

The Remarkable Battle
Matthew 12:22-50
June 9, 2019

>Sabbath comes from a Hebrew word that means rest.<

Last week, we discussed the Sabbat or rather the perverted version from the Oral Law which contained 39 additional prohibitions to the real/genuine spirit of Shabbot (Hebrew) which was and is merely to set aside one day to rest and reflect or “remember” (**Exodus 20:8**) to remember the significance of Shabbat both as a commemoration of creation and as a commemoration of the Jews’ freedom from slavery in Egypt, and “to keep it holy” (**Exodus 20:8**) or observe it – which for the orthodox Jew of the First Century and the orthodox Jew of today meant “the ceasing of 39 different categories. How do we keep it or observe it today?”

1. Understand What It Means To Keep The Sabbath Holy – i.e. a day that’s different from the other days of the week. Rest from normal activities on this day and dedicate your thoughts and time to God.
2. Commit To Keeping The Sabbath Day Holy Through Worship – Jesus was resurrected on Sunday.
3. Prepare During The Week To Keep The Sabbath Holy – last week we discussed how there had to be preparation to observe the Sabbath throughout the week and especially the day before. Don’t make plans that will take you away from what you could be doing to honor the Sabbath.
4. Organize Special Sunday Activities So The Day Feels Different – Don’t look at the Sabbath as a list of cant’s but can’s.

*It's the only one of the Ten Commandments that is not reiterated in the New Testament. So we are under a different dispensation today . . . , however it's still one of the Ten Commandments and the spirit of it should be acknowledged and kept. We should meditate on these things and then obey the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 12:22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw.

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“Then” – implies another day has come . . .

PRAY HERE

The pattern of **Matthew 9:32-34**. Where there is Jesus' exorcism, the crowd's astonishment, and the Pharisees' accusation is repeated in **verses 22-24**, but this time Jesus responds with much more length. **Verses 38-42** seem to shift the topic, but the Pharisees request a sign presumably to justify Jesus' exorcism and **verses 43-45** return explicitly to the topic of evil spirits.

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Barclay, p. 37-39

Remember with me, back in **Matthew 9:32-34** that the demon-oppressed man was mute as well and if the name of the demon could not be obtained from the person under the demonic influence, then the demon could never be exorcized. (They were considered a lost cause, impossible to heal.) **BUT** this is never the case with Jesus. NO ONE IS BEYOND HOPE! NO ONE IS TOO FAR GONE, PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY!

*Only here in the four Gospels (a one and only miracle) do we find reference to the healing of a man both blind and mute.

Bob Creager information on demon oppression

Matthew 12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?”

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“amazed” - the only time this verb occurs in Matthew.

“Can this be the son of David?” - Remember, as with the healing of the two blind men in **Matthew 9:27** the term “son of David” comes primarily in Matthew from blind people and Gentiles (viewed by many as spiritually blind). The everyday people here, presumably Jews, ask this question skeptically. The widespread rejection of Jesus is growing in strength and stronger in this gospel.

Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.”

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So, just as before in **Matthew 10:24**, Jesus is accused of being in league with the devil. *Interestingly enough, this charge persisted as a common view of Jesus among Jews in the early centuries of the Christian era. They did not deny the genuineness of his miracles but ascribed his power to the devil, so he was branded a SORCERER and worthy of death. [Notes from the Sanhedrin: Once again, we can never separate Jesus from his miracles.]

Matthew 12:25

Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.”

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(This verse was often attributed to Abraham Lincoln.)

Since Jesus supernaturally knows the thoughts of the Pharisees (see also in **Matthew 9:4**) we can assume that **verse 24’s** accusation was made only among themselves and not directly to him or others.

Matthew 12:26

“And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?”

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The concept of Satan having a “kingdom” is found explicitly in the New Testament only here and in Mark and Luke’s parallel passages. **(Elaborate on this, if time?)** “Whatever fault the devil’s have, they are not at strife with each other; that fault is reserved for the servants of a better master.” Spurgeon

Matthew 12:27

“And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges?”

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“Your sons” – Jesus turns the tables on the Pharisees here because there were many Pharisaic Jews that were casting out demons at that time (i.e. Josephus quotes in Barclay). The accusation of the Pharisees actually makes them guilty of opposing the very work of God.

Matthew 12:28

“ But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Jesus claims he is casting out demons by the Spirit of God and “the kingdom of God has come upon you” – This is the very first time Matthew uses the phrase “kingdom of God” (he usually uses “kingdom of heaven”). He will only use “kingdom of God” here, and in probably to parallel the “Spirit of God.”

Matthew 12:29 “Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.”

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[A powerful verse] The picture of binding a strong man is taken from:

Isaiah 49:24-26 **24** Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued? **25** For thus says the Lord: “Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children. **26** I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all flesh shall know that I am the Lord your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

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This is in the discourse of the “Suffering Servant” (songs/poems) in **Isaiah 42 – 53**. The “strong man” is Satan. Jesus is saying here he must first bind Satan before he can “carry off” or “rob” his house. **Jesus is stronger than the strong man!** There is nothing in our lives must stay under Satan’s domination – NOTHING! (There is an unseen spiritual war constantly going on against Satan. He’s still coming after you and me. “Seeking whom he may devour . . .”)

Matthew 12:30

“Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.”

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This is one of my favorite verses because it teaches that with Jesus there is no neutrality. There is no room for neutral ground. My friend, if you are not with Jesus, you are against him and you are scattering his work, literally, working against him. “Scattering” – can mean losing grain into the wind or “shepherding” – he who is not helping to keep the flock safe by bringing it into the fold is driving it out to the dangers of the hills (Barclay).

“He that is not with me is against me” – is a test we ought to apply to ourselves.

