

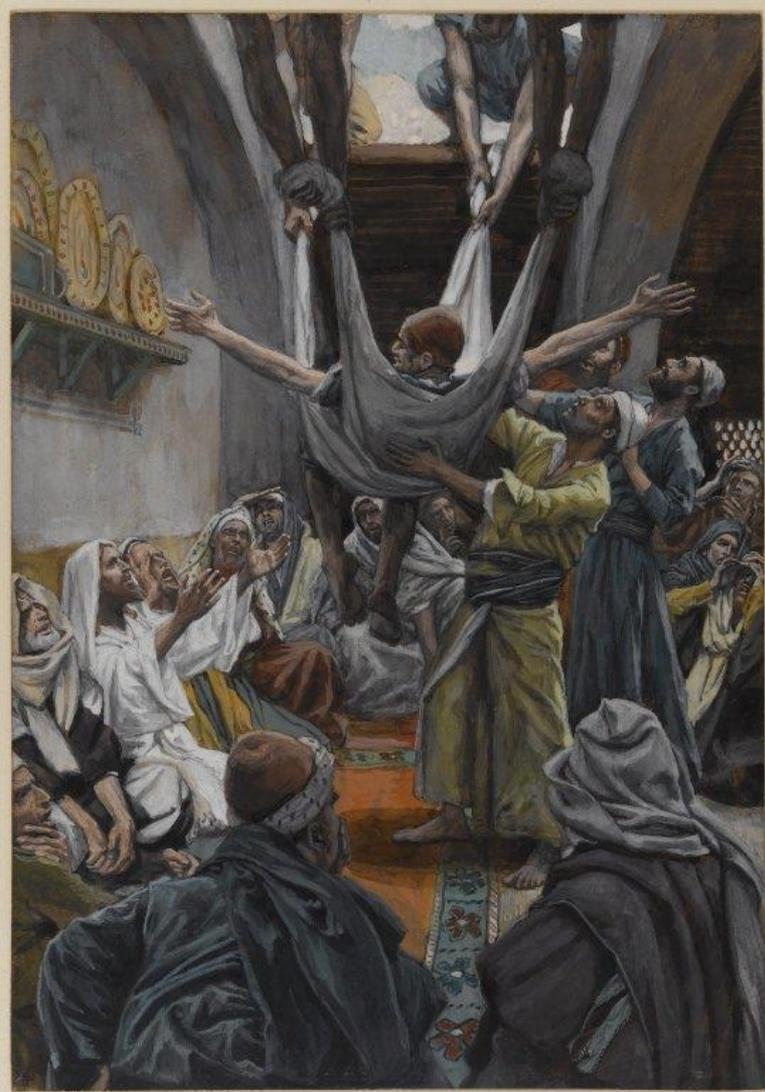
A close-up photograph of a stone architectural detail, likely a frieze or cornice, featuring intricate carvings of acanthus leaves and scrolls. The stone is a warm, reddish-brown color with some weathering and discoloration. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

Tim Collins

<http://www.pas.Rochester.edu/~tim/study/study.html>

WHO IS JESUS?

Jesus heals the paralytic



●

Tonight: *The Healing of the Paralytic*

❧

Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26

Opening with prayer, followed by song

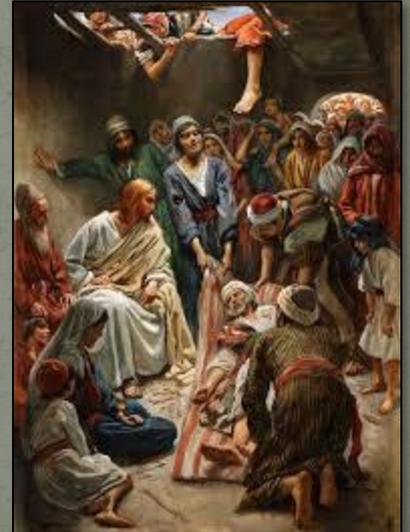
Be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God.

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

Why this story?

This story reveals what we want to know about any historic figure

- What Jesus calls himself and why
- How Jesus responds to interruption...
- ...by desperate people with an agenda
- How Jesus pulls off the impossible task of assuming a prerogative of God alone
- How Jesus handles hostile authorities (a MLK moment)
- The origin of the conflict which would lead to his state-sanctioned murder



A simple mistake tied sin and sickness in Jewish thought

- God is both sovereign and just, right? So sickness must be the result of sin! (Not biblical—e.g. 2 Kings 13:14)
 - ❖ Rabbi Chija ben Abba: “No sick person is cured from sickness until all his sins have been forgiven him”
 - ❖ Rabbi Alexander: “The sick does not arise from his sickness until his sins are forgiven”
- This led to the bizarre theology of prenatal sin
 - ❖ What about someone born disabled? The sins of the father are not visited upon the child—so s/he sinned in the womb, right?
- The question is not crazy; the popular alternative has God allowing disabilities and diseases for no reason at all



Cultural background

This is a timely topic

sickness in Jewish thought

A simple

- God is the result of the resurrection
- Rabbi Amarnath Amarasingam
- Rabbi Jacques Deletréz
- This led to the question of why God did not stop a pandemic, allowing for the possibility of an alternative



WASHINGTONPOST.COM
How NIH chief Francis Collins is trying to get people of faith to wake up to coronavirus realities

John Poggio, Sue Collins and 4 others · 2 Comments

Like · Comment · Share

Nathan Dickson Reporter: "Aren't you concerned that you could catch the coronavirus?"
 Woman in car: "No. I'm covered in Jesus' blood."
 Jesus: "My blood does not protect against Covid-19..." See More

TWITTER.COM
 Amarnath Amarasingam on Twitter

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Jacques Deletréz In God, who did not stop a pandemic, we trust.

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The sins of the father are visited on the children, right?
 An alternative has God no reason at all



Cultural background

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- God is the result of the resurrection
- Rabbi Amarnath Amarasingam
- Rabbi Jacques Deletré
- This led to the question of why God allowed suffering
- The question of why God allowed suffering

Tim Collins
April 5 at 11:30 AM

Here is an articulate person of faith



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Jesus' response: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him."

Not a general theology of suffering, but an indication of trust that God has a plan

The sins of the father are imputed in the womb, right?

This account occurs at the end of a string of healings

52. THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC.		
Matt. 9:1-8	Mark 2:1-12 (160-65, 84, p. 31f.)	Luke 5:17-26 (112-56, 84, p. 31f.)
1 And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city.	1 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them.	17 On one of those days, as he was teaching, there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judaea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.
2 And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed;	3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.	18 And behold, men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; 19 but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.
and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."	4 And when they could not get near him, because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay.	20 And when he saw their faith he said, "My son, your sins are forgiven you."
3 And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming."	5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven."	21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?"
4 But Jesus, knowing* their thoughts,	6 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question that in your hearts? 7 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'"	22 When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'"
"Why do you think evil in your hearts? 4 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'"	8 But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he then said to the paralytic—	24 But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home."
"Rise, take up your bed and go home."	5 And he rose, and immediately went out before them all; and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.	25 And immediately he rose before them, and took up that on which he lay, and went home, glorifying God. 26 And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

- This passage follows four healing stories: a man with an unclean spirit, Peter's MIL, a leper, and various other sick and possessed people
 - ❖ These demonstrate Jesus' authority over uncleanliness, the demonic, disease, etc.
- This passage begins as such then takes an abrupt right turn into controversy which again speaks to Jesus' authority

This account occurs at the end of a string of healings

This passage follows four healing stories: a man with an unclean spirit, Peter's MIL, a leper, and various other sick and possessed people

These demonstrate Jesus' authority over disease, etc.

When takes an adversary which again

Time to analyze...

