
a *Grace Notes* course

Life of Christ 200

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Lesson 203

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Contents

Sabbath Review	1
John 5:19-47 Outline	4
Another Sabbath Controversy.....	11
Healing on the Sabbath.....	14

Sabbath Review

Gen. 1:31-2:3, "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and he rested on the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He "sabbathed" from all His work which God had created and made."

God does not tire.

God can do an infinite amount of work and still concentrate and appreciate what He has done.

But God stopped on this occasion to demonstrate to man his need for concentration on God.

It is true that man needs physical rest; but the rest for the soul comes from a relationship with God, and that is the nature of the Sabbath.

Rhetorical question: if you only needed rest once a week, then why do you sleep every day? Isn't sleep rest?

One day a week of rest has no magical effect on the body, nor is this indicated anywhere in the Bible. There is no verse that says if you fail to rest one day a week you will die young!

Exodus 20:8-11, "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 of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

Deut 5:15: "And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath."

Also significant is the placement of this commandment. It follows after three relationship commandments:

You shall have no other Gods before Me.

You shall no make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

The interpretation of the Sabbath as a period of concentration on God is the only interpretation compatible with the greatest commandment, Deut 6:5.

Read Joshua 21:43-22:6.

The Jews occupied the promised land, and immediately entered into the rest of God. Here for the first time the Sabbath is equated with spiritual maturity, and the feast of tabernacles.

Observe that Joshua tells his people that they have kept all that the Lord commanded, and that this was the prerequisite for their entrance to the blessing of the promised land. God kept every promise about it.

He also warns them to continue in this direction - "to love the Lord your God"

Notice that in the commandment it is called the Sabbath of God. This is the possessive sense here - the Sabbath that belongs to God; the one you should give to Him.

Exodus 23:12, "Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease from labor in order that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave, as well as your stranger, may refresh themselves."

Here is the more practical side of the Sabbath - but see that the Sabbath is for the animals and slaves and visitors at your house.

The refreshment seems to be of a physical nature here.

This physical command is repeated in Exodus 34:21, "You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during plowing time and harvest you shall rest."

A Sabbath could be a whole week, Lev 23:39, the feast of Tabernacles. Here the connection with concentration on God is made the more strong.

A Sabbath could be a whole year, Lev 25:2,4,6.

Exodus 16:22-30 is a reminder that the Lord provides logistics so that you can concentrate on Him.

If you are striving to get ahead, and make logistics a priority above God, then you are under the mistaken assumption that God cannot provide for you.

If you make recreation a priority above God, then you are under the mistaken impression that God cannot refresh you in the allotted time.

Ezekiel 20:12,20 place a seal on the meaning of the Sabbath: "And also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them."

The purpose of the Sabbath is to know God, the God who sanctifies them.

Interestingly enough, we are sanctified by knowing God.

There is one day a week when the people know God, and that is what sanctifies them.

Aside from the prohibition of work, there is very little specific about the commandment. The real question about this commandment is whether you concentrate on God during this period.

Perhaps Isaiah 40:27-31 summarizes the benefit of the true Sabbath best: "Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet

those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."

Read Hebrews 3:7-4:13.

This long passage is about the Sabbath rest of Joshua, which is spiritual maturity.

You can only enter the Sabbath rest of God through belief in Jesus Christ.

Unbelief prevents you from ever knowing this wonderful rest.

The writer of Hebrews makes a big point out of the present time. Again and again he makes the assertion that there is no day like today to enter into the Sabbath rest of God (although you cannot reach maturity in a day, you can get on the trail that leads to it).

The word of God is the means of entering the Sabbath rest - it is the way to maturity.

When the Pharisees accuse the sick man of violating the Sabbath, he says that he was just following orders from the one who made him well, HUGIE.S, physically well. He is not spiritually well just yet.

But the sick man only knows that he is well. He does not know who made him that way.

John 5:14-16, "Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; sin no longer, so that nothing worse may befall you." The man went away, and reported to the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. And for this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath."

Christ was in the temple, for His observation of the Passover proceedings. What thoughts He must have had.

The man is physically well, but there is in him a persistence of sin. There is little or no evidence of his conversion to this point, and our Lord makes it clear that he is at this moment not right with God.

Handicaps are neither spiritual liabilities nor spiritual assets. Volition runs the same in the handicapped as in all others.

