**The Gospel of Luke**

**Witness to the Gentiles - #12**

**Jesus Lord of the Sabbath**

**Luke 6:1-11**

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***1*** *Now it happened on second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grain fields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands.* ***2****And some of the Pharisees said to them, “Why are you doing what is prohibited on the Sabbath?”*

***3*** *But Jesus answering them said, “Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him?* ***4*** *How he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?* ***5****And He said to them, “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”*

**Healing on the another Sabbath**

***6*** *Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered.* ***7*** *So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.* ***8****But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, “Arise and stand here.” And he arose and stood.* ***9*** *Then Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one thing: Is it allowed on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?”* ***10****And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.* ***11****But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.*

**Notes and Studies**

1. This is the first group of events that tell us of Jesus’ attitude to the Sabbath. On some Greek MSS (manuscripts), verse 1 was “one Sabbath” but most reading is “second” Sabbath. Luke has mentioned the Sabbath 3 times (4:31, 6:1: and 6:6), so we have here a second Sabbath since the first was in 4:31.
2. Plucking ears of grain from a neighbor’s filed was actually permitted by the Law (Deut 23:26).
3. Jesus was rubbing the ears of corn in his hands and began to eat.

**Was this act breaking the commandment?**

1. In Exodus 34:21, we read *“Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.”* The extended application of `the prohibition work on the Sabbath did include a Sabbath rest. Even plucking ears of corn was regarded as “reaping” in later tradition (M. Shabbat 7:2)

2. According to the letter of the commandment, Jesus did not break the commandment, for there is nothing against plucking to eat in Exodus 20:8-11:

***8*** *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.* ***9****Six days you shall labor and do all your work,* ***10****but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.* ***11****For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”*

 But it is the later tradition that ignored the goal of the commandment.

**The Showbread**

1. The “showbread” or the “bread of the presence” was set as the “bread of the face” (***lechem happaim***, Exod 25; 30, 35:13, 39:36; 40:23). In the Law of Moses it was set in the desert-tabernacle on a table made of Acacia wood. This same table was made of Gold in the temple of Solomon (1 Kings 7:48). The bread was covered by a blue cloth (Num 4:7), arranged in two rows with frankincense, and was called the “bread of the row” (I Chron 9:32)
2. The bread was changed every Sabbath, and was eaten on the Sabbath as the new row replaced the old one (Lev 24:5-9).
3. What happened in the days of David is that he was hungry after a long chase by King Saul. The story appears in 1 Samuel 21:1-6:

***1*** *Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, “Why are you alone, and no one is with you?”*

***2*** *So David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, ‘Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.’ And I have directed my young men to such and such a place.* ***3****Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give me five loaves of bread in my hand, or whatever can be found.”*

***4*** *And the priest answered David and said, “There is no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women.”*

***5*** *Then David answered the priest, and said to him, “Truly, women have been kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day.”*

***6*** *So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the Lord, in order to put hot bread in its place on the day when it was taken away. (1 Sam 21:1-6)*

1. It was not a Sabbath when David ate the Showbread, but Jesus used this event to reach a conclusion of his teaching. This is very crucial for the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom.

**The son of man is the Lord of the Sabbath**

1. The son of man has been a long debated topic in NT studies. The name is certainly a generic name for “man.”

1. Jesus is applying the name to himself not only in its generic meaning of “just man” but in the sense that it was used in Daniel 7:13-14:

***13*** *“I was watching in the night visions,*

*And behold, One like the* ***Son of Man****,*

*Coming with the clouds of heaven!*

*He came to the Ancient of Days,*

*And they brought Him near before Him.*

***14*** *Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,*

*That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.*

*His dominion is an everlasting dominion,*

*Which shall not pass away,*

*And His kingdom the one*

*shall not be destroyed.”*

This is what gives Jesus the right to say, “*the son of man is the lord of the Sabbath*.”

