

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S4E16

The Leper Scholar - (Mark 1:39-42)

Description – Jesus the Messiah performs a miracle and heals a leper, which hadn't been done to a Jewish person since Miriam, and it was God who healed her. Join us today as we examine how the Messiah heals even lepers.

We've recapped the miracles that only the messiah was thought to be able to perform.

Remember, Leprosy was a death sentence back in the day.

Pharisaical law thought that leprosy was punishment for breaking parts of the law.

To be healed from leprosy, you had to have a dual nature: You had to have your sins forgiven, and also you had to be cleansed physically.

Imagine the guilt, shame, and the social stigma that came with leprosy.

Who were the two people in the OT with leprosy?

The first was Miriam. (Moses's Sister) She was Jewish, and was healed. She was the last Jewish person in the OT that is healed up until the time of Jesus.

Numbers 12:1-15 (CSB)

Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses because of the Cushite woman he married (for he had married a Cushite woman). ² They said, "Does the LORD speak only through Moses? Does he not also speak through us?" And the LORD heard it. ³ Moses was a very humble man, more so than anyone on the face of the earth.

⁴ Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "You three come out to the tent of meeting." So the three of them went out. ⁵ Then the LORD descended in a pillar of cloud, stood at the entrance to the tent, and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them came forward, ⁶ he said:

"Listen to what I say: If there is a prophet among you from the LORD, I make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. ⁷ Not so with my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my household. ⁸ I speak with him directly, openly, and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD.

So why were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" ⁹ The LORD's anger burned against them, and he left.

¹⁰ As the cloud moved away from the tent, Miriam's skin suddenly became diseased, resembling snow. When Aaron turned toward her, he saw that she was diseased ¹¹ and said to Moses, "My

lord, please don't hold against us this sin we have so foolishly committed. ¹² Please don't let her be like a dead baby whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother's womb."

¹³ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "God, please heal her!"

¹⁴ The LORD answered Moses, "If her father had merely spit in her face, wouldn't she remain in disgrace for seven days? Let her be confined outside the camp for seven days; after that she may be brought back in." ¹⁵ So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was brought back in.

The second person healed in the OT of leprosy was a gentile, named Naaman.

Naaman was a gentile, outside the people of God who was healed by God through Elijah.

2 Kings 5:1-16 (CSB)

Naaman, commander of the army for the king of Aram, was a man important to his master and highly regarded because through him, the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was a valiant warrior, but he had a skin disease.

² Aram had gone on raids and brought back from the land of Israel a young girl who served Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his skin disease."

⁴ So Naaman went and told his master what the girl from the land of Israel had said. ⁵ Therefore, the king of Aram said, "Go, and I will send a letter with you to the king of Israel."

So he went and took with him 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing.

⁶ He brought the letter to the king of Israel, and it read:

When this letter comes to you, note that I have sent you my servant Naaman for you to cure him of his skin disease.

⁷ When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and asked, "Am I God, killing and giving life, that this man expects me to cure a man of his skin disease? Recognize that he is only picking a fight with me."

⁸ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king: "Why have you torn your clothes? Have him come to me, and he will know there is a prophet in Israel." ⁹ So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house.

¹⁰ Then Elisha sent him a messenger, who said, "Go wash seven times in the Jordan and your skin will be restored and you will be clean."

¹¹ But Naaman got angry and left, saying, "I was telling myself: He will surely come out, stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the skin

disease. ¹² Aren't Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and left in a rage.

¹³ But his servants approached and said to him, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more should you do it when he only tells you, 'Wash and be clean?'" ¹⁴ So Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, according to the command of the man of God. Then his skin was restored and became like the skin of a small boy, and he was clean.

¹⁵ Then Naaman and his whole company went back to the man of God, stood before him, and declared, "I know there's no God in the whole world except in Israel. Therefore, please accept a gift from your servant."

¹⁶ But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, in whose presence I stand, I will not accept it." Naaman urged him to accept it, but he refused.

Lepers had to do certain things:

1. Had to live outside the city
2. Had to rip their clothes
3. Had to yell "UNCLEAN" whenever anyone would come around
4. Had to be isolated from the community, with no physical contact

If they broke any of these laws, they were subject to 40 lashes, or even death, according to the Mishnah

Mark 1:39-40 (CSB)

³⁹ He went into all of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. ⁴⁰ Then a man with leprosy came to him and, on his knees, begged him, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

The leper we assume is doing all the things he's supposed to do. But look at how he addresses Jesus. He knows Jesus can heal him, he's more than capable of healing him. He knows it and the man knows it. Also notice how the man says, "If you are willing," not, "if you are able." He comes to Jesus begging on his knees.

Mark 1:41 (CSB)

⁴¹ Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched him. "I am willing," he told him. "Be made clean."

Jesus is moved, shows compassion to the man, and reaches out and touches the man. His healing is complete, he's both healed physically and cleansed of his sins.

Mark 1:42 (CSB)

⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

The leprosy left the man, and everyone present saw it. The leprosy didn't affect Jesus at all.

Remember John, at the end of his ministry when he's imprisoned by Herod, sends his disciples to Jesus to confirm that he's the Messiah. Jesus's response to John is directly from Isaiah, including the messianic miracles of healing a leper and raising the dead.

Matthew 11:1-6 (CSB)

When Jesus had finished giving instructions to his twelve disciples, he moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns. ² Now when John heard in prison what the Christ was doing, he sent a message through his disciples ³ and asked him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

⁴ Jesus replied to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, ⁶ and blessed is the one who isn't offended by me."

So next week: Why does Jesus tell some to not tell anyone how / who healed them, and other times he allows them to go to the religious leaders to present an offering?