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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1999

HIS MIRACLES - BY MIRACLES AND WONDERS AND SIGNS

Speaker: Bro. Jim Cowie

Study #3: The Son of Man and the Open Hand

Reading: Luke 13:10-17

Thanks, bro. John! Brethren and sisters and young people, we've come to look at the second section of this wonderful view of our Lord Jesus Christ with the open hand. And I thought, before we launched into that this morning, we might just add a postscript to our study of yesterday: a scripturally intelligent brother came to me after the session yesterday and said he was still wrestling just a little bit with the concept of how we reconcile the strict law against work on the Sabbath under the Law of Moses with what we were saying yesterday about Christ deliberately working on the Sabbath, virtually bound by scripture to work on the Sabbath as the Son of man, to exercise dominion on that day; and, I thought to myself afterwards that if that brother was perhaps just wrestling a bit with that, that there may be others in the audience as well. And perhaps we should just spend a few minutes adding to what we said yesterday to see if we can make this clearer in our minds.

I want you to come back to Deuteronomy chapter 5, if you would, for there in the secondary recounting of the Law of Moses: the Ten Commandments, from verse 6 onwards we have the Ten Commandments reiterated; we come in verse 12 to the Sabbath law, 'Keep the Sabbath day'. (The word 'keep' is 'shamar' (8104), it means 'to hedge about' and 'to guard'; 'to sanctify it', 'qadash' (6942), 'to keep it holy' as the word means.) 'As Yahweh thy God hath commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work' (I want you to notice that phraseology, 'to do all thy work'). 'But the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work', (the thy work of verse 13) 'thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, ass, cattle and the stranger that is within thy gates, that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest ('nuwach', 5117) as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Yahweh thy God brought thee out thence (remember, b&s, the simple rule Sabbath day = open hand, remember that? just keep reading, verse 15), 'through a mighty hand and a stretched out arm'. If there's a stretched out arm, on the end of that arm there's an open hand! You wouldn't stretch the arm to help, would you, with a clenched fist? 'Yahweh's arm is not shortened that it cannot save' and so you see, the theme of the Sabbath and the hand, is right back here in the recounting of the Law of Moses and the Ten

Commandments in particular. Therefore, Yahweh thy God commanded thee, to keep the Sabbath day'.

Now, I want you to notice something! You'll recall that in verse 12, the word 'keep' was 'shamar', but the word 'keep' at the end of verse 15 is a different word in the Hebrew. It is the word 'asah' (6213), it means 'to do', and we've met it before in this context: you can go back to verse 8, 'Thou shalt not make thee any graven image', the word 'make' is 'asah' = 'to do'; in verse 10, 'and showing mercy unto thousands, the word 'showing' is the Hebrew word 'asah' 'to do'; in verse 13 the word 'do' and the word 'do' in verse 14 is again 'asah'. So, you see, what God was doing for the perceptive Israelite in adding these final words of the Sabbath law in verse 15, was just giving them a little clue, that if they were perceptive enough they would pick up the fact, that for six days, they were to do their own work (and 'to do' means 'to labour'), but on the seventh they would cease from doing their own work and they would do the Sabbath work, HIS WORK! So, it was a cessation from their own labours in order for them to have time to think and to act in accordance with God's word.

And that's why, b&s, in the record of Matthew chapter 12, in the account with the man with the withered hand; a companion account of Mark chapters 2 verse 3 which we considered yesterday, in Matthew 12, there are some additional words. There are of course, some reference of David going in and requesting the showbread, but then in verse 5 of Matthew 12 we read this, 'Or have you not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbath days, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless?' What the Lord is averring to there, is to the fact that on the Sabbath Day the priests actually doubled their duties: that's the day on which they replaced the showbread; that was the day on which they doubled the number of daily burnt offerings offered (every day there was one lamb in the morning and one lamb in the evening, but on the Sabbath there were two, two in the morning and two in the evening). And the perceptive Israelite who was taking the day off work because it was the Sabbath and who came and worshipped before his God, would notice something very unusual; that whereas he had ceased his work in order that he might come to worship, the priests on the Sabbath day had doubled their work.