The prohibition against sinning is quite interesting:

Christ says, "ME.KETI HAMARTANE". The verb HAMARTANE is in the imperative mood, so this is a command. ME.KETI is a temporal adverb which denotes the cessation of an action. This really does mean "sin no longer", as in never again.

But how can Christ tell this to someone whom He knows will sin? Christ has to be aware of the realities of the sin nature. C. Really, this would be a legitimate command to a believer - all of us are commanded to restrain from sin.

However, there is a very similar turn of the phrase in Jeremiah 31:34, and it would be a good idea to go there and examine its context.

The formerly sick man reported, ANAGGELO to the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. This Greek word holds only a negative connotation here. It may be taken as "tattled", or just "reported", but either way it is the voluntary nature of the act that really stinks. This man chose to report to the Jews what could only turn out wrong.

The Jews employed this information in persecution - DIOKO means to doggedly pursue someone for the purpose of doing them harm.

The stated reason for the persecution is Christ's violation of the Pharasaic rules of the Sabbath. He definitely broke their Sabbath, but not the real one. Remember, Christ was the fulfillment of the Law; He could never have broken the real Sabbath.

John 5:17-18, "But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."

The two verbs translated "working" are both the same, ERGAZOMAI. They are the present middle indicatives, indicating ongoing, non-stop work to the indefinite future.

The purpose of these verbs is to answer the assertion that we rest because God rested. The

essence of the Sabbath is not the cessation of work, but concentration on God.

But Christ's works and God's works should be the objects of concentration, and they certainly are not a violation of the Moses' Sabbath.

Christ uses the personal pronoun EGO in order to emphasize His own work - not in contrast to that of the Father's, but in concert.

So two things here would get the attention of the Pharisees:

That Christ called God His Father.

That Christ considered His work equivalent with that of the Father's.

As a result, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him.

The more bold Christ became, the more the Jews wanted to kill Him; the more that Christ revealed about the plan of God in Him, the more the Jews wanted to kill Him; the more that Christ set Himself up as a substituted for them, the more the Jews wanted to kill Him.

So this was not only persecution, but deadly persecution.

Even two years before the death of Christ, the conspiracy to kill Him gained great strength.

Christ spoke the truth - He is a part of the trinity. God is three persons in one Godhead.

The first person of the Trinity is God the Father. The second person of the Trinity is God the Son. The third person of the Trinity is God the Holy Spirit.

The three persons of the trinity possess identical essence in one being.

This divine being is tripersonal, having three distinct persons which are autonomous from one another in soul function.

This distinction in persons is more than just one God showing different facets or modes of His one person.

Christ is a part of the trinity even though His is in the flesh.

Definition: "In the person of the incarnate Christ are two natures, inseparably united without mixture or loss of separate identity, without loss or

transfer of properties or attributes, the union being both personal and eternal from the moment of the virgin birth."

The standard operating procedure for the hypostatic union was to be something called Kenosis, Phil 2:5-8, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!"

During the incarnation our Lord voluntarily restricted the independent use of the divine capabilities. Furthermore, the expression of His character was restricted to what He had developed in His humanity, and not what He inherently had as deity.

He did this in compliance with the Father's plan for His time on planet earth.

Christ voluntarily became man, and with that restricted His deity to His humanity.

During the incarnation Jesus Christ never once exercised the independent use of His own Divine capabilities, either to benefit Himself, to provide for Himself, or to glorify Himself, Mt 4:1-12; Lk 4:1-12.

Voluntary restriction does not mean that those things went away, but that they were simply not used. He was still omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, love, etc.

Christ's divine capabilities and character traits were ready and available for His use at all times, but He chose not to use them.

John 5:19-47 Outline

The Humility of the Son, vv.19-21

His humility in earthly doings, "19 Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing from Himself, unless it is something he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also likewise does."

Now here is the definition of Christ's humility to the Father, and from Christ's own lips.

Christ does exactly what the Father does. He is the exact imitation of the integrity of God.

This statement, during the incarnation, is restricted to the character of God, and it stands as a great example for all of us.

Also in this statement is a strong reinforcement of the doctrine of kenosis.

The Son observes the Father through His study of the Old Testament. Christ definitely does not "go visit" the Father when no one is looking. Christ's observations are limited to what anyone else has during that time.