1. Is it “Lord” or just “lord”? The debate about capital letters is a modern one and was not known in Greek NT MSS. Here is an example of John 18:31-33, one of the oldest NT MSS and known as “P 52”:

ΟΙ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ ΗΜΕIΝ ΟΥΚ ΕΞΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΠΟΚΤΕΙΝΑΙ

OYΔΕΝΑ ΙΝΑ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΠΛΗΡΩΘΗ ΟΝ ΕΙ-

ΠΕΝ ΣHΜΑΙΝΩΝ ΠΟΙΩ ΘΑΝΑΤΩ ΗΜΕΛΛΕΝ ΑΠΟ-

ΘΝHΣΚΕΙΝ ΙΣΗΛΘΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΡΑΙΤΩ-

ΡΙΟΝ Ο ΠIΛΑΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΦΩΝΗΣΕΝ ΤΟΝ ΙΗΣΟΥΝ

ΚΑΙ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΣΥ ΕΙ O ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥ-

ΔAΙΩN

English Translation …

*the Jews, "For us it is not permitted to kill*

*anyone," so that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke signifying what kind of death he was going to die. Entered therefore again into the Praetorian Pilate and summoned Jesus and said to him, "Thou art king of the Jews?*

a. All Alexandrian MSS were written in what we call capital litters.

b. The Lord of the Sabbath is not just a lord but is the Lord.

c. Luke did not provide us with the rest of the saying as Matthew did, (12:8, *“the Sabbath made for humans not humans made for the Sabbath”*). This omission is of no significance, for in the context of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is the King who brings the kingdom and being the Lord, Jesus can by his actions prove that he is not under the Law.

**Healing on another Sabbath**

1. From verse 6 we know that there was a man whose right hand “withered”; the Greek word ***exrammrnen*** means atrophied.
2. Verse 7 is very revealing how much resistance did Jesus face, for *“the Scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.”* The accusation is healing as a work, not of God but of Jesus. So the action of Jesus was not seen as a divine work but as “breaking the commandment.” To this Jesus faced the challenge by a question. Luke tells us that Jesus questioned the Scribes and Pharisees because Jesus knew their thoughts.
3. Is doing good on the Sabbath allowed? Is saving life against the commandment?
4. Jesus did not hear answer to his question.
5. The fuss ends with what may be translated literally as “*they were filled with madness*,” but it is too early to do harm to Jesus.

**A Letter from Philemon**

**Love and Freedom**

Brother George,

Christ our Savior called us to freedom and it is the freedom of love, not the rejection of the good, which only the fools think is freedom.

I am glad to hear that you have progressed in your study and that you are about to come home. I myself think that my home is the Lord himself, without this I am nothing and remain captive to my biological mortality of my body.

The commandments are the light of our way. Slaves to their lusts see it as a chain, but those who seek the Lord without a divided heart, look at the commandments as a Lenten that enlightens the way of life.

This is not about a change of our attitude to the commandments but it is about how we live and exercise our love. Our Lord tells us if we love those who love us we are not different from the prostitutes and the Tax Collectors. Both love those who feed their lusts. But we are choked by hearing that to be different we have to seek loving our enemies. This is not a problem at all. But for those who live for the gratification of their lusts, it is a major problem.

My beloved brother, the others are just like us in need of the Father’s mercy. If we accept our own poverty and weakness, we can look at the others as we look at our own life. But if we are conceited and think that we are better than those who are around us we certainly see ourselves as greater and [we see] the others are not worthy of our attention let alone our love.

Our freedom begins in the inner heart, in our awareness of our belonging to the Lord. As we have spoken before that love of freedom is not the same as freedom of love. What we love defines our life and our actions. Thus if we seek to love the Lord as we love our life, or at least love the Lord equally, then whatever we choose is chosen not only for our life but also for the Lord.

I love myself for there is the eternal dwelling of my beloved Lord and Savior.

Be aware my beloved brother that the Lord Jesus Christ did not hand over to us any Laws but gave us first new life and called us to eternal communion in his life, death and resurrection. In this communion we learn freedom of loving the Lord not just freedom of love. For without Christ there is no freedom and no love.

Pray form me.

Philēmōn

No date / 1966

***Pope’s Notes***

**Class Contacts**

George & May Bebawi Bob & Pam Walters

403 Shoemaker Dr. 12281 Blue Springs Lane

Carmel, IN 46032 Fishers, IN 46037

317-818-1487 317-694-4141 / 317-727-7917

*Audio at GeorgeBebawi.com* rlwcom@aol.com