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Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman on the Sabbath
Luke 13: 10-21

Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath DIG: How is this Sabbath-setting a problem for the woman? For Jesus? For the synagogue leader? How did the woman demonstrate her faith? Does Christ still heal today? How? When? How did her healing point to Isra'el's healing? When will all Isra'el be saved? How does Yeshua expose the synagogue leader's hypocrisy? How had the Oral Law infected his thinking? What is the proper response to the work of the Great Physician? What is the real intent of the Sabbath? What is the one main point about the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven?

REFLECT: What tensions between caring for people and keeping religious rules do you experience? What tends to win out? Why? When have you felt that your faith was too small to matter? What do these parables teach you about your significance?

Whereas **the Rabbi from Galilee's** earlier teaching emphasized **His** authority over **the Sabbath** (**to see link click Cw – Jesus Heals a Man With a Shriveled Hand**), here the issue involves the meaning of **Shabbat**. This is the last recorded incident of **Christ** teaching in **a synagogue**. **He** concludes the teaching by repeating the parables of **the mustard seed** and **the leaven**. The result was that while **the people were delighted** in this display of **God's** glory and power, **the synagogue leader** and **all His opponents were humiliated**.



On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues. The drama begins, **and a woman was there whom an evil spirit had crippled for eighteen years.** Here individual need is emphasized. Since **Isra'el** was **His** personal possession, **Jesus** could take care of individual members **(Zechariah 11)**. **She** had a curved spine and **was bent over and could not straighten up at all.** This **woman** graphically portrayed **Israel's** condition in the sight of **ADONAI**. **When Jesus saw her, He called her forward and said to her: Woman, you are set free from your infirmity (Luke 13:11-12).** After **His** rejection by the Sanhedrin, **the Lord's** ministry changed drastically (see **En – Four Drastic Changes in Christ's Ministry**). **He** was no longer performing miracles for the purpose of authenticating **His** messiahship to the masses, but only healing individuals on the basis of **faith**. Here, this **daughter of Abraham**, not only by physical descent, but because **she** was a daughter in **faith** who responded to **the Great Physician's** invitation to come to **Him**. When **she** came **forward**, as a demonstration of **her faith**, **she** was healed.

Then Jesus put His hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God (Luke 13:13). Christ still heals today, but **He** does so according to **His** own timetable and purposes (Google Joni Eareckson-Tada). This act of **praising God** is the proper response to the work of **Christ (Luke 2:20, 5:25-26, 7:16, 17:15, 18:43,** and **23:47)**. **Yeshua** had been calling the nation to **Himself**, just as **He** had been calling this woman to **Himself**. Although **Isra'el** had rejected **Him**, the nation's condition was not hopeless. In **the far eschatological**

future, **Isra'el** would respond to **His** invitation of salvation by **faith**, **all Isra'el will be saved (Romans 11:26).** This will happen at the end of the Great Tribulation as the antichrist and the armies of the world tighten the noose around the neck of Petra, the Jewish leaders will have a moment of spiritual clarity, realize their sin, recognize that **Yeshua** is indeed their long awaited **Messiah**, turn to **Him** in **faith**, and beg **Him** to come back (see my commentary **Revelation Ev – The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**). **He** offered to make the nation whole again so that they could walk uprightly before **God**.[1055]

While **the woman** glorified **God** because of the deliverance granted to **her**, **the leader** of **the synagogue** openly rejected **Christ** because **He** had performed this miracle on **Shabbat**. **Indignant** and angry **because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader** gruffly spoke **to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath" (Luke 13:14).** This **man** was more angry than wise. **He** acknowledged **Messiah's** healing power, but did not dare to attack **Him** directly. **He** did not even try to silence **the woman**, who was praising **God**. **He** recognized that the majority of **the people** were in full sympathy with the miracle **Jesus** had performed on this poor, deformed **woman**. Having no other argument except **the traditions of men (Mark 7:8; Colossians 2:8)**, **He** appealed to **the Oral Law** (see **Ei – The Oral Law**) and totally missed the point. This attitude supports what **Jesus** had already said about the religious leaders keeping others from entering the kingdom of **God**.[1056]

The Lord answered him: You hypocrites! The word **hypocrites** is extremely important in the narrative. Earlier, **He** called the crowd and the religious leader's **hypocrites (12:56)**. Here, **Christ** repeats **His** charge. **Messiah's** point was that having a pretense of godliness, they were anything but godly. They didn't even really understand the meaning of Shabbat.