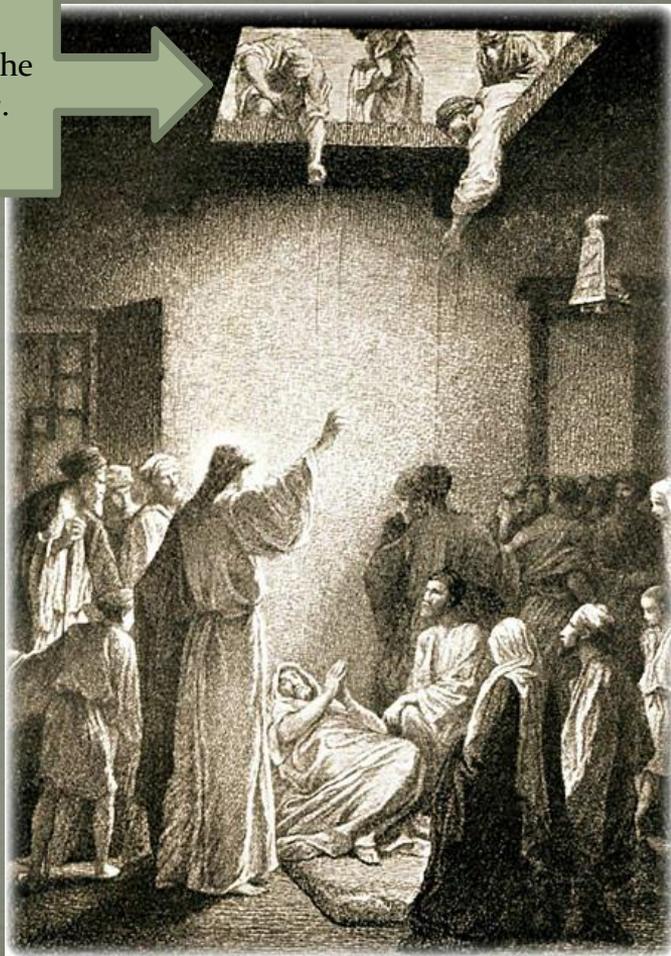


speaks to Jesus' authority

32. THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC.

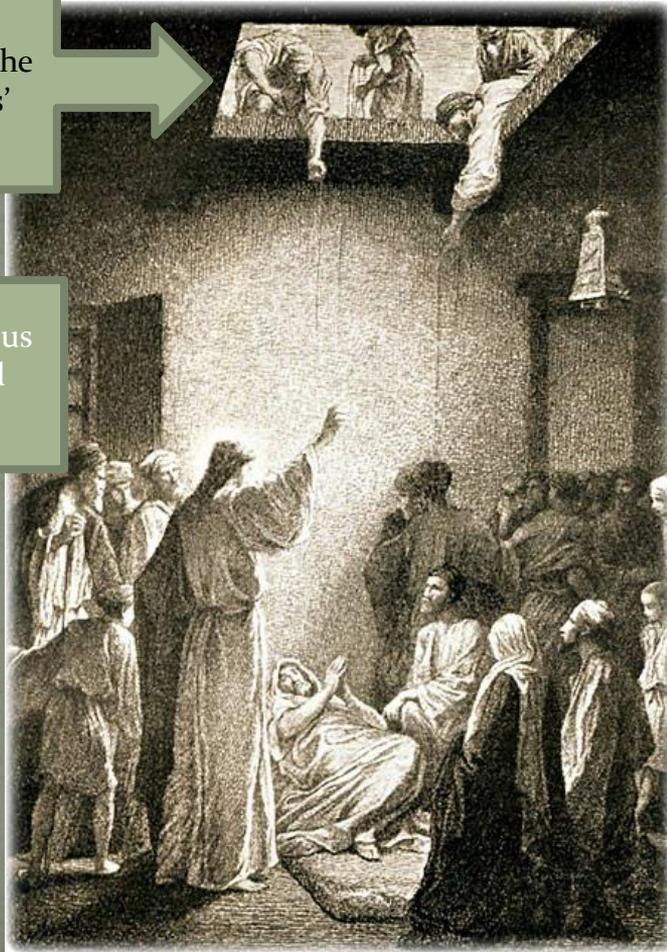
<p>Matt. 9:1-8</p> <p>1 And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city.</p> <p>2 And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed;</p> <p>and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."</p> <p>3 And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming!"</p> <p>4 But Jesus, knowing* their thoughts,</p> <p>5 said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? 6 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?' 7 But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he then said to the paralytic—</p> <p>"Rise, take up your bed and go home."</p> <p>8 And he rose and went home. 9 When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.</p>	<p>Mark 2:1-12 (1:40-45; 2:1, 3:1f.)</p> <p>1 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them.</p> <p>3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.</p> <p>4 And when they could get near him because of the crowd, removed the roof above, and when they had made an opening, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay.</p> <p>5 And when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."</p> <p>6 Now some of the scribes sitting there, questioning their hearts, 7 "Why does man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"</p> <p>8 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk?' 10 But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—</p> <p>"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home."</p> <p>11 And he rose, and immediately took up that on which he lay, and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"</p>	<p>Luke 5:17-26 (5:27-32; 8:45; 9:1f.)</p> <p>17 On one of those days, as he was teaching, there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.</p> <p>18 And behold, men were</p>
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Jesus is
impressed by the
man's *friends*.
Why?



Jesus is
impressed by the
man's friends'
faith.

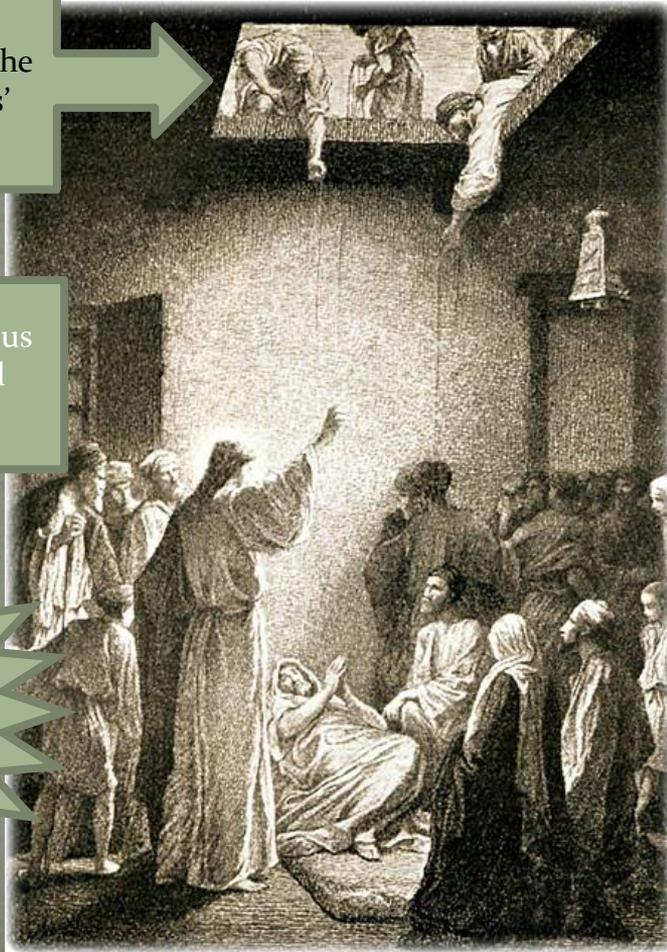
How could Jesus
tell they had
faith?

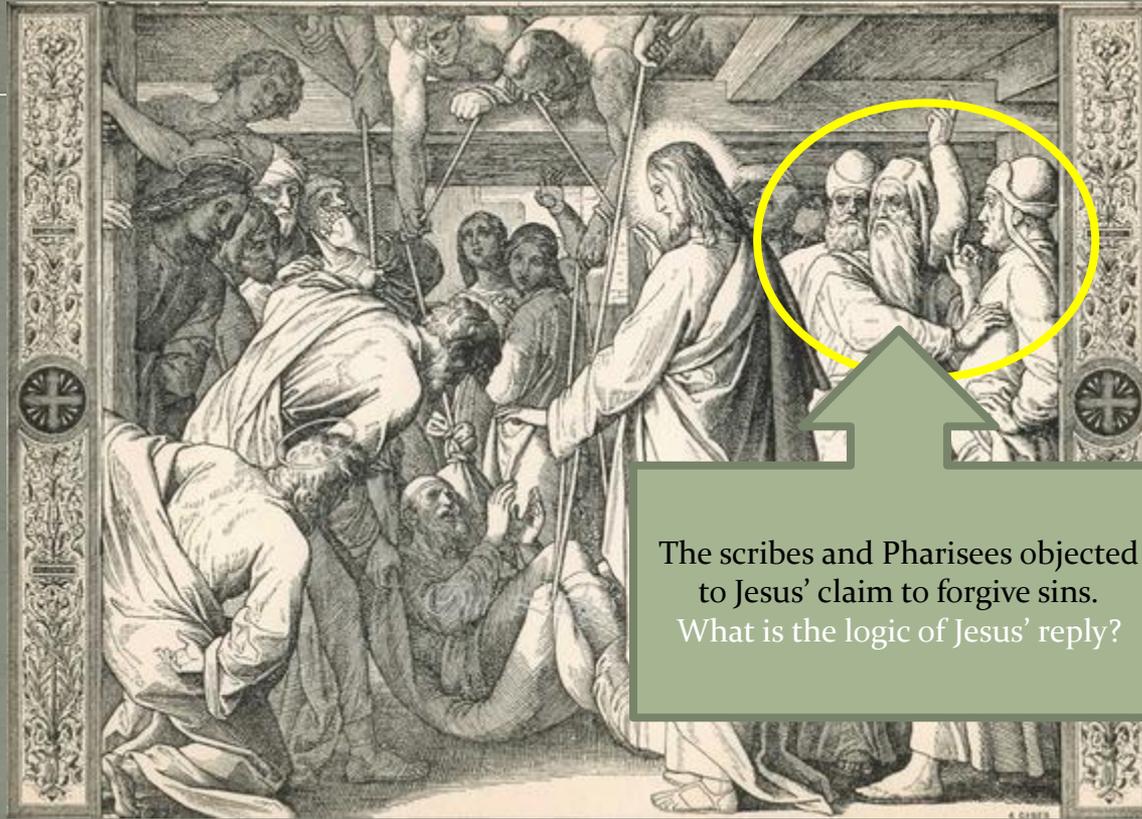


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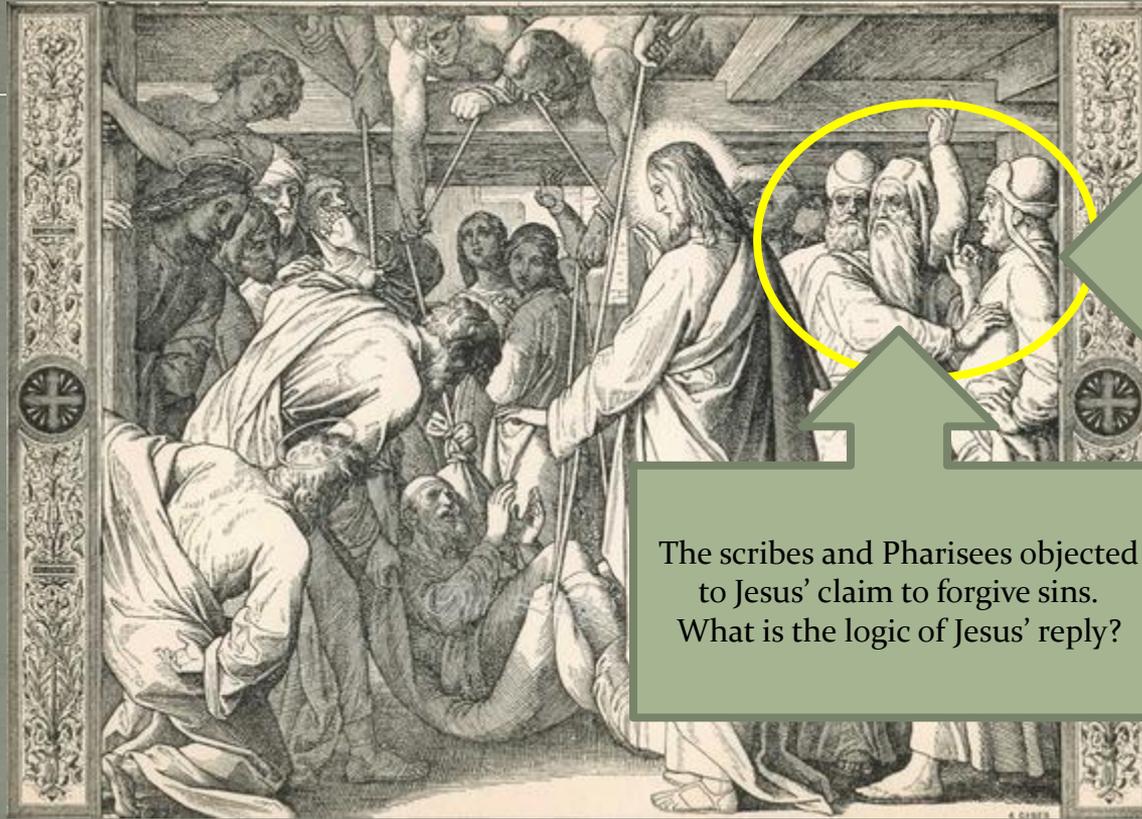
How could Jesus
tell they had
faith?

trust
+ action
faith





The scribes and Pharisees objected to Jesus' claim to forgive sins. What is the logic of Jesus' reply?

