

JESUS HEALS LEPERS

Matthew 8:1-4

Now when Jesus had come down from the mountain, large crowds followed him. A man with a skin disease came, kneeled before him, and said, "Lord, if you want, you can make me clean."

Jesus reached out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do want to. Become clean." Instantly his skin disease was cleansed. Jesus said to him, "Don't say anything to anyone. Instead, go and show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded. This will be a testimony to them."

Luke 5:12-16

Jesus was in one of the towns where there was also a man covered with a skin disease. When he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged, "Lord, if you want, you can make me clean."

Jesus reached out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do want to. Be clean." Instantly, the skin disease left him. Jesus ordered him not to tell anyone. "Instead," Jesus said, "go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses instructed. This will be a testimony to them." News of him spread even more and huge crowds gathered to listen and to be healed from their illnesses. But Jesus would withdraw to deserted places for prayer.

Luke 17:11-19

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten men with skin diseases approached him. Keeping their distance from him, they raised their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, show us mercy!"

When Jesus saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." As they left, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw that he had been healed, returned and praised God with a loud voice. He fell on his face at Jesus' feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus replied, "Weren't ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? No one returned to praise God except this foreigner?" Then Jesus said to him, "Get up and go. Your faith has healed you."

QUOTES ABOUT LEPROSY

It has always been my concern to touch people with leprosy, trying to show in a simple action that they are not reviled, nor are we repulsed.

—Princess Diana

The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread but there are many more dying for a little love. The poverty in the West is a different kind of poverty -- it is not only a poverty of loneliness but also of spirituality. There's a hunger for love, as there is a hunger for God.

—Mother Teresa

I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus.

—Mother Teresa

For centuries, as pope and emperor tore each other apart in their quarrels over power, the excluded went on living on the fringe, like lepers, of whom true lepers are only the illustration ordained by God to make us understand this wondrous parable, so that in saying 'lepers' we would understand 'outcast, poor, simple, excluded, uprooted from the countryside, humiliated in the cities.' But we did not understand; the mystery of leprosy has continued to haunt us because we have not recognized the nature of the sign.

—Umberto Eco

AIDS is the leprosy of the 21st Century. Where did Jesus hang out? With lepers. Jesus would love on people with AIDS.

—Rick Warren

These people walk by a widow deformed by leprosy...walk by children dressed in rags living in the street, and they think, 'Business as usual.' But if they perceive a slight against God, it is a different story. Their faces go red, their chests heave mightily, they sputter angry words. The degree of their indignation is astonishing. Their resolve is frightening.

—Yann Martel

WHO ARE THE SAMARITANS?

The Samaritans are very closely related to the Jews ethnically and their language is a dialect of Hebrew. The Samaritans are said to be descendants of several of the twelve tribes of Israel. They worship the same God and observe many of the same rituals and festivals as the Jews. They even speak a dialect of Hebrew and even the name “Samaritans” or “Shamerim” means “Keepers of the Torah.”

This similarities come from the fact that the Samaritans claim descent from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and the Levites, three of the northern tribes.

TIMELINE

- C 930 BC Following the death of King Solomon the kingdom of Israel splits in two, each following a different heir. The northern kingdom was called Israel and comprised 10 tribes. The remaining two tribes and their southern kingdom were called Judah.
- 721 BC The growing Assyrian Empire conquers Israel and carries the people of the 10 tribes into captivity. The kingdom of Judah remains unconquered.
- 597 BC The rising Babylonian Empire takes over the territories of the Assyrians and conquers Judah. The Jews are taken to the city of Babylon in captivity.
- 500s BC During this period the Samaritans (members of the northern kingdom who had retained their ethnic and religious identity) move into the lands of Israel and Judah.
- 539 BC The Persian Empire conquers the Babylonians and the Jews are allowed to return home. They find the Samaritans there and a bitter rivalry between the two peoples begins.

DIFFERENCES

The Jews and the Samaritans have a number of religious differences. The Samaritans say that the Jews allowed their faith to become corrupted during their captivity in Babylon. The Jews say that the Samaritans allowed theirs to become corrupted in Assyria.

- Samaritans have a different version of the Torah, known as the Memar Markah.
- The Samaritans have a similar but different version of the 10 Commandments.
- Samaritans reject the Talmud (rabbinic commentary on the scriptures.)
- Samaritans reject worship in Jerusalem, insisting that God’s sanctuary must be at Mt. Gerazim.