

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 5- Luke 5:17-20** 63- Saving Faith in a Paralyzed Man- Part 2

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Luke 5:17-20

Now let's look closer at this account because it's an important one. And under other circumstances- we might move through this more rapidly- but we have some "firsts" here that we need to deal with. Please look again at **Luke 5:17**:

One day He was teaching; and there were *some* Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting *there*, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and *from* Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was *present* for Him to perform healing.

Now that's how this account begins. And it's somewhat of an oblique reference because it doesn't tell us a particular place or time. But we can fill in the blanks and that's the fun of having more than one Gospel Account because **Matthew 9** and **Mark 2** record this very same event, and so by looking at them- we can fill in a little bit from those accounts. And we can also pull from **John 5** and add even further understanding.

Now first of all- the phrase "**One day**" comes from the Greek "*kai gennetos*", and it is a term that means "*And it happened,*" and it is without reference to a particular time or place. So by using this phrase- Luke is telling us that it isn't the chronology that matters here- the chronology isn't critical. It was not important to Luke that we know the sequence here.

But it is kind of interesting to know that **Mark** records this very same incident very early in the ministry of Jesus- so no doubt it happened very early in His Ministry while He was still in Galilee.

And **Matthew** tells us the place was Capernaum. **Matthew** says it was in the city of Capernaum, and **Matthew** seems to indicate to us that it happened right after Jesus returned from the land of Gerasa, or the land of the Gadarenes- where He ran in to a man who was full of demons. Remember that? And He cleaned the demons out of that man, sent them into a herd of pigs. That is a very familiar story at the end of **Matthew 8**.

So having been over there and accomplished that mighty miracle over the forces of hell and delivered that man- Jesus now comes back to Capernaum which has become sort of His hometown since He can't go back to Nazareth because they want to kill Him there. And so He's taken up residence in the town of Capernaum which is right at the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee- which is a fishing town.

And this Capernaum no longer exists because the Lord said it would be destroyed and it was. And also, Simon Peter lived there with his brother and his family, and many believed that Jesus stayed in the house of Simon Peter. And today you can find excavations where people will tell you this is likely the location of that house because traditions go way, way back to the fact that the first church in Capernaum was in Peter's house and the subsequent churches were built on top of the ruins of Peter's house.

And it's possible that that's where Jesus stayed. We know that it was in the town of Capernaum and we also know that it was early in His Galilean ministry.

Now these are not just gee whiz facts that I'm giving you- but it's important to know this stuff because this is the center of Jesus' Ministry. So this is early in His Ministry and the Message of Forgiveness from Sin is the primary Message that Jesus preached.

Now if we tie in **John 5:16**- we know also that by this time the Jews were already after Jesus. And when I say the word "Jews," I use it as the Gospel writers often used it to speak of the *leaders* of the Jews- the spiritual authorities or the Pharisees and the scribes as they are identified here- the chief priests and the Sadducees also among them- and not the average Jew walking down the street.

So Jesus had already generated a lot of heat on Himself. And this goes way back when He began His Ministry down in Judea before He ever came to Galilee. You remember that the first thing Jesus did there was to make a whip and clean out the Temple which didn't make Him

very popular with the Jewish authorities. And you can read about that in the **John 2**.

So Jesus had already raised the hackles of those leaders and it didn't go away even though He stayed in Judea for about a year. So then Jesus went up to Galilee and as He began to minister in Galilee there was an explosion of interest around Him because for all intents and purposes- Jesus literally banished all illness from the Galilee region during that period of time. And that caused a very large crowd to gather around Him.

So Jesus went from town to town to town- preaching the Gospel. And it tells us in **Luke 4:44**:

So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

...and verse 43 tells us that Jesus was preaching the Kingdom of God because that is why God had sent Him.

So here Jesus was- going around preaching the Forgiveness of Sins, and everywhere He went- He was also healing those who were sick because back in verse 40 it says,

... all those who had any *who were* sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them.

