

The Gospel According to

SAINT MATTHEW

SAINT MARK

SAINT LUKE

SAINT JOHN

CHAPTER 8, VERSES 1-4	CHAPTER 1, VERSES 40-45	CHAPTER 5, VERSES 12-16	NOTHING RECORDED
<p>8:1 - When he was come down¹ from the mountain², great³ multitudes⁴ followed⁵ him.</p> <p>8:2 - And, behold, there came a leper⁶ and worshipped⁷ him, saying, Lord⁸, if thou wilt⁹, thou canst make me clean¹⁰.</p> <p>8:3 - And Jesus put forth his hand¹¹, and touched¹² him, saying, I will¹³; be thou clean¹⁰. And immediately¹⁴ his leprosy¹⁵ was cleansed¹⁶.</p> <p>8:4 - And Jesus saith unto him, See¹⁷ thou tell no man¹⁸; but go thy way¹⁹, shew thyself²⁰ to the priest²¹, and offer²² the gift²³ that Moses²⁴ commanded²⁵, for a testimony²⁶ unto them²⁷.</p>	<p>1:40 - And there came a leper⁶ to him, beseeching²⁸ him, and kneeling down²⁹ to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt⁹, thou canst make me clean¹⁰.</p> <p>1:41 - And Jesus, moved with compassion³⁰, put forth his hand¹¹, and touched¹² him, and saith unto him, I will¹³; be thou clean¹⁰.</p> <p>1:42 - And as soon as he had spoken, immediately¹⁴ the leprosy¹⁵ departed³¹ from him, and he was cleansed¹⁶.</p> <p>1:43 - And he straightly³² charged³³ him, and forthwith³⁴ sent him away;</p> <p>1:44 - And saith unto him, See¹⁷ thou say nothing³⁵ to any man¹⁸; but go thy way¹⁹, shew thyself²⁰ to the priest²¹, and offer²² for thy cleansing³⁶ those things which Moses²⁴ commanded²⁵, for a testimony²⁶ unto them²⁷.</p> <p>1:45 - But he went out³⁷, and began to publish³⁸ it much, and to blaze³⁹ abroad⁴⁰ the matter⁴¹, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly⁴² enter into the city⁴³, but was without⁴⁴ in desert places⁴⁵: and they came to him from every quarter⁴⁶.</p>	<p>5:12 - And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city⁴⁷, behold a man full⁴⁸ of leprosy¹⁵: who seeing Jesus fell on his face⁴⁹, and besought²⁸ him, saying, Lord⁸, if thou wilt⁹, thou canst make me clean¹⁰.</p> <p>5:13 - And he put forth his hand¹¹, and touched¹² him, saying, I will¹³: be thou clean¹⁰. And immediately¹⁴ the leprosy¹⁵ departed³¹ from him.</p> <p>5:14 - And he charged³³ him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself²⁰ to the priest²¹, and offer²² for thy cleansing³⁶, according as Moses²⁴ commanded²⁵, for a testimony²⁶ unto them²⁷.</p> <p>5:15 - But so much the more went there a fame⁵⁰ abroad⁴⁰ of him: and great³ multitudes⁴ came together to hear⁵¹, and to be healed⁵² by him of their infirmities⁵³.</p> <p>5:16 - And he withdrew⁵⁴ himself into the wilderness⁵⁵, and prayed⁵⁶.</p>	

CHRONOLOGY: Spring of 28CE (Most likely around the blooming of the lilies of the field, which took place between March and April on the modern Calendar).

LOCATION: The actual location for this chapter is unknown. We know that it was in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee and near Capernaum. There are three possible locations for the Sermon on the Mount; 1.) **Kafr Hattin or the Horns of Hattin** (Northwest of Tiberias). The Horns are a set of twin mountain peaks about 1,816 feet and 1,135 feet above the Sea of Galilee. 2.) **Mount Eremos** lies between the city of Capernaum and Tabgha. It is considered the smallest mountain in Northern Israel. It is the traditional site of the Sermon on the Mount. The Catholic Church has built a basilica on top of the mount. It lies 401 feet above the Sea of Galilee. 3.) **Mount Arbel** (near the city of Tiberias) is the least likely of the three theories. Mount Arbel is only 593 feet above the Sea of Galilee; however, it has a clear view of the Sea and the surrounding area.

COMMENTARY: As Jesus descended the mount where he had delivered the Sermon on the Mount, He was confronted by a leper. The leper was in the advanced stages of leprosy, a disease that causes the body to decay and deform. Lepers were ritually unclean and prohibited from interacting with the general population. In fact, they were required to warn people as they approached them by calling out "Unclean! Unclean!". Lepers were forced to leave the families and friends, living apart from society. It is suspected that this leper listened to the Sermon on the Mount from a distant location. His faith was great. Perhaps the words of the sermon had sunk deep into his heart. Perhaps the confirmation of the spirit had motivated him. He knelt before Jesus near the shore of the Sea of Galilee and told the Savior that he knew if Jesus would, He had the power to heal him. Leprosy had no cure, and the Jews believed that it was a direct result of sin; specifically slander. Seeing his faith, Jesus did the unthinkable. He reached forth His hand and touched the leper. He commanded the man to be healed. Immediately, the leper was healed. It must have been an amazing sight to witness. Possible fingers and toes restored, sores healed, and deformities made normal. Jesus commanded the man to complete the process outlined by the Law of Moses. He was to submit himself to priesthood authority for inspection, and perform the ordinances necessary to be pronounced clean. He commanded the man to tell no one of the miracle, but to obey the law. We don't know if the man submitted to the Law of Moses, but we do know that he failed to comply with Jesus' direction to tell no one. He spread the word everywhere. So much so that Jesus had difficulty entering cities because of the fame that had spread. Just like the law of substitute redemption, the leper who was once prohibited from entering the cities is now free to enter while Jesus who healed him now finds the entering of the cities restrictive.

FOOTNOTES:

1- **come down** – The term "was come down" is translated from the Greek word "καταβαίνω" or "katabainō". It means to go down, come down, or descend.

This verse establishes several facts. First, the events of this chapter occur immediately following the Sermon on the Mount. In fact, they occur as Jesus is descending from the Mount of Beatitudes. This also establishes location. The base of the Sermon on the Mount is on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Second, the time of day becomes a little more apparent. Jesus delivered the entire Sermon on the Mount, before coming down off the mount. Surely the recorded sermon and the additional information, of which we have no record, would have taken the better part of the morning. The events of this chapter would have taken place in the afternoon. "After preaching the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus descended the hill and was followed by a large number of people who had listened to His discourse." (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 53). Jesus left the "Mount of Beatitudes" with the intent of returning to the city where His mother now resided, and



where Peter had a home. Skousen wrote, **“As Jesus finished his Sermon on the Plain, he began his journey toward nearby Capernaum.”** (The Days of the Living Christ, Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, page 313).

Of course, the chronology of New Testament events are also a debated subject. There are those that believe the Sermon on the Mount took place at a much later date, and possibly had no connection with the cleansing of a leper. I personally prefer the chronology of Matthew. Barclay said, **“Of all the gospel writers Matthew is the most orderly. He never sets out his material haphazardly. If in Matthew one thing follows another in a certain sequence, there is always a reason for that sequence; and it is so here.”** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 298). Additionally, the wording of this verse in Matthew, “he was come down from the mountain” is thought to be a transition by Matthew from the Sermon on the Mount. Albright wrote, **“This verse can hardly be anything but a connecting link with Matthew 7:28-29, and is not intended to be a chronological note.”** (Matthew: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 91).

2- the mountain – The term “the mountain” is translated from the Greek word ὄρος or “oros”. It means literally a mountain. A mountain is used symbolically to represent the abode of deity. It shares the same symbolism as a temple of God. In fact, when there is not an appropriate temple available the Lord often uses mountains as temples. Mountains **“symbolize consistency; eternity; firmness; and stillness... the cosmic center, the throne of God.”** (An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page110).



As discussed in Chapter 17 on this Book, there are three major theories as to the location of the Sermon on the Mount. This would be the same mount referred to here as a mountain. The three possibilities are;

1. Kafr Hattin or the Horns of Hattin (Northwest of Tiberius)
2. Mount Eremos or the Mount of Beatitudes (between the city of Capernaum and Tabgha)
3. Mount Arbel (near the city of Tiberius)

Most scholars support Mount Eremos or the Mount of Beatitudes as the most probable site of the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore, the base of Mount Eremos is the most likely site for the events of this chapter. The mountain is located above Tabgha, 574 feet higher than the sea of Galilee, yet 115 feet under the Mediterranean sea level. It is difficult to

say how long it would have taken the Savior to descend Mount Eremos, as we have lost the ancient paths that existed at the time of Jesus. As a rule of thumb, there is an average of 3 miles per every 1,000 feet of elevation. Consequently, a descent of 574 feet would have taken about 1.7 miles of descent path. At an average hiking pace of 1.86 miles per hour, it would have taken Jesus and His followers just under an hour to reach the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Of course, there are scholars who prefer other Mountains for the Sermon on the Mount. Canon Farrar wrote, **“When the Sermon was over, the immense throng dispersed in various directions, and those whose homes lay in the plain of Gennesareth would doubtless follow Jesus through the village of Hattin, and across the narrow plateau, and then, after descending the ravine, would leave Magdala on the right, and pass through Bethsaida to Capernaum.”** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar’s Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 183). It is obvious that Farrar preferred the Horns of Hattin. Other predominate scholars have differing opinions which should be considered when evaluating the site for the Sermon on the Mount, and consequently the location for the healing of the leper. The healing of the leper took place at the base of the Mount where the sermon was delivered, along the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

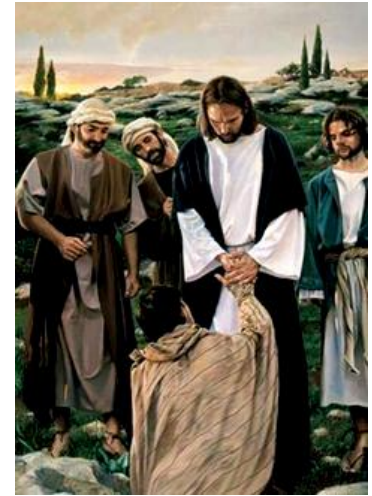
3- great – The word “great” is translated from the Greek word “πολύς” or “polys”. It means many, much or large. The Codex Sinaiticus translated the word “great” as “many”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 21). Skousen wrote, **“The vast throng crowded and pushed right along with him.”** (The Days of the Living Christ, Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, page 313). It is estimated that at least 4,000 people attended the Sermon on the Mount.

4- multitude – The word “multitudes” is translated from the Greek word ὄχλος or “ochlos”. It means a crowd, a casual collection of people, a multitude (specifically of common people), or a throng. In the Jewish culture at the time of Jesus, a multitude carried the idea of over 2,000 people. A great multitude would be thousands of people, probably well over 4,000 people. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “multitude” as the plural “multitudes”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 21).

5- followed – The word “followed” is translated from the Greek word ἀκολουθεῖω or “akoloutheō”. It means to follow one who precedes, joins him as his attendant or accompanies him.



It is no coincidence that Jesus left His sermon to almost immediately perform miracles of service. As faith without works is dead, so it is that Jesus always followed His teachings by an example of action. It is as though He was showing His disciples the principles of His words in everyday practice. Farrar wrote, **“The Inauguration of the Great Doctrine was immediately followed and ratified by mighty signs. Jesus went, says one of the fathers, from teaching to miracles. Having taught as one who had authority, He proceeded to confirm that authority by accordant deeds.”** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar’s Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 183).



Lepers at the time of Jesus, were banned from common associations with men. They lived outside the communities, whether that was a city, a camp, or a gathering. A leper would have hardly been accepted in a gathering such as the Sermon on the Mount. The people would have cited the Law of Moses, and denied any leper access. Even so, it would seem that a leper followed the faithful masses to listen to the Master. **“The leper would not have stood among the crowd as Jesus preached because he was defiled. Thus, he may have secreted himself away within earshot of Jesus’s words. But he only approached Christ after the crowd had dispersed.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 66). If the Sermon was delivered on Mount Eremos, this would have been a likely scenario. The valley on the south slope of Eremose acts as a natural amphitheater. This would have allowed a leper to stand at considerable distance, and clearly listen to the words of the Sermon.

The words of the Savior must have sunk deep into the heart of the leper. He already demonstrated faith by attending the Sermon; but his actions after the sermon showed even more faith. Gaskill wrote, **“A leper, who had likely been listening to Jesus’ sermon from a distance, approached Him in an attitude of worship, kneeling before Him.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 53). This acknowledgement demonstrated the fact that the leper believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and furthermore that He had power over all things.

- 6- **leper** – The word “leper” is translated from the Greek word “λεπρός” or “lepros”. It means scaly, rough, leprous, or affected with leprosy. A Leper symbolizes, **“The unclean; the outcast; the spiritually and morally fallen.”** (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 96). **“A man with scale-disease. Gk lepros. ‘Scale disease’ is Milgrom’s translation for the Hebrew term sara’at, which the Septuagint renders as lepra. ‘Leper,’ the usual translation, is misleading, sara’at/lepra designates a variety of conditions in which the skin becomes scaly, but not what today is called leprosy (Hansen’s disease)....”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 205).



One of the most significant details to the miracle of the healing the leper was the Jewish belief that any disease was a consequence of sin. Abrahams records, **“Rabbinic Judaism took over from the Old Testament a belief that disease was a consequence of sin.”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, First series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 108). If a man, or woman, contracted a disease it was assumed that either they had committed a sin, or the disease was consequence of sin committed by his or her parents. It was an accepted false doctrine that God would punish children with illnesses and diseases because of the sins of their parents. Undoubtedly, this is a misunderstanding of the principle that the sins of the parents shall be a consequence to their children, even for generations.

