

Gospels class 21-Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law, tours Galilee, heals a leper

Good morning/afternoon, everyone.

Today we'll be picking up where we left off last time in our study of the Gospels, beginning with the bottom part of page 18. We covered the top part of page 18 last time, which describes how Jesus healed a possessed man at the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath day, and discussed what it meant that Jesus had *smicha* or authority as a great rabbi from God.

Today we pick up the story where that left off, with what happens immediately after they leave the synagogue in Capernaum. We'll read from Mark's account, which has the most detail.

Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law and many others (Capernaum)

Mark 1:29-34

29 Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. Notice here that Simon Peter has a wife and a mother-in-law. Clearly if Peter has a wife and mother-in-law, he is married. This is a problem for those who think Peter was the first pope and that popes have to be celibate or unmarried, because clearly Peter is married. I've never understood exactly where the idea of papal or priestly celibacy came from, but it clearly didn't come from Peter.

31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

So this is an immediate healing with no recovery period even—she gets up and begins serving Jesus, Peter, James, John and whatever others were with them. Notice that no sooner had He healed her than she was up and tending to the needs of her guests in her house. Jesus healed her, and her first thought was to use the blessing of having her health restored to serve others. That's a great attitude and a great example.

32 At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed.

33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door.

34 Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

The miracles that Jesus had done that day couldn't be hidden. He had healed a demon-possessed man, so those who were possessed by demons or those who had family or friends afflicted by demons flocked to Him. And no doubt word of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law got around, causing all those wanting healing to come to Him.

So this is a wonderful and exciting time, but a somewhat tragic time as well. Because why are the crowds coming to Him? They weren't coming out of love for Him, or out of love for the message He taught. They were coming because of what they could *get* from Him. They wanted to *use* Him, in other words. They wanted healing. And later Jesus would tragically condemn them because they had seen miracle after miracle after miracle, but they still didn't believe or didn't believe enough to allow it to make a transformative difference in their lives.

Notice what he says in Luke 10:13-15—

13 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 “But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

15 “And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.

So we see that in the long run all these miracles didn't change the lives of most of those who saw them. And in the same way, if we're in it only for what we can get from God, we're going to end up the same way they did.

One of the study questions I sent out was, why did the people wait until evening to bring people to Jesus to be healed? It was because this was the Sabbath day, and it was commonly taught that healing on the Sabbath was wrong because it involved work.

In the culture of that day, you could take steps to prevent someone from getting worse, which was allowable, but you couldn't take steps to make the person better. Or, if the person's life was in danger, you could intervene to save a life. But if it were not a matter of life and death, they would just have to wait until after the Sabbath was over. So this was one reason that the people waited. Another was their rule about carrying a burden. They defined a burden as anything that weighed more than two dried figs. So if a person was lame or immobile or had to be carried on a stretcher or carried with his or her arms around the shoulders of others for support, that was carrying too much of a burden on the Sabbath and therefore breaking the Sabbath in their eyes.

And Jesus set them straight on that. It's interesting that of the 40-something places the Sabbath is mentioned in the Gospels, a large number of those mentions of the Sabbath involve Jesus healing people on the Sabbath. Those were the kind of manmade rules that made the Sabbath a burden rather than a delight and distorted the meaning of the Sabbath. So Jesus by example set them straight on many of their practices relating to the Sabbath. So this is the background to what's taking place here.

This is why we see that right at sundown, the crowds come out to see Jesus, bringing with them people sick with all kinds of afflictions, even some who were demon-possessed, and Jesus heals them all. That had to be a Sabbath that would be remembered in Capernaum for a long time. First Jesus astonishes the people of Capernaum with His teaching with *smicha* in the synagogue, then He heals a demon-possessed man in the synagogue, then He heals Peter's mother-in-law, then at sundown He heals everyone brought to Him.

I once went to a lecture given by a medical doctor who gave up his practice to become an archaeologist. And he was very knowledgeable of health and sickness and disease and sanitation and that sort of thing in the Bible because of his medical background. I remember one thing he said that astonished me, and that was that he estimated that based on writings and archaeological findings from that period, one out of five to 10 people had some kind of serious injury, illness or disease.

That's a staggeringly high number. That means that in Capernaum alone there may have been 100 to 300 people in need of healing. And yet I think we see a figure like that reflected in what we read in the Gospels. People are regularly coming to Jesus, and coming to Him desperate for healing. And that is certainly a focus of Jesus' ministry and His miracles.

