



Matthew Lesson 15

August 25, 2020

Scriptures from TLV

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

12:1-32

Chapter 12 is a little long to cover tonight, so we will stop at verse 32. In chapter 11, Yeshua sent out His disciples to minister and He continued to minister alone in the towns of the Galilee. As chapter 12 opens, they are again back together and are walking through a grain field on a *Shabbat*. This is also found in Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5. Here is Matthew: *1 At that time Yeshua went through the grain fields on Shabbat. His disciples became hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. 2 But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples are doing what is not permitted on Shabbat” (Matthew 12:1-2).* This may have been that same accusative group of Pharisees who seemed to follow Yeshua around. The disciples were just walking along and breaking off the heads of wheat, or it could have been barley, and eating them. It was legal for them to do this in someone else’s field because the *Torah* permitted it. *26 When you come into your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand; but you are not to swing a sickle on your neighbor’s standing grain (Deuteronomy 23:26).*

The Pharisees knew the *Torah* and that their picking and eating was ok, but that was not their complaint. Their problem with it was that it happened on *Shabbat*. They were actually accusing Yeshua’s disciples of harvesting and threshing grain. But, they didn’t base that accusation on the *Torah shebiktav*, the *Torah* that is in writing, but on the *Torah shebe’al peh*, the *Torah* that is on the mouth. You get the picture. The *Torah shebe’al peh* is the *Oral Torah* which was written down about 200 years later as the *Mishnah*. This belief was developed from time that the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity and it was carried forward to Yeshua’s day as law to be followed equally with the written *Torah*.

In saying this, these Pharisees were accusing Yeshua’s disciples of working on the Sabbath. To understand how they arrived at that, we have to understand the meaning of “work.” In Genesis 2 ADONAI created and then He ceased from creating: *1 So the heavens and the earth were completed along with their entire array. 2 God completed—on the seventh day—His work (melakha) that He made, and He ceased—on the seventh day—from all His work (melakha) that He made. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He ceased from all His work (melakha) that God created for the purpose of preparing (Genesis 2:1-3).* *Melakha* means work but also means creating. Since ADONAI ceased from creating on *Shabbat*, the Pharisees argued that there should be no work which involved creating on *Shabbat*. But, they interpreted what creating was and with their *Oral Torah* they put a “fence around the written *Torah*” and made it to mean something which G-d never intended. A fence served to make the commandment harder so that you could not accidentally violate it. Yes, labor was prohibited on *Shabbat*. Exodus 20 makes that clear: *8 “Remember Yom Shabbat, to keep it holy. 9 You are to work six days, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Shabbat to Adonai your God. In it you shall not do any work—not*

*you, nor your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your cattle, nor the outsider that is within your gates” (Exodus 20:8-10).*

But this was something more than that. The *Oral Torah* describes 39 categories of prohibited work on *Shabbat* known as the 39 *Melakhot*. These are supposedly the 39 different activities which were required to build the Tabernacle, and according to *Oral Torah* and later, the *Mishnah*, are prohibited activities on *Shabbat*. What were the disciples doing? According to these Pharisees, they were performing *kotser*, reaping, one of the 39. By definition, it was severing a plant from its source of growth which included removing all or part of a plant. According to them, if you plucked one kernel from a head of barley or wheat, you were reaping. According to them, Yeshua’s disciples also violated the *Oral Torah* command not to *dosh*, to thresh. According to Pharisaic law, they did that when they rubbed the grain in their hands to remove the husk. Those are fences around the *Torah* command by ADONAI not to work on *Shabbat*, but they are obvious exaggerations of His command. Similarly, according to the *Oral Torah*, the *shofar* is not blown on *Shabbat* today by the religiously observant because it has to be carried. This violates *hotza’ah*, transferring something from one domain type to another domain type, or transferring within a public thoroughfare. What does all this mean with regard to our Matthew Scripture? When the Pharisees said: “*Look, Your disciples are doing what is not permitted on Shabbat,*” they were saying that they violated *Oral Torah*, rulings which they say came from Moses and were passed down through the years from mouth to ear generation by generation. But, I don’t believe that. We have discussed it before and we have no time to go into it further tonight. We definitely do not believe in the authority of the *Talmud* within which these laws are found today.

