

**Lesson 20**  
**The Messiah's Challenge to Investigate His Claims**  
**Luke 5:12-27**

Last week we looked at Luke 5:1-11. In this section we see that Jesus' emphasis was on teaching the word of God. In the midst of His teaching He called certain men to be His disciples who would follow Him. Though these disciples were sinners they would be taught the art of catching men from among Jews and Gentiles. The section begins in 5:1 where Luke reports that while Jesus was teaching on the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret, a crowd was pressing against Him and listening to Him teaching the OT word of God. According to verse 5, this was early in the morning, around 7am. Due to the close proximity of the crowd, in verse 2 Jesus saw two vacant boats at the edge of the lake. So, in verse 3 He got into one of the boats in order to separate Himself from the crowd, so He could teach the word of God. The boat belonged to Simon, and He asked Simon to put out a little way from the land. After doing so He took the posture of a rabbi and began to teach the people from the boat. In verse 4, when He had finished teaching, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Being daytime, Peter knew the fish would see the nets and had already gone to deeper water anyway and so could not be caught. Therefore, in verse 5 he answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." Though the idea was contrary to all his experience on the lake, he was willing to obey Jesus' word. So, in verse 6, when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to tear. In order to salvage the nets and the catch, in verse 7 they signaled to their business partners in the other boat for them to come and help. And when they came they filled both boats. These boats were very likely similar to the one found on the shores in the 1980's and known today as 'the Jesus Boat.' This boat was 24'x7' and when both were filled they both began to sink. In verse 8, when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" This section is devoted to the question, "Who is Jesus?" And Peter realized just who Jesus was, the Holy One of God, Messiah. In contrast Peter knew who he was, a sinner. Therefore, he did not think he was worthy to be in His presence. In verse 9 we have the reason Peter and the others realized who Jesus was. "For amazement had completely surrounded them so as to take hold of them because of the catch of fish which they had taken." This was simply not humanly possible. In verse 10 we're told that James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also completely surrounded by the event, amazed, but Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear." Why should Peter not fear? Because, though Jesus was Holy, Peter had already believed in Him and was perfectly accepted, having the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to him. And rather than going away from Peter, Jesus calls Peter to Himself, telling Him what He was going to train him to do. "From now on you will be catching men." Peter had been catching fish all his life. He knew there was an art to catching fish and he knew that Jesus was now going to teach him the art of catching men. This art employs the principles of attracting men and persuading them to believe the gospel. In verse 11 they responded to the call, bringing their boats to land, and leaving everything, followed Him. They had accepted the call to committed discipleship; the commitment a believer makes to follow the Master, to learn from Him and to live His lifestyle.

We come tonight to two sections, Luke 5:12-16, the cleansing of the leper, and Luke 5:17-27, the healing of the paralytic or the forgiveness of the paralytic's sins. These two sections are

integrally related. In other words, what Jesus does by cleansing the leper was deliberately done to alert the Sanhedrin of His presence and to challenge them to come up to the Galilee to investigate His words and works. Therefore, these two pericopes are an excellent example of how Luke has thematically arranged Jesus' ministry. As Fruchtenbaum said, "...studying the life of the Messiah thematically instead of geographically enables one to easily see the relationship between one event and another. This segment will serve as a very good example. What happened here was a direct result of the healing of the Jewish leper."<sup>i</sup> So, we'll be treating the healing of the leper and the forgiveness of the paralytics sins together and I know you will learn some new things tonight.

In 5:12 let's carefully read through verse 14 to see what happened. **While He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."** <sup>13</sup>**And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him.** <sup>14</sup>**And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."** In verse 12, the phrase, **while He was in one of the cities**, refers to one of the cities of the Galilee. All the events in Luke 4:14-9:50 takes place in the Galilee and this is no exception. What happened **in one of the cities** of the Galilee was **behold, there was a man covered with leprosy**. The word **behold** is *ιδου* and is used to introduce something new or unusual. In other words, what we see with the healing of the leper is something categorically different than casting out demons or healing various diseases. Healing a leper was in a class all by itself. Yet, to understand this we have to look in detail at leprosy.

