

Luke 17:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

Analysis

The lepers approach: 'And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.' The 'ten men that were lepers' (δέκα λεπροὶ ἄνδρες, deka leproi andres) formed a community of afflicted outcasts. They 'stood afar off' (ἔστησαν πόρρωθεν, estēsan porrōthen) as Mosaic law required—lepers had to maintain distance and warn approaching people (Leviticus 13:45-46). Their compliance with this law demonstrates they still identified as part of the Jewish community despite exclusion. The number ten is significant—enough for a synagogue minyan (minimum prayer quorum). These outcast sufferers formed their own worshiping community in exile, bound together by shared affliction and desperate hope.

Historical Context

Leprosy in Scripture encompasses various skin diseases causing ritual uncleanness, social exclusion, and often physical disfigurement. Lepers lived outside communities, depending on charity for survival. The disease's progressive nature and lack of cure made diagnosis a living death sentence—families mourned lepers as if dead. That Jews and a Samaritan (v. 16) were together in this group shows how suffering erases social barriers. Desperation creates unlikely fellowship. The lepers' positioning 'afar off' wasn't just legal requirement but cruel reality—they were separated from family, friends, worship, normal life. Their encounter with Jesus represented their only hope for restoration.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does leprosy picture sin's effects—separation, defilement, progressive destruction, hopelessness apart from divine intervention?
2. What does the mixed Jewish-Samaritan leper community teach about how shared suffering can transcend social divisions?
3. How should the church demonstrate compassion to modern 'lepers'—those whom society marginalizes and excludes?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εἰσερχομένου	αὐτῷ	εἰς	τινα	κώμην	ἀπήντησαν
And	entered	as he	into	a certain	village	there met
G2532	G1525	G846	G1519	G5100	G2968	G528
αὐτῷ	δέκα	λεπροὶ	ἄνδρες	οἱ	ἔστησαν	πόρρωθεν
as he	ten	that were lepers	men	which	stood	afar off
G846	G1176	G3015	G435	G3739	G2476	G4207

Additional Cross-References

Luke 5:12 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

Luke 18:13 (Parallel theme): And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

2 Kings 7:3 (Parallel theme): And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

2 Kings 5:27 (Parallel theme): The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

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