

The Messianic Miracles
Part 1 Cleansing Leprosy
Matthew 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-45 and Luke 5:12-26

- Turn to all three of those passages that are listed
- Many Thanks to Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum for his leading on this subject
- ‘Messianic’ comes Messiah which is a transliteration of the Hebrew word Mashiach, ‘the anointed one’
- John in his Gospel gives readers the Greek equivalent to Messiah, thinking that they do not know this, in 1:41 and similarly in 4:25
- In 1:41 he says: **He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated from Hebrew to Greek, the Christ).**
- When we say Messianic miracles we are talking about miracles only performed by Messiah, whom we call Christ

Peter says this in **Acts 2:22** about Jesus of Nazareth
22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested or proven by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—
-Peter is saying that the Jews present at Pentecost know that God proved that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah

For some time prior to the coming of Jesus

- The rabbis separated miracles into two categories.
- First** were those miracles anyone led and empowered by the Holy Spirit would be able to perform
- Second** there miracles called “messianic miracles,”
- Which were miracles only the Messiah would be able to perform.
- Jesus did miracles in both categories: general miracles and also miracles only the Messiah would perform

This will be a series studying the three messianic miracles of the Christ

- Notable by the reaction to them by both the people and the Jewish leadership
- The results of them, giving credence to the truth of that rabbinical statement that Messiah comes
- He will perform miracles where He will be the first to do so.
- Whenever He performed a messianic miracle it created a different type of reaction versus other miracles.

One would think that raising someone from the dead would be a Messianic miracle, but it was not

- Elisha restored life to a dead boy in **2Kings 4:34-36**
- The disciples were given the ability to raise the dead in **Matthew 10:8**
- But we have no record of them doing so until after His ascension
- You will note in the Matt. 10 passage that were given power by Jesus
- To heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead, cast out demons.

But they did not cleanse lepers until after Jesus the Messiah did so

- When they did so it substantiated them as disciples of the Christ
- As Christians or little Christs, as they were called in the later in the Book of Acts

In the Gospels...

- The disciples will cast out demons, but not all types of demons
- They will heal the sick, the blind, but not all types of blindness would they be able to heal
- More on those two in the future

The first messianic miracle was the healing of a leper

- From the time the Mosaic Law was completed,
- There was no record of any Jew who had been healed or cleansed of leprosy.
- What about Miriam you say?...
- While Miriam was healed of leprosy, this was before the completion of the Torah.
- The Syrian Naaman was healed of leprosy, but he was a Gentile, not a Jew.
- From the time the Mosaic Law was completed, there was never a case of any Jew being healed of leprosy.
- The Rabbis contended that the Messiah, when He comes, would do so.
- Whether we accept this or not, the people and the Jewish leadership in the gospels did believe this
- Jesus would not disappoint their Messianic expectations

Matthew Written To Prove that Jesus of Nazareth is the Expectant Messiah

- Proving that Jesus was the Messiah thru His detailed fulfillment of Prophetic Scripture
- And thru the testimony of Signs and wonders performed by the Messiah, Including Messianic Miracles
- Matthew gives us two of the three Messianic Miracles performed by Jesus and the reactions to them.
- Remember truth is established by two or three witnesses: **Deuteronomy 19:15, Matthew 18:16**, also in the church age, **2 Corinthians 13:1**

Did Jesus go out looking for a Leper in order to establish His Messiahship?

- Let's see
- Matthew, Mark and Luke start the ministry of Jesus, to establish His Messiahship, at the arrest of John B.
- In Matthew 4 He preaches the same message in the Galilee that John preached in Judea
- Matt. 4:17** "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- He then set about to prepare for His future departure,
- He began to call His disciples to be His eyewitnesses and to follow Him

Then we read this in Matthew 4:23

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. **24** Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. **25** Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

- But no lepers are listed
- After His first Leper healing, these kind of lists included healing or cleansing of lepers
- Then in Matthew 5-7 we have His kingdom manifesto
- Then in chapter 8, after laying a great foundation for His claim to the Messiahship we read in ...
- Matthew 8:1-4** **1** When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. **2** And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."
- Luke 5:12** tells us that this man was in the later stages of his leprosy, 'full of leprosy'
- All of Jesus' preparatory work regarding His Messiahship has paid off
- There was a man who now believed He was the Messiah and as the Messiah and only as the Messiah
- He could heal and cleanse him of leprosy and make him whole

How do we know this? v.2 again ... **And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him** (Only God is to be worshipped, the Messiah is God), **saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."**

- Being 'full of leprosy', his leprosy was now fully developed,
- And it would not be very long before the leprosy would take this man's life.
- So this was no early stages of leprosy, where there might be doubt about its presence
- This man with fully developed leprosy came to Jesus and said, **"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."**

- The leper clearly recognized the authority of Jesus as the Messiah who had the power to heal a leper.
- If Jesus had not established His Messiahship before this,
- This man would not have come knowing that only Messiah could heal him
- The only question on the part of the leper was: is the Messiah willing to do so?
- At that point, we read in verse 13 that Jesus touched the leper
- and **“immediately the leprosy left him.”**

Leprosy was the one disease that was left out of rabbinic cures

- There was no cure for leprosy whatsoever.
- Yet Leviticus chapters 13–14 gave the Priesthood detailed instructions as to what they were to do in case a leper was cleansed.