What is leprosy? Scripturally, "The first OT mention of this disease is as a sign given by God to Moses..." Remember that Moses was worried that the people in Egypt wouldn't accept him as their deliverer? So God gave him three signs to do that would convince them. One was to put his hand in his bosom and it would come out leprous. Then he would put his hand back in his bosom and it would come out normal. That's the first reference to leprosy in the Bible and it was limited to Moses' hand and could come and go. "The second case is that of Miriam (Nu 12:10), where the disease is graphically described..." Remember how the Lord struck her with leprosy because she slandered Moses, the servant of God? And because she slandered him she had to spend seven days outside the camp until she was restored. The third mention is "...in Lev 13, 14 (PC) the rules for the recognition of the disease, the preliminary quarantine periods and the ceremonial methods of cleansing are given at length."<sup>ii</sup> These chapters are all about leprosy. They describe how a priest would detect it, the different strains, how long a person who might have leprosy had to be detained, what kind of garments a leper had to wear, how they had to keep their head uncovered and cover their mustache and warn bypassers by saying "Unclean, unclean!" And how they must live outside the camp, and how if they were thought to have been cleansed, then they must go to the priest and be evaluated and if indeed they were clean, there would be a ceremony involving sacrifices and a proclamation by the priest that they were clean.

The disease was some kind of skin ailment, or rather, seven various skin ailments, though it could also apply to a garment or to a stone in a house. But our main interest tonight is in the skin ailment. Some think that ancient leprosy is a broad term referring to a variety of modern human skin ailments including Hansen's disease, Elephantiasis and a number of other skin disorders.

For example, Fruchtenbaum said, “The leprosy mentioned in the Gospels would refer to Hansen’s disease, which is caused by a bacterial infection.”<sup>iii</sup> The bacteria is *Mycobacterium leprae*. The disease it causes spreads slowly over many years and is not highly contagious. This leads me to question whether this really is the ancient leprosy as described in the OT. According to Lev 13, ancient leprosy spread quickly, not slowly. Further, “In Dt 24:8 there is a reference to the original tradition concerning the treatment of lepers...” which involved them having to live outside the camp. The reason was because leprosy was highly contagious, which is unlike the modern disease known as leprosy. Because of these two facts, I reject that the modern Hansen’s disease is the same as ancient leprosy. And I don’t know enough about skin disorders today to know if any of them are readily identifiable with the descriptions in Lev 13-14. But, we may say of it that “It began with little specks on the eyelids, and on the palms of the hand, and gradually spread over different parts of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swellings and sores. From the skin it slowly ate its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, and the eyes were attacked in turn, till, at last, consumption or dropsy brought welcome death.”<sup>iv</sup> Under the Mosaic Law, “This disease in an especial manner rendered its victims unclean; even contact with a leper defiled whoever touched him...”<sup>v</sup> This is important background for our passage, as this man is introduced as being **covered with leprosy**, so that we know he was in the advanced stages of leprosy, and near death, making this event all the more remarkable.

What did the rabbis teach about leprosy? Why did they believe a Jew might acquire this dreaded disease? The rabbis cited five OT examples of leprosy and concluded that all five were judgments of God. The first they cited was Miriam, for her sin of slandering Moses, the servant of God. The second they cited was King Uzziah, who was a godly king, but in a weak moment went into the temple and offered incense, a function only the high priest could do. The third they cited was Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the prophet who sinned by coveting a payment Naaman offered Elisha. The fourth they cited was Shebna, the servant of King Hezekiah, who used his high office to glorify himself and embezzle from the Temple treasury. The fifth they trace to tradition that King David was struck with leprosy, but this has no basis in Scripture. In all the cases the leprosy was a judgment of God. Therefore, in rabbinic theology, the cause was always personal sin that resulted in God’s judgment. As Geikie said, “A disease at all times terrible, but aggravated, in the opinion of that day, by the belief that it was a direct “stroke of God,” as a punishment for special sins.”<sup>vi</sup> The rabbis listed these sins as follows; immorality, arrogance, robbery, bloodshed, false oath, slander, meanness, idolatry, gross indecency, blasphemy, haughtiness, an ‘evil eye’, selfishness, usurping a dignity to which one has no right, and contending against one’s master, though slander was considered the most despicable of all sins leading to leprosy. In any event, the leper’s situation was considered hopeless because it was a strike of God against the person and no man could heal it.

So disdained were lepers that Edersheim reports the situation that “Rabbi Meir would not eat an egg purchased in a street where there was a leper. Another Rabbi boasted, that he always threw stones at them to keep them far off, while others hid themselves or ran away.”<sup>vii</sup> The rabbis classified them with three other types of people accounted as dead. “Four are accounted as dead: A poor man, a leper, a blind person, and one who is childless.” As to how the rabbis understood dead is not exactly clear. However, as Fruchtenbaum noted, “Whichever meaning was intended

for the term “accounted as dead,” the fact that the rabbi’s correlated leprosy with death implies that healing a leper was to restore him to life, “the greatest of all feats.”<sup>viii</sup> This is vital for interpreting our passage.

