

The Greatest Life Ever Lived

A Study in the Incarnate Life of Jesus Christ and An Exposition of the Four Gospels

LESSON XXXV : JESUS ASSERTS HIS AUTHORITY AS LORD OF THE SABBATH

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	related passages
12:1-14	2:23-28; 3:1-6	6:1-11		

○ The chronological sequence here is uncertain. Some take these events to have happened shortly after the end of Matthew 11, saying “at that time” recalls Mt 11:25. Others believe this follows closely after John 5, placing these events around April / May. It again must be noted that the Lord placed no emphasis on chronology or He would have left definite traces of what follows what. If the chronological order is unimportant to the Lord, we must not place undue emphasis upon conjecture.

○ “All Jesus must have taught must have seemed to these Pharisees strangely un-Jewish in cast and direction, even if not in form and words. But chiefly would this be the case in regard to that on which, of all else, the Pharisees laid most stress, the observance of the Sabbath. On no other subject is Rabbinic teaching more painfully minute and more manifestly incongruous to its professed object. For, if we rightly apprehend what underlay the complicated and intolerably burdensome laws and rules of Pharisaic Sabbath-observance, it was to secure, negatively, absolute rest from all labour, and positively, to make the Sabbath a delight.” [Edersheim, *Life of Messiah*]

Picking of Grain on the Sabbath

Matt 12:1 *At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat.*

Mk 2:23 *And it came to pass, that He went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day; and His disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.*

Lk 6:1 *And it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first, that He went through the corn fields; and His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.*

Luke states this was, literally, “the second-first” Sabbath. The interpretation of this varies:

- the Jews had three first Sabbaths: the first Sabbath after the Passover, that after the Feast of Pentecost, and that after the Feast of Tabernacles. According to which opinion, this second first Sabbath must have been the first Sabbath after the Pentecost.
- this was the next day after the passover, the day in which they were forbidden to labor (Lev 23:6) and for this reason was termed Sabbath (Lev 23:15). Here it is marked by the name, second-first Sabbath, because being the day after the passover, it was in this respect the second; and it was also the first, because it was the first day of unleavened bread (Ex 12:15,16).
- “After the first day of the passover (which was a Sabbath, Ex 12:16) ye shall count unto you seven Sabbaths complete (Lev 23:15) reckoning that day for the first of the first week, which was therefore called *first Sabbath from the second day of unleavened bread* (the 16th of the month), the second was called *the second Sabbath from that day*, and the third *the third Sabbath from the second day*, and so on, till they came to the seventh Sabbath from that day, i.e. to the 49th day, which was the day of Pentecost.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] To this agrees several other commentators: “Luke says it was on *the second Sabbath after the first*, or rather *the first Sabbath after the second*; that is, the first Sabbath after the second day of the Passover, when the sheaf of the first-fruit was offered, and harvest was begun.” [Gill, *Commentary*] “So the Jews reckoned their Sabbaths, from the Passover to Pentecost; the first, second, third, and so on, till the seventh Sabbath (after the second day.) This immediately preceded Pentecost, which was the fiftieth day after the second day of unleavened bread.” [Wesley, *Commentary*]

“Time: literally, *season*. The word implies a *particular* time; as related to some event, a *convenient, appropriate* time; absolutely, a particular point of time, or a particular season, like spring or winter. [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest: “*At that epochal and strategic time Jesus proceeded on the Sabbath through the grain fields.*” Grain was evidently ripening. Depending on the altitude this event occurred early spring to mid-summer. In Palestine’s warm Jordan Valley barley ripens during April; in the transjordan and east of the Sea of Galilee wheat is harvested in August. Exactly when this happened is uncertain as is the place. Robertson says it happened probably in Galilee on His way back from Jerusalem which is as good a guess as any.