Even so, leprosy was the ultimate symbol of grievous sins in the days of Jesus. **“The Jews of Jesus’s day referred to leprosy as ‘the finger of God’. This may in part be because they tended to see it as evidence of God’s displeasure with those who developed it.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 54). Those who studied the law determined that there were only certain serious sins that could result in leprosy. **“Rabbi Ammi (of the third century, but his view was shared by earlier authorities) asserts that there was no affliction without perversive sin. Rabbi Jonathan said: ‘Disease (בַּעֲוֹנוֹת) come from seven sins: for slander, shedding blood, false oaths, unchastity, arrogance, robbery and envy’. In particular leprosy was the result of slander.”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, First

series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 108).

The Jews believed that one’s outward health was a measure of their obedience to the laws of God. **“Thus obedience prevented disease, just as disobedience produced it.”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, First series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 108). One must remember that the Jews at the time of Jesus lived under the conditions of apostasy. They had lost the understanding of God’s plan of salvation for His children. Had they understood, they would have known that sickness and disease are part of the Lord’s plan for refining His children. Even the most righteous men will endure illness and disease. In a larger sense, I suppose that illness and disease are a result of sin. Though they are not a direct result of our personal sins, they did enter into mortality as a result of Adam and Eve’s transgression.

When Adam and Eve fell; illness, disease and death entered into the world. **“The leper potentially reminds us that we are each filled with spiritual sickness and are dying from the influence of this fallen world. Like the leper who, when he first contacts the disease, is undoubtedly unaware that he is sick, so also many who are spiritually ailing doubt that they are in any way contaminated by the devil’s diseases. Similarly, like the leper, who once his disease advances becomes numb, you and I, if we allow our spiritual sicknesses to advance, can get to the point where we too are ‘past feeling’.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 56). The associations between leprosy and sin are so closely interwoven into ancient Judaism that the words were even associated in Hebrew. **“In Rabbinic Hebrew the very strong word ‘סִרְיָה’ which literally means ‘to be putrid’ is a common term for to sin.”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, First series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 41).

Spiritually speaking, **“Leprosy is a standard symbol for the sin-sick soul. It represents those who are lost without the intervention of the Lord and His atoning blood. It is a disease that causes the decay and putrefaction of the living body. In scriptures, lepers are the living dead. According to the law of Moses, lepers were to be somewhat ostracized or cut off from direct fellowship with the rest of the house of Israel.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 55). When we sin, we become spiritually death. We are cut off from the presence of our Father in Heaven. Spiritual death is incurable without the gift of the Savior. Without the atonement of Jesus Christ, we are doomed to our fallen state. **“The leper is a perfect type or similitude of what King Benjamin called ‘the natural man’.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, pages 55-56). The natural man is spiritually dead. **“Scarcely is there a more loathsome, defiling,**

and hopeless disease than leprosy. Even to this day it remains incurable except through divine intercession.” (The Doctrinal New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 173). The same is true of all sins, who are spiritually dead,

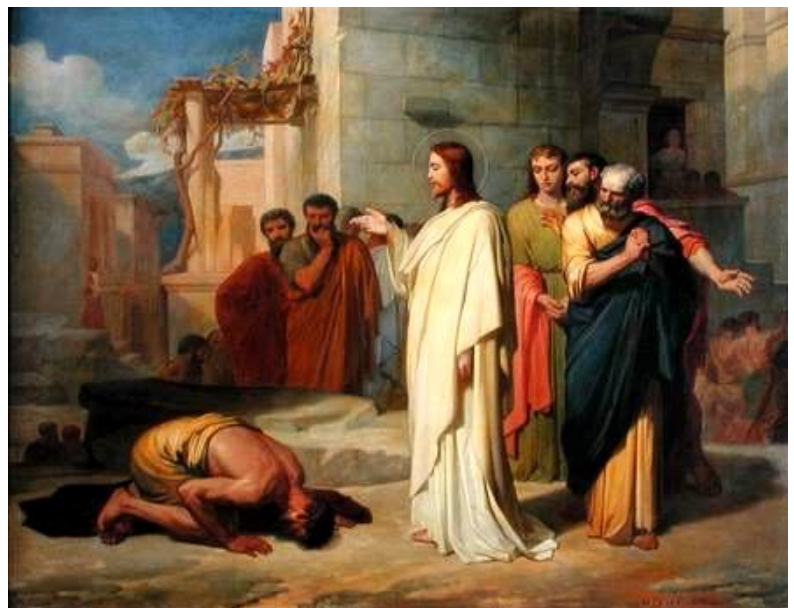
“Leprosy is an infectious disease, almost a living death, where the skin literally flakes off the bone.” (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 155). Today, it is known as Hansen’s disease. “In the ancient world leprosy was the most terrible of all diseases. E. W. G. Masterman writes: ‘No other disease reduces a human being for so many years to so hideous a wreck.’” (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 300). There was no known cure, and the final outcome was surely death, but not until one endured much suffering and pain. “Leprosy was nothing short of a living death, a corrupting of all the humors, a poisoning of the very springs, of life; a dissolution, little by little, of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away. Aaron exactly describes the appearance which the leper presented to the eyes of the beholder, when, pleading for Miriam, he says, ‘Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother’s womb.’ (Numbers 12:12).” (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, pages 199-200). Several scholars have described the leprosy of the ancient word as follows;

TALMAGE	ZONDERVAN	BARCLAY	GEIKIE	DEEMS
<p>“The symptoms and the effects of this disease are very loathsome. There comes a white swelling or scab, with a change of the color of the hair... from its natural hue to yellow; then the appearance of a taint going deeper than the skin, or raw flesh appearing in the swelling. Then it spreads and attacks the cartilaginous portions of the body. The nails loosen and drop off, the gums are absorbed, and the teeth decay and fall out; the breath is a stench, the nose decays; fingers, hands, feet, may be lost, or the eyes eaten out. The human beauty has gone into corruption, and the patient feels that he is being eaten as by a fiend, who consumes him slowly in a long remorseless meal that will not end until he be destroyed.” (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, pages 199).</p>	<p>“Leprosy, also known as Hansen’s disease, as defined today, is the name for disease processes caused by the microorganism <i>Mycobacterium leprae</i>. There are two types: A. The lepromatous type begins with brownish-red spots on the face, ears, forearms, thighs and/or buttocks which later become thickened nodules and, losing their skin covering, become ulcers (‘sores’) with subsequent loss of tissue and then contraction and deformity. It was apparently the lepromatous type that was chiefly in view in the Bible cases of true leprosy. B. The tuberculoid type is characterized by numbness of an affected area of skin and deformity such as fingers like claws resulting from paralysis and consequent muscle wasting (atrophy). The advanced forms of leprosy are not described in Leviticus 13, presumably because this chapter is concerned with early diagnosis. Advanced leprosy would only be seen in isolation outside the camp.” (Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor Merrill C. Tenney, Page 218).</p>	<p>“It might begin with little nodules which go on to ulcerate. The ulcers develop a foul discharge; the eyebrows fall out; the eyes become staring; the vocal chords become ulcerated, and the voice becomes hoarse, and the breath wheezes. The hands and feet always ulcerate. Slowly the sufferer becomes a mass of ulcerated growths. The average course of that kind of leprosy is nine years, and it ends in mental decay, coma and ultimately death. Leprosy might begin with the loss of all sensation in some part of the body; the nerve trunks are affected; the muscles waste away; the tendons contract until the hands are like claws. There follows ulceration of the hands and feet. Then comes the progressive loss of fingers and toes, until in the end a whole hand or a whole foot may drop off. The duration of that kind of leprosy is anything from twenty to thirty years. It is a kind of terrible progressive death in which a man dies by inches.” (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page).</p>	<p>“It began with little specks on the eyelids, and on the palms of the hand, and gradually spread over different parts of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swelling and sores. From the skin it slowly ate its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, the eye were attacked in turn, at last, consumption or dropsy brought welcome death.” (Life and Words of Christ, John Cunningham Geikie, pages 390-391).</p>	<p>“The symptoms and the effects of this disease are very loathsome. There comes a white swelling or scab, with a change of the color of the hair ... from its natural hue to yellow; then the appearance of a taint going deeper than the skin, or raw flesh appearing in the swelling. ... The nails loosen and drop off, the gums are absorbed, and the teeth decay and fall out; the breath is a stench, the nose decays; fingers, hands, feet, may be lost, or the eyes eaten out. The human beauty has gone into corruption” (Charles F. Deems, The Light of the Nations [1884], 185).</p>

In addition to the physical suffering associated with leprosy, the infected person was required to endure social and emotional consequences. “He is shut out from his fellows. As they approach he must cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ that all humanity may be warned from his precincts. He must abandon wife and child. He must go to live with other lepers, in disheartening view of miseries similar to his own. He must dwell in dismantled houses or in the tombs.” (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, pages 199).

The loss of friends and family associated with leprosy had to be devastating, but it didn’t end there. The leper was banned from contact with society. He couldn’t go to town and talk with merchants and interact with even strangers. Many feel that lepers were confined to leper colonies, as they are in many places today. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that supports this. If they didn’t live in leper colonies, it would indicate that they lived a relatively solitary life. They were alone with their disease and pains.

Lepers were, however, allowed to attend synagogue. The attended in a separate room and required to arrive before the ‘normal’ people, and depart after the ‘normal’ people had left. Gaskill wrote, “These diseases [the various sicknesses referred to as ‘leprosy’] are associated with uncleanness and entail segregation from others. But the segregation is not complete isolation; for although Leviticus 13:46 might mean that lepers should live by themselves, in both Testaments lepers have dealings with other people. One nowhere reads of leper



The Leper Healed

colonies. On the contrary, lepers advertise their presence by wearing ragged clothing, looking unkempt, and crying 'Unclean, unclean!'" (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 67). They were required to warn the people around them that an unclean person was in their proximity.

7- **worshipped** – The word “worshipped” is translated from the Greek word “προσκυνέω” or “proskuneō”. It means to kiss the hand of one in token of reverence. It can also be used in conjunction with the ancient Oriental practice of falling upon one's knees and touching the ground with one's forehead as an expression of profound reverence. The leper recognized who Jesus was. **“The leper came with reverence. The King James Version says that he worshipped Jesus. The Greek verb is proskunein (Greek #4352), and that word is never used of anything but worship of the gods; it always describes a man's feeling and action in presence of the divine. That leper could never have told anyone what he thought Jesus was; but he knew that in the presence of Jesus he was in the presence of God. We do not need to put this into theological or philosophical terms; it is enough to be convinced that when we are confronted with Jesus Christ, we are confronted with the love and the power of Almighty God.”** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 303).

8- **Lord** – The word “Lord” is translated from the Greek word “κύριος” or “kyrios”. It means Master or Lord. It is a title used for someone who has possession or power over another person, people, property or land. It was a title of great respect and reverence given by servants when greeting their master. Consequently, it was a title often invoked when referring to the Messiah or God.

On an interesting note, the Rabbi's often referred to the promised Messiah as ‘the Leprous’. Edersheim wrote, **“And yet, as if writing its own condemnation, one of the titles which it [Rabbinism] gives to the Messiah is ‘the Leprous’, the King Messiah being represented as seated in the entrance to Rome, surrounded by, and relieving all misery and disease, in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 493). I supposed the Jew under stood the prophesy which reads, **“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”** (Isaiah 53:4) as meaning that the Messiah would take upon Him the disease of leprosy. Though they were a little too literal in their interpretation, it is true that Jesus' atonement entailed Him bearing the pain, grief, and suffering of all mankind's mortal experience.

9- **if thou wilt** – The term “thou wilt” is translated from the Greek word “θέλω” or “thelō”. It means to will, have in mind, or intend.

There is no record indicating that the leper approached Jesus in the prescribed fashion. The law prescribed that the leper be **“wrapped in mourner's garb”** and as he **“passed by, his cry ‘Unclean!’ was to incite others to pray for him – but also to avoid him.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 495). It is evident in the Gospel records that the leper approached Jesus in an attitude of worship.

The Leper displayed great faith, and equally great submission, as he asked “if thou wilt”. The implication is that the leper made his request knowing that Jesus had the power to heal, but understanding that the will of the Lord was a prerequisite to his healing. Elder Talmage wrote, **“The petition implied in the words of this poor creature was pathetic; the confidence he expressed is inspiring. The question in his mind was not--Can Jesus heal me? but--Will He heal me? In compassionate mercy Jesus laid His hand upon the sufferer, unclean though he was, both ceremonially and physically, for leprosy is a loathsome affliction, and we know that this man was far advanced in the disease since we are told that he was ‘full of leprosy’.”** (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 153).

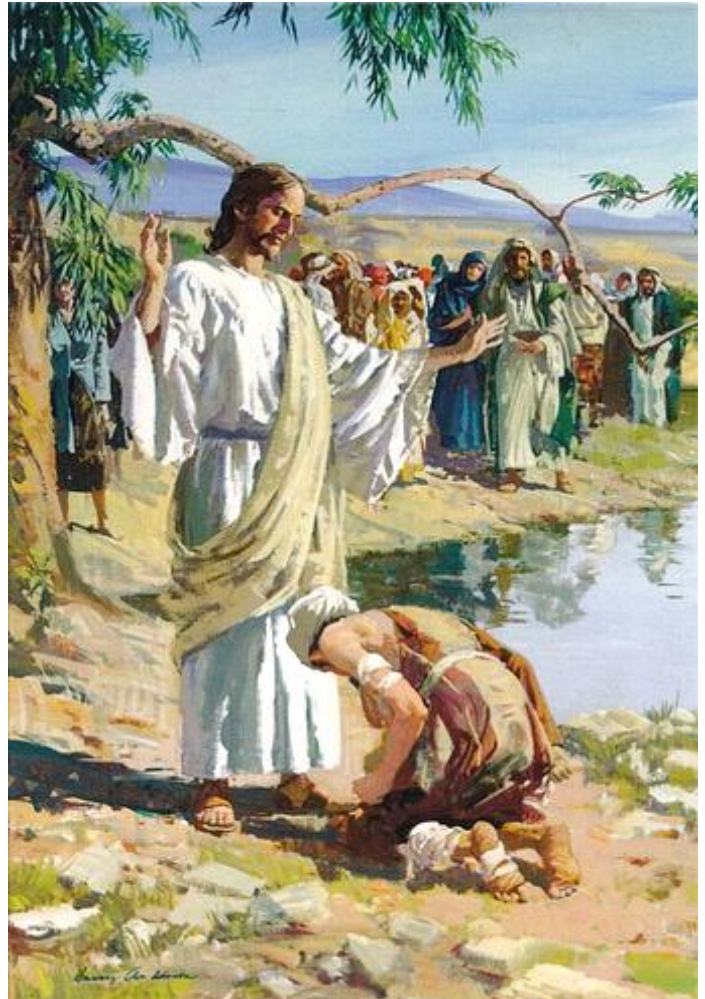
Gaskill indicated that the leper's words might not be a willingness to accept god's in his request, but rather a concern that the Lord might not want to heal him because of his social status. He wrote, **“The afflicted man's words made it clear that he had no doubts about Jesus's ability to heal him, though he may have had reservations about Jesus's willingness – particularly in light of how lepers were treated in first-century Judaism.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 53).