Matthew introduces a new element that Mark and Luke don't mention, which is the prophecy from Isaiah:

Matthew 8:16-17

16 When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,

17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."

This is quoting from **Isaiah 53:4**—

4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

We read this at the Passover service every year because part of Jesus Christ's sacrifice was to be "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and by His stripes we are healed." Jesus came to give His life as an offering for sin, and gave His body to be bruised and stricken so that humanity might be healed and reconciled to the Father. Healing was an important part of Christ's ministry and His sacrifice for us. And Matthew here tells us that these dramatic healings by Jesus Christ were a direct fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. And we see healings again and again in His ministry, reflecting His compassion and love for others.

I'd like to also bring in here a few details from archaeology. In an earlier study I showed you the partially restored ruins of the white limestone synagogue in Capernaum. This is **what they look like**, and if you ever visit Capernaum you can't miss it. It's the most prominent thing in the town. These ruins actually date to a synagogue built in the 300s or 400s A.D., not the one from Jesus' time.

However, in the 1960s archaeologists started exploring what was underneath these ruins and **found the foundation of an earlier black basalt** synagogue that dates back to the first century, which would've been the synagogue Jesus visited and taught in and healed people in. They know this dating from coins and the type of pottery fragments found in and immediately underneath the floors and foundations of these two buildings. And they found that this later white limestone synagogue was built directly on the foundations of the earlier synagogue, so **this gives us a good idea of the size and style** of the synagogue that existed in Jesus' time.

Let's notice a detail that Mark includes in what he wrote:

Mark 1:29-34

29 Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

What does this tell us? It tells us that Peter's house was very close to the synagogue, because they entered Peter's house as soon as they left the synagogue. When archaeologists were excavating Capernaum in 1968, they found something very interesting. They found the remains of an **eight-sided structure** with mosaic floors that was clearly a church, one that dated to being built in the 400s A.D. and below that they found the remains of an earlier church dating to the 300s A.D. And underneath that they found the remains of a first-century house typical of other houses excavated there in Capernaum.

But this first century house was different. It had a large center room that had been plastered multiple times on the walls and floors. In the plaster they found more than 150 inscriptions

etched into the plaster in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin and Syriac over a period from the first century until the 300s A.D. The later church built in the 400s was centered right over this original first-century room. Archaeologists concluded that this may well have been Peter's house, and sometime in the middle of the first century the room changed from a normal residential room to a public area visited by people from many areas speaking many languages over the next few centuries, after which two churches were built over the identical spot.

Now a modern church has been built over this spot, with a see-through glass floor through which visitors can look down into the remains of these earlier buildings. I'll tell you that I rarely put much stock in churches that have been built over supposedly holy or significant sites from Jesus' time, but I do think this is likely the house of Peter. It fits with what Mark says, being very close **to the synagogue**, only a block or so away, and it fits with Peter and Andrew being fishermen, because it's also only about a block, if even that, from the shore of the Sea of Galilee. So I think this is one of perhaps two locations of churches that I would consider accurate in terms of being built over authentic biblical sites in Israel. So if you ever go there, I think a visit here is worth your time.

Are there any questions before we leave this section and move to the next section in the harmony? If not, we'll move on.

Now we come to the section titled, "Jesus tours Galilee with Peter, Andrew, James and John." Mark and Luke place the first part of this on the very next morning after Jesus has healed all these people after sundown. Again I'll read from Mark's account because he has more details.

Mark 1:35-39

35 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

Let's consider a few things here. Notice that Jesus awakens and goes out to a deserted place well before dawn so He can have some quiet time with God. He needed that quiet time with God, and so do each of us. This is one reason why we've long said that the best time for prayer is early in the morning before you start your day and have to begin dealing with problems and phone calls and e-mails and questions and a thousand other things that sap away our attention and focus. Pray early while your mind is clear and uncluttered. That's what Jesus did.

36 And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him.

37 When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

So Jesus couldn't get a break. After all He had done the previous day and night with all the teaching and healing, He just wants to be alone with God. And what He gets is, "Hey, Master, everybody's looking for You!" And what does He do? He again gives of Himself to answer the cry of human need—and He goes.

