

Jesus Heals On The Sabbath

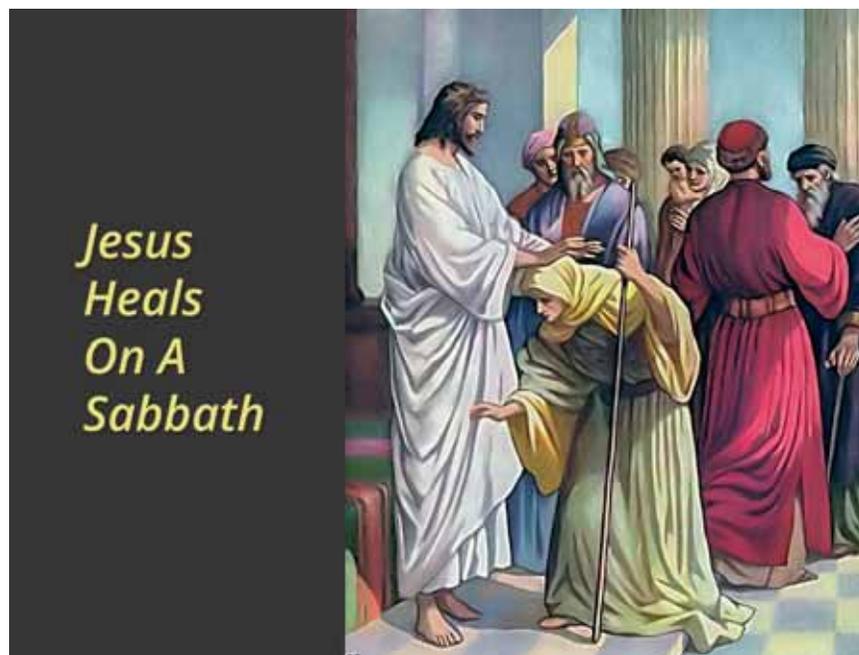
Imagine someone being angry because you helped another person on the wrong day of the week. They had little compassion for the person you helped. They just objected that you helped them on the wrong day. The day was not a national holiday, their birthday or anniversary. The day was not their wedding day or the first day on a new job or their long awaited day of retirement. The day was none of those things. It was simply Sunday! How would you react if they told you that they were angry because you helped them on Sunday? Do you know someone who believes you should rest and relax on Sunday and do nothing? Does that person say that others should not work but it is okay to help a dog or cat? Maybe they think it is okay to go to the beach, climb a mountain or visit an amusement park because they need to unwind before returning to work on Monday. But if you help someone on Sunday that is wrong! Do you know anyone like that? Our study is about a religious leader who became angry when Jesus healed a woman on the Sabbath. This study is from Luke 13:10-17.

JESUS HEALS IN THE SYNAGOGUE AGAIN. Both Luke 4:31-37 and Luke 6:6-11 record two previous occasions when Jesus taught on the Sabbath and then healed someone. In Luke 4:31-37 Christ healed a man possessed by an unclean demon. It is bad enough to be possessed by a demon but it is worse to be possessed by an especially unclean demon. We are told that Jesus rebuked the demon and demanded, “Be quiet and come out of him!” He did not use some magical chant, special group of words or announce “In Jesus’ name” or say “In My name!” The demon left the man. The people responded in amazement and the news about him spread everywhere.

In Luke 6:6-11 we are told that Jesus healed another time on the Sabbath after teaching in a synagogue. On this occasion Jesus healed a man whose hand was partially paralyzed. That is, his hand is described as “withered.” This time we are told that someone became not just angry that Jesus did this. We are told

that they were filled with rage. The Greek word “rage” is *anoia* and it refers to extreme rage. In short, they were not just angry; they were furious that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. Most likely they had heard about the first healing in the synagogue on a prior Sabbath. This time, very likely they were angry because Jesus did it again! They did not like Jesus healing someone on the Sabbath because it was contrary to their teaching and Jesus was not submitting to it. Our study is about cold hearts.

THE WOMAN WHO WAS BENT OVER. Our study begins in Luke 13:10 and we will be told that Jesus teaches in the synagogue once again and heals. Watch what the religious leaders do this time.



