

*Jesus Heals the Woman Bent Over and the Parable of the Fig Tree*, Illumination from *History Bible*, Utrecht. c. 1430. Claes Brouwer (active, early 15<sup>th</sup> cent.)



In the [Dutch History Bible](#), the parable of the barren fig tree (at the right in this illustration) shares its pictorial space with Jesus' healing the bent woman (at the left).

In the Gospel of Luke, the parable and the healing follow each other in the text and the two were combined in the illustration by Claes Brouwer. Master artist, Brouwer, worked on the *History Bible* with draughtsman, Alexander, and several other master artists.

After telling the disciples the parable of the fig tree, Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath to teach. When he saw a woman who was bent over and had been so for many years, he called her and said “Woman, you are freed from your infirmity” and she was healed immediately. The *ruler* of the Synagogue, however, regarded healing to be *work* and he was not pleased that Jesus healed this woman on the Sabbath. He said to the people, “There are six days on which work ought to be done, come on these days [to be] healed, and not on the Sabbath.” Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of the ruler’s statement with examples of necessary activities that sometimes require attention on the Sabbath and yet are regarded to be acceptable under the law.

Note: The “ruler” of a synagogue is an official appointed by the elders to see that the building and its contents are in order and functioning as intended. He makes arrangements for worship services and prayers.