

The Miracles of Christ - Healing of a Leper - Luke 5

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Date: 24 December 2020

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[0 : 0 0] Well, I have a distinct advantage over you this morning because I have here in my hands a volume that I have used profusely over the years. It is called A Harmony of the Gospels, and it was a contribution by Dr. A.T. Robertson, who taught New Testament Greek at one of the Baptist seminaries for like 40 or 50 years. And one of the great contributions that he made to the cause of Christ was the compilation of this volume called The Harmony of the Gospels.

And I found it to be very beneficial and very helpful, and you'll see why as we go through it, because what it does is it parallels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John side by side so you can see them by way of comparison instead of wearing your fingers out flipping through the pages. So it makes it very convenient and it enables me to find things a lot more quickly than I'd be able to otherwise.

I want to emphasize that our Lord is going to spend or has spent the vast majority of his time in the Galilee. And for good reason, because in part that was what was prophesied of him.

And I might just mention this because it too was just a footnote here. And Dr. Robertson reminds us that Nazareth, where Jesus spent his boyhood, even though he was born in Bethlehem, way down in Judea, just a few miles from Jerusalem, he was reared in Nazareth, but he didn't spend much time there.

He spent the vast majority of his time in other areas of the Galilee. And Dr. Robertson notes, Nazareth was never the Savior's residence during his public ministry. After the wedding at Cana, which you'll recall was the first miracle that he performed, he lived a short time at Capernaum.

[2 : 0 9] And henceforth, that city will be his abode till he leaves Galilee six months before the crucifixion.

Most of the time, however, being actually spent in several journeys throughout Galilee, together with a trip to Jerusalem and retirement to districts around Galilee.

We will note that as we continue to work our way through the miracles of our Lord during his three-year ministry. And it will be seen that he will spend three or four excursions or journeys in and around the Galilee.

That's where the vast majority of his ministry is going to be centered. And that is also in keeping with the prophetic word because we read in Isaiah chapter 8, verses 23 through 9-1, we find this.

Well, actually, I'm reading this from Matthew, but he's going to quote from Isaiah. Now, bear in mind, Isaiah lived and prophesied 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

[3 : 4 1] And this is one of many of Isaiah's prophecies. The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. What are those?

Zebulun and Naphtali are tribes. They are two of the original twelve tribes of Israel that were produced by four different women, you'll recall.

They are sons of Jacob. And as you drive through, it's quite remarkable. You know, here in our country, we drive from one county to another, and a little sign will say you're entering Clark County or you're entering Montgomery County or whatever.

But when you're in Israel, it says you're now entering the land of Naphtali. And it kind of struck me as really strange. But that's the way it is. And it's still all divided like that over there.

So going on with the text, that it might be fulfilled. The land of Zebulun, another one of the tribes, and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

[4 : 50] The people which sat in darkness saw a great light. And to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up.

Guess what the light was? The light was he who is the light of the world. And by the way, what are you going to do with a man who claims to be the light of the world?

We're not talking about incandescent light or sunlight. We're talking about moral and spiritual light. What are you going to do about a man who says, I am the water of life.

How essential is water? What are you going to do about a man who says he is the living bread which came down from heaven and gives life to the world?

What can you make of a man like that? One of two things. He's either a lunatic or he's speaking the truth. You can take your choice.

[6 : 01] You can't choose both and you can't choose neither. It's a neither or proposition. And as Josh McDowell pointed out in his book, which I can't believe is 50 years old now, and evidence that demands a verdict, Jesus is either a liar, a lord, or a lunatic.

And there are no other options that I can think of. So, being believers in him, we have opted, of course, for his being the very lord of life. And I want to say something, too, about his miracles that we're talking about.

This is going to be an extensive study. I don't know how long we'll be here, but we're in no hurry. He is going to be, a number of times, introduced in different ways with different titles.

He will refer to himself repeatedly by his own favorite designation, which is, always speaking of in the third person, he calls himself the Son of Man.

The Son of Man. Well, there's no question that he is also the Son of God. And being the Son of God, he is able to be God's representative on earth.