38 But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

39 And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

So he kept focused on His mission, travelling around Galilee and teaching in the synagogues. The synagogue in Capernaum isn't the only one archaeologists have found. They've also excavated synagogues at the nearby towns of Korazin, Magdala, Tiberias and Gamla, and possibly others that I don't know about. The one in Magdala they found only about two years ago. So when Matthew, Mark and Luke say that Jesus was teaching in the synagogues around Galilee, they knew what they were talking about because archaeologists find synagogues in virtually every town, usually right in the middle of town.

Matthew adds a few different details in **Matthew 4:23-25**—

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.

As I noted in my message on why Jesus chose to settle in Capernaum, the ancient superhighway called the *Via Maris* ran north from Capernaum to where? What was north of Galilee? Syria. As we read here, “**Then His fame went throughout all Syria.**” How did that happen? Because of the travellers on the *Via Maris* spreading word of this miracle-working rabbi north along this ancient superhighway.

25 Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

As we covered earlier, the northern part of the Decapolis was just across the Sea of Galilee, so word spread there. And another main route ran along the Jordan River Valley down past other cities of the Decapolis and on to Judea and the region beyond the Jordan River, and the *Via Maris* ran down south along the coast to the western side of Judea, too. So essentially this is describing the road network that ran through Galilee. That was the communication network and travel network that people used in that day, and that’s how people learned about Him.

This was a short section, but are there any questions before move to the next section in the harmony? If not, we’ll move on.

Jesus heals a leper, creating excitement among the people

Now we come to the healing of a leper. What is leprosy? In the Bible, the word translated “leprosy” is a more general term that included any kind of skin disease or disfiguration ranging from a rash or something like psoriasis to full-blown leprosy of several kinds. And this is evident in Leviticus chapters 13 and 14, which talk a lot about different kinds of what is called “leprosy.”

Let’s turn back to **Leviticus 13:1-3** and read here some of the biblical instruction about leprosy. This entire chapter is about the subject, but we’ll read just a few verses to get the flavor and the biblical instructions regarding leprosy.

1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

2 “When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a bright spot on his skin that may become an infectious skin disease, he must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons who is a priest.

Notice the concern here—that this is an infectious skin disease. So what this chapter is about is dealing with diseases that can be infectious. I read on the World Health Organization website that scientists aren’t sure exactly how leprosy spreads, whether it’s through the air, or through skin-to-skin contact, or through contact with contaminated clothing, but it’s clear that being in close contact with someone with leprosy, like a family member, greatly increases the likelihood of becoming infected with leprosy. So we see here that God set in place quarantine procedures thousands of years before mankind discovered the bacteria that causes leprosy.

3 The priest is to examine the sore on his skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep, it is an infectious skin disease. When the priest examines him, he shall pronounce him ceremonially unclean.

We won’t read all of this, but we see from this chapter that the priesthood served another

important function in Israel, and that was essentially as a kind of national health service where part of their job was to at times quarantine people to prevent the spread of diseases such as leprosy and other skin diseases. If someone was diagnosed with a serious skin disease like leprosy, there was a severe protocol to be followed. We find that near the end of the chapter in verses 45-46.

Leviticus 13:45-46

45 “The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’

46 As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.

So the person had to visually signify that he carried disease by wearing torn clothing and unkempt hair, he had to cover the mouth and lower part of the face and cry out, “Unclean, Unclean!” if another person approached, and he had to live apart from other people outside the towns or cities. There was a purpose for this, which was to prevent the spread of disease in a time in which the causes and cures for diseases wouldn’t be known for another 3,000 years. But it was brutal on the man or woman or child who was afflicted in this way. This is what life was like for a leper in first-century Galilee or Judea.

What did leprosy do to the human body? This is a gory subject, but we need to understand leprosy if we’re to understand what we’re being told here and what lessons we should learn from it. Leprosy is a hideous disease caused by a particular bacteria. There are three types of leprosy, all of which are horrible.

First **small nodules or bumps would form**, then turn into open, oozing sores. The person would have difficulty talking because the vocal cords often developed ulcers. The hands and feet and fingers and toes **would always develop open sores**, and the person would lose all sensation in parts of the body as the bacteria attacked the nerves. Tendons in the hands would contract until the fingers became more like claws than hands. Fingers and toes and eventually entire hands and feet would decay and fall off. As far as others were concerned, the lepers were the living dead.