And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. Luke 13:10-11 (NASB)

The gospels repeat-

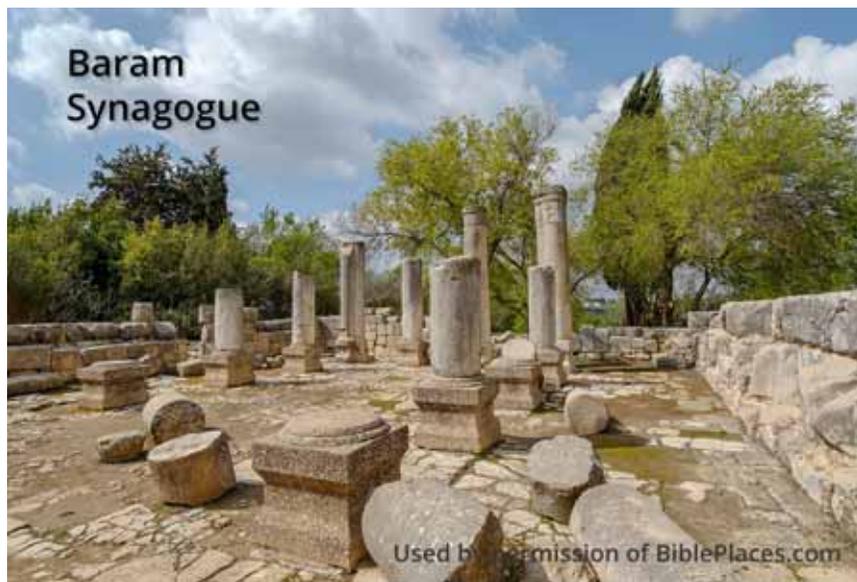
edly hints that Jesus frequently taught in a synagogue. The Jerusalem Talmud states that there were 394 to 480 synagogues.^{1,2} If true, then Jesus may have preached in 480 synagogues during His ministry. How many existed outside the city of Jerusalem across the land of Canaan has been estimated to be 240. It would take about two years to preach in every one. Since it was the custom of the day to allow a well-known teacher or rabbi to be a guest speaker in a synagogue, Christ may have frequently taught.

Next we are told a woman was present in the synagogue. She was either demon possessed or demon oppressed. That is, demon possession occurs to a person when a demon lives within a person and oppression occurs when a demon attacks from the outside. Paul was also afflicted externally (2 Corinthians 12:7-10), but he was not demon possessed since he was an apostle. This reveals an important truth for Christians. Yes, 1 John 4:4 tells us that demons cannot possess a Christian, but demons can attack us and cause us to be ill. A Christian can be physically sick but not be demon possessed and 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 reveals that it was God's will for Paul to be afflicted.

But this woman was demon possessed as we will soon discover. A review of the New Testament reveals that when a person is demon possessed they are usually sick or ill, but not always. Verse 16 will reveal that this woman was demon possessed and that is the reason she could not stand up straight. The Greek words for "bent double" and "straighten up" are present participles. This implies an ongoing condition where

the woman could not stand up straight.

The first Greek word *sygkypto* translated as "bent double" describes his condition, and the Greek word for "straighten up" is *anakypto* which tells us the day-to-day struggle she experienced. We are told that the woman lived this way for eighteen years. Today my wife and I went to a large store called Costco to buy some groceries. While we were there I saw a man walk toward me who was doubled over and could not straighten up. He walked quickly but he could not stand up straight. I do not know how long the man lived like that. Just imagine how the woman must have felt being in that condition for eighteen years or how the man I saw at Costco must feel.



JESUS HEALS ON THE SABBATH AGAIN. The next two verses give us the wonderful news that Jesus healed the woman.

When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness." And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made erect

again and began glorifying God. Luke 13:12-13 (NASB)

Notice that Jesus called her. If it had been me, I would have walked over to the woman and healed her; but Jesus did not do that. Instead He called her! He wanted to see if she would come to Him and seek healing. It was a test for her trust in Christ. It is important to know that Christ wanted her to demonstrate trust in Him. The same is true for us today. For example, in James 1:6 we are told that we must ask without doubting if we want something. That means we must act. In James 5:13-15 we are told that if we want healing, we should ask the elders to pray for us and their prayer

1. Jerusalem Talmud. Ketubot 100a.; Ketubot 8:1; Megillah 3:1, II.2.d-e.

2. Dan Urman. Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery. Brill, p. 22.

of faith will heal. That reveals we must act in confidence that God responds to our faith or the faith of someone else. It is important to remember that on some occasions Jesus raised people from the grave when they obviously would not be able to exercise faith.