God does what He does from His perfection. Christ does what He does from God's perfection. For what Christ does, He does as a man.

What Christ says here to the Pharisees is really stunning: that he is both equal to the Father, and to them. Christ is limited by kenosis to the human condition.

His humility in future doings, "20 For the Father loves the Son and shows to Him all things which He Himself does and He will show Him greater works than these, so that you yourselves might marvel."

The Father loves the Son

There is equal love in the Godhead among all members. The Father loves the Son's humanity as well.

This is my Son, whom I love; in whom I am well-pleased. The Son had lived the perfect life up to this time, and He is the one human being who deserves the true personal love of the Father.

The Father shows the Son all things which He himself does.

The showing depends on the power of the Holy Spirit, but neither is this outside of the access of the rest of the human race. In order to be truly effective as savior and prototype, Christ had to have only what was available to other believers of His time. Therefore, this revelation of God is what was already revealed to everyone, and something that was in plain sight. It also eliminates excuses, and removes anti-grace thinking.

The greater works, those which would cause even the Pharisees to marvel, are future, and things which have yet to be done.

Christ had already done healings and miracles - and such things had been done in the Old Testament.

But there had been no resurrection, nor yet the second coming and millennial rule. These are the works to which Christ refers.

The greater works does not refer to church age mystery doctrine, because Christ did not reveal the church, or even hint at the church until the last week of His life.

Therefore, these things must be those already associated with Israel.

His humility in life making, "21 For just as the Father raises the dead and makes them alive, even so the Son also makes alive whom He wishes."

God the Father gave life in a limited sense in the dispensations before Christ. He placed their souls into interim bodies, and transferred them either to torments or paradise. And also he creates the soul in the first place and puts it into the human body.

This function is portrayed as occurring just then, as Christ spoke. God still held this role.

Jesus Christ had apparently already resuscitated a number of people as a kingdom sign. Christ would continue to do this, in order to point to His own resurrection, and the future resurrections of mankind.

Christ specifically points out that His willpower is involved. This works in conjunction with His spiritual gift. Our willpower works the same way with our gifts.

The Equality and Superiority of the Son, vv.22-30.

His authority to judge, "22 For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son."

The Son will judge on several different occasions. Judgement of our sins on the cross.

The self-judgement of our sins in time through confession.

The Judgment Seat of Christ, the evaluation of all Church Age believers.

The baptism of fire, which is the judgment of all unbelievers of the tribulation, both Jew and Gentile, Mt 25:31-46; Ezek 20:33-48.

The evaluation of all tribulational believers, both Jew and Gentile, Mt 25:31-46; Dan 12:2-3.

At the great white throne, there are three categories of judgments.

The judgment of believers.

All believers who lived before the incarnation, both Jew and Gentile, are judged at this time.

All Millennial believers are judged at this time.

The judgment of unbelievers. All unbelievers in history, except those of the tribulation, are judged at this time. Mt 25:31-46, Ezek 20:32-38, Rev 20:7-10.

The judgment of all fallen angels at the end of the Millennium. Their sentence was passed before time began, but its execution is not carried out until the end of human history.

The purpose of His authority, "23 So that all might honor the Son just as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father Who sent Him."

The purpose particle introduces the purpose for the authority of Christ in judgment.

God gave Christ the authority to judge so that the human race would give Him equal honor.

The honor that Christ should receive comes from the dual sacrifice of His kenosis, Phil 2:5-8.

This honor is a mental attitude of appreciation for the sacrifice and integrity of another.

There is honor for the Father from the Old Testament dispensations.

The honor is an option, for it is in the potential subjunctive mood.

The application of man related to Christ's authority, "24 Truly truly I say to you that the one who listens to My word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

Since Christ has authority to judge and to give life, it behooves all men to listen to the word of Christ and believe in the one who sent Him.

Belief in Christ negates the judgment which rightfully should come to one in total depravity.

Every human being is born into a state of total depravity, characterized by total separation from God due to Adam's original sin, and total helplessness to do anything about it. This is a state of judgment!

If you refuse to believe in Christ, you are left in that state of judgment; if you believe in Christ you are removed from that state of judgment and placed into union with Christ.

The resurrection related to Christ, "25 Truly truly I say to you that the hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God - and the ones who hear will live."