Now, come back to Leviticus 23, 24. Firstly, chapter 24 and just one passage; verses 5 to 8 speak of the continual shewbread, and in verse 8 of Leviticus 24 we read, 'Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before Yahweh continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant'. So, here was just one thing in which the priest laboured more on the Sabbath than they did on an ordinary day of the week, they replaced the showbread. Now, if you just cast your eye back to chapter 23 you will notice in verse 39, in this list of the feasts of Israel, we come to the feast of Tabernacles, 'And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you've gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto Yahweh seven days; on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath'. Then it says, note this carefully, verse 40, 'And you shall take you on the first day (which verse 39 has told us is a Sabbath) the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of a

thick tree, and willows of the brook'. Now, put yourself in the place of the Israelite, b&s, this first day of the feast is a Sabbath, you are not allowed to work on a Sabbath, but you are required to go up to the mountain and to cut down the boughs of goodly trees and to put them on your shoulder and to carry them down and to make little houses to dwell in. Now, I don't think I'm a donkey, but if I was an Israelite who had to go up the mountain on a Sabbath day and cut down a tree, cut off its boughs, put them on my shoulder and come down and build a house, I think my little mind would be saying, hey, this is a Sabbath, why are you working? wouldn't you? Why are you working on a Sabbath? Just read on, verse 40, 'And ye shall rejoice before Yahweh your God seven days'; it's exactly what Isaiah 58 says: 'you take delight in the Sabbath, in my works and my Words', and the reason for you building that little house, is that you're going to spend the next 7 days out under the stars, devoting yourself absolutely to thinking, and ruminating upon, discussing with others (because there's no work of yours to be done here), you'll be talking to others about just one thing, what Yahweh has done for you! Verse 43, 'that your generations might know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Yahweh your God'; and, you'll talk about what I've done for you. You'll take delight in my ways and in my works (or to use the words of Deuteronomy chapter 5), you'll remember my open hand and my stretched out arm to save you out of Egypt, and you'll do that over seven days, and I've asked you to work on the first of them, the Sabbath; got the point of that, b&s?

But you see, Israel, unfortunately like us so often, we're so restricted in our thinking, we don't ask questions, we don't think; our mind is too much like that, it's closed. And that's how they were in the synagogue, weren't they? so, He made the man stand forth in the midst.

Just a quick review then, of where we were yesterday at the conclusion of our studies. We saw that the Sabbath prefigured the millennium during which divine dominion will be exercised in the earth. We saw that the title, the Son of man, as a title of Christ which He took to Himself because He exercised dominion over carnal things on the earth, in prospect of the greater Sabbath to come. He deliberately went out of His way to work on that day, and in fact He performed 7 miracles on the Sabbath, b&s. Seven miracles on the Sabbath! There was an artfulness about that, a deliberateness which could not be missed by the perceptive mind that followed Him and thought about what He was doing! We thought and considered the subject of the Son of Man and the open hand and you'll remember that we went back and had a look at Deuteronomy chapter 15 and Isaiah 56, and Isaiah 58 and 59, and we saw in each of those places that the Sabbath is always linked with the open hand, with its 5 fingers, the 5 fingers of grace, always observable, giving, releasing from bondage, taking off the heavy burdens. We saw that principle, that wherever you meet the Sabbath you'll always find some reference to the open hand. B&S, we now come to look at it in real life; we now come to look at the miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ performed on the Sabbath, and we're going to see this principle of the open hand.

I'd like you to come to that reading in Luke chapter 13, and here we have the woman bowed with an infirmity for 18 years; and you will note in verse 10, 'that He was teaching