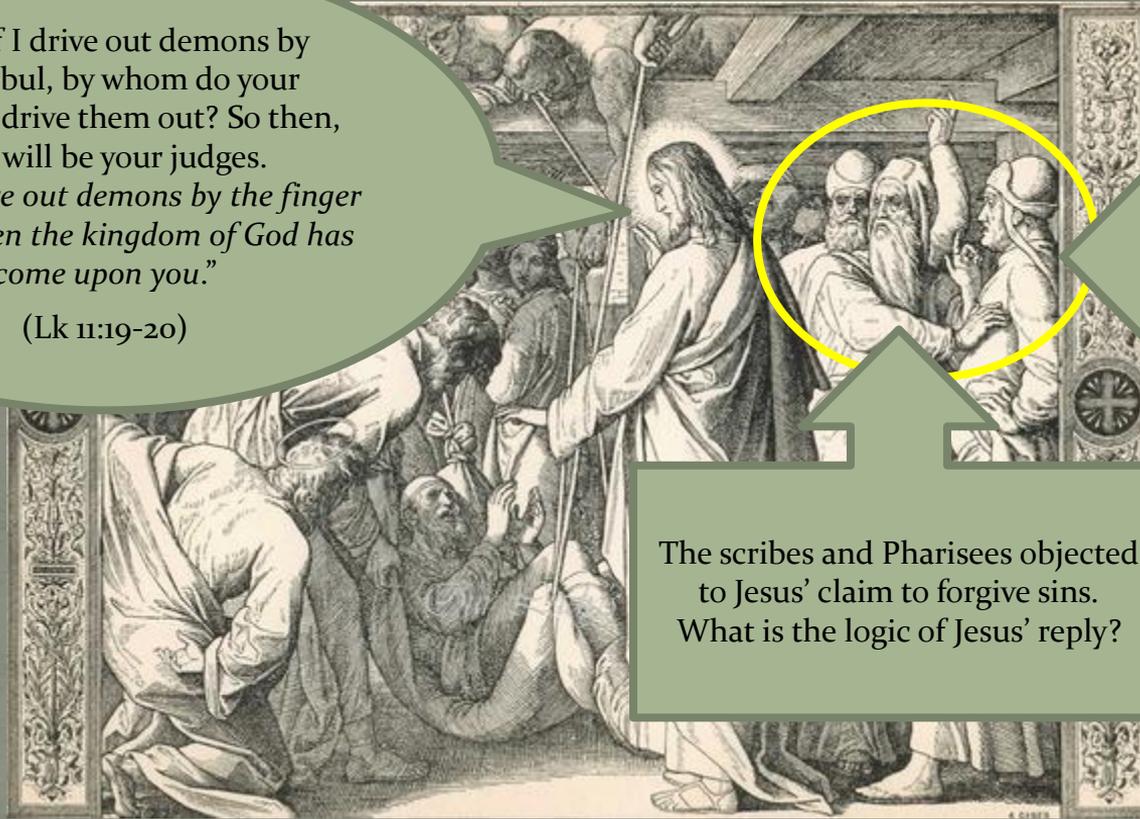


Does Jesus rebuff them because he expects them to already have figured out who he is?

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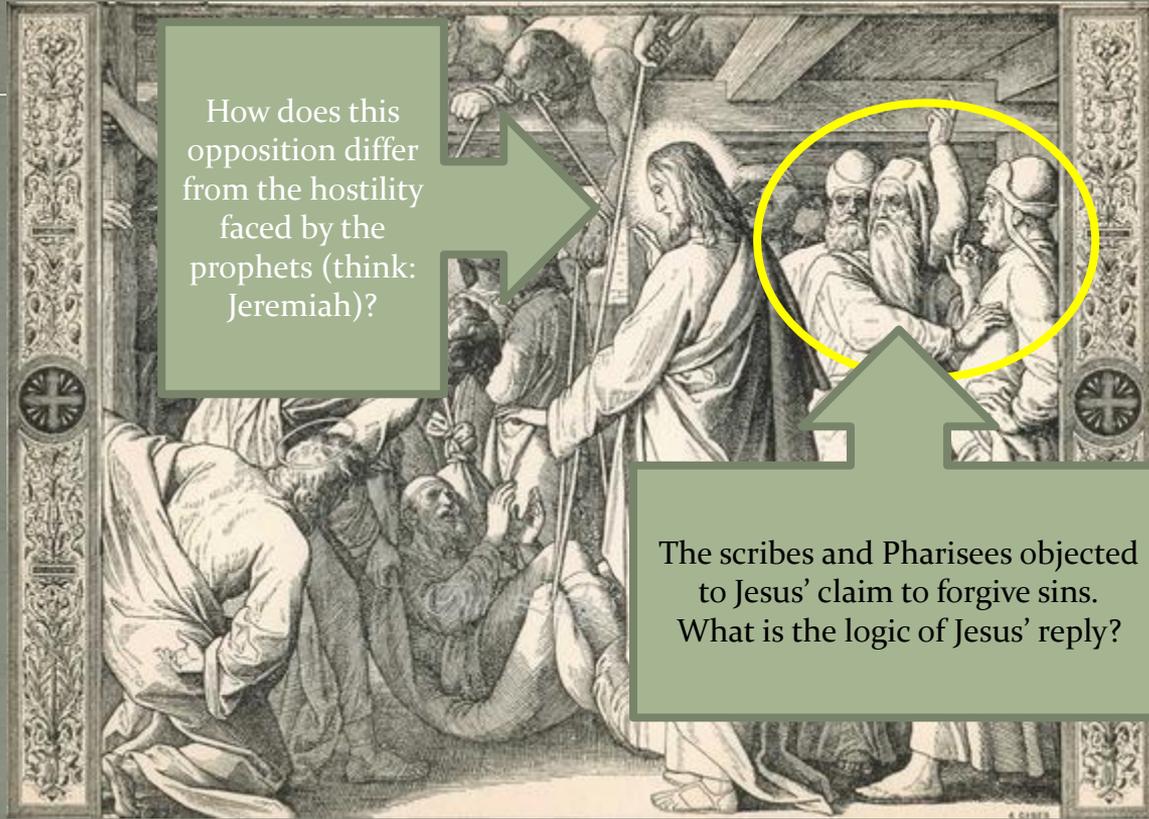
“Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

(Lk 11:19-20)



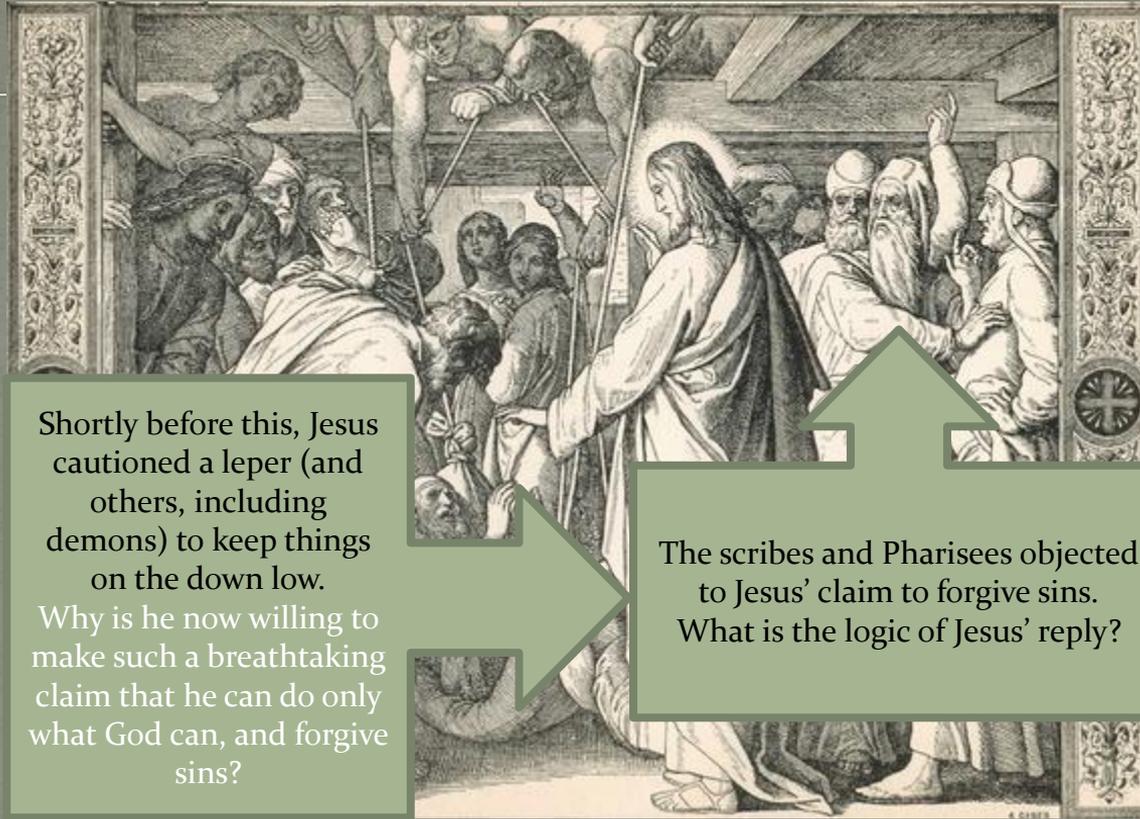
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The scribes and Pharisees objected to Jesus' claim to forgive sins. What is the logic of Jesus' reply?



How does this opposition differ from the hostility faced by the prophets (think: Jeremiah)?