When Jesus laid hands on the woman, we are told that she stood up erect immediately and began to glorify God. The Greek word for “made erect again” is *anorthoo*. In Hebrews 12:12 it is translated “straighten.” She was no longer doubled over but straight. Contrary to the beliefs and teachings of many who sensationalize God’s miracles of healing today, notice that scripture does not tell us that she was growling, moaning or screaming before she was healed. We are told that she was not super powerful or spoke in a deep bass voice. We are not told that the people were afraid of her as with the Gerasene man who was possessed (Luke 8:26-39). Demon possession is not always easily recognized.

We are simply told that she was “bent over” and after she was healed, she stood up straight. It is important to realize that God heals miraculously today too! When God does, we should not demand something sensational in addition to the miracle itself. I knew a man who was in a coma for seven days after a serious heart attack and both medical doctors said that they did not expect him to survive. The probability of death was extremely high. Seven days later God brought the man out of the coma in an answer to our prayers. The doctors stated that it was truly a miracle. The man did not shout, dance or run around with joy. The miracle gave God glory and that was what should have happened.

COLD HEART OF A SYNAGOGUE OFFICIAL. I am sure

that many people would have ignored this bent over woman who was in her 30s or 40s. How would you have responded? How do you respond now when you see someone who is physically paralyzed? Do you want to avoid them out of fear of being asked to do more or of not wanting to be drawn into an extended conversation or obligation? This was not true of Christ. Did you notice that He called her? Did you notice that He offered to “free” her of the sickness? Did you notice that He then laid His hands on her? He actually touched her. Jesus cared for the woman!! He had compassion for her. She had been sick for eighteen years, and even worse, she had been oppressed by Satan (v. 16).

Oh, how wonderful it would be if every believer would



respond as this woman did. Immediately after being healed, she praised God. The phrase “began glorifying” is a translation of the Greek word *doxazo*. This word means to give glory and it is in the imperfect tense implying that she was repeatedly giving God glory. She was not just

excited that God had healed her and then talked about her plans to travel or do something else. Instead, she was repeatedly glorifying God. Wouldn’t it be great if we wanted God to get that much praise? This woman was so thankful that she just kept praising God. The time God blesses you, praise Him and praise Him. That is what she did.

Now watch the next verse and you will see that the synagogue official had no compassion for this woman. In fact, the official was angry that she was healed. Wow!

But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, “There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and

get healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” Luke 13:14 (NASB)

The Greek word translated as “indignant” is *aganakteo*. The word literally has the sense of being angry because something wrong has occurred. That is, the synagogue official was angry because he did not think that Jesus should have healed the woman. In addition to telling Jesus that He should not have healed the woman, he also announced his complaint to the crowd. He also quoted scripture to justify his point. He quoted Exodus 20:9 where Moses communicated God’s command that the Israelites were to work six days and then rest on the Sabbath. The official claimed that Jesus should have healed during one of the days of the week

Not only did he lack compassion, but he was also a coward. When he accused Jesus of breaking God’s command to rest on the Sabbath, he spoke to the crowd and not to Jesus. Was he intimidated by Christ? Was he jealous that Christ could perform a miracle? Whatever his motivation, it is clear that he wanted the crowd to think he had sinned. He tried to discredit Christ and he was the leader of the synagogue. One would have expected better.

HYPOCRITE REBUKED FOR NO COMPASSION. Jesus replied with a rebuke.

But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the

Legalism is a list of rules . . .

(that God did not create)

. . . that someone else thinks we need to keep
in order to be righteous and go to heaven.

