

Darrel Bock does such an excellent job in showing how 13:10-17 fits into the immediate context, I quote him at length:

The account of the healing of a bent-over woman is the first healing since Luke 11:14–23. It is also the first miracle account told in detail since 9:37–43. The placement is crucial to Luke's argument. Jesus has spent much time telling His audience to note the nature of the time (11:37–54; 12:54–13:9). He has noted their failure to do so until now, and so Jesus also calls them to repent, for there is great danger in not responding. Miracles picture the time and the need for decision. Examples of the "weather" (12:54–56) that the crowd needs to recognize are miraculous healings.

The miracle is a "mirror miracle," in that it replays the Sabbath healings of 4:31–41 and 6:6–11 and will be reinforced by another Sabbath account in 14:1–6. Here is new opportunity and another chance. Will the fig tree bear fruit (13:6–9)? Have Jesus' previous warnings been heeded when miracles are again displayed on the Sabbath?

This miracle examines whether the crowds and leadership have responded to Jesus' strong and explicit warnings. The rebuke of 13:15 shows that they have not. In fact, those who failed to heed Jesus' warning treat animals better than people. The Pharisees, in their concern about Sabbath law and tradition, miss God's compassion. The decision against Jesus fails to discern the time. All that is left for those who refuse to respond is peril. Thus, more warnings will follow this passage (13:22–35), along with yet another failure to accept what God is doing on the Sabbath (14:1–6).

The account also underlines a second major theme: Jesus' struggle with Satan. Jesus explicitly alludes to the struggle in 13:16 (also Luke 14:18–19 and Acts 10:38; Tannehill, 65). The issue is stated in terms of supporting God's program or standing with Satan against it. Just as Luke 10:18 and 11:14–23 linked Jesus' actions with the kingdom's in-breaking, so 13:10–17 links Jesus' healing with Satan's collapsing hold on people. The teaching about the battle between Satan and God leads naturally into the kingdom parables that follow. God's rule is manifest.

A third theme is God's compassion. He is ready to exercise his power on behalf of those in need. The miracle vividly shows that any time is appropriate to come to God for healing and restoration. (Bock, 1212)

13:10 And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

13:11 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.

13:12 When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your sickness."

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

As Bock has pointed out (see above intro), the miracle of healing the woman on the Sabbath is placed here strategically by Luke to advance his argument that there were signs Jesus was giving the people that they needed to be reading.

He challenged them in Luke 12:56-57 by saying, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming,' and so it turns out. And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, 'It will be a hot day,' and it turns out that way. You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but *why do you not analyze this present time? And why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?*"

After such strong warnings and harsh rebukes, the miracle of healing the woman was a test to see if the leaders were listening to what Jesus was telling them. It provided a new opportunity and another chance to respond. It was something at the present time, a spiritual "weather pattern," that they needed to analyze (12:56). It was evidence by which they could discern (judge) what was right (12:27). The question remained: "Will the fig tree bear fruit (13:6-9)?" Verse 14 and following show that it did not. Instead of seeing the miracle as evidence of Jesus' messianic claims, the leadership denounced Jesus' action as a Sabbath violation. Instead of seeing Jesus as one sent by God, they continued to oppose Him, forcing Jesus to issue yet another warning: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together . . . and you would not have it!" (Luke 13:34).

The miracle involved a woman who suffered both physically and spiritually; she was physically bent-over but the condition was due to demonic activity. By mentioning the length of her condition (18 years) Luke generates empathy with the reader - she has suffered for a long time. The fact that there was demonization reminds us of the spiritual conflict that was ever present as Jesus advanced the kingdom of God.

Jesus initiated the healing. This was significant in itself for in that culture there was no public interaction between men and women. Jesus' willingness to break cultural norms demonstrates the extent of His compassion toward those in need. There is also no mention of the woman's faith; the miracle was performed solely by the authority of Jesus.

13:14 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."

13:15 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?"

13:16 "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?"

13:17 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.

Verses 14 through 17 record the reactions of the observers. The synagogue official was indignant and indirectly rebuked Jesus by telling the crowd, "There are six days in which work should be done; so come

during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day." His words sound ludicrous as if all that people had to do was to come to the synagogue during the week to be healed. He had forgotten that this poor woman had come to the synagogue for 18 years with no relief (RWP). His words imply that Jesus had violated Sabbath law which forbade people from working.