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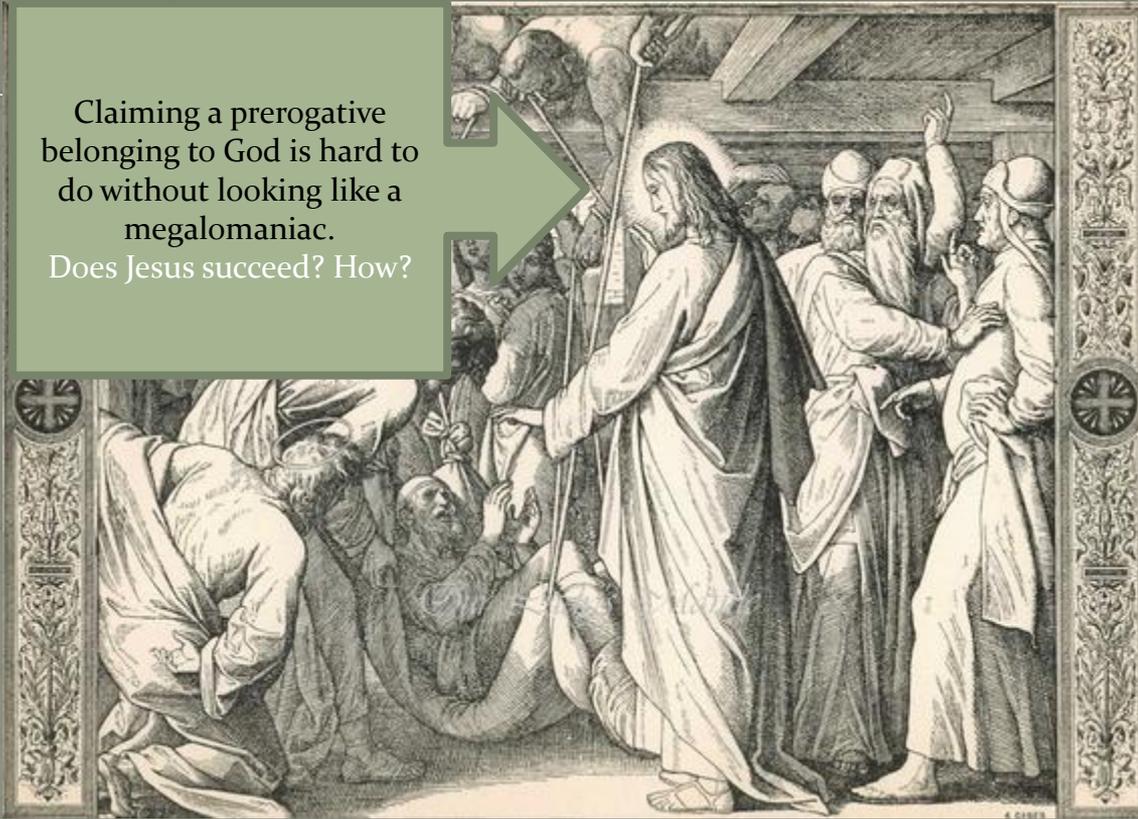


Shortly before this, Jesus cautioned a leper (and others, including demons) to keep things on the down low.

Why is he now willing to make such a breathtaking claim that he can do only what God can, and forgive sins?

The scribes and Pharisees objected to Jesus' claim to forgive sins. What is the logic of Jesus' reply?

Claiming a prerogative
belonging to God is hard to
do without looking like a
megalomaniac.
Does Jesus succeed? How?



Jesus responds to
the request for
*healing with
forgiveness.*

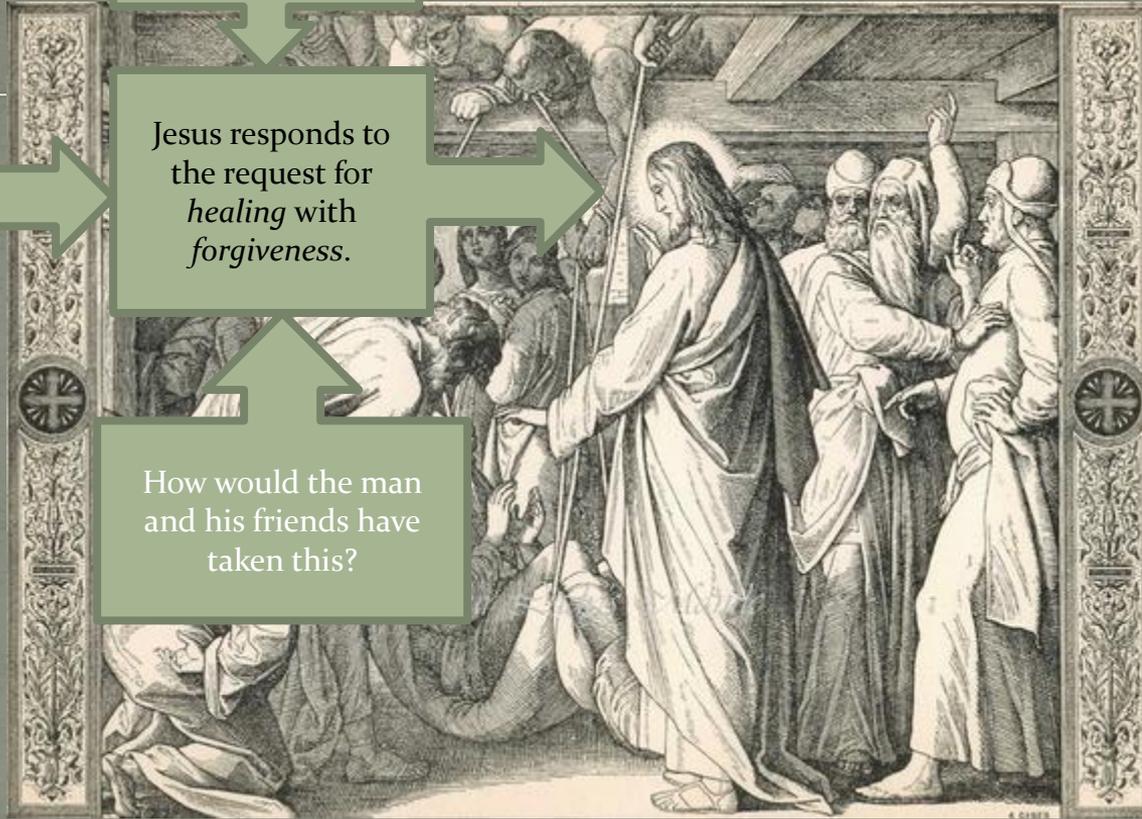


Was this cruel?

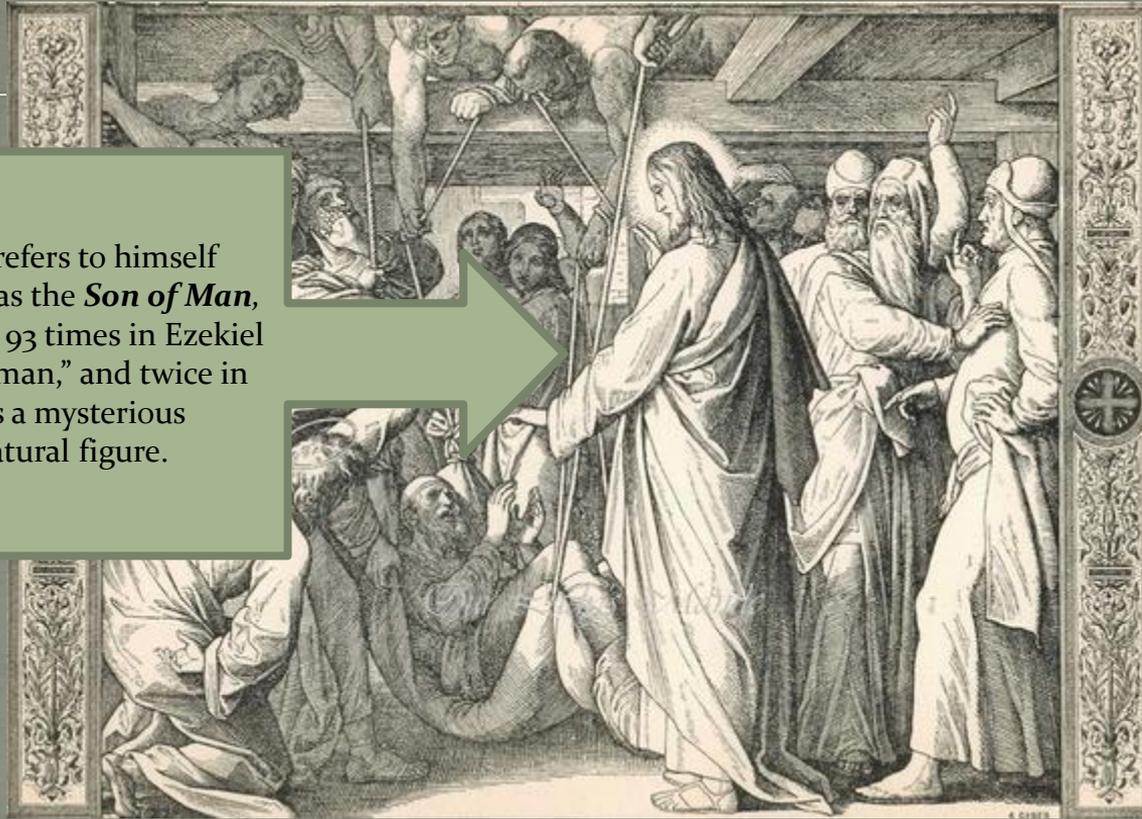
What clues
does the text
provide?

Jesus responds to
the request for
*healing with
forgiveness.*

How would the man
and his friends have
taken this?

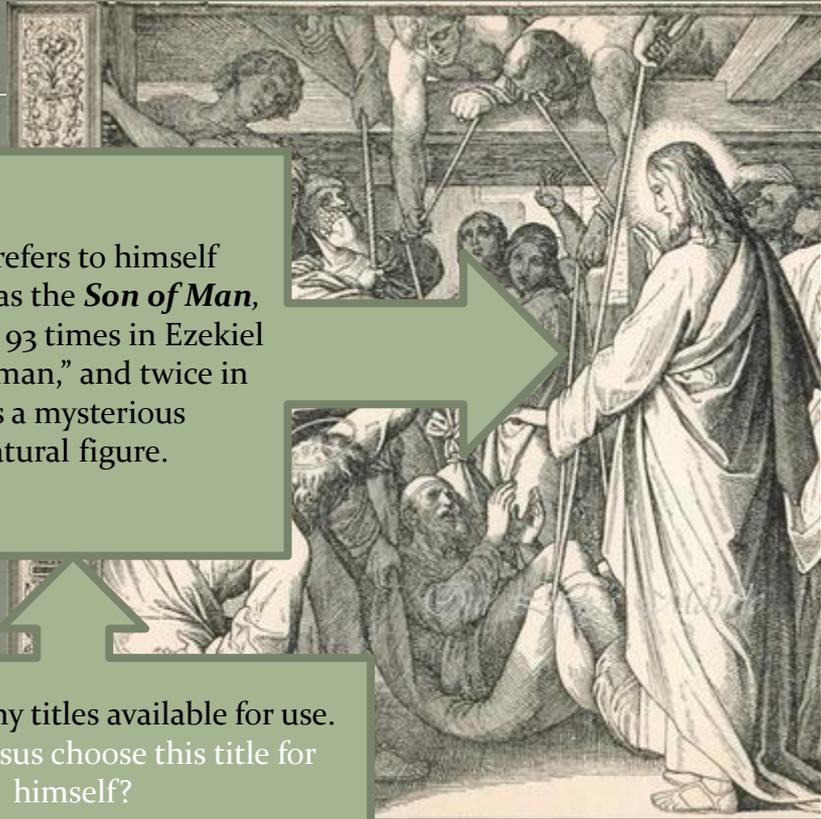


Now Jesus refers to himself enigmatically as the ***Son of Man***, which appears 93 times in Ezekiel meaning “human,” and twice in Daniel as a mysterious supernatural figure.