It might be superfluous to say that the leper’s life was a horror, but it might be helpful to identify with what their lives might be like. If one was found to be leprous, he was “required to rend his outer garment, to go bareheaded, and to cover his mouth so as to hide his beard...He had to warn passers by away from him by the cry of “Unclean, unclean;”...He could not speak to anyone, or receive or return a salutation.” McGee accounts how the man in this account might have come to acquire leprosy and how it might have affected his life. “We are not told how the man discovered that he had leprosy, but it could have happened in the following manner. One day he came in from plowing and said to his wife, “I have a little sore on the palm of my hand. It bothers me when I am plowing. Could you put a poultice on it and wrap it for me?” His wife bandaged his hand, but the next day the sore was worse. In a few days they both became alarmed. His wife said, “You should go to the priest.” He went to the priest who put him in isolation for fourteen days. When he was brought out the priest looked him over and found the leprosy had spread. The priest told him he was a leper. The heartbroken man said to the priest “Let me go to my wife and children and tell them goodbye.” The priest replied, “You cannot tell them goodbye. You will never be able to take your lovely wife in your arms again. You will never be able to put your arms around those precious children of yours.” The man went off, alone. His family brought his food to a certain place and then withdrew when he came to get it. In the distance he could see his wife and observe his children growing day by day.” But he could never be with them.

This brings us to the last introductory point about leprosy; no Jewish leper had ever been healed. Fruchtenbaum noted, “It is important to understand that from the time the Mosaic Law was actually completed, there is no record in Scripture of a Jew ever being healed of leprosy...While the leadership had all the details of what to do if a Jew was healed of this dreaded disease, they never had a single opportunity to perform these procedures.” This background explains why the cleansing of the leper was totally unique in terms of Jesus’ Miracles. Fruchtenbaum said, “Yeshua performed many kinds of miracles, but a select few caused a unique reaction among the people and the leadership. The healing of the leper in this paragraph was the first of this type. Other people, such as Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, had performed many miracles, but none of the miracles they performed caused the people to wonder if any of those men were the Messiah.” Even when Jesus cast out the demon in the synagogue, the people did not wonder if He was the Messiah. Instead they wondered by what authority He did it. Thus, the biblical evidence shows there were two categories of miracles. **First**, those that could be performed by anyone whom God empowered. Some of Jesus’ miracles were in this category. But others went beyond this category. **Second**, those that only Jesus could perform. These are unlike any other miracles and induce a response from the Jewish people that was unlike their response to other miracles. As such, these are termed, “messianic miracles.” Fruchtenbaum said, “There are three special miracles in this second category, and the first of these was the healing of the Jewish leper. Within the rabbinic frame of reference and due to the uniqueness of this miracle, the act of healing a Jewish leper automatically meant the healer could be the Messiah. Understanding this will make it easier to grasp exactly why things happened the way they did.”

Finally we come to Luke 5:12-27 and I'm hopeful that you will grasp why Jesus tells the man who was leprous to go to the priest and show himself and make the proper offerings. In 5:12, **when the leprous man saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."**<sup>x</sup> Remember that this man was not supposed to address anyone or to say anything other than, "Unclean, unclean" as a warning. So what he did here by addressing Him was forbidden. What he said was, **"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."** It's obvious this man was living a life of tremendous suffering. He wanted to be clean so that he could return to any family and friends and be restored. But to be clean he had to be healed. That is why he called upon the Lord to heal him. And was there any doubt in this man's mind that the Jesus could **make him clean**? No. But what would the man have to believe in order to request that Jesus make him clean? That Jesus was God. No mere man could heal a leper and no leper had ever been cleansed in all of Israel's history. So he knew that Jesus was God and as such referred to Him as **the Lord**, saying, **if You are willing**. The issue wasn't ability in this man's mind, but willingness. Was He **willing**? The **if** is a 3rd class condition in the Greek. Maybe Jesus was willing, maybe He wasn't, but **if** He was, He could do it. That's a remarkable way of putting it. He doesn't presume on his Lord's grace. He doesn't say, if you can do it, prove it to me by doing it. He says, **if you are willing, You can make me clean**. The leper already believed that Jesus was God. He was hopeful of being cleansed.