Regardless of the leper's thoughts about Jesus' willingness, he had the faith to be healed and asked the Savior to perform the miracle he knew Jesus was capable of.

10- **make me clean** – The term “make clean” is translated from the Greek word “καθαρίζω” or “katharizō”. It means to make clean, or cleanse. It can be used in reference to the removal of physical stains and dirt as well as the removal of moral stains such as ; sin, faults, wickedness, guilt and moral deprivation. Finally, the word is used in conjunction with ritual purity in the levitical sense. **“In Rabbinic Hebrew, as in Biblical, the same word means physically and spiritually clean. To ‘repent’ is to ‘be purified’. Sin is conversely, uncleanness.”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, First series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 41).

To a Jew at the time of Jesus, the healing of a disease, especially leprosy, was the same as forgiving sin. Gaskill wrote, **“Consequently, leprosy was seen in ancient times as a symbol of that which happens to those who transgress God's laws. Sin introduces decay and corrupts our spirits. Sin causes us to be cut off from fellowship with the Lord's spirit and, potentially, with His covenant people.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 55). To the Jews, the power to forgive was directly and eternally connected with the power to heal. Such was reserved for God Himself.

Asking Jesus to make him clean of leprosy was a tall order in the sight of the Jews. In fact, many would see it as a form of blasphemy. Leprosy would represent an even more extreme scenario. The Jews believed that leprosy was actually a death sentence from God. Barclay wrote, **“The physical condition of the leper was terrible; but there was something which made it worse. Josephus tells us that lepers were treated ‘as if they were, in effect, dead men.’ Immediately leprosy was diagnosed, the leper was absolutely and completely banished from human society. ‘He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone in a habitation outside the camp’ (Leviticus 13:46). The leper had to go with rent clothes, disheveled hair, with a covering upon his upper lip, and, as he went, he had to cry: ‘Unclean, unclean’ (Leviticus 13:45). In the middle ages, if a man became a leper, the priest donned his stole and took his crucifix, and brought the man into the church, and**



Jesus's ability to heal him, though he may have had reservations about Jesus's willingness – particularly in light of how lepers were treated in first-century Judaism.” (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 53).

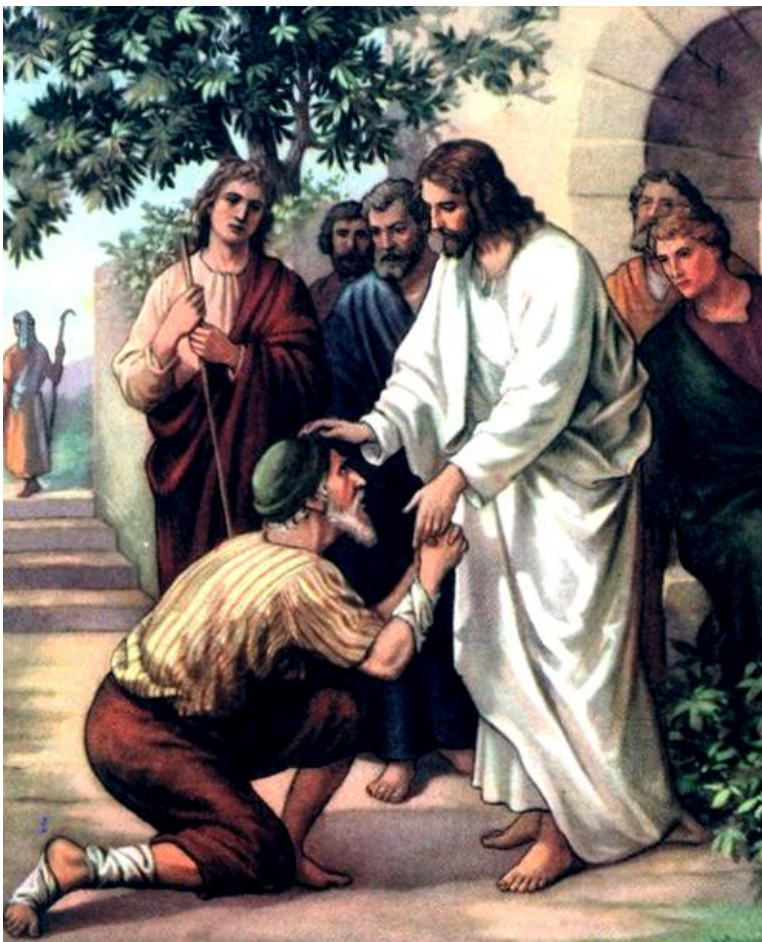
read the burial service over him. For all human purposes the man was dead.” (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 301).

Leprosy was not curable by men. In fact, the actual disease of leprosy is not curable even with today’s modern medicine. Anciently, there were numerous diseases classified as leprosy. Lacking the skills to properly diagnose, many skin diseases were diagnosed as leprosy. Consequently, there was allowance for lepers who appeared to be healed by God. The Jews had no problem with a leper being healed. They figured that the leper must have repented and God had granted him forgiveness. **“We may go further, and say that not only did Rabbinism never suggest the cure of a leper, but that not only did Rabbinism never suggest the cure of a leper, but that its treatment of those sufferers presents the most marked contrast to that of the Savior.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 492).

- 11 - **put forth his hand** – The term “put forth” is translated from the Greek word “ἐκτείνω” or “ekteinō”. It means to stretch out, stretch forth, over, towards, or against one. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the term “put forth” as “stretched forth”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 21). The term “his hand” is translated from the Greek word “χείρ” or “cheir”. It means by the help or agency of one. It represents the power of one to act. **“Stretched out his hand and touched him. Gk ekteinas ten chera autou hepsato, lit. ‘having stretched out his hand, he touched.’ Chrysostom asserts that this description is deliberately provocative, since it overlooks Old Testament/Jewish scruples about touching ritually impure people, and he contrasts it with 2nd Kings 5:1-14, where Elisha avoids contact with the man whom he cures of scale-disease.”** (Mark 1:8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 206). The hand symbolizes **“the power and might of God; blessing; divine grace.”** (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 78). The Encyclopedia of Jewish symbols says that the hand is **“a symbol of our strength and creativity...In Judaism, the hand symbolizes divine might and protection...to take oaths, ordain, bless, acknowledge submission...and act or move.”** (Encyclopedia of Traditional Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, pages 70-71).

You and I might be afraid of touching a leper for fear that the disease could spread to us. The Jews did not believe that leprosy was contagious. Their concern was becoming ritually unclean. To the Jews **“it was not necessarily communicable by touch; at least Jesus was not afraid to touch the leprous man, especially because of his power over disease.”** (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 157). The Jews were afraid of spiritual uncleanness being transferred to them by contact with a leper, and yet Jesus stretched forth His hand. **“And why did [Jesus] touch him, since the law forbade the touching of the leper? He touched him to show that ‘all things are clean to the clean.’ Because the filth that is in one person does not adhere to others, nor does eternal uncleanness defile the clean of heart. So he touches him in his intouchability, that he might instruct us in humility; that he might teach us that we should despise no one, or abhor them, or regard them as pitiable, because of some wound of their body or some blemish for which they might be called to render an account.”** (The Healing of the Leper, Origen [200-254 CE], pages 25-26).

- 12 - **touched** – The word “touched” is translated from the Greek word “ἅπτωμι” or “haptomai”. It means to fasten one’s self to, adhere to, cling to, or touch. **“To touch is to transfer power, as in the laying on of hands.”** (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 174). It is possible that Jesus touched the leper in a manner conducive to a priesthood blessing. Regardless of how Jesus touched the leper, it is significant that He had physical contact.



The Jews were prohibited from touching a leper. They were ritually unclean. Jehovah taught, **“What man soever of the seed of Aaron is a leper, or hath a running issue; he shall not eat of the holy things, until he be clean. And whoso toucheth any thing that is unclean by the dead, or a man whose seed goeth from him; Or whosoever toucheth any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean, or a man of whom he may take uncleanness, whatsoever uncleanness he hath; The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water.”** (Leviticus 22:4-6).

The Jews were fanatic about their adherence to the law, at least according to their understanding. **“Thus, commentators suggest that Jews faithful to the law typically avoided contact with any and all lepers, and also avoided touching anything a leper was known to have touched.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 54). One would not eat in a bowl that had been touched by a leper. Nor would one use a tool, or handle clothing that was once touched by a leper. **“In Palestine in the time of Jesus the leper was barred from Jerusalem and from all walled towns. In the synagogue there was provided for him a little isolated chamber, ten feet high and six feet wide, called the ‘Mechitsah’.** The Law enumerated sixty-one different contacts which could defile, and the defilement involved in contact with a leper was second only to the defilement involved in contact with a dead body. If a leper so much as put his head into a house, that house became unclean even to the roof beams. Even in an open place it was illegal to greet a leper. No one might come nearer to a leper than four cubits—a cubit is eighteen inches. If the wind was blowing towards a person from a leper, the leper must stand at least one hundred cubits away. One Rabbi would not even eat an egg bought in a street where a leper had passed by. Another Rabbi actually boasted that he flung stones at lepers to keep them away. Other Rabbis hid themselves, or took to their heels, at the sight of a leper even in the distance.” (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 301).

We have no record as to how those who were following the Savior after the Sermon on the Mount reacted to Jesus’ action of putting forth His hand and touching the leper. **“No doubt the crowd was horrified as Jesus touched the crouching figure.”** (The Days of the Living Christ, Volume 1, W. Cleon

Skousen, page 313). Touch was an absolute violation of the law. The Jews required at least a 4 cubit distance between a leper and common folk. Even then, the 4 cubit distance may not have been enough. The Jews were always concerned about become unclean because of the presence of lepers. Edersheim explains, **“No less a distance than four cubits (six feet) must be kept from a leper; or, if the wind came from that direction, a hundred were scarcely sufficient. Rabbi Meir would not eat an egg purchased in a street where there was a leper. Another Rabbi boasted, that he always threw stones at them to keep them far off, while others hid themselves or ran away. To such**

extent did Rabbinism carry its inhuman logic in considering the leper as a mourner, that it even forbade him to wash his face.” (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 495).

The Jews were concerned about the transference of “uncleanness”, and yet in this miracle it was actually the transfer of “cleanness” that occurred. **“Touching the individual sickened by the disease represents the conveyance or transference of power and blessings. Touching that which is unclean shows either a disregard for defilement or a power that places one above the defilement (or above the rules that regulate it).”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 55). Jesus’ perfection and adherence to eternal laws entitled Him to exercise a priesthood more powerful than any earthly illness or disease. Truly, He commanded the powers of heaven. Surely, He had no worry about contracting leprosy.

The Savior taught us something significant in the healing of the leper. The world had condemned him because of his mortal circumstances. Jesus saw him differently, and didn’t hesitate to come to his aid. **“Symbolically, Christ’s touch of the leper can remind you and me to not judge others, to not place ourselves above someone else because of their weakness, sins, or shortcomings. It is a call to remember that we are all fallen, imperfect creatures – spiritual lepers of the law, per se, who need the help, love and support of our brothers and sisters in Christ if we are to overcome the debilitating diseases of this sacred sojourn we call life.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 65).

13 - I will – The term “I will” is translated from the Greek word “θέλω” or “thelō”. It means to will, have in mind, or intend. The Lord clearly and decisively granted the lepers request. This is the pattern God follows when caring for His faithful children.

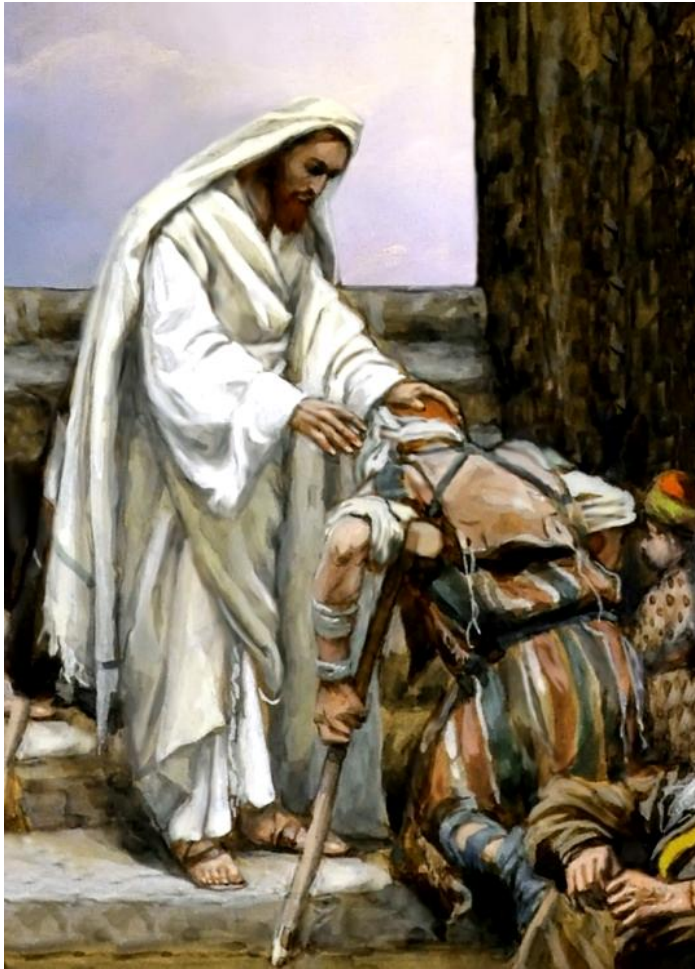
14 - immediately – The word “immediately” is translated from the Greek word “εὐθέως” or “eutheōs”. It means straightway, immediately, or forthwith. **“Immediately, instantaneously, as it were, the leper is cleansed, his leprosy departs, and the miracle is wrought. Nothing is too hard for the Lord.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 30).