[7 : 10] And being the Son of Man, he is able to be man's representative on the earth, because he is also described as the last Adam.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Jesus is referred to as the last, not the second Adam, but the last Adam. And he is going to be charged with the responsibility of literally undoing the damage that was done by the first Adam.

And the most incredible way that he is going to do that is by balancing the record that was tilted ajar and put out of sync because of the actions and the sin of the first Adam.

Jesus is going to balance the books, the moral scales of the universe, by what he is going to do on that cross. And it is a concept that is so mind-blowing, we can scarcely describe it, we just cannot get our brains wrapped around it.

But the essence of which is, in his capacity of being equal with God, being the Son of God and of the same essence, nature, character, and quality as his Father, he is of the same substance that enabled him to say, I and the Father are one.

[8 : 43] This one, designated as the Son of God, must not, repeat, must not be thought of in terms of humanity, of Father and Sonship.

We are talking about an entirely different sphere. It would be terribly erroneous to speak in human terms, addressing Jesus as the Son of God, and looking upon him as some inferior being, as we do with a father, an earthly father who begets a son, who obviously came first.

But we are dealing with a concept where Jesus, as the Son of God, wasn't someone who came along after the Father.

He is equal with the Father, equal with the Spirit, and we're talking about the existence of a being that simply transcends our ability to comprehend.

So please, dismiss the idea of pure humanity in thinking of Jesus, other than the fact that he became one of us in the Incarnation.

[9 : 56] But in his character, in his essence, in his makeup, there was no time when he was not. He is equal with the Father, he is equal with the Spirit, we've got the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of God, not three gods, one God, subsisting in three persons.

How does that work? I have no idea. All I can tell you is it transcends human comprehension and thinking. So we make the big mistake, and our Muslim friends do too, because they cannot escape the idea of God the Father somehow having a sexual relation with another entity that produced the Son, and that's Jesus, and to them that's abhorrent.

Well, it's abhorrent to us too. That's not the way it was. Suffice it to say, we are dealing with a being who occupies a sphere, spoken of as one who inhabits eternity, he occupies a sphere that is simply above and beyond our mind to comprehend.

But what he did, what he did, is he condescended the Philippians 2 thing, being in the form of God, equal with God, did not consider that privileged position something to be grasped and held onto at all costs, but willingly relinquished it, set it aside, and came down to this earth and was born as a human being.

So that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And John says, and we beheld His glory. Oh really? When did you do that, John? When we were with Him in the mount.

[11 : 34] Mount of Transfiguration, and He was transfigured before us, and His face and His garments were as white as the noonday sun, as bright, and it was a stunning, stunning experience.

That's the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus said, when there be some of you standing here that will not see death until you see the Son of Man in His glory. And it was fulfilled then at the Transfiguration.

So in connection with that, the miracles that He is going to perform ought not to surprise anybody. The miracles that He is going to perform are evidences of the kingdom of heaven being in their midst.

And He's going to make that statement later in one of the Gospels. He says, if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come among you.

That was the evidence. So keep in mind, guys, that the principal reason that Jesus performed the miracles that He did was to authenticate His claims to be the Messiah of Israel.

[12 : 46] And secondary was, of course, to relieve human suffering because of the compassion of our Lord. But this is so key and so critical. The miracles of Christ authenticate His claims to Messiahship.

And we're going to see how that will play out later and why it was so critical that He had to silence the demons who knew who He was and stated as much, we know you who you are, the Son of the living God.

Are you come to destroy us before the time? And He silenced them. Why? And we're going to read eventually, we'll get there, when Peter makes his great confession in Matthew 16, Jesus said, flesh and blood has not revealed that to you, Peter, but my Father who is in heaven.

I never put a handle on that until just a few weeks ago. That always puzzled me because right after Peter makes his declaration, when Jesus asked the question, who do men say that the Son of Man am?

Who do men say that I am? And some say you're Elijah's and some say you're John the Baptist. Come back from... And Jesus said, well, that's very interesting. But who do you say that I am? And Peter blurted out, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

[14 : 19] Well, Peter nailed it. He was right. And Jesus said, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood. In other words, you didn't figure that out on your own.

