

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XLII. Christ's Defense Of His Divine Healing On The Sabbath
(Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11)

I. Introduction

- A. The religious leaders were intent on trying to catch Jesus violating the Sabbath in order to condemn Him to death, so they arranged for Him to be faced with the need to heal on the Sabbath in violation of their rules.
- B. Jesus' response to this confrontation demonstrated His defense of divinely healing on the Sabbath, what we view in Matthew 12:9-14, Mark 3:1-6 and Luke 6:6-11 for our insight, application, and edification:

II. Christ's Defense Of His Divine Healing On The Sabbath, Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11.

- A. The Hebrew rabbis taught that it was a violation of the Sabbath prohibition against working for one to heal by administering a medicinal remedy, touch, or outward application to the body except in cases of actual danger to life (Alfred Edersheim, The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah, 1993, p. 515-516). However, this ruling "opened a large field for discussion," and "according to some, disease of the ear (Debar. R. 10), according to some throat-disease (Yom 8.6), while, according to others, such a disease as angina (Yoma 84a), involved danger, and superseded the Sabbath-Law." (Ibid., p. 515)
- B. With this set of rules in His hearers, Jesus entered a synagogue one Sabbath and taught, and in its midst was a man with a withered hand, Matt. 12:9-10a. We are not told if the Pharisees had planted him there, or if they were taking advantage of his presence, but either way, it was an opportunity for the Pharisees to try to entrap Jesus into healing a man on the Sabbath in violation of their rules as he did not have a life-threatening malady.
- C. Intent on catching Jesus violating the Sabbath on healing in violation of their rules, the leaders asked Him if it was lawful to heal on Sabbath, Matthew 12:10b.
- D. Mark 3:3 NIV reported that Jesus then told the man with the withered hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." He was taking on the challenge of the religious rulers in full view of everyone!
- E. Before healing the man, Jesus asked what man in the synagogue who had a sheep that had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath would not take hold of it and lift it out, what would involve a lot of work, Matthew 12:11. This statement implicated the religious rulers as having more concern for an animal than for a man who was made in the image of God, a value system that was unrighteous! (cf. Genesis 1:27)
- F. Mark 3:5 NIV records that Jesus' hearers did not answer His question about pulling a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath, and that He looked around about them with anger, "deeply distressed" at their "stubborn hearts."
- G. Jesus then stated that a man was more valuable than a sheep, so it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath Days such a healing a man or such as pulling a sheep out of a pit, Matthew 12:12.
- H. Then, Christ commanded the man with the withered hand, "Stretch out your hand," Matthew 12:13a NIV. Significantly, Jesus was not violating even the legalistic restrictions of the rabbis such as healing the man by administering a medicinal remedy, or by touching him or applying some compound to the body, but He was demonstrating the supernatural power of God as Creator to restore a withered hand to wholeness!
- I. The afflicted man obeyed the Lord, stretching out his hand, and it was completely restored just like his other normal hand, Matthew 12:13b NIV.
- J. Luke 6:11 reported that this event infuriated the religious leaders, for they knew that Jesus had not technically violated even their own legalistic rulings, but that He had supernaturally exhibited the healing power of God while also critiquing their valuing a sheep's welfare over the welfare of a man with a withered hand!
- K. Matthew 12:14 then adds that the Pharisees went out and convened a council against Jesus to consider how they might destroy Him.

Lesson: *When the Pharisees tried to entrap Jesus into healing a man on the Sabbath in violation of their added legalistic rules, Jesus exposed their hypocrisy and lovelessness in telling that they would pull a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath though they would not then heal a needy man. Jesus then healed the man by demonstrating God's miraculous power without violating even any of the legalistic rules of the Pharisees on the procedures of healing.*

Application: *(1) May we acknowledge Jesus Christ as God Incarnate by His use of God's power miraculously, instantly to heal a man with a withered hand. (2) May we always value ministry to addressing the needs of people as important to God. (3) May we never put God to the test like the Pharisees put Jesus to the test with the man with the withered hand, for that is sin, Deuteronomy 6:16. (4) May we not make a person with a physical malady or a handicap an object of public note like the Pharisees did, but instead seek to help such a person and to honor him.*