

## Research on the “Healing of the Ten Lepers”

Luke 17:12-14, 20, 21

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

“*There met him.* They were in his way, or they were in his path, as he was entering the village. They were not allowed to enter the village while they were afflicted with the leprosy” (Barnes 237).

“*Lepers.* No disease with which the human family has been afflicted, has been more dreadful than that which is often mentioned in the Bible as leprosy. . . . This disease is contagious and hereditary” (Barnes 237).

“*Stood afar off.* At a distance, as they were required by law. They were unclean, and it was not lawful for them to come near to those who were in health” (Barnes 237).

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

“*have mercy on us!* Or, ‘have pity on us.’ The cry of the lepers formulates a prayer. It is an implicit request for help, but whether it would connote a request for alms or a miracle may be debated” (AYB Luke x-xxiv.1154).

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

“*To see* is *eido* in Greek which means “to perceive with the eyes, to discern, to turn the mind to, to behold, perception as denoted by *eido* when conceived of as completed, permits the sensuous element to be forgotten and abides merely as an activity of the soul” (Thayer 173).

“The Jews probably went to Jerusalem, because of the necessary sacrifices; the Samaritan to Mt. Gerizim, unless we are to suppose that he became a Jewish proselyte. *As they went:* The healing was delayed to test their faith” (Dummelow 762).

“By this command he gave them an implied assurance that they would be healed. It may also be observed that this required no small measure of *faith* on their part, for he did not first heal them, and then tell them to go; he told them to go without *expressly assuring* them that they would be healed, and without as yet any evidence to show to the priest . . .” (Barnes 237).

The word *cleansed* is *katharizo* in Greek which means “to make clean, to remove by cleansing, in a moral sense: to free from defilement of sin; to purify from wickedness; to free from guilt of sin, to purify; to consecrate by purifying” (Thayer 312).

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

“Though Luke does not say whether the others had faith, it need not be denied them. The stress is on the openly expressed gratitude of the Samaritan, who alone brought praise to God” (*EBC* 8. 995).

“*One of them.* This man, sensible of the power of God, and grateful for his mercies, returned to express his gratitude to God, for his goodness. Instead of obeying *at once* the *letter* of the command, he *first* expressed his thanks to God, and to his great Benefactor. There is no evidence, however, that he did not, *after* he had given thanks to God, and had poured out his joy at the feet of Jesus, go to the priest as he was directed. Indeed he could not have been restored to society without doing it. But he *first* poured out his thanks to God, and gave him praise for his wonderful recovery” (Barnes 237).

“*when he saw that he was cured.* Lit. ‘seeing that he was cured,’ with the emphasis on the participle *idon*, ‘seeing.’ In the Lucan story this is an awakening; his eyes of faith were opened. The implication is that as a result of this awakening he no longer follows Jesus’ injunction to show himself to the priest, but returns spontaneously” (*AYB Luke x-xxiv.* 1155).

“*came back.* The return of the one leper implies his conversion to Jesus” (*AYB Luke x-xxiv.* 1155).

The word *glorified* is *doxazo* which means “to praise, magnify, celebrate, honor, to cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged” (Thayer 157).

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

“*fell at the feet of Jesus.* Lit. ‘fell upon his face at his feet.’ An act of prostration symbolizes his recognition of Jesus’ status. One scholar considers the act to be the homage due to a king. It could also be a recognition of him as an agent of God” (*AYB Luke x-xxiv.* 1155).

“*He was a Samaritan.* This rendered his conduct more remarkable and striking in the sight of the Jews. They considered the Samaritans as peculiarly wicked, and themselves as peculiarly holy” (Barnes 238).

**The blue color indicates that the following verses are not in this week’s Lesson.**

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? (vs. 17 is not in this week’s Lesson)

“*Where are the nine?* Jesus had commanded them to go to the priest; and they were probably literally obeying the commandment. They were impatient to be healed, and selfish in wishing it, and had no gratitude to God, or their Benefactor” (Barnes 238).

“*Where are the nine?* The contrast of nine with one further expresses the pathos, for the nine were presumably Jews, members of the house of Israel. Obedient enough to carry out Jesus’ injunction to present themselves to the priests, they were cured—physically; but their failure to react responsibly (in not glorifying God and thanking Jesus) reveals that they have missed the greatest moment of their lives” (AYB Luke x-xxiv.1155).

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. (vs. 18 is not in this week’s Lesson)

“*but this stranger.* Lit. ‘except this one of another race,’ i.e. not of the house of Israel, but a ‘foreigner’” (AYB Luke x-xxiv.1158).

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. (vs. 19 is not in this week’s Lesson)

“*Go thy way.* To the priest—for without his certificate he could not again be restored to the society of his friends, or the public worship of God” (Barnes 238).

“*Whole* in Greek is used here as *sozo* which means “to keep safe and sound from danger or destruction; to save one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health” (Thayer 610).

Sources:

*The Anchor Yale Bible: The Gospel According to Luke (x-xxiv).* Introduction, translation and notes by Joseph A. Fitzmyer. New York: Doubleday, 1985.

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*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke.* Ed. Frank E. Gaebelain et al. Vol. 8. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

Thayer, Joseph Henry, trans. *The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.* Peabody: Hendrickson, 1981.

Abbreviation key:

AYB = *The Anchor Yale Bible*

EBC = *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*