This led to the view that people with leprosy were basically cursed by God—that they had done something so evil that God had cursed them in punishment for their sins. Some diseases were viewed as trials by which a person could grow in closeness to God, but not leprosy—it was viewed a curse because you were an enemy of God. It was so bad that in the time of Christ, some rabbis carried around rocks in their pockets to throw at lepers who came within range to drive them away. Some rabbis wouldn’t eat food bought along a street that a leper had walked by.

No one was allowed to come within six feet of a leper lest they become contaminated. If the wind was blowing from a leper toward you, you had to stay at least 150 feet away—50 yards or 100 cubits. Now these weren’t God’s rules, they were manmade rules added onto what God had said regarding preventing disease. Lepers were so detested and despised by others that it wasn’t long before the lepers came to detest and despise themselves. They weren’t just physically tormented, they were mentally tormented as well—being the living dead. Many likely would’ve killed themselves, but that would’ve been violating God’s commandment so they wouldn’t or couldn’t find escape that way.

Picture yourself in the sandals of a leper. You have to wear torn clothes, you can’t comb or dress your hair, you cover your mouth and lower part of your face with a rag. You have to shout out “Unclean, Unclean!” if anyone approaches you. You have to live away from other people by

yourself or with other lepers. Your skin is open, oozing, stinking sores. And on top of that, no one can touch you. Not your husband, not your wife, not your children, not your parents, not your friends—no one. No one can ever hug you. No one can shake your hand. No one can kiss you. No one can pat you on the back. You are literally an untouchable person. No one will touch you—*ever*.

Perhaps some of you remember news reports of the orphanages of Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. There they found thousands of children who had been neglected—just shut up in rooms or in beds, never touched, never held, never hugged, never talked to, just shut away from human contact. They had a condition called “failure to thrive” for lack of a better term—which meant that the children were physically alive, but not much else. They couldn’t communicate, couldn’t respond to others, they basically were shut off from the world. They were essentially forced into a form of autism that left them scarred for life.

This is what being a leper was like in the first century. And because you were cut off from contact with other human beings, you could never go to the temple to offer atonement for your sins, so you were perpetually cut off not only from other human beings *but also from God*. You were basically one of the living dead—despised, rejected, cut off from mankind and certainly cut off from God. You would be this way until you died. You were abandoned. You were anonymous. No one cared. You had *no hope*. This is the situation of the man who comes to Jesus.

Now let’s read the story, again reading from Mark who has the most detail. In **Mark 1:40-45—40 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”**

The leper expresses complete faith that Jesus can heal him. He seems to be so humble in Christ’s presence that he doesn’t even *ask* to be healed—he comes and kneels or prostrates himself on the ground before Jesus and says simply, “Master, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” What a humble attitude he has! Luke the physician adds the detail that the man was “**full of leprosy,**” indicating that he had a very severe case and may well have been dying of it. So this man probably looked horrible. Then Jesus does something *unthinkable* in that culture that would’ve shocked anyone who witnessed it:

41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”

Jesus ignored the six-foot rule. What would those standing around have thought? They would’ve thought, “Oh, no—He *touched the leper!* Now he’s going to have leprosy!” This would’ve blown the minds of the disciples. *You just didn’t do that.* You didn’t touch lepers! Everybody knew that! At the very least you would now become unclean yourself, and you might now have contracted leprosy! But then, right before their eyes—

42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

The man was obviously cleansed. Where did the leprosy go? Did it go to Jesus? No, He doesn’t have it. What just happened here? They can’t believe what’s going on. It goes against everything they’ve thought and held to be true about lepers. And having healed the leper, Jesus tells the man to do something.

43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once,

44 and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

Two questions here:

Why did Jesus tell the leper not to tell others that Jesus had healed him?

We're not told, but this is one of several situations where Jesus heals someone and then tells the person not to tell others about it. As I discussed several classes ago, Galilee ([show map](#)) was home to several different cultural and religious groups, including pagans, Herodians, Samaritans, religious Jews and Zealots who wanted a leader who would lead them in a revolt to throw out the Romans. I skipped over this earlier, but why didn't Jesus allow the demons to speak when He cast them out there in Capernaum? Probably for the same reason. Because they were crying out, "You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God!" as Luke described it.

The setting for this healing of the leper seems to be in Galilee, since it follows events in Capernaum and then Jesus travelling around Galilee with a core group of His disciples. **Luke 5:12** says this took place "**in a certain city,**" but doesn't name the city. So putting together what we know of the historical and cultural background, it appears that wherever this is, there seems to be a significant Zealot presence nearby and Jesus doesn't want word to get out so the Zealots get worked up and try to make Him their leader.