in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath', and you will find the term 'Sabbath' in this context five times. If you want to highlight words, there's one that you can highlight. You will find it in verse 10, of course; a reference in verse 14 to the Sabbath twice; in verse 15; and, again in verse 16. We are in the context of the Sabbath day, are we going to find the 'open hand' at work, by the Son of man, who is Lord of the Sabbath? Well, we certainly do! but we need to notice something else, for when we read verse 11 we read, 'Behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity 18 years'. Now, this infirmity that she had, the Greek word is 'astheneia', it actually means 'feebleness' (769), 'a want of strength', 'weakness', it is very much a term, b&s, akin to our experiences in mortality. Feebleness, want of strength (by the way, I can relate to that just now), that's the way we go, isn't it? it takes time; she'd had this for 18 years. Now I guess most of us have seen (and this is particularly a woman's problem, because of the hormones in their system which can sometimes be out of adjustment), as they get towards later life there can be a bowing of the back, and in fact I have seen, and I guess most of you have seen, an old woman who is in the last stages of this particular problem. Can you get a picture of this? Look at verse 11, 'she had an infirmity 18 years, and was bowed together', the word 'bowed together' in the Greek means 'to stoop altogether' (4794) that is, to be completely overcome; 'and she could in no wise lift up herself'. Now, the word 'could' there is the Greek word 'dunamai' which means 'power' (1410), she had no power, 'and in no wise lift up herself'. The word 'no wise' is a very definitive term, it means 'full ended' (3588, 3838) something that is entire, it was completely beyond her power. It is saying, to lift herself up or to (as that word means) unbend. She could not unbend! Have you got the graphic in your mind? Do I need to illustrate it? a bowed back woman, got the picture? She's heading towards the ground, nose first towards the ground; that's where you and I are going; she's had this problem for 18 years, 18 is 2 x 9, and 9 is the number of finality and judgment; it is often used of God's punishments upon Israel, His people, for He punished them double for all their sins, 2 x 9. It's the problem we have, b&s, because of our inheritance in Adam, but I want you to notice something in this context, 3 times in this chapter, the number 18 is referred to, and again, if you want to highlight, please highlight this word; we've got it in verse 11, and it's again in verse 16, 'and ought not this woman being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound lo, these 18 years be loosed from this bond, on the Sabbath day?' So, there's twice, but over in verse 4 it is used again, now have a look at this!

Let's look at the context, verse 1, 'There were present at that season some that told Him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish'. The message is clear, isn't it? does He need to add to it? does He need to say anymore, b&s? 'unless you repent you'll be like those whom Pilate slaughtered and mingled their blood with their sacrifices upon the altar'. But He does add something! look at verse 4, 'Or those 18 upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish'. Now, you think about that

one! you just imagine that you're standing under the tower of Siloam in that day; you were the poor unfortunate amongst the 18; and you've got your back up against the tower (you don't normally stand with your face towards the tower, do you?). You're standing up against the tower just passing the time of day, and all of a sudden the tower topples over. What does it do to you? It does to you exactly what the disease was doing to the woman, who had been bowed with her infirmity for 18 years; it pitches you forward violently nose first, straight into the ground! The only difference is this, b&s, that the woman was dying over a long time, the 18 who were crushed by the tower of Siloam died in an instance; they were all going to the same place because of the same problem, just like you and I are all going to the same place. Some might go early, some might go instantly, some might go slowly, but we're all going to the same place. See why the scripture would use the term '18' in this context?

But there's an answer, verse 12, 'And when Jesus saw her, He called' (cross out the words in the italics 'her to him', they're not there). The word 'called' (4377 - *prosponeo*) means 'to sound towards', and that's exactly what He's done to you and me, hasn't He? He's sounded towards us the sound of the gospel. It's a CALL, and that sound has gone forth into all the world! 'And He said unto her, Woman (doesn't call her by her name; she's there to represent the whole race, and in particular His own people, a woman, the bride of Yahweh, errant in her ways, bowed down with her sins), 'Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity'. Loosed! this is the language of Isaiah 58, isn't it? 'To undo the heavy burdens'. Here's a woman who has, as it were, has a burden on her back and it's driving her to the ground, 'thou art loosed from thy feebleness'. So, how does He cure her? do you get a picture of this? please, b&s, please try hard, get a picture of this woman, put yourself in her position, because we are in her position! the only difference is my back's straight and so is yours, but in every other particular we are in exactly her position. And this is what the Son of man with the open hand has done for us: He sees this woman, He sounded towards her, she comes towards Him and what does He do? the record of verse 13 says, 'and He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God'. She is there, b&s, bowed over, He puts out two open hands on her shoulders, and lifts her up so He's looking straight into her face. And if ever there was efficacy in the open hand on the Sabbath day, it is there. He's lifted the heavy burden, He's undone the tied knots which tied that woman to the ground, and He can do it for us!