The Son of God pointed out that a person is much more valuable than an animal. **Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?** The Pharisees themselves didn't deem this work was a violation, for they recognized that works of mercy and necessity were allowed **on the Sabbath Day**. They felt responsible for their animals and provided for their needs. **Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?** So if animals could be made more comfortable **on the Sabbath**, why not people? **Jesus** tore off the mask of **his hypocrisy**. Is was

obvious that **Shabbat** should be a blessing and not a burden. As a result, **when He said this, all His opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things He was doing (Luke 13:15-17).**

Here, **Yeshua** repeats **the Parable of the Mustard Seed** (see **Ew**), and **the Parable of the Leaven** (see **Ex**). Here, **Luke** combines the two, but in a different context. In **Luke's** account, we see **Messiah** teaching **on the Sabbath**, and **He** had just **healed a crippled woman** and humiliated **His** opponents by exposing their **hypocrisy** regarding **the Sabbath**. So when **He** finally brings in the parables of **the mustard seed** and **the leaven**, **He** changes the metaphor. **Jesus** seems to be contrasting **the kingdom of God** with what it had become under pharisaic Judaism. The Pharisees and Torah-teachers had totally missed the point of the greatness of **the Kingdom** by being consumed over whether or not **a crippled woman** should be **healed on the Sabbath** or not.

Then Jesus asked: What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew abnormally large **and became a tree, and the birds of the air came and perched in its branches (Luke 13:18-19; Matthew 13:31-32).** There will be an abnormal external growth until it becomes a monstrosity and a resting place for **birds**. When the Bible uses symbolic language, it uses it consistently. **The birds** that are pictured here as pharisaic Judaism, would be like **the birds** in **the Parables of the Soils** (see **Et**)**. As he was scattering the seed of the Gospel, some fell along the path, it was trampled on, and the birds came and ate it up (Matthew 13:4; Mark 4:4; Luke 8:5b)** before it took root**. Again**, when the Bible uses symbolic language, it uses it consistently. **Leaven** always pictures **sin**. **Jesus asked: What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like leaven that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough (Luke 13:20-21).**

The one main point of these two parables is that the sin of pharisaic Judaism would continue to grow and steal the truth of the Gospel from the nation of Isra'el.

An encounter with **Jesus** always brings great healing and dignity. That is because **Yeshua** does not see us as we ourselves or as others see us. In **His** eyes, we all have great value because we are loved by **Him** and made in **His** image (see my commentary on **Genesis Ao – Let Us Make Man in Our Image, In Our Likeness**). **The woman** whom **Christ** healed had been so stripped of **her** dignity

that **she** was considered less important than a thirsty barnyard animal. At least they could be cared for on Shabbat! But **Jesus** saw this **woman** differently. **He** called **her a daughter of Abraham**, and a member of **God's** chosen people. **Hehealed her** so that **she** could stand as **a woman** of dignity, no longer burdened by **Satan**.

Society places such importance on externals, on doing certain things certain ways. **The synagogue leader** thought little of this **daughter of Abraham** and little of **Jesus**. Blinded by **his** hypocrisy, **he** could not see what was happening before **his** very eyes. The kingdom of **God** had come with great power, calling **him** to the freedom of being a son of **God**. But **he** missed it because of **his** narrow view of how **God** would work. **He** wrongly believed that **God** would heal only during the "work week" and not on the official day of rest.

Perhaps our experience is like **the woman's**. We may be deeply burdened by **the Adversary**. We may feel stripped of our dignity through painful experiences or debilitating illness. Perhaps we are like **the synagogue leader**, blinded by commands and duties and unable to perceive the priority of love. We may have become harsh and judgmental to the point that we don't see how valuable we – and others – really are in **God's** eyes.

Let us not feel so sure of how **God** will work that we don't give **Him** the freedom to work outside the boundary lines we have set up for **Him**. **Jesus** can set us free from anything that binds or oppresses us, even physically if **He** so chooses. Let's turn to **Him** now so that **He** can restore us to the dignity that each of us has, as beloved sons and daughters of **God**.

***Lord Jesus**, heal us of our illnesses, burdens and wounds. Set us free from the power of Satan and fill us with love for **You** so that, like this **daughter of Abraham**, we too might praise **You** for the dignity you have given us.*[1057]