... so His healing Ministry was spreading. And then in **Luke 5:15**- we see that the news about Him was spreading even farther because Luke tells us:

15 But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear *Him* and to be healed of their sicknesses.

16 But Jesus Himself would *often* slip away to the wilderness and pray.

So we can see that the fame and reputation about Jesus was spreading like wildfire, and the already hostile Jewish authorities were getting more and more angry, and if you get the tone of **John 5:16** and you put it in its chronology- they already wanted Jesus dead by this time and they kept pushing that issue until they eventually egged on the Romans to crucify Him.

So now these Jewish hypocrites are dogging Jesus' steps and they're looking for things that He does or says so they can trap Him- so

they can indict Him and have Him killed. And they already had tried to kill Him back in Nazareth for just preaching that He was the Messiah- the fulfillment of **Isaiah 61**- and that He was the One Who had come-anointed by the Spirit of God to bring riches to the poor, freedom to the prisoners, sight to the blind, and to deliver the burdens from the oppressed. He was the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecy and Jesus was the only perfect Man. He was the only perfect Preacher and the only human being Who spoke pure Truth. Jesus was the One and Only of the Father- fully God and fully man in the same Body at the same time without conflict or contradiction, and for that they hated Him and wanted to kill Him. And it wasn't their fault that they didn't kill Him- they tried their best- but Jesus just walked right through them.

So the word about Jesus is spreading all over that this Man claims to be the fulfillment of all the Old Testament Promises about the Messiah, and that He can heal diseases and cast out demons, and His Message literally is the very opposite of the Judaistic theology of the day. The Jews were preaching, "*Doom, doom, doom!*", but Jesus completed the statement by saying that this Holy and Righteous God- Who was angry with sin all day long and Who was going to eternally judge all sin- would Mercifully and Sovereignly forgive every single human being- no matter how sinful they had been and no matter how long they had been sinful - as long as they come to Him in broken desperation- confessing their own helplessness and begging for Mercy. And Jesus spent time with these people- the worst that society had to offer- and He was routinely condemned for that by these self-righteous Jews.

But those people who thought they were good enough through their own deeds to earn a place in Heaven- Jesus never gave these people the time of day. Those who trusted in their own good heart, those who trusted in the Jewish rituals, those who put their trust in their own effort to keep the Law, those people who did not think that they needed forgiveness and Mercy from a loving and forgiving God because they were so busy trying to develop their own righteousness- were completely ignored by Jesus.

And it is amazing to me to realize that if Jesus had not been born 2,000 years ago but if God had waited and allowed Jesus to be born in our day- Jesus would be routinely criticized by the modern day religious hypocrites for being too religious, for being too holy, too legalistic, too

harsh, too restrictive, too mean spirited, and people in nearly every Church in America would join in and condemn the Lord Jesus Christ for expecting too much out of us and for making too many demands on us that crimp our style and that interfere with our own plans, and they would condemn this sinless Lamb for being too rigid in His statements while back then- the religious hypocrites of that day- 2,000 years ago- routinely criticized Jesus for being way too lax, they condemned Him for being way too easy going, way too soft, and not hard enough on wicked sinners by offering them forgiveness for their sins.

And that just shows you that the real sure-nuff Biblical Jesus would never be popular in any age. The only people who loved Jesus back then were people who had their eyes mercifully opened by a Sovereign act of God, and the only people who love Jesus today are the people who have been so blessed and so graced to have eyes to see and ears to hear and who have been Sovereignly given a heart to believe. Other than that- nobody would love Jesus, nobody would trust in Him, and nobody would follow after Him.

Now what is interesting is that Jesus was preaching not only the "Bad News" of God's Just Anger and Righteous Wrath against all sin and against all sinners- but Jesus was also preaching the *fulfillment* of that "Bad News" which was the "Good News" that even though we have sinned- even though we are all guilty as transgressors of God's Law- God will Sovereignly and Mercifully Forgive us if we come to Him in desperation- begging for Mercy.

