

## Message #26

## Matthew 8:1-4

When we come to Matthew 8-9, we come to a unique section in which Jesus does a series of miracles to show who He is. He is God, He is Israel's Messiah and He is Israel's King. When Matthew began, we learned Jesus had the pedigree to be Israel's King and He fulfilled all the prophecies to be Israel's King (Matt. 1-2). He was introduced by the predicted forerunner demanded in Scripture for Israel's King (Matt. 3). He conquered satanic temptation as the righteous King (Matt. 4) and He personally had the righteousness of the King and taught the righteousness of the kingdom (Matt. 5-7).

In Matthew 8-9, Jesus does a series of ten miracles to prove He is Israel's Messiah and King. 1) Heals the leper (8:1-4); 2) Heals the centurion's servant (8:5-13); 3) Heals Peter's mother-in-law (8:14-17); 4) Heals two demon-possessed men (8:28-34); 5) Heals a paralyzed man (9:1-8); 6) Heals a hemorrhaging woman (9:10-22); 7) Brings back to life the dead daughter of a synagogue official (9:18, 23-26); 8) Gives blind men their sight (9:27-30); 9) Heals a speechless demon-possessed man (9:32-33); 10) Heals all diseases and sicknesses (9:35). All of these miracles must be interpreted in view of Matt. 11:2-6 and Matt. 12:24-28, which clearly inform us that these miracles proved Jesus was God, and He was Israel's promised Messiah and King. The fact that Israel rejected Jesus Christ was not due to a lack of evidence.

**JESUS HEALED A MAN WITH LEPROSY AND IN THE AFTERMATH OF IT, THE RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP LEARNED OF JESUS' DIVINE POWER.**

Now there are four main historical realities we want to point out to you:

**HISTORICAL REALITY #1** – When Jesus came down from the mountain, great multitudes were following Him. **8:1**

This verse is important because it clearly shows us that when Jesus Christ was here on earth, many people were drawn to Him, even though very few actually believed on Him. The nation could not claim we didn't have a clue, because they had all sorts of clues. Another reason why this is important is because in spite of the fact that tremendous numbers of people were following Christ, He still took time for the individual who wanted His help. The majority of people following Christ were following Him because they knew there had never been anyone like this. He had authority in teaching and power to do spectacular things. But it is not the majority who actually thought they needed His help; it was the minority.

**HISTORICAL REALITY #2** – One man with leprosy came to Jesus to be healed. **8:2**

**(Fact #1)** - The leper came to Christ no matter how many others were around him. **8:2a**

**(Fact #2)** - The leper bowed down to Christ. **8:2b**

The Greek word for "bow down" is a word that means this leper approached Jesus Christ in a worshipful attitude that he was actually approaching God (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 384).

This man may have had leprosy, but he also had a true perspective of who Jesus Christ was. Nobody else in the crowd was acknowledging Christ at this God-level at this time.

**(Fact #3)** - The leper called Jesus “Lord.” **8:2c**

This leper pinpoints who Jesus Christ is—he believed that Jesus was God.

**(Fact #4)** - The leper knew that his cleansing was contingent upon the will of God. **8:2d**

The cleansing was not contingent upon the works of the leper or the will of the leper, but the will of God.

**HISTORICAL REALITY #3** – Jesus heals the leper of his leprosy. **8:3**

Now healing a leper is very, very rare in Scripture. In fact, in the O.T. we have the account of the healing of Miriam (Num. 12:10-15), and the healing of Naaman (II Kings 5:3, 9-14). In both instances of healing, the emphasis was on the fact that only God could heal.

So if Jesus could actually heal this leper, He would establish that He was, in fact, God! Jesus was willing to heal this man and He reached out and touched him and he was healed. Now in any case if a person touched a leper, the one who touched the leper was himself also unclean. However, the touch of Jesus Christ was different because His touch completely cleanses. One touch of Jesus Christ and the leper is completely clean. That is all it takes to be completely cleaned up from sin—one touch from Jesus Christ.

**HISTORICAL REALITY #4** – Jesus tells the leper not to tell anyone but show himself to the priest. **8:4**

Jesus wanted this leper to go to the religious leaders of Israel and show them that he had been made clean. This would do several things: 1) Show the healing was real; 2) Establish that Jesus was who He claimed to be; 3) Establish that Jesus knew and fulfilled the O.T. Mosaic Law. According to Leviticus 14, a cleansing offering was to be given for a leper who was healed. It is doubtful that the priests had ever seen such an offering because no one had the power to do this.

One question has arisen and that is why did Jesus want the leper to keep this quiet?

- 1) To prevent the masses of people from physically making Him King without spiritual repentance (John 6:15).
- 2) To prevent opposition from being stirred that could cause the crucifixion to occur prior to its appointed time.

Whatever the reason, the leper did not listen because he could not keep his mouth shut (Mark 1:45).

Jesus Christ demonstrated that one touch from Him is all that is needed to set one free!