

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

LUKE 17:11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There *are* not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

NOTES

Healing Ten Lepers

Lesson Text: Luke 17:11-19

Related Scriptures: Leviticus 13:38-46; 14:1-32; Luke 5:12-15

TIME: A.D. 30

PLACE: on the way to Jerusalem

GOLDEN TEXT—"And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:19).

Lesson Exposition

HEARING A NEED—Luke 17:11-14

Encounter with ten lepers (Luke 17:11-12). "During [the] period in which Jesus was awaiting the time for His final appearance in Jerusalem, He was traveling on the border between Samaria and Galilee. He thus stayed away from Galilee, where Herod sought to kill Him, and from Judea, where the Sanhedrin was plotting to kill Him" (Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, Zondervan).

As Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers. Because of the regulations in the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev. 13:45-46) combined with Pharasaic traditions, the ten lepers stood away from the crowds (cf. Lev. 13:45-46). They were probably just outside the village Jesus was entering, since they were also required to stay out of town.

Instruction for the lepers (Luke 17:13-14). There was usually a crowd around Jesus, so the lepers would have had to call out loudly both because of the distance they had to maintain and in order to be heard above the noise of the people. What they asked for was mercy from Jesus. They needed His empathy and the healing He could grant them.

These ten recognized Jesus and ad-

dressed Him by name. They also recognized Him as having special healing abilities.

In response, Jesus simply told them what they should do: proceed to show themselves to the priests. He gave no indication that they were healed or were going to be.

Their healing came while they were underway, not before. Whether the healing happened shortly after they began their trek or when they had almost arrived, it is clear that their healing resulted from their obedient faith.

Healed lepers had to be pronounced clean by the priests (Lev. 13:2-3; 14:3-57), so when Jesus told them to go to the priests, it was a clear implication that their healing was already a reality. They had to act in that belief.

RECEIVING GRATITUDE— Luke 17:15-19

Thanks from a Samaritan (Luke 17:15-16). "Healing sent nine of the lepers scurrying to the priests at a rapid clip. But one of the men reversed directions; he returned to thank Jesus. . . . Not only was this person an unclean leper, but he was also an unclean Samaritan" (Anders, ed., *Holman*

New Testament Commentary, Broadman and Holman).

Two truths stand out for us in these verses. First, Jesus has compassion on everyone, no matter their spiritual condition, physical condition, religious affiliation, or national association.

Second, God's response is to those who are needy and humble, not to the self-righteous and proud. Proverbs speaks to this. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate" (8:13).

No doubt this event was a lesson for the Jews, for they would have considered a Samaritan in a negative light and unworthy of God's attention.

Questions about the others (Luke 17:17-18). Jesus asked questions to which He already knew the answers. It was not that the return of only one surprised Him; rather, it was important that He point out to those observing the importance of acknowledging the work of God and being grateful for it. So He asked, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" (vs. 17). Nine out of ten received the healing they requested without coming back to express their thanks! An important attitude was missing.

The Samaritan who returned revealed a deep understanding of who Jesus was. Whether or not he understood Jesus to be the Messiah, at least he knew He was an agent of God working among humans. In light of the miraculous healing he had just experienced, he returned to give thanks to God.

Jesus mentioned the total number who had asked for healing, and that nine had failed to return with thanks. In doing this, they had not given glory to God who had worked on their behalf. Jesus pointed out that the one returning leper was a foreigner. He expressed all these things as the healed leper was worshipping at His feet.

Assurance of healing (Luke 17:19). This man had the privilege of learning that it was his faith that had brought about his healing as Jesus said to him, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." His simple act of going was evidence of his faith, an act shared by all ten of these men.

His response, coupled with the resulting interaction with Jesus, suggests he also received salvation. It is probable, therefore, that the other nine were healed by their obedience to Jesus' command to show themselves to the priests but did not receive life-changing, eternal salvation.

—Keith E. Eggert

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Jesus spending so much time in Samaria and Galilee while on His way to Jerusalem?
2. Who met Jesus as He entered an unnamed village?
3. Where were they positioned relative to the crowds? Why?
4. What was their request, and what did this reveal about what they knew of Jesus?
5. How did Jesus uncharacteristically respond to their request?
6. At what point did their healing actually occur?
7. What did the one healed leper do that none of the others did?
8. What surprising truth do we learn about him that made Jesus' point even more impressive?
9. How did Jesus express His disappointment about the others?
10. What was the ultimate result of the faith of this leper?

—Keith E. Eggert

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. The Lord can help anyone, even those with no other hope (Luke 17:11-12).
2. We all need to cry out for the Lord's mercy (vs. 13).
3. Often it is as we obey the Lord's Word that He does His work in our lives (vs. 14).
4. Thankfulness for what God has done for us should be fervent and public (vss. 15-16).
5. Showing gratitude is often the last thing on our minds when we experience God's goodness to us (vss. 17-18).
6. Jesus gives assurance to all who turn to Him (vs. 19).

—Kenneth A. Sponsler

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. What significance might there be that Jesus passed between Samaria and Galilee on His way to Jerusalem (Luke 17:11)?
2. What does the wording of the plea by the ten lepers tell us about their understanding of who Jesus was (vs. 13)? Why did they cry out for mercy?
3. Why did Jesus tell the lepers to show themselves to the priests before they were healed (vs. 14)? What does the lepers' obedience tell us?
4. Why does the text take pains to identify the thankful leper as a Samaritan (vs. 16)? Was he better than the others because of this? Why or why not?
5. Why is it so easy to receive blessings from God, yet so difficult to remember to give Him thanks?

—Kenneth A. Sponsler

Golden Text Illuminated

“And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole” (Luke 17:19).

The modern hospital's origins came from Christianity and the church's desire to serve the sick and dying. Constantine I, the first Roman emperor to embrace Christianity, abolished all pagan hospitals and emphasized the close relationship of the sufferer to the community members. The Hôtel-Dieu of Lyon and the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris opened in 542 and 660 respectively, paying attention to the well-being of the patients' souls as well as to curing physical illness (www.britannica.com/hospital). We are created both body and soul, and God cares about both. Historically the church has taken care of people's physical and spiritual needs.

Modern medicine largely addresses only the complex needs of the body, leaving the healing of the soul to those trained in that specialization. The Scriptures remain relevant on this topic, prioritizing spiritual wholeness over physical wholeness, without ignoring the latter.

The Old Testament leprosy laws depicted principles of cleanness and uncleanness. Being cleansed from leprosy was a rescue from death, not from sin. A single leper, by an act of faith, returned to worship Jesus. He was the only one to be pronounced whole, though all ten were physically healed. Jesus died and took on our reproach to save both body and soul. We should likewise care for both the bodies and souls of others.

—Brian Burke