This event is in the present - it is really a double entendre. First, is when someone listens to the voice of the Son of God, and believes what he has to say. This person, who begins in a status of spiritual death, that is, total depravity, will live.

The future life is when that person will be resurrected unto life. Thus, resurrection is in view here as well.

The explanation of the power to resurrect, "26 For just as the Father has life in Himself, so also He gave to the Son to have life in Himself."

This is a restatement of the previous statement about the ability to give life. But it does have its own twist.

Notice here that the attribute of life itself is applied to Christ.

The life here is eternal life, and it implies quality as well as infinity.

For us, the meaning is vitality.

Vitality in the gospel of John.

Vitality is expressive Christianity.

The format for vitality is prayer.

The contents of vitality are worship, observation, supplication, confession, dependence, and character.

The explanation of the authority to judge, "27 And He gave authority to Him to make judgment, because He is the Son of Man."

Hand in hand with the authority to give life is the authority to judge.

The two represent the only possibilities for your eternal fate.

A narration of the resurrection and judgment, " 28 Do not marvel at this; because the hour is coming in which everyone who is in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and they will come out, the ones who did [divine] good unto a resurrection of life, but those who practiced human good unto a resurrection of judgment."

The hour is coming - this represents the eminence of divine judgment. The word denotes a short span of time between the present and the future.

When the time is past, it will seem only a short time.

Everyone who is in the tombs - obviously, those who are dead. This does not seem a reference to the incident at the death of Christ, Matt 27:52-53, "and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many."

Those in the tombs at Christ's death are resuscitated - their old nasty decayed human bodies are raised.

However, verse 29 clearly states this passage as a resurrection at the end of time.

Furthermore, here it is PANTES, everyone who is in the tombs; in Matthew it is POLLA, "many".

Will hear His voice - now this is the change from verse 25, and is really the completion of it. If you hear His voice now, you will hear it later, and that's good.

HOI TA AGAPA POIESANTES, "the ones who did the intrinsic good".

The participle is in the aorist tense, and so it reveals action that occurs before the main verb. It describes the action of those who believed in Christ during the span of their lives on earth.

The aorist participle also denotes that the action occurred in one moment of time - this is a single act of good.

The definite article and noun portray a single act of intrinsic good, and one which is known by the listeners. It is only belief in Christ.

The result is a resurrection unto life, eternal life, that is.

HOI TA PHAULA PRAXANTES "The ones who practiced the human good."

This is really descriptive! The aorist participle describes past time, but here the meaning of the verb overrules the tense of the participle in the kind of action. The verb pra/ssw is "practice", and therefore indicates action over a lifetime.

The noun reveals anything worthless or out of bounds. It summarizes all the acts of human good which an unbeliever accumulates over a lifetime.

This person is also resurrected, but unto judgment - the harsh judgment into the lake of fire, which occurs at the great white throne.

The equity of Christ's judgment, "30 I am not able to do anything from Myself; I judge just as I hear, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of the One who sent Me."

Christ follows the will of the Father in judgment.

Christ desires to please God in all of His judgments.

None of the judgments of Christ attempt to please man; they only attempt to please God. This is what makes all of His judgments perfectly fair.

To please man is to fall into the morass of relativity. There is no fairness in relativity.

The Testimony about the Son, vv.31-37

The invalidity of self-testimony, "31 If I testify about Myself, My testimony is not true;"

Christ is speaking to the Pharisees here. Remember that! He therefore switches over to a very objective mode in testimony about Himself.

When Christ says, "not true". What He means is not true to the Pharisees. Of course His testimony is true! It is just that He knows that the Pharisees will not trust His self-testimony.

The validity of outside testimony & the first outside witness to Christ, "32 There is another who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony which He testifies about Me is true."

Outside testimony is more valid for the Pharisees. He would have their attention by now.

Although some manuscripts have the more logical "you know", they are late and unreliable.

So, there is an outside witness, and his testimony is true. The Pharisees would be asking themselves who this might be.

The first witness: John the Baptist, "33 You have sent to John, and he has testified the truth."

Remember, the Pharisees sent a fact finding team to John, John 1:19-28. At that time, John told them about Christ. He made the issue very clear.

Christ uses the intensive form of the personal pronoun "you". He wants to really emphasize that the Pharisees were concerned enough about John ministry to find out more about Him.

When John made the issue so clear, it was the truth.