Now the next thing Jesus did in verse 13 would be classified as an absolute no, no. He touched him. Do you touch a leper? No. Deut 24 says you keep your distance. The rabbis went so far as to say that you stay 4 cubits to the east of a leper and if the wind is blowing, 100 cubits. But **Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him**. Observe that He did not just **touch him**, but he **stretched out His hand and touched him**. And why do you think He did that? Comparison for one. He had compassion on the man. But also to demonstrate that He was no normal individual, that He could not be contaminated by sin, that He was clean and anything He touches would be made clean and not the other way around. If a normal person touched this man they would also have become unclean. But when Jesus touched him He said, **I am willing; be cleansed**. Farrar said it this way, "The hand of Jesus was not polluted by touching the leper's body, but the leper's whole body was cleansed by the touch of that holy hand."<sup>x</sup> **And immediately**, notice, there was no delay, **immediately the leprosy left him**. This is instant healing by just a touch, signaling that it is so easy for Him to heal our infirmities, so easy for Him to solve our bodily ailments. But only if He is willing will He do it. Of course, you can ask if He is willing. But it is up to Him. Now, recall that this was the first Jewish leper in all of Jewish history that had ever been cured of leprosy. Ever since the Mosaic Law had been given and the priests had been given the procedures for declaring a leper to be clean, they had never seen anyone cleansed and they had never followed those procedures.

Which is why, in verse 14, **He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."** People struggle to understand why Jesus **ordered him to tell no one**, but when it is understood that this was a messianic miracle and that Jesus did it to invite the leadership of Israel to investigate His person and His work, all becomes clear. Jesus wanted the man to go straightway to the priest so that the investigation could get underway. At the end of the verse it says, this was done to be **a testimony to them**. The **them** is the Jewish leadership. And if a man confirmed to have had leprosy showed up healed, it would indicate something significant was

happening in the land of Israel. Pentecost said, “The Mosaic law required one who had leprosy, or was suspected of having it, to undergo an elaborate ritual of cleansing in order to be accepted in society....When the man went to the priest and claimed to be a cleansed leper, the priest would have to investigate whether the man had been a leper and then determine his present condition. The priest would make inquiry as to the means by which the man had been cleansed. This would give the cleansed man an occasion to present to the priest the evidence that the One who claimed to be Messiah had power to cleanse lepers. This would make it necessary for the priests to investigate the claim, and the evidence would then be presented to the Sanhedrin for its investigation and final declaration. Thus Christ was generating an investigation of His person and His claim.”<sup>xi</sup> This miracle is what sets up the next paragraph in Luke’s argument. The man apparently did go to the priest and carry out all that Moses commanded in Lev 13-14. Now they were aware that a man named Jesus had done what is classified as ‘a messianic miracle’ and they would come and investigate.

But before we get to that, verse 15, it appears the man told others also. It says, **But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sickness.** Nothing like this had ever been done in all Israel. It was therefore generating a lot of discussion and interest. But, verse 16, **Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.** In the context He was praying about what was going to happen next.

In verses 17-27 we have the healing of the paralytic. Note the occasion, **One day He was teaching**, remember, teaching was the emphasis in His ministry. His words took precedence over and served as precursors to His works. And note who was present; **and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.** Ok, so this was not the typical gathering. There were some very important people in the crowd. And note, **Pharisees and teachers of the law...from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.** In other words, this was not just a few Pharisees from the villages surrounding Capernaum, but from all over the country, every village sent representatives, including Jerusalem, which was more than 60 miles away, more than a three day journey. And why had they come? Because a miracle had been reported that was unlike any other miracle that had ever been performed in Israel; the healing of a Jewish leper. So, what we see here is stage one of an investigation of a very special miracle.

The Sanhedrin apparently had a two stage procedure of investigation. The two-stage investigation was also employed in their investigation of John, the forerunner of Jesus, as when some Pharisees and Sadducees were reported by Matthew to have gone out to be baptized, that was stage one. Then you have the Pharisees who were reported by John to have gone out and asked if John was the Messiah, that was stage two. Here’s the difference. The **first stage** was observation only. A delegation would be sent to observe what was being taught and what was being done. There were no questions, no objections, it was strictly observation. After observing, the delegation would return and give a report to the Sanhedrin. If it was considered insignificant, the whole investigation would be dropped. But if it was considered significant, the second stage would be put into motion. The **second stage** was interrogation. A second delegation would be sent out to ask questions and to raise objections and look for a basis either to accept or reject the messianic claims. Verses 17-27 describe stage one of the investigation. This is observation only.