And it is very important for us to know today that without the full and clear proclamation of the frightening "Bad News" of God's eternal Wrath against all sin- the "Good News" of God's Mercy and Forgiveness is marginalized and minimized and relegated to being simple "nice" and "sweet" rather than "life giving" and "majestic".

And I will even go further than that and tell you that everywhere that the "Good News" of God's Mercy in Jesus Christ is proclaimed without the "Bad News" of God's Just and Righteous Anger against all sin being equally proclaimed- that the lives of the people who hear only the "Good News" are carnal and filled with ongoing and persistent sins and lazy, laid back attitudes about God the things of God abound in every quarter.

As weak human beings- we need to be reminded constantly, dear friends, of the glorious beauty of our Salvation in the finished Work of

Christ alone on an ongoing basis- but the "Good News" of the shining brilliance of God's Mercy in Jesus is clouded and it is dimmed and it is inevitably reduced and marginalized if it is not accompanied with the balancing and terrifying "Bad News" of God's Holy Wrath against all sin and all sinners who will not repent and run to Jesus for Salvation and then serve the living God after they are rescued.

Jesus was preaching, *"I've come to those who know they're spiritually bankrupt and not to the spiritually elite and self-righteous. I'm come to tell the truth to those who understand and know that they are spiritual prisoners, who know they are in prison, who know they are in bondage. And I've come to those who know they can't see and are blind and have no hope and no sight. And I've come to those who are under the tremendous burden of sin and guilt- that's who I've come for."*

We must know that all those who protest their own goodness, those who constantly talk about how much they do for the Lord, and those who say that they deserve to be saved based on how good they have been- we must know that Jesus did not come for them. They are left to themselves.

And as we stand before a holy God on that day draped with the spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ that was imputed to us by Faith alone and washed in the Blood of Jesus which was shed for us by Grace alone- they will stand before that God on that day with only their own self-righteousness and they will be lacking on that day and they shall not enter in.

So I say to you lost sinner- *"Come to Jesus today while there is still hope for you. You know who you are. You know you are not right with God. Do not leave here lost; do not leave here backslid; do not leave here with one sin uncovered and unwashed. Run to Jesus today for Mercy. Call upon His Name for Salvation; Beg Him for Grace and He will cleanse you and save you to the uttermost, or else go your own way and remain in your sins unbroken, unbowed, and perish forever in hell."*

And you remember that Jesus illustrated that by saying that the Lord- even in the Old Testament- knew there were *many* widows in the land of Israel but He didn't help any of them except one. And there were many lepers in the land of Israel but He didn't help any of them except one. And that Message infuriated the self-righteous Jews but it He went right to the heart of many of the pagan Gentiles because God had

graced them to know that they were poor and miserable and wretched and blind and naked, while the Jews said that they were good and holy and that they could see and that they didn't need Mercy because they were righteous in themselves.

And that's why they tried to kill Jesus- they were offended at not only Who Jesus was- but they were highly offended at what Jesus said. And I want to confess something to all of you this morning about this issue. This right here is what frightens me the most, this is what puts fear in my heart, and this is what causes me to tremble. These people were the most Scripturally educated people on the face of the earth and yet they were so steep in deception that they didn't know God when He stood right in front of them. These men studied the 39 Books of the existing Bible for 12 hours a day and were trained in all the ways of God and they prayed long drawn out prayers and spent their life all around the things of God, and yet they were no more saved than a turnip.

Oh, that God would rescue me from my own self-deception! Oh, that God would open my eyes lest I go to hell thinking I am right with God! Oh, that God would have mercy on me to deal with me and convict me and wash me and allow me to love Him so that I will not spend my life in the service of the Lord, and yet myself be a castaway!

We need to know that human beings have an enormous ability to smile as we are thrown headlong into a lake of fire, we can feel real good about ourselves and still be damned by God, and we can be upbeat and pumped and happy and very excited about all the good things that are going on in our lives and yet still be lost and still be headed for eternal damnation.