Christ's purpose in citing these witnesses, "34 But I did not receive the testimony from man, but I speak these things so that you might be saved."

Christ here reveals His pure motive in providing testimony. He wants the very best for the Pharisees, which is for them to be saved through belief in Him.

Christ did not receive the testimony from man. This means that Christ is pointing out that He received a greater testimonial than just human. He received one from God the Father Himself at His baptism.

Although I have not included it in my outline, this is really the second witness to Christ.

John's testimony and the Pharisees' former acceptance of it, "35 He [John the Baptist] was the lamp that was burning and shining and you wanted to rejoice for a short time in his light."

Notice the past tense HEN. Although John was the lamp that was burning and shining, Christ makes it clear that this is no longer the case.

In fact, John has allied with the Pharisees now, and has become the enemy of Christ.

John was the lamp... the lamp that the Pharisees would remember would be the lampstand in the holy place of the tabernacle and temple. It is the lamp which represents the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

John in his ministry shed light on the Old Testament. He was like the Spirit in that regard. In fact, the Spirit worked alongside the ministry of John.

For a short time the Pharisees wanted to rejoice in the light of John's ministry. At first they had a few shreds of positive volition. That time is clearly past.

Summary: we now have two witnesses - John the Baptist and God the Father.

The second witness: the works of Christ, "36 But I have a greater witness than John; for the works which the Father gave Me so that I might finish them, the very works which I do, testify about Me that the Father sent Me."

So the works of Christ also testify about Him - that He is the Son of God.

Christ did the following works through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

Miracles.

Healings.

Demon Exorcisms.

Remember, these great things are done through the spiritual gifts and the power of the Spirit, and certainly not through his own deity.

These same works are given by the Father, so that they might be fulfilled or finished by Christ.

Step by step Christ fulfills Old Testament prophecy.

Through Old Testament wisdom Christ does the works which are given by the Father.

By the guidance of the Spirit Christ knows when to do what. The Spirit even guides when we are not sure or flat out do not know.

Eph 2:10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Christ does miracles, healings, and exorcisms, and nobody else does. Doesn't that point to His being the messiah?

The third witness: the Father, "37 And the Father who sent Me, has testified about Me. You have neither heard His voice, nor seen His form,"

Christ has already alluded to this witness.

The Father testified about Christ at His baptism.

But the Old Testament is chock-full of testimony about Christ. Christ fulfilled dozens and dozens of prophecies.

The Pharisees did not hear the voice of the Father, because they did not want to, not because they did not hear with their ears. Many Pharisees would have been present at the baptism of Christ.

The Pharisees have not seen the form of God. This time the verb is o)ra/w, and it does not mean to see with the organs of sight, but with the organ of the heart.

The part of God that the Pharisees do not see is EIDOS. This is actually a cognate of HORAO, and speakers of Greek employed it to describe the outward form of an idol.

God did reveal Himself in theophanies during Old Testament dispensations, but those days are past by the time this passage rolls around.

Irony: they are right in front of the Son of God, and yet they do not see God in Him.

The Pharisees' Rejection of the Witnesses and Their Negative Volition, vv.38-47

The Pharisees' response to the word, "38 and you do not have His word living in you, because you do not believe the one whom He sent."

The participle me/nonta describes the wordless state of the Pharisees. It is not that the Pharisees are without a knowledge of the Scripture, for they could compete with the best in the world in this regard.

But, they do not have the word living in them. The present tense combines with the meaning of the word so that it places a strong emphasis on the indwelling and durative nature of the word.

Christ makes a point: you can know a tremendous amount about the word, and still there is an issue about whether it dwells in you.

Whether the word dwells in you is entirely up to you. In order to make the word dwell in yourself, you must make it a vital part of your life and relationship with God.

The Pharisees never did do this, and so they rejected the witnesses.

Remember, there is negative volition at hearing the word, and negative volition at using the word. The Pharisees fell into the latter category.

Their blind and failed search of the Scriptures, "39 You search the Scriptures, because You assume to have eternal life in them; and they are those who testify about Me!"

Something amazing: the Pharisees search the Scriptures, because they assume to have eternal life in them. This sounds good, and yet the Pharisees missed something, for sure.

ERAUNTE describes a search only when you do not know what you seek. It describes the exploratory operation in surgery, or the endless and fruitless quest of philosophy.