ears of corn — literally “pick heads of grain and eat them”, either wheat or barley (barley ripens earlier). The bible uses the word “corn” in a general sense and could refer to barley, wheat, fitches, lentils, beans, millet or rye [ISBE vol 2, article on “*corn*”]. Webster defines corn as “any edible grain, esp. Wheat in England and oats in Scotland.” [Webster’s *The American College Dictionary*] “As they passed along, they plucked off the ears of corn, either barley or wheat, and rubbed them in their hands, to get the grain clear of the husk, or beard, and eat them.” [Gill, *Commentary*] Wuest: “*And His disciples were hungry and began to be picking off the grain and to be eating it.*”

His disciples were hungry — stated only by Matthew although Mk 2:25 and Lk 6:3 implies the same. The sense seems to be not that it was just prior to lunch time but rather that no longer being employed in their previous occupations they often were hungry. “This little group was poor, needy, and now also hungry.” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “We may well wonder at the extreme poverty of Christ and His disciples. He was Himself present with them, and yet permitted them to lack bread! A man, therefore, is not forsaken of God because he is in want. **It is more honorable to suffer the want of all temporal things in fellowship with Christ and His followers, than to have all things in abundance in connection with the world.**” [Clarke, *Commentary*] To this the Mosaic economy made provisions in Deut 23:25 by allowing the poor to not reap but they were allowed pick grain with their hands. **Note the allowance for the poor: they were not handouts but provisions for those who would work.**

Note the attack came when the disciples “began” to pluck the grain. “Perhaps emphasis should be laid on this word. No sooner had they *begun* to pluck ears than fault was found. Pharisees on the outlook for offenses.... [Jesus] can do nothing right. The smallest, most innocent action is an offence.” [Bruce, *Gk NT*]

Matt 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto Him, Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.

Mk 2:24 And the Pharisees said unto Him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?

Lk 6:2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath days?

According to their man-made regulations, a man was guilty of desecrating the Sabbath if on that day he “takes ears of grain equal to a lamb’s mouthful.” [the Mishna, Sabbath 7:4; quoted in Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “On any ordinary day this would have been lawful; but on the Sabbath it involved, according to the Rabbinic statutes, at least two sins, viz., plucking the ears, which was reaping, and rubbing them in their hands (Lk 6:1), which was sifting, grinding, or fanning. The Talmud says: ‘In case a woman rolls wheat to remove the husks, it is considered as sifting; if she rubs the heads of wheat, it is regarded as threshing; if she cleans off the side-adherences, it is sifting out fruit; if she bruises the ears, it is grinding; if she throws them up in her hand, it is winnowing’ “ [Vincent, *Word Studies*] “The Jews were so superstitious, concerning the observance of the Sabbath, that in their wars with Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Romans, they thought it a crime even to attempt to defend themselves on the Sabbath: when their enemies observed this, they deterred their operations to that day. It was through this, that Pompey was enabled to take Jerusalem. Those who know not the spirit and design of the divine law are often superstitious to inhumanity, and indulgent to impiety. An intolerant and censorious spirit in religion is one of the greatest curses a man can well fall under.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Although in full accordance with the Mosaic laws, the ones who hated Christ immediately condemned the action. Whether these Pharisees followed Christ from Judea in an attempt to stumble Him up or whether they were just local leaders is unknown. The point is that they had hatred in their hearts towards Him. It is also interesting to note however that even they finally had to admit they had no grounds for condemnation. “That this charge would not stand in the religious court of the Sanhedrin as true Sabbath-breaking is shown by their failure to bring it forward at the trial of Jesus, when they were catching at any straw of evidence against Him as a make-weight. Like Pilate, try as they might, they could find no fault in Him (Jn 19:4).” [Cole, *Mark*]

A summation of Christ’s teaching in response to this is as follows: “(a) necessity knows no law (Matt 12:3,4) (b) every rule has its exception (Matt 12:5,6) (c) showing mercy is always right (Matt 12:7,11) (d) the sabbath was made for man, not vice versa (Mk 2:27) (e) Sovereign Ruler over all, including the Sabbath, is the Son of man (Matt 12:8; cp v6)” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*]

Matt 12:3,4 But He said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

Mk 2:25,26 And He said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

Lk 6:3,4 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him; how he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