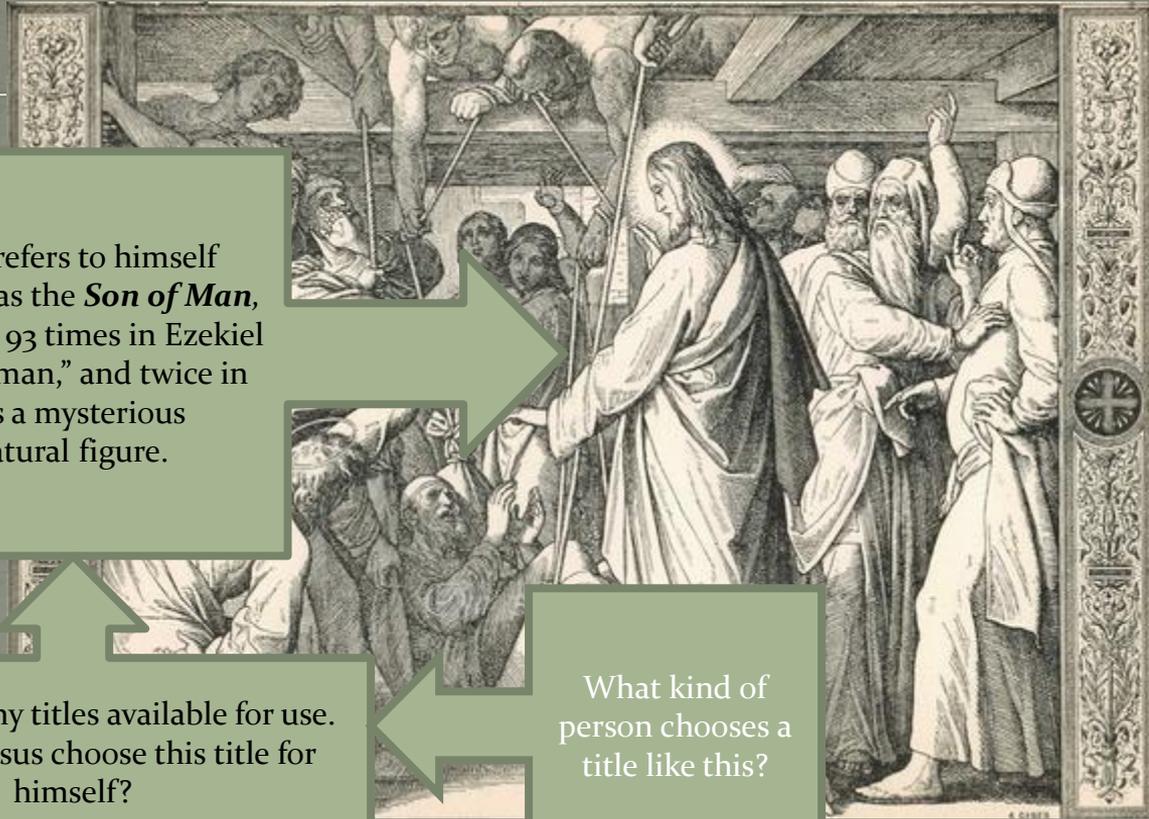


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Jesus had many titles available for use. Why does Jesus choose this title for himself?



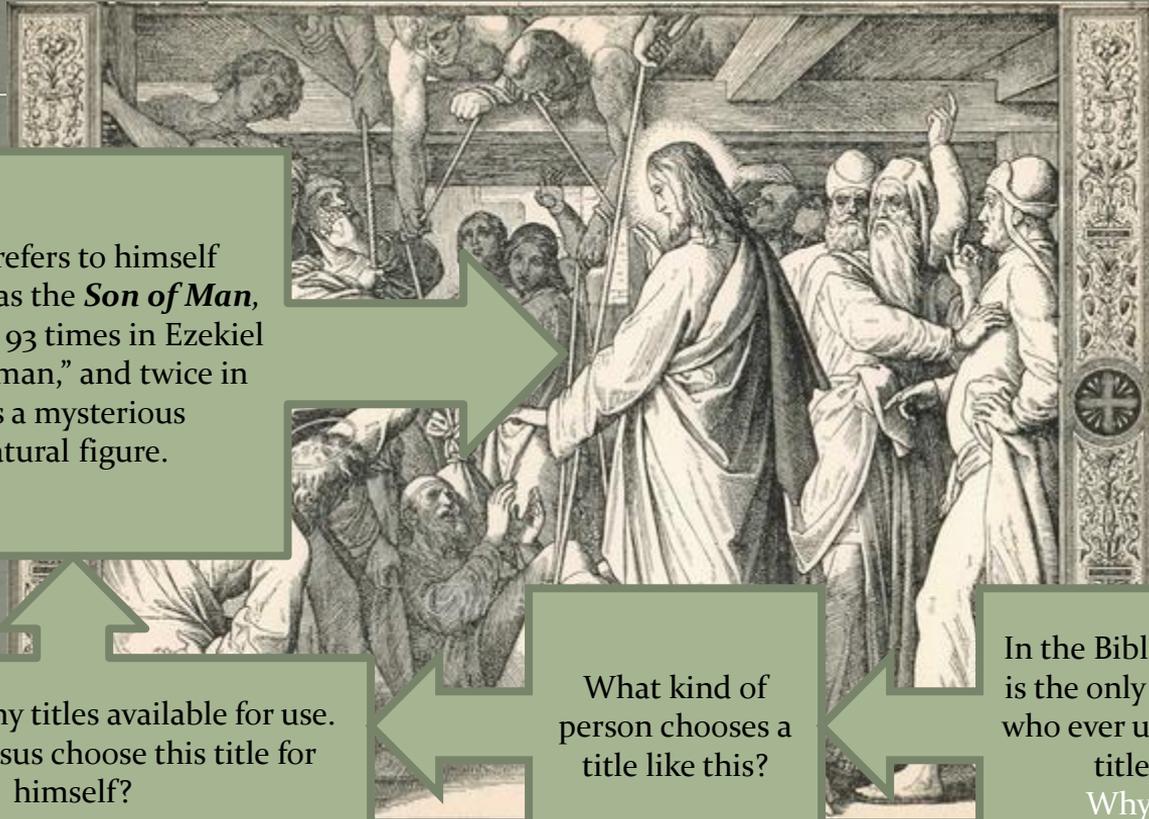
And thou shalt
call his name Jesus,
Prince of Peace, Mighty God,
Wonderful Counselor, Holy One,
Lamb of God, Prince of Life,
Lord God Almighty,
Lion of the Tribe of Judah,
Root of David, Word of Life,
Author and Finisher of Our Faith,
Advocate, The Way, Dayspring,
Lord of All, I Am, Son of God,
Shepherd and Bishop of Souls,
Messiah, The Truth, Saviour,
Chief Cornerstone, King of Kings,
Righteous Judge, Light of the World,
Head of the Church, Morning Star,
Sun of Righteousness, Lord
Jesus Christ, Chief Shepherd,
Resurrection and Life,
Horn of Salvation, Governor,
The Alpha and Omega.



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What kind of person chooses a title like this?