The **Pharisees and teachers** do not ask questions or make objections. They are silent. They are there to observe what He teaches and what He does so they can report back to the Sanhedrin and make a decision as to whether what He is teaching and doing is significant. And yet, the healing of a leper has taken place, something that is entirely unique in their 2,000 year history, so they sent such a very large delegation from all over the country.

And in verse 17, note at the end of the verse, **the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing**. In other words, we are to know that Jesus is going to do a noteworthy miracle in their presence. In verse 18 we have it; **And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed**. The tense of the verb **was paralyzed** is significant. It is a perfect tense. The perfect tense refers to a past completed action with ongoing results into the present. In other words, this man had been paralyzed from some earlier time in life, perhaps from birth or from some event that happened after birth, but the point is that he was permanently **paralyzed**. And he was apparently paralyzed from the neck down because they are carrying him in on a **bed** or “stretcher,” because the man was confined to the laying position. And observe in the middle of verse 18, that **they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd**. The parallel in Mark 2:2 says “there was no longer room, not even near the door.” So the people were crowded into the house and plugging up the door and overflowing outside. As a result, in verse 19, **they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus**. The houses of that day had a staircase on the outside of the house that led to the roof. The roof was flat and usually composed of thatch with clay or tiles. This house apparently had some combination of thatch with clay and tiles because Luke says they **let him down through the tiles**, but the parallel in Mark 2:4 says “they dug an opening.” In any case, they were apparently able to do this just above where Jesus was teaching and so they **let him down...into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus**. Evidently, these men were determined to get their friend to **Jesus**.

In verse 20, **Seeing their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”** It is important to note that Jesus saw **their faith**, that is, the faith of the men who hauled this man up on the roof and dug a hole and removed the tiles just so they could get the paralytic before Jesus. And all three gospels say they (same thing), it was the faith of the four men. No mention is made of the faith of the paralytic, though he may have had faith. But **seeing their faith, Jesus said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”** Fruchtenbaum noted the significance of this expression to a Jew, “...He stated it in the passive voice, *your sins are forgiven*. One has to keep in mind that Yeshua was speaking in Hebrew. The Hebrew form of the passive, *your sins are forgiven*, is used only in one section of the entire Hebrew Bible: in Leviticus 4-6. The context of these chapters is atonement, as they detail the blood sacrifices necessary for the forgiveness of sins. The statement of forgiveness in a passive voice followed the sacrifice (e.g., Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7)...The passive means that God is doing the forgiving. Being Pharisees, these people knew both the Torah and Hebrew, and they caught the connection He was making. He was claiming the authority that God asserted for Himself in Leviticus 4-6: that by means of blood atonement, God had forgiven their sins. In the New Testament, this phraseology was used only by Yeshua Himself. Yeshua was, therefore, speaking as if He were God....Yeshua used a phrase only God could use and spoke as no man in first-century Israel would have ever dared to speak.”<sup>xii</sup>

In verse 21 we see the Pharisees response. **The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”** Of course, they are just reasoning, they are not saying anything out loud, this is non-verbal reasoning going on in their head. Remember, this is just stage one of the investigation, which is observation only. They weren't permitted by the Sanhedrin to say anything. But when He said this you can imagine that they were thinking because they knew the Hebrew Scriptures, they knew Lev 4-6, they knew that only God could forgive sins on the basis of blood atonement.

Now, we might ask, before we go to verse 22, why Jesus said **your sins are forgiven?** Rather than saying, **“get up and walk?”** He could have said either, but He decided to say first, **your sins are forgiven.** Why? The answer goes back to the rabbi's belief that sickness and infirmity are caused by sin. Rabbi Hiyya said, **“The patient is not healed of his sickness until his sins are forgiven.”** This was especially true for illnesses of a peculiar origin, such as leprosy. So, in some sense, they were correct, all sickness is a result of sin. Therefore, for the sickness to be cured, sin must be forgiven. Jesus therefore proclaimed the man was forgiven, with the implication that the man was now healed.

So, in verse 22, **Jesus, aware of their reasonings,** another indication that He is God, knowing the reasonings going on inside of men, **answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts?”** That is, why are you having these thoughts that I am speaking **blasphemies?** Why don't you accept that I am God? Interestingly, their theology was correct; only God could forgive sins. But significantly, that could only mean one of two things: either Jesus was a blasphemer or He was indeed the Messiah, the God-man.

