

The Gospel According to

SAINT MATTHEW

SAINT MARK

SAINT LUKE

SAINT JOHN

CHAPTER 12, VERSES 9-14

12:9 - And when he was departed¹ thence², he went into their synagogues;³
12:10 - And, behold⁴, there was a man⁵ which had his hand²⁴ withered⁶. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful⁷ to heal⁸ on the sabbath days⁹? that they might¹⁰ accuse¹¹ him.
12:11 - And he said unto them, What man⁵ shall there be among¹² you, that shall have¹³ one¹⁴ sheep¹⁵, and if it fall¹⁶ into a pit¹⁷ on the sabbath day⁹, will he not lay hold¹⁸ on it, and lift it out¹⁹?
12:12 - How much²⁰ then is a man⁵ better²¹ than a sheep¹⁵? Wherefore it is lawful⁷ to do well²² on the sabbath days⁹.
12:13 - Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth²³ thine hand²⁴. And he stretched²⁵ it forth²⁶; and it was restored²⁷ whole²⁸, like²⁹ as the other³⁰.
12:14 - Then the Pharisees³¹ went out, and held a council³² against him³³, how they might destroy³⁴ him.

CHAPTER 3, VERSES 1-6

3:1 - And he entered again into the synagogue⁴; and there was a man⁵ there which had a withered⁶ hand²⁴.
3:2 - And they watched³⁵ him, whether he would heal⁸ him on the sabbath day⁹; that they might¹⁰ accuse¹¹ him.
3:3 - And he saith unto the man which had the withered⁶ hand²⁴, Stand forth³⁶.
3:4 - And he saith unto them, Is it lawful⁷ to do good³⁷ on the sabbath days⁹, or to do evil³⁸? to save life³⁹, or to kill⁴⁰? But they held their peace⁴¹.
3:5 - And when he had looked round about⁴² on them with anger⁴³, being grieved⁴⁴ for the hardness⁴⁵ of their hearts⁴⁶, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth²³ thine hand²⁴. And he stretched²⁵ it out: and his hand²⁴ was restored²⁷ whole²⁸ as the other³⁰.
3:6 - And the Pharisees³¹ went forth, and straightway⁴⁷ took counsel⁴⁸ with the Herodians⁴⁹ against him³³, how they might destroy³⁴ him.

CHAPTER 6, VERSES 6-11

6:6 - And it came to pass also on another sabbath⁵⁰, that he entered into the synagogue³ and taught⁵¹; and there was a man⁵ whose right⁵² hand²⁴ was withered⁶.
6:7 - And the scribes⁵³ and Pharisees³¹ watched³⁵ him, whether he would heal⁸ on the sabbath day⁹; that they might¹⁰ find an accusation⁵⁴ against him.
6:8 - But he knew their thoughts⁵⁵, and said to the man⁵ which had the withered⁶ hand²⁴, Rise up⁵⁶, and stand forth in the midst⁵⁷. And he arose and stood forth.
6:9 - Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful⁷ on the sabbath days⁹ to do good³⁷, or to do evil³⁸? to save life³⁹, or to destroy it⁵⁸?
6:10 - And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man⁵, Stretch forth²³ thy hand²⁴. And he did so: and his hand²⁴ was restored²⁷ whole²⁸ as the other³⁰.
6:11 - And they were filled⁵⁹ with madness⁶⁰; and communed⁶¹ one with another what they might do⁶² to Jesus.

NOTHING RECORDED

CHRONOLOGY: Either the Sabbath Day on April 08th, April 15th, or April 22nd, 28^{CE}

LOCATION: Galilee (near the Sea of Galilee), most probably the synagogue in Capernaum.

COMMENTARY: Jesus had presumably been walking with His disciples by a field of grain earlier in the day. The disciples were hungry and so they gleaned grain from the field, which was legal under normal circumstances. Unfortunately, it was the Sabbath and some observing Pharisees protested to Jesus. He dismissed their grievance, citing scripture and using the customary law of witnesses. Indications are that Jesus found His way to a Synagogue later that Day. A trap is laid for Jesus, as the Pharisees present Jesus with a man who has a withered hand. They knew it was the Sabbath, and that Jesus could not refrain from acts of compassion and kindness. The stage was set, and Jesus did not disappoint. After the Pharisees tempted Jesus by asking Him if it was lawful for a man to heal on the Sabbath, Jesus rebuked them. He started by asking the man with the withered hand to arise and stand before the congregation. He then asked if it was against the law to do good on the Sabbath. Knowing the answer, the Pharisees gave no answer. Jesus then asked if there was anyone who had a sheep who had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath that would not work to save the sheep? He followed that question with, "How much better is man than sheep?" After making His point, that being that the Sabbath was created to bless the lives of men, Jesus asked the man with the withered hand to stretch for his hand for everyone on the congregation to see. When he did so, the hand was completely healed. Everyone present witnessed the miracle. You might think that the Pharisees would have been moved to the point of conversions, but they were not. Their plan was foiled, and so they left and met with the Herodians to plot Jesus' murder. Assuming it was the Sabbath, these self proclaimed pious Jews sat and devised a plan to commit the sin of murder on the Sabbath day. They violated the Sabbath, the very act which they accused Jesus of breaking. It is clear to see that they opposed Jesus because of their own pride, and the law was being used as a means to bring about their own sinful desires.

FOOTNOTES:

1- **when he was departed** – The phrase “when he was departed” was translated from the Greek word “μεταβαίνω” or “metabainō”. It means to pass over from one place to another, to remove or depart. Albright translates this phrase as “Going on from there”. **“Going on from there. In varying forms, the phrase occurs five times in Matthew.”** (Matthew: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 150). It serves as a transitional statement between historical segments.

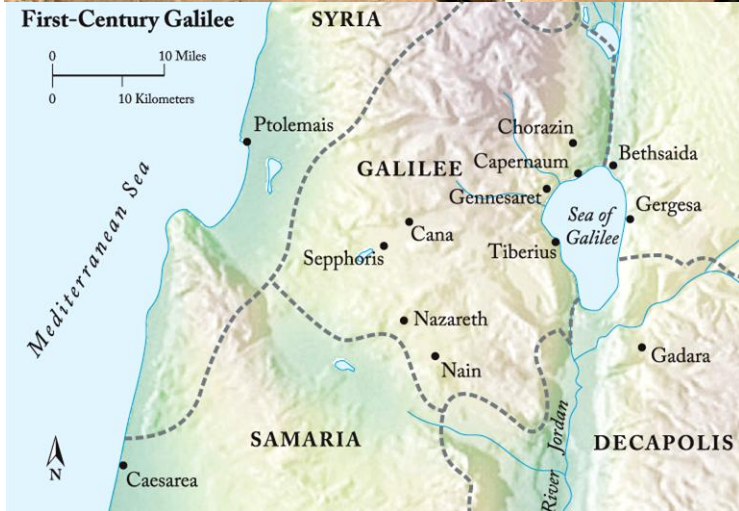
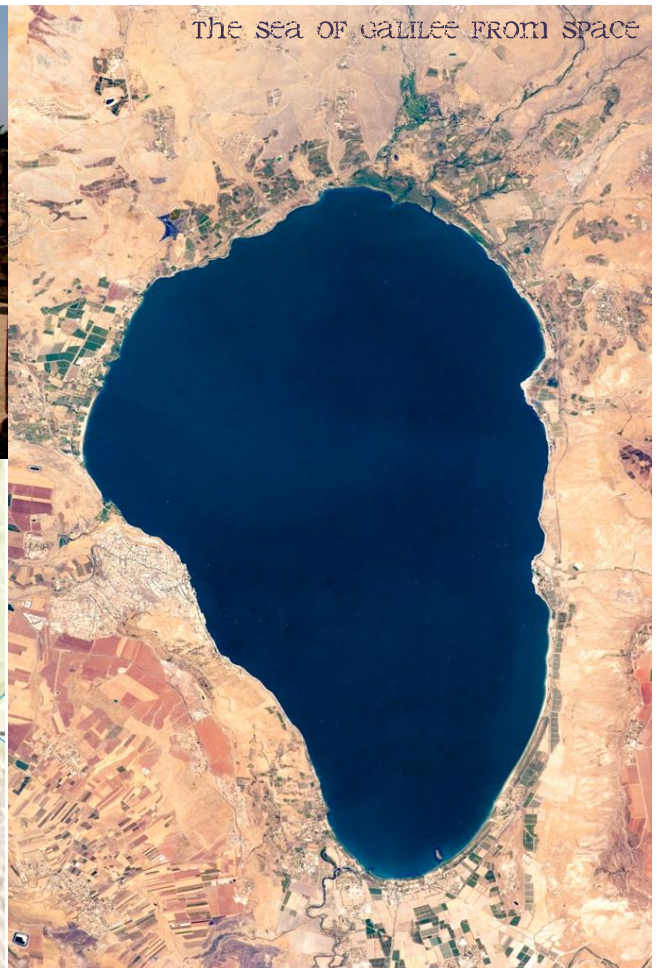
The Biblical account is preceded by a Sabbath confrontation between the Pharisees and Jesus in a field of grain along the road, which probably lead to the local synagogue. The Pharisees challenged the Savior with regards to His disciples plucking grain in the field as a sever breach of the Law. Jesus refuted them with examples from the scriptures, though the account does not explain the feelings and reactions of the Pharisees. It would appear that they followed Jesus to the Synagogue. Matthew starts with the statement, “when he was departed”, making reference to Jesus' departure from the grain field, and implying that this Chapter is but a continuation of the last and occurring on the same day. Mark makes no connection; however, Luke somewhat contradicts Matthew by indicating that this



chapter occurred on an entirely different Sabbath. Fitzmyer wrote, “**This Lukan addition separates the second Sabbath debate from the first more clearly than in Mark 3:1.**” (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 610). Many scholars favor the Lukan account. Gaskill records, “**While Luke also mentions the episode of picking the grain on the Sabbath, he places it in a previous week. Mark makes no mention of that event in the context of this miracle. Thus, the two Sabbath ‘infractions’ may have happened a week or two apart, though the text is unclear.**” (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 94). Even so, it does make sense that the Pharisees were upset over the encounter in the grain field and would have immediately sought an opportunity to redeem themselves. Gaskill, who favors the Lukan timeline, said, “**The ‘bad blood’ from the exchange now spilled over into the Sabbath synagogue service.**” (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 89).

The Pharisees followed Jesus hoping to finish what they started, to charge Jesus and His disciples with violation of the Sabbath Law. “**The following scene in the synagogue reads like a continuation of the conflict over the harvesting on the Sabbath.**” (The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration through the Triumphal Entry, Volume 2, Edited by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, , page 144).

We do not know exactly where Jesus is located geographically. Elder Talmage places Him somewhere in Galilee. This is probably a safe deduction since most of Jesus’ time was spent in this area. It was also quite common for Him to attend synagogue services on the Sabbath. It would have also provided Him a place to preach where the people would gather. Skousen wrote, “**Shortly, after he returned to Galilee, Jesus sent into a synagogue.**” (The Days of the Living Christ, Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, page 207). This connection between the events in the grain field and the synagogue and Galilee are based on the fact that immediately after the encounter at the synagogue (the events of this chapter) Jesus is said to have “**withdrew himself...to the sea**” (Mark 3:7). The term “the sea” is almost always reference to the Sea of Galilee when used in the Gospels. It should also be noted that the Synagogue is Capernaum sat in relative close proximity to the Sea of Galilee; within a stones throw. It should also be noted that Capernaum was the unofficial home of Jesus. Zondervan states that Capernaum is “**a town on the NW shore of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus made His headquarters during His ministry in Galilee.**”(Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor Merrill C. Tenney, Page 146).



2- **thence** – The word “thence” is translated from the Greek word “ἐκεῖθεν” or “ekeithen”. It means thence or from that place. We suspect that the “thence” spoken of in this chapter was an unspecified grain field discussed in the previous chapter. Again, it is believed that Matthew is conveying the idea that Jesus departed from the grain field in the previous chapter to attend synagogue on the same day. Luke’s account conflicts with Matthew’s, recounting that this chapter occurred on another Sabbath day altogether. What is even more interesting is that the Markan account is neutral on the subject. Mark is considered to be the source of the story for Luke and probably even Matthew’s account. Albright recorded, “**The Markan version of the incident has all the signs of an eyewitness account, presumably derived from Peter.**” (Matthew: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 150).

3- **synagogue** – The word “synagogue” is translated from the Greek word “συναγωγή” or “synagōgē”. It means a synagogue. Translated literally it means “to bring together”, as in a gathering of fruits.

Synagogue services were central to daily life at the time of Jesus. There is no evidence that synagogues existed in the days Moses; nor that they existed prior to the Babylonian exile. It is believed that the Synagogue came into existence during the exile because the Jews, for the first time, had no temple to worship in. The Jewish religion was centered around temple worship and the ability to offer sacrifice. In its absence, the synagogue was created and contained elements that were symbolic of the temple. For example, a container containing the law was called the “ark” and was symbolic of the “ark of the covenant”. Though there were no sacrifices offered at the synagogue, it was a representation of the Lord’s house. By the time of Jesus, even with the rebuilding of the Temple, the Jews attended synagogue on a regular basis. It had become part of the culture. In addition

to Sabbath services, the Jews used the synagogue as a school and community center. Jesus would have been raised with the synagogue, and would have been expected to attend. It is accepted that Jesus attended Synagogue on a weekly basis and the events of this chapter are no exception. **“On the Sabbath, Jesus entered a synagogue to participate in the worship services being held therein.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 89). This seems to be a common practice during His ministry. He often used the synagogue as a place to teach and instruct.