The scripture that reads, **“For with God nothing shall be impossible.”** (Luke 1:37), is well illustrated in the miracle of the leper. The leper was “full” of leprosy, and therefore it was well advanced. Leprosy in its advance stages was likely to cause blindness (with the pupils of the eyes turning white), the loss of fingers, toes, ears, the nose or other parts of the body. These were immediately healed. How this happened, and what it looked like physically as the healing took place is beyond my understanding. Did fingers grow back? Gaskill wrote, **“The visible nature of this miracle is almost hard to imagine. When the man first approached Jesus, he was likely in an advanced stage of the disease. While not all believe this to be the case, some commentators hold that fingers and toes would potentially have been missing from the man. His face may have been grossly distorted. The stench of his rotting gangrene-infested flesh would potentially have been noticeable for some distance around him. And yet in an instance, all was gone. His sores were closed and his deformities removed. His once foul flesh no longer smelled but appeared robust and healthy. While some may seek to rationalize away miracles, this act of healing and cleansing could not be denied Jesus instructed the leper to go to a priest to be officially declared clean, as was required by the law.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, pages 53-54).



The immediate healing of the leper reveals much about the Savior and His character. **“All Christ’s miracles are revelations also. Sometimes, when the circumstances of the case require it, He delayed His answer to a sufferer’s prayer. But we are never told that there was a moment’s pause when a leper cried to him.”** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar’s Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 184). The Lord answers all of our prayers immediately, though the immediate response is not always what we asked for. In this case, the will of the Lord brought exactly what the leper desired. In other cases, the Lord answers immediately but the answer requires us to be patient.

15 - leprosy – The word “leprosy” is translated from the Greek word “λέπρα” or “lepra”. It means leprosy. It is a most offensive, annoying, dangerous, and coetaneous disease. The virus of which generally pervades the whole body. The disease is common to ancient Egypt and the East. **“The principle remaining impurity is ‘leprosy’, not necessarily clinical leprosy as now defined, but various kinds of spots or eruptions on the skin.”** (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 220).



“Various skin ailments were often included under the general term leprosy (Gr. Lepra), and it is important not to see here an indication that one of the three types of Hansen’s disease is necessarily indicated. The same word would also cover elephantiasis, psoriasis, and vitiligo (depigmentation of skin). Hansen’s disease (first isolated in 1871) is certainly the most important, and is the disease to which the term leprosy is now properly applied.” (Matthew: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 91). Though Albright divides leprosy into three types, Barclay divides it into only two. He says, **“In Palestine there were two kinds of leprosy. There was one which was rather like a very bad skin disease, and it was the less serious of the two. There was one in which the disease, starting from a small spot, ate away the flesh until the wretched sufferer was left with only the stump of a hand or a leg. It was literally a living death.”** (The Gospel of Luke, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 58).

“Leprosy is an evil and wicked disease.” (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 30). It was a helpless disease, with no known cure. Families were torn apart by it, and there was nothing they could do. Villages and communities were affected, and all they could do was watch the infected in sorrowful pity. The only hope the faithful had was that God would intervene and save their loved one. **“It has already been stated, that Rabbinism confessed itself powerless in presence of this living death. Although, as Michaelis rightly suggests, the sacrificial ritual for the cleansed leper implies, at least, the possibility of a cure, it is in every instance traced to the direct agency of God.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 492).

Lepers lived a life of solitude, enduring pain and at some point welcoming death. **“The isolation already indicated, which banished lepers from all intercourse except with those similarly stricken, and forbade their entering not only the Temple or Jerusalem, but any walled city, could not have been merely prompted by the wish to prevent infection. For all the laws in regard to leprosy are expressly stated not to have application in the case of the heathens, proselytes before their conversion, and even of Israelites on their birth.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 492).

Elder James E. Talmage wrote an explanation on leprosy that is probably worth including in its entirety. It reads;

“The fact that leprosy is not ordinarily communicable by mere outward contact is accentuated by Trench, Notes on the Miracles, pp. 165-168, and the isolation of lepers required by the Mosaic law is regarded by him as an intended object lesson and figure to illustrate spiritual uncleanness. He says: ‘I refer to the mistaken assumption that leprosy was catching from one person to another; and that the lepers were so carefully secluded from their fellowmen lest they might communicate the disease to others, as in like manner that the torn garment, the covered lip, the cry, ‘Unclean, unclean’ (Lev. 13:45) were warnings to all that they should keep aloof, lest unawares touching a leper, or drawing unto too great a nearness, they should become partakers of this disease. So far from any danger of the kind existing, nearly all who have looked closest into the matter agree that the sickness was incommunicable by ordinary contact from one person to another. A leper might transmit it to his children, or the mother of a leper’s children might take it from him; but it was by no ordinary contact communicable from one person to another. All the notices in the Old Testament, as well as in other Jewish books, confirm the statement that we have here something very much higher than a mere sanitary regulation. Thus, when the law of Moses was not observed, no such exclusion necessarily found place; Naaman the leper commanded the armies of Syria (2 Kings 5:1); Gehazi, with his leprosy that never should be cleansed, (2 Kings 5:27) talked familiarly with the king of apostate Israel (2 Kings 8:5).... How, moreover, should the Levitical priests, had the disease been this creeping infection, have ever themselves escaped it, obliged as they were by their very office to submit the leper to actual handling and closest examination?... Leprosy was nothing short of a living death, a corrupting of all the humors, a poisoning of the very springs, of life; a dissolution, little by little, of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away. Aaron exactly describes the appearance which the leper presented to the eyes of the beholders, when, pleading for Miriam, he says, ‘Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother’s womb.’ (Numb. 12:12.) The disease, moreover, was incurable by the art and skill of man; not that the leper might not return to health; for, however rare, such cases are contemplated in the Levitical law.... The leper, thus fearfully bearing about the body the outward and visible tokens of sin in the soul, was treated throughout as a sinner, as one in whom sin had reached its climax, as one dead in trespasses and sins. He was himself a dreadful parable of death. He bore about him the emblems of death (Lev. 13:45); the rent garments, mourning for himself as one dead; the head bare as they were wont to have it who were defiled by communion with the dead (Numb. 6:9; Ezek. 24:27); and the lip covered (Ezek. 24:17).... But the leper was as one dead, and as such was shut out of the camp (Lev. 13:46; Numb. 5:2-4), and the city (2 Kings 7:3), this law being so strictly enforced that even the sister of Moses might not be exempted from it (Numb. 12:14, 15); and kings themselves, as Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:21; 2 Kings 15:5) must submit to it; men being by this exclusion taught that what here took place in a figure, should take place in the reality with every one who was found in the death of sin.” (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 158).

In addition to the literal and actual affects of leprosy, it serves as a powerful spiritual symbol. When we sin, we allow a spiritual sickness to enter our spirit. We might not recognize spiritual illness at first, just like a leper might not recognize the initial symptoms of leprosy. Over time, sin, left unchecked, will begin to deaden our ability to function spiritually. Gaskill wrote, “**Leprosy is a common symbol for spiritual sickness. It is particularly well suited as a teaching device since the one suffering from the disease has outward manifestations of his inward sickness. Additionally, the leper slowly rots because of the ailment, just as the spiritually sick slowly progress in their spiritual decline.**” (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 55).

16 - cleansed – The word “cleansed” is translated from the Greek word “καθαρίζω” or “katharizō”. It means to make clean, or cleanse. It can be used in reference to the removal of physical stains and dirt as well as the removal of moral stains such as ; sin, faults, wickedness, guilt and moral deprivation. Finally, the word is used in conjunction with ritual purity in the levitical sense. Marcus wrote, “**be cleansed! Gk katharistheti. This is probably a ‘divine passive’, a reverent Jewish circumlocution used to suggest God’s action without mentioning him directly, and thus implies that God is the active agent in the cure.**” (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 206).

This is an interesting choice of words. The leper did not ask to be healed, nor did Jesus grant his wish by saying “be healed”. The leper asked to be made clean. He was ritually unclean on account of his leprosy, but he appears to be more concerned about the spiritual aspects of leprosy rather than the mortal consequences. Jesus cleansed him and in the process healed his leprosy.

As mortals, we often departmentalize the temporal from the spiritual as though they have nothing to do with each other. It is common for men to act dishonestly at work during the week, and then become a practicing Christian on the weekend. Unfortunately, God does not work this way. He taught Joseph Smith saying, “**Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created.**” (Doctrine and Covenants 29:34). Whether the leper asked for mortal healing, or spiritual healing; the Lord would have seen them as one and the same. His concern is our total well being.

Jesus rescued the leper from a disease that was beyond his ability to overcome. Similarly, Jesus was sent into mortality to rescue all mankind from a state of sin that is beyond our ability to overcome. “**The Atonement of Jesus Christ is available to each of us. His Atonement is infinite. It applies to everyone, even you. It can clean, reclaim, and sanctify even you. That is what infinite means—total, complete, all, forever. President Boyd K. Packer has taught: ‘There is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no apostasy, no crime exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. That is the promise of the atonement of Christ’** (“The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness,” Ensign, November 1995, 20).” (“The Atonement Can Clean, Reclaim, and Sanctify Our Lives,” Ensign or Liahona, November 2006, page 34).



17 - See – The word “see” is translated from the Greek word “ὁρᾶω” or “horaō”. It means to see with the eyes. It can also mean to see with the mind, to perceive or know. In some instances, it is used to as a caution; to beware, or to take heed.

18 - tell no man – The word “tell” is translated from the Greek word “εἶπον” or “eipon”. It means to speak or say.

There are many who speculate as to why Jesus would instruct the healed leper to keep the miracle a secret. Some of the theories are as follows;

1. The leper was required to travel to Jerusalem to complete his ritual inspection and cleansing at the Temple. The theory is that Jesus did not want to create a frenzy in Judæa that would unnecessarily hinder His work among those who would be receptive. Talmage wrote, “**There was perhaps good reason for this injunction of silence, aside from the very general course of our Lord in discountenancing undesirable notoriety; for, had word of the miracle preceded the man’s appearing before the priest, obstacles might have been thrown in the way of his Levitical recognition as one who was clean.**” (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 153).
2. Another theory is that Jesus was not requiring permanent secrecy. Rather, He understood that the law required that a priest proclaim the leper clean, and proper rituals must be offered in the Temple before the leper could be legally declared clean. The theory is that Jesus required secrecy until the man had completed all the elements of the law. Holzapfel wrote, “**Jesus’ instruction to ‘tell no man’ had nothing to do with secrecy. In fact, the Savior meant for the man to make his miracle widely known – but only in due time. First, the man was to follow the law of Moses regulations governing a recovery from leprosy. The warning ‘tell no man’ was a reminder not to engage in any kind of discourse with anyone until pronounced clean by the appropriate Aaronic authority. Otherwise, those with whom the man might interact would become unclean themselves.**” (The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration through the Triumphal Entry, Volume 2, Edited by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, , page 202).
3. Another theory is that Jesus did not perform this miracle for any reason other than to offer mercy to one who was suffering. The publicizing of the miracle would have served no righteous purpose. It would have only brought fame to Jesus, and being perfectly humble He had no desire for self serving fame. President Kimball wrote, “**I have been impressed at the number of times the Lord said, ‘Go thy way and tell no man.’ And I have been led many times in my blessings – when I felt there was going to be special healing, and that they were such people as would go out and shout it from the housetops – to say, ‘And when you are healed, tell no man who laid his hands upon your head.’ I think it takes away from me the temptation to want to be spectacular, or to want praise, or to want credit, and from them the urge to publish a sacred, intimate miracle. That relieves me. It leaves me more humble and I am sure then I am in a better position to call down the blessings of the Lord again.**” (Teachings of the Prophet Spencer W. Kimball, Spencer W. Kimball, pages 234-235).

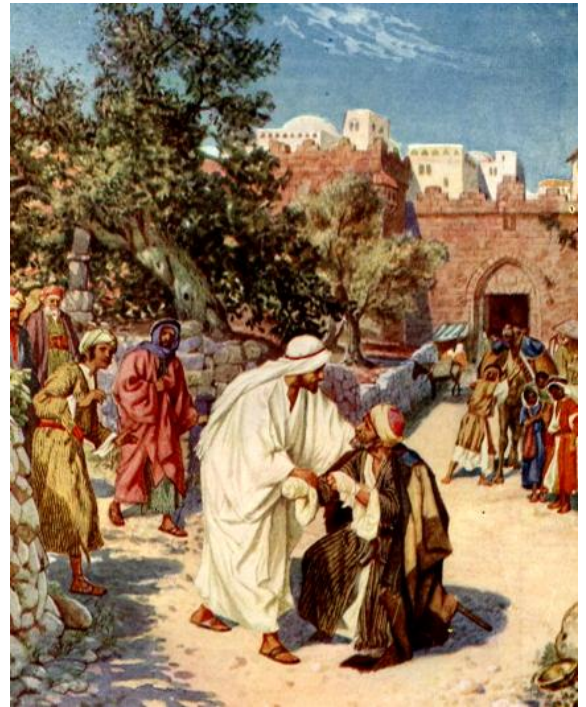
19 - **go thy way** – The term “go thy way” is translated from the Greek word “ὑπάγω” or “hypagōt̄”. It means to lead under, to bring under, to draw one’s self, to go away or depart.

20 - **shew thyself** – The word “shew” is translated from the Greek word “δεικνύω” or “deiknyō”. It means to show, or expose to the eyes. It is used metaphorically to indicate that something has been proven with evidence, or taught by words. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “shew” as “show”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 21).