But the omni-present critic is always there, isn't he? the closed mind, the fist-brained brother, he's always there, in this case verse 14, 'And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said to the people'. The word 'people' (3793) there is the word normally rendered 'multitude'. She represented the multitude. They all had the same problem; they were no different than the 18 who had stood by the tower of Siloam. Jesus had just pointed that out to them, it could have been them! and the ruler said, 'There are 6 days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed (he's talking to the multitude; if you want to be healed come in the 6 days; someone should have just tapped him on the shoulder and said, 'Hey, you don't work for a living, but I do; I've got to work for 6

days, and I only get the Sabbath day off, so if you're going to make me come on the 6 days when I've got to put food in my family's mouth, I can't come. I've got to come on the Sabbath, that's why I'm here in the synagogue today! otherwise I'd be out in the field!'): 'In them come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day'. Look at the Lord's answer: 'The Lord then answered' (the word 'Lord' 'kurios' 'supreme in authority, the controller, the One, b&s, who is Lord 'kurios' of the Sabbath) said, 'You play actor, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?' Ox and ass, both of them symbols of Israel; you get up in the morning, you hypocrite, you look out at your own personal interests and you see your ox tied up and you go out on the Sabbath day and you unloose him and you take him to the water; but I come into your synagogue on the Sabbath day to unloose a woman who's been bound for 18 years, and you take indignation. There's the closed hand mentality, isn't it?

And He says in verse 16, 'And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, (links with the ox and the ass, doesn't it? a daughter of Abraham!), whom Satan hath bound these 18 years be loosed'? (the word 'loosed', 3089, of course, takes us back to Isaiah 58), 'from this bond' (1199 - it means 'a band' or 'a ligament', 'a shackle'), 'from this shackle on of all days, the Sabbath day?' That is the day, b&s, in which mankind generally is going to be loosed from their shackles, and you and I are going to have the privilege of doing that; we will go out with our Lord Jesus Christ to extend the open hand, to grab hold of people's shoulders, so to speak, people who are heading towards the earth, and we in our immortality will be the medium whereby the Spirit, as it were, will course through us, and by the power of the Word, people will be lifted up on the Sabbath day! 'And when He had said these things, verse 17, all His closed-minded adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things (and I'll give you the literal Greek) 'that were being done by Him'. They were being done, and it was a Sabbath day!

We turn one page in our bibles, to Luke 14, and we come to the final conflict over the Sabbath between Jesus and His adversaries; and they set Him up! This was their response to the events of Luke chapter 13, and just for those of you who are acute of mind, the last verse of chapter 13 is quoted from Psalm 118 verse 26, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Yahweh', it's in the context of the desolation of their house and their ultimate acceptance of Him, when they shall say, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Yahweh'. As I said, those of you who have got good memories will remember that Psalm 118 makes the statement just a couple of verses before that verse 24, 'This is the day that Yahweh hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it' Do you know what David's been talking about? you're right! the Sabbath day! and it will be on the Sabbath day that the Jews will recognize their Messiah and will say as Elijah escorts them back into His presence, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Yahweh'.

And the very next verse of chapter 14, verse 1 says, 'And it came to pass, as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees'. Now this is an unusual circumstance, isn't it? Think about it for a while! Jesus wasn't really all that friendly with the

Pharisees; mind you, He tried to save them, He was just as interested in saving the elder son of Luke chapter 15 as He was in saving the prodigal. That's why He gave two parables, one of the lost sheep outside the house, the other of the lost coin inside the house, and both were being searched for. He wanted to save them, b&s, but they didn't want to be saved, they were inert like the coin because of materialism, that was their character. They were too contented, too comfortable, they had positions of authority and power; He was not wont to mix with them anymore than He had to.

The record says, 'He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day, and they watched Him'. Now, do you think that the Pharisees would have missed this opportunity? They must have invited Him, I'm sure! So, they set Him up, and what they had done was to go around and to find the worst possible case that they could of a man terribly afflicted, and to bring him along; they brought the wheelchair out as it were. Now listen, this man might have been by the pool of Bethesda waiting for the movement of the water, we don't know. Wherever he was, they brought the wheelchair out and they wheeled him in, and told him to just sit here: this is the only time you'll ever be invited into the house of a Pharisee! we will feed you but don't eat too much, please! And they put him there as trap for the Lord because they knew it was irresistible; it was irresistible for Christ! 'and they watched Him'.

'And behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy'. The word 'dropsy' in the Greek is the word 'hudropikos' (5203) 'hydro' is an English word that we get from that Greek word. Hydro, water, it means 'watery', and dropsy is fluid retention in the body, in cavities of the body, so you can get it, for instance behind the knees, under the arms, in the elbow, and water builds up and it becomes bloated like a balloon, and you become, of course, incapable of movement, can't move legs or arms, and so it is a dreadful affliction, but it's not the real problem. It is only a symptom of a much deeper malaise; the fluid retention is in fact, caused by any number of other serious diseases. Like for instance, a disease of the heart, of the liver, or the kidneys, or even of the brain. And because those vital organs are in some way diseased, fluid is produced in the body and it's got to go somewhere, so it collects in these cavities of the body.