Since the events of this chapter are clearly on the Sabbath, and occurred on the same day as the previous chapter or on a Sabbath within the next two week, we can make some reasonable estimates on the date. It would appear that the events of this chapter occurred on either April 8th, 15th, or 22nd, 28CE. Please see the calendar below;

The Jewish Months of **Nisan** and **Iyyar** in the Jewish year **3,788**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	The Sabbath Saturday	Sunday
14 (March 27, 28CE) PASSOVER	15 (March 28, 28CE) Feast of Unleavened Bread	16 (March 29, 28CE) 2nd Day of the Feast - The Day of First Fruits - The Day of Omer - Feast of Unleavened Bread	17 (March 30, 28CE) Feast of Unleavened Bread	18 (March 31, 28CE) Feast of Unleavened Bread	19 (April 01, 28CE) First Sabbath After Passover Feast of Unleavened Bread	20 (April 02, 28CE) Feast of Unleavened Bread
21 (April 03, 28CE) Feast of Unleavened Bread	22 (April 04, 28CE)	23 (April 05, 28CE)	24 (April 06, 28CE) Jesus' 31st Birthday	25 (April 07, 28CE)	26 (April 08, 28CE) Plucking of Grain on the Sabbath Second Sabbath After Passover	27 (April 09, 28CE)
28 (April 10, 28CE)	29 (April 11, 28CE)	30 (April 12, 28CE)	01 (April 13, 28CE) Hebrew Month of Iyyar Starts	02 (April 14, 28CE)	03 (April 15, 28CE) Third Sabbath After Passover	04 (April 16, 28CE)
05 (April 17, 28CE)	06 (April 18, 28CE)	07 (April 19, 28CE)	08 (April 20, 28CE)	09 (April 21, 28CE)	10 (April 22, 28CE) Fourth Sabbath After Passover	11 (April 23, 28CE)

There is a debate among scholars as to who accompanied Jesus to the synagogue in this chapter. It is an irrelevant discussion, but is worth mentioning. Since there is no mentions of the disciples, and the Gospel writers generally note their presence, many assume that Jesus attended synagogue alone on this day. Marcus writes, **“On the level of source reconstruction the singular verb ‘he entered,’ along with the lack of specificity about date and locality, suggests that the story was at first independent of its present context; Jesus really was alone in the original story.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 251). Unfortunately, Marcus later contradicts himself when he says, **“The passage begins with Jesus entering the synagogue – presumably the one in Capernaum (2:1), presumably on the same Sabbath as in the previous passage, and presumably in the company of his disciples, although none of these circumstances is stated explicitly.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 251). These facts are obviously clear as mud.

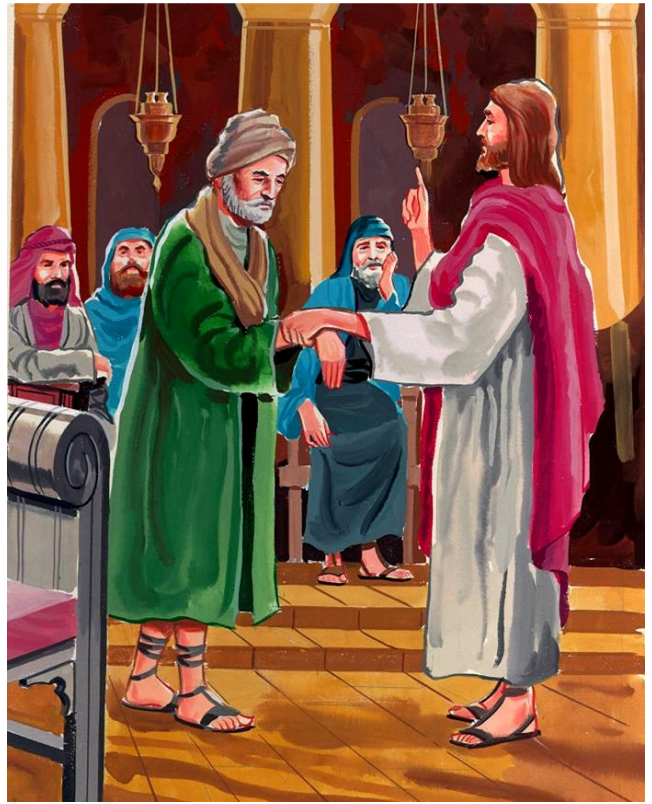
Regardless of who was with Jesus, or what the actual date was, there was an established protocol for synagogue service. Edersheim gives a nice summary of the layout of the synagogue at the time of Jesus, though an entire work could be compiled on the subject. Edersheim wrote the following;

“The synagogue was so placed that, on entering it, the worshippers would face towards Jerusalem—mere “orientation,” as it is now called, having no meaning in Jewish worship. Beyond the middle of the synagogue rose the platform or “bima,” as it was anciently, or “almmeor,” as it is presently named. Those who were called up to it for reading ascended by the side nearest, and descended by that most remote from their seats in the synagogue. On this “bima” stood the pulpit, or rather lectern, the “migdal ez,” “wooden tower” of Nehemiah 8:4, whence the prescribed portions of the law and of the prophets were read, and addresses delivered. The reader stood; the preacher sat. Thus we find (Luke 4:20) that, after reading a portion from the prophet Isaiah, our Lord “closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down,” before delivering His discourse in the synagogue of Nazareth. Prayer also was offered standing, although in the Temple the worshippers prostrated themselves, a practice still continued in certain of the most solemn litanies. The pulpit or lectern—“migdal” (tower), “chisse” and “churseja” (chair or throne), or “pergulah” (the Latin “pergula,” probably elevation)—stood in the middle of the “bima,” and in front of “the ark.” The latter, which occupied the innermost place in the synagogue, as already noticed, corresponded to the Most Holy Place in the Temple, and formed the most important part. It was called the “aron” (ark), the “tevah,” or “tevutha” (chest, like that in which Noah and Moses were saved), or the “hechal” (little temple). In reality, it consisted of a press or chest, in which the rolls of the law were deposited. This “ark” was made movable (Taan. ii. 1,2), so as to lift out on occasions of public fasting and prayer, in order to have it placed in the street or market-place where the people gathered. Sometimes there was also a second press for the rolls of the prophets, in which the disused or damaged rolls of the law were likewise deposited. In front of the ark hung the “vilon” (“velum,” veil), in imitation of that before the Holy Place. Above it was suspended the “ner olam,” or ever-burning lamp, and near to it stood the eight-branched candlestick, lit during the eight days of the feast of the dedication of the Temple (John 10:22), or Candlemas. The practice of lighting candles and lamps, not merely for use, but in honour of the day or feast, is not unknown in the synagogues. Of course, in regard to this, as to other practices, it is impossible to determine what was the exact custom at the time of our Lord, although the reader may be able to infer how much and what special practices may have been gradually introduced. It would lead beyond our present scope to describe the various directions to be observed in copying out the synagogue-rolls, which embodied the five books of Moses, or to detail what would render them unfit for use. No less than twenty such causes are mentioned by the Rabbis. At present the vellum, on which the Pentateuch is written, is affixed to two rollers, and as each portion of the law is read it is unrolled from the right, and rolled on to the left roller. The roll itself was fastened together by linen wrappers or cloths (“mitpachoth”), and then placed in a “case” (“tik,” the Greek “theke”). All these articles are already mentioned in the Mishnah. Later practices need not here occupy our attention. Lastly, it should be noted,

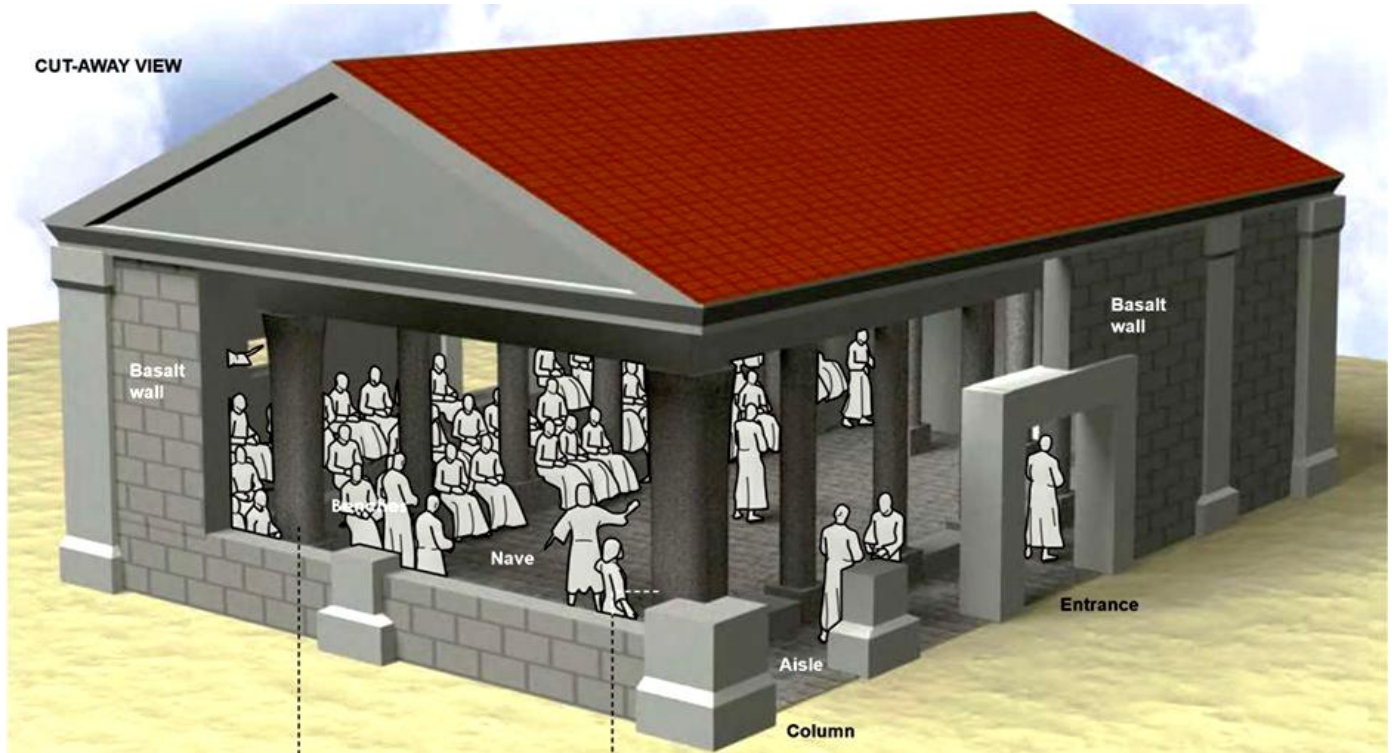
that at first the people probably stood in the synagogues or sat on the ground. But as the services became more protracted, sitting accommodation had to be provided. The congregation sat facing the ark. On the other hand, “the rulers of the synagogue,” Rabbis, distinguished Pharisees, and others, who sought honour of men, claimed “the chief seats,” which were placed with their backs to the ark, and facing the worshippers. These seats, which bear the same name as in the New Testament, were made objects of special ambition (Matt 23:6), and rank, dignity, or seniority entitled a Rabbi or other influential man to priority. Our Lord expressly refers to this (Matt 23:6) as one of the characteristic manifestations of Pharisaical pride.” (Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Alfred Edersheim, pages 146-147).

If we are in Capernaum, then we are fairly confident of the exact location of this chapter. Archeologists have concluded that Capernaum had only one synagogue and have identified the ruins. Today the site is referred to as the “white synagogue”. “We can now imagine the scene in that Synagogue. The place is crowded. Christ probably occupies a prodominant position as leading the prayer or teaching: a position whence He can see, and be seen by all. Here, eagerly bending forward, are the dark faces of the Pharisees, expressive of curiosity, malice, cunning. They are looking round at a man whose right hand is withered, perhaps putting him forward, drawing attention to him, loudly whispering, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?’” (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 61). The setting suggests that Jesus was invited to read from the scrolls of the prophets. The reading of the law was typically recited without discussion or interpretation; however, the reading of the prophets was done standing followed by the reader sitting and expounding on the reading. The fact that Jesus was given the floor indicates that He was asked to be the reader. This was typically an honor bestowed on great Rabbis, of which Jesus was considered to be. We do not know what He read, but He definitely asserted Himself in the role of teacher.

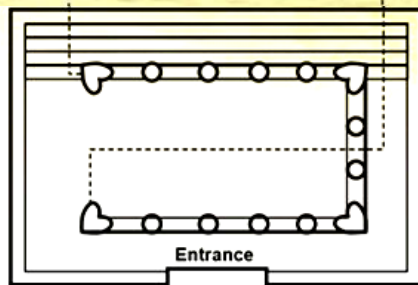
The audience would have expected a great Rabbi to expand points of doctrine. Jesus took the opportunity to address the Sabbath Law, directly confronting the Pharisees and scribes in attendance. His speaking would not have been unexpected, but His brazen approach to the sacred law would have been shocking to many.



CUT-AWAY VIEW



Heart-shaped columns were constructed at each of the four corners.

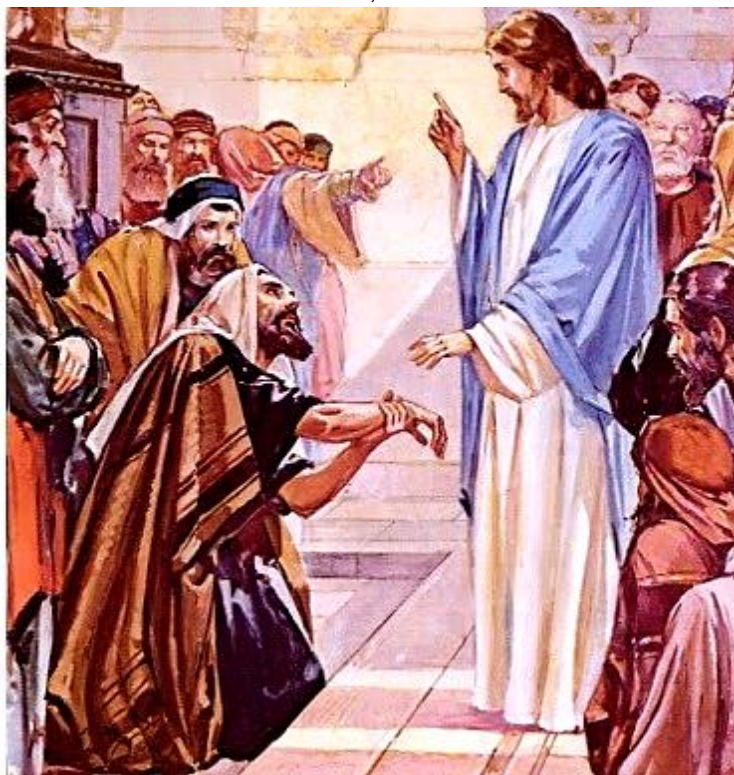


The “white” synagogue in Capernaum

- 4- **behold** – The word “behold” is translated from the Greek word “ἰδοῦ” or “idou”. It means to behold, see of lo.