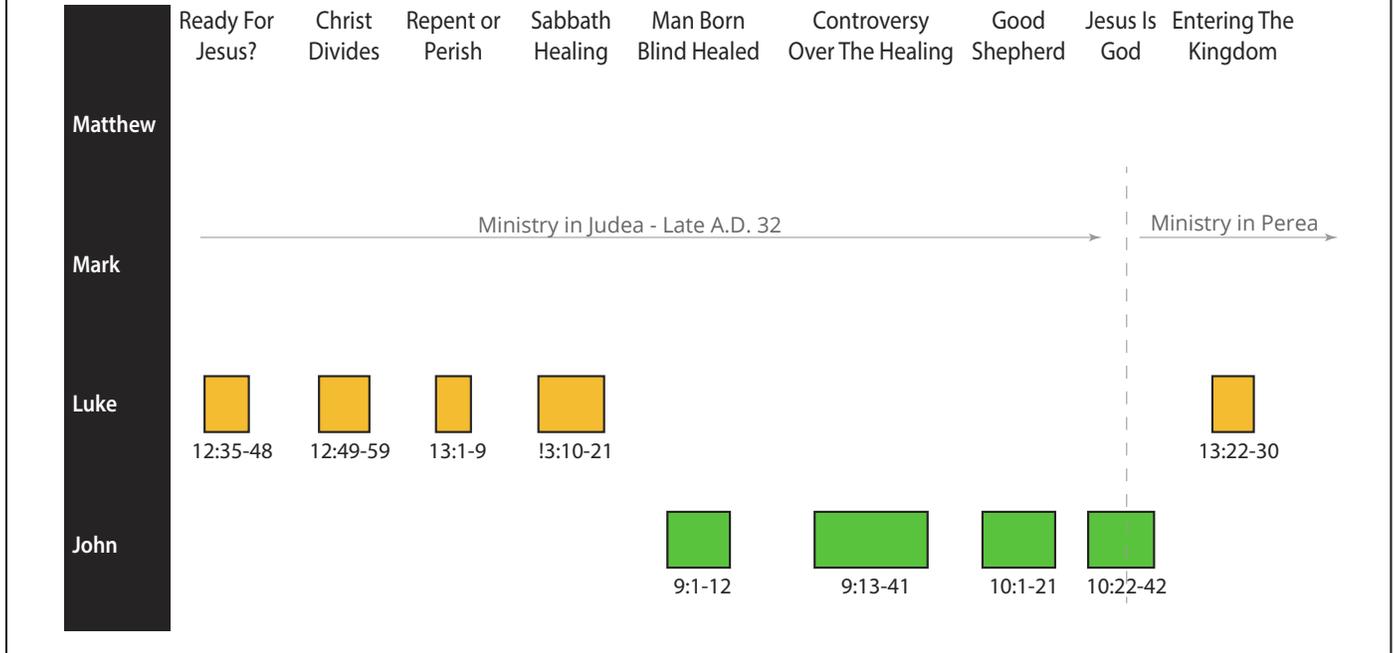
but not on the Sabbath. That is, he considered healing to be work or labor.

What a distorted view of *work*. This was not God’s view of *work*. The Jewish religious leaders had created their own set of rules in an attempt to prevent someone from violating the Mosaic law. They were well intentioned, but eventually their own rules became equal to scripture. This is true legalism. Legalism is not the existence of biblical rules or laws that prohibit someone from doing something. Legalism is not “you shall not kill.” Biblical legalism is rules or laws that are man made and supposedly help us go to heaven. The synagogue official was into legalism. He had a cold heart.

stall and lead him away to water him? And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?” Luke 13:15-16 (NASB)

Jesus calls him a hypocrite. The Greek word for hypocrite is *hypokrites* and it means “to pretend to be something you are not.” That is, the synagogue official was not what he pretended to be. That is, according to his definition of work, he worked too! Why? Because he untied his donkey from the stall and led him to water. It took effort to untie the donkey and lead him to water. The Pharisees’ definition of work was

Life and Heart of Jesus



silly. The synagogue official was guilty and his rule was silly. Earlier in His ministry, Jesus said that man was not made for the Sabbath; but the Sabbath was made for man so that he could rest.

Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Mark 2:27 (NASB)

That is, the Sabbath was established with God’s approval so that men would rest and worship Him and not feel like they must work seven days each week. These religious leaders had made the Sabbath a burden and not a day of enjoyment.

Next, Jesus appeals to the man’s lack of compassion. He compares releasing the donkey from the stall to releasing the woman from bondage to Satan. If the synagogue official has enough compassion to help his donkey drink some water, shouldn’t he have compassion to desire the woman to be free from bondage and walk upright, especially on the Sabbath day? What a stunning rebuke!