In verse 23, Jesus now reveals that He knew what they were thinking, and He did so by asking a question of His own. **Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?** This is a typical method of training in Jewish education and rabbinic schools. The teacher answers a question with a question. This is to get the student to think and come up with the right answer himself, a very good method. The question is **which is easier to say?** The Pharisees and scribes knew it was **easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,”** because it required no physical evidence to prove it. They also knew the harder thing **to say** was **“Get up and walk,”** because that would require physical evidence to prove. Why did Jesus set it up this way? What Jesus was doing was using a form of rabbinic logic called *kal v'chomer*. This is the logic they were very familiar with and very similar to our *a fortiori* or *de minore ad majus* (from the lesser to the greater). The rabbinic *kal v'chomer* logic means “from easy to hard.” If this logic is reversed, which Jesus did, if one could do the harder thing, it proved he could do the easier thing. But so far, Jesus had only done the easy thing. However, this was a set up so that when He did the hard thing they could come to no other conclusion than He was the Messiah, the God-man.

He then proceeded to do the harder thing in verse 24, **“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,”—He said to the paralytic—“I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.” Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God.** Doing the hard thing,



telling the man to “**get up and pick up your stretcher and go home**” demonstrated that He had done the easier thing as well, He had forgiven the man’s sins, since infirmities were a result of sin. So, now that the infirmity was gone the Pharisees and scribes from throughout the land of Israel had their answer. The only two possible answers were that Jesus was a blasphemer or He was the Messiah, the God-man. But now, having done the hard thing, the only possible answer was He was the Messiah, the God-man. And Jesus, by calling Himself **the Son of Man**, was emphasizing His humanity, while at the same time, by forgiving sins was emphasizing His deity. In this paragraph Jesus shows that He is both God and man and has authority to forgive sins in the salvation sense.

Verse 26 describes the response of everyone in the house. **They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen remarkable things today.”** So, when these leaders went back to report to the Sanhedrin, it would be evident that this was a significant movement. The first stage of the investigation was complete, now they would move to the second stage of interrogation. From this point in Luke forward, they will ask Him questions and they will raise objections and look for a basis upon which to accept or reject Him as Messiah.

In conclusion, this section is of vital interest as to how Jesus is carrying out His ministry. It was time for the leadership to start taking note. He healed a leper and sent him to the priest for the first time in all of Jewish history. This was the first of His messianic miracles, works that distinguished Him from all others like Moses or Elijah, who had done miracles. This miracle had to be investigated, for it was true that the man who had leprosy had been healed. They sent a large delegation of Pharisees and scribes from all over the country, including Jerusalem, to the Galilee to observe Jesus. When He claimed to forgive sins they knew that He was claiming to be God, but thought He might be a blasphemer. However, by adding the *kal v’chomer* logic and doing the harder thing of raising the paralytic, He left them with no other choice; He was not a blasphemer, but He had to be the Messiah, the God-man. Now it was known that something very significant was taking place in Israel and the controversy will ensue.

---

<sup>i</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 183.

<sup>ii</sup> *Ibid.*, 1867.

<sup>iii</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 167.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*, Geikie, 13.

<sup>v</sup> Alister Macalister, “Leper, Leprosy,” *ISBE*, Vol. 3, p. 1867.

<sup>vi</sup> Geikie, *Life and Words*, vol. 2, 13.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*, Edersheim, 149.

<sup>viii</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 174.

---

<sup>ix</sup> J. Vernon McGee said, “We are not told how the man discovered that he had leprosy, but it could have happened in the following manner. One day he came in from plowing and said to his wife, “I have a little sore on the palm of my hand. It bothers me when I am plowing. Could you put a poultice on it and wrap it for me?” His wife bandaged his hand, but the next day the sore was worse. In a few days they both became alarmed. His wife said, “You should go to the priest.” He went to the priest who put him in isolation for fourteen days. When he was brought out the priest looked him over and found the leprosy had spread. The priest told him he was a leper. The heartbroken man said to the priest “Let me go to my wife and children and tell them goodbye.” The priest replied, “You cannot tell them goodbye. You will never be able to take your lovely wife in your arms again. You will never be able to put your arms around those precious children of yours.” The man went off, alone. His family brought his food to a certain place and then withdrew when he came to get it. In the distance he could see his wife and observe his children growing day by day.” That is very possibly the life this man had to live.

<sup>x</sup> Farrar, quoted by Pentecost, 150.

<sup>xi</sup> Pentecost, 151.

<sup>xii</sup> Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective*, 185-6.