

Messianic Rabbi: What Shall You Do vs. If You Are Willing

It is amazing to me how many times we read events in the Bible without knowing that those events or conversations are about the exact same topic or concept.

One often missed example is two conversations that Yeshua has. The first is a dialogue between Yeshua and the rich young ruler in Matthew 19, and the second is between Yeshua and the leper in Matthew 8. While on the surface these conversations may seem to be about two very different subjects, in truth, both are about the exact same topic.

Let's take a closer look at these two discussions. In the first, the rich young man asks Yeshua, "Teacher, what good shall I do to have eternal life?" In the second, the leper asks, "Master, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

These questions or requests may at first sound very different, until we dig a little deeper and find that the leprosy we read about in the Bible is not the same as Hansen's disease, which we call leprosy today. The leprosy of the Bible was an outward symptom of an inward problem. We only have to look at Miriam's bout of leprosy in Numbers 12 when she rebelled against Moses to understand the correlation between the disease and sin.

Once we understand that biblical leprosy has to do with sin, we will see that the leper is asking the exact same question to Yeshua as the rich man, and this knowledge will dramatically change our insight of the whole conversation.

As we dig deeper into the Scriptures concerning lepers, our understanding of leprosy will grow clearer and so will our perception of the context of the leper's request of Yeshua. According to Leviticus 13-14, when one had *tza'arat* (the Hebrew word for what is translated as leprosy). They were to

be removed from the camp (or quarantined), and they would have to stay outside the camp.

The person with *tza'arat* could not just decide when they wanted to enter back into the camp. They first had to go to the priest and asked to be made or proclaimed clean. This is what we see happening in Matthew 8; the leper recognizes Yeshua's priesthood and asks Him to make him clean. Unlike the rich man who asked Yeshua, "What shall I do?", the leper understood that he couldn't do anything in order to be made clean.

However, the conversation between the leper and Yeshua didn't end with Yeshua speaking the words, "I am willing. Be cleansed." Yeshua went on to command the leper two more things. Yeshua said, "See that you tell no one; but go show yourself to the *kohen* and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Because we don't usually view the leper's conversation through the same lens as the rich young ruler's conversation, we miss out on one of Yeshua's most powerful teachings concerning our redemption and how we should live as redeemed people.

Let's look at the conversation again.

Step one: The man with leprosy comes to Yeshua and says, "Master, if You are willing, You can make me clean." What a beautiful description of a repentant heart crying out to G-D with complete understanding that he was unclean and unable to make himself clean.

Step two: Yeshua responds, "I am willing. Be cleansed." It is not G-D's will that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance.

Step three: "But go show yourself to the *kohen* and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." This is the part that people tend to miss because they don't read the

dialogue through the correct contextual lens. Yeshua tells the now clean man: Now that you are clean, go and obey the Torah by presenting yourself to a levitical priest and then offer a sacrifice.

This is the same message that we should be sharing with those who come to us asking how they can be made clean.

First: we tell them that we cannot make ourselves clean; our righteousness is as filthy rags.

Second: We must introduce them to the only one who can proclaim them as clean: Yeshua, our high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Third: (And this is where we usually drop the ball ...) We must tell them now that they have been made clean, they need to adopt a lifestyle that follows G-D's Torah or instructions—not to be made clean, but because we have been made clean.

The problem with the rich young ruler is he skipped steps one and two and tried to be clean based only upon step three. He was completely committed to keeping the commandments because, by doing so, he was trusting in his own ability and works.

He was unwilling to accept that in order to truly be made clean and have eternal life, he would have to submit to the priest (Yeshua) and then present his offering of himself.

Fourth: We must offer a sacrifice, as we read in Romans 12:1 (TLV):

“I urge you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice—holy, acceptable to God—which is your spiritual service.”

In his very short conversation, in just a few sentences, Yeshua preached the message of salvation and deliverance that we should still be preaching today. {eoa}

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