Having just confronted the Pharisees in a field of grain, Jesus was aware of their hostility and their disdain. **“By this time the opposition to Jesus was quite open.”** (The Gospel of Luke, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 72). To introduce His teaching, He tells the audience to “behold” or “to look upon” a man who was obviously in need of healing. The external withering of the man’s hand would have been an obvious sign of need. In a state void of social welfare and accommodations, a withered hand would have typically resulted in a life of poverty and difficulties. This man surely suffered in many unseen ways.

- 5- **man** – The word “man” is translated from the Greek word “ἄνθρωπος” or “anthrōpos”. It means a human being, whether male or female. Man is a symbol for mortality and its carnal state. **“Cosmic man is the microcosm, a reflection of the microcosm and the elements, with the body representing the earth; the heat of the body, fire; the blood, water; the breath, the air.”** (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, pages 102-103). In Biblical text, the term “man” is often used to symbolize mankind in general. It represents man in their carnal and sinful state. It implies a need for redemption.



The Biblical record gives little information regarding the man with the withered hand. Though he represents all of us in our infirmities and transgression, he was also a literal man. Barclay records, **“the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which was one of the early gospels which did not succeed in gaining an entry to the New Testament, tells us that he came to Jesus with the appeal: ‘I was a stone mason, seeking my living with my hands. I pray you, Jesus, to give me back my health, so that I shall not need to beg for food in shame.’”** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 33). Unfortunately, the Gospel according to the Hebrews has been lost to time. All we have are several quotations made by Clement, Origen, Jerome, and Cyril of Jerusalem. Jerome took a lively interest in this book, an Aramaic copy of which he found in the famous library at Caesarea in Palestine. More than once he tells us (and with great pride) that he made translations of it into Greek and Latin.

Most people labored with their hand, so it is safe to say that his livelihood was affected, especially if he was a stone mason. **“According to the Greek, the man’s hand had ‘dried up,’ suggesting this was not a birth defect but the cause of disease or an injury.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 90). Perhaps the man enjoyed a prosperous life prior to his condition. He was now reduced to poverty.

We do not know if Jesus knew the man prior to this day in the synagogue. It is interesting to note that many scholars believe that Jesus’ foster father, Joseph, was a stone mason. In Jewish tradition, Jesus would have been trained and educated in His father’s trade. The man with the withered hand may have shared the same occupation as Jesus. Additionally, it is quite likely that the man was

from Capernaum. Since Capernaum was a small city, and Jesus spent much time there, it would therefore be highly likely that they knew each other. Of course all of this is highly speculative. **“Whether the man is there of his own accord to worship with his fellow Galileans, or was enticed to come as an unwitting dupe, that the guile-filled Pharisees might have aught with which to challenge the Master Healer, is not apparent. Perhaps it is the latter.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 59). Whatever the reason was for the man with the withered hand to attend synagogue that day, it played to Jesus’ purposes. He taught the people in attendance the true meaning of His Sabbath day, and confounded His accusers. He also applied mercy to one in need. It also teaches us. **“In this climate of confrontation, Jesus’ actions related not merely to the man with the withered hand but also to all present. Before performing any healing, Jesus questioned His questioners, again bringing them back to the issue of the interpretation of the law.”** (The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration through the Triumphal Entry, Volume 2, Edited by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, , page 144). The Sabbath is meant to perfect man, and bring about the mighty works of God.

- 6- **withered** – The word “withered” is translated from the Greek word “ξηρός” or “xēros”. It means dry. When used in conjunction with a part of the body it carries the idea of a member that is deprived or natural juices, shrunk, wasted or withered. Fitzmyer, speaking of the translation of the word withered says it means **“Literally ‘dried up,’ i.e. atrophied in its growth.”** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 610). Elder McConkie clarifies. **“There is in the synagogue a man with a withered hand, an underdeveloped hand, a hand without strength or facility, hanging on an arm and a wrist that may not have been wholly normal.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 58).

The Greek word “xēros” implies a body member that was once healthy, but is now shriveled or otherwise withered. Barclay said, **“In the synagogue there was a man with a paralysed hand. The Greek word means that he had not been born that way but that some illness had taken the strength from him.”** (The Gospel of Mark, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 67). Whether injury or illness, the man’s hand was surely disabled.

Not fully understanding God’s plan for His children, the Jews had an apostate belief surrounding illnesses, birth defects and diseases. They saw every abnormality as punishment from God. **“Rabbinic Judaism took over from the Old Testament a belief that disease was a consequence of sin.”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, first series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 108). The man standing in the synagogue before Jesus, the Pharisees, and those in attendance would have surely been considered a sinner of some sort.

This ancient belief probably influenced the symbolic meaning we understand today. Withered hands symbolize sinful and unrighteous actions. In this manner, **“many of us are suffering from withered hands. Sin so paralyzed us so that we are not able to do much for Christ, whose pierced hands saved us. But withered hands can be healed and empowered to do great things for our Healer in the midst of a burdened and suffering creation. The Sabbath day can play a key role in that spiritual healing, which we each desperately need.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 93). This same symbol was used in the early days of the church. Heber C. Kimball described member’s who fell away from the church, or fell into sin, as withered.



The Journal of Discourses records, “Now there are a great many people that have broken off from this Church, we will not mention names, but have they not withered? Yes, and so will you if you turn away from it, and if you refuse to obey the counsel that is given to you, you will wither away like a limb that is cut off from an apple tree, or the grass that is mown down when the sun strikes it. We are the people of God, and we cannot prosper upon any other principle than to cleave together, to cleave to His work, to amalgamate our feelings in one, and nourish the all-powerful principle of union, all feeling a general interest for the public welfare.” (Journal of Discourses, Volume 1, Heber C. Kimball, October 8, 1852, page 207).

7 - lawful – The word “lawful” is translated from the Greek word “ἐξἔστι” or “exesti”. It means it is lawful. The Jewish Law of the land was the Law of Moses, as contained in the scriptures. Every law was based on scripture, and beyond that there was no law. The Roman’s had laws, but the Jews generally did not accept them as valid. They followed them out of self preservation. The law spoken of in this chapter is at least partially contained in the following verses;

“And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? 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.” (Exodus 16:23-29).

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8-11).

“Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. 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. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. 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.” (Exodus 31:13-17).

“Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: **whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.** Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.” (Exodus 35:2-3).

“It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.” (Leviticus 16:31).

“Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.” (Leviticus 23:3).

“Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.” (Leviticus 24:8).

“Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.” (Leviticus 26:2)

“Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. 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.” (Deuteronomy 5:12-15).



8 - heal – The word “heal” is translated from the Greek word “θεραπεύω” or “therapeuo”. It means to serve, or do service. It can also be used to mean to heal, cure, or restore to health. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “heal” as “cure” (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 6, Verse 10, page 29) (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 3, Verse 2, page 68). The Jews believed in healings and divine intervention. Even so, they believed that “**the Law quite definitely forbade healing on the Sabbath. It was true that the Law clearly laid it down that ‘every case when life is in danger supersedes the Sabbath Law’.** This was particularly the case in diseases of the ear, the nose, the throat and the eyes. **But even then it was equally clearly laid down that steps could be taken to keep a man from getting worse, but not to make him better. So a plain bandage might be put on a wound, but not a medicated bandage, and so on.**” (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 32).

9 - Sabbath days – The term “Sabbath days” is translated from the Greek word “σάββατον” or “sabbaton”. It means the seventh day of each week which was a sacred festival on which the Israelites were required to abstain from all work. The Codex Sinaiticus translated the term “Sabbath days” as merely “Sabbath”. (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 6, Verse 10, page 29).



this city with his army, these men, in observing this mad custom of theirs, instead of guarding the city, suffered their country to submit itself to a bitter lord; and their Law was openly proved to have commanded a foolish practice. This accident taught another men but the Jews to disregard such dreams as these were, and not to follow the like idle suggestions delivered as a Law, when in such uncertainty of human reasonings they are at a loss what they should do" (Josephus: Against Apion, 1: 22). The rigorous Jewish observance of the Sabbath seemed to other nations nothing short of insanity, since it could lead to such amazing national defeats and disasters." (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 32).

By the time of the Maccabees, it was decided that the Jews could defend themselves if attacked. This conclusion was reached after gentile nations caught on to the practice and made it a habit of attacking on the Sabbath. The Jews still practiced a hold on all offensive attacks on the Sabbath.

Over time, the Jews started counting the number of steps one took on the Sabbath. They developed applications that restricted starting a fire on the Sabbath, requiring people to start fires prior to the start of the Sabbath and requiring them to keep it burning all Sabbath long. The list of ridiculous "how's" became long and complicated. I find it hard to believe that a normal Jew at the time of Christ could commit to memory all the nuances of Sabbath observance. **"That holist day of the week is a gift to help us be spiritually healed from the sickness and wounds of the world. For Jesus's Jewish antagonists, the Sabbath had become a day of testing men with trivial and vexing rules."** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 93). The blessings of Sabbath observance became lost in false application of a divine principle.

The same things, though maybe on a different level, occur today. We often struggle to understand how to properly apply the Law of the Sabbath. Elder Faust tried to help us in this area. He said, **"Where is the line as to what is acceptable and unacceptable on the Sabbath? Within the guidelines, each of us must answer this question for ourselves. While these guidelines are contained in the scriptures and in the words of the modern prophets, they must also be written in our hearts and governed by our conscience. ... It is quite unlikely that there will be any serious violation of Sabbath worship if we come humbly before the Lord and offer him all our heart, our soul, and our mind. What is worthy or unworthy on the Sabbath day will have to be judged by each of us by trying to be honest with the Lord. On the Sabbath day we should do what we have to do and what we ought to do in an attitude of worshipfulness and then limit our other activities"** (Ensign, "The Lord's Day," James E. Faust, November 1991, page 35).

10 - might – The word "might" is implied in the translation. It is accepted that the Pharisees, at this point in the story, were looking to accuse, but had not yet made the accusation. Hence the word "might".

11 - accuse – The word "accuse" is translated from the Greek word "κατηγορέω" or "katēgoreō". It means to accuse, as in before a judge or judicial body. **"Literally, 'they might find to accuse him.' The awkward Greek expression uses the subjunctive of the verb *heuriskein* with an infinitive *katēgorein*. It is often translated, 'find a charge against him' making a noun out of the infinitive...Luke's expression, however, may reflect an Aramaism."** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, pages 610-611).

The Pharisees had an obvious disdain for Jesus. We will discuss the word "disdain" in greater detail in footnote #31. The Jews wanted rid of Jesus, and a proper conviction of intentional Sabbath Law violation would give them their desired outcome. The Law was specific, **"whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death."** (Exodus 35:2-3). And so they sought to accuse Him. A proper accusation must be brought before the Sanhedrin. Local matters came to local Sanhedrin's. The Sanhedrin's were made up of allegedly honorable men selected by the people. We know in Jesus' day that politics and favors played a major role in selections for the larger Sanhedrin's and especially the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. Even so the process for accusing someone required a witness to testify before this legal body. It then required at least a second witness to be valid. The legal body, which typically consisted of some scribes, would interpret the law. The accused was allowed to face his accusers and argue a defense. Should the accused be found guilty of violating the law, he would receive the consequence dictated by the Law. The Pharisees knew their Law. **"Though they had not yet spoken to Him, Jesus read His**

The Jews spent an inordinate amount of time trying to define and understand the proper application of the Sabbath Law. The problem is, they didn't understand the doctrine and principle associated with the Law. Without this understanding, they would never be able to find the proper application.

Elder Bednar explained, **"Doctrine refers to the eternal unchanging, and simple truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are several key words in that definition: eternal, unchanging, simple and truth. Doctrines are never altered. They never vary. They will always be the same. You can always count on them."** (Ricks College Campus Education Week Devotional, "Teach them to Understand", Elder David A. Bednar, June 4, 1998). Doctrines answer the question of 'why'. In the case of the Sabbath, the doctrine associated with the law is the doctrine of salvation. The doctrine teaches that God authored a plan for the salvation and happiness of his children. It teaches that God has provided a path for all of His children to obtain immortality and eternal life.

The principles associated with the doctrine of salvation answers the question of "what". Elder Bednar explained, **"Principles are doctrinally based guidelines for what we ought to do."** (Ricks College Campus Education Week Devotional, "Teach them to Understand", Elder David A. Bednar, June 4, 1998). The Sabbath is a principle, not a doctrine. It is a guideline that assists us in obtaining salvation.

Applications answer the question of "how". Correct applications can only be obtained when we properly understand the doctrines and principles associated with them. Unlike doctrines and principles, the Lord often saves the revealing of applications until we seek personal revelation. Our ability to know "how" to apply doctrines and principles is dependent upon the direction and gifts of the spirit. The spirit is the great teacher. It is the testifier of truth, and the revealer of God's will.

The Jews were so confused on the principle of the Sabbath that they placed it above the doctrine. They valued the Sabbath over life itself. Barclay explained that the Jews would let their people die if a foreign army invaded on the Sabbath, because defending themselves was believed to violate the Sabbath. He wrote, **"Agatharchides wrote: 'There are a people called Jews, who dwell in a city the strongest of an cities, which the inhabitants call Jerusalem, and are accustomed to rest on every seventh day; at which time they make no use of their arms, nor meddle with husbandry, nor take care of any of the affairs of life, but spread out their hands in their holy places, and pray till evening time. Now it came to pass that when Ptolemy the son of Lagos came into**

antagonists' thoughts and knew that they were watching Him in order to 'catch Him' in some act or statement that they could use against Him." (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 89). Many feel that the Pharisees set the whole thing up. It is speculated that the Pharisees brought the man with the withered hand to the synagogue knowing that Jesus could not resist healing a man in need. Today, we would call that entrapment. **"Whether or not the Pharisees had brought 'the man with the withered hand' on purpose, or placed him in a conspicuous position, or otherwise raised the question, certain it is that their secret object was to commit Christ to some word or deed which would lay Him open to the capital charge or breaking the Sabbath-Law."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 59). The capital charge, by the very definition of the word, is death.

What is interesting is that Jesus did not act in the prescribed, as might have been expected, by the Pharisees in the act of healing. He didn't lay hands upon him, anoint him, or otherwise touch the man with a withered hand. Jesus simply invited the man to stretch forth His hand. Stretching forth your hand did not constitute a breach of the Sabbath, and Jesus performed no work in the process. **"Sanders argues that because speaking was not considered work, no violation of the Sabbath occurred."** (The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration through the Triumphal Entry, Volume 2, Edited by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, , page 145). The accusation, though cleverly planned, resulted in nothing in reference to their desired outcome.

