

# Weaving the Word

## *Bird Blood Bath*

Part 103, May 5, 2019

*Welcome to where we're learning what it means to be covered in the blood!*



### What's the most disgusting infection or disease you've had?

Leprosy. Not a lot'a words in the Bible carry such weight. It separates and isolates while slowly consuming its host. **God chose leprous sores to symbolize sin.** Loathsome. Gruesome. Incurable. Devastating. Humiliating. **Ravaging body, mind, and soul.** The only *big difference* between leprosy and sin is, **nobody willingly invites leprosy in.** Isaiah calls on the skies over Israel to witness God's "leprous", rebellious children.

Hear, O heavens [skies] ... "Children have I reared ... but they have rebelled ... [They have] despised the Holy One ... The **whole head is sick [in thought]**, and the **whole heart faint [in strength]**. From the sole of the foot even to the head ... bruises and sores and raw wounds [Oh my!]; they are not **pressed out** or **bound up** ... – Isaiah 1:2-6 ESV

When I was 18, a mangy cat rubbed against my ankles and gave me scabies. The itching and oozing and sores, *oh my!* To remove my socks, I had to soak my feet in warm water so I could peel 'em off. **Like scabies, sin burrows deep under your skin. It's an itch you can never reach, and can't scratch away.** In Jesus' day, I would've been cut off from loved ones, isolated in a lonely "waste place", and forced to suffer alone. (Lev 13:46) Whereas, **in our day, sin still accomplishes exactly that. Only, sin starts in our heart and spreads into mind and body.**

I can't imagine being *covered* in scabies. And I can't picture *anyone* touching my ankles without gloves! Even *I* didn't want to. But, early in Jesus' earthly ministry ...

While Jesus was **in one of the towns**, [The town doesn't matter. What does is that He's *IN a TOWN* when] **A man who was covered [head-to-toe] with leprosy [raw flesh, snowy scales] came [privately, and in direct violation of the law (Num 5:2-3)] ... and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."** [Not "healed", "clean". *Clever. "You can make me innocent".* This is a risky, death-defying move] **Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.** [Jesus sees us beneath our gross sin, and sees us as embraceable. **No matter how putrid or scaly your heart of sin, Jesus wants in!** To embrace. To comfort. To heal. To restore.] **"I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"** [verses "healed"] **Immediately the leprosy left him** [he was healed] **and [not only that] he was cured.** [lit. *cleansed*. Like bouncing the snow off a Christmas tree; leaving a donut shaped drift of his old dead self!] **Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning** Jesus **ordered** him, **"don't tell this [faithful violation of yours] to anyone.** [Or mobs of lepers will enter every city Jesus' visits] **But** [It isn't that Jesus wants this leper kept under wraps] **go, show yourself to the priest** [There's a procedure and a person *appointed* to declare it. The priest *pronounced* a leper clean; but, only Jesus could *make* a leper clean] **and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your** [public declaration of] **cleansing,** [found in Leviticus 14:4-6] **as a testimony to them."** ...

Significantly included in Moses' sacrifices for the "Leper's Day of Cleansing" are two small, song birds, taken to a field. **One is killed in a jar of clay over running (living) water; the other is covered in its blood, and set free to fly away home.**



... **Instead** he went **out** [of that city] and began to **talk freely**, ["He regarded my violation of the leper's prohibition, and restriction to staying outside in lonely places, as confirmation of my faith!"] **spreading the news** [And if you think leprosy spreads!] the news about him **spread** all the more, so that **crowds** [NKJ: *great multitudes*] **of people** came to **hear** him and to **be healed** of **their sicknesses** [*astheneia: infirmity of body and soul*]. As a result, Jesus could no longer **enter a town openly** but **stayed outside in lonely places** [where the lepers were allowed]. **Yet** [this wasn't to *avoid* the lepers, but to *accommodate* them *and* the cities] **the people still came to him from everywhere**. Jesus **often withdrew to lonely places** [out of necessity to maintain order] **and prayed** [for the lepers]. – Mt 8:2-4; Mk 1:40-45; Lk 5:12-16 NIV