Necessity knows no law: Christ refers to a well-known OT passage to illustrate the first principle. “The shewbread: literally, *the loaves of proposition*, i.e., the loaves which were *set forth* before the Lord. The Jews called them the *loaves of the face*, i.e., *of the presence of God*. The bread was made of the finest wheaten flour that had been passed through eleven sieves. There were twelve loaves, or cakes, according to the number of tribes, ranged in two piles of six each. Each cake was made of about five pints of wheat. They were anointed in the middle with oil, in the form of a cross. According to tradition, each cake was five hand-breadths broad and ten long, but turned up at either end, two hand-breadths on each side, to resemble in outline the ark of the covenant. The shewbread was prepared on Friday, unless that day happened to be a feast-day that required Sabbatical rest; in which case it was prepared on Thursday afternoon. The renewal of the shewbread was the first of the priestly functions on the commencement of the Sabbath. The bread which was taken off was deposited on the golden table in the porch of the sanctuary, and distributed among the outgoing and incoming courses of priests (compare *save for the priests*). It was eaten during the Sabbath, and in the temple itself, but only by such priests as were Levitically pure. This old bread, removed on the Sabbath

morning, was that which David ate.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

“Yet when Ahimelech, functioning in the days of Abiathar the high-priest (1 Sam 21:1-6; Mk 2:26), realized that David and his men were hungry, and became convinced that the man whom God had anointed to be king over Israel (1 Sam 16:12,13) had undertaken a sacred mission (1 Sam 21:5), he gave him the bread needed by this future kings and by his retinue. David, having entered ‘the house of God,’ that is, the tabernacle in Nob (1 Sam 21:1; 22:9) ate this bread. If then David had a right to ignore *a divinely ordained ceremonial provision* when necessity demanded this — for, surely, Jehovah’s anointed had a right and a duty to maintain himself physically, and so did his hungry attendants! — then would not David’s great Antitype, namely, Jesus, God’s Anointed in a far more exalted sense, have the right to set aside *a totally unwarranted, man-made Sabbath regulation*? The aptness of this historical reference appears all the more clearly when the fact is considered that a parallel is drawn here between, on the one hand, David and his followers, and on the other, Jesus and His disciples. Though, to be sure, during the old dispensation ceremonial laws were instituted to be obeyed, yet it would be hard to prove that even then a higher law — in this case the principle that human life and health must be preserved (Ex 20:13; Matt 22:39b; 1 Cor 6:19) — could not under certain circumstances invalidate or at least modify an ordinance of lesser significance.” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*]

“have you not read” -- as if to say, though they prided themselves as being teachers of the law and the final authority in the interpretation of scriptures, they had overlooked a simple passage. [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “The AV misses the force of οὐδὲ: ‘have ye not *so much as* read?’ Rev., ‘have ye not read *even* this?’ “ [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest: “*Jesus said to them, Have you not read even this which David did...*”

“But Ahimelech was the priest then (1 Sam 21:2ff). Either a natural error arising from the close connection of David with Abiathar, the well-known high priest, or we must adopt one or other of the solutions proposed: father and son, Ahimelech and Abiathar, both bore both names (1 Sam 22:20; 2 Sam 8:17; 1 Chron 13:16); Abiathar, the son, Ahimelech’s assistant at the time, and mentioned as the more notable as approving of the conduct of his own father and of David.” [Bruce, *Gk NT*] “

Matt 12:5,6 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. : Every rule has its exception: while the principle Jesus expounded in v3,4 always applied, Jesus continued to give them this second principle. “On the Sabbath the priests were kept very busy (Lev 24:8,9; Num 28:9,10; 1 Chron 9:32; 23:31; 2 Chron 8:12-14; 23:4; 31:2,3), all this in spite of the Sabbath commandment found in Ex 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15. What happens in such a case is that a higher law, demanding that everything be done to make possible the worship of God by the people, modifies and restricts the too literal interpretation of the regulation concerning Sabbath rest.” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*]