- 12 - **among** – The word "among" is translated from the Greek word "ἐκ" or "ek". It means out of, from, by, or away from. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the phrase "among you" as "of you". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 6, Verse 11, page 29).



Evidently, most of the congregation in the synagogue lacked a personal perspective when it came to the man with the withered hand. The Lord changes their perspective by asking if there were any in their presence who could relate to having a sheep that had fallen into a pit. This might seem like an odd analogy, but we need to remember that the people present were either shepherds or extremely familiar with shepherding. Herding sheep was a way of life in ancient Palestine. Even a stone mason may have had a small flock of sheep. Shepherds in ancient Israel had a close relationship with their flocks. **"The shepherd is deeply interested in every single one of his flock. Some of them may be given pet names because of incidents connected with them.**

They are usually counted each evening as they enter the fold, but sometimes the shepherd dispenses with the counting, for he is able to feel the absence of any one of his sheep. With one sheep gone, something is felt to be missing from the appearance of the entire flock. One shepherd in the Lebanon district was asked if he always counted his sheep each evening. He replied in the negative, and then was asked how then he knew if all his sheep were present. This was his reply: 'Master, if you were to put a cloth over my eyes, and bring me any sheep and only let me put hands on its face, I could tell in a moment if it was mine or not.' When H. R. P. Dickson visited the desert Arabs, he witnessed an event that revealed the amazing knowledge which some of them have of their sheep. One evening, shortly after dark, an Arab shepherd began to call out one by one the names of his fifty-one mother sheep, and was able to pick out each one's lamb, and restore it to its mother to suckle. To do this in the light would be a feat for many shepherds, but this was done in complete darkness, and in the midst of the noise coming from the ewes crying for their lambs, and the lambs crying for their mothers. But no Oriental shepherd ever had a more intimate knowledge of his sheep than Jesus our great Shepherd has of those who belong to His flock. He once said of Himself: 'I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep' (John 10:14)." (Manners and Customs in the Bible, Victor H. Matthews, pages 210-211).

Jesus was able to help the congregation in the synagogue see the man as something more than a stranger with a withered hand. **"Rather than seeing him abstractly as a man who is not in mortal peril and whose needs can be met on another day, instead, through the parable with sheep, he becomes a genuine person."** (The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration through the Triumphal Entry, Volume 2, Edited by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, , page 144).

- 13 - **shall have** – The term "shall have" is translated from the Greek word "ἔχω" or "echo". It means to have, i.e. to hold. It can also mean to possess or own.

Sheep were the property of the shepherd. Consequently, he cared for them. They were of great value to him. **"The man, by analogy, becomes our own and is precious to us. We can see him as God sees him. But if we know that we should see him this way and still do not act to help him, our hearts become increasingly hardened."** (The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration through the Triumphal Entry, Volume 2, Edited by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, , page 144).

- 14 - **one** – The word "one" is translated from the Greek word "εἷς" or "heis". It means one.

One is a singular number and considered insignificant in most scenarios. Governments typically focus on the majority, often ignoring the individual. Though the Lord has billions of children, we learn that the individual is as important to Him as the whole. The Doctrine and Covenants teaches, **"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God; For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance. And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth! Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people. And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!"** (Doctrine and Covenants 18:10-16).

When we see our fellowman as God sees them, we see them as our brothers and sisters. We love them, and desire to help them in any way. The man with the withered hand, the beggar on the street, the alcoholic, or the criminal are no longer strangers. They can no longer be ignored without feelings. We become concerned over them as a shepherd does over his sheep. **"It is very important that sheep should not be allowed to stray away from the flock, because when by themselves they are utterly helpless. In such a condition, they become bewildered, for they have no sense at all of locality. And if they do stray away, they must be brought back. The Psalmist prayed the prayer: 'I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant' (Psa. 119:176). The prophet Isaiah compared man's waywardness to that of sheep: 'All we like sheep have gone astray' (Isa. 53:6). David sang of his divine Shepherd: 'He restoreth my soul' (Psa. 23:3)."** (Manners and Customs in the Bible, Victor H. Matthews, page 209).

- 15 - **sheep** – The word “sheep” is translated from the Greek word “πρόβατον” or “probaton”. It means any four footed, tame animal accustomed to graze. It is commonly used for small cattle, opposed to large cattle like horses or cows. It is commonly used for sheep and goats. In the New Testament, the word “probaton” is almost always used in relation to sheep.

Sheep have deep symbolic meanings. **“Sheep signify Innocence, the covenant people, martyrdom, rebirth, and sacrifice.”** (Encyclopedia of Traditional Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, page 154). **“Because of their association with sacrifice, sheep came to represent the innocent victim.”** (Encyclopedia of Traditional Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, page 154). On one hand, they represent the Savior Himself, who was sacrificed as an innocent victim for our sins. On the other hand, they represent us and Jesus represents the shepherd. Sheep are often associated with innocence and are not considered very smart. In fact, one symbolic dictionary states, **“Sheep: Blind and unintelligent following; helpless. The Faithful.”** (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 151).



Jesus chose his analogy carefully. It was not happenstance that He spoke of sheep. The local people understood the love that shepherds had for their sheep. They knew that among all the Sabbath restrictions created by the Jews, sheep became an exception in many instances. They were allowed to be sacrificed on the Sabbath. One could rescue and care for sheep on the Sabbath. **“If works of mercy to animals were lawful on the Sabbath, how much more the Messiah’s work of restoration! It is worthy of notice that while Pharisees permitted the rescue of an animal on the Sabbath the Essenes apparently did not.”** (Matthew: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 150).

- 16 - **it fall** – The phrase “it fall” is translated from the Greek word “ἐμπίπτω” or “empiptō”. It means to fall into. It is commonly used in regards to falling among robbers or falling under one’s power. It can be used to symbolize the committing of sin and transgression.

As we make our way through life, we all find ourselves symbolically falling into the pit of sin. Like a sheep, we lack the ability to recover from the fall or remove ourselves from the pits we find ourselves in.

- 17 - **into a pit** – The phrase “into a pit” is translated from the Greek word “βόθυνος” or “bothynos”. It means a pit or a ditch. It is symbolic of the grave, both spiritual and mortal death, sin, and helplessness. Zondervan states, **“Pit represents several Hebrew and two Greek words whose usages are not sharply distinguished. A pit may be a bitumen deposit; a deep place, natural or made by man; often a well; or cistern. A pit stands for death, the grave, or Sheol.”** (Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor Merrill C. Tenney, Page 659). A better symbolic interpretation for a pit would be sin and the conditions of sin. Consequently it represents physical and spiritual death; of which we cannot overcome by ourselves. We are symbolically stuck in a pit.



The Jews loved their sheep so much that even on the Sabbath there were special accommodations afforded to a sheep in trouble. **“The Rabbinic Law ordered that food and drink should be lowered to it, or else that some means should be furnished by which it might either be kept up in the pit, or enable to come out of it. But even the Talmud discusses cases in which it was lawful to lift an animal out of a pit on the Sabbath.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 61).

Physical and spiritual death are far worse than a earthen pit. If the Jews were willing to save a sheep why not a man. The man with a withered hand represented a man facing these two deaths. Is he not more important than a sheep?

It should be noted that the Holy Land is covered with natural caves and pits. The limestone in the area has formed in such a way that these are common. Additionally, much of the holy land was dry and arid. The inhabitants would chisel pits or holes in the earth to create cisterns. Cisterns were used to collect and store rain water for the dry season. They were also

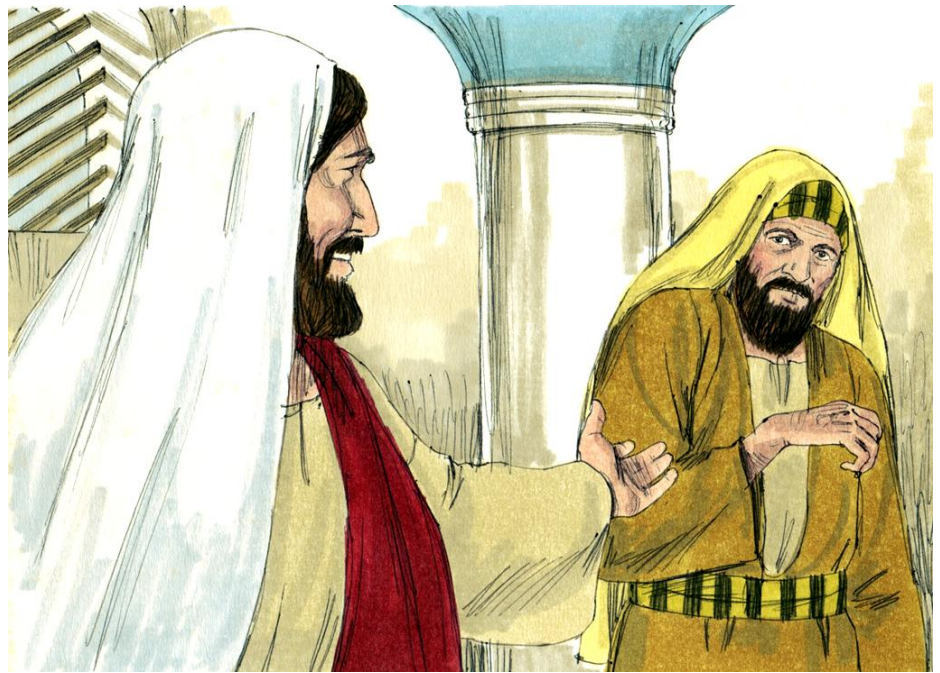
used to store grain. These can be found abandon or empty in various areas. It is also common for the ancient inhabitants to chisel holes deeper into the earth in search for the water table. The holes were called wells. As you might imagine, there were many chances for sheep to fall into pits.

- 18 - **lay hold** – The phrase “lay hold” is translated from the Greek word “κρατέω” or “krateō”. It means to have power, or get possession of.

To lay hold or lay claim on someone is not being used as a reference to an act of violence. Rather, it implies preservation; to gather unto one’s self or to gain safe control over. **“Jesus was trying to teach that the end is not to be sacrificed to the means. The purpose of the Sabbath is to heal, not to punish man.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 93). The purpose of God’s plan is to lay hold on His children and bring them safely home. God does not want His children trapped in the pit of sin, but rather saved unto eternal life and exaltation.

- 19 - **lift it out** – The phrase “lift it out” is translated from the Greek word “ἐγειρω” or “egeirō”. It means to arouse or cause to rise. It is used to arouse from sleep, raise from the dead, stand up or build. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the phrase “lift it out” as “lift it up” (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 6, Verse 11, page 29).

The purpose of the Church of Jesus Christ is to assist God’s children in the process of improvement and perfection with the ultimate goal of exaltation and immortality. The Church serves as the mechanism, which God created, wherewith God’s children come unto Christ. **“Because of the eternal sanctity of man’s agency upon which this mortal life was founded, the Savior cannot take from us our will. We are free to choose. The Savior stands beside us waiting to heal our wounds and to lift us into eternal salvation, but He can only do that with our invitation. We must choose Him. For us, there is only one plan of rescue; it is in and through His atoning sacrifice. He descended below all things to rescue us.”** (Liahona, “Seeking Rescue”, Connie Goulding, June 2015). Consequently, those who choose to be rescued and lifted out of the pit of sin, do so by coming unto Christ by repenting and entering into eternal covenants offered under the authority of the church.



- 20 - **how much** – The phrase “how much” is translated from the Greek word “πόσος” or “posos”. It means how great, how much, or how many.

- 21 - **better** – The phrase “better than” is translated from the Greek word “διαφέρω” or “diapherō”. It means to distinguish between good and evil, lawful and unlawful, or something that is better.

For many of us, the choice between an evil decision and a righteous decision is easy to discern. What is often hard to discern is the difference between good, better, and best. The Lord desires His children to make the best decisions regarding their eternal progression. While it is good to rest from your labors on the Sabbath, the better choice is to make the Sabbath day a spiritual day, and the best choice is to do the Lord’s work of salvation on the Sabbath. The Pharisees could not see beyond the first. **“No act of mercy, whether the need pressed or not, was to be intermitted because of the Sabbath.”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, first series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 135). They required total rest on the Sabbath and were afraid to violate that even with a better choice. **“The Pharisees permitted, nay required, the performance of all necessary works of mercy, but refused to extend the license too indiscriminately, and never reconciled themselves to the theory that in general the performance of a duty justified the infringement of a prohibition.”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, first series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 135).

- 22 - **to do well** – The word “well” is translated from the Greek word “καλῶς” or “kalōs”. It means beautifully, finely, excellently or well.

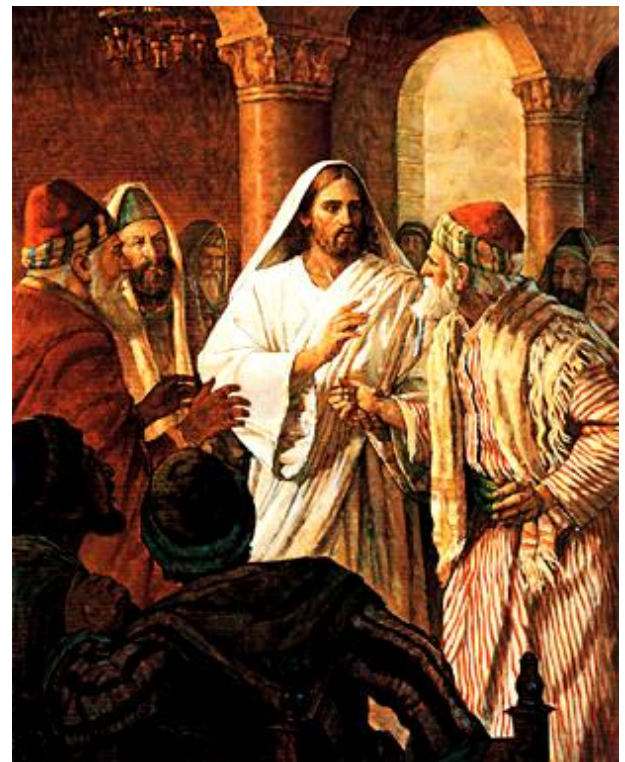
Even though the **“Rabbi argued that one may profane a particular Sabbath to preserve a man for keeping many Sabbaths”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, first series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 130), they could not see the justification in rendering service to the needy or performing acts of mercy. **“All things considered, it would seem that Jesus differed fundamentally from the Pharisees in that he asserted a general right to abrogate the Sabbath law for man’s ordinary convenience, while the Rabbis limited the license to cases of danger to life.”** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, first series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 134).

