

## Research on: Healing of the Woman Bowed Over

Luke 13: 10 -17

*“This story is told not so much for the sake of the miracle, as for the light it throws upon the question of Sabbath observance. It is the only case of Christ’s preaching in a synagogue recorded in the latter part of the ministry” (Dummelow 756).*

*“This story has to do with a physical restoration, but it may well point to something far more significant than the immediate reference. In a real sense, Jesus has enabled woman to stand up with a proper sense of dignity, freedom, and worth. He gave this woman priority over the day, the Sabbath, and over his own security” (Stagg 106).*

*“In his eyes bodily sickness, even though not necessarily the result of transgression, was always the sign of a deeper ill: the sickness of the soul. Thus the healings wrought by Jesus are sign and promise of a deeper health” (IB 9.242).*

### 10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

Jesus probably performed this healing in the synagogue in Capernaum. It was the sabbath day, so there should have been no work done from sundown to sundown. And healing was considered work, so Jesus was immediately in trouble with the Pharisees and they reacted against this healing work.

### 11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

This woman came to worship in the synagogue. She wanted to be in church. The word infirmity in Greek is *astheneia* and means she expressed “feebleness of health, weakness of body and soul” (Thayer 80). It says she had a “spirit” of infirmity, maybe a belief of infirmity. The word bowed in Greek is *sygklypto* and means to “be crooked, bent, under a mental weight, to bend completely over with disease, to be crippled” (Thayer 593).

Eighteen years is a long time to be in bondage to any physical problem, and her thought was probably filled with the despair of incurability and hopelessness. One commentary said it was a fusion of her spinal joints that could never be healed.

Luke mentions that she could in *no wise lift up herself*. The Greek word for “lift up” is *anakypto* and it means “to lift one’s self up in body or soul” (Thayer 39). This perhaps might indicate the mental nature of the disease, the answer being to lift up the soul or mind to solve the problem.

“Bent over. Her eyes on the ground, so that she could not see Jesus. . .” (IB 9.242).

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

“*Jesus saw her ...*” The Greek word for “to see” is *eidon* and it means “to perceive with the eyes, to perceive, discern, to turn the mind to, to understand with the mind” (Thayer 173). This is how Jesus saw her. It wasn’t being in Jesus’ presence that healed – it was being in the presence of what he was thinking. How was he viewing this woman mentally?

476:32-4

Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God's own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick.

Jesus called the woman to him, which is very unusual. The woman did not cry out for healing as so many men did in the Gospels.

“**loosed** in Greek is *apolyo* which means “set free, to liberate one from a thing as from a bond, to let go, dismiss, bid depart, send away, release as from captivity – to loose his bonds and bid him depart, to grant a prisoner leave to depart, release a debtor, divorce” (Strong’s 630). Mary Baker Eddy says in *Science & Health with Key to the Scriptures*:

Notice that the healing is instantaneous, because she is already free. “Thou **art** free.” No future tense here; she is already whole. Jesus helps her see it!

13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

S&H 38:10-18

Jesus said: "These signs shall follow them that believe; . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Who believes him? He was addressing his disciples, yet he did not say, "These signs shall follow *you*," but *them* — "them that believe" in all time to come. Here the word *hands* is used metaphorically, as in the text, "The right hand of the Lord is exalted." It expresses spiritual power; otherwise the healing could not have been done spiritually.

Biblically, hands are symbolic of spiritual power and dominion as in the “hand of God.”

Immediately, she was made **straight** (*anorthoo* in Greek), meaning “made erect, to build anew” (Thayer 49). Paul says, “where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (II Cor 3:17).

**Immediately** in Greek is *parachrema* which means “immediately, forthwith, instantly” (Thayer’s 3916).

“Jesus touched this woman. He gave her priority over the day, the sabbath, and over his own security” (Stagg 106).

“But she was made straight in soul as well as in body, thus giving evidence that Jesus was intent on the deeper cure, of which the bodily cure was but a visible sign. Do we wish to be made whole to glorify God, or to be cured just enough to rid us of discomfort?” (*IB* 8.242).

No longer is she dominated by the “spirit of infirmity,” but she has complete dominion and freedom through the “spirit of the Lord.”

**14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.**

“**Said unto the people.** The ruler durst not openly rebuke Jesus, but indirectly censured him by censuring the people” (Dummelow 756).

“The ruler of the synagogue is represented as avoiding a direct criticism of Jesus. He addresses himself to the congregation by recalling the words of Deut. 5:13” (*IB* 9.242).

**15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou* hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?**

“Loose his ox. The rabbis, while permitting attention to beasts on the Sabbath, did so grudgingly: ‘it is not only permitted to lead a beast to the water on the Sabbath, but also to draw water for it, yet so that the beast draw near and drink, without the water being carried to it and set down by it’” (Dummelow 756).

**16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?**

“The opposition between the mind of Jesus and that of the religious leaders of Israel came to sharp and open clash on the question of the Sabbath. . .

“Jesus here offers three reasons for what seemed his radical breach of the law: 1) Jewish tradition itself supported him: some work was allowed on the Sabbath, for a man was allowed to lead his ox to water, even though he was not permitted, in the scrupulous hairsplitting of the Talmud, to lift the water in a vessel to the animal’s mouth. 2) The worth of human life justified him: a woman is more important than an ox, her bondage more important than an ox’s bondage by a

rope, . . . 3) Conscience spoke an instant demand, and through conscience the voice of God-  
'Ought not this woman . . . be loosed?'" (*IB* 9.242).

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

*Sources:*

Eddy, Mary Baker. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. 1875. Boston: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1911. Concord Windows 95 version, CD-ROM.

*The Interpreter's Bible*. Ed. George Arthur Buttrick et al. 12 vols. New York: Abingdon, 1953.

Stagg, Evelyn and Frank. *Woman in the World of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978.

Thayer, Joseph Henry, trans. *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1981.

Abbreviation key:

*IB* = *The Interpreter's Bible*