

# Jesus Heals Ten Leprous Men

Here's a detailed explanation of **Luke 17:11–19**, which tells the story of Jesus healing ten lepers, focusing on:

1. **Narrative Breakdown**
2. **Levitical Laws on Leprosy**
3. **Greek Terms: Healed (ἰάομαι), Cleansed (καθαρίζω), and Saved (σώζω)**
4. **Significance of the Samaritan's Gratitude**



## 1. Passage Breakdown: Luke 17:11–19 (CSB)

As Jesus traveled to Jerusalem, **He passed between Samaria and Galilee. Ten men with leprosy** stood at a distance and cried out,

“Jesus, **Master**, have mercy on us!”

He told them, “**Go and show yourselves to the priests.**”

As they went, they were **cleansed**. One of them, seeing he was **healed, returned** and glorified God **with a loud voice**, fell at Jesus' feet, and thanked Him—a **Samaritan**.

Jesus asked, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Did none return to give glory to God except this **foreigner**?”

Then He told the man:

“Rise and go your way. Your **faith has saved** you.”



## 2. Laws on Leprosy in the Torah

**Leviticus 13–14** contains detailed laws concerning leprosy:

Aspect	Law/Instruction
<b>Diagnosis</b>	A priest examined visible skin diseases. If declared "unclean," the person was isolated (Lev. 13:45-46).
<b>Living Condition</b>	Lepers lived <b>outside the camp</b> , wore torn clothes, and covered their mouths while crying “Unclean!” (Lev. 13:45).
<b>Restoration</b>	If healed, they must be <b>examined by a priest</b> and offer specific <b>sacrifices</b> to be declared <b>clean</b> (Lev. 14:1–32).
<b>Reintegration</b>	Only after the priest's declaration could a person reenter society and worship.

Jesus instructing the lepers to “**go show yourselves to the priests**” honors this law. It also shows **faith**—they were still diseased when sent, but obeyed anyway.



## 3. Key Greek Words: Healed, Cleansed, and Saved

English	Greek	Meaning	Verse Used
<b>Cleansed</b>	καθαρίζω ( <i>katharizō</i> )	Lit. “to make clean” — ritually or physically	v.14 – “they were cleansed”
<b>Healed</b>	ἰάομαι ( <i>iaomai</i> )	Lit. “to heal a disease” — physical restoration	v.15 – “seeing that he was healed”
<b>Saved</b>	σώζω ( <i>sōzō</i> )	Lit. “to rescue, save” — can mean salvation, wholeness	v.19 – “your faith has saved you”

**Progression:**

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- All ten were *cleansed*—ritual/physical impurity removed.
- One recognized he was truly *healed*—internal awareness of change.
- That one, in faith, was also *saved*—a deeper, spiritual restoration.

🔍 Jesus emphasizes that only **one** receives full *sōtēria* (salvation), showing **gratitude connects to faith and deeper healing**.

## 4. Why Highlight the Samaritan?

Jewish View of Samaritans	Explanation
Ethnically mixed, viewed as heretical half-breeds	Descendants of Northern Kingdom Israelites who intermarried with Assyrians
Religious division	Samaritans worshiped on Mt. Gerizim, not in Jerusalem
Social rejection	Jews often <b>avoided contact</b> , viewed them as <b>unclean</b>

### Significance:

- The **Samaritan was doubly outcast**—as a leper and as a Samaritan.
- Yet **he alone** returns, praises God, and thanks Jesus.
- Jesus’ question—“Where are the nine?”—is a rebuke to **ungrateful Israelites**.
- He calls the Samaritan a “**foreigner**” (ἄλλογενής – *allogenēs*), a word used in the LXX for Gentiles, driving home the contrast.

💡 This foreshadows the **inclusion of Gentiles** and reinforces Luke’s recurring theme:

**Outsiders often display greater faith than insiders** (cf. Luke 7:1–10, the centurion; Luke 10:33, the Good Samaritan).

## Summary Chart

Element	Explanation
<b>Setting</b>	Border between Samaria and Galilee—Jews and Samaritans alike
<b>Problem</b>	Ten men had leprosy—isolated, unclean, hopeless
<b>Command</b>	“Show yourselves to the priests” — act of faith before healing
<b>Result</b>	All ten <b>cleansed</b> , only one <b>returned</b>
<b>Identity of One</b>	A <b>Samaritan</b> , despised by Jews
<b>Key Greek Verbs</b>	Cleansed (καθαρίζω), Healed (ἰάομαι), Saved (σώζω) — physical → ritual → spiritual healing
<b>Theological Message</b>	Faith leads to wholeness; gratitude is evidence of saving faith. Outsiders may have deeper spiritual insight.

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According to **Jewish law**, those declared *unclean*—especially **lepers**—were required to stay **outside the community** and **maintain distance** from others. The Torah does not give an exact measurement of that distance, but rabbinic tradition and related passages help clarify the expected separation.

## Biblical Requirements for the Unclean (especially lepers)

### ◆ Leviticus 13:45–46 (ESV)

“The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘**Unclean, unclean.**’ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease.

**He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.”**

### ◆ Numbers 5:2–3

“Command the Israelites to **send away from the camp** anyone with a defiling skin disease... so they will not defile their camp, where I dwell among them.”

## Distance According to Rabbinic Tradition

While the Torah does not specify an exact **distance**, **rabbinic sources** (e.g., **Talmudic writings**) provide more detail.

Source	Instruction	Distance
<b>Mishnah</b> (e.g., Tractate Nega'im)	Lepers must dwell outside town limits	Not precisely measured
<b>Baba Kamma 82b</b> (Talmud)	Unclean person must keep a <b>distance of four cubits</b> from others	About <b>6 feet (2 meters)</b>
<b>Medieval rabbinic tradition</b>	If wind was blowing toward a clean person, distance extended to <b>100 cubits</b>	About <b>150 feet (45 meters)</b>

 **Important:** These rabbinic rules **expanded** on Torah law to preserve ritual purity and community safety, especially in the **Second Temple** era.

## In Jesus' Day

- Lepers often **lived in isolated groups** (as in Luke 17:12).
- They were expected to **warn others** with cries of “Unclean!” as they approached.
- Their separation wasn't just about **physical health**, but also **ritual status**—being excluded from **temple worship**, **social life**, and even **family contact**.

## In Luke 17:12

“As He entered a village, **ten men with leprosy met Him. They stood at a distance.**”

Luke's note reflects obedience to the social and religious expectations of the time—possibly the **6 feet or more** rule derived from rabbinic customs. Their **cry for mercy** was both a **plea for healing** and a **challenge to the purity laws** that isolated them.