*3 But He said to them, “Haven’t you read what David did when he became hungry, and those with him? 4 How he entered into the house of God, and they ate the showbread, which was not permitted for him to eat, nor for those with him, but only for the kohanim. 5 Or haven’t you read in the Torah that on Shabbat the kohanim in the Temple break Shabbat and yet are innocent” (Matthew 12:3-5)?* Yeshua referred to 1Samuel 21 which tells about when David was fleeing from Saul and he and his men needed food. *Achimelech* the *kohen* gave him the Bread of the Presence from within the Holy Place of the Tabernacle to eat. According to *Torah*, it could only be eaten by the *kohanim*. And, then Yeshua reminded the Pharisees that *kohanim* work in the Temple on *Shabbat* but have not violated *Torah* with regard to the Sabbath.

His point in regard to both of these examples is made in His next words. *6 “But I tell you that something greater than the Temple is here. 7 If you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you wouldn’t have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord of Shabbat” (Matthew 12:6-8).* What is the something greater than the Temple? It is what ADONAI said through Hosea: *6 “For I delight in loyalty and not sacrifice, knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6).* The Hebrew word used for loyalty in this verse is *chesed* which is usually translated as lovingkindness, or goodness, kindness and faithfulness. But the point is that it was G-d’s mercy. *Chesed* is also the word translated mercy in Deuteronomy 5:10; “And showing mercy unto thousands.” In Matthew 12:7, the Greek word is *eleos* meaning mercy, compassion, or pity. In the case of David and his men needing food, possibly Yeshua was saying that ADONAI will have mercy upon whom He wishes and that we must understand that it is not always the letter of the law.

Regarding the *kohanim* working in the Temple on *Shabbat*, they did it for a higher purpose, to allow the Temple worship to take place, including receiving sacrifices for sin. The

word work regarding what the priests did in the Temple is *avodah*, meaning work, worship and service. Referring to the Tribe of Levi, ADONAI said to Moses: 8 *“They are to tend to all the implements of the Tent of Meeting and the service of Bnei-Yisrael while performing the service of the Tabernacle”* (Numbers 3:8). The TLV translates two words in this verse as service, but only one, the second one is *avodah*. “The service of the Tabernacle” refers to worship and serving in the Temple, *avodah*, but is also a form of work taking place there. But, *avodah* also can refer to other physical labor as we see here: 21 *“For six days you will work (avodah), but on the seventh day you will rest”* (Exodus 34:21a). Here again, Yeshua was saying, your ways are not my ways. “I desire mercy and I, the Son of Man, am the L-rd, the Master, of the *Shabbat*.” When He said “Son of Man,” Yeshua used *remez* to refer to Daniel 7: 13 *“I was watching in the night visions. Behold, One like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days, and was brought into His presence. 14 Dominion, glory and sovereignty were given to Him that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will never pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed”* (Daniel 7:13-14). ADONAI gave Yeshua sovereignty, that is, supreme power or authority. And, through *remez*, hinting at the Daniel verses, this is what He said to the Pharisees. “I am the Master of the *Shabbat* and I make the decisions as to what can be done on it.”

But, they were not done accusing Him about the Sabbath. 9 *Leaving from there, He went into their synagogue. 10 A man with a withered hand was there. And so that they might accuse Him, they questioned Yeshua, saying, “Is it permitted to heal on *Shabbat*”* (Matthew 12:9-10). This was probably the *synagogue* in Capernaum. A withered hand would probably mean that the man would not be able to work and provide for himself and his family and would need to depend on *tzedakah*, charity, in order to live. 11 *He said to them, “What man among you will not grab his sheep and lift it out, if it falls into a pit on *Shabbat*? 12 How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is permitted to do good on *Shabbat*”* (Matthew 12:11-12). It is permitted to do good on *Shabbat*.

