

The Blind and the Lame

An obscure story from the life of David bears a remarkable resemblance to the work of Jesus a thousand years later. Coincidence? Hardly.

“And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, ‘You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,’ thinking, ‘David cannot come in here.’ Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). Now David said on that day, ‘Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David’s soul), he shall be chief and captain.’ Therefore they say, ‘The blind and the lame shall not come into the house’” (2 Sam. 5:6-8).



One of David’s first priorities following his elevation as king over all Israel was to identify a new capital city. He chose Jebus, the fortress of the Jebusites, known in earlier times as Salem (Gen. 14:18), later as Jerusalem (Judg. 19:10). It was located on an outcropping of rock that offered ideal protection from attack. The problem, of course, was that the Jebusites still inhabited the city, requiring David to take it by force. The Jebusites were so confident of their natural defenses, they taunted David that even “the blind and the lame will repel you.” Being a military genius, David found a weak spot in a water channel that led into the interior of the fortress, and exploited it. Thus, the city of the Jebusites became Jerusalem,

the holy city of the Jews. Henceforth, the mockery of the Jebusites was turned into a proverb among the Jews: “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house”—that is, those who boast of their invincibility will fail in the end.

By itself, this episode is an interesting but unimportant footnote in the career of David. But the story doesn’t end there.

A thousand years later, David’s descendent, Jesus of Nazareth, came into this very same city and performed a pair of miracles that bear an eerie resemblance to David’s exploit. The two miracles, both recorded only in the gospel of John, involve Jesus healing a *lame* man (5:1-15) and a *blind* man (9:1-12). Adding to the irony, both healings involved bodies of water (the pools of Bethesda, 5:2, and Siloam, 9:7). We can’t say for sure that these were the only miracles Jesus performed *within Jerusalem itself* (see Jn. 2:22), but they are the only two specifically described in the gospels.

David and Jesus . . . the blind and the lame . . . an impregnable fortress of resistance. The parallels are too obvious to be mere coincidence. David overcame “the blind and the lame” to take the city by physical force, thus ensuring his dominance over the pagans who populated the region. In like manner, Jesus, by His healing of the blind and the lame under the very noses of the Jewish leadership, exposed the limitations of their corrupt power. Later, they would condemn Him within the holy city and execute Him just outside its walls; but in His resurrection, His ultimate victory was assured. The message screams loud and clear: those who are *spiritually* blind and lame shall not come into the house of God.

So, what is the practical lesson here? Two thoughts come to mind: First, we see in these connections further evidence of the thematic unity of the Bible. This is just one of many such remarkable coincidences, scattered across hundreds of years, that suggest a Master Mind was at work in stitching together a complex mosaic of events that tell a magnificent story of redemption.

Second, this story teaches us that we mustn’t fear the threats of the forces of evil and wickedness. The boasts of their power to defeat God and His people will someday be turned back upon their own heads. Our job in the meantime is to be faithful to the Lord, looking for the little opportunities He sends our way to do His work. In due time, God will bring the victory.

— David King