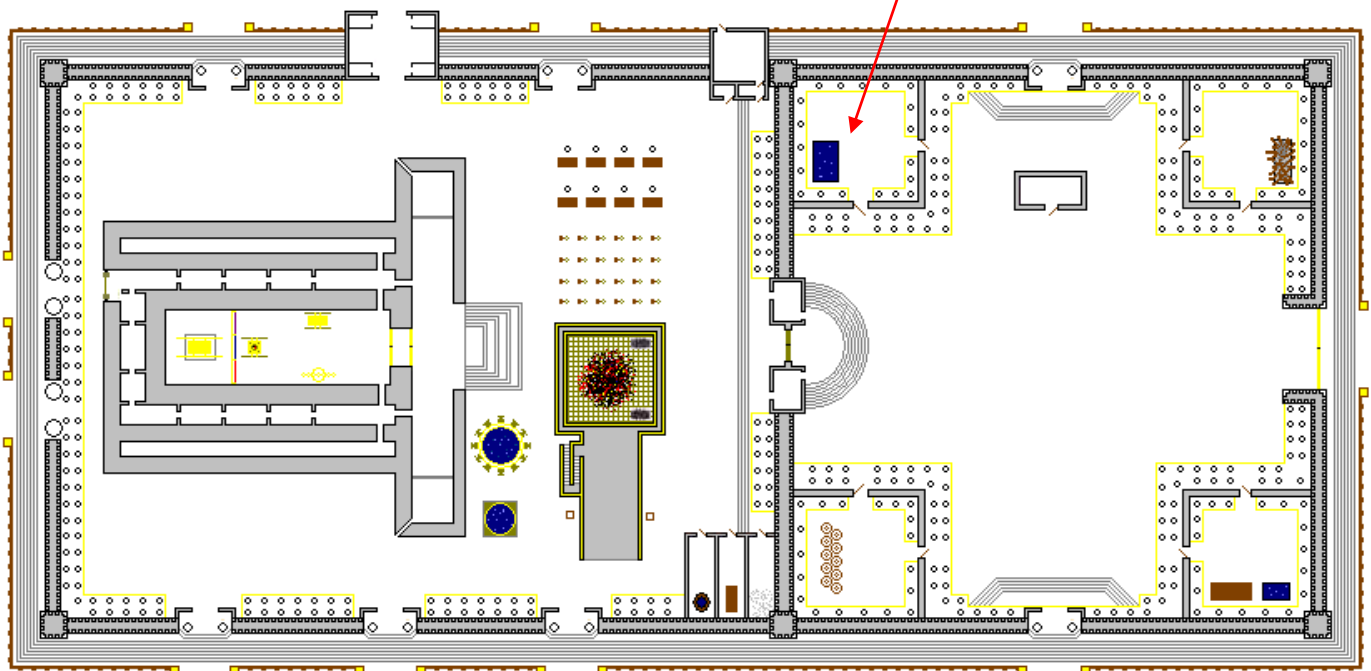
According to the Jewish Law at the time of Jesus, no cleansing was complete without an official inspection and declaration by an authorized priesthood representative and the required rites associated with cleansing. In the case of a leper, the leper was first required to present, or show, himself to the local priest. The Mishnah, “T. Neg. viii.2, 628, states that the leper must first show himself to the local priests;” (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament period, Joachim Jeremias, page 206). If the priest certified that the leprosy was indeed gone, he would be referred to the priests at the Temple in Jerusalem. The priests in Jerusalem would perform the same inspection. No leper could be pronounced clean without the declaration of priesthood authority, just as a grievous sin cannot be forgiven without confessing to proper priesthood authority in our day.

21 - **the priest** – The word “priest” is translated from the Greek word “ἱερεὺς” or “hierēusl̄” It means a priest, one who is set apart to perform the sacred rites of the temple and offer sacrifices.

We often hear of priest working in the Temple in Jerusalem; however, there were priestly functions throughout the Jewish settlements. “Priests served as magistrates and judges, those who applied the law.” (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 177). The local priests were authorized by virtue of their priesthood to sit as judges for the people, especially regarding matters of the Mosaic Law. Jesus healed the leper, but understood the importance of priesthood. “By sending the cleansed leper to the priest so that the detailed cleansing ritual of the Levitical law might be obeyed. Jesus recognized and made honorable that law he himself had given through Moses.” (The Doctrinal New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 174).



After being pronounced “cleansed” of the physical signs of leprosy by the local priest, the leper would be sent to the Temple for another inspection by priesthood authority, followed by ritual washing. The ritual washing took place in a Mikvah, or a large font of water, located in the Temple. The Mikvah was in a 60 foot square chamber reserved for the cleansing of lepers. Edersheim explained, “The Court of the women was 135 cubits long by 135 cubits broad, and four chambers were in the four angles, each 40 cubits square, and they were not roofed in. And so they are intended to be, as it is said: ‘And he brought me forth into the outer court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court, and behold, in every corner of the court a court. In the four corners of the court courts smoking’ ...It is said, they were ‘smoking;’ and that because they were not roofed. And for what did they serve? That on the south-east was the chamber of the Nazarites, where the Nazarites washed their peace-offerings, and polled their hair, and threw it under the pot. That on the north-east was the wood chamber, where the priests who were disqualified picked the wood, and every stick in which a worm was found, it was unfitted for the altar. That on the north-west was the chamber of the lepers. That on the south-west Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Jacob, said: ‘I have forgotten for what it served.’ Abba Shaul said: ‘There they put the wine and the oil; it was called the chamber of the house of Schamanyah.’ And it [the wall] was at first flush, and they surrounded it with a gallery, so that the women looked from above and the men from beneath, for the purpose that they might not be mixed together. And fifteen steps went up from there to the Court of Israel, like the fifteen degrees in the Psalms [Songs of Degrees in the Psalms]. Upon these the Levites stood singing the songs. They were not rectangular but rounded, like the arc of a rounded substance.” (Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Alfred Edersheim, page 168).



Once the leper was fully inspected by two levels of priestly authority (the local priest and the Temple priest), and the leper was ritually washed, the priests would assist the leper in offering the proper sacrifices required to finally be pronounced ritually clean. Many suppose that the Temple was run by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes; however, the priests ran the official roles of judgment and cleansing as associated with the Mosaic Law and the Temple. Sanders wrote, “**Rabbinic literature, or course, gives the impression that rabbis knew things and decided everything and that the priests were ignorant and had to be constantly tutored by Pharisaic sages. The reader of the tractate Negaim, on the identification of ‘leprosy’, might well conclude that Pharisees or rabbis had to stand beside the priest to tell him how to judge each case. It was, however, the priest who had the legal responsibility of deciding when skin disease constituted ‘leprosy’ and when a person was cleansed of it, and it is doubtful that priests ran to the nearest Pharisee to bring him out of his shop or field to examine the case. Priests, after all, were professionals, non-priestly Pharisees were amateurs.**” (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, pages 177-178). Most agree that the Sadducees largely controlled and ran the Temple.

22 - offer – The word “offer” is translated from the Greek word “προσφέρω” or “prospheō”. It means to bring to, or to lead to. It is used when a person presents a thing, or offers something to another. Once a leper was pronounced free of leprosy and the required washings had taken place, the leper was required to offer a series of sacrifices. **“For the offering, Leviticus 14:4-7 (two living clean birds, cedarwood, scarlet stuff, and hyssop), 10-20 (two male lambs without blemish and one ewe, a cereal offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, and one measure of oil).”** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 575).



23 - the gift – The term “the gift” is translated from the Greek word “δῶρον” or “dōron”. It means a gift or a present.

The temple rite at the time of Jesus required that the patrons present a gift or an offering to God as a requirement to receive the various blessings of the Temple. According to the Law of Moses, a person who was proclaimed free from the signs of leprosy by the temple priest was required to offer a series of offerings to obtain the blessings of atonement and consequently cleansing.

The Court of Women was a preparatory court. **“The Court of Women stood open to all who had carried out the last stages of purification, except the offering (M. Kel. i.8; T. Kel. B.K. i.io, 570); for example, a leper had to bathe in the chamber of lepers, which was in the Court of Women, before being declared clean (M. Neg. xiv.8).”** (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament period, Joachim Jeremias, page 164). Once the preparatory washings were performed, the priest presented the “washed” leper at Nicanor’s gate so that his gift could be presented to the Lord. Jeremias explains, **“The director of the weekly course, during his week of duty, performed the rites of purification for lepers and women after childbirth, who were pronounced clean at the Nicanor Gate when the rites were complete.”** (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament period, Joachim Jeremias, page 164).

The Priests inspected the patrons offerings to assure that they were acceptable according to the law. An acceptable offering was then set apart by the laying on of hands by priesthood authority. The priests then offered the gift to the Lord. The time that priests served in the temple was a privilege. **“The cultic functions of the priests were, then, confined to two weeks in the year, and the three pilgrim festivals. The priests lived at their homes for ten or eleven months (according to whether the distance from Jerusalem, and the journey to and fro five times a year, took up more or less time). Only very occasionally did they exercise any priestly function at home, such as declaring a leper clean after his healing before he went up to Jerusalem to obtain a final declaration of cleanness after offering the prescribed sacrifice.”** (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament period, Joachim Jeremias, page 206).

The gifts offered in the Temple were all done in similitude of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He is the great gift that God gave the world that all who believed in Him might return home to God and live as He lives for eternity.


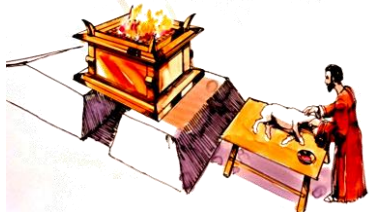
24 - Moses – The name “Moses” is translated from the Greek word “Μωϋσῆς” or “Mōysēs”. Literally translated it means “drawing out”. Moses was drawn out of the Nile as an infant, and therefore names “Moses”. The name has Hebrew origin. The Hebrew name is “מֹשֶׁה” or “Mosheh”.

The Jews saw Moses as the great law giver. To the Jews, Moses was considered one of the greatest prophets to have ever lived. **“In the Old Testament, the law of Moses is the law of Jehovah. Obedience to it was the way of life and salvation for the house of Israel.”** (The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration through the Triumphal Entry, Volume 2, Edited by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, , page 177). Consequently, failure to observe the Law of Moses was a great sin. **“Jesus, at this point was still requiring his converts to keep the law of Moses. After his passion and crucifixion it would be different; the ‘the law of commandments contained in ordinance’ would be ‘abolished in the flesh’ (Eph. 2:15); then ‘the handwriting of ordinances,’ or better, ‘the bond written in ordinances,’ would be nailed ‘to his cross’ (Col. 2:14). But now the healed leper must report to the priest, be shaved and examined, be quarantined for seven days, wash his clothes, offer the required sacrifices, and have the blood sprinkled and all the rites performed as set forth in Leviticus 14.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 30).

25 - commanded – The word “commanded” is translated from the Greek word “προστάσσω” or “prostassō”. It means to assign or ascribe to. It also means to order or command. The Law of Moses commanded that all sinners be cleansed of their sins, in part, through rituals and rites performed in the Temple. Since diseases and other abnormalities were so closely associated with sin by the ancient Jews, they required the same adherence to the cleansing rites and rituals of the Temple. Edersheim wrote, **“It is, indeed, true that, as in general so especially in this instance, Rabbinism loved to trace disease to moral causes. ‘No death without sin, and no pain without transgression’; ‘the sick is not healed, till all his sins are forgiven him’. These are oft repeated sayings; but when closely examined, they are not quite so spiritual as they sound. For, first, they represent a reaction against the doctrine of original sin, in the sense that it is not the Fall of man, but one’s actual transgression, to which disease and death are to be traced according to the saying: ‘Not the serpent kills, but sin’.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 494). Jesus did not share the Rabbis view that disease was always a result of one’s sins, but He did know that disease was a result of the Fall of man and that His mission was to atone for all the ills of mortality. **“It was a glorious violation of the letter of the Law, which attached ceremonial pollution to the leper’s touch; but it was at the same time a glorious illustration of the spirit of the Law, which was that mercy is better than sacrifice. The hand of Jesus was not polluted by touching the leper’s body, but the leper’s whole body was cleansed by the touch of that holy hand. It was even thus that He touched our sinful human nature, and yet remained without spot of sin.”** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar’s Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 184). In spite of all of this, Jesus honored the commandments and required the cleansing rites of the temple for the leper.


Cleansing of the Leper

“This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing:” (Leviticus 14:2).