- 23 - **stretch forth** – The term “stretch forth” is translated from the Greek word “ἐκτείνω” or “ekteinō”. It means to stretch out, stretch forth; towards or against one.

Jesus asked the man with the withered hand to stretch forth his hand. A simple command, if you didn’t have a withered hand. By its very definition it could not be stretched forth, it was withered. The command must have caused a stir among the congregation. Surely that was impossible for the man to do.

It is also interesting to note that Jesus issued the command with conspiring men looking on. He was grieved by their pride and spiritual blindness. **“Despite the hint of sadness in Jesus’ response to the Pharisees’ obduracy, his main concern is not with them but with the disease-stricken man; and in the climax of the passage he turns away from them to the man and heals him. He does so in a clever way that eludes the charge of performing work on the Sabbath; rather than touching the afflicted limb, he commands the man to stretch it out himself, and when he does so, it is miraculously healed by the eschatological power of God.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 253).

- 24 - **hand** – The word “hand” is translated from the Greek word “χεῖρ” or “cheir”. It is translated in the Bible as hand 178 times, with no other translations. Even so, the meaning of the Greek word has more to do with one’s agency or ability to act. **“The hand was an ancient symbol for people’s actions, or that which they chose to do or pursue. It often symbolized their ‘inner state’**



and 'attitude of mind'. Thus, one scholarly source on biblical symbolism noted, 'The hands are the essence of the individual. Hands communicate our attitudes and perform our deeds. They speak more eloquently than our words, since the actions of the hands come from the heart.' (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 91). One dictionary of symbols defines the hand as "a symbol of our strength and creativity." (Encyclopedia of Traditional Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, page 70). Another dictionary states that the hand is "one of the most symbolically expressive members of the body...It represents the power and might of God. Hands raised, palms outwards, is blessing, divine grace and favor." (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, pages 78-79).



The symbol of the hand surely applied to the man with the withered hand, but we must understand that he is a type or representation of us. We all lack when it comes to our performance with the works of righteousness. Symbolically we all have withered hands. Hands that do not bear good fruits (good works), but rather occupy themselves with the narrowing and withering works of selfishness and self gratification. In reality, who is worse off, the man with the physically withered hand or those of us who have symbolically spiritually withered hands. In the synagogue during this chapter the Pharisees did not see their own shortcomings. They were the ones with withered hands.

"The fourth century author Origin of Alexandria (AD185-254) said of the Pharisees, 'They brought to the Savior the barrenness of their hands. For having a withered hand indicated unfruitfulness.' In other words, while they looked down upon the man with the physically withered hand and watched to see if Jesus would heal him, they seemed entirely unaware that they were truly needed healing. Their hands were the ones that were truly withered, in that their works were fruitless – as is evidenced by their attitude during this miracle. Though the man healed may have been physically impaired, the Pharisees were spiritually impaired, making them much worse off than was the invalid whom Jesus restored." (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, pages 91-92).

25 - stretched – The word "stretched" is translated from the Greek word "ἐκτείνω" or "ekteinō". It means it means to stretch out, stretch forth; towards or against one.

The man with the withered hand was asked to stretch forth his hand. This was an act of faith. It required him to see past his perceived limitations. Likewise, the Lord requires us to stretch ourselves as we progress towards immortality and eternal life. Joseph Smith said, "a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation." (Lectures on Faith, Joseph Smith Jr., 6:7). Many refuse to do that which they see as impossible or which they do not fully understand. "I know that there are many at the present day, in Christendom, who will ask 'What is the use of these outward ordinances? What particular benefit is it for me to go and be immersed in water, or to have hands laid upon me for the gift of the Holy Ghost? They are only outward ordinances.' In explanation, let me say to the congregation that the blessings which God has promised in his word, generally come through some act required of the creature. When the man with the withered hand was healed, the Lord did not say I command you to be healed, without any act on his part; but he commanded him to stretch forth his hand. That, apparently, was an impossibility, for his arm was withered, powerless; and he might have thought that it was impossible for him to perform the act required of him. But an exercise of faith was required on the part of that man, - something connected with the mental faculties, by which the blessing of healing might be secured." (Journal of Discourses, Volume 14, Orson Pratt, November 27, 1870, pages 291-292). We must stretch ourselves beyond our perceived capabilities if we wish to receive the Lord's blessings.

26 - forth – The word "forth" is implied in the Greek word associated with stretched, see foot notes #23 and #25.

"He was a man who was prepared to attempt the impossible. He did not argue when Jesus told him to stretch out his useless hand; he tried and, in the strength Jesus gave him, he succeeded. Impossible is a word which should be banished from the vocabulary of the Christian. As a famous scientist said, 'The difference between the difficult and the impossible is only that the impossible takes a little longer to do.'" (The Gospel of Luke, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, pages 72-73). The scriptures teach us simply and boldly, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." (Luke 1:37).

Spiritually, our ability to act and do is maintained by acts of righteousness. We exercise our spiritual abilities by doing God's work. By symbolically stretching forth our hands to God's children we keep our hand from developing spiritual atrophy. "Saint Ambrose (circa AD 333-397) counseled, 'You who think that you have a healthy hand beware lest it is withered by greed or by sacrilege. Hold it out often. Hold it out to the poor person who begs you. Hold it out to your neighbor, to give protection to a widow, to snatch from harm one whom you see subjected to unjust insult. Hold it out to God for your sins.'" (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 94).



27 - restored – The word "restored" is translated from the Greek word "ἀποκαθίστημι" or "apokathistēmi". It means to restore to its former state. It implies that the arm was once normal, consequently withered, and now returned to its original state in an act clearly defined as a

miracle. A miracle is something that defies our understanding and would otherwise be considered impossible. The man could not have devised a way to restore his own hand. Like most things associated with God, we are reliant upon God to overcome the major obstacles in life. We are totally reliant upon Him for all the important things in life. He is willing to save, yes, even mighty to save and requires from us only actions of faith. **“Nibley was wont to say, ‘Work we must, but the lunch is free.’ In other words, while the man performed his small act of obedience, this narrative reminds us that he simply cooperated with Christ’s grace.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 94). Our humble submission to God’s will qualifies us for His redeeming powers. In this way, we can restore all things lost through sin and the perils of mortality.

- 28 - **whole** – The word “whole” is translated from the Greek word “ὅλητος” or “hōlēitos”. It means sound, as in sound of body. It implies being in good health or whole. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “whole” as “soundness” (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 6, Verse 13, page 29).
- 29 - **like** – The word “like” is translated from the Greek word “ὡς” or “hōs”. It means as, like, even as, etc. The implication here is that the man’s withered hand was in no way inferior to his other hand. This was a full and absolute restoration.
- 30 - **the other** – The phrase “the other” is translated from the Greek word “ἄλλος” or “allos”. It means another or other. The withered hand was the right hand, it was restored and looked like the other hand; the left hand.
- 31 - **Pharisees** – The name “Pharisees” is translated from the Greek word “Φαρισαῖος” or “Pharisaios”. Translated literally, the name means “to separate” or “separate ones”.



Prior to the Babylonian exile, the Jews were ruled by a monarchy. The monarchy was terminated when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and utterly destroyed the Temple in 587BCE. While in exile, the people deferred to the Temple priests for leadership. The priests, who previously worked in the Temple, evolved into a civil authority. They became the Jewish ruling class and eventually called themselves the Sadducees.

In 539BCE, the Persians conquered Babylon. The Persian King, Cyrus the Great, released the Jews to return home and rebuild their temple. As the Jews returned in 537BCE, the Sadducees started to shape the Jewish society and religion in their own vision. The Temple reconstruction was completed in 515BCE and the Sadducees quickly took their place in the Temple hierarchy.

For several hundred years, the Sadducees led the Jewish people down a path of apostasy. They were obsessed by their own power and wealth. They endured the overthrow of the Persians by the Greeks in 332BCE, and then maneuvered the collapse of the Greek empire in 323BCE. The collapse of the Greek empire brought a couple hundred years of chaos in Israel. During this time, the Sadducees politically maneuvered to retain power.

Many of the Jews could see the corruption of the Sadducees. In 198BCE the Egyptian-Hellenic Ptolemies that ruled Judea were removed by the Syrian-Hellenic Seleucid Empire, under Antiochus III. Then, in 167BCE, the Seleucid king Antiochus IV invaded Judea, entered the Temple, and stripped it of its tithes, wealth, and ceremonial objects. He imposed a program of forced Hellenization, requiring Jews to abandon their own laws and customs, thus precipitating the Maccabean Revolt. Jerusalem was liberated in 165BCE and the Temple was restored. In 141BCE an assembly of priests and others affirmed Simon Maccabeus as high priest and leader, in effect establishing the Hasmonean dynasty.

The Pharisees came into existence during this period. They were Jews who saw the apostate nature of their leaders and advocated for a separation from the Hellenistic ways. They were originally a conservative movement wanting to return to old ways. The problem was, the truth had been lost to the point that it was impossible for them to restore things without divine help. Unfortunately they were not spiritually minded, and failed to seek out God. Consequently they focused on the laws rather than revelation. **“To the Pharisee, religion was ritual; it meant obeying certain rules and regulations”** (The Gospel of Mark, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 69) rather than seeking out God.

Over time, the Pharisees saw themselves as the protectors of the law. They were self proclaimed experts. By the time of Jesus, the Pharisees numbered about 6,000 men carefully selected from the general population, though not aristocrats. Jeremiah explained, **“We shall do well not to overestimate the number of members of these Pharisaiic following. From a reliable source, transmitted to us by Josephus who probably had it from Nicholas of Damascus, the intimate counselor and historian of the court of Herod the Great— thus from a semi-official source—we learn of ‘more than six thousand’ Pharisees during Herod’s time throughout his kingdom. By way of comparison, let us quote other figures. The population of Jerusalem was about twenty-five to thirty thousand (p. 84); the priests and Levites together raised that number by about eighteen thousand (p. 204); the Essenes were four thousand strong (Ant. 18.20). Incidentally, these numbers confirm that as far as the Pharisees are concerned, we are dealing with a marked group; and the size of their number confirms that in Jerusalem during the first century AD, there must have been several Pharisaiic communities.”** (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament period, Joachim Jeremias, page 252). They were the largest sect in Israel, but the average person was not a Pharisee. In fact, the average person did not belong to a sect. The Pharisees aligned themselves with the common man, and were the hierarchy of the synagogues. They were the rulers of the lower courts, so to speak. They probably related to the common man more than any other sect. The Temple in Jerusalem, however, was run by the Sadducees. Additionally, the Great Sanhedrin was ruled by the Sadducees with some Pharisees as members of the great council. The Pharisees had managed to infiltrate most levels of government. Even though they proclaimed themselves as scholars and experts of the law, their understanding was highly flawed.

Like the man with the withered hand, the Pharisees had figuratively withered hands and hearts. We should be very careful in our evaluation of them. Many of us share their attributes. Gaskill wrote, **“The Pharisees didn’t have a theology problem; they have a heart problem. Can we take them as an example of what not to do and instead love others as Jesus calls us to? Then neither our hearts nor our spirits will be shriveled. This miracle invites us to introspection. Do we look for the bad rather than the good in others? Do we feel jealousy and anger because of their blessings or success? Is our approach to our faith so ridged that we look for the spiritual failings and infractions of others, all the while not noticing the ‘beam’ in our own eye, which obscures our vision of reality.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 94).



The Pharisees, and for that matter the Sadducees and Scribes, had become so enamored by their own interpretation and understanding that they really worshipped that instead of the religion given to them by God through living prophets. **“By their religious forms and practices men reveal whether they have pure religion in their souls or not. These Jews bore record of their own apostasy by exhibiting their false and fanatical views about Sabbath observance. To them the Sabbath had become a day of restrictions and petty prohibitions. In large measure their very religion was the rabbinical interpretations surrounding it. The formalities of Sabbath observance had come to outweigh the basic virtues of revealed religion – faith, charity, love, integrity, mercy, healing, and gifts of the Spirit.”** (The Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Volume 1: The Gospels, Bruce R. McConkie, page 206). They were lovers of themselves, desiring only to glorify their own personas. They filled their own pockets and surrounded themselves with luxury in the name of the law. They took advantage of the poor, and profited on the less fortunate. Jeremiah explained, **“We hear more than once that the acceptance of this kind of subsidy was not always satisfactory: King Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC) warned his wife, as he lay dying, against the hypocrites who appeared like Pharisees (and most of the scribes were Pharisees) but were actually wicked and greedy. Their zeal was directed towards the things of this world and not of the next, a fact that is proved by the much-quoted reference to the seven kinds of Pharisee, which to-day is only partly comprehensible. All this fits in with the report that the Pharisees were said to have received bribes from the wife of Herod's brother Pheroras, that they are described as 'covetous' in the Gospels, and that the scribes were reproached for exploiting widows. This last passage, with its illuminating reference to 'devouring widows houses', can scarcely mean that the scribes accepted payment for legal advice although it was forbidden, or that they cheated widows of their rights; nor can it refer to Hillel's prosbul (by which the remission of debt directed by law in the Sabbatical year was evaded) which had finally deprived widows who were in debt of the ownership of their houses. It is much more likely to refer to the scribes' habit of sponging on the hospitality of people of limited means.”** (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament period, Joachim Jeremias, page 114).

Because the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees had managed to surround themselves with wealth, prestige, power, and authority, they were willing to do almost anything to preserve it. When something new was happening in the land, they sent officials to investigate. A new religious figure would have been a large threat to their way of life, especially one who was liked by the people, and preach things that were so different from their interpretations. Visiting officials were charged with protecting the system. It should be remembered that they were present when John the Baptist was baptizing. They were present for many of Jesus' sermons and miracles, not by chance but by design. Given His rising popularity it should not be a surprise that the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem would send officials, even spies to observe, confront and accuse Jesus. Elder McConkie, speaking of the Pharisees in the chapter, calls them **“the spies from Jerusalem.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 59).

