

A WORD TO THE PROUD

¹ When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. ² A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." ³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. ⁴ Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Matthew 8:1-4

⁴⁹ Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰ You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." ⁵¹ He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵² and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.

John 11:49-52

¹⁰ Even human anger praises you; you will wear the survivors of your wrath as an ornament.

Psalms 76:10 (ISV)

I. Volitional doubters say, "Amen!"

A. There are three kinds of doubt: Factual doubt (This is easily cleared up), Existential doubt (This is emotional and potentially damaging), Volitional doubt (Rank unbelief that becomes impervious to facts and truth)

B. Christ led off his ministry by performing undeniable messianic miracles only God could do. (Matthew 11:2-6; Isaiah 35:4-6)

[Mat 11:2-6] ² When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" ⁴ Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

[Isa 35:4-6] ⁴ say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.” ⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. ⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

C. Christ would demand that the priests and religious leaders acknowledge him.

II. Go show yourself to the priest!

A. In the Bible the effects of sin are as leprosy; they progress slowly. They are undetectable at first, but deeply rooted. They spread, leading to spiritual dismemberment and death.

B. Lepers were forced away from fellowship and community; to touch a leper was to be unclean.

C. Jesus sent all of his healed lepers to the priests to perform a long forgotten ceremony unseen in 1500 years.

III. The law of the leper

A. The priest goes out to the leper. (Leviticus 14:1-3) If a leper felt he was healed he would come to the priest.

¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² “These are the regulations for any diseased person at the time of their ceremonial cleansing, when they are brought to the priest: ³ The priest is to go outside the camp and examine them. If they have been healed of their defiling skin disease,

B. The priest would go outside the camp to investigate and determine if the leper had been healed.

C. So Christ, our high priest, left heaven to come out to where we were.

D. The victim offered two birds. (Leviticus 14:4-7) Birds don’t belong in clay jars; they belong in the heavens. Jesus came down from heaven and became a man. He put himself in a clay jar so that he might die for our sins. (John 3:13,31;6:38,42)

[Lev 14:4-7] ⁴ the priest shall order that two live clean birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought for the person to be cleansed. ⁵ Then the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over

fresh water in a clay pot. ⁶ He is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. ⁷ Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the defiling disease, and then pronounce them clean. After that, he is to release the live bird in the open fields.

[Jhn 3:13, 31] ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of Man. ... ³¹ The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all.

[Jhn 6:38, 42] ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ... ⁴² They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

E. A holy trio: cedar, hyssop, and scarlet yarn. The priest made an aspergillum, an instrument of sprinkling. The hyssop and the living bird were attached to the cedar handle by means of the scarlet wool or crimson fillet. The bird was so bound to this handle that its tail feathers should be downward. All were dipped in the blood of the sacrificial bird and the leper was sprinkled 7 times. The second bird was set free.

F. The person then cleansed himself. (Leviticus 14:8-9). He washed himself and his garments and shaved off all of his hair. He was permitted to enter the camp, but was not allowed to enter his tent. He stayed outside for another week.

⁸ "The person to be cleansed must wash their clothes, shave off all their hair and bathe with water; then they will be ceremonially clean. After this they may come into the camp, but they must stay outside their tent for seven days. ⁹ On the seventh day they must shave off all their hair; they must shave their head, their beard, their eyebrows and the rest of their hair. They must wash their clothes and bathe themselves with water, and they will be clean.

G. The person cleanses himself again. (Leviticus 14:9) The man washes and shaves his body again, and puts on clean clothes. He is now brand new and ready for entry into the community.

H. The eighth day! He now offered the required sacrifices. (Leviticus 14:10-32) The sin offering shows Christ's atoning for a person's sin. The trespass

offering reminds us that Christ paid the debt we owed to God for every instance of sin. In the burnt offering, the man dedicated himself completely to God. The meal offering displayed the perfections of Christ's gifts accepted for the imperfections of the worshiper.

IV. A new priest. Ears, thumbs, and toes

- A. The priest treated the cleansed leper like a fellow priest. The blood of the trespass offering was put on the man's right ear right thumb and right big toe.
- B. The oil was sprinkled 7 times on the man. Then the oil was placed on the blood on the ear, thumb, and toe. The remaining oil was poured on the man's head.
- C. Now the cleansed leper could re-enter the community as respected as a priest.

V. Pride is now being dealt with swiftly.

- A. The religious leaders were without excuse, and all volitional doubters will be left without excuse due to the undeniable signs and wonders we will see in our time.
- B. We are all lepers, prideful or humble.
- C. God is pressing down the mountains of pride, and raising up the valleys of humility.

Christ cleansing lepers
Jesus cleansing lepers



Leprosy



Freed sacrificial bird

