

# TRUTH & RIGHT

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## ARE WE BLIND

*"Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'" (Mark 10:46-48). Have you ever witnessed the scene of a parent sitting down, bent over their phone in serious concentration, seemingly transported into another world, while their child cries and yells out seeking attention, only to be ignored or even scolded to be quiet? Or, like the scenario Jesus presents, have you ever felt justified in turning down someone's request for help because of the*

inconvenience it would impose on yourself to get involved?

*"Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything,'" (Lk. 11:5-7). Put the crowd following Jesus in the same group as those too preoccupied with what they were wrapped up in to bother with the annoying cries of a blind beggar. But let's at least be fair. I mean, it's not like they were hushing up this poor man's shouts for help because they were too busy updating their status on Facebook, or because they were too cozy and*

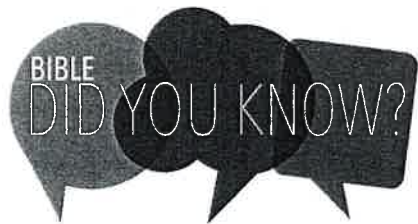
attending to Bartimaeus would somehow inconvenience their comfort. No...they had something that was actually completely legitimate to warrant their stern dismissal of his pleas. They were on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover with the Messiah who they were anticipating would finally renew the Kingdom of Israel. "...*He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately,*" (Lk. 19:11). The excitement surrounding this much anticipated event is evidenced by the very title Bartimaeus attributes to Jesus, calling Him, "Son of David", indicating how many were finally becoming convinced by the things they were witnessing and hearing about Jesus that He was the prophesied Messiah King to sit on David's throne. In fact, this is precisely what the crowds who followed Him all the way into Jerusalem were anticipating He would immediately do.

*"Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD; Hosanna in the*

*highest!'"* (Mt. 21:8-9). Too preoccupied with the epic fulfillment of long desired anticipation of a renewal of God's nation to their rightful place of honor and glory, giving any attention to this poor blind beggar seemed a total waste of time. What is so ironic about this is the total blindness displayed by the crowd attempting to silence blind Bartimaeus. Just prior to their encounter with the beggar, Jesus attempts to clarify the understanding of His disciples as to the true purpose of His mission as a King. *"'You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many,'"* (Mk. 10:42-45). So selfishly wrapped up in their greedy thoughts of how their own lives would radically be altered once the Messiah claimed the throne, they were blinded by their own selfish ambition in regards to their own relationship with the Christ that they were totally incapable of

seeing how someone lowly and pathetic and helpless like Bartimaeus, poor and blind and begging for help, was exactly the kind of poor helpless individual Jesus was seeking to serve. How shocked and even shamed they must have felt when Jesus actually sends the crowd to bring the blind beggar to Jesus' feet, despite their belief to the contrary that Jesus would not possibly take notice of him. *"And Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him here.' So they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you,'"* (Mk. 10:49). Is it possible that, we too, at times are too blinded by what we consider the great important matters of glorifying Christ as members of His Kingdom that cries for mercy from the poor, blind, beggars around us fall on deaf ears? Do we see, as Jesus desperately tried to show His own followers, that to recognize Jesus and His mission clearly is to open our sympathetic ears to be attentive to the cries of mercy from blind sinners around us begging for help? Rather than feeling too preoccupied with the "important" pressing matters in our Christian life like the parent too busy reading a text to listen to the cries from their own child, let us have our eyes and

ears open to those whom Christ is all too willing to stop and serve. *"Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus. And answering him, Jesus said, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' And the blind man said to Him, 'Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!'"* And Jesus said to him, *'Go; your faith has made you well.'* Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road," (Mk. 10:50-52). — Daniel Ruegg



**Amos was a simple farmer who God used to prophecy judgment and warning against God's people. "The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoah, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake," Amos 1:1**

# People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



## ***The Pilate Stone***

Pilate was the Roman Prefect over Judea from AD 26-36. All four gospels record his involvement with the trial of Jesus, and his authorization to crucify Jesus. The Bible, however, is not the only literary source for information about Pilate. He is also attested to in the works of three men who lived in the first-century AD: Tacitus (Roman senator and historian, AD 56-117), Josephus (Jewish historian, AD 37-100), and Philo (Jewish philosopher and theologian, 20 BC – AD 50). Josephus writes: *About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, for he was a performer of wonderful deeds, a teacher of such men as are happy to accept the truth. He won over many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. When Pilate, at the suggestion of the leading men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him at the first did not forsake him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct to this day.* Philo described Pilate as “a man of inflexible, stubborn and cruel disposition.” But there was no archaeological evidence of Pilate’s existence until archaeologists discovered a slab of rock with his name on it in a theatre in Caesarea in 1961. It is translated: To the honorable gods (this) Tiberium Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea, had dedicated. A Tiberium was a temple used in worship of Tiberius Caesar. Apparently Pilate had dedicated such a temple, and an inscription was made in the temple walls to



commemorate the event. Tiberius Caesar reigned from AD 14-37