

SABBATH HEALINGS

“The Kingdom of Heaven”

Mark 3:4

Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. NIV

This was the question Jesus asked the Pharisees before He healed the man with the shriveled hand. As it turned out later, we find that the Jews were a bit squeamish about killing folks on the Sabbath, which is why those crucified with Christ had their legs broken. But this question is prophetic and poignant. The Pharisees did not have a good reaction to the sheep being pulled out of the pit.

Matt 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus. NIV

The Pharisees' reaction to the healing of the man with the withered hand was to plot to kill Jesus for doing good on the Sabbath day. Jesus dealt with this real threat very wisely.

Matt 12:15-21

15 Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick,

16 warning them not to tell who he was.

17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

18 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

19 He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.

21 In his name the nations will put their hope." NIV

Jesus continued to do good and heal all that were oppressed of the devil. But He didn't make it a recruitment campaign. He healed all without telling them to advertise His greatness to the world. He healed (and still heals) with no strings attached. Verse 20 tells us much about how our Lord deals with us. "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out." This means that when we are beat up or almost burnt out, He will care for us. If we go to Him, he will bind the wounds of our iniquities and trim and oil our lamps.

His action fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah in Isaiah 42:1-4.

Isa 42:1-4

1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

2 He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets.

3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

4 he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope." NIV

After the fulfillment of this prophecy, we come to Matthew 12:22.

Matt 12:22

Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. NIV

This verse begins with "then." Then gives us a sequence of events. The last time signature we had was that it was the Sabbath day. In the flow of this narrative, the day has not changed. It is still the Sabbath.

Matt 12:22-27

22 Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.

23 All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

25 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.

26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?

27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. NIV

The Pharisees accuse the Lord of using demonic power to cast demons out. We know that the kingdom of darkness eventually falls because of the executed victory of the kingdom of light (read the end of the book, the Good Guys win!). Though there are jealousies and squabbling in the devil's kingdom, it does generally present a united front. Jesus points out the futility of their argument. Satan has no vested interest in casting satan out.

In light of this, He asks them by whom did their people [KJV – children] cast demons out. Phariseism was a fraternity and initial entrance was by birth, thus the phrase "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee." Since those who stand in judgment are typically in better standing than those being judged, one can infer that the children of these Pharisees were driving demons out by the power of God just as Jesus was. Thus, since these Pharisees were guilty of calling the work of God the work of the devil, their own children would judge them.

Matt 12:29-37

29 "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

31 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

- 33 "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.
- 34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.
- 35 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.
- 36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.
- 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." NIV

Calling the working of God the work of the devil is part of what blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is. It is not all that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is, but blasphemy is to speak evil of. And they spoke evil of the Holy Spirit when they said that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub.

Matt 12:38-40

- 38 **Then** some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."
- 39 He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.
- 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. NIV

The word "then" tells us that we are still on the same day. They asked Him for a sign and He told them the only sign they would get would be the sign of Jonah. He said that He would be in the heart of the earth for "three days and three nights." From Genesis we understand the terminology of "day and night" to indicate what we would call a full, 24-hour day. If Jesus had only said "three days," then we might be able to buy a partial day theory of His death (say Friday night to Sunday morning, which equals at best three days and two nights). But He didn't. He said "three days and three nights" which means that He would be in the grave at least 72 hours.

Matt 12:41-43

- 41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.
- 42 The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.
- 43 "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. NIV

On the surface, this conversation seems to meander with no connecting thread. After telling them about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the Pharisees ask for a sign. He gives them the sign of Jonah, then speaks of Nineveh and the Queen of the South and how they will judge their generation. Then he begins to tell them what happens when an evil spirit comes out of a man. It's as if they had asked "What time does the meeting start?" and He answered them with

“We’re having chicken on Tuesday.” But in reality, His whole narrative is intricately woven together.

Matt 12:44-45

44 Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order.

45 Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. **That is how it will be with this wicked generation.**" NIV

Though in application this section teaches us much about what can happen to a man who is delivered if he doesn't fill his heart and mind with the things of God once the evil spirits are driven out, in interpretation, Jesus is talking about a generation. He is talking about what is going to happen to a people living during a specific season of time.

Matt 12:46

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. NIV

Mark 3:21

When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." NIV

His family thought Jesus was crazy. They want to take Him into custody.

Matt 12:47-50

47 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

48 He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"

49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers.

50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." NIV

Matthew 12 began with Jesus declaring Himself to be “the Lord of the Sabbath.” It was on this Sabbath day that He healed the man with the withered hand. From that point forward, we had phrases that moved the narrative along but did not change the time signature. Verse 15, “aware of this”; verse 22, “then”; verse 24, “but when”; verse 38, “then”; verse 46, “while” all of these keep us in the same day as the first few verses of chapter twelve.

Then we turn the corner to Matthew 13:1.

Matt 13:1 **That same day** Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. NIV

*“That same day,” what day? The Sabbath day He had declared Himself to be Lord of. It was on this day that Jesus divulged the most prominent parables about the kingdom of heaven, whose culmination will be on **the** Sabbath day, the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ. It was when I recognized that Matthew 13 was spoken on a Sabbath day that it began to dawn on me that*

maybe the Sabbath healings of the Lord recorded in Scripture might give us insight into the kingdom.

His change in teaching style was so dramatic that it caused the disciples to ask Him about it.

Matt 13:10-15

10 The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

11 He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

12 Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

13 This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' NIV

His purpose in teaching in parables wasn't to be a more effective teacher, but to hide the message from the generation that was going to wander in the dry places. To His disciples, those who recognized him as the King of Heaven, He would explain these parables that we might know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven and hear with our ears and see with our eyes and see Him and be healed.

Matt 13:36-43

36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.

38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one,

39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

40 "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. NIV

Jesus is divulging secrets of the kingdom. One of the secrets is that children of God and children of the devil are growing so close together that their roots are intertwined and if the angels pulled up the weeds, they would pull the wheat up at the same time. The only place I know where good and evil dwell so close together is in the church itself. What gives us hope is that at the end of the age, the Lord will separate out all the "weeds" and cast them to the fire they deserve.

Matt 13:44-46 NIV

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Lord is the One who found us. And having found us, He gave all He had for us, Himself.

Matt 13:51-52

51 "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied.

52 He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old." NIV

*The Millennial Age brings the promises of the Old Testament (which contains the law) to prophetic fulfillment. As we gain deeper understanding into this age which we are marching towards, we will be as good stewards with treasures in our house. Our house will not be swept clean and prey to the habitation of the wandering evil of our generation. No, our house will be stocked with old treasures (all the wisdom of the Old Testament) and new (all the promise of the New Testament) that we might bring out and share with all the glory of kingdom, **the** Sabbath Day, of our soon returning Lord.*