So I beg you today- do not think for one minute, Oh man, that you can give God a tip of your hat on Sunday morning and then live according to your own ways all during the week and think that it will be well with your soul in that day. Do not even begin to believe, Oh woman, that you can go through the motions on Sunday and put on your false religious garments, and then love and follow the world all week long and that it will be well with your soul on that day.

Do not think, young man and young lady, that you can sit in Church for a few hours on Sunday morning while your mind and heart are on the things of the world and that it will be well with your soul on that day.

No, your Salvation has got to be real, dear friends. And you know your Salvation is real when your Salvation is making demands on your life- restricting your behavior and crimping your desires and limiting your own wants and cravings and those limitations and those demands cause you to have measurable change- and where you are able to identify specific sins in your life and overcome them because genuine true Salvation should be giving you both the will and the power to turn away from those sins, and real Salvation will cause you to hate what you used to love and to love what you used to hate, and you hunger and thirst after Righteousness and you crave to be in God's Presence and you desire to know what God has said in His Word and you cannot live without talking to God in prayer and you love to talk and sing about God, and your heart is filled with joy and peace because all of your sins have been paid in full and you are draped with the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, and peace like the world has never known floods your soul and your happiest and most satisfied moments are when you are in the Presence of the Lord.

So being saved doesn't mean to simply endure two hours of Church on Sunday Morning, but it means that you are trusting in Jesus all during the week and you are trusting in the Promises of God all during the week and you are bearing the fruit of a real believer in Jesus all during the week.

The religious hypocrites of that day were outraged that they could be identified by Jesus as being religious hypocrites. In their own minds- they were the spiritually rich, they were the free, the liberated. They were those who had a corner on Truth, and yet Jesus offended them terribly and He offended them regularly.

And that is what happens today. Jesus and the Words of Jesus offend the religious hypocrites of our day as well. And they may pay Jesus lip service- but when He speaks - what He says- drives them to despise Him and to rebel against Him and to want to silence Him.

But we need to know that Jesus offended these people precisely because they were not saved. They were religious- but they were not saved; they prayed- but God ignored them; they were knowledgeable about Scripture- but they were not redeemed; they knew about God and they knew His Characteristics; they knew His Ways- but they were not His people.

You see, lost people don't want *anybody* telling them what to do- not even God. Lost people want to do what is right in their own eyes while saved people want to live their lives in humble submission to the Glory of God based on the authority of Scripture. And that is one of the hallmarks of what it means to be saved. Saved people follow Jesus because God has allowed them the gift of loving Him and since they love Jesus- saved people desire to obey Him.

Now I completely understand why lost people get offended at Jesus. I get that. They do not love God, their nature has not been regenerated, and they have not been graced with any love for God or will to obey Him.

But what I don't get is why so many who say they are saved get offended at Jesus. If you are saved- then part of what it means to be saved is that you desire to please the Lord, and it doesn't matter how much it costs you and it doesn't matter what it takes and it doesn't matter whether you live or die. All that matters to a truly regenerate person is that they please the Lord with their lives- that's it. Everything else about this life is simply fluff.

So here Jesus is in this place- some kind of house- it is identified as such in the other Gospels- and He is in Capernaum and He was teaching. And Teaching and Preaching was always the main focus of Jesus' Ministry and don't ever let anyone mistake that. Jesus did not come to this earth to primarily be a Healer or a Community Organizer or a Social Worker fighting for social justice or a Humanitarian.

Jesus came primarily to be a Teacher and a Preacher and a Savior and a Sacrifice, and what He taught was Repentance and Salvation and Redemption only in Himself, and that means He told people that God would forgive their sins through Him. And that's the primary Message of the Gospel. The only reason that Jesus ever healed anybody was to give credibility to what He was teaching. The miraculous Signs and Wonders and healing, as in casting out of devils, was only to show the people that the Words that He spoke were from God, and once that credibility was given to those Words- and those Words were written down and preserved for us in this Book- the need for those kinds of miracles and signs and wonders was over.