### Not only does Jesus touch the lepers ... He trades places!

Jesus went about *all* the cities and villages ... healing *every sickness* and *every disease* – Matthew 9:35 NKJ

*All* those who had *any* that were sick with *various diseases* brought them to Him; and He *laid His hands on every one of them* and *healed* them. – Luke 4:40 NKJ

*As many as had afflictions* [*plague*] *pressed about* Him to *touch* Him. – Mark 3:10 NKJ

*Great multitudes* followed Him, and He *healed them all*. – Matthew 12:15 NKJ

It's a violation of the law to touch lepers. So, **how is Jesus not sinning when doing this?**

It's an argument still made to this day. Well, **Jesus was exempt, because of why He was sent.** And this is why it's so *important* that He *touch* and *heal* them *all*.

[Matthew tells us specifically that Jesus] ... *healed all* who were sick, [so] *that* it might be *fulfilled* which was spoken by Isaiah ... "*He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses* [*diseases*]." – Matthew 8:16b-17 NKJ

**We typically apply this only to the cross.** But, according to Matthew, this was being fulfilled with *every healing touch*. **How do you picture Him touching those open sores and abscesses and lesions and rashes and inflammations and small pox pustules?** Was it with an extended finger, going: "Eww"? Or, "pressing them out" and "binding them up" with His embrace? Look what Isaiah wrote:

Burst into songs ... you ruins [*waste places*] ... for the Lord has comforted his people ... [many] were appalled ... He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ... Like one from whom men hide [*turn*] their faces he was despised ... Surely he **took up our infirmities** and **carried our sorrows**, yet we considered him *stricken* by God, *smitten* by him, and *afflicted*. – Isaiah 52:9, 14; 53:2-4 NIV

Imagine what His cloak looked like! I picture a civil war field surgeon after a long day! Malachi refers to Jesus' *cloak*: "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His *wings*." (Mal 4:2 NKJ)



Imaging when Jesus suddenly sent the Twelve out on their own throughout Judea: "To heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease." (Mt 10:1 NKJ) "And commanded them ... Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers ..." (Mt 10:5, 8 NKJ) **It's one thing to watch Jesus love on them like that; but, it's entirely another to touch and embrace the hurting on His behalf!**



[When Jesus sent them out, He said] What you **hear whispered** in your **ear, proclaim upon the housetops**. [How? **Blood red birds**. He's quoting the "little bird told me" verse from Ecclesiastes: "for a bird of the air may carry your words, and a winged creature (lit. Lord of the Wings) may report your speech" (Ecc 10:20)] ... Are not **two sparrows** sold for a cent?



And yet not **one of them** [the one that's killed] will **fall to the ground** apart from your Father [who established a means, and the law, to diagnose leprosy by the color of the hairs in the spots and blemishes (Lev 13)]. But the **very hairs of your head are all numbered**. [And He knows the spots and blemishes in your heart as well] So do not fear; **you are more valuable than many sparrows**. – Matthew 10:26b-31 NAS

Remember: **it's never a surface issue with sin**; because **sin, like disease, comes from deep down within**. And, while they were in Judea, John the Baptist's disciples came to Jesus during His whirlwind ministry tour of Galilee. And, "That very hour He **cured many of infirmities, afflictions [or: plagues]** ... Tell John the things you have seen and heard ... the **lepers are cleansed** ..." (Lk 7:21-22 NKJ)



**And every cleansed leper throughout the land was lining up to have their Day**, wherein one bird must die so the other can fly! "**We're gonna need a bunch more birds!**"



**Ever have a flying dream?** Unburdened by weight, you can suddenly fly. The opposite is a **falling dream, of fear and panic**. **Flying is a dream of freedom and life. Falling is a jolt of fear and death.**



Remember Jesus saying "birds-of-the-air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head"? (Lk 9:58) That's because, **He's the bird-of-the-ground that fell so we could be free**. The dove descended to point this out and make it clear. (Jn 1:32) In the beginning it hovered over dark water; but then it descended through heaven's window to die over living water.

