

Signs & Wonders

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SESSION 5

A Two-Stage Miracle
Seeing Again
(Mark 8:22-26)

OPENING

Question: For those of you who wear glasses, what was your first experience of putting on the glasses?

Blindspot Questions: Have you ever been able to see something positive in others that they were unable to see in themselves? Where you able to help them see it? If so, how?

Blindspot Test

OVERVIEW

Scripture: Isaiah 35:5-7

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

Questions: What is the vision Isaiah is presenting here? Is it to be read literally or figuratively?

In the Book, AJ writes: By restoring sight to someone who was blind, Jesus anticipates the messianic age... Jewish messianic expectations for the most part did not think of the messiah as performing healings. Since the messiah was to bring in the messianic age, the healing would come with the general resurrection of the dead

Scripture: Mark 8:22-26

They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?" And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again, and he looked intently, and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Then he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even go into the village."

In the Book, AJ writes: Isaiah 42:6-7 depicts God as saying to Israel, "I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as... a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness."

Remembering the Context of Mark 8

- Feeding of the 5000
- Religious Leaders Demand a Sign
- Disciples Stressed about forgetting to Bring Bread (Yeast of the Pharisees)
- Jesus Cures the Blind Man
- Peter's Great Declaration
- Jesus Interprets the Declaration and Peter's Rebuke
- Jesus Extends the Expected Sacrifice to his Disciples

VIDEO

Defining Christology: (derived from "Christ" and "-ology," meaning "the study of") is the study of Christ is the part of theology that is concerned with the nature and work of Jesus, including such matters as the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and his human and divine natures and their relationship.

Mark's Christology: Is there any connection between the phrase "He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village..." and the Isaiah 42 passage? If so, who is Jesus?

What Do You Think: A Roman historian (69–122AD) claimed that the Emperor Vespasian used his saliva to heal a blind man. Is it just a coincidence, or if the Gospel writer knows this story, is there an intended point to be made?

Question: What do you make of Jesus having a "two-part" miracle, suggesting that his first attempt came up short?

In the Book, AJ writes: As Socrates tells the story, people chained to the wall of a cave see only shadows; since shadows are all they can see, the shadows represent to them the real world. In effect, they see people like trees, walking. The philosopher (of course, the hero) who gets out of the cave and into the sunlight can see true reality. If Mark is riffing on Plato's text, the lesson is that it is not philosophy that reveals truth; it is Jesus.

GOING DEEPER ON CHRISTOLOGY

Question: If most first-century Jews would have understood the coming Messiah in terms of a New David, what characteristic would people have expected of the Messiah?

Scripture: Mark 8:31-33

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

In the Book, AJ writes: Peter gets the right job title, but he misses on the job description.

Imagine: Put yourself in Peter's shoes, and you hear Jesus explain how the "Son of Man" must suffer and die. He probably didn't even hear "rise again." Peter's reaction is against both the historic expectation and that underlying suggestion that his teacher and friend is going to die.

Question: How does the "two-part" healing story become a lens through which one could read Peter's confession and faux pas?

Follow-up Question: Is there grace to be found in that story, implying that Jesus can't even overcome Peter's inability to perceive on the first try?

Final Question: How much possible meaning do we miss when we read a passage out of its larger context?