You didn't come to that conclusion on your own. But my Father in heaven revealed that to you. And I say unto you that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my dreams. And then the very next verse says, and straightway he commanded the apostles to tell no one that he was the Messiah.

What? Why? Wasn't that the whole point of his being there? Wasn't that the point of the miracles to demonstrate his Messiahship? Why in the world would he sound like that? Why didn't he tell them, go out and publish it to everybody that I am the Messiah?

Why? No. Keep a lid on it. And the reason for that, super significant. Never hit me until just a few weeks ago.

And when it did, it was with a major sledgehammer. So we'll get there eventually. All right. I want you to look now, if you will. Well, I'll tell you what.

[15 : 39] Fellas, that is, that is not an act of cruelty. It is to plant that seed, that question, that thought in your mind so you can be ruminating about that, thinking about that.

You may well come up with it yourself. I didn't until I was forced to focus on it because I was doing a series on volume, on volume 64 for Christianity Clarified.

And it came to me like a thunderclap. And then all I could say was, well, well, Wiseman, of course, of course, absolutely.

Why else would it be? Okay. Okay. So that's something for you to think about. Eventually, we will get there. And when we do, we will review it a number of times because it is beautiful and it is critical.

So, all right, let's, we've gotten past Peter's mother-in-law being healed. And now we are entering the first tour of the Galilee with the four fishermen.

[16 : 47] This is before he calls all of the others to be with him. That's recorded in Matthew 10. But this precedes that and Jesus is in the earliest stage of his ministry.

He is dealing with just four apostles and they are two teams of brothers. Andrew and Peter and James and John. Those four fishermen and they all reside there in Capernaum, sometimes Bethsaida, back and forth.

And this is right on the northern shore, northernmost shore of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus is actually going to be headquartered for his Galilean ministry.

That's going to be home, Capernaum. And a fascinating place is there in ancient Capernaum.

The ruins remain and it was just really sent chills up my spine, yours truly, when we stood there in the rock floor of the synagogue there in Capernaum.

[18 : 00] Only a few of the vertical columns were standing but the floor and some of the benches on the side were remaining intact and archaeologists have been able to date that synagogue and its ruins to the first century.

Guess who walked on that floor in the first century? Wow. That was the only place that we visited in Israel after spending six weeks there.

That was the only place where our guide could assuredly tell us this enables you to walk where Jesus walked. But it's the only place that we can really verify that.

Even around Jerusalem and you go through the tourist thing and you find the various stations of the cross where this was supposed to have happened and that was supposed to have happened while Jesus was carrying the cross and virtually all of the guides will tell you yes this is the general area this is where it happened but you must remember it was about six or eight feet down lower than this because of what's happened over the last 2,000 years.

So in this early ministry he's going to be traveling throughout the Galilee with just four apostles and they are those who are going to be his comrades during that first tour and here he is going to heal a leper and if you will come to Luke chapter 5 actually there are parallel accounts Dr. Robertson tells us in Mark chapter 1 in Matthew 8 6 and in Luke 5 but in Luke 5 we'll read that account because it's the account of a physician and even though the difference is slight you can still see the medical touch because Mark simply says that there cometh to him a leper and Matthew says there came to him a leper and worshipped him and Dr. Luke says and it came to pass while he was in one of the cities behold a man full of leprosy that sounds something like the doctor would say others would say well he had leprosy yeah he had leprosy and Dr. Luke says this man was full of leprosy

[20 : 37] I guess we might say that indicated perhaps advanced stages this man may not have had long to live because leprosy was always a terminal disease it was contagious those who contracted leprosy were assigned to separate living quarters usually even outside the city and there were generally leper colonies where these people would gather together to continue their life such as it was it was a life of abject misery as your nose would fall off decay your fingers your feet your toes would just disintegrate and it was leprosy was a viral disease the likes of which they could not cure it was just simply not curable at all and it was a death sentence and these people had to live together and travel together and they had fashioned what looks like to us like a giant ping pong paddle and a couple of pieces of wood and whenever they would come into a community where normal people were they had to clap those things together make a lot of noise let everybody know they were coming and they would cry out unclean unclean unclean and everybody would clear the way make a path for the lepers and they were passing on through one occasion there would be ten ten together and Jesus healed them all you realize what that means what that's saying that just is not done period who is the one who's doing this if he is the one who said let there be light and there was light if he was the one who said and let the earth bring forth what in

