

Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy

Luke 17: 11-19

DIG: What was it like to be a leper? What would their healing mean to them? Why do you think the **nine** didn't go back to thank Yeshua? What is significant about the one who came back being a Samaritan?

REFLECT: How has Messiah healed you spiritually? Physically? Emotionally? Afterwards, how do you show your gratitude to the Lord? Do you throw yourself at Jesus' feet and thank Him like the Samaritan? Or take His healing for granted?

In **Messiah's** time, those suffering from **leprosy** were isolated in special camps outside the cities in an effort to contain the disease. According to the Torah, the only way a **leper** could be allowed to return to society was if he or she were declared clean by a priest (**Leviticus 14:1-32**).

During His ministry in Perea as He waited for His final appearance in **Jerusalem**, **Jesus** traveled along the border between **Samaria** and **Galilee** (**Luke 17:11**). Thus He stayed away from **Galilee**, where Herod sought to kill Him, and from **Judea**, where the Sanhedrin was plotting to kill Him. **Christ** made several trips to **Jerusalem**, but **Luke** telescoped them to make his point that **the Lord** had to get to **Zion** to present Himself as **the Messiah**.¹¹⁵¹

On one occasion, as He was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met Him. In the Jewish culture of that time, **leprosy** was not merely the symbol of sin, but of death, to which it stood related to our state of sin and death before **God**. **The rabbis taught that lepers were regarded as dead, along with the blind, the poor, and those who had no children. They were excluded from the camp of Isra'el, which in later times the Talmudists understood to be all the cities walled since the days of Joshua, who was supposed to have sanctified them. Everywhere a leper entered was considered defiled. They were, however, admitted to the synagogue, where a place was railed off for them, ten handbreadths high (a handbreadth being the measure of four fingers, equal to four inches) and four cubits wide, on condition of their entering the house of worship before the rest of the congregation, and leaving them before the service was over (Tractate Negaim 13.12).**¹¹⁵² So it was natural that they would band together.

At first **Christ** did not see **them**, for **they stood at a distance**. But then **He** heard **their** cry as **they called out in a loud voice**, "**Jesus, Master, have pity on us**" (Luke 17:12-13)! **They** knew **His** name because **they** had heard of the remarkable cure of one of the worst lepers in Galilee (see Cn - **The First Messianic Miracle: The Healing of a Jewish Leper**), not far from **their** village. **Nine** of them were Jews, but fellow-sympathy in misery had broken down the barriers of racial prejudice. Miserably afflicted with this disease, which was itself a living death, **they** spent **their** days in hopelessness, waiting for the end to come. The Torah requires people with serious skin diseases to separate **themselves** from the rest of **the camp of Isra'el** (Leviticus 13:45-46; Numbers 5:2-4). One Samaritan stood up with **the others** and joined with **them** in a heart-rending plea for **pity**.

When **Yeshua** saw **them**, **He** said: **Go show yourselves to the priests**. **They** went in faith even before **they** had actually experienced the healing. **As they** limped along the road, the dry scales fell from them, the white spots disappeared, a healthy color returned to **their** flesh, **their** disfigured limbs were restored, and the thrill of new life flowed through **their** veins. **They were cleansed** (Luke 17:14). Joseph Caiaphas, the high priest of the Sanhedrin, the Temple and the priesthood, led the rejection of **the Messiah**. Now he would have to see the results of this messianic miracle first hand.

All **ten** had enough faith in **Yeshua** to be **healed**. But only **one** of **them** had enough gratitude that **when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice**. **He** understood the significance of what had been done for **him**. Therefore, **he** threw **himself at Jesus' feet**, worshiped **Him** and thanked **Him** - and **he** was a Samaritan (Luke 17:15-16). To *demand* an action in keeping with the Torah from **him** would in itself be a challenge and could have offended **him**. So **the Samaritan** who returned had to overcome considerable obstacles in order to be obedient to **the Great Physician's** request. How **his** obedience to **the Lord**, and **his** worship and gratitude for **his** healing, must have pleased **the Savior of sinners**. **His** faith had not only **healed him**, but also saved **him**.

Jesus asked: **Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine** (Luke 17:17)? **They** had received **God's** spoken word and believed enough to be healed of **their** leprosy, but they fell short of the ultimate healing of salvation. **They** had **once been enlightened . . . [and] tasted the heavenly gift** (Hebrews 6:4) in **their** physical healing, but **they** had not stepped across the line from knowledge to faith. The lack of gratitude by **the other nine** was typical of the rejection of **Christ's** ministry by the Jewish people. **He** alone had the power to cleanse the nation and make her ceremonially clean. However, Isra'el did not respond properly to **Him**. She accepted the healings and feedings, but she did not accept **Him** as **the Meshiach**. But those outside the nation, such as this Samaritan leper (a person doubly repulsive to the Jews) and many of those in Perea were responding.¹¹⁵³

Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner (Luke 17:18)? Several questions come to mind. Did these **nine** Jews separate from **the one Samaritan** when **they** realized **they** were healed? Or was it Jewish pride, which felt it had a right to blessings, and attributed **them**, not to the mercy of **the Galilean Rabbi**, but to **God**; or rather, to the relation of Isra'el to **God**. Or what seems the most likely it was simply ingratitude. A state of mind all too characteristic of those far from **ADONAI**, and which led to the neglect and rejection of **Christ**. It was certainly a terrible contrast between **the sons of the Covenant** and **this foreigner**.

Then He said to him: Rise up and go, your faith has made you well (Luke 17:19). The phrase **made you well** is literally **saved you**. And in truth, **faith saves** us. Certainly the grateful **Samaritan** received a healing that far surpassed the physical cleansing of **his** skin. The wholeness **he** received in **his** flesh pointed to the wholeness **he** was receiving in **his** soul as **he** lay before **the Lord** in worship. Like this **Samaritan**, let us lay our hearts bare before **Jesus Christ** and allow **Him** to bring us deeper healing and wholeness.

*Lord Jesus, we believe that Your desire to work in us far exceeds our expectations We come to You today asking You to transform us. Yeshua, we bow before you in praise and thanksgiving.*¹¹⁵⁴