

Matthew 12
Part 1 (1-13)
Jesus disputes with the Pharisees

- I. Jesus' use of the Sabbath contradicts the traditions of the Pharisees. (1-8)
- A. The disciples pluck grain to eat on the Sabbath. (1)
1. Luke's account is more specific concerning the time this event happened. (cf Lk 6:1)
 2. This event took place between the holy days of Passover and Pentecost. (cf Ex 12:1, 2; 34:18; Lev 23:2, 15, 16)
- Note: That last passage (Lev 23:15, 16) may explain the Sabbaths in Luke 6:1.
Note: Matthew's account is not written chronologically. He groups events together. Mark, Luke and John are much closer to being chronological.
- a. "Corn" means grain of any kind. (cf Jn 12:24)
 - b. Rubbing it together in their hands would be unnecessary if maize. (cf Lk 6:1)
- Note: Probably wheat or barley, it would be eaten raw.
- c. This removed the outer part (chaff) from the grain. (cf 3:12)
- B. The Pharisees accuse His disciples of violating the Sabbath law. (2)
1. The faultfinding Pharisees went beyond that which was written.
 - a. The old law said that there was to be no work on the Sabbath. (cf Ex 20:10)
 - b. There was no commandment against the preparing and eating of food on the Sabbath.
 2. The Pharisees must be charging the disciples with harvesting as they walked through the "corn".
 3. Of course, their actions were completely lawful. (cf Deut 23:25)
- C. Jesus vindicates His disciples by referring to the very law they accused them of violating. (3-5)
1. "Have ye not read" was a common way that Jesus used to get people who should have understood God's word to think about the scriptures. (cf 19:4; 21:16; 22:31, 32)
 - a. Jesus refers to an act by David regarding the "shewbread" of the tabernacle. (cf 1 Sam 21:3-6)
 - b. This bread was to be for the priest only. (cf Lev 24:5-9)
 - c. This was illegal by Jewish law, yet David went uncondemned when he received and ate the bread.

Note: The reason it is called "shewbread" is that it was placed on display before God.
 2. Having made that point, He continues to show them that work is done in the temple every Sabbath.
 - a. The priests were responsible to do labor on each Sabbath day to fulfill the law. (cf Num 28:9, 10)

Note: This is in addition to the daily sacrifices of the priests. (cf Num 28:2-4)
 - b. Jesus shows them how circumcision would fall into the same category. (cf Jn 7:22, 23)

- c. If they condemned not David for his actions, their own Priests or the act of circumcision, they should not try to condemn His disciples.
 - d. “Profane” means to pollute or defile. (cf Neh 13:17; Ezek 24:21)
 - D. One who is greater than the temple and the Sabbath was among them. (6-8)
 - 1. “Greater than the temple” would be a principle hard for the Jewish mind to grasp. (6)
 - a. They thought of the temple as the most holy place on earth. (cf Acts 6:13)
 - b. It was the only place on earth for Jewish nation to receive atonement. (cf Heb 9:25)
 - 2. Mercy is preferred over sacrifice. (7)
 - a. Jesus taught that mercy to His hungry disciples was more acceptable than altar sacrifices. (cf Hosea 6:6; Matt 9:13)
 - b. What David did was unlawful, but mercy permitted it.
 - c. The same mercy, if properly understood, would cause these Pharisees to rethink their condemnation of the disciples, who were guiltless. (cf Rom 12:8; Jude 21)
 - 3. Being greater than the Sabbath, He is Lord of the Sabbath. (cf Mk 2:28)
 - a. The Sabbath was made for man’s convenience, not for his abuse. (cf Mk 2:27)
 - b. “Lord even of the Sabbath” shows His authority.
Note: Jesus is exposing their inconsistencies. These religious leaders were hypocrites. (cf 6:2, 5, 16)
 - c. The law-giver would be greater than the law given.
- II. Jesus justifies healing on the Sabbath. (9-13)
 - A. Jesus entered “their” synagogue on the Sabbath. (9, 10)
 - 1. They were probably the same Pharisees which made accusation about the picking of grain. (1)
 - a. Jesus had taught the truth on the picking and eating of grain. They knew this was true.
 - b. Here, they approach Jesus a little differently, due to the teaching He presented concerning the grain.
 - 2. They have a question they want answered concerning healing on the Sabbath. (10)
 - a. They only appeared to be seeking information. They wanted to “accuse Him”. (cf 19:3; 22:17, 18; Jn 8:6)
 - b. The same happened to many of His followers. (cf Acts 6:11-13; 24:5, 6)
 - B. Jesus attempts to show them the value of a man. (11, 12)
 - 1. A man with only one sheep would naturally put a very high value on it. (cf 2 Sam 12:3-6)
 - 2. The most valuable animal is less than any person.
 - a. If acts of kindness could be shown to animals on the Sabbath it should be more proper to show the same kindness to other humans. (cf Deut 22:4; Matt 6:26; Lk 12:24)
 - b. There are many examples of kindness in both the OT and NT, e.g., Pharaoh to Jacob. (cf Gen 45:16-20; 47:5, 6) Joseph to Mary. (cf Matt 1:19)
 - C. Jesus’ conclusion was that it was proper to do good on the Sabbath. (13)

1. For Jesus not use the power granted to Him and the opportunity to share in healing and knowledge would have been the wrong in this situation.
2. Then, as if to emphasis His point, Jesus healed the man with a withered hand.

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