Genesis 1 if he is that one and he is the one before whom all things consist and without him nothing was made that was made he ought to be able to handle any human difficulty at all and healing not a problem and when the time comes this man we'll see if we get to it this man let down through the roof they broke up the tiles let him down through the roof because they couldn't get in the door places packed crowded around there and Jesus said son thy sins are forgiven and the Pharisees just went apoplectic who can forgive sins but God only who does this guy think he is anyway and they began a tirade that continued until it ended with his crucifixion who is he and Jesus said the son of man has power to forgive sins who can forgive sins but God only right who did

God only Jesus is Emmanuel he is God with us in the flesh and the word was made flesh and we beheld his glory this is the one who is described as in the beginning was the word and the word was God and the word was with God all things were made by him and without him was nothing made that was made wow we are talking about deity creatorship creatorhood come down to this earth to do what only he could do and it is truly truly remarkable so let's move on he is confronted by Dr.

Luke as a man full of leprosy and when he saw Jesus he fell on his face and besought him saying Lord if thou wilt and you'll notice that the word Lord here at least in the King James is with a capital L and a small O R D and that is a common expression that is used for one who is recognized as a superior to the one who is speaking and if you see the word in at least in the English in the King James where it's all in capital letters capital L capital O capital R capital D all capital letters the word there in the original is Yahweh or Jehovah and it is speaking of the Father or it is speaking of deity absolute it was a common thing for people to call one another

Lord if someone was recognized as their superior as a servant would address his master as Lord and not to be confused with the Lord of heaven so we are told that this man full of leprosy when he saw Jesus fell on his face besought him saying Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me clean now there's only one reason why this leper thought that there was even the possibility of Jesus doing that and that's simply because Jesus' reputations and his feats had preceded him the word had gotten around that this man was healing every manner of disease all kinds of things and by the way there isn't anything that is ever attributed to him as having attempted that was not accomplished one thing comes a little bit close but and I'm by the way that's something else I'm looking for light on let me plant that little seed with you if I may because everyone else whom Jesus healed he healed just just like that just like that remarkable but there was a certain man certain blind man and Jesus

[27:17] I don't remember if he touched his eyes or if he spit on the clay and made clay but at any rate the man was not totally healed and Jesus said what do you see and the man says he's blinking and blurring and looking and he said I see men walking as trees and Jesus touched him a second time and his sight was whole don't get a handle on the significance of that that's something I want to plant in your fertile minds and you be thinking about that what was the necessity of the second touch and I can assure you of what it wasn't it wasn't a case of Jesus saying oh gee I forgot the formula let me let me run that through you again no no no I can assure you it was deliberate there was a need for a second but what was it teaching what was the significance of that and if you stumble upon something

I want to know because I'm still looking for that alright let's move on he touched him and said I will be thou made clean and straightway the leprosy departed from him and he charged him to tell no man but go thy way and show thyself to the priest and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded for a testimony unto them I'm going to give you a reference but I don't think it's necessary to turn there because it does deal with the methodology that the priest was to utilize in examining people because there were all kinds of difficulties skin lesions and allergies and rashes and all kinds of things that a person could develop that wasn't leprosy but the priest supposedly had the credentials to be able to identify what was truly leprosy and if it was the man was immediately isolated from his family and from the community and that's found in Leviticus chapter 13 if you're taking notes

Leviticus chapter 13 and verse 49 through chapter 14 and verses 2 through 32 and there it deals with the leprosy being examined by the priest and pronouncing the person clean or unclean and of course it made a huge difference and verse 15 says but so much the more when abroad the report concerning him and great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed of their infirmities I have searched the scriptures high and low and I have never found a definition of multitudes except to say the context always indicates a huge number of people but we don't know if a hundred considered was considered a multitude or if it was a thousand it was a multitude it's just a whole big lot of people no doubt about that but we aren't given any specific numbers and these people are of course everybody everybody knows everybody in these communities and there's a lot of interrelationship and interconnection between these people and the word just spreads like wildfire because even though they didn't even though they didn't have cell phones and they didn't have telephones you know what they did have they had housetops and housetops and Jesus told them on one occasion he said whatsoever you have heard in secret pronounce it from the housetops and you got to realize we'll see this when we deal with the man who was let down from the ceiling how that the housetop of all of these dwellings were flat and by the way they still are in ancient