“*The priests profane the Sabbath*: Profane, i.e. put it to what might be called a common use, by slaying and offering up sacrifices, and by doing the services of the temple, as on common days, Ex 29:38; Num 28:9.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] “*The priests in the temple profane the Sabbath*: That is, do their ordinary work on this, as on a common day, cleansing all things, and preparing the sacrifices.” [Wesley, *Commentary*]

One greater than the temple is here: if even an earthly temple’s laws had its exceptions (a type of Christ), how much more would the anti-type who was standing before them have the right to make a similar demand? “The reference is, of course, to Christ Himself. Compare Jn 2:19, where Christ speaks of His own body as a *temple*.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Matt 12:7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. : a saying previously given by Jesus in Mt 9:13 and recorded for the second time only by Matthew. Jesus here gives another principle: **Showing mercy is always right.** “That was exactly the trouble with these Pharisees: they lacked pity. They did not love kindness. Therefore the hunger which plagued the disciples of Jesus failed to kindle within the hearts of their critics any feeling of tenderness or eagerness to help. Instead they were condemning the disciples. As to Jesus, they not only condemned Him but secretly rejoiced in having discovered another reason, as they saw it, for causing Him to be destroyed.” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*]

taken from lesson 32 on the same saying: By implication, Jesus is attacking His accusers in the same breath. Are they not the ones who are so “righteous”? (or so they thought of themselves). Then why are they themselves not out seeking to help these “sinners”? This is the point of his quoting Hos 6:6. The context of Hosea is that of an iniquitous nation which continually dwelt in religious sins against God as well as robbery and murder. Yet they continued their outward rituals of sacrificing of which God said is a mockery. God said through Hosea that a genuine manifestation of “goodness” was what God desired than burnt offerings. **“When without a genuine change of heart and conduct sacrifices were nevertheless brought, this amounted to dead ritualism, loathsome to the Lord. ‘Religion’ without goodness or kindness is worthless.”** [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “Accordingly, Jesus bids these doctrinaires, in a passage found only in [Matthew’s] gospel, to read their Bible again, and to discover from Hosea 6:6 how completely in accordance with the will of a merciful God it was that He should make contact with these ‘sinners’ instead of avoiding them in the interests of ritual correctness. **It was mercy that found favour with God, not sacrifices offered by those who felt themselves to be morally superior.**” [Tasker, *Matthew*]

Matt 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Mk 2:27,28 And He said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Lk 6:5 And He said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

The sabbath was made for man, not vice versa: “The Sabbath was instituted to be a blessing for man: to keep him healthy, to make him happy, and to render him holy. Man was not created to be the Sabbath’s slave.” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “*The Sabbath was made for man*: That he might have the seventh part of his whole time to devote to the purposes of bodily rest and spiritual exercises. And in these respects it is of infinite use to mankind. Where no Sabbath is observed, there disease, poverty, and profligacy, generally prevail. Had we no Sabbath, we should soon have no religion.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

The Son of Man is Sovereign Ruler over all including the Sabbath: In picking and rubbing the grain the disciples were doing what Jesus allowed and wanted them to do. By doing this they were therefore recognizing His lordship over the lordship of the Pharisees and their traditions. **They obeyed Christ rather than the man-made observances of the time.** This is a proper lesson for us today although it is often over-used and sometimes mis-used. In recognizing many are caught up in man-made traditions, some properly feel led to “think for themselves” and throw off the bondage of “legalism”. But I’m afraid in this rejection of tradition some may also come out from the binding commands of Christ. **It’s the pendulum effect: legalism is rejected (and properly so), but instead of coming to a proper balance some use this as an excuse to sin in the name of “Christian liberty”.** What is forgotten is that not everything we are taught is merely man-made regulations and some of what is labeled “legalism” is actually God’s word and scriptural admonitions. The most extreme example to my knowledge is a young lady I used to attend church with some years back. A deacon of the church and I went to visit this lady living in adultery. When confronted she labeled our advice as “legalism”. *If Christian liberty includes the right to extra-marital affairs then what command of Christ is safe from being called a “man-made legalistic yoke”?*