- 32 - held a council** – The word “held” is translated from the Greek word “λαμβάνω” or “lambanō”. It means to take in hand, to take hold of, select, begin or choose. The word “council” is translated from the Greek word “συμβούλιον” or “symboulion”. It means to consult, deliberate, or hold a council. It is used of official assemblies of governors and procurators. **“Bested again, the Pharisees ‘go out’...a significant verb implying self exclusion from the divine presence and conspire with the Herodians to put Jesus to death. Contrary, then, to the Pharisees' principle of saving life on the Sabbath and their professed concern for that day's sanctity, they themselves desecrate the Sabbath by using it to plot Jesus' murder.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 253). These, the self proclaimed experts on the law, take counsel with unclean men to commit an act of murder. They took counsel to defile even the most sacred of law; the one design to save human life.
- 33 - against him** – The term “against” is translated from the Greek word “κατά” or “kata”. It means down from, throughout, according to, toward, or along.

The irony of the story is that the Pharisees did not catch Jesus breaking the Sabbath Law. The trap was set. A man with a withered hand was brought forth in the synagogue in front of Jesus. They must have known from experience or reputation that Jesus would not be able to refuse the opportunity to heal someone who was suffering. It was in His very nature. He was called to save, to redeem and to heal. Surely, the Pharisees and Scribes expected Jesus to perform some physical labor in the process of healing. They must have sat in anxious anticipation. Once He labored to heal, they could accuse Him of a capital offense. I am not sure how they would carry out a death sentence because the Romans reserved that sentence unto themselves. Regardless, if Jesus was convicted it would have condemned Him as a criminal to society. They desperately needed to bring something serious against Him.

Jesus was not naïve to what was going on. **“Both Mark and Luke suggest that Jesus picked this fight.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 90). According to Barclay, **“This incident is a crucial moment in the life of Jesus. He deliberately and publicly broke the Sabbath Law; and the result was a conference of the orthodox leaders to search out a way to eliminate him.”** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 30). Though I would agree that this was a significant moment in Jesus’ ministry, Jesus did not break the Law. This would go against the fact that He lived a perfect life. What He did do was break the Pharisees interpretations of the Law and the Oral Law that they built around the Law of God. These laws were apostate. Jesus intentionally broke their law in favor of keeping the law of His Father in the way it was intended to be kept.



Even so, Jesus outsmarted the Pharisees at their own game. He healed on the Sabbath, but the way He performed the miracle involved no labor. He healed by the simple utterance of words, and talking was not prohibited on the Sabbath. Elder McConkie said, **“It is difficult to see how even these Jews could have construed this healing to be a Sabbath violation. Jesus had performed no physical labor, administered no medicine, and required no exertion on the part of the healed person, except that of stretching forth his hand.”** (The Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Volume 1: The Gospels, Bruce R. McConkie, page 206).

34 - destroy – The word “destroy” is translated from the Greek word “ἀπόλλυμι” or “apollymi”. It means to destroy, abolish, render useless, kill or put to death.

The Pharisees and Scribes were, generally speaking, extremist. They were willing to go to extreme measures to protect what they saw as theirs. This included the willful destruction of another man’s life. They hoped that Jesus would do something that would allow them to destroy Him. The epitome of evil is meanness. These were mean men, looking for a chance to hurt another. Some scholars have a little more understanding of the ancient Pharisees and Scribes. Barclay wrote, **“We will not understand the attitude of the orthodox unless we understand the amazing seriousness with which they took the Sabbath Law. That Law forbade all work on the Sabbath day, and so the orthodox Jews would literally die rather than break it.”** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, pages 30-31). Though I do not disagree that the Pharisees were fanatics, I don’t think this removes the fact that their actions were often intentionally evil; especially when we see their action illustrated in this chapter.

Another example of the Pharisees extremism and evil behavior is found in a debate between them and the Sadducees. In several instances, the Bible declares the sentence for certain crimes as death. The Pharisees and Sadducees debated how that sentence was most appropriately carried out. The Sadducees felt that a burning at the stake was appropriate; while the Pharisees took the gruesome stance that pouring molten metal down the condemned person’s throat appropriately cleansed them from the inside out. Only a wicked man or group of men could find satisfaction in such conclusions. Jeremias documents this debate as follows;

“With regard to this the following facts are certain:

- (a) **Criminal law was administered without interference by the Jewish authority, which points to the time of Agrippa I. This dating is confirmed by the evidence that R. Eleazar b. Zadoq as a small boy, had seen the execution of the sentence.**
- (b) **The sentence was passed, not according to Pharisaic law (M. Sanh. vii.2: ‘The court at that time had not right knowledge’, i.e. of the law) but according to Sadducaic (b. Sanh. 52b); for whereas the Pharisees taught that the sentence of death by burning in Lev. 21.9 required that molten lead be poured down the throat, thus burning from inside, the Sadducees taught that it should be done by heaping faggots round the accused, thus burning from outside, and this was done to the priest’s daughter.”** (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament period, Joachim Jeremias, page 178).

35 - watched – The word “watched” is translated from the Greek word “παρητηρέω” or “paratēreō”. It means to stand by and watch, observe carefully or to watch assiduously. The authorized LDS scriptures note that the word “watched” as translated from the Greek means “watched carefully and maliciously”. **“The Pharisees are described as ‘watching closely’ (pareteroun) to see if Jesus will heal on the Sabbath. This same verb is used in Ps. 36:12 (one of only two Septuagint usages), where it is sinners who lie in wait for the righteous person, to slay him (Ps. 129:3) – a portrayal similar to the description of the Pharisees’ plot at the end of our passage.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 252).

The Gospel writers differ slightly on how this process of “watching” Jesus transpired. **“Matthew’s tradition says of the onlookers, They demanded of him, where the Markan tradition has them observing him with hostility.”** (Matthew: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, page 150). In either case, their watching was for an evil purpose. It was a trap, in hopes of condemning an innocent man. We suppose that they planted a man with a withered hand, whether the man was aware or not we do not know. In their judgment, Jesus would not be able to stand idly by without healing him. **“But in this they judged rightly: that Christ would not witness disease without removing it – or, as we might express it, that disease could not continue in the presence of Him, Who was the life. He read their inward thoughts of evil, and yet he proceeded to do the good which He purposed.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 59).



The Jews required two witness to condemn a man, and the Pharisees and Scribes had thought of that because **“Spies are present.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 58). They could witness of His violations. If this violation was not enough, it might stand as evidence in a larger and more comprehensive case. Elder McConkie explained, **“His enemies, however, at the direction of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, are building up a case against him. By**

the sheer weight of the evidence, by accumulating numerous instances of supposed wrongdoing, they seek to justify their murderous designs.” (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 58).

- 36 - **Stand forth** – The phrase “stand forth” is translated from the Greek word “ἐγειρω” or “egeirō”. It means to arouse, cause to rise, awake, rise from the death, or rise from a chair or bed. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the phrase “stand forth” as “Rise and come forth” (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 3, Verse 2, page 68).

Jesus never backed away from evil. It was not in His character to be ashamed of His Father’s work or fear the consequences of conspiring men. **“The unfortunate man is made to take a position center-stage.”** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 611). Unfortunate in regards to his mortal hand, but extremely fortunate to have found the Savior of mankind. He is called forth to stand in the center hall of the synagogue. This would place him where all the congregation could see him. He would have been standing before the hierarchy of the synagogue. The spies would have had a bird’s eye view. They must have been happy with the thought that their plan was coming together, but surely Jesus would not perform a healing so publically and obviously as to do it in the center of the synagogue. Marcus writes, **“Jesus nevertheless goes ahead and lays the groundwork for the healing, telling the crippled man to come forward to the center of the synagogue and thus setting up an open confrontation with the Pharisees.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 252). He is going to heal publically, but not before He teaches.

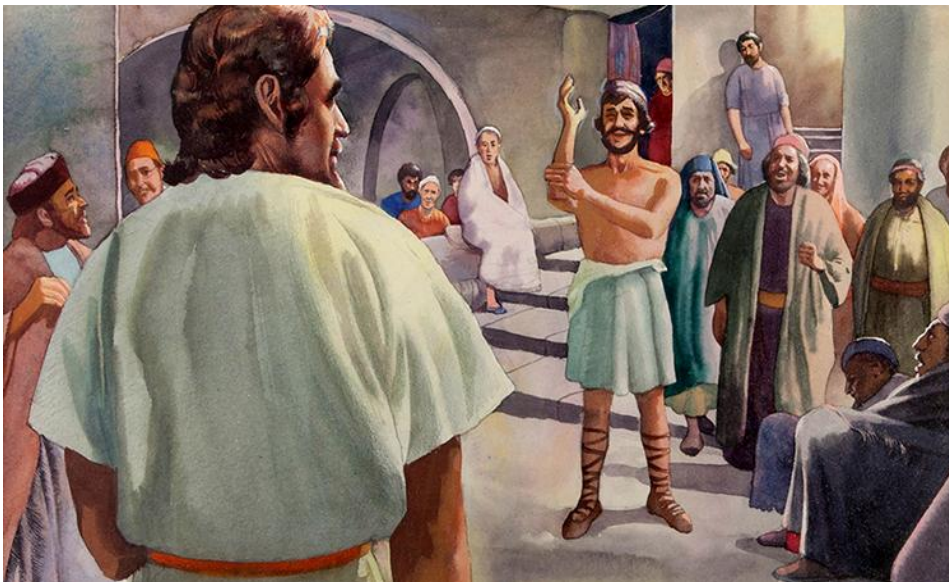
- 37 - **to do good** – The phrase “to do good” is translated from the Greek word “ἀγαθοποιεῖν” or “agathopoieō”. It means to do good, to do something which profits other, or to do right.

Jesus asks a rhetorical question that must have caused every one present to stop and ponder. Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath? The Jews were so caught up in observing the letter of the law that they almost totally ignored its purpose. The purpose of the Sabbath is to bless the lives of all of God’s children. It is a day to rest from the labors of mortality and focus on the labors of heaven. His labors always focus on the salvation of men. They are always good works. Jesus must have created a dichotomy in their minds. Surely doing good is part of the Sabbath day, but what if it conflicts with their interpretations of the letter of the law. Marcus wrote, **“Just as, in the first two antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount, the Matthean Jesus equates anger with murder and lust with adultery, so here the Markan Jesus makes withholding the cure of the man’s paralyzed hand, even for a few hours, tantamount to killing him, and performing the cure immediately tantamount to saving his life. For Mark’s Jesus, the eschatological was is already raging, and on that battlefield every human action either strikes a blow for life or wields one for death; the cautious middle ground, upon which one might wait a few minutes before doing good, has disappeared. And if Jesus is ‘the holy one of God,’ whose holiness implies the apocalyptic destruction of demons and diseases, then his Sabbath-day healing of a man with the paralyzed hand is a fulfillment rather than an infraction of the commandment to ‘remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.’”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, pages 252-253).

- 38 - **to do evil** – The phrase “to do evil” is translated from the Greek word “κακοποιεῖν” or “kakopoieō”. It means to do harm, to do evil, or to do wrong.

There are two kinds of sins. Sins of omission and sins of commission. The later is the one that we are most familiar with. It is the act of doing evil. A sin of commission is where we act or perform a deed that violates God’s law. The former is also familiar to us, but often goes by without our recognition. A sin of omission is one where we did nothing. We did not perform an act or deed. Quite the opposite, when there was good to do we sat idly by. We ignored the widow in need, or failed to help a friend. For Jesus to see a man whose hand He could heal, and do nothing would be a sin. **“He asked the experts in the law two questions. Is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath day? He put them in a dilemma. They were bound to admit that it was lawful to do good; and it was a good thing he proposed to do. They were bound to deny that it was lawful to do evil; and, yet, surely it was an evil thing to leave a man in wretchedness when it was possible to help him. Then he asked, Is it lawful to save a life or to kill it? Here he was driving the thing home. He was taking steps to save this wretched man’s life; they were thinking out methods of killing himself. On any reckoning it was surely a better thing to be thinking about helping a man than it was to be thinking of killing a man. No wonder they had nothing to say!”** (The Gospel of Mark, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, pages 68-69).

- 39 - **to save life** – The word “save” is translated from the Greek word “σῶζω” or “sōzō”. It means to save, to keep safe and sound, or to rescue from danger or destruction. The word



“life” is translated from the Greek word “ψυχή” or “psychē”. It means to breath, as in the breath of life.

The Jews made exceptions on the Sabbath when it involved the saving of life. They were allowed to engage in battle on the Sabbath if it was in defense. They could rescue animals on the Sabbath. Jesus knew exactly what He was doing when He asked the Pharisees and Scribes if it was legal to save life on the Sabbath. **“This question places the Pharisees in a quandary, since according to their own principles, the necessity of saving life overrules the imperative of Sabbath observance.”** (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 252).

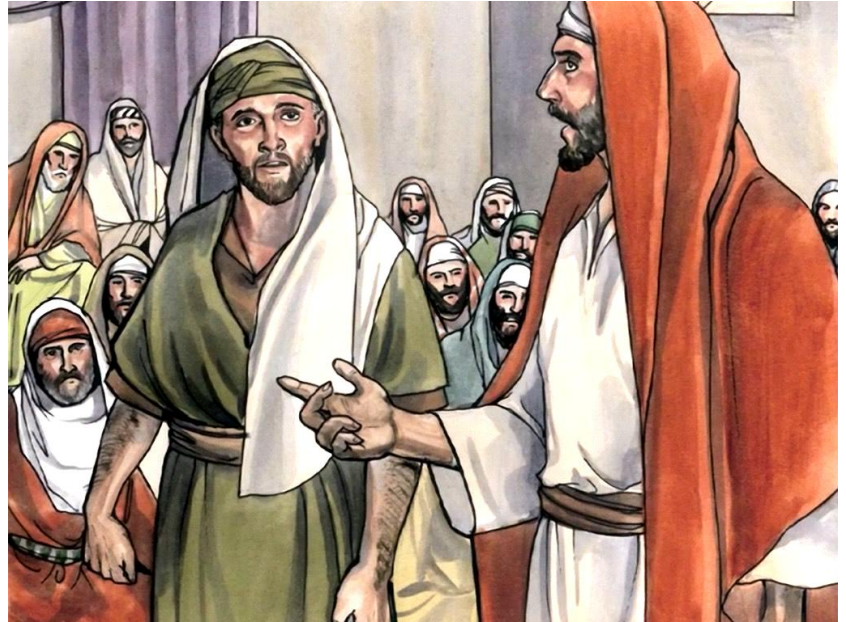
One might ask, ‘How is this line of questioning relevant when a withered hand was not life threatening?’ Marcus brings up this very argument. He wrote, **“...the question is not one of saving life; the man with the ‘withered’ hand is not in mortal danger, and if Jesus waits a few hours to allow the Sabbath to end before performing the cure, he will not be killing him.”** (Mark 1-8: A New

translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 252). We must remember that saving life is not just saving it from death. We save life from suffering, pain and evil. Even the Jews understood this. They made Sabbath day accommodations for many things that threatened the quality of life, though death was not expected. **“We have already seen, that in their view only actual danger to life warranted a breach of the Sabbath-Law. But this opened a large field of discussion. Thus, according to some, disease of the ear, according to some throat-disease, while, according to others, such a disease as angina, involved danger, and superseded the Sabbath-Law. All applications to the outside of the body were forbidden on the Sabbath. As regarded internal remedies, such substances as were used in health, but had also a remedial effect, might be taken, although here also there was a way of evading the Law. A person suffering from toothache might not gargle his mouth with vinegar, but he might use an ordinary toothbrush and dip it in vinegar.”** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, pages 59-60). Surely if a man was allowed to use vinegar to alleviate a tooth ache on the Sabbath, Jesus could cure a withered hand.