Jesus rebuked the leader as being hypocritical; his superficial zeal for the law neither fulfilled the spirit or the purpose of the Sabbath (Morris, 244). More compassion was given to a cow on the Sabbath than the woman.

Although the Rabbis listed 39 forms of labor that were forbidden on the Sabbath, some work was allowed. Cattle, for example, could be led out to pasture as long as they carried no burden (Marshall, 558). The Qumran sect limited the distance that cattle could be taken to 2000 cubits (Marshall, 558). Water could be drawn and poured for them as long as the bucket was not held for them to drink from (Morris, 244-245). They also could be tied up lest they stray. When Jesus healed the woman He did less "work" than what was needed in caring for a cow; He only spoke and laid His hands on the woman (it's hard to imagine how that can even be construed as work at all); the actual energy, the work, the power exerted that brought about the healing came from God.

If people were allowed to labor on the Sabbath out of compassion for an animal's well-being, how much more should someone be allowed to labor out of compassion for a daughter of Abraham who had been suffering for 18 years under a demonic influence! To treat an animal with more compassion than a human, especially on a sacred day, is a reversal of the created order (Danker, 262).

Division ensued. His opponents were humiliated and the crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him. The division was a harbinger of the division Jesus had predicted He would kindle after He was crucified (12:51-53) and a confirmation of it.

The healing left no room for people to remain indifferent. Jesus had warned the crowd to respond to Him while there was time (13:1-9); the Sabbath healing provided another opportunity to do that.

13:18 So He was saying, "What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it?

13:19 "It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED IN ITS BRANCHES."

13:20 And again He said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?

13:21 "It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."

"Jesus' miracles are not just the promise of the kingdom; they are themselves the actualization, at least in part, of the kingdom. . . [They are] signs of the kingdom, manifestations of the new creation.

Restoring health to the sick or freeing the demonized from oppression signals the onset of the new age, and this is a harbinger of the new creation where sickness is absent and the impact of demons only a memory. Jesus' power over sickness and demons demonstrates that He rules over disease and the demonic. The forces of evil cannot triumph over Him; He reigns over all that deforms and destroys. . . .

[The miracles] also testify of Jesus' identity. They demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of Man

the Son of God, and the Lord of all. This is scarcely surprising, for the coming of the kingdom also signals the arrival of the king. It would be a strange state of affairs if the kingdom arrived without its King and Lord! " (Schreiner, *NT Theology*, 64, 66). In other words, despite the opposition of the Jewish religious establishment, the kingdom was growing and prompts Jesus to explain the mysteries of its growth.

The Jews had expected the kingdom to come like a storm with Messiah smiting the nations and Israel enjoying peace and prestige. They thought it would be like a massive tree planted upon the earth that spread over everything just as the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 was described. The healing of the woman and authority over the demon may well be signs that Jesus is the Messiah, but if He was, how would one explain that the messianic kingdom was not present in its fullness? Jesus answers this with two parables.

The kingdom did not come as the Jews assumed; rather, it comes like a mustard seed, small and inconspicuous, but would eventually grow into a tree that produces shade and shelter for the world.

In the OT, the tree was frequently used as a metaphor of a kingdom (Dan. 4:10–15; Ezek. 31:5, 6). Relative to Luke 13, the most significant passage is Ezekiel 17:22–23.

It says:

22 Thus says the Lord GOD, "I will also take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and set it out; I will pluck from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one and I will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

23 "On the high mountain of Israel I will plant it, that it may bring forth boughs and bear fruit and become a stately cedar. And birds of every kind will nest under it; they will nest in the shade of its branches.

The word for "sprig" (Ezekiel 17:22) is the tree top, but is derived from a Hebrew word meaning "to be tender or soft." Other OT authors have used similar expressions of the messianic descendent who would come from the Davidic line (see Isa. 11:1-5 ["shoot" and "branch"]; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12 ["sprout"]; Block, *Ezekiel*, vol. 1, 550); it seems that this is what Ezekiel is referring to as well. The mountain upon which God plants it is Mount Zion. There the sprig "grows majestically upward, and expands over the earth offering shelter to every species of bird" (Matt. 13:31-32).