Cleansing of a Healed Leper: Day 1 – Inspection, sacrifice of two birds, and washing	1. A healed leper seeks out a priest.	“He shall be brought unto the priest:” (Leviticus 14:2).
	2. Inspection of the leper's body for signs of the disease. This is performed away from the city or the general population	“And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper;” (Leviticus 14:3).
	3. Offering of two birds, one to die and one to be freed after taking upon it the blood of the sacrificed bird.	 <p>“Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water:” (Leviticus 14:4-6).</p>
	4. The healed leper shall be anointed with the blood of the sacrifice, seven times. He is pronounced clean.	“And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean” (Leviticus 14:7).
	5. The bird that has taken upon it the blood of the sacrifice, is released in an open field.	“...shall let the living bird loose into the open field.” (Leviticus 14:7)
	6. The healed leper is to wash himself and all his clothes with water, and shave off all his hair.	“And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean” (Leviticus 14:8).
Cleansing of a Healed Leper: Day 2 to 7 – Wait 7 days & rewash	7. The healed leper is allowed to be with the general population, and stay away from his tent for 7 days.	“he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days.” (Leviticus 14:8).
	8. On the seventh day, the healed leper repeats the act of shaving off all his hair and washing himself and his clothing with water	“But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.” (Leviticus 14:9)
Cleansing of a Healed Leper: Day 8 – Presentation of Sacrificial lambs, trespass offering, and washing by blood	9. On the eighth day the healed leper presents three sheep without blemish; 2 male and 1 female to the priest. Additionally, he offers a meal and oil offering. The healed leper is presented at the temple.	“And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:” (Leviticus 14:10-11).
	10. A trespass offering is given with the sacrifice of a lamb (lamb #1). A wave offering is given with the oil.	“And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the Lord: And he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the holy place: for as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the trespass offering: it is most holy:” (Leviticus 14:12-13)
	11. The blood of the lamb shall be used to wash the healed leper. He shall be symbolically washed from the tip of his right ear, to the thumb of his right hand, to the big toe of his right foot.	“And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot:” (Leviticus 14:14)
Cleansing of a Healed Leper: Day 8 – Presentation of Oil, and Anointing	12. The healed leper shall be anointed with oil. The oil shall first be presented to the Lord seven times. He shall be symbolically anointed from the tip of his right ear, to the thumb of his right hand, to the big toe of his right foot, and then the oil is poured upon his head.	“And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand: And the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord: And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering: And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord.” (Leviticus 14:15-18)
	13. A sin offering is given with the sacrifice of a lamb (lamb #2).	“And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering:” (Leviticus 14:19)
Cleansing of a Healed Leper: Day 8 – Burnt offering	14. A burnt offering is given with the sacrifice of a lamb (lamb #3). The Lord outlines alternatives for the poor.	“And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean. And if he be poor, and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb for a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering, and a log of oil; And two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering.” (Leviticus 14:20-22)
	15. Clarification on the trespass offering	 <p>“And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the Lord: And he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, and the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot: And the priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand: And the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before the Lord: And the priest shall put of the oil that is in his hand upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering: And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make an atonement for him before the Lord.” (Leviticus 14:24-29)</p>

according to the Law of Moses

“This is the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing.” (Leviticus 14:32).

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“How do they purify a leper?” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:1 A, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1009).	
“He would bring a new flask of clay, and put in it a quarter-log of living water, and bring two domesticated birds. He slaughtered one of them over the clay utensil and over the living water. He dug a hole and buried it before him [the leper]. He took cedarwood and hyssop and scarlet wool and bound them together with the ends of the strip of wool and brought near to them the tips of the wings and the tip of the tail of the second bird.”(The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:1 B-E, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1009). “Two birds: their requirement is that they should be equal to one another in appearance, in size, and in price. And their purchase must be at the same moment. Even though they are not equivalent to one another, they are acceptable. If one purchased one today and one tomorrow, they are acceptable. If one slew one of them, and it turned out to have been domesticated, one purchases a mate for the second. The first is permitted for eating. If one slaughtered it, and it turned out to be terefah, he purchases a mate for the second. The first is permitted for use. If however the blood of the first bird is poured out before sprinkling, the one which is to be sent forth died, the blood of the first bird is to be poured out.” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:5 A-K, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1010). “The requirement concerning the cedarwood is as follows: its length is a cubit; and its thickness is the quarter of the thickness of the leg of a bed. Exactly divided into two, and the two into four. The requirement of the hyssop: not the Greek hyssop, not stibium hyssop, not Roman hyssop, not wilderness hyssop, and not hyssop which has a special name.” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:6 A-F, Translated by Jacob Neusner, pages 1010-1011).	
“He dipped them in the blood of the slaughtered bird and sprinkled the blood seven times on the back of the hand of the leper. There are some who say ‘On his forehead’. And thus did he sprinkle on the lintel of the house on the outside.” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:1 F-H, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1009).	
“He came to send forth the living bird. He does not turn its face either to the sea or to the city or to the wilderness, as it is said, And he shall send forth the living bird out of the city into the open field.” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:2 A-B, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1009).	
“He came to shave the leper. He passed a razor over all of his flesh. And he washed his garments and immersed.” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:2 C-E, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1009). “Three shave, and their shaving is a requirement: The Nazir [Numbers 6:18], the leper [Leviticus 14:8] and the Levites [Numbers 8:7]. And all of them who shaved without the razor who left behind two hairs have done nothing at all and must repeat the shaving.” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:4 A-C, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1010).	
“He is clean so far as rendering unclean through entry, and lo, he renders unclean like an insect. He enters inside the wall, is separated from his house seven days, and is prohibited from sexual intercourse.” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:2 F, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1010).	
“On the seventh day he shaves the second shaving, as in the manner of the first shaving. He washes his garments and immersed. He is now clean so far as rendering unclean like an insect. And lo, he is one who has immersed on the selfsame day: he eats second tithe. Once his sun has set: he eats heave offering. Once he has brought his atonement offering on the eighth day, he eats holy things. It comes out that there are three stages of purification in regard to a leper.” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:3 A-I, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1010).	
“On the eighth day [Leviticus 14:10] one brings three beasts: a sin offering, and a guilt (trespass) offering, and a whole (burnt) offering. The poor person would bring a sin offering of fowl and a whole offering of fowl [Leviticus 14:21].” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:7 A-B, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1011).	
“He came to the guilt offering and put his two hands on it and slaughtered it. And two priests received its blood, one in a utensil and one by hand. This one who received [the blood] in the utensil came and sprinkled it on the wall of the altar. And this one who received it by hand came to the leper. And the leper immersed in the court of the lepers. He came and stood in the gate of Nicanor. Rabbi Judah says, ‘He did not require immersion [on the eighth day, having done so on the seventh].’ ” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:8 A-G, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1011).	
He [the leper] put his head inside [the Temple court], and he placed [blood] on the tip of his ear. [He put his] hand [inside], and he placed it on his thumb of his hand. [He put] his foot [inside], and he placed it on the big toe of his foot. Rabbi Judah says, ‘The three of them did he put inside all at once.’ If he did not have a thumb, a big toe, [or] a right ear he can never have purification. Rabbi Eliezer says, ‘One puts it [the blood] on their place.’ Rabbi Simeon says, ‘If he put it on the left [side instead of the right], he has carried out his obligation.’ (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:9 A-G, Translated by Jacob Neusner, page 1011).	
“He [the priest] took part of [the content of] the log of oil and poured it into the palm of his fellow. And if he poured it into his own palm, he has carried out his obligation. He dipped [his right forefinger into the blood] and sprinkled seven times toward the house of the Holy of Holies. For every sprinkling is a [corresponding] dipping [of the finger]. He came to the leper. Wherever he [in the application of blood] places the blood, there he places the oil...If he put [the rest of the oil on the head of the leper], he made atonement, and if he did not put [the rest of the oil on the head of the leper], he did not make atonement. ‘Whether he put of whether he did not [put the rest of the oil on the head of the leper], he made atonement. But so far as he [the priest] is concerned, it is credited to him as though he did not make atonement. If the log was found lacking before he poured it out, one should fill it anew.’ The words of Rabbi Aqiba. Rabbi Simeon says, ‘If the log was found lacking before one placed it, one should fill it up. After he placed it, let him bring other [oil] as in the beginning.’” (The Mishnah: A New Translation, The Sixth Division: Purities, Negaim, 14:10 A-O, Translated by Jacob Neusner, pages 1011-1012).	
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SYMBOLS associated with The Cleansing of the Leper

in Leviticus 14



TWO BIRDS

Birds are seen as symbols of freedom to move, and act. They are often associated with the powers of heaven. They can be symbols of covenants and the promises of heaven. Birds were common symbols for heavenly messengers. The Old Testament used birds in temple sacrifices. They were always used in pairs. **“Where as one of the birds, however, had to lay down its life, and shed its blood for the person to be cleansed, the other was made into a symbol of the person to be cleansed by being bathed in the mixture of blood and water; and its release, to return to its fellows and into its nest, represented his deliverance from the ban of death which rested upon leprosy, and his return to the fellowship of his own nation.”** (Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 1: The Pentateuch, C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, page 577). Gaskill clarifies, **“The two birds symbolized the death and Resurrection of Christ. The bird whose life was taken represented the slain Jesus, and the bird that was to be released heavenward symbolized the resurrected Christ.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 58).



CEDAR WOOD

The large wooden beams and planks used for building at the time of Jesus were the famed cedars of Lebanon. Trees are often used as symbols for people; however, the cedar often took on additional symbolism. **“Because cedar is slow to decay, it is a symbol of preservation and the absence of corruption...Likewise, Christ’s Atonement has the power to save us from corruption. Thus, cedar reminds the participant in the cleansing ritual of what Christ has done for all.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 58). It is speculated that the cross of Jesus’ crucifixion was a cedar from Lebanon. This would associate the cedar with the burden that Jesus carried to atone for the sins of mankind. It would also be a symbol of His resurrection, meaning it is a symbol of eternal life. Keil and Delitzsch wrote, **“The Cedar-wood on account of its antiseptic qualities was a symbol of the continuance of life; the coccus colour, a symbol of freshness of life, or fullness of vital energy; and hyssop, a symbol of purification from the corruption of death.”** (Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 1: The Pentateuch, C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, page 577).



HYSSOP

Hyssop is a plant that grows wild in Israel and much of the Middle East. It is common in Egypt, and became an important symbol of the very first Passover. When the children of Israel were captive in Egypt, Moses used the power of God to weaken Pharaoh’s resolve and allow the release of Israel. The ten plagues were issued, each demonstrating to Pharaoh the power of the true and living God. The final plague was the death of the firstborn of all of Egypt. Only those who followed Moses’ instructions were spared the curse of this plague. It required the sacrifice of a lamb without blemish. The blood of the lamb was collected in an earthen vessel, and using a hyssop branch the blood was brushed on the door frame and threshold of the faithful believers. Since that time, Hyssop has become an important symbol of cleaning, protection, atonement and forgiveness. Gaskill wrote, **“In Hebrew Bible times, the herb hyssop symbolized purification. One ancient source indicated, ‘Hyssop symbolizes the effervescence [life-bestowing], activity and power of the spirit.’** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 58).

In one of his Psalms, King David wrote, **“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”** (Psalms 51:7). Such language has prophetic meaning. During the Savior’s crucifixion, the Roman soldiers offered Jesus a drink of wine vinegar (which would have been red in color) on a sponge as the end of a stock of hyssop. The Romans undoubtedly used the hyssop stock for practical purposes, but the symbolism is undeniably connected with the symbol of the Passover. In this case, Jesus was the lamb. His blood was required to protect the faithful seeking forgiveness. The hyssop represented the act of partaking of the gift of redemption.

It is also supposed that the hyssop leaves were used to mask the taste of the vinegar wine. Hyssop is a natural mint flavoring, and was used anciently as a form of medicine. It might symbolize the fact that Jesus can make our burdens bearable.



OIL

Oil was an essential to life in the Middle East. It was used in cooking, to moisturize heat baked skin, and used medicinally for wounds and the repelling of insects. It was seen as a protector and preserver of life. Perhaps that is why **“the oil was a symbol of the Holy Spirit. To touch those organs with oil was to imply that the Spirit would both cleanse and direct them.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 60).



ANOINTING WITH OIL

The origin of anointing was from a practice of shepherds. Lice and other insects would often get into the wool of sheep, and when they got near the sheep’s head, they could burrow into the sheep’s ears and kill the sheep. So, ancient shepherds poured oil on the sheep’s head. This made the wool slippery, making it impossible for insects to get near the

sheep's ears because the insects would slide off. From this, anointing became symbolic of blessing, protection, and empowerment. The ancient Temple rite included anointing with oil. **"Individuals are ritually washed and anointed before endowments can be performed in the temple."** (Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, page 147).

The anointing described in Exodus and Leviticus goes far beyond the simple placement of oil upon one's forehead. Both describe oil being placed upon the person's right ear, right thumb, and right big toe. The anointing of these specific parts of the body is significant. **"Oil is put on his ear, so that his ear hears his Master's voice, and listens to the Word of God... Oil is put upon his hand that he may be a consecrated man and to serve his God... Oil is put upon his foot that his feet may run in the way of God's commands, even to the end."** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 60). Anointing is the bestowal of priesthood blessings to one's thoughts, actions, and service. It is to be cleansed and consecrated in every aspect of one's life.

Prior to serving in the office of a priest, the man was called, washed, and anointed. **"The priests were also anointed at their consecration, not only by the pouring of oil upon their head, but by the sprinkling of oil upon their garments. But in their case the anointing of their head preceded the consecration-offering, and holy anointing oil was used for the purpose. Here, on the contrary, it was ordinary oil, which the person to be consecrated had offered as a sacrificial gift; and this was first of all sanctified, therefore by being sprinkled and poured upon the organs with which he was to serve the Lord, and then upon the head, which represented the personality. Just as the anointing oil, prepared according to divine directions, shadowed forth the power and gifts of the spirit, with which God endowed the priests for their peculiar office in His kingdom; so the oil, which the leper about to be consecrated presented as a sacrifice out of his own resources, represented the spirit of life which he had received from God, and now possessed as his own."** (Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 1: The Pentateuch, C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, page 577).



WATER

Water, when pure, is clear and transparent. Impurities are typically readily seen. Though this may not always be true, in the symbolic sense, water hides no sin. It is also used as a tool to remove impurities. We use it to bath, clean dishes, and wash in general. **"Washing was an obvious symbol of cleansing."** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 59).

In a spiritual sense, the Holy Ghost is the agent of washing away spiritual dirt. When we repent of sin, the Holy Ghost purifies and purges the sin from our spirits. Therefore, **"water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. When Christ hung on the cross and His side was pierced, out of His body – the earthen vessel – came blood and water mixed."** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 59). The two elements combined are necessary for forgiveness.



BLOOD

Blood symbolizes life. Our blood supplies all the necessary elements for our mortal bodies to live. Without blood we die. When Jesus came to earth, He bled and died as He took upon Himself the sins of the world. He literally paid the price of sin. Consequently blood can symbolize sin and the atonement made for sin. Like water, blood is an agent of cleansing. Where water directly washes away filth, blood is seen as an agent of cleansing by proxy. The ancient world sacrificed animals as substitutes for a person's sins. The word "scapegoat" is derived from this practice. Through the blood of the sacrifice, the offeror was cleansed.