What does Leviticus tell this man to do?

- He’s to approach the priesthood and say, “I was a leper but now I have been healed,”
- The priesthood was to give an initial offering of two birds.
- For the next seven days, they were to investigate intensively the situation to determine three things:
First, was the person really a leper?
Second, if he was a real leper, was he really cured of his leprosy?
Third, if he was truly cured of his leprosy, what were the circumstances of the healing?

- If after seven days of investigation the man passed this thorough examination
- On the eighth day there would be a lengthy series of offerings.
- All together, there were four different offerings.
- The ceremony would then end with the anointing of oil upon the healed leper.
- With all of these detail instructions they never had the opportunity to put these instructions into use
- Because from the time the Mosaic Law was given, no Jew was ever healed of leprosy.
- As a result, it was taught by the rabbis that only the Messiah would be able to heal a Jewish leper.

The healing of the leper was the first of three messianic miracles performed by Jesus

Jesus and His instructions to the Leper after his cleansing

- But carefully note what Jesus told the leper to do, according to **Luke 5:14**
14 And He charged him to tell no one, “But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded.”
- The word “them” refers to the leadership of Israel.
- Jesus sent this man directly to the priesthood in Jerusalem, which is quite a journey
- In order to force them to follow through with the commands of Moses for a cleansed leper in Leviticus 13–14.
- This man appeared before the priesthood of Israel and declared himself to be a cleansed leper;
- The reactions of ‘them’ would soon follow after following the Leviticus protocols

In the mean time

- 15 However, the report went around concerning Him (who is He? Is He the Messiah?) all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities.**
- 16 So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.**
- Having sent the healed leper to the leadership of Israel, Jesus then **“withdrew himself into the desert, and prayed” Lk. 5:16.**
- What was He praying about?
- He was praying for what would happen next and how the leadership of Israel would respond to this messianic miracle.

In Jerusalem ...

- For the next seven days, the Jewish leadership intensively investigated the situation and discovered three things.
- First**, they discovered this man really had been a leper, they never refuted this.
- Second**, they discovered that the man was perfectly healed of his leprosy.
- Third**, they also discovered that Jesus of Nazareth was the One who healed the man of his leprosy.
- Because they taught that the healing of a leper was a messianic miracle,
- Anyone healing a leper would, by that very act, claim to be the Messiah Himself.
- Jesus deliberately sent this cleansed leper to the priesthood
- In order to get the leaders to start investigating His messianic claims
- And to come to a decision regarding those same messianic claims.

The Jewish Response

- The people responded in **Mark 1:45** 45 However, he (*the healed leper*) went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.
- Luke 5:15** amplifies this 15 However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities.

In the meantime...

- The once fully leprous man has traveled has finally arrived in Jerusalem
- He has presented himself, at least seven days have passed in this examination period

According to Sanhedrin law...

- Any kind of 'messianic movement' had to be reported,
- The Sanhedrin had to investigate the situation in two stages.
- The first stage was called the "stage of observation."
- A delegation was formed to investigate only by way of observation.
- They had to observe: what was being said; what was being done; and what was being taught.
- They were not permitted to ask any questions or raise any outward objections.
- After a period of observation, they were to return to Jerusalem,
- Report to the Sanhedrin, the ruling body, and answer one question:
- Was the movement significant or was the movement insignificant?
- If the movement was decreed to be insignificant, the matter would be dropped.

But if the movement was declared to be significant

- There would then be a second stage of investigation called the "stage of interrogation."
- In this stage, they would interrogate the individual or members of the movement.
- They would ask questions and raise objections to discover whether the claims should be accepted or rejected.
- This incident in Luke 5:17, Matt. 9:1, and Mark 2:1 records the first stage, the stage of observation.
- They were there to observe what Jesus was saying and doing, without verbal objections
- Because a messianic miracle had been performed,
- Leaders from all over the country had come to Capernaum to participate in the stage of observation
- To observe what Jesus was saying, doing and teaching.
- Mark points out that this incident occurred in Capernaum in Galilee, many miles from Jerusalem.
- After a period of time when many traveled from around the country to Capernaum in Galilee
- We find out who those travelers were

-Luke 5:17 states: **17 Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by down, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.**

-What we do not have here are a few Jewish leaders from the town of Capernaum listening to Jesus
-Luke's account very clearly states that these were Jewish leaders that have come together from all over the country: Galilee, Judea, and the Jerusalem and surrounding areas.