Though Israel's kings had failed miserably, God would not fail; the Davidic dynasty would rise again, but this time the King would be perfectly righteous and rule over a kingdom that has no end.

Although Bock concedes that it may be somewhat speculative, he makes an interesting observation about Jesus' parable of the mustard seed and OT "tree" metaphors.

He says:

If the picture of the cedar tree was common in Judaism to describe the kingdom, and that image is a consistent one in the OT, then the use of a mustard seed to describe the kingdom is a surprise, a twist in the story. The twist functions like the Samaritan in an earlier parable. The

Samaritan is not the character voted “most likely to help” by current cultural standards. So also the mustard tree is not the normal image of the kingdom and shelter. As such, Jesus makes the point that the kingdom comes in a surprising form, not the one anticipated. That is why Matthew 13 has the parable in His “mystery” section. But the surprising humble form of the kingdom’s coming should not deceive anyone. The kingdom will end up being a place of comfort and shelter under the protective shade of the Almighty. In fact, the shrub shall transform itself into a tree. This point is important: *Jewish expectation had been of the magnificent arrival of a grand kingdom all at once. Jesus says that the kingdom comes now, but it starts out small and will gradually assume the grand scale they expected.* That is why the parallels speak of the mystery of the kingdom in such texts. It is still kingdom truth, but it is a fresh element added alongside the OT picture (Bock, 1227).

In 13:20 Jesus repeats His question, “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?” His answer is “leaven”.

Leaven often has a negative connotation in the Bible, but it is difficult to see how it could be negative here: the kingdom is like leaven. Just like the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus taught that the kingdom does not arrive manifestly and clearly, but nearly invisibly, like leaven in flour. The watching world does not perceive its presence, but as leaven permeates every part of the dough, so the kingdom will penetrate every part of the world.

The point in both parables is similar: what starts out small will eventually come to the point where many will dwell securely (mustard seed) and where the penetration will be total (leaven). The kingdom looks deceptively weak and impotent now, but the exercise of its inherent power allows it to transform and spread its scope. An understanding of how the kingdom grows will provide the proper understanding of Jesus’ ministry. The parables represent a call to trust in the way God is developing the kingdom. They are also designed to assure followers that the kingdom’s current small size is not where the program will end. The kingdom will start small, but eventually God will cause it to penetrate the whole earth (Bock, 1229).

13:22 And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem.

13:23 And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them,

13:24 "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

13:25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'

13:26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets';

13:27 and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.'

13:28 "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out.

13:29 "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.

13:30 "And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."

Luke reminds us in 13:22 that Jesus is still deliberately moving toward Jerusalem (see 9:51). The imperfect tense, "proceeding on His way," suggests progressive movement.

Jesus' repeated warnings and proclamation of the kingdom of God prompted someone to inquire if only a few will be saved (13:23). Jesus never specifically answered; instead, by means of a parable, He told them that there will be many who expect to be on the inside who find themselves on the outside.

The parable itself explains the difficulty of salvation:

First, the door is narrow; entry into the house is not easy (13:24). In a similar illustration (Matthew 7) the narrow gate is described as a gate that few enter and contrasted to the broad way that leads to destruction.

Secondly, people must *strive* to enter it. The word "strive" in Greek is *agonizomai* (ἀγωνίζομαι). We get the word agonize from it. It indicates an intense struggle. It is a term used in the NT of competing in athletics or in hand-to-hand combat. It can be translated as "fight." People must fight to enter the door; they must put forth effort to get in.

Manson (quoted by Bock, 1235) says:

The reply of Jesus begins by asserting that the way of salvation is a door which God opens and man enters. The entry cannot be made without God. The gate of heaven opens only from the inside. But also man has to make his way in, once the door is open. And this is not easy. The entrance is narrow, and it is a case of struggling through rather than strolling in. If men fail to enter, it is not that God is unwilling to admit them, but that they will not enter on the only terms on which entrance is possible.

Thirdly, Jesus points out in verse 25 that there are no second chances; there will come a time when entrance into the house will become impossible. The door is only open for a while; once it is closed it is shut forever, and those outside have no chance of entering.