CLEANSING WITH BLOOD

The symbolic cleansing with blood was performed by covering specific body parts with blood. The patron had his right ear, right thumb, and right big toe covered with blood. These body parts were symbolic of the whole body. It was vital that they be "covered", for the cleansing to be effectual. **"Our English word atonement comes from a Hebrew word that means literally 'to cover'. Thus, by placing blood on parts of the body, the priest was suggesting that atonement be made for that thing, or for sins committed with that body part. In this case, we find the blood of the lamb sanctifying the organ of hearing or obedience (the ear), the organ of action (the hand), and the organ of following or walking in the proper way (the foot). Thus symbolically, every aspect of the person's life was to be touched or affected by the Atonement of Christ."** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 60). The blood of the sacrificial lamb, or animal, was symbolic of the blood of Christ which was shed to cover or cleanse us from the sins of mortality.

The blessings of the sacrifice were only valid if the patron came prepared to enter into the covenant associated with the gift of atonement. The patron was required to covenant that he or she was willing to follow Jehovah in all things and in all circumstances, even unto the giving of his own life. **"The willingness of the candidate to sacrifice his own life is symbolized by the blood on the right thumb and right earlobe, where the blood would be if the throat has been cut."** (Temple and the Cosmos, Hugh B. Nibley, page 58).



RED

Red is a symbol of life, death, sacrifice, atonement and Christ. Gaskill explained, **"Most often in scripture, the color red or scarlet represents sin or the blood of Christ that had to be shed because of sin. Red is occasionally associated with both life and death – resurrection and evil."** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 58).

Red has also been used to represent fire, power, destruction and purification. Red, as a symbol of fire, is used to represent the great cleansing that fire provides. It should be noted that the earth was cleansed with water at the time of Noah, and will be cleansed by fire at the second coming of Jesus.

7 seven

The number seven is used as a symbol of completeness. The earth was created in seven creative periods. Mortality is divided into 7 dispensations, and the Lord commanded that the seventh day of the week be dedicated to Him. In regards to the cleansing of the leper, **“the sprinkling was performed seven times, because it referred to a readmission into the covenant, the stamp of which was seven; and it was made with a mixture of blood and fresh water, the blood signifying life, and the water purification.”** (Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 1: The Pentateuch, C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, page 577).

shaving

Hair is a symbol of physical strength and virility. The virtues and properties of a person are symbolically contained in a person's hair. Anciently, a man's ability to grow facial hair was a symbol of wisdom, maturity and manhood. **“The removal of all body hair gave the participant the appearance of a newborn, implying that the candidate for cleansing had been spiritually reborn. The removal of the hair was an indication that all old things had been rejected, done away with, or given up.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 59). It would convey an idea of humility, and submission. **“While we are not called to shave off our hair, we are called to become as little children and reject the wicked ways of our past, which is what is symbolized by the removal of the hair.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 63).

26 - testimony – The word “testimony” is translated from the Greek word “μαρτύριον” or “martyrion”. It means testimony. The Greek word in this passage has proven to be difficult for translators. Marcus translates the passage as **“As a witness to them. Gk eis martyrion autois. This phrase could modify either ‘what Moses commanded’ in which case ‘them’ refers to Israel, or ‘show yourself and offer’, in which case ‘them’ refers to the priests. A reference to the priests is more probable because of the parallelism between the datives to hieriei (‘to the priest’) and autois (‘to them’). The dative could be translated either as ‘to them’ or as ‘against them’.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 207). It is apparent that Marcus' translation is riddled with un-clarity and un-certainty.

In contrast, Fitzmyer translates the passage as **“A proof for them. Literally, ‘for a proof (or testimony) to them.’ This is a difficult phrase, derived from Mark 1:44. Luke has not modified it, probably because he did not understand it either. Part of the difficulty is the pl. autois, ‘to/from them’. Does it refer to ‘the priests’ with a transfer of thought from the ‘priest’ mentioned earlier in the verse? Or to ‘the people’ (in general)? A variant reading in ms. D, the Itala, and Marcion has rather hymein, ‘(a proof) for you (pl.)’. That just complicates the matter. Part of the difficulty is also the meaning of the noun martyrion. Does it mean ‘proof’ (that the leprosy is gone), or ‘testimony’ (that Jesus’ power has cured the condition)?”** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 575).

Albright follows Fitzmyer's translation of the passage, but his interpretation differs. He translates it as **“For proof to them. In view of this injunction to silence, lest Jesus’ ministry be compromised by a reputation as a wonder worker, it is important to note that the proof referred to here was not proof of a cure. The priests would certainly assure themselves of a cure before allowing an offering to be made. The proof in question was that of Jesus’ allegiance to the Law, and this fact may well have indicated Matthew’s placing of the incident here.”** (Matthew: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 92).

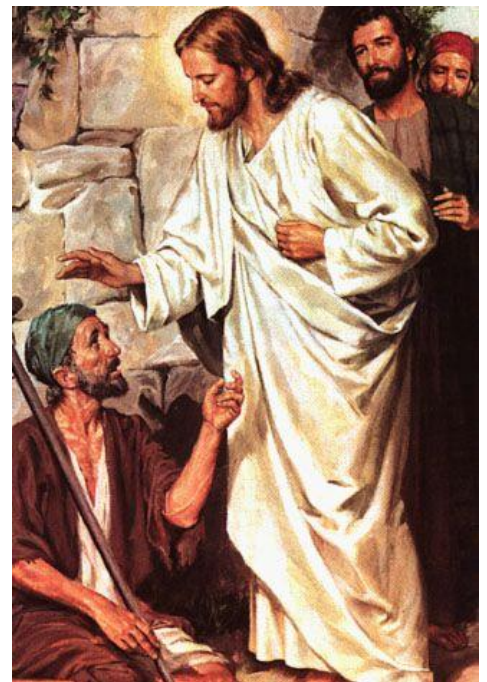
Whatever the case, there were several testimonies establish that day with the healing of the leper.

1. The people present saw the miracle and saw Jesus direct the leper to adhere to the Law of Moses. They could bear testimony of the Savior's works and words.
2. The leper was instructed to go to the temple so that the priests could bear testimony that he was indeed free from the disease. This was the duty of the priest as he served in the temple. He inspected sacrificial animals, and people who had been declared unclean. It was his job to declare, by way of testimony, if they were ritually qualified for rites of the temple.
3. The leper himself was instructed to offer sacrifice to the Lord, which would be a testimony of the leper that he was healed of his disease. **“These rituals, performed openly at the Jerusalem temple, would be part of ‘a testimony unto them’ – the man’s public declaration of his miraculous healing.”** (The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration through the Triumphal Entry, Volume 2, Edited by Richard Neitzel Holzappel and Thomas A. Wayman, , page 202).

27 - unto them – The term “unto them” is translated from the Greek word “αὐτόν” or “autos”. It means himself, herself, themselves, itself, he, she, or it. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “unto” as “to”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 66).

28 - beseeching or besought – The word “beseeching” or “besought” is translated from the Greek word “παρακαλέω” or “parakaleō”. It means to call to one's side, call for or summon. The Codex Sinaiticus translated the word “beseeching” as “entreating”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 66). **“Some manuscripts follow these words with ‘and kneeling’ (kai gonypeton), and the idea of kneeling, though not the exact phrase, is supported by the Matthean and Lukan parallels.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 205)

29 - kneeling down – The term “kneeling down” is translated from the Greek word “γονυπετέω” or “gonypeteō”. It means to fall on the knees, the act of imploring aid, and of expressing reverence and honor. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the term “kneeling down” as simply “kneeling”. (Codex



Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 67). **“Kneeling depicts homage to a superior, supplication, submission, and inferiority.”** (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 91).

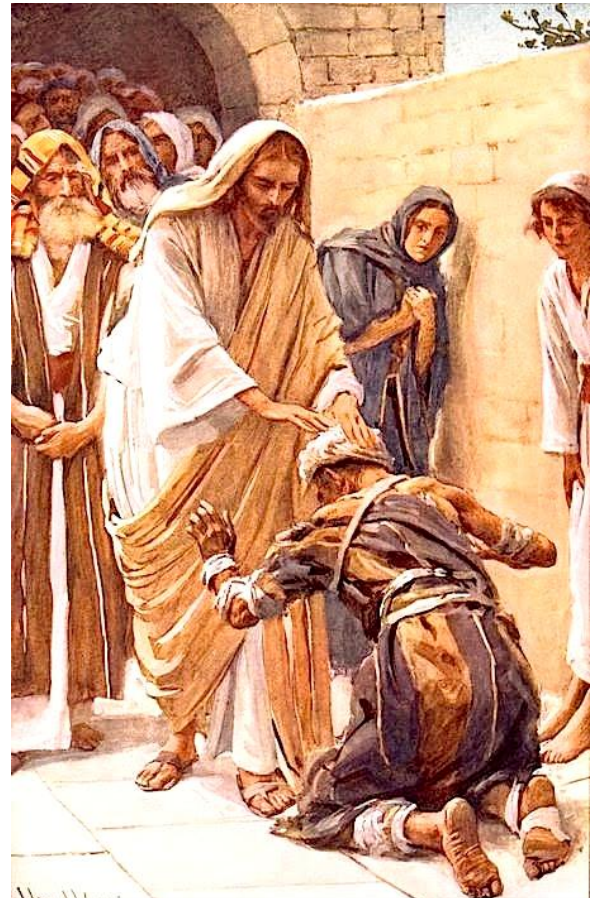
Among the ancient Arabians, one prayed while kneeled down and touched the forehead and nose to the ground with the arms extended out in front with the palms face down upon the ground. Such **“prostration is a symbol of submission or humility, but also of respect and gratitude. It is an acknowledgement by the one lying face down that he is inferior to or dependent upon the person before whom he prostrates himself.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 55). The leper obviously recognized Jesus as a great man. I would suggest that he recognized Jesus as the Messiah. I say this because the prevailing thought at the time was that leprosy was caused by sin, and only God could forgive sin. He approached Jesus confident that He could heal him. He approached Him as the Messiah.

The leper prostrated himself as one would a great king. This is even more amazing since **“no leper would ever have come near an orthodox scribe or Rabbi; he knew too well that he would be stoned away; but this man came to Jesus. He had perfect confidence in Jesus' willingness to welcome the man anyone else would have driven away. No man need ever feel himself too unclean to come to Jesus Christ. He had perfect confidence in Jesus' power. Leprosy was the one disease for which there was no prescribed rabbinic remedy. But this man was sure that Jesus could do what no one else could do. No man need ever feel himself incurable in body or unforgivable in soul while Jesus Christ exists.”** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 302).

30 - moved with compassion – The term “moved with compassion” is translated from the Greek word “σπλαγχνίζομαι” or “splanchnizomai”. It means to be moved as to one’s bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, have compassion (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity). The Codex Sinaiticus translates the term “moved with compassion” as “moved with pity”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 66).

There are a group of translators and scholars that prefer a translation which is somewhat out of character for Jesus. They agree with Marcus who translates the passage “moved with compassion” as **“becoming incensed. Gk orgistheis, a text read by Western witnesses, though a much more widely attested reading is splanchnistheis (‘moved with compassion’). The latter, however, is probably a scribble amelioration, though it may also reflect the interchange of the gutturals heth and ‘ayin in the Aramaic words ethra’em (=‘he was enraged’) and ethraham (=‘he had pity on’).”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 206). Though Marcus uses good logic to justify his translation, the end result is totally out of character for Jesus. Bruce R. McConkie said, **“Jesus is compassionate. With no thought of the Levitical uncleanness that results from touching a leper, he reaches forth his hand, touches the suffering suppliant – which physical contact is mentioned by all three of the synoptists – and, almost as the echo of the entreaty, says: ‘I will; be thou clean’.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 30).

Jesus is moved with compassion towards our sorrows and challenges. He endured all things so that He could properly succor those that His Father sent Him to earth to save. Matthew, one of the original 12 apostles, would have known this compassion first hand. Perhaps that is why Matthew ignores this entire passage. Albright writes, **“At this point Mark’s account represents Jesus as ‘having pity’, and in some manuscripts as ‘being angry’ or ‘deeply stirred’. It might be assumed that Matthew, with Mark’s account before him, deliberately omitted the phrase in the interests of reverence for the person of Jesus.”** (Matthew: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 91).



31 - departed – The word “departed” is translated from the Greek word “ἀπέρχομαι” or “aperchomai”. It means to go away, or depart.

32 - straitly – The term “straitly charges” is translated from the Greek word “ἐμβριμάομαι” or “embrimaomai”. It means to charge with earnest admonition, sternly to charge, or threatened to enjoin. It has also been translated as “groan” or “murmur against”.

One theory is that Jesus had compassion on the leper, healed him, and then earnestly admonished him to go to the Temple in Jerusalem without publishing the mighty miracle that had just transpired. Jesus was directing the leper to go to Jerusalem without delay so that the cleansing rites could be completed as outlined in the Law of Moses.

Another theory, and one that I do not personally prescribe to, says that Jesus was angry (reference footnote #30) and with indignation directed the leper to the Temple in Jerusalem. Marcus translates the Greek word “straitly” as **“growling. Gk embrimesamenos. As Guelich points out, in classical Greek this verb refers to the snorting of a horse; as applied to human beings, it means to express indignation by an explosive expulsion of breath. The nuance of anger continues in the Septuagint (see Lam. 2:6; Dan. 11:30) and is obvious in the other Markan usage (14:5); there is no reason to deny it in our passage, especially when it follows the reference to Jesus’ anger in 1:41. The word is also used in healing contexts in Matthew 9:30 and John 11:33, 38.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 206)

33 - charged – The Codex Sinaiticus translates the term “straitly charged him” as “after charging him in a threatening way”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 67). **“Not only is the word, ‘He straitly charges him’, a word implying an extreme earnestness and even vehemence of look and gesture, but the word for ‘forthwith sent him away’ is literally He ‘pushed’ or ‘drove him forth’.”** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar’s Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 185).