So, you see, b&s, this man had a dreadful problem which was very evident; it's like someone whose life shows the evidence of a deep problem. The cure to the problem is not to get rid of the water buildup, the cure to the problem is to heal the deeper malaise, to get to the heart of the matter, to get to the kidneys, as it were, to the real essence of that man's problem. Can you begin to see a relationship between the man with dropsy and all men? 'And Jesus, in verse 3, answering said unto the lawyers (lawyers! oh, yes, they've got the best brains there today), and the Pharisees (the strict ones) saying, (and He's challenging them), 'is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day'. 'Now you tell Me?' You don't think it is, do you? that's why you've put this man here. Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?' Well, we've seen that it is, but their closed minds couldn't receive that; 'And they held their peace' says verse 4, and that's an interesting word. The three words 'held their peace' are just one word in the Greek, the word is

'hesuchazo' (2270) and it means 'to keep still', 'to refrain from labour and speech', and it's very interestingly used, b&s, in Luke chapter 23 and verse 56, when it says the 'women prepared their spices and on the Sabbath they rested'; that word 'rested' is the same word here, held their peace. So, you see, He asked them the question, 'is it lawful to heal (that is, to be active, to work) on the Sabbath, and they kept their Sabbath'. Thank you, we will just say nothing, we're keeping our Sabbath. They were just sitting there smirking, 'What are YOU going to do? Can you just see this? you've got that kind of mind confronted by that kind of attitude!

Verse 4 says in the second sentence, 'and He took him'. How do you take someone? the word in the Greek is too long for me to spell out, it simply means 'to seize' (1949) 'epilambanomai'.....(tape turned-no overlapping) It's suggestive of two things: it is firstly suggested by the fact that he was there unwillingly, he had been wheeled in in a wheelchair; and, he walked out cured of his disease. He let him go: not only was he released from the house of the Pharisees where he had been unwillingly taken, he was now released from the deep seated problem that had brought on his affliction; he'd come to redemption in Christ Jesus. The old man as it were had been left behind.

And Jesus answered, verse 5, saying (because they're still silent, they're still keeping their Sabbath, but now their eyes are bugging out of their head), 'He answered them saying, you're a bunch of hypocrites'; oh, He doesn't say that, but that's what He means! 'Which of you shall have an ass or an ox (there they are again, symbols of Israel) fallen into a pit ('entrapped', 1706, the word means) and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day, out of self interest?' because it's going to cost you money if you leave it there. Which of you, who are sitting here with your smug looks on your faces, saying, 'Oh, we wouldn't work on the Sabbath! have you an ox or an ass in a pit? and you get up in the morning, 'oh, my ox is in the pit, but oh, it's the Sabbath day; I'm sorry Mr. Ox, but it is the Sabbath day and I am a true Israelite, and I will keep the Sabbath, I hope you have an enjoyable day!' Which of you would do that? you know what they did, they came out and said, 'oh, a \$1,000 down there, please come out quickly, I hope you haven't hurt yourself?' We've got a hideous nature, haven't we? b&s, a hideous nature!

One of my greatest problems is probably one of your greatest problems; it's hypocrisy! What you see when you look at me, is not always the truth of the matter. And perhaps the same can be said of you. If I've one objective in life, it is to be free of hypocrisy! It is centred in human pride, the last and the greatest of the three lusts that we wrestle with throughout our lives. The body tires of pleasure, the body tires of purchase, there comes a time when you get to the stage of life where like Barzillai the Gileadite you say, 'Look, I don't enjoy eating anymore, I don't even enjoy music, I don't enjoy any activity of the body; I've got passed all that!' But the last of the three to die is the pride of life, it's there right to the end. Proof of that is men like Ahithophel, who reached the point in life when the only thing that mattered to him was vengeance and his own pride was at stake, and it died with him as his body hung testimony to the pride of man. Hypocrisy, b&s, is a deadly disease, it can only be cured by one attitude of mind, and it is symbolized by an open hand, when people can see you as you are. It's open, it's not

closed; IT'S OPEN! You talk about wearing your heart on your sleeve, what you see is what you get. Thankfully I've got one child like that, the oldest girl who grew up, not without her problems like all young people, but the one thing she had that got her through was that she would tell you everything, everything, I mean everything! what you saw is what you had; the second girl was the opposite like her father.