We have learned from Yeshua as we have studied the Word and sought to understand how to obey *Torah*. We are also to have mercy and He shows us mercy. We obviously work on *Shabbat* at the synagogue, but it is *avodah*, not *melacha*. We have to arrange chairs, serve food and drink and clean up. We understand Yeshua perfectly in that regard. We don’t follow the Talmudic application of the 39 *Melachot*. If we did, it would prevent us from turning the air conditioning on and off, the light switches on and off and we could not use the microwave or hot plates to keep our *oneg* food warm. Additionally, we would not be able to drive to synagogue since car engine combustion in their opinion is also building a fire. Nevertheless, we affirm their right to interpret for themselves. We just don’t agree that is for us.

With regard to obedience, we teach that we are not to build a fire on *Shabbat* as we obviously would not clean up the yard and burn trash on the Sabbath. We also understand that we are not to do either *avodah* or *melacha* type work on *Shabbat* for our vocations, our jobs. ADONAI commands that we rest from our labor of making a living on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. In that regard, we don’t buy on the *Sabbath* unless the sheep is in a pit or the ox is in the ditch. We also recognize that buying on the *Sabbath* is also causing our manservant or maidservant, the clerk who would serve us, to work on *Shabbat*. And, we are commanded not to make them work. This is only from our standpoint and we don’t condemn others who believe it is ok for them to work on *Shabbat*. There are other ways that the ox could be in the ditch. When we travel on *Shabbat*, we have to buy food and gasoline and stay in hotels, etc. But,

in general, we believe that *Shabbat* is to be a day of rest after we are done travelling to and from synagogue service as we obey ADONAI's command to assemble ourselves together each Sabbath. But, even though we are commanded to assemble on the Sabbath, we prefer to look at it not as "have to," but as "we get to!" It's a joy and a delight!

*13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out and it was restored, as healthy as the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him* (Matthew 12:13-14). Yeshua restored not only the man's hand, but also his life. Now, he could do what he needed to do to provide for his family. Doing good on the Sabbath is also something that we wish to do. We would never hesitate to physically help a person in need, such as changing a tire or driving them to a gas station if they ran out of gas, and be in danger of violating *Shabbat*. I also recall my days of being more physically fit when I helped to build houses for Habitat for Humanity on *Shabbat*.

There is a *Talmudic* principle called *Pikuach nefesh*, "saving a life," which specifies that the preservation of human life overrides virtually any other religious rule, including violating the *Shabbat*. It is based on this *Torah* command: 5 "So you are to keep My statutes and My ordinances. The one who does them will live by them. I am Adonai" (Leviticus 18:5). The rabbis interpret these words of ADONAI to mean that "you are to live by them but not die by them." In other words, you are not to keep a command even if it kills you. Human life takes precedence over the absolute to obey *Torah*. While I have said many times that *Talmud* is not authoritative for us, but we can learn from it, I agree with their conclusion.

*15 Knowing this, Yeshua went away from there. And large crowds followed Him, and He healed them all. 16 And He sternly warned them not to make Him known. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, 18 "Here is My servant whom I chose, the One I love, in whom My soul takes delight. I will put My Ruach upon Him, and He shall proclaim justice to the nations. 19 He will not quarrel or cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. 20 A crushed reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, until He brings forth justice to victory. 21 And in His name the nations shall hope"* (Matthew 12:15-21). This is confusing because immediately after Yeshua warned them not to make Him known, He next said "This is to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the Prophet." But, there is no warning in Isaiah 42:1-4. The warning was to the large crowds that He healed not to tell that He had healed them. What was fulfilled was that Yeshua is revealed, the Chosen One in Whom ADONAI delights. 1 "Behold My servant, whom I uphold. My Chosen One, in whom My soul delights. I have put My Ruach on Him, He will bring justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry out or raise His voice, or make His voice heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed He will not break. A smoldering wick He will not snuff out. He will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not be disheartened or crushed until He establishes justice on earth. The islands will wait for His Torah" (Isaiah 42:1-4). In chapters 41 and 42, ADONAI speaks of "His Servant" and refers to both Israel and to Yeshua. In Isaiah 41, He speaks of Israel as His servant: 8 "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham, My friend"— (Isaiah 41:8). In Isaiah 42 He again speaks of Israel: 19 "Who is blind, but My Servant? Or deaf as My Messenger that I send? Who is so blind as the one in covenant with Me, blind as Adonai's Servant" (Isaiah 42:19)? But in chapter 42, verses 1-4, He is clearly speaking about Yeshua. The rabbis identify these verses, 1-4, as being about the *Mashiach* and not referring to Israel.