Why are all these Jewish leaders suddenly having a convention in Capernaum?

-This was their response to the first messianic miracle.
-They knew that Jesus had healed a leper.
-According to their own teachings, only the Messiah would be able to heal a leper.
-If He healed the leper, it could very well mean that He was the Messiah.
-They all came together to first silently investigate Him.

As Jesus was teaching..

....Four friends of a paralytic tried to bring him to Jesus so that he could be healed.
-Because all the Jewish leaders were sitting inside and blocking the doorway, they were not able to get in.
-They climbed onto the roof, made a hole in the roof and lowered the paralytic to the feet of Jesus.

At this point Jesus departed from His normal procedure

-He did not, as He had done on previous occasions, simply proceed to heal the sick man brought to Him.
-Instead, in **Mark 2:5** we read: **And Jesus seeing their faith** (all 5 of them) **said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, your sins are forgiven** (*perfect tense, have been since you believed and still they are forgiven, and now I have affirmed that to you*).
-Rather than healing the man, Jesus made a dramatic announcement; **"your sins are forgiven,"**
-He did not know it, but now God has told him.
-Jesus know that his forgiveness declaration was going to create a response.

-Indeed it did, in **Mark 2:6** we read: **But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts ...**

-Not out loud, only within themselves
-This was still the stage of observation not interrogation
-They could only observe; they were not allowed to raise questions or objections.
-According to **Mark 2:7**, they reasoned in their hearts: **"Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"**

Their theology was absolutely correct: no one could forgive sins except God

-Since Jesus declared the prerogative of forgiving sins, it meant one of two things
First, it could mean that He was a blasphemer.
-Or **Second** there is the possibility that He was who He claimed to be: the Divine Messianic Person.

-It was at this point that Jesus turned to the leadership of Israel and interrogated them out loud.

-Mark 2:9 states: **Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'?**

-The question was: "What is an easier thing for a man to say?" Is it easier for someone to say to another, "Your sins are forgiven?"

-Or, is it easier for someone to say to a paralytic man, "I'm going to heal you, so stand up and walk?"

-The easier thing to say was, "Your sins are forgiven" because that required no tangible, external and observable, physical evidence.

-But to state that a paralytic man was going to be healed was a harder thing to say because that did require external and observable evidence.

Jesus then went on to say.....

That He was going to prove to them that He could say and mean the easier statement, 'your sins are forgiven'

-How? By performing the harder act: healing the paralytic man.

-He proceeded to heal the paralytic man.

-There was instantaneous, observable evidence,

-The man was able to stand up, walk around, and even carry his own bed.

-This proved that Jesus could say the easier words, that this man's sins were also forgiven.

-If Jesus could forgive sins, then it meant that He was who He claimed to be: the Messianic Person.

Their Response

-The leaders observed Jesus claiming the right to forgive sins.

-Therefore, He was either a blasphemer or He was the Messianic Person.

-It is evident that this leadership group would return to Jerusalem and decree the movement of Jesus as very significant.

After this Jesus was subject to the second stage of the Sanhedrin investigation: interrogation.

-Between the first messianic miracle and the second messianic miracle,

-Everywhere Jesus went, a Pharisee, a Scribe, a Lawyer, even the Sad-u-see was sure to follow.

-This time, they would no longer be silent.

-They would be trying to find a basis for rejecting or accepting His messianic claims.

Leprosy As a Type of Sin

Dr. Ryrie Actually the nearest Biblical reference which would justify this type is Psalm 51:7 ("Purge me with hyssop"). Because the hyssop mentioned here is also a part of the cleansing ritual for the leper (Lev 14:4)

We read this at the end of Luke 5:17

And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

-To heal them of the leprosy of sin

-He would like nothing better then to say to them: I see your faith in me as Messiah

-And I declare to you that your sins are forgiven

C.I. Scofield says this about leprosy as a type of sin ...

Leprosy speaks of sin as

(1) in the blood;

(2) becoming overt in loathsome ways;

(3) incurable by human means.

(4) when it is healed it is cleansed, which is the only disease in the Bible that is cleansed

(5) The anti-type as applied to the people of God is "sin,"

(6) sins are to be forgiven and cleansed of all unrighteous staining

-demanding self-judgment (1 Cor. 11:31); and demanding confession to forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9).

(7) The consequences of leprosy are separation from spiritual society and a slow death

(8) The consequences of sin unrepented of is separation from God forever

-But Jesus has the power to heal if you will but believe