One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. – John 19:34 NKJ

One year before the cross, when Jesus reunites with His disciples in Jerusalem, He confronts the religious rulers.

The **very work** that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am **doing, testifies** ... And the **Father who sent me has himself testified** concerning me. ... But do not think I will **accuse** you before the Father. **Your accuser is Moses,**" – John 5:36-45 NIV

If His *work* and His *Father* testify, why does *Moses* accuse? Because *they're* ignoring His testimony on the rooftops! Shortly after this, the Pharisees and Sadducees will test Him yet again by asking for a sign from heaven (the skies). And, Jesus will reply:

When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to *interpret* the *appearance* of the *sky*, but you *cannot interpret* the *signs* of the *times*. – Matthew 16:2-3 NIV

Imagine the first person to notice a bloody songbird on their roof. "*What kind of bird is that?*" "*I have no idea.*" "*Hey, there's another!*" And on that Passover, one year before the cross, all Jerusalem would've been buzzing about those bloody songbirds in the sky!

Like *birds caught* in a *snare*, so the sons of men are *snared* in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them. – Ecclesiastes 9:12 NKJ

[Ask] the *birds* of the *heavens*, and they *will* tell you ... In [the *Lord's*] *hand* is the *life* of every living thing ... Does not the *ear* test words as the *palate* tastes food? – Job 12:7-11 ESV

How can you say to my *soul*, "*Flee as a bird to your mountain*"? ... The *Lord's* *throne* is in *heaven*; – Psalm 11:1, 4a NKJ

Who may *ascend* into the *hill* of the *Lord*? Or who may *stand* in His *holy* *place*? He who has *clean* hands and a *pure* *heart*, – Psalm 24:3-4 NKJ

So do this, my son, and *deliver* yourself; for you have come into the hand of your *friend*: go and *humble* yourself; *plead* with your friend. Give *no sleep* to your eyes ... *Deliver* yourself ... like a *bird* from the hand of the *fowler*. – Proverbs 6:3-5 NKJ

But *no one* says, "*Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night* ... and makes us *wiser* than the *birds of heaven*?" – Job 35:10-11 NKJ

Hear *my prayer*, O *Lord*, and let *my cry* come to You. ... My *heart* is *stricken* ... I lie *awake*, and am like a *sparrow* *alone* on the *housetop*. – Psalm 102:1, 4, 7 NKJ

My *soul* longs, yes ... my *heart* and my *flesh* *cry out* for the living *God*. Even the *sparrow* has found a *home* ... Blessed are those who  *dwell* in Your *house* ... – Psalm 84:2-4 NKJ

If it had not been the *Lord* who was on our side ... then the *waters* would have overwhelmed *us*, the *stream* would have gone over *our soul* ... Our *soul* has *escaped* as a *bird* from the *snare* of the *fowlers*; the *snare* is *broken*, and *we* have *escaped*. Our help is in the name of the *Lord*, – Psalm 124:2-8 NKJ

Like *birds flying about*, so will the *Lord* of hosts *defend* *Jerusalem*. Defending, He will also *deliver* it; *passing over*, He will *preserve* it. – Isaiah 31:5 NKJ

... that He might present her to Himself a *glorious church*, not having *spot* or *wrinkle* or *any such thing*, but that she should be *holy* and *without blemish*. – Ephesians 5:27 NKJ

... that *we* should be *holy* and *without blame* before Him *in love*, – Ephesians 1:4 NKJ

For this is *My blood* of the *new covenant*, which is *shed* for *many* for the *remission* of *sins*. – Matthew 26:28 NKJ