*22 Then a demon-plagued man, who was blind and mute, was brought to Yeshua; and He healed him, so that he spoke and saw. 23 All the crowds were astounded and saying, "This*

*can't be Ben-David, can it*" (Matthew 12:22-23). Yeshua was still in the synagogue on *Shabbat* when this was done. It doesn't say that the Pharisees brought this man. It could have been done by some friends or his family. Yeshua healed him. After this miracle healing, the crowds began to wonder about this man, Yeshua. They wondered if He could be *Ben-David*, Son of David. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century, this was a Messianic title. It was another way of them saying, "this can't be *Mashiach*, can it?"

24 *But hearing this, the Pharisees said, "This fellow drives out demons only by beelzebul, the ruler of demons" (Matthew 12:24). Some Pharisees and others had called Yeshua be'elzebul in Matthew chapter 10. It is a derogatory word meaning, "lord of the house," and is a name which was applied to HaSatan. Hearing the crowds say, "this must be Mashiach," the Pharisees immediately responded, "no, he can't be Son of David because he uses the power of be'elzebul, HaSatan, to drive out demons."*

25 *Knowing their thoughts, Yeshua said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is destroyed, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26 If satan drives out satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive them out? For this reason, they will be your judges. 28 But if I drive out demons by the Ruach Elohim, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:25-28). The Pharisees were not being logical, but grasping at straws. Yeshua shot down their argument easily. HaSatan does not want us to be free and he would not cast out his own agents. Yeshua turned it around and said, "if I drive out demons by be'elzebul, by whose authority do your disciples drive them out?" This seems to mean that the Pharisees and their sons, their disciples, were also casting out demons. Yeshua said: "But if I drive out demons by the Ruach Elohim, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." Yeshua said it without saying it, that by casting out demons by the Spirit of G-d, He is *Ben-David*, the King and that they, the Pharisees, were in the midst of His Kingdom. Earlier, He had said, "the Kingdom of Heaven is in your midst." The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of G-d are one and the same, the place where Yeshua was ministering. These words, G-d and Heaven, are also epithets for the YHVH, the *Tetragramaton*, the four letter unpronounced name of ADONAI.*

29 *"Or how can one enter a strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he will thoroughly plunder his house" (Matthew 12:29). Yeshua was using an example to explain how He could cast out demons. If you are going to rob a man's house and he is a powerful man, you must first overpower him and tie him up. Then you can take away his possessions. Of course, Yeshua was speaking about what He did to HaSatan when He cast out demons. He was saying, "how can I drive out demons from a house, a person's body, which HaSatan has taken control of? I do it by rendering him powerless." We know how Yeshua did it. He did it by the power of G-d. But, how do we render HaSatan powerless so that we can cast out demons? We do it with the authority of Yeshua's name which He has given us. Then, the demons must obey and come out.*

30 *"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters" (Matthew 12:30). There are only two possibilities; you are either for Yeshua or you are against Him. There is no middle ground. You cannot straddle the fence. You are either gathering with Him, helping to expand His Kingdom, or you are causing people to move away from His Kingdom. There is no middle ground.*

31 *"For this reason I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Ruach will not be forgiven. 32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son*

*of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Ruach ha-Kodesh will not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in the one to come*” (Matthew 12:31-32). When He said this, Yeshua seemed to have been referring to those who had not accepted Him, those whom He said were scattering. He essentially said, “for this reason, I will forgive those who repent and accept me. But, if they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit, there is no hope for them.”