Notice what happened after another miracle in [John 6:14-15](#), which is right after Jesus multiplies bread and fishes to feed more than 5,000 people near Bethsaida—and Bethsaida is within a few miles of the city of Gamla, which would be a center of rebellion in the Jewish revolt that would come in a few decades. This movement is already in its early stages, as we see here:

14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

So why did Jesus tell the leper not to tell others of his healing? Presumably because Jesus doesn't want the zealots in the area to get stirred up and start a revolt against the Romans, starting a war—which is exactly what they did about 40 years later in that same area as we talked about in an earlier study.

I find it curious that Luke specifically omits that this took place in or at "a certain city"—I say "at" because the lepers wouldn't have lived in the city itself if it was a Jewish city. They would've lived outside the city so as to not make others unclean. There is a theory that I came across several years ago which proposes that one purpose for Luke writing the Gospel of Luke and its companion volume, the book of Acts, was that this was written by Luke as part of the apostle Paul's legal defense after he was arrested and taken to Rome for trial. This legal process took a number of years, as we see from the book of Acts, so there was plenty of time for Luke to write his two books as a legal defense if that was his purpose or part of his purpose.

We can't prove that, but I think there's a good argument to be made for that idea because Luke spends a great deal of time talking about Roman customs and Roman officials and legal proceedings and such things, and shows repeatedly that Paul did nothing that was against Roman law but was the victim of trumped-up charges against him. He even shows that various Roman officials were somewhat sympathetic to him and that King Herod Agrippa II, who was appointed ruler by the Roman emperor Claudius, was "almost persuaded" to become a convert to Christianity in Acts 26.

If it is the case that Luke and Acts were part of a legal defense for Paul, I wonder if the unnamed city Luke mentions might've been Gamla, and the reason Luke didn't mention it is because Gamla was a hotbed of Zealot activity and Luke thought it might be best to leave out that detail.

We don't know either way, but Luke is such a meticulous historian when it comes to details that it begs the question as to why he didn't name the city. I guess we'll find out one of these days when we can ask him!

And the second question is, why did Jesus tell the healed leper to go to the priest and make the required offerings? Because *healing* was only part of what the man needed. He was healed, but what the man needed now was to be *fully restored as a member of the community*. And Jesus couldn't do that. Without being pronounced healed and cleansed by the *priest*, the man would remain an outcast, cut off from his family and community. So Jesus tells him to go to the priest and do what was needed for him to be officially pronounced healed or cured, and then he can be a normal and fully restored member of society again.

45 However, he 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.

And this verse I think supports what I said earlier about Jesus not wanting word to get out lest the zealots try to make Him part of their political movement or coming revolt against the Romans. He had to leave town and go out and lie low for a while—but even then He couldn't escape all the people coming to see Him.

Another study question I asked was, Why did Jesus “do and teach” rather than “teach and do” as it says in Acts 1:1? What is the significance of this word order? Any ideas?

Acts 1:1

1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, What was Jesus teaching method with His disciples? He called them to follow Him around, to eat, drink, breathe, sleep, walk and talk with Him 24/7 for several years. They would learn from example by observing and watching everything He did. This was what made that form of training so effective. It's one thing to *hear* about how to do something, it's something entirely different to *watch and participate* in what's being taught.

Sometimes Jesus used “shock treatment” on His disciples to teach them a lesson. Here He could've talked to them about loving lepers and lectured them about it for hours on end, but nothing could've been more effective than reaching out to this hideously deformed, probably dying man, this total outcast with no hope, and *physically touching* him to heal Him. Jesus didn't need to touch the man to heal him. Jesus has already healed a nobleman's son from about 25 miles away, so surely He can heal this leper from six feet away! But no, Jesus teaches these men by example. And that example, that graphic picture of what He did there that day, was worth thousands of words about loving your fellow man, even if he's a leper. That's why Luke describes Jesus' method as “*do and teach*” rather than “*teach and do*.” There's a big difference. And we'll see more examples of this as we continue through the Gospels.

I want to mention one other point here about the name Jesus or Joshua or *Yeshua* in the Hebrew, which we know means “God Saves” or “God's Salvation.” I've mentioned previously that Hebrew words in general have a broader range of meanings than English words because there are far fewer words in biblical Hebrew—about 150,000 compared to 700 to 800,000 words in English.