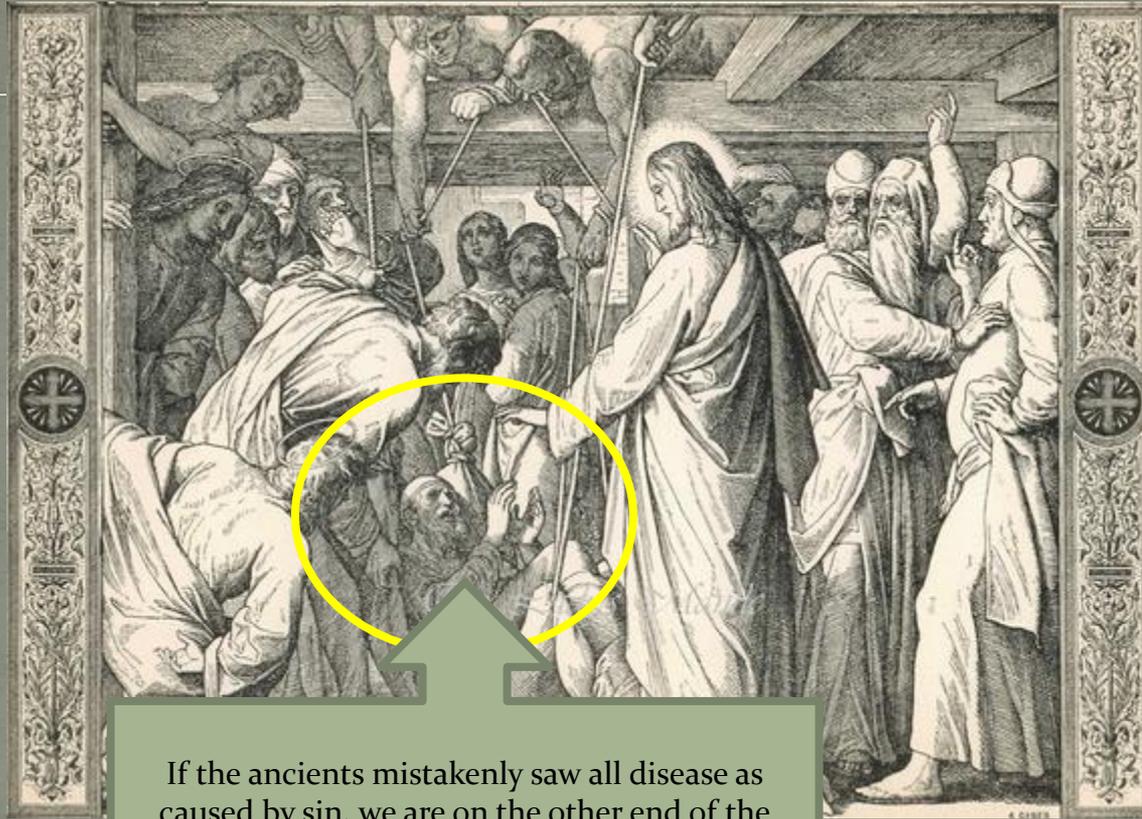


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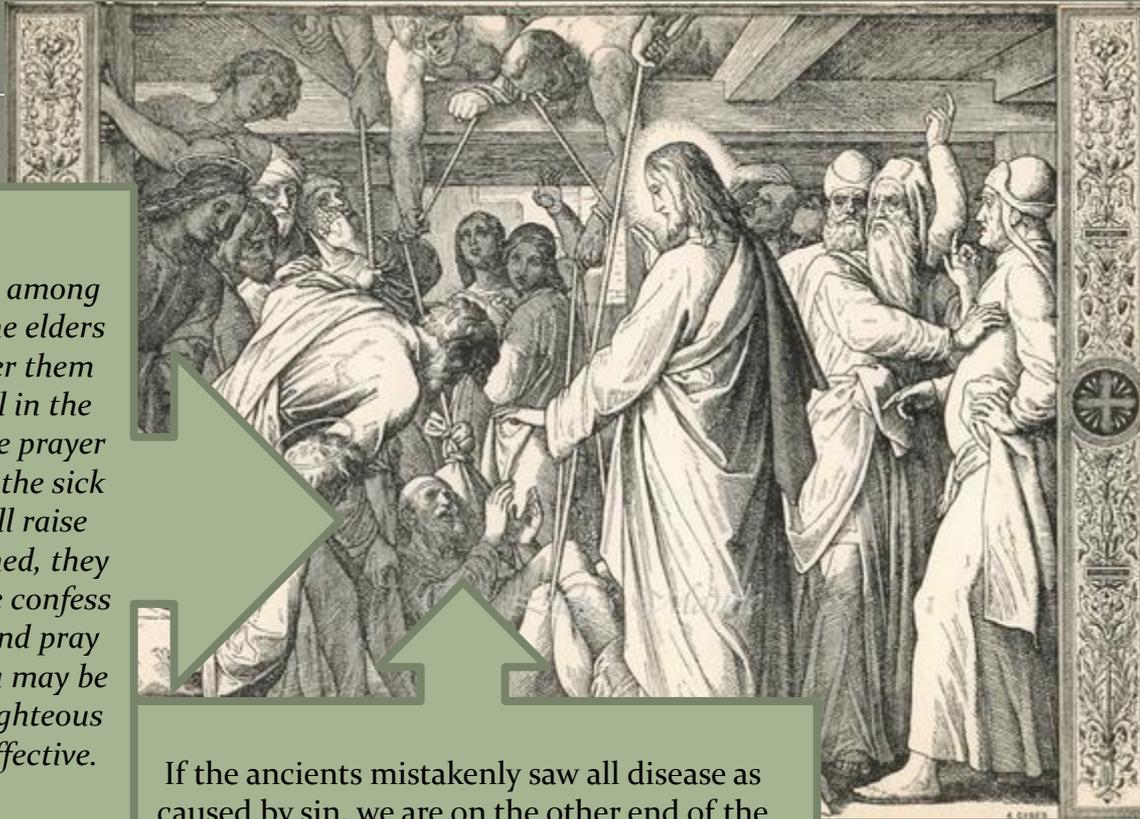
What kind of person chooses a title like this?

In the Bible, Jesus is the only person who ever uses this title. Why?



If the ancients mistakenly saw all disease as caused by sin, we are on the other end of the spectrum, seeing no connection at all.

James 5:14-16: *Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*



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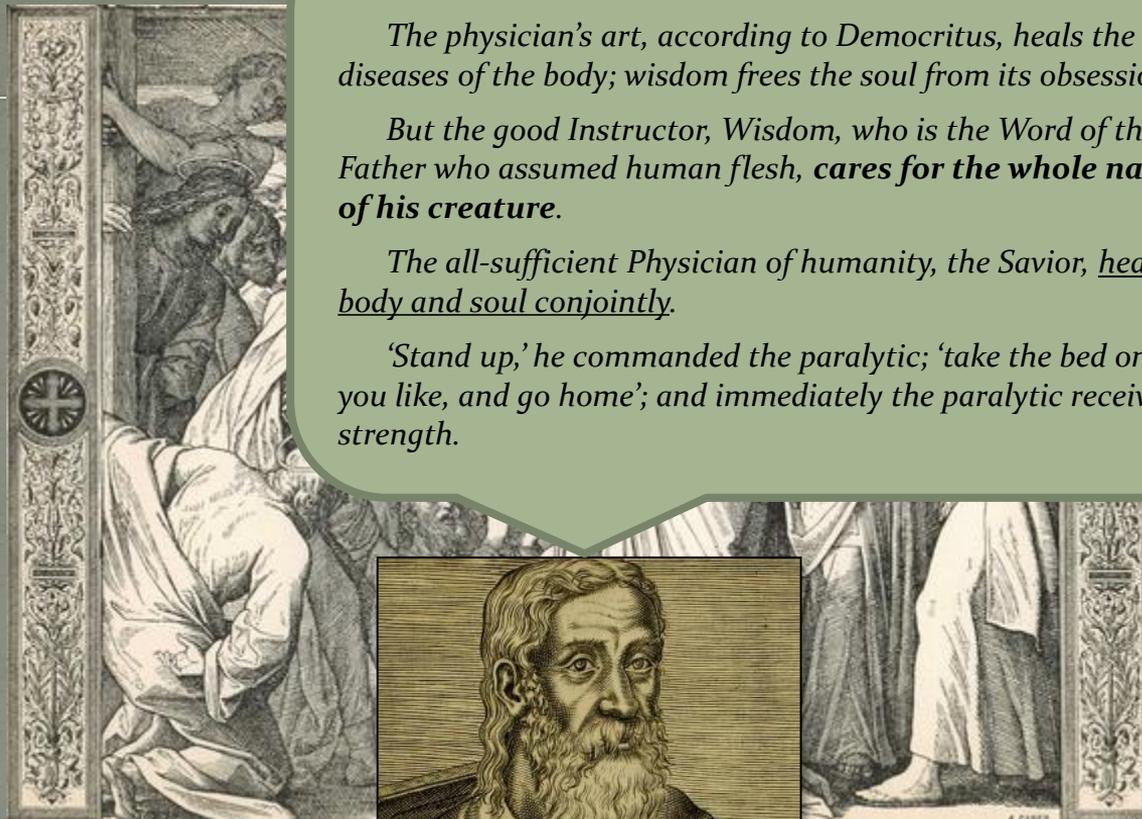
Clement of Alexandria, 2nd cent.:

The physician's art, according to Democritus, heals the diseases of the body; wisdom frees the soul from its obsessions.

*But the good Instructor, Wisdom, who is the Word of the Father who assumed human flesh, **cares for the whole nature of his creature.***

The all-sufficient Physician of humanity, the Savior, heals both body and soul conjointly.

'Stand up,' he commanded the paralytic; 'take the bed on which you like, and go home'; and immediately the paralytic received strength.



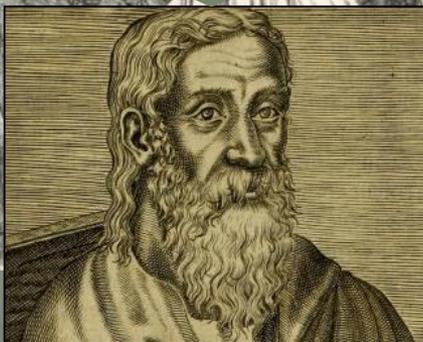
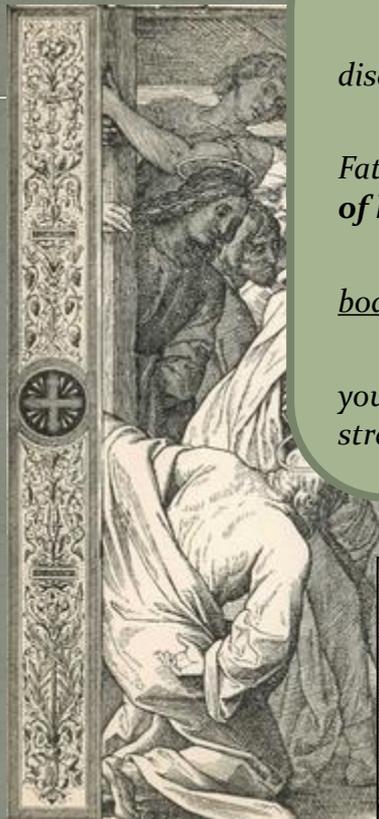
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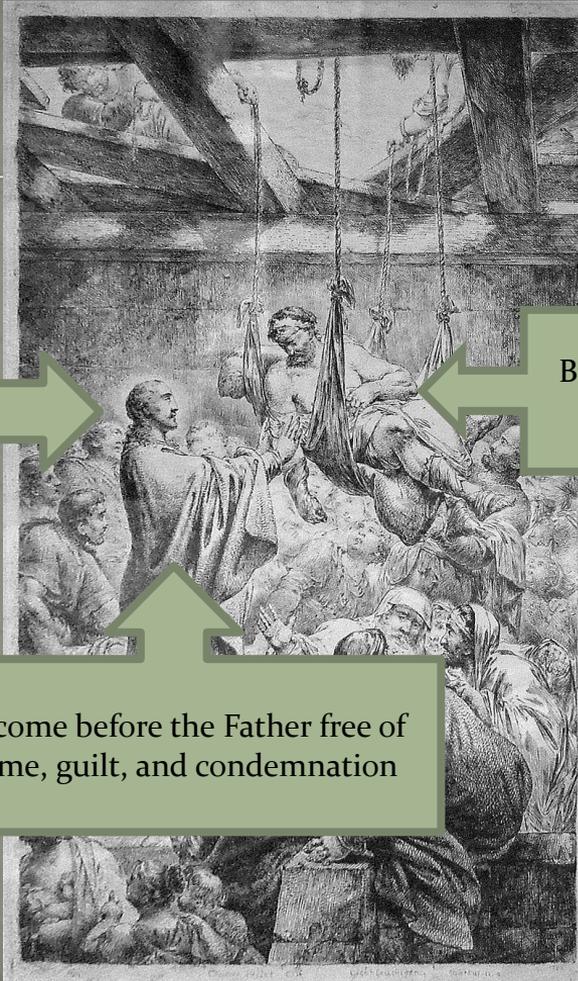
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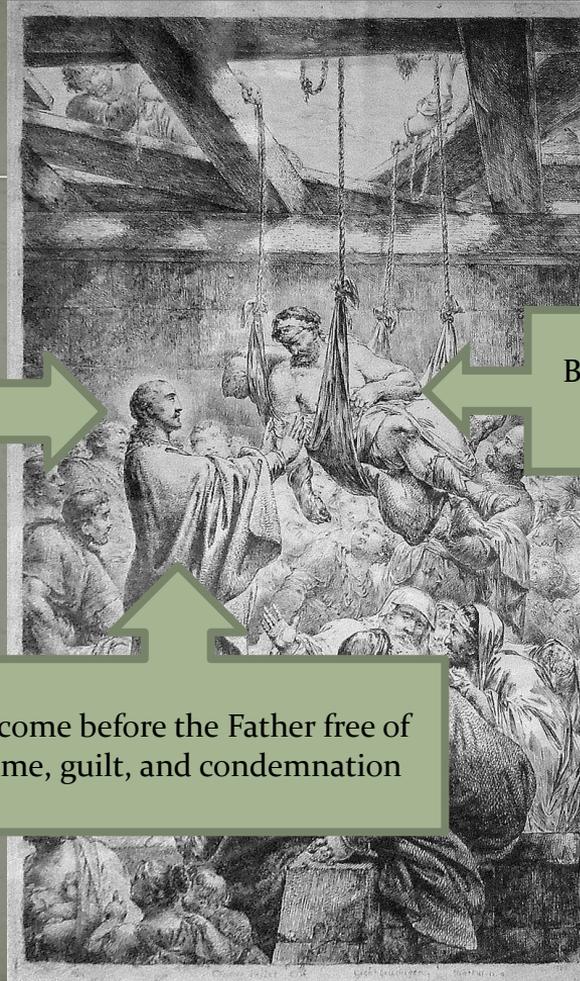
Aside from smoking, obesity, and STDs, how do body and spirit affect one another?