34 - forthwith – The term “forthwith” is translated from the Greek word “εὐθέως” or “euthēs”. It means straightway, immediately, or forthwith. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the term “forthwith sent him away” as “he immediately sent him forth”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 67)

35 - say nothing – The word “nothing” is translated from the Greek word “μηδείς” or “mēdeis”. It means nobody, no one or nothing. **“Two reasons are apparent why this manifestation of healing should have been kept secret: (1) To enable the healing leper to obey the Levitical requirements for ceremonial cleanliness - a thing which might have been difficult had the priests been aware that Jesus had performed the miracle involved; and (2) To avoid feeding the flames of persecution that already were igniting on every hand against the Master and his cause.”** (The Doctrinal New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 174).

36 - thy cleansing – The word “cleansing” is translated from the Greek word “καθαρισμός” or “katharismos”. It means a cleansing, purification, a ritual purgation or washing.

The reference being made is ceremonial or ritual washing. The Jews prescribed to ritual washings in ceremonial fonts called “Mikvah’s”. Wealthy Jews built Mikvah’s in their own homes, while the general population used public Mikvahs. There were Mikvah’s throughout Jerusalem, but there was a Mikvah especially designated for lepers located in the Court of Women on Temple Mount. Only by submersing oneself in a prescribed manner, could one be cleansed. Of course, the process ended with sacrificial rites.

Additionally, the leper was required to ceremonially wash his clothing, possessions, and dwelling. **“In the elaborate code of defilements leprosy was not only one of the fathers of uncleanness, but, next to defilement from the dead, stood foremost amongst them. Not merely actual contact with the leper, but even his entrance defiled a habitation, and everything in it, to the beams of the roof.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 494). Therefore, the leper had to cleanse everything he touched. Sanders said, **“Things as well as people could become impure...Leprosy could beset clothes and houses.”** (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 220).



37 - he went out – The term “he went out” is translated from the Greek word “ἐξέρχομαι” or “exerchomai”. It means to go or come forth of. Marcus translates the Greek word as **“Went out. Gk exelthon, literally ‘going out’. It is clear that the man disobeys Jesus’ injunction to be silent; what is unclear is whether or not he also disobeys his command to show himself to the priest and offer the required sacrifices.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 207).

38 - publish – The word “publish” is translated from the Greek word “κηρύσσω” or “kēryssō”. It means to be a herald, or to officiate as a herald. It also means to publish, or proclaim openly something that has been done. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “publish” as “proclaim”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 67).

There is no justification for disobeying the direction of the Savior, and this applies to the leper. Even so, his joy must have been overwhelming. He had just been cured of a death sentence disease. He was whole again. The temptation to tell everyone must have been overwhelming, and so he told everyone he saw.

39 - blaze – The term “blaze abroad” is translated from the Greek word “διαφημίζω” or “diaphēmizō”. It means to spread abroad, or blaze abroad. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “blaze” as “publish”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 67). The leper was told to tell no one, **“but the leper did not obey Jesus’s instructions. Rather, he told many, and thus Jesus could no longer openly enter the city without being mobbed by those seeking not the Messiah, but a faith healer or miracle worker.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 54). The word “blaze” is an interesting English word to choose in this translation. A fire blazes out of control, burning down the whole forest. Similarly, the leper told the news of his healing, and like a wildfire the news “blazed” through the various communities.

40 - abroad – The word abroad usually means in or to a foreign country. It is doubtful that the leper’s story traveled too far, but conceivably it could spread to Syria, Egypt, and other nearby lands. It is more probable that the word means over a wide area or through different locations.

41 - the matter – The term “the matter” is translated from the Greek word “λόγος” or “logos”. It means a word, a saying, or to be uttered by a living voice.

42 - openly – The word “openly” is translated from the Greek word “φανερῶς” or “phanerōs”. It means manifestly, plainly, clearly or openly.

Part of the Savior’s mission was to teach the everlasting doctrines of His Father to all mankind. To accomplish His mission, He needed to make Himself accessible to people. Fame could significantly hinder Jesus’ ability to enter villages and towns on His own terms. Fame brought out individuals with selfish agendas, where Jesus was searching out the sincere and submissive.

43 - enter into the city – The word “enter” is translated from the Greek word “εἰσερχομαι” or “eiserchomai”. It means to go out or come in. It can also mean to enter.

The fact that Jesus found it difficult to enter into the various cities in an open fashion was no doubt a literal fact as a result of the miracles and teachings that He performed. What is interesting, in relation to the healing of the leper, is there appears to be a reversal of roles. Lepers were not allowed to enter the city, and surely not openly. Jesus healed the leper and now He could not enter the city openly. This circumstance has similarities to the law of substituting redemption. Jesus redeems us by taking upon Himself the consequences of our sins.

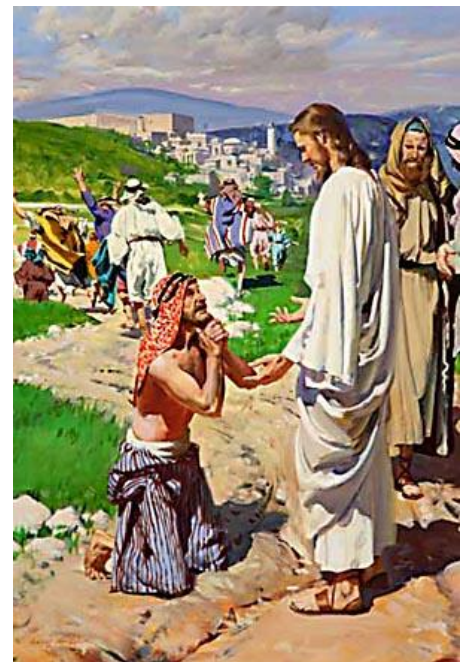
44 - was without – The word “without” is translated from the Greek word “ἐξω” or “exō”. It means without, or out of doors.

45 - desert places – The word “desert” is translated from the Greek word “ἐρημος” or “erēmos”. It means solitary, lonely, desolate or uninhabited. The word “places” is translated from the Greek word “τόπος” or “topos”. It means a place (any portion or space marked off), as it were from surrounding space. This passage implies that Jesus left the crowds and cities, and retired to a place free of people. He left to a place where He could be alone.

46 - every quarter – The term “from every quarter” is translated from the Greek word “πανταχόθεν” or “pantachōthen”. It means from all sides, or from every quarter. This passage implies that people came from various locations and directions to see Jesus. His fame was not confined to one location.

47 - a certain city – The word “certain” is translated from the Greek word “μία” or “mia”. It means the only one, or someone.

The Gospel of Matthew indicates that the leper confronted Jesus as He came down from the Sermon on the Mount. Mark gives little indication where the healing of the leper took place. Luke says that when Jesus came to a “certain city”, Jesus beheld the leper. The term “certain city” is used figuratively when the location of a city is not known, or the symbol could be applied to any city.



48 - **full** – The word “full” is translated from the Greek word “πλήρης” or “plērēs”. It means full or filled up. Fitzmyer translates the passage as “A man covered with leprosy. Literally, ‘a man full of leprosy’”. In extrabiblical Greek the word *lepra* usually designated something like psoriasis. In the Greek Old Testament it translates Hebrew *sara’at*. Some think that the latter may denote there ‘true leprosy’ (Hansen’s disease, caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*). But it more likely refers to several inflammatory or scaly skin-diseases (e.g. favus, lupus, psoriasis, ringworm, or white spots)... Though Hansen’s disease was apparently isolated only ca. A.D. 1870, it was known in antiquity, appearing at least in the sixth century B.C. in India, but known by a different name.” (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, pages 573-574).

In spite of the fact that there is some lack of clarity in the ancient’s ability to properly diagnose leprosy, the advanced stages were almost certainly what we call Hansen’s disease. Early stages could have been confused with other skin disorders and diseases. There are six general classifications or stages for leprosy. They are:

1. Intermediate Leprosy - a few flat lesions that sometimes heal by themselves and can progress to a more severe type
2. Tuberculoid Leprosy - a few flat lesions, some large and numb; some nerve involvement; can heal on its own, persist, or may progress to a more severe form
3. Borderline Tuberculoid Leprosy - lesions similar to Tuberculoid but smaller and more numerous; less nerve enlargement; may persist, revert to Tuberculoid, or advance to another form
4. Mid-Borderline Leprosy - reddish plaques, moderate numbness, swollen lymph glands; may regress, persist, or progress to other forms
5. Borderline Lepromatous Leprosy - many lesions including flat lesions, raised bumps, plaques, and nodules, sometimes numb; may persist, regress, or progress
6. Lepromatous Leprosy - many lesions with bacteria; hair loss; nerve involvement; limb weakness; disfigurement; doesn’t regress

The severe or “full” stage of leprosy would have obvious signs. It would be common for such a stage to display missing fingers or toes. There would be large and severe sores or lesions covering the body. There would be disfigurement, most especially noticeable in the face. The body would develop nodules or bumps. The eye would often lose sight and turn white, and the hair would also become white.

The severe or “full” stage was so obvious that there was little need for question. Edersheim wrote, “We need not here enumerate the various symptoms, by which the Rabbinic law teaches us to recognize true leprosy. Any one capable of it might make the medical inspection, although only a descendant of Aaron could formally pronounce clean or unclean. Once declared leperous, the sufferer was soon made to feel the utter heartlessness of Rabbinism. To banish him outside walled towns may have been a necessity, which, perhaps, required to be enforced by the threatened penalty of forty stripes save one. Similarly, it might be a right, even merciful, provision, that in the Synagogues lepers were to be the first to enter and the last to leave, and that they should occupy a separate compartment (Mechitsah), ten palms high, and six feet wide.” (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 493).

49 - **fell on his face** – The word “fell” is translated from the Greek word “πίπτω” or “piptō”. It means to descend from a higher place to a lower. It also means to fall to be thrust down, or to come under condemnation. The word “face” is translated from the Greek word “πρόσωπον” or “prosōpon”. It means the face. The face symbolizes one outward self. It represents one’s status, pride, prestige, fame and fortune. The bowing of one’s face is a way conveying humility and respect towards others. Such was the approach of the leper as he came to Jesus. “Suddenly, with agonies of entreaty, falling first on his knees, then, in the anguish of his heart and the intensity of his supplication, prostrating himself upon his face, there appeared before Him, with bare head, and rent garments, and covered lips, a leper – ‘full of leprosy’ – smitten, with the worst and foulest form of that loathsome and terrible disease.” (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar’s Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 184).



50 - **fame** – The word “fame” is translated from the Greek word “λόγος” or “logos”. It means a word, a saying, or something uttered by a living voice. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “fame” as “report”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 111).

Jesus never sought fame. It was not His goal to bring glory upon Himself, but rather to do the will of His Father. His Father’s will was to proclaim the truths of salvation. “It may be that at this time, when men were flocking to him in such great numbers, further fame and notoriety would have hindered him in his travels and preaching; or that such a notable miracle would fan the flames of persecution that already were beginning to burn with an intense flame; or that if the priests in the temple in Jerusalem – whence the cleansed leper must now go to seek Levitical cleanness – knew the source of the healing power, it would have been difficult to obtain the ceremonial absolution required.” (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 30).

51 - **hear** – The word “hear” is translated from the Greek word “ἀκούω” or “akouō”. It means to be endowed with the faculty of hearing, to hear, or not to be deaf.

52 - **be healed** – The term “to be healed” is translated from the Greek word “θεραπεύω” or “therapeuō”. It means to serve, to do service, to heal, to cure, or to restore to health. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “healed” as “cured”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 111).

Beyond the comprehension of mortal men, Jesus cures a seemingly incurable disease with only the words of His mouth. By uttering the phrase “be healed”, **“Immediately, instantaneously, as it were, the leper is cleansed, his leprosy departs, and the miracle is wrought. Nothing is too hard for the Lord.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 30). In fact, healings are one of the signs that accompany the Lord’s church. Consequently, they occurred regularly during Jesus’ ministry.

Even so, the healing of the leper stands out. It was an exceptionally severe disease, and associated with great sin. **“Healings there have been in profuse abundance, but none – up to this point and as far as we know – has involved a leper, ‘a man full of leprosy.’ None has dealt with a body and soul plagued with a living death, one whose body was in process of rotting, decaying, and returning to the dust to gain a merciful surcease from the torments of the flesh.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, pages 28-29). Jesus demonstrated the power of heaven when exercised it with perfect faith and submission to the will of the Father. **“It was in the depth and spontaneity of His human emotion that our Lord had touched the leper into health. But it was His present desire to fulfill the Mosaic Law by perfect obedience; and both in proof of the miracle, and out of consideration to the sufferer, and in conformity with the Levitical ordinance, He bade the leper go and show himself to the priest, make the customary offerings, and obtain the legal certificate that he was clean.”** (The Story of a Beautiful Life: Farrar’s Life of Christ, The New 20th Century Edition, 1900, Canon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., page 184).



53 - **infirmities** – The word “infirmities” is translated from the Greek word “ἀσθένεια” or “astheneia”. It means to be in want of strength, weakness, infirmity, or frailty. It is used of sickness or one stricken with disease.

54 - **withdrew** – The word “withdrew” is translated from the Greek word “ὑποχωρέω” or “hypochōreō”. It means to go back or withdraw.

55 - **the wilderness** – The word “wilderness” is translated from the Greek word “ἐρημος” or “erēmos”. It means a solitary, lonely, desolate or uninhabited place. The Codex Sinaiticus translated the word “wilderness” as “deserts”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 25, page 111). **“In Jewish tradition, the wilderness has been both a positive and a negative symbol.”** On the positive side it symbolizes, **“freedom from slavery...the covenant with God...Purity, and simplicity.”** On the negative side, it symbolizes **“danger, vulnerability and sin.”** (Encyclopedia of Traditional Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, page 192).

56 - **prayed** – The term “” is translated from the Greek word “προσεύχομαι” or “proseuchomai”. It means to offer prayers or to pray.

It is always amazing to me that Jesus, who was perfect in all things, had an obvious reliance on prayer with His Father. In spite of the Savior’s doctrinal proficiency, and priesthood power, He seemed to regularly look for opportunities to be alone with His Father in prayer. If He, being perfect, had such a need to pray, how much more so is our need? We are imperfect and often lost when it comes to spiritual direction. Prayer is the avenue wherewith we can gain spiritual guidance. Jesus knew this eternal truth, and practiced it.