

CURING A LEPER

Matthew 8:1-4

(cf. Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16)



INTRODUCTION

We have been introduced to:

- the Person of the King (chs.1-4)
- the Principles of His Kingdom (chs.5-7).

Now, we witness

- the Power of the King.
- In chapters 8 and 9, Matthew recorded 10 miracles of our Lord.

INTRODUCTION

- The miracles do more than authenticate Jesus as God's Messenger.
- They demonstrate the extent of His authority: over sickness, nature, demons, sin, and even over death itself.
- Surely this One is to be followed completely, by those who own Him as King.

INTRODUCTION

- Lepers, Gentiles and women were considered outcasts by many Jewish people, esp. the Pharisees.
- Many Pharisees would pray each morning: *"I give thanks that I am a man and not a woman, a Jew and not a Gentile, a free man and not a slave."*
- Chapter 8 opens with three miraculous healings of Jesus.

I. THE LEPROSY OF THE MAN

- In one of the cities of Galilee during the Lord's preaching tour, a leper accosted him.
- *"When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold, there came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (v. 1-2).*

**What is
Leprosy**

LEPROSY

Leprosy, also known as **Hansen's disease**, is a chronic mycobacterial disease of humans.

The term '**Leprosy**' is taken from a Latin word, '**lepra**' means Scaly, while the **Hansen's** disease was named after the Physician, **Gerhard Armauer Hansen**, who first identified the Mycobacteria.



I. THE LEPROSY OF THE MAN

- **Leprosy was the most feared disease in the ancient world.**
- **Not only did it make one an outcast but there also was no cure.**
- **Leprosy knows no climactic or social boundaries.**

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF LEPROSY

- **Today, leprosy appears in two forms: one affects the nerves, and the other the skin.**
- **The latter seems to be the kind described frequently in the Bible.**
- **In the Old Testament certain guidelines were given for diagnosing leprosy (Lev. 13).**

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF LEPROSY



B. CONSEQUENCES OF LEPROSY

- **When it was discovered, the afflicted persons were rigidly cut off from the community.**
- **They were compelled to put on the signs of mourning, and wherever they went they had to shout "unclean, unclean" in order to warn others away (Lev. 13:45; Num. 12:12).**

B. CONSEQUENCES OF LEPROSY

- **Lepers were not allowed to share in the services of the synagogue or worship at the temple in Jerusalem.**
- **In fact, lepers were barred from Jerusalem, as from all walled towns.**
- **William Barclay says, "There never has been any disease which so separated a man from his fellow-men as leprosy did."**

B. CONSEQUENCES OF LEPROSY

- Never has there been a condition that so illustrated the spiritual condition of humankind.
- For sin is a terrible disease that separates us from our fellows and from God; it spreads, and it is fatal.

II. THE LOVE OF THE MASTER

- The *behold* makes clear the unusual circumstance of a leper approaching anyone.
- For the leper to approach Jesus was socially inappropriate; it was also theologically inappropriate because leprosy was viewed as a disease given as a judgment by God.

II. THE LOVE OF THE MASTER

- The leper's approach to the Lord showed great faith in His power: ***"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"*** (v.2).
- But would He?
- Yes, because He was moved with compassion (see Mark 1:41).

II. THE LOVE OF THE MASTER

- "And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed"*** (v. 3).
- Touching a leper went against the culture of that day based on the command of the OT (cf. Lev. 13:45-46).
 - This showed Jesus' compassion & love.

II. THE LOVE OF THE MASTER

Professor Carson notes that when Jesus touched the leper,

"Jesus does not become unclean, but the leper becomes clean! When Jesus comes in contact with defilement, he is never defiled. Far from it: his touch has the power to cleanse defilement"

(D. A. Carson, *When Jesus Confronts the World*, p. 20).

III. THE LAW OF MOSES

"And Jesus saith unto him: See thou tell no man ... " (v. 4a).

Why did Jesus instruct the healed man to tell no one?

The answer to that question is that Jesus probably did not want to draw attention to himself as a miracle worker.

III. THE LAW OF MOSES

- The healing of the sick is a great miracle, and the raising of the dead an even greater one; but the salvation of the lost soul is the greatest miracle of all.
- God's greatest concern is the salvation of sinners.

A. PROCEDURE OF THE LAW

Brush for Healing a Leper

Cedar Stick Temple Scarlet Thread Sin Hyssop Passover, Cross Sprinkle 7 Times "Thou art Clean"

A. PROCEDURE OF THE LAW

- After being healed, the man was commanded to go to the priest and offer the ritual for a cleansed leper (Lev. 14).

"... but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them" (v.4b).

B. POWERLESSNESS OF THE LAW

- A testimony to what?
- To the fact that one greater than Moses had come.
- To the fact that the Law could only pronounce a leper unclean but could not cure him from leprosy.

C. PURPOSE OF THE LAW

- This was an attempt by Jesus to affirm the Mosaic law of Lev. 13–14.
- It is consistent with Matthew's understanding that Jesus fulfilled the Law rather than destroyed it (Matt. 5:17).

C. PURPOSE OF THE LAW

- It was also an attempt to show His power to the priests in Jerusalem.
- During the public ministry of the Lord the lepers would keep coming for cleansing!
- It is no surprise that Luke records that *"a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith"* (Acts 6:7).

SPIRITUAL LESSON

- In these two chapters (8 & 9), Matthew assembled several of our Lord's miracles and recorded them as proof that:
- **Jesus is the promised Messiah (1Cor. 1:22; Isa. 35:4-6).**

SPIRITUAL LESSON

- ***Leprosy is incurable by human agency.***
- ***Restoration can only be effected by the finger of God—such also is the case with respect to sin.***
- ***God alone can pardon, and renew, and sanctify the heart.***

SPIRITUAL LESSON

- ***The leper was excluded from society. Sin separates man from God and from other men.***
- ***Uncured, leprosy terminates in death. James declared, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Paul proclaimed, "The wages of sin is death."***

SPIRITUAL LESSON

- ***Christ is the Great Physician who is able to cure both the leprosy of the body, and the moral defilement of the soul.***
- ***His precious blood cleanses all our sin and unrighteousness.***

SPIRITUAL LESSON

**"In vain we seek for peace with God,
By methods of our own;
Jesus! there's nothing but thy blood,
Can bring us near thy throne."**

- ❖ ***Jesus is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by Him.***