There are some real issues here, aren't there? Let us not sit in judgment upon the religious elite of Israel without reflecting as to whether or not we might be replicating their disease. John chapter 5. Bro. Alan's going to talk about this chapter in the context of the sacrifice of Christ, I won't steal his thunder, all I want, b&s, is to take this subject matter of the Son of man as Lord of the Sabbath, one step further. We've seen the personal lessons, there are more to come, but now let's focus upon the national. Yahweh's design for His own way with His people Israel, which was prefigured so wonderfully in the 3rd sign of John, in John chapter 5 verses 1 to 16. The 3rd sign of John: what happened on the third day of the Creation, b&s? the dry land appeared from the sea of nations, to represent the emergence of Israel in the 3rd millennium after the Creation. That's what happened, didn't it? And the 3rd sign of John is about the re-emergence of Israel in the sea of nations as the preeminent nation, at the end of a long wilderness wandering after the work of Elijah is complete, and they're back in their land, having crossed over the Jordan for the last time. That's what John chapter 5 is about! You look at me with stunned looks, but it is, let's read it!

Verse 1, 'After this there was a feast of the Jews (probably Passover, very appropriately), and Jesus went up to Jerusalem'. Now, there is at Jerusalem by the sheep gate (as you'll see the margin, quite accurate, the place where they brought the sheep in for sacrifice, and we're going to speak more about that). There's a pool there that's called in the Hebrew tongue'; Hebrew tongue! what does 'Hebrew' mean? 'crosser-over', and there were people here waiting to cross over. It's called in the Hebrew tongue 'Bethesda'. There were two Hebrew words there, 'beth' = bayith = house, 'esda' = checed (964) (1004 + 2617), that's the word used in Exodus 34 verse 6, when Yahweh said in a still small voice to Moses (more about that at the end of the week), He said, 'listen Moses, I am He who will become; He who will become power, full, full of goodness and truth'. The word 'goodness' = checed. The other half of His name, the house of mercy, the house of grace; and, it just happened to have 5 porches, 5 the number of grace, the number of fingers on an open hand.

Verse 3, 'In these porches lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered'. Withered? yes, like the man with the withered hand, people like him, and what are they there for? 'waiting for the moving of the water' (because it was a tradition, it was thought that an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water, whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole' (healthy, the word is 'hugies', 5199, we get our word 'hygiene' from that word); he was made healthy or whole of whatever disease he had. All his problems were resolved, that at least was the tradition. It didn't happen! but it is going to happen, b&s, because when the Lord arrived at this place He was just looking for one man. There was a

whole multitude in that place, all of them had very great needs, He'd left them there, He could of cured them before but He had not done so, He was only looking for one man on this day. You have a look with me at verse 13, when He encounters the man He had cured a little later, verse 13 says, 'That he that was healed wist not who it was, for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place'. Look at your margin, it's correct; Jesus had conveyed Himself away from the multitude in that place, which means when He got in there and looked around at all this bunch of people, they were all around the pool, because you see, they've got to get as close as they can to the edge, because when the water moves, and the angel comes, the first in is healed. Can you imagine what it was like? they'd be up against the edge of the pool so they could just drop off of the edge! These are real people, they've got blood coursing through their veins, it could have been you or me; I might have been born back then, I could have been one of those people, you could have been one of those people. And the Lord came in and He's looking around at all these people and in His heart He would have loved to heal them all! and He would have normally! but He's just looking for one man, just the one man, and He finds him.

Verse 5, 'And a certain man was there which had an infirmity', (same word as the woman bowed down), a feebleness, a weakness, '38 years', and everybody's mind goes back to that awful period when from Numbers chapter 14, an entire generation from 20 years old and up was condemned to wander in the wilderness, and to witness 500 funerals a week, until almost 2,000,000 people had been laid to rest over the course of 38 years. And finally, when that nation was bereft of its older generation, they came to the Jordan river, waiting for the moving of the waters, which when the feet of the priests who bare the ark of the covenant went into the Jordan, went backward through the city of Adam, cutting off the waters coming from the sea of life, and descending by the serpentine course of the Jordan to the Dead Sea, where there was no life, because of Adam. When those waters went backwards to a nation 'crossed-over 2,000 cubits', (got that? Joshua 3: 4), '2,000 cubits below where the priests with the ark were standing', to indicate, b&s, that though Israel was crossing at that time, as far as God was concerned, the real crossing would only come 2,000 years after another man would stand in the water of Jordan, so to speak, and cause it to go back through Adam, by a resurrection from the dead to a newness of life. And 2,000 years after He came on the scene, the nation of Israel would cross again, at the moving of the waters.