What does that have to do with our discussion today? My point in mentioning this is that the root Hebrew word for “saves” in *Yeshua*—*Yah saves*—has some other meanings, too. It can also

mean “helps.” Or “preserves.” Or “delivers.” Or, one that I think is appropriate here, “*rescues.*” Did the leper in this story need salvation? Yes, of course. We all need salvation. But perhaps more than that, the man needed to be *rescued*. He needed to be *delivered*. He needed to be rescued and delivered from a hopeless and helpless situation. We could also say that the name *Jesus* or *Yeshua* means not just “God saves,” but also “God *delivers*” or “God *rescues.*”

As we’ll see throughout Jesus Christ’s ministry, there are times when His focus isn’t so much on *saving* people as it is on just plain *rescuing them* from hopeless and helpless situations. He does that here. He’ll do it again. And He’ll do it again. And He’ll do it again. And sometimes, *He’ll do it for you and for me.* Yes, He is our Savior, but at times He is also our rescuer and our deliverer. That’s food for thought.

To wrap this up, **what lessons do we learn from this?** What takeaways do we learn that teach us about God? What does it teach us about our condition? Here are a few things I wrote down:

1. I just talked about this, so I’ll start here: ***Jesus is our Savior, but He is also our Rescuer.*** Sometimes we just need rescuing from the difficult circumstances or situations we find ourselves in.
2. Notice that ***Jesus never turns people away.*** On that one Sabbath He first taught in the synagogue, perhaps for up to several hours, then He healed a demon-possessed man. That had to be pretty draining on Him. He goes with several of the disciples to Peter’s house to unwind and eat a meal, and the first thing that happens is that Peter’s mother-in-law is sick and needs healing, so He heals her. And then when sundown comes, He spends what may have been hours healing all who came to Him. When did He get a rest? Well, practically never. But as we saw, He said that was His purpose, His mission.

What do we learn from this? That Jesus Christ and the Father never turn away from us. Yes, They may not heal us when or in the way that we humanly want, though sometimes They do. But at other times that healing doesn’t come in this life. But this life isn’t all there is. We’ll have a memorial service in a few minutes for one of God’s saints who wasn’t healed. We heard prayer requests for some of God’s people who may not be healed at this time.

But you know what? God *is* going to heal them, and He’ll heal them far beyond any kind of healing we can get in this life. God will heal to the point that we will never be sick again, never have an injury again, never have aches and pains again, never be subject to death and dying again. That’s the kind of healing They are for more interested in for each of us. And that is promised if we remain faithful to the end.

3. We saw that ***Jesus needed quiet, alone time to spend with His Heavenly Father***—and so do we. We saw this several times in these few verses. If Jesus needed it, how much more do we need that quiet time with God? If Jesus needed to pray, how much more do we need to pray?

Jesus also knew that He couldn’t give out what He wasn’t taking in. If he was to exercise divine power as He did, He needed to be close to that source of divine power and taking it in. If Jesus needed to recharge His spiritual batteries, so to speak, by being alone spending time with God, how much more do we need to recharge our spiritual batteries by spending time alone with God?

4. *Sometimes God is unpredictable* when it comes to our expectations. Jesus utterly shocked His disciples (and everyone else) when He touched the leper. God the Father and Jesus Christ don't always operate within the limits of our expectations. Their thoughts are not like our thoughts, and our thoughts not like their thoughts.

5. *Before our calling, we were like the leper—covered in our sins, cut off from God and helpless and hopeless.*

Ephesians 2:12 (NIV)

12 Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

But Jesus touched us, cleansed us, healed us and rescued us.

6. *God responds to those who want to be cleansed and seek Him out to be cleansed.* That's what the leper did. He came seeking out Jesus even though in that culture rabbis were often hostile toward lepers. Do you need to be cleansed? Do you need to be baptized? Do you want the sins covering you like the leprosy covering that leper to be washed away? Let's talk about it.

7. *God uses "do and teach" with us.* Sometimes we have to *do* before we get the lesson. Sometimes we have to step out on faith regarding things like the Sabbath, like the Holy Days, like tithing, and start *doing* things before God reveals all the understanding as to *why* we should be doing those things or before he starts blessing us for doing them. We have to step out on faith first to *do* so God can then begin to *teach*.

There are no doubt many other lessons we could draw from these examples, but we're out of time and these give us a few for us to think about. Until next time, *keep studying!*