

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God

When Religion Obscures God

Luke 13: 10-17

The event in Luke 13:10-17 forms a bridge between Jesus' parable of the unproductive fig tree and the parables of the Kingdom. It points out how far Israel still is from understanding the true character and purposes of God and the nature of His Kingdom. The incident has at least three layers of meaning (not three different meanings, but three applications in the context on three different levels) and all of them hold significance:

I. The Obvious—A Woman Who Has Suffered for 18 Years is Restored

- A. Jesus is teaching in a synagogue when He sees a woman who has a spinal deformity
- B. He calls her over to Him and says, "You are freed from your sickness."
- C. He lays His hands on her and immediately she was able to stand up straight.
- D. She begins to glorify God for His deliverance
- E. Significant sub-points:
 - 1. Her deformity (*sickness*) was caused by a demon.
 - 2. Satan had bound her for 18 long years.
 - 3. She is a daughter of Abraham, a true and faithful believer.

II. The Secondary—The Sabbath and the Synagogue Ruler

- A. Jesus is teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath day.
- B. The deliverance occurs during the teaching on the Sabbath.
- C. The synagogue ruler become very angry and instructs the crowd against Sabbath breaking.
- D. Jesus makes that observation that they are willing to free animals on the Sabbath so as to care for their well-being, but, apparently, human beings are less important and cannot be freed from their tethers.
- E. Satan has had her tied up for 18 years, isn't the Sabbath—the rest of God—the most wonderful day to release her?
- F. Jesus' opponents were humiliated, the crowd become ecstatic. The ruler(s) have been defeated by the Law and their own logic.

III. The Third Layer—The Dawning of the Kingdom Age & Repentance

- A. Jesus' parting comments, before Luke takes us into this synagogue scene, is that the time is short for becoming a fruitful tree and it is time for a change of mind (repentance).
- B. Here is an opportunity to reflect a change of heart and mind with respect to the true purpose of God (to set the captives free, among other things).
- C. Once again, the rulers in Israel are failing to grasp the importance of this time and are refusing to learn the lessons of the Kingdom.
- D. It is a bridge to the parables of the Kingdom which expand on the true nature and purposes of God.

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. 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. 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." 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 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?" 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: 10-17 NASB

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the logic Jesus' uses to prove that the laws regarding the Sabbath were not broken in freeing this woman?
2. What does this teach us about getting to the heart of Scripture with text and interpretation?
3. What assistance do we have in gaining insight into the true meaning of God's revelation?
4. Does this approach to Scripture eliminate moral absolutes?
5. Regarding the teaching of Scripture, what can we confidently assert and when should we refuse to establish rules of conduct?
6. How does the leading of the Holy Spirit factor in to our understanding and application of Scripture; for our own practice and for others?

"Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you may be refreshed."

Exodus 23: 12 NIV

"Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

Deuteronomy 5: 12-15 NIV

NOTES