

§188. Jesus Heals Ten Lepers (Luke 17:11–19)

Introduction

1. Why Jesus want to be shown to priests?
2. Lord once again showing who he is thereby they get one more chance to repent.
3. Although the Mosaic Law outlines detailed ceremonial procedures for cleansing lepers, historical records show that no Israelites were healed of leprosy during their age of miracles.
4. Apart from Moses and Miriam, the Old Testament records no other Israelite cures, leaving temple priests to puzzle over the purpose of Leviticus 13–14 for centuries.
5. The only other recorded cure—Naaman the Syrian—was healed outside of Israelite ritual and completely bypassed the mandated temple purification rites.
6. God inspired Moses to write the cleansing laws in Leviticus and foretell a coming prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15) fifteen centuries before they would actually be needed.
7. When a cleansed leper finally arrived to request the long-unused purification rites as instructed by Jesus, it created a profound impact on the temple priesthood.
8. A miraculous cleansing that had not occurred in centuries would naturally be reported to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling body.
9. The Sanhedrin would have to recognize that Moses legislated for this exact scenario centuries earlier, making Jesus the sole historical claimant to be the prophet "like Moses."

10. This unprecedented event explains why Jesus specifically instructed the healed leper to present himself to the authorities as a testimony to them.
11. The ten men thus had a three day journey to present themselves to the priests in Jerusalem, for the necessary sacrifices could only be offered in one place, the temple.

Exposition

17:11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

1. The narrative places Jesus traveling between Samaria and Galilee in a northerly direction, which is difficult to reconcile with His presumed prior location in Perea or His overall path toward Jerusalem. Some scholars suggest Jesus traveled north to Ephraim after the raising of Lazarus and later joined Galilean pilgrims heading to Passover. This northern route aligns well with the detail that Jesus's final trip to Jerusalem went through Perea, making the journey described by Luke a natural precursor.

17:12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.

1. Jewish tradition enforced extreme separation rules to prevent ceremonial defilement, requiring people to stay six feet away from a leper if upwind and 100 feet away if downwind.
2. Lepers were forced to bear visible and audible signs of their condition, including torn clothes, bare heads, a covered upper lip, and continuously shouting "Unclean, unclean."
3. In stark contrast to these distancing rules, Jesus closed the gap and physically touched the leper

Luke 5:12–13. And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his

face and implored Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” 13 Then He put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately the leprosy left him.

4. Rather than Jesus becoming ceremonially defiled by the contact, His divine purity caused the dread disease to immediately flee.

17:13 And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

1. They did not asked for healing; but only mercy.
2. **Master:** One who has authority and not one who teaches.

17:14 So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

1. Jesus noticed the men, though He did not approach, touch them, or verbally declare them cured.
2. He commanded them to go show themselves to the priests—the standard Levitical procedure for individuals who had been healed of leprosy, where priests served as health inspectors.
3. By telling them to act as though they were already healed while still leprous, Jesus deliberately tested their obedience and trust.
4. As the men actively obeyed and went on their way, their cleansing occurred purposefully rather than by mere chance.

17:15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God,

1. Only one of the ten men returned to Jesus to show gratitude as soon as he realized he was cured, before even waiting for official certification from the priest.
2. The man openly praised God to let everyone know what happened and humbled himself by prostrating before Jesus. Luke notes that this

grateful man was a Samaritan, highlighting an irony since Jews and Samaritans normally avoided each other, though their shared leprosy had temporarily united them.

17:16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

1. Despite being an outsider, the Samaritan was the only one—and the first—to return and give thanks, reinforcing the principle that gratitude delayed is often gratitude forgotten.

17:17-18 So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?”

1. Through a series of questions, Jesus expresses disappointment that only one of the ten returned to give thanks, despite all nine experiencing the same healing and having an equal reason to be grateful.
2. The nine healed men were so consumed by their newfound happiness that they completely neglected to thank the source of their healing.
3. The sole exception was an outsider—a foreigner who did not belong to the chosen people. The Samaritan's grateful response starkly highlights and rebukes the ingratitude of the healed Jewish men.

17:19 And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

1. Encouragement and assurance: Jesus told the returning Samaritan to get up and continue his journey, assuring him that his faith had made him well. Faith of the others: The other nine presumably also possessed faith, as faith was typically required for Jesus's miracles, but only the Samaritan combined it with explicit gratitude.
2. **Made you well = (lit.) saved you:** The original Greek verb can mean more than physical healing and is literally translated as "has saved you."

3. Jesus recognized a saving faith in the man, granting him the assurance of spiritual salvation alongside his physical healing for a complete restoration of both body and soul.

Application

1. **Gratitude:** Practice intentional gratitude, not just a feeling, like the Samaritan who turned back, cried out, and prostrated himself. Ingratitude is a sin - a serious spiritual failure — a form of practical atheism, treating blessings as though they arose by chance or by one's own merit rather than from God's hand.
2. **Perception:** Perceive the spiritual significance of what the Lord is doing in your life. Note the distinction between common grace and saving grace or the difference between outward blessing and inward regeneration.
3. **Self-examination:** Distinguish between genuine conversion from false profession (sufficient to ask for mercy and even to obey instructions and even technically correct). The Samaritan represents a truly regenerate heart evidence by his gratitude and worship that accompany genuine salvation, not optional extras. Limitation of Law: it can only pronounce healing and not actual healing. Technically correct - obedience to the law; but Spiritually wrong as they forgets the law giver.