Another point that needs to be made is the circumstances brought about by a withered hand. The ancient Jews lived in a society without social welfare. There were no government subsidies for the unfortunate. A man with a withered hand could not perform his labors, and his income would be lost. He would most probably lose his home and property. He would most probably resort to begging, sleeping wherever he found place, and eating when someone was merciful. He would have suffered from poverty in a way that most of us do not understand. Most of us have never gone hungry, or struggled for the basic requirements of life. We may see the man with a withered hand as just a man with a disability. In reality, he was a man struggling for life. Most beggars in the ancient world did not have a long life expectancy. Harsh conditions and poor diet resulted in early deaths. This man was in danger of his life. **"The established general rule was that the Sabbatical regulations might be, nay must be, waived in order to save life, and this is throughout implied in the Synoptic incidents."** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, first series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 132).

40 - to kill – The phrase "to kill" is translated from the Greek word "ἀποκτείνω" or "apokteinō". It means to kill in any way whatsoever. It is akin to murder. The Sabbath Law was significant to the Jews because it was part of the ten foundational laws given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments are the hallmark of Jewish law. Included in that Law is a prohibition to kill or murder. The Lord said simply and clearly, **"Thou shalt not kill."** (Exodus 20:13).

Jesus poses the question is it lawful to kill on the Sabbath? Of course, the answer to this question would have been obvious to all present. The Law of Moses prohibited killing altogether regardless of the day of the week. Jesus is placing the two laws in conflict. This is not the first time that the Jews had faced such a conflict with the Sabbath. One might imagine that over the centuries the enemies of Israel learned about their religious practices and their refusal to even take up arms on the Sabbath. A cunning enemy would simply attack on the Sabbath, nearly guaranteeing a win. **"It was because the Jews insisted on keeping the Sabbath Law that Pompey was able to take Jerusalem. In ancient warfare it was the custom for the attacker to erect a huge mound which overlooked the battlements of the besieged city and from the height of the mound to bombard the defenses. Pompey built his mound on the Sabbath days when the Jews simply looked on and refused to lift a hand to stop him. Josephus says, 'And had it not been for the practice, from the days of our forefathers, to rest on the seventh day, this bank could never have been perfected, by reason of the opposition the Jews would have made; for though our Law gave us leave then to defend ourselves against those that begin to fight with us and assault us (this was a concession), yet it does not permit us to meddle with our enemies while they do anything else' (Josephus: Antiquities, 14. 4. 2)."** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 31).



As time went on, the surrounding lands took advantage of the Jews and waged wars on the Sabbath killing large numbers of Jews. **"In the time of the rising under Judas Maccabaeus certain Jews sought refuge in the caves in the wilderness. Antiochus sent a detachment of men to attack them; the attack was made on the Sabbath day; and these insurgent Jews died without even a gesture of defiance or defense, because to fight would have been to break the Sabbath. 1st Maccabees tells how the forces of Antiochus 'gave them battle with all speed. Howbeit they answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, nor stopped the places where they lay hid; but said: 'Let us die in our innocency: heaven and earth shall testify for us, that ye put us to death wrongfully.' So they rose up against them in battle on the Sabbath, and they slew them with their wives and children and cattle, to the number of a thousand people' (1 Maccabees 2:31-38). Even in a national crisis, even to save their lives, even to protect their nearest and their dearest, the Jews would not fight on the Sabbath."** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 31). One cannot help but to admire the noble desires of the Jews to keep God's law. Even so, they eventually started to talk about the contrast between allowing the killing of their people (a violation of another commandment) and the keep of the Sabbath day. **"War was prohibited on the Sabbath, but the father of the Maccabees, under the stress of practical necessity, established the principle that self defense was lawful on the Sabbath day, for to hold otherwise was to 'deliver up' man, life and soul, to the Sabbath, just as at an earlier period they would not continue the pursuit of a defeated enemy late on a Friday afternoon."** (Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, first series, Cambridge, I. Abrahams, page 130).

Jesus knew the law in ways that the Jews could only imagine. He was in fact the mighty Jehovah who gave Moses the Law. He was the very author of the Law under the direction of His Father. Jesus had the Jews in a quandary. Their understanding of the law was so lacking that they were in conflict, and God's law is never in conflict. **"Yes – to do good, and to neglect it (the Sabbath), would have been to do evil. Nay, according to their own admission, should not a man, on the Sabbath, save life? Or should he, by omitting it, kill?"** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 61). The conflict was a lack of understanding doctrine. The doctrine of salvation explains why we have the Sabbath. The principle of the Sabbath is given for the perfection of man. It is not designed to torment man, but rather to assist in His exaltation. This includes bringing the best out of man. It involves righteous acts and behaviors. A true understanding of the doctrine associated with the Sabbath explains how it works. The Jews lacked this.

41 - held their peace – The phrase "held their peace" is translated from the Greek word "σιωπᾶν" or "siōpān". It means to be silent, or to hold one's peace. The Codex Sinaiticus translated the phrase "held their peace" as "were silent". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 3, Verse 4, page 68). The authorized LDS scriptures note that the phrase "held their peace" as translated from the Greek means "remained silent".

"St. Mark expressly records that they dared not attempt a reply." (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 60). Jesus' line of questioning placed the Pharisees and Scribes in such conflict with their own ideals that to speak would have condemned them one way or the other. They would have either admitted that the Sabbath could be broken under set circumstances or that it was okay to ignore goodness and allow people to die or suffer. **"Although the man with the withered hand could not be classed with those dangerously ill, it could not have been difficult to silence the Rabbis on their own admission."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 60).

42 - looked round about – The phrase "looked round about" is translated from the Greek word "περιβλέπω" or "periblepō". It means to look around, or to look about. **"Mark records that Jesus felt angry and 'grieved' by the Jews attitude (or by their 'stupidity' as the Anchor Bible renders the noun)."** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 92). One might picture the Savior looking around the room with great disappointment. He has come to save all mankind, and yet here they sat eager to condemn Him. What a terribly sad sight that must have been to such a sweet and tender soul.

43 - with anger – The term "with anger" is translated from the Greek word "ὀργή" or "orgē". It means anger, temper, indignation, or any violent emotion.

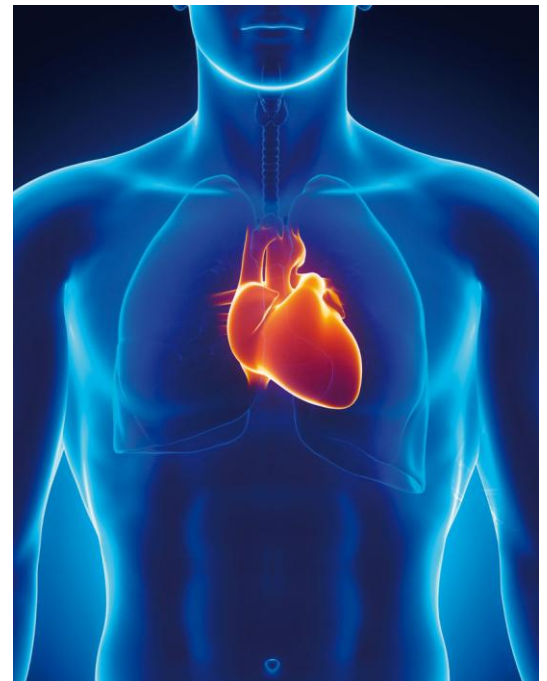
Anger is not an emotion that we readily associate with Jesus. We tend to see anger as an evil emotion associated with men. The difference is that the anger of men is commonly associated with evil thoughts and desires. Our anger is usually associated with pride, selfishness, revenge, and evil doing. God's anger is one of righteous indignation. Elder McConkie explained, "**The Jesus 'looked round about on them with anger,' his soul stirred with righteous indignation, he being 'grieved for the hardness of their hearts.'**" (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 59). Righteous indignation is defined as an emotion of anger or annoyance provoked by a moral judgment of unfair treatment or actions. Jesus' righteous indignation, which is different than base mortal anger, resulted in Him confronting evil, "...his action amounts to 'a virtual taunt'." (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 252). This may have been unexpected. Only on a few occasions have we seen Jesus display righteous indignation. We saw it when He cleared out the money changers at the temple. In both cases "**they were speechless. But a strange mixture of feeling was in the Savior's heart – strange to us, though it is but what Holy Scriptures always tells us of the manner in which God views sin and the sinner, using terms, which, in their combination, seem grandly incompatible.**" (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 61). He is a man of endless patience and love, and yet He will confront sin boldly and without hesitation or weakness.

44 - being grieved – The term "being grieved" is translated from the Greek word "συλλυπέω" or "syllypeō". It means to be sorrowful over someone else, to be grieved, to afflict jointly.

"**There is the same curious duality in Mark's conception of hardness of heart: it is both a sin that angers Jesus and an affliction for which he grieves, and elsewhere in Mark it can visit even those who are well intentioned.**" (Mark 1-8: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joel Marcus, page 253). Jesus has no toleration for sin. He abhors it. And yet He loves the sinner and is grieved that they sin. As weak mortal men, we often struggle to separate the sin from the sinner. Jesus does not struggle in this area. Righteous indignation for sin and a grieving love for the sinner can co-exist in Jesus' heart and mind.

45 - hardness – The word "hardness" is translated from the Greek word "πῶρωσις" or "pōrōsis". It means to cover with a callus. It also means to dull perception, to blunt the mind, to be stubborn or obduracy. The authorized LDS scriptures note that the word "hardness" as translated from the Greek means "insensibility, dullness". The spirit of the Lord cannot reside nor teach a man who is hardened in thought and emotion. Soft hearts are achieved through humility. We cannot soften our hearts by ourselves, but we can humble ourselves to the point that the spirit is allowed to work within us. This allows the spirit to soften our hearts and refine our souls.

46 - hearts – The word "hearts" is translated from the Greek word "καρδιά" or "kardia". It means the heart, as in the organ of a living being which is at the center of the circulation of blood. Symbolically it represents one's thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes and endeavours. Symbolically, the heart carries many meanings. In most cultures, the heart symbolizes "**the centre of being, both physical and spiritual; the divine presence at the centre. The heart is the temple of God. It symbolizes love, understanding, courage, joy and sorrow.**" (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 82). "**In Jewish tradition, the heart is similarly seen as the center of the inner life, which includes both feeling and thought.**" (Encyclopedia of Traditional Jewish Symbols, Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, page 75).



Our hearts represent the kind of person we are. "**Since the heart is a soft muscle and was thought of as the seat of the feelings as well as the intellect,...its petrification can signify an inability to respond in an emotionally appropriate manner. These men had become 'past feeling'. Whenever we allow ourselves to marinate in sinful behaviors or thoughts, we too run the risk of losing our sensitivity to spiritual things.**" (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, pages 92-93). This is especially evident in the Book of Mormon. Early in the book, we find a significant contrast between the sons of Lehi. All are faced with implausible facts. Their father has claimed to have seen God, and the mysteries of heaven. He has been instructed to leave Jerusalem and take his family into the harsh wilderness. He has prophesied of destructions and a future that no one saw. The sons were changed with believing this story. All struggled. Nephi, took his struggle to the Lord. He prayed for understanding. He records, "**I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers.**" (1st Nephi 2:16). In contrast, Nephi's brothers, Laman and Lemuel, did not turn to the Lord but relied on their own understanding. Their hearts were hard, and they rebelled against just about everything. To them, the Lord declared, "**Ye are swift to do iniquity but slow to remember the Lord your God. Ye have seen an angel, and he spake unto you; yea, ye have heard his voice from time to time; and he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past feeling, that ye could not feel his words.**" (1st Nephi 17:45). Our hearts represent our ability to receive and understand things of the spirit. If our hearts are hardened, we become spiritually deaf, becoming unable to feel and understand the spirit.

47 - straightway – The word "straightway" is translated from the Greek word "εὐθέως" or "euthēs". It means straightway, immediately, or forthwith. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the term "straightway" as "immediately" (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Mark, Chapter 3, Verse 6, page 69).