What does Jesus' authority over sin mean for us?

But we can still get trapped by our sins, *paralyzed*.

We come before the Father free of shame, guilt, and condemnation

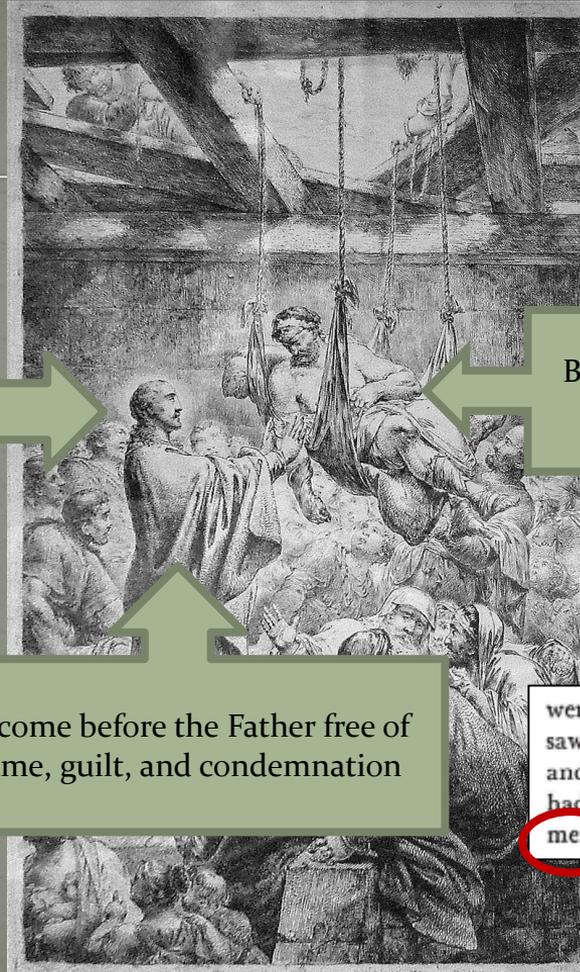


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What can we do?



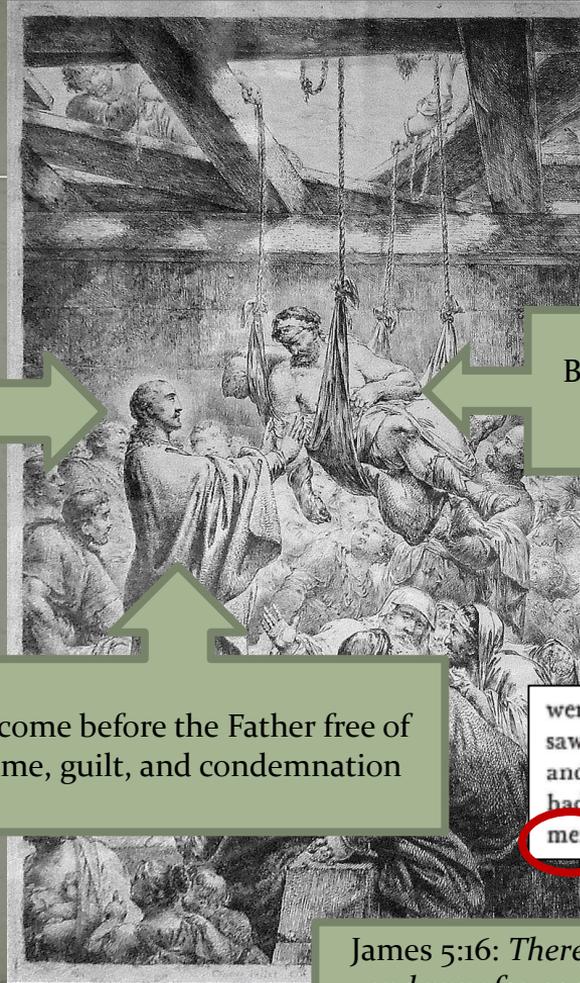
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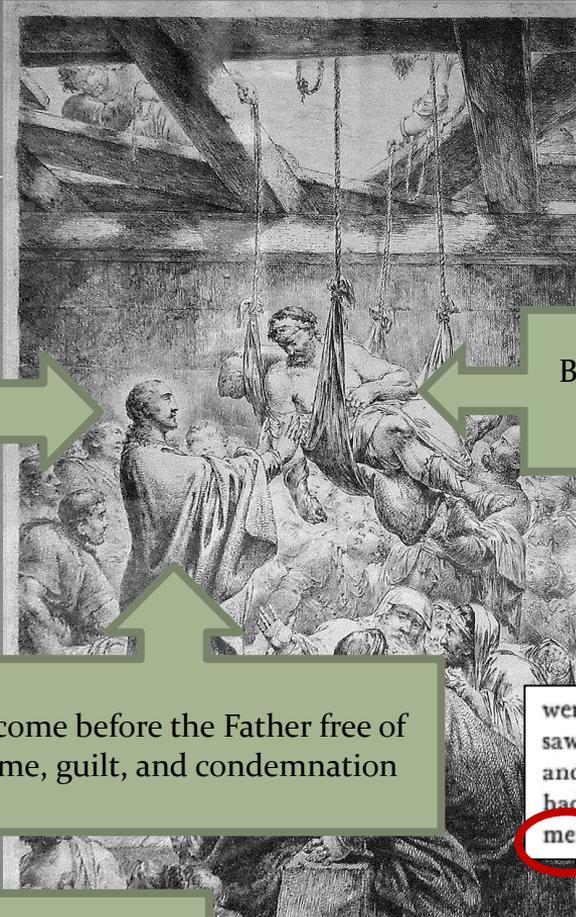
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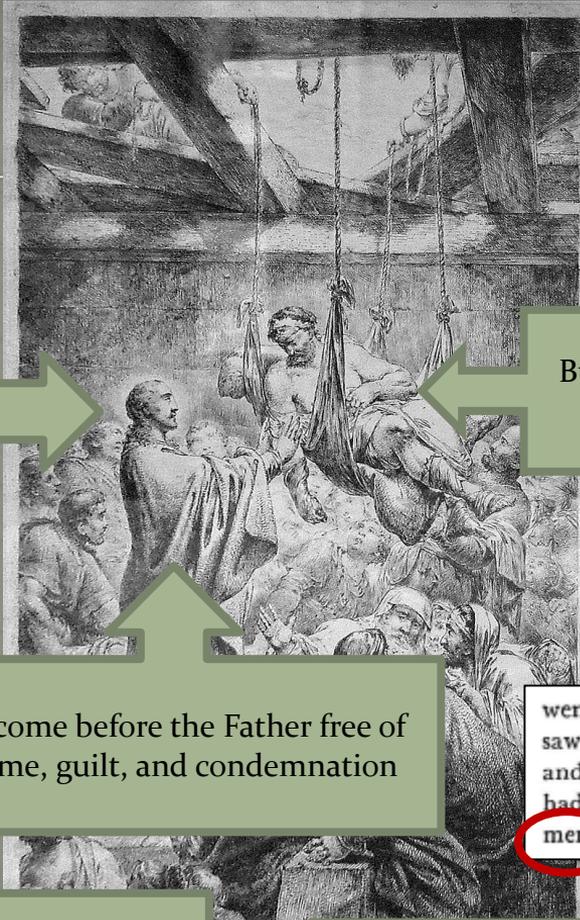
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Isolation is dangerous when facing sin and shame.

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Jesus is the kind of leader who empowers us to minister to one another

Isolation is dangerous when facing sin and shame.

James 5:16: *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*

The Chosen clip

- Did it capture at least the main point of the account?
- Any bloopers or errors?
- How did it differ from your imagination?
- Was there anything you liked?



What have we learned about who Jesus is?



- Suffering Servant of Isaiah:
 - ❖ *A bruised reed he will not break*



- Jesus and the Gentiles:
 - ❖ *Demoniac: Jesus was an exorcist*
 - ❖ *Canaanite woman: Jesus is nuanced and may push us to commit*



- Jesus and his Family:
 - ❖ *Jesus the tween: He was a normal kid but also had understanding of his mission from God*
 - ❖ *Jesus knows what he is about, and doesn't play favorites*

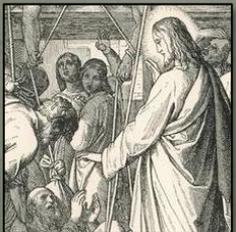
What have we learned about who Jesus is?



- Walking on Water:
 - ❖ *Jesus as miracle worker who wants us to trust him; he's our shepherd and comforter*



- Jesus calls his disciples:
 - ❖ *Jesus who knows things about you and your future even you don't know*
 - ❖ *Jesus, who leads us forward with questions ("come and see") and often wants us to make the next move*



- Jesus heals the trans-ceiling paralytic:

?

In times of trouble, Huddle!



