

## **LORD OVER ALL**

The Pharisees criticized Jesus about His activities on the Sabbath, and set a trap. They placed a man with a withered hand in the synagogue when Jesus was teaching. He knew their deceit.

In Luke 6:6-11, the Lord of creation asked, "*Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?*" No one said a word in that tense moment. After looking around at them all, He said to him, "*stretch out your hand, and he did so, and his hand was restored.*"

**1- LORD OVER LAW** - The hand moved and transformed from withered to whole. Jesus did no work, speaking only a word. The healed man did no work, he only obeyed Jesus' word. Neither broke any Laws. "What is so astounding is that these Pharisees, self-proclaimed lovers of the Law, did not see that their lack of concern for their fellow Israelite was substantive proof that they did not keep the Law," observes RK Hughes, as 'good omitted is evil committed.'

Failure to do good, even on the Sabbath, is to do evil. Aiming at outward appearance, Pharisees missed obedience and became hypocrites. "In exaggerated zeal, those who pretend strictness on one point were more than lax about other points of infinitely greater importance," notes JC Ryle.

**2- LORD OVER SABBATH** - Pharisees stretched the true meaning of the fourth commandment (keeping the Sabbath) but they openly trampled on the tenth commandment (as they were notorious for being covetousness), adds Ryle. These ritualists condemn themselves.

Jesus demonstrates how the Sabbath is appropriate for both physical and spiritual healing. It is a time to do acts of mercy to the glory of God. Did the religious leaders rejoice? Verse 11, "*they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.*" In their intense jealousy, points out RC Sproul, they missed the presence of God, as Christ tenderly heals.

**2- PLAY ON WORDS** - In Mark 2 Jesus said, "*the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*" and "*the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.*" The word sabbath (Hebrew 'shabat') means the seventh day, and is related to the word 'shavat' which means rest. Sabbath rest was established at creation as God rested the seventh day, so it supercedes the Law of Moses.

*"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath and made it holy"* (Exodus 20:6).

**3- LORD OVER OPINIONS** - Jesus' critics were filled with fury. He had trumped them, and they wanted to get rid of Him. Jesus ignored their traditions, shamed their ignorance of Scripture, and claimed to be Son of Man, equal with God. This was unacceptable to them. He had to go.

Jesus took issue not with the Sabbath, but with their religious rules about it. They missed God's purpose for a day holy to the Lord, resting from labors and doing good. "We must take heed to not abuse the liberty Christ has given us," says Ryle. "There's little risk of committing the error of the Pharisees and keeping the Sabbath more strictly than God intended. The risk is our general disposition to neglect the Sabbath and rob it of the honor it ought to receive."

**5- LORD OVER SUNDAYS** - The day of worship for Jews was the seventh day, but for Christian believers it became Sunday, the first day of the week, on which Jesus was resurrected. Christian worship services kept a lot in common with Judaism, but ritualistic aspects were not continued because Jesus had perfectly kept the Law. We are saved by grace, not works.

Outside the Gospels in the New Testament, the Sabbath is mentioned twice. Colossians 2:16 calls it "*a shadow of things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*" Hebrews 4:9 says "*there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God.*" Christ not only fulfills the Sabbath, but has inaugurated its fulfillment for His people, to be consummated in the new heavens and earth.

**6- LORD OVER ALL** - "Christ is greater than Moses and greater than the original Joshua who failed to bring rest to God's disobedient people," notes Hughes. "The ultimate 'Jeshua' will do so, as Jesus supplies in His person everything the Sabbath was meant to give: peace, restoration, communion, renewal, regeneration, rest." Let us be careful to submit our thoughts to Scripture, and aim for "in essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity. In all things, Jesus Christ"! □