These two principles may be unwisely applied however. The movement in our culture is against any form of reverence on the Lord’s Day; and while this is mostly due to a total negligence to the things of God, some true Christians may get caught up in this as well. To those believers these verses could be used to support their stand. “Some have understood this as applying to men in general, and not to Christ. **The Son of man, any man is Lord of the Sabbath; i.e. it was made for him, for his ease, comfort, and use, and to these purposes he is to apply it. But this is a very harsh, and at the same time a very lax, mode of interpretation; for it seems to say that a man may make what use he pleases of the Sabbath; and, were this true, the moral obligation of the Sabbath would soon be annihilated.** God ordained the Sabbath not only to be a type of that rest which remains for the people of God, but to be also a mean of promoting the welfare of men in general. The ordinances of religion should be regulated according to their end, which is the honor of God, and the salvation of men. It is the property of the true religion to contain nothing in it but what is beneficial to man. Hereby God plainly shows that it is neither out of indigence or interest that He requires men to worship and obey Him; but only out of goodness, and to make them happy. **God prohibited work on the Sabbath day, lest servants should be oppressed by their masters, that the laboring beasts might have necessary rest, and that men might have a proper opportunity to attend upon his ordinances, and get their souls saved.** To the Sabbath, under God, we owe much of what is requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Healing the Man with the Withered Hand on the Sabbath

Matt 12:9,10a And when He was departed thence, He went into their synagogue: and, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered.

Mk 3:1 And He entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

Lk 6:6 And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

The action now shifts to the synagogue on the Sabbath, of which at least four of the five preceding principles still apply. Humanly speaking it was not *necessary* for the man to be healed on the Sabbath and that the healing could have waited until tomorrow.

A withered hand: “The participle indicates that the withering was not congenital, but the result of accident or disease.... His right hand: A very precise mode of statement. Literally, *his hand the right one*. Luke only specifies which hand was withered. This accuracy is professional. Ancient medical writers always state whether the right or the left member is affected.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Matt 12:10b And they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse Him.

Mk 3:2 And they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse Him.

Lk 6:7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against Him.

Among the Jews there were two schools of thought concerning the Sabbath. The disciples of Shammai held to a stricter observance of the Sabbath and was the most prevalent in Judea. The disciples of Hillel held to a more lenient view and was more prevalent in Galilee. Regardless, the widely accepted teaching concerning this incident is that it was only permissible to heal on the Sabbath if the man’s life was endangered. The Pharisees confronted Jesus with this question, hoping to use this to further accuse Him. Wuest: “*And they kept on spying upon Him closely, whether He would on the sabbath heal him, in order that they might bring a formal accusation against Him before a tribunal.*” “Find: peculiar to Luke, and emphasizing the eagerness of the Pharisees to discover a ground of accusation.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

“*Watched him*: They maliciously watched him. This is the import of the word, Luke 14:1; 20:20, and in the parallel place, Mark 3:2.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] “They watched: imperfect tense. *They kept watching*. The compound verb ... means to *watch*

carefully or closely, as one who dogs another's steps, keeping *beside* or *near* him. Wycliffe, *They aspieden him*: i.e., *played the spy*." [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Mk 3:3 And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

Lk 6:8 But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

"The Lord of the Sabbath orders the man to stand up before the entire assembly, as if to say to one and all, 'Look at him; study his hand, and consider what his condition means to him. Does he not arouse your sympathy?'" [Hendriksen, *Matthew*]

"Stand forth: literally, *rise into the midst*. So Wycliffe, *Rise into the middle*. Tyndale, *Arise and stand in the midst*." [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

"He knew: imperfect. He was *all along* aware." [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Matt 12:11,12 And He said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

Mk 3:4 And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

Lk 6:9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

Jesus turns the tables by asking them a question of a man who had one sheep (which could mean anything from "a sheep" to "the only one, one in distinction from more than one, one lone sheep"). Such a man that had such a mishap, regardless of it being the sabbath or not, would be justified in taking measures to rescue the sheep. "To be sure, 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 enabled to come out of it." [Edersheim, *Life of Messiah*] From the previous principles, we see Jesus teaching it always correct to have mercy even if life is not endangered.

