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Leprosy: How It Defined a King

Paul Sanders: (Advisor: Rob Wilson Ph.D.)

Introduction

- Leprosy is a disease that can severely damage a person's skin and nerves.
- If left untreated, it can result in the body reabsorbing fingers and toes.
- Lepers were often forced to live outside of settlements because of the widespread fear about leprosy's contagiousness.
- William of Tyre, Baldwin's teacher, diagnosed him with leprosy at the age of 9.

Sources

- Hamilton, Bernard. *The Leper King and his Heirs: Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem.*
- World Health Organization. *Hansen's Disease (Leprosy).*
- Browne, S.G. *Leprosy: The Christian Attitude.*



Baldwin frequently led or marched with his armies into battle.



Baldwin didn't feel the pinches from his classmates.

Research Findings

- Baldwin fought in the vanguard many times during his reign.
- His first major victory was when he was 16.
- Baldwin was never segregated from others, despite his condition.
- Leadership was never taken away from Baldwin, despite the stigma surrounding his illness.
- Another major victory for Baldwin came at Le Forbelet, where he was outnumbered.
- King Baldwin died at the age of 24, due to complications with leprosy.

Conclusion

- Baldwin's courage and many victories made his subjects adore him.
- Baldwin's prowess in battle, despite his deteriorating nerve condition, was undoubtedly what led his armies to victory.
- Historians attribute some of Baldwin's victories not only to his tactics, but to his willingness to stay on the field with his troops.
- Baldwin's social status likely played a role on how he was treated, but he was still able to change the way some people viewed lepers.



Baldwin IV never had to directly protect the walls of Jerusalem during his reign.