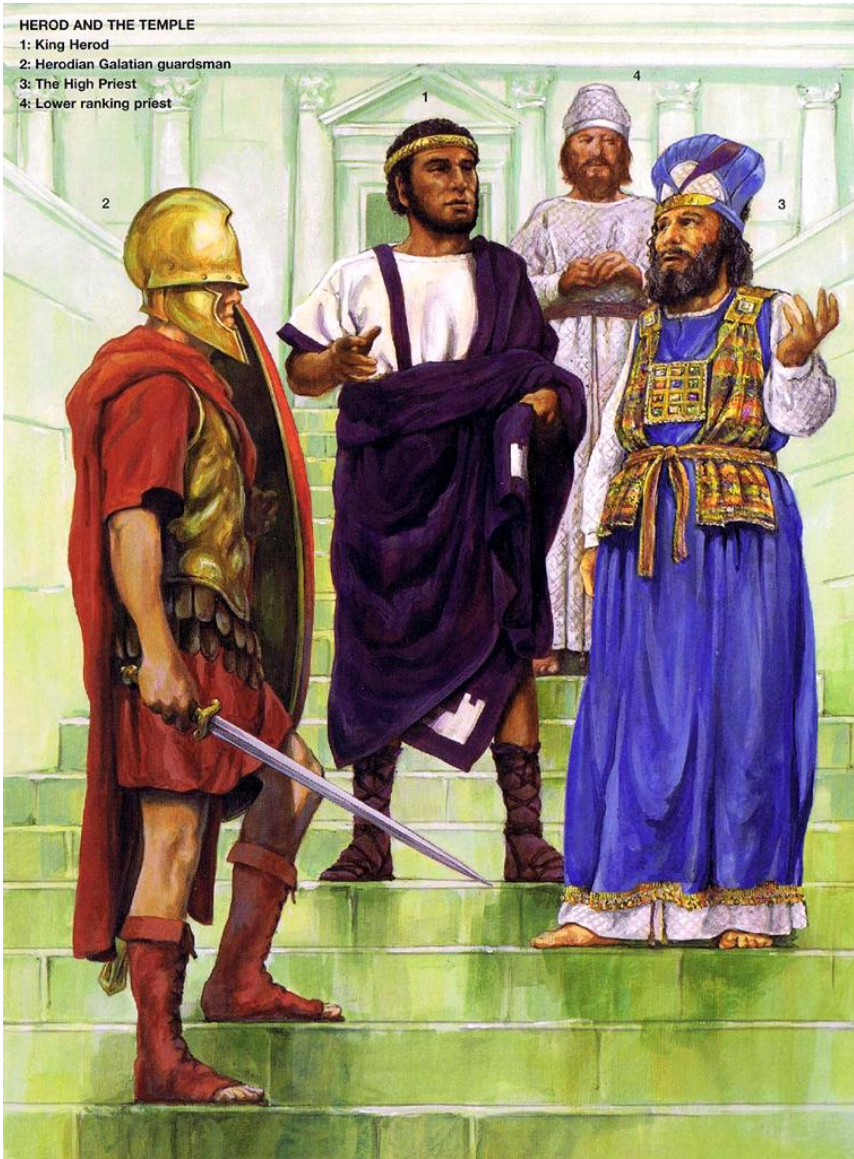
48 - took counsel – The term "took counsel" is translated from the Greek words "ποιέω" or "poieō" and "συμβούλιον" or "symboulion". The word "poieo" means to make, produce, prepare, form or fashion. The word "symboulion" means to counsel, deliberate, or assemble for the purpose of counsel; most especially governors or procurators. This was an official council of officials. These men, Pharisees, Scribes and Herodians, sat in positions of power. They were there under an official capacity. They were there to pass judgment and extend consequences.

Rabbis were consulted for direction. For example, "**when a Rabbi was consulted, whether a man might on the Sabbath take a certain drink which had a purgative effect, he answered 'if for pleasure it is lawful; if for healing forbidden.'**" (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 60). This was not the kind of counsel being sought. They were not seeking spiritual direction or counsel. "**At the end of it the Scribes and Pharisees began to plot the death of Jesus. In a sense the highest compliment you can pay a man is to persecute him. It shows that he is regarded not only as dangerous but as effective. The action of the Scribes and Pharisees is the measure of the power of Jesus Christ. True Christianity may be hated, but it can never be disregarded.**" (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 2, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 35).

49 - Herodians – The word "Herodians" is translated from the Greek word "Ἡρώδιοι" or "Hērōdianoī". Its name, translated literally, comes from the English equivalent of "Hero". Unfortunately, I do not believe that there were any true heroes in this group. A hero is a person who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities. The Herods were murderers, thieves, and evil in nearly every conceivable manner. In a total contradiction of terms, the root word of their name is hero. The Zondervan Bible Dictionary defines Herodians as "**a party mentioned only three times (Matt. 22:16, Mark 12:13, Mark 3:6) as joining with the Pharisees to oppose Jesus. Nothing more is known about them than what the Gospels state. It appears that they were neither a religious sect nor a political party, but Jews who supported the dynasty of Herod, and therefore the rule of Rome.**" (Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor Merrill C. Tenney, Page 352).

HEROD AND THE TEMPLE

- 1: King Herod
- 2: Herodian Galatian guardsman
- 3: The High Priest
- 4: Lower ranking priest



Herodians are individuals who adhere to, support and identify themselves as followers of the Herodian family. **“The Herodians were a political group among the Jews who favored Herodian rule over direct Roman rule.”** (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 272). Herod was a vassal King of Judea under Caesar’s decree. He rose to power through murder and cunning. After his death, Judea was divided between his sons. The Herodians were hated by most Jews. Barclay explained, **“The Herodians were the court entourage of Herod; they were continually coming into contact with Romans. For all normal purposes the Pharisees would have considered them unclean; but now they were prepared to enter into what was for them an unholy alliance. In their hearts there was a hate which would stop at nothing.”** (The Gospel of Mark, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 69).

The Herodians and the Jewish Hierarchy (Hasmoneans) have some things in common. **“The Hasmoneans and Herodians ruled with cunning, brutality, and sometimes incompetence.”** (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 404). And yet they had total distain for each other. Then there were the Pharisees who quarreled with both. The Herods tried to please Ceasar while the Pharisees saw any allegiance to Rome as a form of idol worship. Normally this would have resulted in the death of the Pharisees, and though many did die, Herod saw the political need to control the Pharisees and partner with them. **“When subsequently the Pharisees refused to take the oath of fidelity to Herod and to Caesar, the king contented himself by imposing a money fine on them, while for the same crime he had other people put to death. The Pharisees had complete access to the court in Jerusalem and exercised great influence on the harem and on domestic arrangements. The reason for the king’s toleration of the Pharisees is to be found chiefly in their power: Herod had to keep continually before him the fact that the Pharisees had the support of the people.”** (Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament period, Joachim Jeremias, page 263). Therein lies a symbiotic, love/hate relationship.

The Herodians consistently looked for ways to fit in with the Jews. The Jews saw them as gentiles who through forced marriage claimed to be part of the covenant people. **“The Herodians themselves knew very well that as descendants of proselytes they had no right to the throne and must pay due regard to public opinion.”** (Jerusalem in the Time of

Jesus: An investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament period, Joachim Jeremias, page 334). This placed them in an ongoing political arena. It is not surprising to hear that the Herods were conspiring with the Pharisees. It is more surprising that the Pharisees were conspiring with the Herods. Elder McConkie wrote, the Pharisees **“...took counsel from the hated Herodians – those half apostate Jews who dealt traitorously toward their own people, and who stood for all that Roman tyranny imposed upon the chosen race – they took counsel with such misdirected recreants as to how they might destroy him. It was the ages-old scene of enemies forgetting their won differences and joining hands to fight the truth and Him who is the source.”** (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 59).

The picture on the left shows the apostate state of the Jews at the time of Jesus. We see the High Priest, who should have been the presiding prophet of God, but was actually an appointed Sadducees by Herod himself. A position earned by bribery and murder. We see Herod in the temple. An unworthy man standing in a place reserved for those who make and keep sacred covenants. We see priest, who should be concerned with work of God, but he is involved with political matters. And finally we see a soldier under the employ of the Herodians; a symbol that evil ways were enforced by the sword. These are the conspiring men of Jesus’ time.

50 - another sabbath – The word “another” is translated from the Greek word “ἕτερος” or “heteros”. It means the other, another, or the other of two.

Here is where Luke differs from Matthew and Mark. Matthew indicates that the events of this chapter are on the same day that Jesus and His disciples were in the field of grain and the disciples pucked grain on the Sabbath. Mark is somewhat neutral on the matter, but Luke says clearly, **“On another Sabbath” – probably that following – He was in their synagogue.** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 58). This places the date for this chapter on April 8th, 28CE if you follow Matthew’s record. It places the date on April 15th or 22nd, 28CE if you follow Luke’s account.

51 - taught – The word “taught” is translated from the Greek word “διδάσκω didaskō”. It means to teach, impart instruction, instill doctrine, or act as a teacher.

Fitzmyer says that exchange in the synagogue **“is a deliberate provocation of the Scribes and Pharisees by Jesus the teacher.”** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 611). Though I believe that Jesus confronted evil without hesitation, I would tend to think that His motive was more in line with teaching the people the right way. **“Christ does all that He does for us in an attempt to bless us, develop us, and save us.”** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 92).

52 - right – The word “right” is translated from the Greek word “δεξιός” or “dexios”. It means the right, or right hand. Symbolically, it is a place of honor or authority. One dictionary of symbols records, **“The right side... in the west and in Christianity it is the side of honor.”** (An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols, J.C. Cooper, page 138).

Luke is the only account of this story that declares that the man's withered hand was his right hand. **"This Lucan addition probably stresses what is for most people the hand for work, and it heightens the condition of the unfortunate person."** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 610). **"If we compare the story in Matthew 12:10-13 and Mark 3:1-6 with Luke's version, we find that only Luke tells us that it was the man's right hand which was withered. There speaks the doctor, interested in the details of the case."** (The Gospel of Luke, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 72).



- 53 - scribes** – The name “scribes” is translated from the Greek word “γραμματεὺς” or “grammateus”. The name is a title or occupation. It means a clerk, scribe, public servant, or recorder. In the Bible, a scribe is a man learned in the Mosaic law and in the sacred writings; an interpreter or teacher of the law. Scribes examined the more difficult and subtle questions of the law; added to the Mosaic law decisions of various kinds thought to elucidate its meaning and scope, and did this to the detriment of religion. Since the advice of men skilled in the law was needed in the examination in the causes and the solution of the difficult questions, they were enrolled in the Sanhedrin; and are mentioned in connection with the priests and elders of the people.

"Priests and Levites were often scribes, a title that covers a range of activities: copying texts, drawing up legal documents and serving as experts on the law." (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 170). They were more than just experts in religious matters. **"An expert in the Bible was an expert in everything, including war."** (Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE-66CE, E.P. Sanders, page 171). We must remember that the law of the land was indeed the holy scriptures. The scribes were **"a class of learned men who made the systematic study of the law and it exposition their professional occupation...They are also called 'lawyers'".** The Pharisees were **"a religious party, while scribes held an office. The double designation distinguishes them from the Pharisees, but the majority of the scribes belonged to the Pharisee party which recognized the legal interpretations of the scribes."** (Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor Merrill C. Tenney, Page 761).

- 54 - accusation** – The word “accusation” is translated from the Greek word “κατηγορία” or “katēgoria”. It means an accusation or a legal charge.

The Pharisees and Scribes came to the synagogue to accuse Jesus of a crime. They left with no formal charges. Did he not break their law? He had healed on the Sabbath, and by their interpretation that was a violation. **"The Saviour had broken their Sabbath-Law, and yet He had not broken it, for neither by remedy, nor touch, nor outward application had He healed him. He had broken the Sabbath-rest, as God breaks it, when He sends, or sustains, or restores life, or does good: all unseen and unheard, without touch or outward application, by the Word of His Power, by the Presence of His Life."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 2, Alfred Edersheim, page 62). Frustrated to anger, the Pharisees and Scribes saw the miracle but had no witness of any acts that they could use to charge Jesus. Jesus had not even touched the man.

- 55 - knew their thoughts** – The word “thoughts” is translated from the Greek word “διαλογισμός” or “dialogismos”. It means the thinking of a man deliberating with himself; i.e. inward reasoning, purpose, and design.

One of the gifts of the spirit is the gift of discernment. This is the ability to know right from wrong, to see danger, and know the hearts of man. Jesus had this gift. Luke **"was not likely just offering an abstract principle. He was actually speaking prophetically, clearly knowing that, in their hearts, they had murderous desires regarding Him."** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 90). Jesus knew what He was doing because He had mastered His spiritual gifts.

- 56 - Rise up** – The term “rise up” is translated from the Greek word “ἐγείρω” or “egeirō”. It means to arouse, cause to rise, awake, recall from the dean, or rise from a seat or bed. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the phrase “Rise up” as simply “Rise” (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 8, page 114).

- 57 - in the midst** – The phrase “in the midst” is translated from the Greek word “μέσος” or “mesos”. It means middle, the midst, in the midst or amongst. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the phrase “stand for in the midst” as stand in the midst” (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 8, page 114).

- 58 - to destroy** – The term “to destroy” is translated from the Greek word “ἀπόλλυμι” or “apollymi”. It means to destroy, abolish, render useless, kill, or put to death.

- 59 - filled** – The word “filled” is translated from the Greek word “πίμπλημι” or “pimplēmi”. It means to fill, to be filled, or to be fulfilled.

- 60 - madness** – The word “madness” is translated from the Greek word “ἄνοια” or “anoia”. It means want of understanding, or folly. It can also mean madness expressed in rage. **"The Greek noun a-noia actually describes a state of unthinking or thoughtlessness and often means no more than 'folly'."** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 611).

The Old Testament passage teaches, **"Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."** (Ephesians 4:19). No scripture could be more fitting for this setting. These men were so void of the spirit that they were governed only by their own desires. Denied their own desires **"Jesus totally discomfited his detractors but added to their hatred and madness."** (The Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Volume 1: The Gospels, Bruce R. McConkie, page 206). Their true nature is revealed. This is the case with man; place him in a trying situation and take way his personal wishes and you will see who he truly is. **"Cyril of Alexandria (AD 375-444) wrote, 'The nature of an envious person is such that he makes the praises of others food for his own disease and is wickedly maddened by their reputation' or success."** (Miracles of the New Testament: A Guide to the Symbolic Messages, Alonzo L. Gaskill, page 95).

- 61 - communed** – The word “communed” is translated from the Greek word “διαλαλέω” or “dialaleō”. It means to converse together, or to talk with. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the word “communed” as “conferred” (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 11, page 114).

- 62 - What they might do** – The phrase “what they might do” is translated from the Greek word “ποιέω” or “poieō”. It means to make, prepare, produce, construct, acquire, or fashion. The Codex Sinaiticus translates the phrase “what they might do” as “what they should do” (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Luke, Chapter 6, Verse 11, page 114). **"They had received no injury, yet they went about to slay Him. So great an evil is envy. For not against strangers only, but even against our own, is it ever warring."** (The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople on the Gospel of St. Matthew, Part II, Matthew 8-18, Translated from the works of John Chrysostom from the 4th Century C.E., Baxter Printer, Oxford, 1854, page 567).