Israel and in modern Israel most all of these have a flat roof and people would conduct all kinds of activities on the housetop Peter in Acts chapter 10 Peter went up on the housetop at the time of prayer to pray children played their games on the housetop mother hung out or wash on the housetop sometimes they would get an escape from the heat of the house and go up where they'd get a little bit of a breeze on the housetop what Joe David saw a beautiful woman on a housetop oh yeah he did yeah housetops could be very revealing Bathsheba was out there bathing herself and David saw her from afar and said hmm that really looks nice and what Danny yeah yeah yeah well there is no way no way in the world that you could keep a lid on what Jesus was doing but why was he so intent on not telling people who I am there are times when he's going to say go and show someone show people what great things the Lord has done for you but he never did say and by the way be sure to tell them that I'm the Messiah no no no none of that was to be withheld and for very good reason what

I think I got the idea of why his time had to come he had to be go to the cross he had to go to the cross and if he became too popular with the people and they build him up too much they make him king right now he wouldn't have a chance to go to the cross he would bingo too popular okay go and what put the nail on the thing was the last miracle when Lazarus was healed you know that would have oh man it was done and these Pharisees leaders couldn't have that happen they put a start to that right now okay thank you Joe if you're not careful you're going to get excited but I'll tell you what it's something worth getting excited about it is now what Joe's talking about in John chapter John chapter 6 I think it is yeah

[34 : 07] I'm pretty sure it's in John chapter 6 Jesus had performed miracles and the people this is shortly after he had fed thousands of people and the word was getting around to all of these people you know what you know who this is I'll tell you who this is this is the Messiah do you suppose yes he's got to be the Messiah Messiah what what who else could he be he's got to be the Messiah and the text says they got up a little committee they were going to confront Jesus and take him by force and make him king he's going to how's that going to sit with room going to be a big to do there cannot be any divulging of his identity that would in any way threaten or short circuit the real reason for his coming and this is why he said repeatedly even when his life was threatened even in his hometown

Nazareth when they threatened to throw him over the cliff because of what he said about Gentiles Jesus said my time mine hour has not yet come and he did that repeatedly and as a result when he was in the garden of Gethsemane the night before he was crucified he prayed addressed his father and said father the hour is come and that of course was speaking of his crucifixion because you're going to explain because he came because he came for all humanity you and me as Gentiles too not just the Jew he came for all humanity and we wouldn't have been included if the thing hadn't worked out the way he wanted it to work out when Jesus came the first time fellas it's really important to understand it when Jesus came the first time he was going to pay the price that would enable him to claim the trophy when he comes the second time and that's what he's going to do that is so critical that is so important that's what this is all about really that's what our redemption is all about and everything is vested in this that cannot be short circuited and when he announced in plain language to the twelve as they were going to Jerusalem just before the triumphal so called triumphal entry took place when they were throwing the palm branches and everything and saying

Hosanna to the son of David blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord and he was telling them telling the apostles the son of man must needs go to Jerusalem be subjected to cruelty the chief priest the scribes be crucified the third day raised again and Peter Peter took him aside and said stop talking like that we're going into Jerusalem it's going to be a wonderful it's going to be a coronation it's going to be wonderful and Jesus said get thee behind me Satan and what he meant was if you had your way you would short circuit this thing and there wouldn't be a cross and you know Peter was thinking just like you just like me you don't want your master go to a Roman cross that's crazy you don't want him to die on the cross stop talking like that and Jesus knew but for this purpose came I into the world the cross was everything the crown is the payoff but there's no crown without the cross and there's no redemption there's no salvation for you without your sin debt being paid and when

Jesus was on that cross he who knew no sin was made sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself this is fellas this this isn't the thing this is everything this is everything without this you've got nothing and with this you've got everything hallelujah what a savior this is done