That's what this sign is about! Jesus came in looking for just one man, the man with an infirmity of 38 years, and in verse 6, when He saw him lie (are you there with the Lord? are you there with Him?) with all these people; can you imagine the filth and the squalor of that place? Can you imagine the stench of people who are lying there, who are lying there, who won't go away, because they're waiting for the movements of the waters? We don't think about these things do we? You go in there with your finger pinching your nose; can you imagine the rubbish that's there in the terms of humanity? He's just looking for one man, and He's coming again to look for him, and He'll send out Elijah into the nations, and He'll find him amongst the nations, and He'll look at him lying. What a sad sight! What a sad sight that nation is, b&s; how far removed they are from

the things of their peace. He's got to get hold of their minds, doesn't He? somehow! Look at verse 6, 'And Jesus saw him lie and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, 'are you willing to be made healthy?' That's the question, are you willing to be made healthy?' It's all dependent upon a willingness, it's a theme of this chapter. Just cast your eye across to verse 35, speaking of John He said, 'He was a burning and a shining lamp: and ye were willing (then He qualifies it) for a season to rejoice in his light'. Then He says in verse 39, 'Search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me. And you will not come to Me (same word in the Greek). You are not willing to come to Me, that ye might have life'. That was their problem! when He came to them for the first time, He had to wait, b&s, for the 2,000 cubits down stream, 2,000 years before the dry land would appear on the 3rd day, as it were, on the sea of nations, all those bodies around the pool of Bethesda waiting for the moving of the waters.

And the impotent man said to Him, in verse 7, 'Sir, I have no man'; (I have no man! You've got one now; he's got the same one as we've got, b&s,) 'when the waters are troubled, to put me in the pool; but while I am coming, another steps down before me'; and he had to, (just like the priests who bore the ark of the covenant, symbolizing our Lord Jesus Christ), had to step in first! He needed another man to step in first! Jesus said to him, 'rise, take up thy bed, and walk', (and he did!) 'Immediately the man was made whole'; (he was healthy), 'he took up his bed and walked: and on the same day it was the Sabbath'. And that's when it's going to happen for Israel, b&s, when Elijah goes out and calls to them, 'are you willing, are you ready?' Eventually, their children will come back to the borders of the Land, and will remain at the east until such time as there is, as it were, a moving of the waters, that they might cross-over and come face to face with the Son of man.

What an incredible story that is! I've got three minutes, just one more, John chapter 9. This time it is the 6th sign of John's gospel, and in verse 1 we read, 'As Jesus passed by on the Sabbath'. Not in your bible? just cast your eye across to verse 14, 'And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes'. This is the 6th sign of John's gospel, and there is a man born blind, just as I was; oh, I can see, but I was born blind just like you were. My head was as vacuous of spiritual ideas in birth as any other man. I was born blind, the 6th sign, this is about the redemption of humanity. How is it performed? 'His disciples asked this curious question, 'Master, who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him'. I'm not responsible for my difficulties, b&s, in terms of my nature; I'm not to blame for the fact that I'm a son of Adam anymore than you are; I was born blind because I'm in Adam. Who sinned that this man should be like this? He didn't sin, says Christ, someone else did. He knew who had sinned, the man who had sinned, b&s, was the first man that was made by the open hand of angels who took the clay and moulded it into their own shape and then breathed into its nostrils the breath of life. And that's what our Lord does again, that the works of God, the creative works of God might be made manifest in him; He says in verse 4, 'I must work the works of Him that sent Me

while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work'. And on the 6th day before the night came, b&s, the angels took the clay and they made that man: 'As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world, He says, and when He had spoken He spat on the ground and made clay', and He began to re-form that man, and He started with the eyes! He rubbed clay on the eyes, He's remaking the man.

He says to him, 'Go wash in the pool of (one sent) Siloam, and he went his way therefore, and washed, (washed away the clay of humanity), 'and he came seeing'. The open hands had been at work to re-form this man, and now he had, b&s, release from the affliction of his birth; he was no longer blind, and it was the Sabbath day!