WARNING TO CHRISTIANS. Before we move to the next verse, we must ask ourselves why was the woman in the syn-

agogue? Why was a demon possessed woman in the synagogue? How do we know that she was demon possessed? The answer is found in the Greek word that is translated as “bound” which is *deo*. It means “to bind, to tie, or to imprison.” Thayer comments that it means “taking possession of the woman and preventing her from standing upright.”³ So, why was this demon possessed woman in the synagogue?

Some have suggested that she heard Jesus was coming to the synagogue and so she came. That could be true if an announcement had been made about His coming to the synagogue. It is more likely that she had come to the synagogue since it was the Sabbath and after she arrived, she discovered that Jesus was speaking. Some have suggested that the woman was seeking to be healed, but verse 12 strongly suggests that was not true since Jesus called her. He took the initiative. This leaves us with a strong conclusion that the woman did not know her physical problem was due to a demon. She was accustomed to her condition and did not

³ Thayer. The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon. Christian Copyrights.1981 p. 131.

know the cause of the physical condition, but Jesus did. It is also a warning to us that demonic oppression, not possession, is possible for a Christian. Yet a believer may not know that is the reason for their physical illness. Remember 1 John 4:4 tells us that the Holy Spirit, who is in us, is greater than Satan. Therefore, if you are ill, remember to pray and ask God to protect you from Satan and his demons. Ask for a fence of protection to be put around you. God had a fence of protection around Job and it protected him (Job 1:10).

OPPONENTS WERE HUMILIATED. After Christ asked the question, “. . . should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?” we are told that His oppo-

religious leaders were repeatedly feeling guilty, the crowd was cheerfully rejoicing because of what Jesus was doing. Have you ever been sad while others around you were happy and having fun? That helps us to understand what this synagogue official must have been feeling. He was miserable and everyone else was happy.

That must have been a wonderful morning in the synagogue for everyone else. Jesus had just preached and He must have preached a powerful message. Mark 1:27 and Matthew 7:29 tell us that Jesus did not preach as the scribes. Then a woman is healed, the synagogue official is humbled, and the crowd is rejoicing repeatedly. Jesus was the preacher

You Have Eternal Life If You:

- *Believe Christ is God (John 8:24, 58).*
- *Believe Christ is your Lord (Romans 10:9).*
- *Believe Christ died for your sins (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).*
- *Believe Christ returned to life (Romans 10:9).*
- *Believe you are a sinner (Romans 3:23)*
- *Repent of your sins (Luke 13:3, 5).*
- *Confess Jesus is your Lord and Master (Romans 10:9).*

nents were convicted.

As He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him. Luke 13:17 (NASB)

Anyone who cares more about a rule that God did not give us than he/she cares about a person should feel convicted too! Legalism is a list of rules that God did not create, that someone thinks we should keep in order to be righteous and go to heaven.

Now notice that His opponents were convicted while the entire crowd was rejoicing. The Greek words translated as “humiliated” and “rejoicing” are both in the imperfect tense which reveals continuous repeated action. That is, while the

of preachers and one who also healed.

CONCLUSION. Why did God have this historical event recorded for us? The answer is not so we can discover how to defeat our enemies or be critical of the religious leaders. The answer is not so we can discover people can be sick or have physical problems as a result of demons or spirits. The answer is not primarily to teach us that Jesus went to the synagogue once a week. The answer is Jesus did glorious things that reveal that He is God!

. . . the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him!

The gospels reveal that Jesus healed people all over the land of Canaan (Matthew 4:23-25). Jesus healed the blind, the

lame, the deaf, epileptics and those paralyzed. He healed every kind of disease and He even raised the dead. He healed with a touch and without a touch. He healed with a word and without a word. Jesus proved Himself to be God in human flesh. As a result, we have a decision to make. What are you going to believe about Jesus and what are you going to do?

In John 3:16 Jesus tells us that He loves us and by believing or trusting in Him we can escape eternal punishment and have eternal life in heaven. Believing in Christ means that you believe He is God. That is what this account was about. Belief also includes that He is Lord and later we will discover that He died for our sins and returned to life Himself. Our response should be to repent of our sins and ask Him to take over our lives. Then we can have eternal life. May God grant you His grace.