

Jesus Heals Those with Leprosy

There are two stories of Jesus healing people with leprosy. One is found in Matthew 8 and the second in Luke 17. First, we need to understand that leprosy was regarded as a horrible disease in the old testament times.

Incurable by man at the time of Jesus, many believed God inflicted the curse of leprosy upon people for the sins they committed. In fact, those with leprosy were so despised and loathed that they were not allowed to live in any community with their own people ([Numbers 5:2](#)). **A leper wasn't allowed to come within six feet of any other human, including his own family.** The disease was considered so revolting that the leper wasn't permitted to come within 150 feet of anyone when the wind was blowing. Lepers lived in a community, usually in caves, with other lepers until they either got better or died. This was the only way the people knew to contain the spread of the contagious forms of leprosy. This sounds like Covid 19 in many ways. The main reason why leprosy is talked about upwards of 40 times in the Bible is that it is a graphic illustration of sin's destructive power.

Leprosy is also called Hansen's disease and is now treated with a combination of antibiotics. Typically, 2 or 3 antibiotics are used at the same time. This is called multidrug therapy.

Treatment usually lasts between one to two years. The illness can be cured if treatment is completed as prescribed. If left untreated, the nerve damage can result in paralysis and crippling of hands and feet. In very advanced cases, the person may have multiple injuries due to lack of sensation, and eventually resulting in the apparent loss of toes and fingers. Blindness can also occur if facial nerves are affected. Other signs of advanced leprosy may include loss of eyebrows and saddle-nose deformity resulting from damage to the nasal septum.

Many times, in the old testament times people thought that any illness or disease was due to sin. Not true. Today, cancer is simply a disease that a person can have and not due to some type of sin.

The truth is that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and we all need to confess our sins, repent of those sins and be baptized into Christ. Then

we can spend the rest of our lives growing in the Spirit through the study and application of the Word of God.

Scripture: Matthew 8 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy

8 When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. ²A man with leprosy^[a] came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

³Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, “See that you don’t tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

Luke 17:11-19 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy

¹¹ Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy^[a] met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

Leviticus 13 New King James Version (NKJV)

The Law Concerning Leprosy

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ² “When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of

his body *like* a [a]leprous sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. ³The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears *to be* deeper than the skin of his body, it *is* a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him [b]unclean. ⁴But if the bright spot *is* white on the skin of his body, and does not appear *to be* deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the sore seven days. ⁵And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore appears to be as it was, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him another seven days. ⁶Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore has faded, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it *is only* a scab, and he shall wash his clothes and be clean. ⁷But if the scab should at all spread over the skin, after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again. ⁸And *if* the priest sees that the scab has indeed spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him [c]unclean. It *is* leprosy.

Question Time:

- 1. Why was leprosy such a bad disease?**
- 2. How many feet should a leper be apart from others?**
- 3. How many feet should we social distance from people due to Covid 19?**
- 4. Is having leprosy due to being a sinner?**

Next Steps: Talk to your parents about people who have diseases that are no fault of their own and how we should treat them. Also, talk to your parents about children at the Shriners Hospital and St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.