Lastly, entrance through the door presupposes a positive response to Jesus and His message. The ability to enter the door is only granted by Jesus, and it is granted only to those who have established a relationship with Him through faith. Once the door is shut, those outside will begin to protest and reason that the door should be opened for them and they should be let in. However, the master of the house will not acknowledge knowing them. Even though they ate and drank in his presence and heard him teach in their streets, their pleading is to no avail. Instead, the master will repeat himself: "I do not know where you are from" (13:27). In other words, even though many people had seen Jesus, heard Jesus, and had been in close proximity to Him, they had not repented. They had not heeded Jesus'

warnings; they had not discerned the season. Most of all, they had not established a relationship to Christ; He did not know them. In His eyes they were simply workers of unrighteousness and counted among the enemies of God.

In verse 28 the destiny of those who are not allowed to enter the house is described. "The image is clear, graphic, and painful: weeping and gnashing of teeth will accompany the awareness that the patriarchs and prophets are in the kingdom, while the present audience is excluded" (Bock, 1238).

Weeping and gnashing of teeth is an idiom that describes the physical and mental trauma of realizing that one is excluded from the promises of God.

Verse 29 adds to the tragedy of the situation. Although the Jews were prime candidates to enter the kingdom of God, their rejection of Jesus resulted in their forfeiture of what was promised to them. Instead, many from the east, west, north, and the south will share in God's blessed banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Verse 30 is somewhat proverbial, summing up verse 29; the Jews expected that they would be first and the Gentiles last; in reality the order will be reversed: many Gentiles will end up at God's great banquet while many Jews will be locked out of the house.

In sum, the only passports to the kingdom are submission to God and repentance (Manson). National heritage will not count. Only those who have placed their faith in Christ will enter; everyone else will remain outside forever. The emphasis is to not miss the opportunity while the door remains open.

13:31 Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, "Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You."

13:32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.'

13:33 "Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.

Verse 31 appears to be a genuine concern for Jesus' safety. Nothing in the text suggests there were ulterior reasons behind the warning or any malice. Nonetheless, their concern was playing into the hands of Satan. This incident reminds us of Matthew 16:21-23 where Jesus began to show His disciples that He *must* go to Jerusalem to suffer and be killed. When Peter objected to His comment, Jesus said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." Peter had inadvertently been Satan's tool. Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51) and He knew He had "a baptism to undergo" (Lk. 12:50-His suffering and death – see notes) before He could kindle fire upon the earth. Therefore, Jesus responded, "I *must* (indicating divine necessity) journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem (Lk. 13:33).

Jesus viewed Herod with little respect. By calling him a fox He was depicting Herod as a cunning deceiver. The fox was also a symbol of destructiveness. Herod's threats would not thwart the plan of

God. Jesus would continue to provide evidence of the kingdom's presence by performing miracles and casting out demons. He would continue to minister "today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal." Although Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, if this were a reference to His resurrection, it would be too subtle to grasp. It is probably better to take the expression, "today and tomorrow, and the third day" (13:32) and "today and tomorrow and the next day" (13:33) as simply meaning that there will be a quick succession of events (Bock, 1247); Jesus would complete His allotted course (Morris, 249).

13:34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!

13:35 "Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

Jerusalem, the capital city, was the heart of the nation and is representative of the nation of Israel as a whole. The feeling behind Jesus' words is both prophetic and sorrowful.

Jesus' wish is the wish of God. Although He has a constant desire to intimately care for, nurture, and protect His people, the people did not wish Him to do so. They were not simply apathetic toward God, they were about to kill yet another of His prophets - the greatest prophet of all.

Israel's rejection of her Messiah put the nation in great peril. A time of abandonment would come; the nation would not be blessed until it acknowledged Jesus as blessed by God. When they are able to say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord" God will care for His people once again.

"In Luke 21:24 and the speech of Acts 3 Jesus and the church continued to extend hope to Israel. They believed that God would restore the nation in the end. In fact, the NT suggest that such a response will precede Christ's return, thus Luke's later reference to the current period as "the time of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24; see also Ro. 11:11-32 [esp. 11:12, 14, 25-27, 31-32] and probably Rev. 7:1-8; Bock, 1251).

Thus, the necessity of choosing Jesus comes to the forefront once more. This is coupled with a clear sense of national rejection. Consequences apply both to the individual and the nation in their response to Jesus; however, Israel's rejection cannot stop God's plan.