Of course, God can heal today and God can perform miracles today- He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God never changes- that is absolutely true. But how God deals with Man and how

God moves in the earth *does* change and it has changed throughout time.

God used to speak to Man very vaguely through the Urrim and the Thumin- but He changed and then He spoke more clearly to Man through Seers and Prophets. But now God has changed again and He speaks to Man in the most clear way through Jesus, and through the more sure Word that was inspired by the Spirit of Jesus and that are contained in the 66 Books of the Holy Bible. And that more sure Word of prophecy that is the Holy Bible is more certain than angelic visitations, it is more certain than the visions and pronouncements of prophets, and it is more trustworthy than personal experiences.

And so the Scriptures are the Verbum Dei- they are the Word of God in the earth today, and the Scriptures are the Vox Dei- they are the Voice of God in the earth today, and what the Scriptures say is all we need for both life and godliness, and so we hear God today through His Word and we know God today through His Word and we understand God today through His Word and we fellowship with God today through His Word and we experience God today through His Word.

But the Message that Jesus taught and then Personally fulfilled by His Own Death, Burial, and Resurrection is the main reason why Jesus came to earth. And that very same Message is to be our Message today. And we are not to add to that Message and we are to detract from that Message, but we are to earnest contend for that very same Faith and that very same Message that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Now just who are these Pharisees and these teachers of the Law? Let me introduce them to you because we need to know about them because from now on as we continue to journey through **Luke**- these guys are going to be the main players in the entire drama of this Gospel.

Now the word "Pharisees" comes from the Hebrew term *parash*, which means: *to separate*. So the Pharisees were "the separated ones." And they thought that they were separated to the Law, and to God, and to righteousness. And this separation was the instrument that they used to measure their relationship with God. So since this separation was foremost in their minds- they hated anything that even seemed to violate that separation.

Now many people have asked me, "*Were the Pharisees devoted to the Old Testament?*" Yes, they were devoted to the Old Testament- but only as the Old Testament was interpreted by the rabbis. Most of the Pharisees saw the tradition of the rabbis to be of equal or even greater value than the Scriptures themselves- and that was their problem.

They were also devoted to the oral tradition- some of which had been written down. So in effect- the Pharisees of Jesus' day had invented their own religion that had little or nothing to do with what had actually come out of the Mouth of God to the Prophets and was written down in the 39 Books of the Old Testament.

Now during that time- there were four main distinctions among the Jewish religious leaders. There were the socially conservative Pharisees and then there were the liberal Sadducees- who denied the resurrection and who denied the existence of angels and demons, etc. And it was the Sadducees who were the power brokers of Israel. They were among the chief priests and the high priests- so they were the political branch- at least in terms of having the power.

Then there were the Essenes- and they were the monkish monastics who didn't want anything to do with the establishment or the culture. And these people wore simple clothes and ate simple food and lived out by themselves in the desert. They were the original anti-establishment group.

Now what is interesting is that it was the Essenes who God used to copy down the Scriptures and keep them in those dry, hot caves where they would be preserved, and back in 1947- we found a bunch of copies of the Holy Bible dating back to the Second Century. And those copies were collectively called the Dead Sea Scrolls.

And before these Scrolls were found- the oldest manuscript that existed on earth which claimed to be inspired was The Koran- dating back to the Seventh Century, and the Muslims used to make a big deal about that- trying to say that since *their* book was older than *our* Book- it was supposed to prove something. But then in the 1940's a boy found a jar in a cave and told his mother about it, and she called the authorities and they found every single Book of the Old Testament, except **Esther**, and every Book of the NT that dated back to the Second Century, and the Muslims were suddenly quiet. And you know what? The Words of those scrolls were identical to the Words that we have in our Holy Bible today.

