

Matthew Lesson 16

Matthew 12:1-8 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath! But He said to them, **Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.**



Here we see the controversy started with the questions initiated by the disciples of John the Baptizer asking about why Yeshua's disciples did not fast the way they did and the way the Pharisees did.

Yet this accusation is without merit as it says in

Deuteronomy 23:25 If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to their standing grain.

Then in **Exodus 35:2** it says: Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.

This verse was stated just prior to the directions for the building of the tabernacle. So the leaders decided that "Work" could be defined as any work that would be done in the building of the tabernacle, and they defined that work. They came up with 39 different things. (39 avot)

In this case, they had expanded the rules and were trying to trap Yeshua.

Yeshua is now going to straighten out this understanding, when He says:

Matthew 12:3,4 *Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?*

1. What is Yeshua's point here?

He goes on to reprimand them:

Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Now Yeshua has laid down the gauntlet! He has stated that He is greater than the temple, He is the Son of Man, a Messianic title and He is Lord of the Shabbat. He desires Mercy and not sacrifice! He is getting to the true heart of the Shabbat.

Isaiah 58:13a If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a **delight** - (**oneg**) the holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words.

2. Could you sum up what you think Yeshua is trying to teach us about the Shabbat?

Matthew 12:22-29 Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and **He healed him**, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, *Could this be the Son of David?*

Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, "This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: **Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against**

itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself.
How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

Now the Pharisees accuse Yeshua of being in line with Beelzebub, the ruler of demons. Calling Yeshua Beelzebub was a terrible insult.

It is putting Him in the category of the highest of heathen gods, as Beelzebub was one of the most powerful Philistine gods as well as in the cultures of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon.

In the Talmud, Beelzebub was thought of as the lord of idolatry.

They wanted to associate Yeshua with this pagan god; they were making every attempt to discredit Him.

Because this god's philosophy was well established in Egypt, it is also possible that they are saying He picked up the ways of this god during His time in Egypt.

But not only is none of this true, it doesn't even make sense which Yeshua clearly points out, saying:

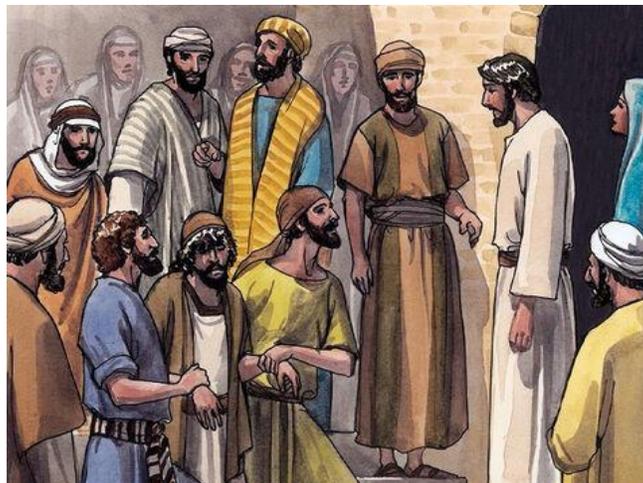
If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself, and a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

Yeshua is casting out demons by the power of the kingdom of G-d.

So He is again saying, The kingdom of God has arrived!

G-d's kingdom is stronger than Beelzebub, therefore He can cast demons out of people.

It is really very simple, and people were seeing and hearing His truth!



Matthew 12:30-37 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 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. 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. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.

Matthew now takes a big turn in his presentation of Yeshua as Messiah. He has proven He is the long awaited Jewish Messiah by His words and by His actions.

Now people have to make a decision.

Will they believe Him, accept Him for who He is or not?

And Yeshua says, **If you are not for Me, you are against Me.**

He makes it very simple. There is no middle road.

Then He adds: **every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.**

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.

These are incredible words and we need to pay close attention to them.

The question we need to ask is - What leads to repentance?

We know that we have to repent and be forgiven to be in the Kingdom.

Rabbi Shaul tells us:

Romans 2:4,5 Or do you disregard the riches of His kindness tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you to repentance? But because of your hard and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.....

