

MATTHEW 12:1-14

A. Matthew 12:1-2 - At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. Matt. 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

1. As Christ and His disciples were walking through a cornfield, they began to take a few ears off and eat them because they were hungry. The seeming problem was that it was on the Sabbath. Of course, there were some Pharisees that saw them do this. The Pharisees seemed to almost be omni-present because they were always spying on Jesus to try and find fault.
2. Seeing Christ's disciples picking corn on the Sabbath day angered the Pharisees (religious leaders), who were sticklers of Mosaic-law-keeping. They piously tell Jesus, "Hey, they broke the Law!"

B. Matthew 12:3-5 - But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; Matt. 12:4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Matt. 12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

*Christ gives two examples of seemingly violating the Law and the Sabbath, where God allowed it to be okay.

1. David had been anointed king by Samuel, in place of Saul whom God had rejected (I Sam. 16:13). Saul would not leave and he sought to kill David. It is while David was being rejected that he and his men were on the run and hungry. They were given holy shewbread by the priest to eat.
 - a. **Eating the temple's shewbread was the result of David being forced into that compromising position, or circumstance, due to Israel's rejection of him as king (Saul would not abdicate the throne).
 - b. Christ rebukes them for being ignorant of the scriptures. He shows that He and His disciples were in a similar circumstance as David's. David was exonerated by God because he should have been on the throne ruling the people.

**So Christ (King) and His disciples should also be exonerated for violating the Sabbath, according to the same principle.

Note: King Saul, who stood in the way of David, represented the people of his day. Israel's Sanhedrin, the ruling government who stood in the way of the Messiah, represented the people of Christ's day. The rejection of David and Christ, both kings, in both cases made the rule of the program void. God was at liberty to change David's and Christ's actions as being allowed under their circumstances.

2. The second example Christ gave was about the priests who were held in high esteem. Moses had said not to work on the Sabbath Day. Yet the priests had to work on Tabernacle and Temple duties, even on the Sabbath day. God held them guiltless. There were certain allowances that God permitted on the Sabbath: a male child circumcised on the eighth day, even on the Sabbath (Gen. 17:10-14; Lev. 12:3; John 7:22-23). They could also rescue livestock (Exo. 23:5; Deut. 22:4; Matt. 12:11-23), etc.

Note: Jesus Christ had **greater** rights than the temple and the Sabbath. He is **Jehovah** God!

C. Matthew 12:6-8 - But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple. Matt. 12:7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. Matt. 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

1. While the Pharisees were highly educated and **appeared** to be good, they were **not merciful** toward the sick and hungry. They were sticklers for not working on the Sabbath day, and yet, they had no idea what the Sabbath day even represented. Blinded by their religious **tradition**, they preferred to see the hungry faint and the sick suffer than to even dare break the Sabbath. And, there was **no law** against this!

The Pharisees had lost sight of God Who gave them the law through Moses. They worshipped the law instead of worshipping the God they were supposed to worship, **using the law.

2. Jesus makes two claims for Himself.

***First**, He says He is greater than the Temple. The Temple was **only** a type, a **foreshadowing** of Christ.

***Secondly**, He declares He also is **the Lord of the Sabbath**. As mighty Jehovah, the **One** Who had created everything, including the Sabbath (Gen. 2:1-2), He had become flesh to offer Himself as their King. But the Pharisees were so blind, they could not see Him as the Lord-Creator-**Originator** of the Sabbath!

D. The Sabbath

1. It means: Sabbath, a cessation, **intermission**, to cease or stop.

2. It began in Genesis 1-2. The principle is that, out of 7 days, there should be a day of physical and sacred **rest** (Exo. 20:11). After Genesis, there was no commandment given to man to observe the Sabbath until **2500** years later in Exodus 16:31.

*It was given to the Jews when they became a **nation** after their deliverance from Egypt. Up to that time, Israel was totally ignorant of the weekly Sabbath.

Exodus 16:26, 29-30 - Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. Exo. 16:29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. Exo. 16:30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

3. It was given to Israel as a covenant **sign** between Israel and God.

Exodus 31:17 - It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

Deuteronomy 5:15 - And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

4. The Sabbath's seriousness:

Exodus 31:14 - Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it *is* holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth *any* work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Galatians 3:10 - For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

5. What is the Christian's-Body's relationship to the Sabbath?

*Absolutely **nothing**!

Colossians 2:14, 16-17 - Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; Col. 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Col. 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

6. Why then do we worship today on the First Day of the week?

a. The Sabbath has to do with Israel and not the Body Church. I think as baptism **faded** off the scene to help keep the Body **separated** from Israel, likewise the Sabbath faded - giving way to the First Day of the week to maintain a **difference** of the Body Church from Israel.

b. Note:

Acts 20:7 - And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until mid night.

I Corinthians 14:23 - If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

I Corinthians 16:1-2 - Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 1Cor. 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

*They were meeting upon the First Day of the week (Sunday) and
*not on Israel's seventh-day (Saturday).

E. Matthew 12:9-13 - And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: Matt. 12:10 And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. Matt. 12:11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out? Matt. 12:12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Matt. 12:13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

1. The Pharisees looked for **any** opportunity to get something on Jesus, in order to have evidence to accuse Him. They felt threatened by Him and, underneath, they truly hated Him. By asking Jesus this question, it reveals that they did believe in Christ's healing power!
 2. Christ teaches them (by the example of taking their sheep out of a pit) that it is law**ful** to do good on the Sabbath. Jesus proceeds to heal the man's withered hand as the man, in faith, stretched out his hand.
- * This man was a **type** of poor withered Israel, withered spiritually and nationally. Christ had come to restore them, but Israel, unlike this man, had **no** faith in Christ.

F. Matthew 12:14 - Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

1. You would have thought everyone would be rejoicing over the miracle they had **seen**, but not so with the religious leaders. Their hearts, like Pharaoh's, only grew **harder** as God's miraculous was revealed.
2. Israel was spiritually dead and wanted to stay that way. Their burdensome legalism was **preventing** the kingdom message from being received by the nation.
3. Why do they want to kill Him?

Answer:

He was **exposing** their **false** system and ignoring the authority of the religious apostate system. They wanted to kill Him and now was their chance - for His healing on the Sabbath and His stating that He was "the Lord of the Sabbath".

G. Questions?

1. Why was the legalism of the Pharisees so terrible?
2. When was it possible to go contrary to the Law?
3. What did Jesus mean when He said He was greater than the Temple?
4. Why was the Sabbath so important to Israel?
5. Why do people want to keep the Sabbath today?
6. Why do we meet on Sundays today?
7. Why was it impossible for the Sanhedrin to kill Christ, even though they plotted to destroy Him?