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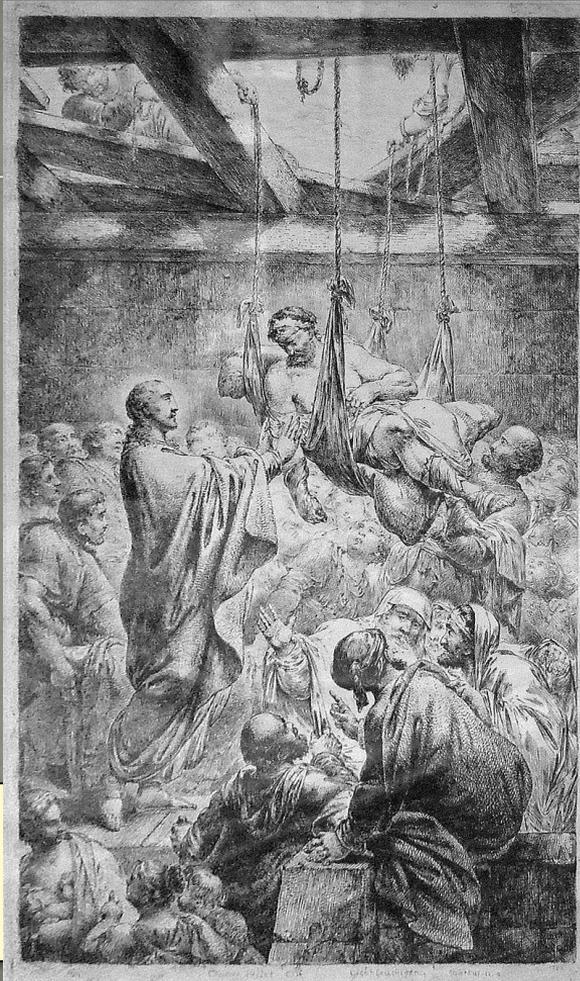


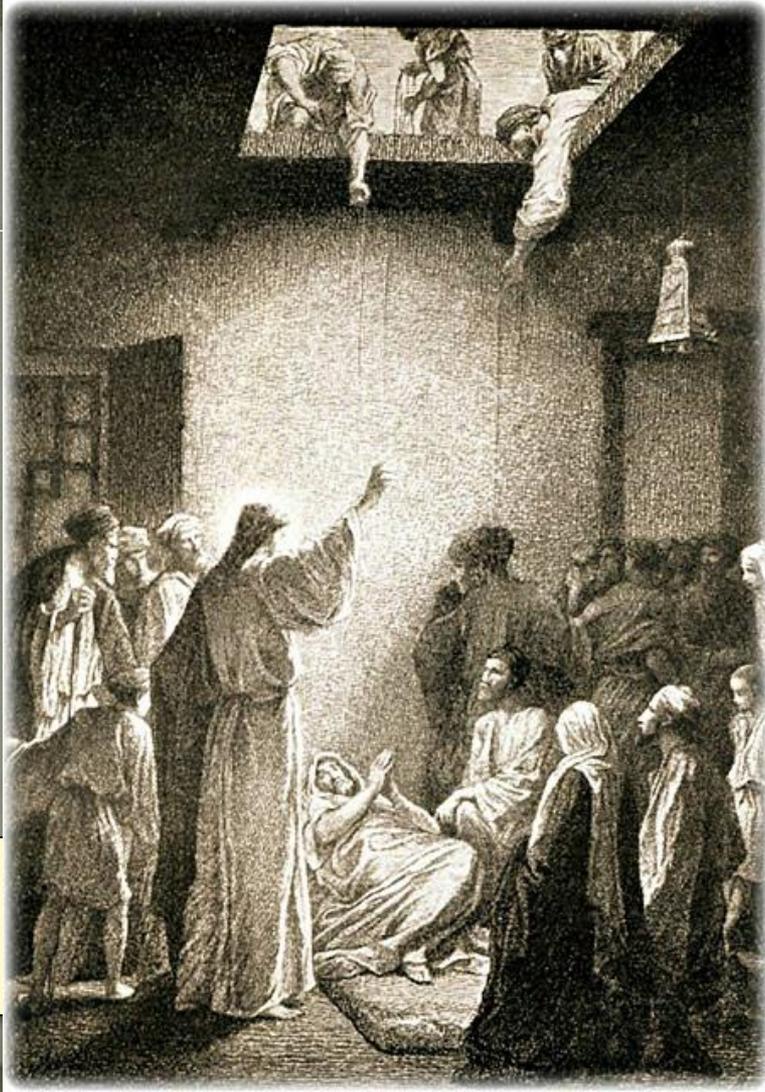
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Exegetical Notes

Context:

- In Mark, 2:1-3:6 form a single narrative of controversies and conflicts
- These follow a series of accounts demonstrating Jesus' power over various things (nature and the demonic), and here we learn of Jesus' authority over forgiveness of sins.
- In the synoptics, this is the very start of Jesus' conflict with the scribes and Pharisees.

The Passage:

- Jesus is impressed by *the friends' faith* (Mk 2:5) Hurtado: "The boldness of the four friends is matched by the strangeness of Jesus' final statement. We expect him to heal the disabled man, but instead he forgives the man's sins. And this introduces what is clearly the main value of the story for Mark. What appears at first to be a miracle story with interesting color suddenly develops into a major controversy story regarding Jesus' authority to forgive sins."
 - Note that this is a perfect worked example of faith as a combination of trust and action: they trust Jesus can help and then act. Both are needed here or there would be no genuine faith.
- Hurtado again: "So Jesus seems to say, 'Do you think that this is merely talk and that it is easy to pretend to have such authority? Allow me to give a tangible demonstration of the authority involved' (2:8-11)."
- The word "authority" "already mentioned as important in Mark, reappears in this story" (see 1:21, 27 earlier....). Here again this question is whether Jesus has the right to act as he does, and in this case it is a matter of acting as God—no small matter!"

Exegetical Notes

- **Keener: “Jesus knows that supplicants need forgiveness even more than physical healing (9:2).”**
 - Was Jesus using this man to make a point or perceiving in the man a genuine deeper need? Did the man perceive his need for forgiveness? Given the cultural believe that disease was causally connected to sin, probably yes.
 - Keener: “The Gospels do not argue that sickness was always a direct personal result of sin (2 Ki 13:14 [Elisha’s final illness]), as many people in Jesus’ day, both Jewish (Ps 103:3; Jn 9:2; 4Q510; 4QPrNab; m. ‘Abot 2:7; t. Ber. 6:3; Mek. Nez. 18:55-58; etc.) and Gentile (...), thought. That Jesus did not always pause to forgive sins shows that he did not always connect disease and sin in a causal relationship; but Jesus’ healing of the human body also functions as a dramatic illustration of healing for the human character (13:15). The Gospels do, however, suggest that when these problems are intertwined, God wishes to deal with both (Jas. 5:14-16).” [289]
 - So the ancients joined body and soul. We separate them completely. The NT allows some connection (James 5:14-16) but doesn’t require it. So the following quote is useful:
 - Clement of Alexandria: “The physician’s art, according to Democritus, heals the diseases of the body; wisdom frees the soul from its obsessions. But the good Instructor, Wisdom, who is the Word of the Father who assumed human flesh, cares for the whole nature of his creature. The all-sufficient Physician of humanity, the Savior, heals both body and soul conjointly. ‘Stand up,’ he commanded the paralytic; ‘take the bed on which you like, and go home’; and immediately the paralytic received strength.”
- We see here again a range of responses: whereas in the preceding exorcism in Gadara they wanted nothing to do with him, here the scribes are scandalized and others praise God (Mt 9:8). But none of these is adequate (as Green points out); only complete allegiance is sufficient.

Exegetical Notes

Jesus, Person and Mission:

- This passage tells us about Jesus as a person and is very interesting for this reason:
 - How he behaves when interrupted!
 - How he responds to a desperate person
 - How he responds to critics bringing a very serious and understandable accusation—especially in his first duel with the scribes and Pharisees (and it gives us some sense of where blame lies for that conflict)
 - How he pulls off “acting as God”
 - How he chooses to talk about himself. Hurtado: “The title [Son of Man] conveys the scandal of Jesus, that this mere man (in the eyes of his uncomprehending contemporaries) should teach and act with such radical and shocking authority.”
- The passage is interesting because to the casual modern reader, it appears cruel. Clearly the man and his friends want physical healing. Jesus offers them something completely different. So a quick reading will leave us feeling Jesus is uncaring or even cruel. Put bluntly, this is due in part to our believe that the physical is *paramount*. We are used to not worrying about our sins, and certainly wouldn’t connect sin and suffering.
- Son of Man
 - No one else ever uses this title of Jesus—only he of himself, and only in the gospels, but there, often
- Jesus places himself in danger much the way the prophets did. There is a worthy comparison to be drawn here. The prophets of course had messages they needed to deliver, even if it placed them in danger, as it often did.

Exegetical Notes

Questions:

- **What *does* Jesus mean by his response to the scribes/Pharisees?**
- **Only Jesus ever uses “Son of Man”, and he does so often. Why doesn’t Paul call him that? Or Peter? The title is deliberately vague; mostly it is from Ezekiel and similar passages. But then there’s Daniel 7. And Enoch 1 picks up “Son of Man” as an important supernatural figure. So why does Jesus use this term, and why doesn’t anyone else?** [Ans: It’s an ideal term for someone who doesn’t want to come right out and say, “I am the Messiah,” for fear of a premature Palm Sunday, but who wants to let the seekers know who he is. And no one else uses it because after the crucifixion there is no need to veil Jesus’ identity that way. What does this tell us about Jesus? Well, it shows subtlety and intelligence. It is a very creative solution to a difficult problem. It shows someone who doesn’t mind being misunderstood by those who are not genuinely seeking. It indicates someone who is not dependent on others for his sense of self.]
- **Given Jesus’ general reluctance to let it be known he is the Messiah, why is he willing to make such a public claim, that he has authority to forgive sins?**
- **To the casual modern, Jesus appears cruel. Clearly, the friends hope for physical healing. Jesus generously offers something they didn’t ask for but appears to leave the physical without remedy. Was Jesus being cruel?**
- **It may be worth presenting Clement’s quote above and thinking about a more subtle corrective to the modern complete divorce of body and soul. Sometimes sin may lead to physical ailments. Aside from smoking and obesity, can we think of a situation in which we might be hurting ourselves physically due to sin (e.g. in the form of incorrect beliefs at the very least, and possibly due to actual sin or estrangement from God)?** [Bear in mind James 5:14-16; Mt 13:15; John 9:2-3.]
- **Are we meant to understand that Jesus had *supernatural* knowledge of the scribes and Pharisees’ thoughts? Mt, reminiscent of Mt 12:25, makes it almost sound like he did, though the text doesn’t require this. John 2:24-25 suggests that Jesus was very perceptive regarding the hearts of those he interacted with. Would it be more powerful for Jesus to have revealed knowledge or to be a person of unusual perceptiveness and intuition?**
- **What does Jesus’ authority over sin mean for us? Yes, we can approach God. But we can still get trapped in our sin and guilt, which in turn can lead to paralysis. What sins do we feel are beyond change?**

Exegetical Notes

Other things one could pursue:

- Survey passages in Mark which use the word “authority”

Fun facts and trivia:

- Keener: Because Jesus is responding to the friends’ faith, “Some have applied the principle in this text to infant baptism (e.g. Richardson 1958: 360-62); others would be more skeptical of that application unless more explicit apostolic evidence supports it.” [288]
- Keener again: “Luke’s ‘tiles’ portray northern Mediterranean roofs (Lk 5:19), despite their incompatibility with the story (such a roof would collapse—cf. Aristoph. *Clouds* 1486-89)!”

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