Now then, there was a fourth group of religious Jews back then called the Zealots. And the Zealots were the nationalistic Jews. And they were the original terrorists who liked to sneak up on Romans and kill them in the Name of God. So you had all of these various groups pulling on the average Jew who was simply trying to pay his bills and raise his children to side with them.

But for the moment we'll just look at the Pharisees. The Pharisees were Jewish fundamentalists in the sense that they believed in the fundamentals of Judaism- so they believed in what the Bible actually said. So the Pharisees believed in a resurrection. And they believed in angels and demons. And they believed in God's Sovereignty and they believed in Predestination.

And we find in their ancient writings that the Pharisees had a fairly good understanding between God's Sovereign Predestination and Human Responsibility.

Now the Pharisees also believed in the coming of the Messiah, and they believed that when the Messiah came- that He would establish His Kingdom on earth in Jerusalem. So the Pharisees were what are called premillennialists. Now some people think that premillennialism was invented only about two hundred years ago- but we can find Pharisaical writings that prove to us that the Pharisees were staunch premillennialists who believed in a literal Kingdom that would come to Israel, that was the promise of God, and that the Messiah would bring it with Him.

Now what is interesting about the Pharisees is that they were not priests- because they were not in the priestly line- but they were simply laymen. But even though they were not priests- they were very devoted and they gave their entire lives to keeping the people loyal- not to God or His Word- but to the Jewish traditions and to the system of Judaism.

Now just how did they go about doing that? Well they wanted to keep the people loyal and they didn't want the Law of God violated and so they developed a very complex set of regulations- all of it completely manmade- that they bound on people in an effort to somehow build a wall of protection around the Law of God.

And to protect the Law from being broken they thought it would be a great idea to define the Law or apply the Law in six hundred plus little prescriptions that everybody had to keep. And all they did was to confuse everybody. Jesus said in **Matthew 23** that all that the Pharisees

did was to lay a burden on the people that nobody could even understand- much less keep.

Now their effort was noble- they wanted to build a wall of protection around the Law so that it wouldn't be violated, and so they could protect it, and so that people would be encouraged to keep God's Law- and that's a noble thing to do.

But what they did in reality was to obscure the true intent of God's Law, and they replaced it with this manmade complex religion of their own invention. And you still see that today in orthodox Judaism and in the extreme forms of orthodox Judaism. And these Pharisees produced what really amounted to an impenetrable, impossible system of self-righteousness that they themselves believed that their fastidious attention to all of these little prescriptions had given them or granted them righteousness.

But they were totally devoid of Grace and Repentance, and thus, they were completely devoid of Salvation itself. And in **Matthew 15** Jesus said they had substituted human and manmade tradition for the Divine Commandments of God.

Now the Pharisees were a very powerful group- even though there were only about six thousand of them. But they were very influential because they were so fastidious and so demanding, and they were the ones that the people looked to as being the source of spiritual life and conduct. And they had a very long history.

You see, after Israel returned to their land after the Babylonian captivity- they began to reestablish themselves, and God raised up a godly man named Ezra. Now Ezra was a scribe, and he was one who was studying the Law and he brought the Law before the people. And you remember back in **Nehemiah 8**- that Ezra read the Law to the people and he went into great detail and explained the Law to the people- which made Ezra the Father of Expositional Preaching- which is preaching the Word of God in such a way that the people can understand the Scriptures.

And Ezra called the people to reaffirm their belief in God's Word and to reaffirm their monotheism and their worship of the one true living God, and to reaffirm that as God's people- they lived their lives according to the Scriptures and did not do what the other nations of the world do. And under Ezra- a group of serious men began to develop, and they saw as their objective to keep the people committed to the

Law- which was the Word of God at that time, and to preach the Law and teach the Law and apply the Law.

And this was a noble thing and it was a right thing. But over the years- after Ezra died- this group of men who became the *appliers* of the Law and the *definers* of the Law and the *interpreters* of the Law and the theologians, as it were- continued to develop from the time of Ezra for several hundred years. And they developed through the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the reign of the Greeks and they developed through the Maccabean era and they developed through the Roman era and the Herodian era.

