbolically representing a request for spiritual sight.

## Mark 10:52 (NIV)

“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

“Go, your faith has healed you”

There is no touch here – Jesus heals by words alone. But again, it is the man’s FAITH that has enabled his healing.

Literally, the Greek word here is “saved”, not “healed”. The word means to be delivered from WHATEVER ails, afflicts, or threatens someone – whether physical, spiritual, or sinful.

So, Bartimaeus has been healed physically, but also “saved” into full relationship with God in Christ.

“followed Jesus along the road”

We see the man’s transformation spiritually in his joining the crowd of followers.

He is becoming a real disciple – and a model one at that. He is transformed from a helpless man going nowhere into a restored man on the road of discipleship.

# Mark 10:32-52

(NIV)

## SUMMARY

The cycle of stories of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem comes to a close.

We have seen three cycles of:

Jesus predicting his passion

The disciples' poor response

Jesus' teaching on discipleship

The cycle of stories was bracketed on either end by accounts of healing of blindness – of people coming to “see” both physically and spiritually.

The pattern of “model discipleship” of Bartimaeus:

He saw and admitted his own need.

He showed determination to have his need met by Jesus.

He was willing to articulate his need clearly to Jesus.

He called upon, and trusted in, Jesus to meet that need.

Jesus, meanwhile, has demonstrated what he has just taught about serving ALL, giving time and attention to one of Israel's lowest members of society.

This is a fitting conclusion to his public ministry, demonstrating himself to BE the Son of David, anointed to “bring sight to the blind.” (Isaiah 61:1-2)

Jesus will now enter Jerusalem for the final phase of his ministry.



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