HEALING TWO MEN

And as Jesus was leaving there, two blind men followed, crying out and saying: "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" And when he had come into the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord!" Then he touched their eyes, saying: "Let it be to you according to your faith." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying: "See to it that no one knows of this." But they went out and spread his fame in that whole region.
Matthew 9:27-31

This is now the ninth miracle in the healing narrative of chapters 8-9. The healing of the blind men following the raising of the dead girl is not an accident. The stories move with the intention of displaying and documenting the scope of the miracles performed by the anticipated Messiah.

"If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.
John 10:37-38

That the blind men address Jesus in this passage as the *Son of David* confirms Matthew's messianic signaling.

Thus, what we see Jesus accomplishing by giving sight to these blind men is the fulfillment of what the people believed the Messiah would do. The question by John the Baptist regarding the authenticity of Jesus being the expected Messiah is now answered.

the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.
Matthew 11:5

Matthew 20:29-34 also contains an account about the healing of two blind men and there are some interesting parallels between these two accounts.

In both accounts, the men say, *"Have mercy on us, Son of David."*

In both accounts, Jesus touches their eyes.

As similar and interesting as these accounts seem, the placement of them within the narrative of Matthew may even be more so and may possibly hint at some symbolism regarding eyes being opened to behold the One who has come to fulfill the Old Testament promises. Matthew places each of these sight-restoration passages in the following way.

The first *before* Jesus confirms the calling of the Twelve and sends them out to proclaim the Good News of the Messiah's arrival.

The second *before* Jesus rides into Jerusalem amid shouts of

affirmation that he is indeed the Promised Messiah who has now arrived.

And as Jesus was leaving there, two blind men followed, crying out and saying:
"Have mercy on us, Son of David!"
Matthew 9:27

The opening words of this passage – *And as Jesus was leaving there* - again steer the direction of the narrative and prepare us for the next account.

The text tells us that *two blind men followed [him]* but this is not in the manner of discipleship but in order that they might be healed of their blindness.

The fact that they *cried out* reveals the force of their desire.

To these people, blindness was often regarded as a judgement of God and thus, limitations were put upon the blind.

And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house,
both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.
Genesis 19:11

Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute,
or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?
Exodus 4:11

and David said on that day, "Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up
the water shaft to attack 'the lame and the blind,' who are hated by David's soul."
Therefore it is said, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."
2 Samuel 5:8

The title *"Son of David"* is found in 2 Sameul 7:12-16 whose kingdom was foretold would have no end.

12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up
your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his
kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of
his kingdom forever. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure
forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.'"
2 Samuel 7:12-13, 16

This is the expectation when David's son, the Messiah came to establish this kingdom. The miracles performed by Jesus were leading people to believe that he had, indeed, arrived.

"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said, "The son of David."
Matthew 22:42

Solomon was of course the son of David that was the immediate offspring mentioned in the 2 Sameul passage above. However, he was merely a foreshadow of the greater than Solomon and it was this greater One that is being referred to in Matthew's passage.

By using the title, *"Son of David,"* the blind men reveal their hope that Jesus is the messianic figure which means that they have good authority for their sight to be restored.

In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book,
and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.
Isaiah 29:18

hen the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
Isaiah 35:5

And when he had come into the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord!"
Matthew 9:28

What *house* this is remains uncertain, but it could very well be the house of Peter where Jesus clearly stayed at times while ministering.

What we can understand from Matthew's mention of a house is that the secrecy of the healing that Jesus desires can better be conducted inside and not on the public street.

If you look at the passage, it's interesting that we hear Jesus asking them if they believe he has the power to perform this miracle.

There is something important to learn about Matthew by this. The blind men had already revealed their faith by their coming to Jesus and crying for him to heal them. Thus, Matthew uses this question from Jesus as a teaching tool which brings attention to the importance of faith.

This connects this passage with the prior paralytic passage where Jesus saw the faith of those involved in bringing the man to him and called attention to it. For Matthew, faith in Jesus is essential.

The direct question of Jesus is answered by the blind men with equal directness: *"Yes Lord."*

Then he touched their eyes, saying: "Let it be to you according to your faith."
And their eyes were opened.
Matthew 9:29-30a

Here again we see Jesus healing through touch.

And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him.

But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.
Matthew 8:3, 15, 9:25

We also see him once again emphasizing the relationship between faith and healing – *"Let it be so according to your faith."*

What is important for us to know is that *it is the fact of faith in view here, not the quantity.*

Immediately upon the pronouncement by Jesus, their eyes were opened. The authority of Jesus that was heard in his teaching continues to be displayed in his actions as well.

And Jesus sternly warned them, saying: "See to it that no one knows of this." But they went out and spread his fame in that whole region.
Matthew 9:30b-31

Again, we see that despite his desire for this miracle to be kept silent, the word spreads by those healed and his fame spreads with it.

Matthew thus shows that although Jesus wants to avoid stirring up the popular expectations concerning the Messiah, which have no room for his more important work on the cross, the news of such wonderful deeds is simply too good to be kept a secret.
Hagner – Matthew, page 254

Do not see the disobedience of the healed here as a central point; it is not. Jesus does not fault them for this. What is being shown is that the miraculous works of Jesus cannot be contained nor can the good news of the Kingdom's arrival.

It is no coincidence that the blind are the first to call upon Jesus as the "Son of David." The blind in Israel, we can be certain, would have known well that the Scriptures spoke of the time to come when the blind would receive their sight. It would be the age of fulfillment, the age of the kingdom promised to David's Son. Now they heard that this Jesus had been proclaiming the presence of that kingdom and that he was performing miracles of healing. And so they seek out Jesus and cry out to him for mercy as the Son of Daivd. They believe in him and they receive their sight.
Hagner – Matthew, page 254-255

It must be understood that the healing of the physically blind here points beyond itself. It serves as a symbol that all humanity is blind and in need of receiving the sight offered by the One who

gives life to the dead and sight to those who are blind. The *"Light of this world"* has come. The invite has been given. Darkness is no longer a permanent condition but a choice.