And so by the time of Christ you've got hundreds and hundreds of years of the development of this group of men who thought it their responsibility to protect the Law and keep the people looking at the Law and obeying the Law. And by the time you get to Christ- this group had evolved into a group of professional religionists whose profession was to act out the teachings of the Law even though it was only their job. And they evolved into the Pharisees- a group of legalistic, mean, cruel, self-righteous, degenerate, hypocrites who were filled with spiritual pride, and who lived according to external rules and prescriptions, and while totally obscuring the true character of the Law of God and not loving God at all- but who in reality only loved themselves.

They are the rankest legalists, and they live under the most deadly illusion of all - that they actually belonged to God, when, in fact, Jesus said to them, "*You are of your father, the devil.*" The Pharisees are the only group of people in the entire Bible that Jesus never said anything good about.

And the extent of their delusion is seen here as it will be through the rest of **Luke**. And we will see that these religious hypocrites actually hated the God they said they worshiped. Because Jesus is that God, and here He is standing in their midst and all they want to do is to kill Him- thinking they're doing God service. That's how deceived and deluded their minds have become.

Now we need to know that there's another group mentioned here in verse 17- the "doctors of the Law". And these people were a group within the Pharisees. And verse 21 identifies them another way as being "scribes" which is probably more familiar to you. So here in verse 17 is the only place in the New Testament where the scribes are

referred to as Doctors of the Law. You see, in order to teach the Law you had to study the Law, and in order to teach the Law- you had to interpret the Law. So these men were the legal experts within the Pharisees. These were particular Pharisees whose responsibility was the Law. They would have been religious lawyers. So when you wanted an interpretation of the Law you went to them. They were the theologians. They were the elite theologians.

Now all of the Pharisees, to some degree, prided themselves on their theology but this was the elite group- this was the doctors of the Law which is another way to translate this. And these men would have been the Ph.D.s among the Pharisees. And they were also horribly self-righteous, and they were the externalists, they were legalists, they were deluded and deceived by satan, and their presence here indicates that this was a high-level conference.

They had collectively gone, in fact, we find out in verse 17 they had come from every village of Galilee, Judea and from Jerusalem, so this had to be orchestrated, this had to be planned, and everybody was coming from various places. Now this statement is obviously hyperbole, it doesn't mean every single solitary town and village because there were thousands of those. But what it does mean is that they came from everywhere- including not just Galilee, but Judea, and more importantly some of the high ranking big shots and hot dogs came up from Jerusalem.

Now they were already on the trail of Jesus because too much had happened already to assault their comfortable status. Their self-righteous kind of religion- their religion of human accomplishment was being attacked and assaulted by Jesus. And the scribes were the people who prided themselves on being the rich and the free and the sighted and the delivered. And Jesus said, *"There's no Salvation for them at all- because Salvation is only for the poor and the prisoners and the blind and the oppressed."*

Now even though the Pharisees and Sadducees were in two different theological camps- they both agreed on one thing- they both wanted Jesus dead. And we're going to run into these people time and time again as we journey through **Luke**.

But what you need to know today is that the clear and glorious and simple Message of the Forgiveness of Sins by Grace through Faith runs right up against the legalism of these evil Jewish religious leaders.

And that conflict became so great- that they even broke their own laws in order to have Jesus murdered.

So these self-righteous, demon led, demon deceived, religious big shots were being threatened and were becoming very angry by Jesus' Message of God's Mercy, Grace, and Forgiveness, and they understood very clearly that Jesus was going to expose and absolutely destroy their diseased man-made religion.

So the great battle lines for this epic conflict are clearly drawn, and Lord willing- we will see the clash of the Pharisees against Jesus next week as we look at Salvation coming to this paralyzed man- not through his obedience to the Law- but through simple saving faith.

Let's come and pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.