"*How much then is a man better than a sheep?* ... There are many persons who call themselves Christians, who do more for a beast of burden or pleasure than they do for a man for whom Christ died! Many spend that on coursers, spaniels, and hounds, of which multitudes of the followers of Christ are destitute — but this also shall come to judgment." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

An point which almost requires not even being mentioned is that of Christ's comment concerning man and animals. Evolutionists state we are all one and man is just an advanced animal. **The scriptures repeatedly place a noticeable difference between mankind and the animal kingdom, the latter created for the needs of the former.** A refreshing point of view for our culture where whales, owls and the like are protected but human babies are aborted.

Matt 12:13 Then saith He to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

Mk 3:5 And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Lk 6:10 And looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

"Jesus, looking around, studies the faces of His opponents and reads their inner secrets. His cheeks are glowing with holy indignation. He is grieved at their hardness of heart. No one is able to answer Him. The Pharisees cannot very well deny that to do good on any day, and certainly on the Sabbath, is right and proper. Yet to admit this openly means surrender for them. So an embarrassed, chilling silence prevails in their ranks. With bated breath the rest of the people are also watching, wondering what will happen now. The atmosphere in the synagogue is surcharged with uneasiness on the one hand, expectancy on the other." [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] "*Looking round upon them with anger, being grieved*: Angry at the sin, grieved at the sinner; the true standard of Christian anger. But who can separate anger at sin from anger at the sinner? None but a true believer in Christ." [Wesley, *Commentary*]

It is worthy of remark, that as the man was healed with a word, without even a touch, the Sabbath was unbroken, even according to their most rigid interpretation of the letter of the law. All Jesus commanded was the man to stretch forth his hand and he was cured immediately and completely. No further treatments or check-ups were required. "A little before (Mt 12:6,8) Jesus Christ had asserted his Godhead, in this verse He proves it. What but the omnipotence of the living God could have, in a moment, restored this withered hand? There could be no collusion here; the man who had a real disease was instantaneously and therefore miraculously cured; and the mercy and power of God were both amply manifested in this business." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

"Hardness: *pōrōsei*, from *pōron*, *kind of marble*, and thence used of a *callus* on fractured bones. *Pōrōsin* is originally the process by which the extremities of fractured bones are united by a *callus*. Hence of *callousness*, or *hardness* in general. The word occurs in two other passages in the New Testament, Rom 11:25; Eph 4:18 ... *hardening*, which is better than *hardness*, because it hints at the *process* going on. Mark only records Christ's feeling on this occasion." [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Matt 12:14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Mk 3:6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Lk 6:11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

The reaction of the Pharisees was not that of submission or obedience but rather hatred. **Faith is a moral issue, not one of mental acquiescence. An unbeliever will not believe even when confronted with unsurmountable and irrefutable evidence.**

Filled with rage they sought to kill Him, but two things kept them from immediately carrying out their plans: (a) the Roman government (Jn 18:3) and (b) the spectators. “To find a solution to their problem the Pharisees, those very men who were always boasting about their extraordinary holiness, ... now consult with, of all people, the thoroughly unholy, worldly Herodians, a political party that supported Herod’s dynasty! Misery makes strange bedfellows, especially when it is linked with envy. Together the two groups now plot how to crush Jesus.... These bitter enemies of the Lord should have read and taken to heart Psalm 2.” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “The Pharisaic party really aimed at the life of Jesus, and they would naturally regard the assistance of people having influence at court as valuable.” [Bruce, *Gk NT*]

“They were filled with madness: peculiar to Luke. *Madness*, is, properly, *want of understanding*. The word thus implies *senseless* rage, as distinguished from intelligent indignation.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest: “*But they themselves were filled with a senseless rage akin to insanity, and kept on conferring with one another with regard to what they might do to Jesus.*”

The Sabbath controversy, then, marked an important development. The opposition of the Pharisees was no longer veiled but open. They were determined to put Him to death and were soliciting help from other parties in the nation to accomplish their goal.” [Pentecost, *Works of Jesus*]