

01/30/2022

MATTHEW 12
(INTRODUCTION)

This morning we begin our consideration of Matthew chapter 12. That this chapter is connected to our previous chapter is seen immediately in the opening words of verse one, **“AT THAT TIME...”** These words indicate to us that what is now taking place connects to what Jesus had just said in Matthew 11:28-30, concerning His yoke being easy, and His burden being light. The narratives and episodes which open chapter 12 are illustrative of His easy yoke and light burden.

In the FIRST NARRATIVE, concerning the PLUCKING OF GRAIN, in verses 1-8, and the SECOND NARRATIVE, concerning the HEALING OF THE WITHERED HAND, in verses 9-14, the ISSUE OF THE SABBATH and Jesus teaching concerning it is brought into CONFLICT and CONTRAST with that of the Pharisees. These two narratives illustrate Jesus easy yoke and light burden in contrast to the teaching, yoke, and burden of the Pharisees.

MATTHEW 12:1-8
(THE PLUCKING OF GRAIN ON THE SABBATH)

I. INTRODUCTION

The FIRST NARRATIVE of Matthew 12 occurs in the time that Jesus spoke the words recorded in Matthew 11:28-30. This is made clear by the opening words of 12:1, **“AT THAT TIME...”** As stated previously, this episode is ILLUSTRATIVE of our Lord’s words in Matthew 11:30, **“FOR MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.”** What is in view in this narrative is the CONTRAST between Jesus UNDERSTANDING AND TEACHING CONCERNING THE SABBATH and THAT OF THE PHARISEES. In this, Jesus YOKE and BURDEN is seen to be EASY and LIGHT, in contrast to that of the Pharisees. What is going to emerge out of this opening narrative is Jesus UNDERSTANDING of BOTH, the SABBATH, and the LAW, and JESUS CONNECTION/RELATION to the TEMPLE. In all of this will be seen Jesus defense of the rightness of the actions of His disciples.

II. PARALLEL PASSAGES

Mark 2:23-28

Luke 6:1-5

III.STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

1. The Narrative Setting, verse 1.
2. The Criticizing Question of the Pharisees, verse 2.
3. The Answer of Jesus, verses 3-5. a) the illustration of David and his men, verses 3-4. b) the illustration of a precept of the Law, verse 5.
4. The Presence of something greater than the Temple, verse 6.
5. The Failure to Understand the Law, verse 7.
6. The Authority of the Son of Man over the Sabbath, verse 8.

IV.EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT

VERSE 1

In this verse we have the transition from the previous chapter to the present. We also have the setting for the present narrative, - the disciples being hungry and plucking ears of corn on the SABBATH to have something to eat.

VERSE 2

In this verse we have the criticizing question of the Pharisees concerning the actions of the Lord's disciples. To them the plucking of corn by the Lord's disciples on the SABBATH was a violation of the COMMANDMENT to NOT WORK ON THE SABBATH. It is worth nothing that our Lord is not accused by the Pharisees of engaging in the same actions as that of His disciples.

VERSES 3-4

In these verses our Lord defends the actions of His disciples by pointing to the actions of David and his men in the eating of the shew bread, which was placed fresh every SABBATH in the TEMPLE, and which only the priests were allowed to eat. Both David and his men violated the Law in the eating of this bread and in the entering into the TEMPLE to obtain it. But David and his men are not condemned in their actions in that HUMAN NEED was PRIORITIZED OVER THE STIPULATIONS OF THE LAW. Our Lord's point is, - His disciples actions are justified by this HISTORY AND TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD. And as we shall see later - the WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE LAW is that OF MERCY and was not this what was taking place in His disciples plucking of the corn in order to have something to eat – just another INSTANCE OF MERCY. Is not the END OF THE LAW WHICH IS MERCY GREATER THAN THE STIPULATIONS OF THE LAW WHICH ARE BUT THE MEANS TO THAT END? (Also, note the implication that it is the GREATER DAVID that the disciples are with.)

VERSE 5

In this verse Jesus points out that the priests who minister in the TEMPLE on the SABBATH PROFANE THE SABBATH and yet are guiltless. TEMPLE SERVICE TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER THE SABBATH. The priests are about the work of God and thus, are not bound by the normal regulations of the SABBATH. How much more would this be true for Jesus disciples whose labor is a greater work for God in that they labor for Him who is God, and who is the GREATER PRESENCE OF GOD than that which the Temple housed.

VERSE 6

In this verse Jesus proclaims Himself to be **GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE**. The **TEMPLE** merely **HOUSES THE PRESENCE OF GOD**, He is **GOD**. (Also, note the words, **“BUT I SAY UNTO YOU,”** which are reminiscent of the language of our Lord in Matthew 5 in His correction of the understanding and teaching of the Law by the scribes and Pharisees.)

VERSE 7

Here Jesus appeals to Hosea 6:6. In this verse **MERCY** is **PRIORITIZED** over **OBEDIENCE**. The **END** is **GREATER** than the **MEANS TO THE END**. The point is that the stringency of Law observance must give way to the **PRIORITY OF THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM, WHICH IS AIMED AT HUMAN NEED, MERCY**, and thus, too the need of those who labor on behalf of the Kingdom. Further, in the showing of mercy the Law and the Prophets find their fulfillment. (Matthew 22:39-40)

VERSE 8

In this verse Jesus refers to Himself as the **“SON OF MAN”** which identifies Him with the figure of Daniel 7:13-14. As such He is indeed the **“LORD”** of the **SABBATH DAY**. As such the **DEMANDS** of the **SABBATH COMMANDMENT** must give way to **HIS PRESENCE AND PURPOSE**.

V. THE TEACHING OF THE TEXT

1. In this narrative Jesus yoke and burden are seen to be easier and lighter than that of the Pharisees and scribes. This narrative is illustrative of what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30.
2. The end of the Law, Mercy, is esteemed to be greater than the means to that end, the stipulations of the Law. Human Need takes precedence over the stipulations of the Law.
3. Acts of **NECESSITY** and **MINISTRY** are not violations of the **SABBATH LAW**.