

Episode #752 Matthew 12 Part 1-Lord of the Sabbath

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. In Matthew 11, the Lord taught about John, pronounced woe on the cities that rejected Him, and proclaimed Himself as the Giver of true rest. Today we continue Matthew in chapter 12.

III. Eating Grain on the Sabbath. Matthew 12:1-8.

- A. Matthew 12:1. Around the same time as chapter 11. The disciples are back? The word for “hungry” is the same as when the Lord was hungry in the wilderness after fasting for 40 days, so this probably means they were ravenously hungry. This was lawful to do per Leviticus 19:9-10, Deuteronomy 24:19-22.
- B. Verse 2. They were at least brave enough to complain to Him, not His servants! They claim this was not lawful (permitted, allowed, right), the word John used for having your brother’s wife in Matthew 14:4. Only on the Sabbath, as this was fine otherwise.
- C. Verse 3. “Have you not read” 6 times in Matthew, only by the Lord, several parallel passages in Mark and Luke. David in I Samuel 21:6. Same word for “hungry.”
- D. Verse 4. “House of God” was the tabernacle. “Showbread” word means “purpose,” bread left out purposefully for the Lord. “Not lawful” is the same word they used; refers to Leviticus 24:9. David was not a priest; we don’t know about the others.
- E. Verse 5. “Profane” or desecrate, trample down, treat as common. The priests treated the Sabbath like any other workday, yet were guiltless. The Sabbath law was superseded by more important laws. Bullinger points out MORE sacrifices were performed on the Sabbath than on any other day!
- F. Verse 6. How could a man be greater than God’s temple? He couldn’t be, unless that Man was God Himself. The Lord’s claim here cannot be mistaken!
- G. Verse 7. Hosea 6:6 was speaking against the wicked northern kingdom. Desire = “will,” Greek *thelo*. “Guiltless” is the same word as “blameless” in verse 5.
- H. Verse 8. Son of man = fifth time in the New Testament, all of Christ. The Messiah had the right to judge the Sabbath; the religious leaders’ right was self-granted. Bullinger suggests He was Lord of the Sabbath as Son of man, since the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27), and Lord of the temple as Son of God, verse 6.

IV. Healing the Man with the Withered Hand. Matthew 12:9-14.

- A. Verse 9. Synagogue of those who chided Him in the field? There were Pharisees all over Israel, but it was the Jerusalem Pharisees who put Him to death. Bullinger thinks this was in Tiberias; “in Mark 3.6, the Pharisees conferred with the Herodians, so that the Lord was in Herod’s jurisdiction.”
- B. Verse 10. Withered means dried up; we can picture it. “Asked” is more like “officially enquired.” The matter in the fields was not over; they wanted to determine if His teaching was “orthodox” or “heretical.”

V. Conclusion: The Pharisees reserved for themselves the right to determine what was right on the Sabbath, but the Lord Jesus claimed to be greater than the temple and Lord of the Sabbath. Who could be greater than the temple than the God Who owned the temple? Who could be Lord of the Sabbath but Jehovah Who gave the Sabbath? The Lord here shows clearly that He is God. We cannot deny that Scripture says it; the question that remains for us is will we believe it?

Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ² And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!”

³ But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵ Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple ^[a]profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? ⁶ Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple. ⁷ But if you had known what *this* means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord ^[b]even of the Sabbath.”

⁹ Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. ¹⁰ And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—that they might accuse Him.

¹¹ Then He said to them, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it* out? ¹² Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” ¹³ Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored as whole as the other. ¹⁴ Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Leviticus 19: ⁹ ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather *every* grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 24: ¹⁹ “When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. ²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean *it* afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. ²² And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing.

I Samuel 21:1 Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, “Why *are* you alone, and no one is with you?”

² So David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, ‘Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have

commanded you.’ And I have directed *my* young men to such and such a place. ³ Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give *me* five *loaves of* bread in my hand, or whatever can be found.”

⁴ And the priest answered David and said, “*There is* no ^[a]common bread on hand; but there is holy^[b] bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women.”

⁵ Then David answered the priest, and said to him, “Truly, women *have been* kept from us about three days since I came out. And ^[c]the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day.”

⁶ So the priest gave him holy *bread*; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread *in its place* on the day when it was taken away.

Leviticus 24: ⁵ “And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths *of an ephah* shall be in each cake. ⁶ You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure *gold* table before the LORD. ⁷ And you shall put pure frankincense on *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. ⁸ Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. ⁹ And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it *is* most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute.”

Hosea 6: ⁴ “O Ephraim, what shall I do to you?
O Judah, what shall I do to you?
For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud,
And like the early dew it goes away.
⁵ Therefore I have hewn *them* by the prophets,
I have slain them by the words of My mouth;
And ^[a]your judgments *are like* light *that* goes forth.
⁶ For I desire mercy^[b] and not sacrifice,
And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

⁷ “But like ^[c]men they transgressed the covenant;
There they dealt treacherously with Me.

Mark 2: ²⁷ And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.