Matthew 9:40 “He that is not against us is for us.” – is a test we ought to apply to others (context is always key).

Matthew 12:31

“Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”

The Unpardonable Sin is discussed here. This is shocking! The Holy Spirit had two supreme functions to the first century Jew:

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1. He brought God’s truth to men.
2. He enabled men to recognize and to understand that truth when they saw it.

So, a man needed the Holy spirit both to receive and to recognize God’s truth. In it’s exact content the unpardonable sin is “attributing to Satan what is accomplished by the power of God.” Ultimately, it is the flagrant willful and

persistent rejection of God's son, Jesus Christ. Christians through the ages have tried to identify this sin with such things as murder, adultery, or divorce.

HOWEVER, the Pharisees were rejecting Jesus as Messiah plus attributing his power to that of Satan. (A Christian can never and has never committed this sin.)

Matthew 12:32 “And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

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Troubling and difficult statement – “Perhaps what Jesus means here is that all other sin and blasphemy against me, as I appear in my human nature, has some excuse, and may be cured so pardoned (like Paul); but seeing the great works of the Holy Spirit done by me, and to be done by my disciples and yet denying God's attestation and blasphemously insisting that it is the work of the devil will never be repented of, nor forgiven” (Benson). How one interprets Jesus' **miracles** the conclusion one comes to, will determine his eternal destiny.

Matthew 12:33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.”

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Jesus now speaks about the awful responsibility of words. The Pharisees have just spoken the most terrible words possible. -DEMONIC WORDS -

Matthew 12:34 “You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”

“brood of vipers” -offspring of Satan. A tree is to its fruit what a person's heart is to him or her speech. (no middle ground here)

Matthew 12:35 “The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.”

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A person is either good or evil.

Matthew 12:36 “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,”

“careless word” – KJV “idle word” – it literally means “workless.” These are “deedless” words like a “broken promise” or an unpaid vow.” What may seem like trivial or casual remarks may at times better reflect the true attributes of one’s heart than more carefully chosen words. “Choose rather to fling a chance stone than to speak a chance word.” Pythagoras

Matthew 12:37 “for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

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Matthew 12:38 “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.”

“a sign from you”.- What? Really? Jesus had just cured a blind mute in **verse 22**. Not to mention everyone he had cured before him in **verse 15** on the Sabbath Day controversy (plus at the multitudes he had healed before that in Matthew). The Jews according to Paul “demand signs” in:

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I Corinthians 1:22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

Matthew 12:39 “But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”

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Jesus does not perform party tricks. He’s not some magician putting on a show/entertaining people (well, I guess some people do look at him that way – Scribes and Pharisees) “the sign of the prophet Jonah”

Matthew 12:40 “For just 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.”

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This is Jesus’ first unambiguous predictors of his death is Matthew still not as explicit as it will become and probably understandable only in retrospect. “Three days and nights” represent a semiotic idiom for any portion of three calendar days (no error here from Jesus or Matthew).

Matthew 12:41 “The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.”

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As in **10:15** and **11:21-24** if only Jesus brands these Jewish leaders as worse off than certain Gentiles of Old Testament times. The Ninevites were totally wicked before Jonah.

Research of wickedness of Ninevah

Matthew 12:42 “The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.”

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The “Queen of the South” was the Queen of Sheba (**I Kings 10:1-10**) Where was Sheba located

info on her Queen of Sheba

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Matthew has now shown that Jesus is greater than the priests, prophets like Jonah, and kings like David and Solomon.

Matthew 12:43 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none.”

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Notice the connection to **Vs 22**, still. “seeking rest” – Remember last week’s Sabbath discussion on rest?

Matthew 12:44 “Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order.”

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Matthew 12:45 “Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.”

Jesus want the man who was liberated, along with everyone else present to realize that freedom from demon oppressor / possession is not enough.

Ownership by the devil must be replaced with ownership by Christ . . .

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Romans 6:15-18 15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

. . . otherwise one's release is only temporary. Moral reform without Christian commitment always remains inadequate. The "rest" (Vs 43) the evil spirit seeks here contrasts sharply and ironically with the "rest" Christ offers (11:29).

Just as you think things could not get worse for our Lord, just when you think his about done with the **demons attack** from the Scribes and Pharisee, his family shows up.....(blood relative)

Matthew 12:46 While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.

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While he's still speaking... Mary, James, Joseph (Joses), Simon and Judas show up and it's not to offer their support. Evidently what he's saying here - - his ministry - - is causing so much hostility; they want him to go back home with them. No details are given about why they have come **but** he does offer a mild rebuke towards them by saying:

Matthew 12:48 But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?”

Matthew 12:49 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers!” But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?”

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Matthew 12:50 “For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

In the last several verses Jesus is saying they deserve no preferential treatment.

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Mark 3:21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”

Jesus’ brothers (and his mom) are in no way yet supporters. Given the strong family ties in ancient Israel, Jesus’ attitude here would have proved as shocking as **8:22** and **10:37** (Shame and honor culture – up to the family) More positively he points to believers as people who should care for each other as if they were family members. (**Ephesians 3:5-10**)

Please notice with me how **Vs 46-50** fit perfectly, still within the action and follows discussion begun in **Vs 22** with demon oppression (blind and mute man). Ladies and gentlemen, there’s constant and never-ending demonic attack against the work of God (in Jesus) primarily manifested in church conflict (Jewish religion leadership – Scribes and Pharisee) and the family.

Thank God, we don't have that here inside RBC. Brag on the church here about how well we get along with each other in our mission to Glorify God by loving Him, loving others and laboring to see all people become disciples of Christ

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Lord's Supper.

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PRAYER AND INVITATION

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