If they have spoken against Him, the Son of Man, and repent, they will be forgiven. Yochanan helps us to understand. He said: 22 *“Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Yeshua is the Messiah? This one is the anti-messiah—the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; the one who acknowledges the Son also has the Father”* (1John 2:22-23). As we have taught in the last two *Shabbat* messages, we are not looking for a physical anti-christ to come and rule the world. It’s a spirit, an evil spirit from *HaSatan*. There is no person who’s going to rebuild the Temple and then cause Temple worship to cease. Refresh your memory if you need to. You can find our recent *Ekev* and *Shoftim* messages on YouTube, Facebook and in written form on the *Beit Shalom* website. John also makes it clear that those who deny Yeshua do not have a relationship with the Father. You can’t think that you are going to be a part of the world to come if you only trust in the Father. But, ADONAI’s word is true and we believe with all our hearts that Jews who don’t know Yeshua will know Him and that “all Israel will be saved” before Yeshua returns. John said essentially the same thing about the anti-messiah in 2John: 7 *“For many deceivers have gone out into the world—those who do not acknowledge Yeshua as Messiah coming in human flesh. This one is a deceiver and the anti-messiah”* (2John 1:7). John makes it even clearer. A person who denies that Yeshua is Messiah and denies His coming to earth as a human being for our sins has the spirit of the anti-messiah and is in fact the anti-messiah themselves! This means that there are a lot of anti-christs walking around in the world today, millions of them. That sheds a lot of light on what is going on in our nation right now. Going back to 1John: 2 *“You know the Ruach Elohim by this—every spirit that acknowledges that Messiah Yeshua has come in human flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Yeshua is not from God. This is the spirit of the anti-messiah, which you have heard is coming and now is already in the world”* (1John 4:2-3). This is how we know that we have the Holy Spirit. It’s only available to us through Yeshua. You can’t not know Yeshua and have the *Ruach HaKodesh*.

What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? There are many ideas about it out there. John also gives us some insight into it: 6 ... *“The Spirit is the One who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth”* (1John 5:6b). Because the *Ruach* is the truth, one who denies the truth of G-d is blaspheming. But, there is more to it than that. The writer of Hebrews said: 15 *“As it is said, “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion”* (Hebrews 3:15). ADONAI did not allow the Israelites who rebelled against His command to go in and conquer Canaan to enter into His rest. They died in the wilderness. In my opinion, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is denying His truth with a hardened and unrepentant heart. Also in Hebrews: 4 *“For it is impossible for those who once were enlightened—having tasted of the heavenly gift and become partakers of the Ruach ha-Kodesh, 5 and having tasted the good word of God and the powers of the *olam ha-ba*, 6 and then having fallen away—to renew again to repentance, since they are again crucifying Ben-Elohim for themselves and publicly disgracing Him”* (Hebrews 6:4-6). We don’t exactly know what this means with regard to being able to return to ADONAI and Yeshua. It seems to say that you can’t. Here is my personal opinion. But, ADONAI is merciful. Even if a person has done this and other terrible things against Him and Yeshua, He will forgive you if you can sincerely repent. 19 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise*

(Psalm 51:19). The problem, blasphemy against the Spirit, is with those who arrogantly deny ADONAI's truth, which includes, must include, that Yeshua is the Messiah. But, if you have done these terrible things and have a change of heart and your heart is tender toward ADONAI and Yeshua and you sincerely repent, I strongly believe that you will be forgiven. A person who can repent with a sincere heart has not blasphemed the Holy Spirit.

The next 5 verses are a follow-up to this subject, but we will leave them for next time. Trust in ADONAI with all your heart and accept Yeshua's sacrificial death as payment for your sins. Then serve Him with all of your heart and you will see Him in the *Olam Haba*, the world to come. *Shalom aleichem!*