2. What happens to people who do not repent according to these verse in Romans?

And Yeshua tells us:

John 16:7-9 But I tell you the truth, it is for your benefit that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate (Holy Spirit) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment; in regard to sin, because they do not believe in Me....

3. What will the Holy Spirit do when He is sent?

The Greek word for "convict" means: **Usage:** (a) I reprove, rebuke, discipline, (b) I expose, show to be guilty (Strong's 1651)

4. From this definition on "conviction", would you say everyone likes to be convicted?

Blasphemy (988 /blasphēmía) "switches" right for wrong (wrong for right), i.e. calls what God *disapproves*, "right" which "exchanges the truth of God for a lie" (Ro 1:25). See 987 (blasphēmeō).

Matthew 12:33-37 Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

So the conversation goes on between Yeshua and the Pharisees. He is not soft peddling their role as leaders.

Their words are very important.

By their words and by our words we will be justified or condemned!

We are all leaders to someone, so let our words lead people to the Lord, and let our words be in line with the teaching of Yeshua by the Holy Spirit.

5. How do we know if our leaders and political or otherwise are good?

Matthew 12:38-42 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Teacher, we want to see a sign from You. But He answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

6. With whom does this conversation continue?



Why does Yeshua call the scribes and the Pharisees evil and adulterous?

They are evil because of their false judgment of who Yeshua is.

How many signs had He performed up to this point?

If anyone truly desired to know who He is, Yeshua had given ample proof, but they are blaspheming the truth and choosing to believe the lie.

And why are they adulterous?

They have not been faithful to the covenants of G-d.

Jeremiah 3:1,2,4,5 If a man divorces his wife

and she leaves him and marries another man,

should he return to her again? Would not the land be completely defiled?

But you have lived as a prostitute with many lovers— would you now return to me? declares the Lord. Look up to the barren heights and see. Is there any place where you have not been ravished? By the roadside you sat waiting for lovers, sat like a nomad in the desert. You have defiled the land with your prostitution and wickedness. Have you not just called to me: My Father, my friend from my youth, will you always be angry? Will your wrath continue forever? This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can.

G-d is saying that His people have been spiritually unfaithful.

Yeshua says the only sign they will be given is the sign of Jonah.

Jonah went to Gentiles, and the Gentiles responded!

These leaders are very familiar with the scroll of Jonah because it is read in the synagogues every year in the afternoon service of Yom Kippur.

Because Jonah was in the belly of the whale for 3 days and 3 nights, Yeshua is alluding to His own upcoming death and burial for 3 days and 3 nights.

It was as though Jonah was dead while in the belly of that fish.

But he is given life to take the message of grace and forgiveness to the Gentiles in Ninevah and the Lord gives him success. Yeshua says **indeed a greater than Jonah is here!**

7. What might you expect the reaction was of the scribes and Pharisees to Yeshua's words?

Matthew 12:43-45 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Remember that in this chapter Yeshua had cast out a demon from a man. Now it would appear he is warning the leaders that they cannot depend on the religious practices alone to protect them from demonic activity.

They need to fill their house - referring to their spirits or souls - with the free gift they are being offered. They are being offered the gift of forgiveness when they repent and turn and follow Yeshua as their Messiah.

He is warning them.

Without the transforming work of the Spirit of G-d they will be worse off than they were before.

Matthew 12:46-50 While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you. He replied to him, Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? Pointing to his disciples, he said, Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

Yeshua's words here re-emphasize His absolute oneness with His disciples.

He is not putting His family down;

He is lifting His disciples up and **affirming the closest possible relationship He has with them. - With us !!!**

Why? Because they have seen the truth, and they are willing to give up their lives - as He warned them that they would have to do, to truly follow Him!

8. What is it that we are willing to give up to follow Yeshua and be part of His family?

9. What do we learn about being disciples as we listen to what Yeshua said to the scribes and Pharisees?

10. What part of Matthew chapter 12 will you put into action in your life?