Searching the Scriptures would normally be a good thing; but when you search and do not know why, then you are in trouble. You will not find the object for which you search if you do not know what it is.

The verb DOKEITE means to assume something. It describes presumptive thinking. Christ inserts the personal pronoun HUMEIS in order to show His surprise that the Pharisees do this. It could be translated, "even you".

The Pharisees assume that they have eternal life in the Scriptures, and this is a good assumption.

With this good assumption they go on to search aimlessly through the Scriptures, paying a great deal of attention to detail which did not exist, and failing to discover eternal life.

Christ is eternal life, and the Old Testament is full of testimony about Him.

What the Pharisees desire is a quality of life, but they assume that the quality is legalism, and living Scripture to the letter, and even their letter.

The eternal life of Christ comes by dwelling in God through Scripture.

Their current response to Christ in spite of the witnesses, "40 And you do not want to come to Me in order that you might have life!"

Now Christ registers His indignant surprise at the negative volition of the Pharisees.

They search the Scriptures, but do not see Him there. How ridiculous! How stupid.

They have John the Baptist; God the Father; the Old Testament; the works of Christ. What more could they possibly want? Why don't they see Christ?

The policy of Christ related to approbation from men "41 I do not receive glory from men,"

The do/can of man is any extraneous or illegitimate approbation which He might receive. 1 Pet 1:24 [Isa 40:6], "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord abides forever."

Christ here sets up a contrast with the Pharisees, who loved the approbation directed toward their illegitimate activities, and given for ulterior motives.

Christ includes the preposition PARA: This portrays on or more persons and that something proceeds from this person or persons.

The noun ANTHROPON is plural, and it gathers all of mankind into one generic class; it could just as well be translated "mankind," or, "people."

The Pharisees' lack of virtue love, "42 but I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves."

The conjunction ALLA is not adversative, so much as it is transitional. It changes gears to the next clause, which has to do with what the Pharisees lack.

The Pharisees lack true love - the virtue love of God. The virtue love of God is certainly something that would be acceptable to Christ in His judgments.

Christ uses the perfect tense of the verb "to know". Christ has already had experiences with the Pharisees, so that He knows of their lack of virtue.

Again, they have a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures without the love of God. What a spectacular failure.

If Christ has the authority to judge mankind, and He knows the Pharisees do not have what it takes, well, this should chill them to the bone.

The Pharisees' willingness to receive false messiahs, "43 I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; If another shall come in his own name you will receive him!"

Christ came in the name of the Father, and with many testimonies about His true nature.

Christ uses the personal pronoun EGO to form a contrast between Himself and the false messiahs of the day.

Christ forms a hypothetical future case with something called the future more vivid construction. It creates a likely scenario, and then adds a definite outcome.

The likely scenario is the coming of another false messiah. In fact, many false messiahs have come since that day, and many even in the lifetimes of the Pharisees who listened then to the words of Christ.

The definite outcome is that the Pharisees will receive this false one. There is no question left in the construction.

It is a prediction base on the current state of the souls of these Pharisees. Their legalism and unhappiness has left them quite vulnerable to false doctrine and false messiahs.

The impossibility of the Pharisees' belief, and the reason, "44 How can you believe, while receiving glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory which is from the only God?"

You cannot believe in Christ and at the same time seek the approbation from men. Christ knows the fatal distraction of the Pharisees quite well!

The Pharisees searched the Scriptures for nothing, but for their work they hoped to receive glory from one another and from man.

The glory which is from the only God is Christ Himself, and the relationship with God which He brings to man.

ZETEITE denotes the search for what is known. It contrasts strongly against the preceding verb of searching.

It is really a rhetorical question.

The Pharisees present judge, "45 Do not assume that I will accuse you before the Father; your accuser is Moses, in whom you have hoped."

The indictment against the Pharisees comes from the Law of Moses.

They have place their hope in Moses - that is, in their fulfillment of the letter and ritual of the Law of Moses.

Yet the law of Moses exists in order to lead the way to God, and to provide the basis for a continuing relationship with Him. Of course, the Pharisees utterly failed to see this.

So this same Law of Moses forms their indictment.

The first part goes to the future, to the Great White Throne, where both believer and unbeliever Pharisees will be judged. In both cases, Christ will not accuse them.

The second part indicates that the judgment from the Law already exists - it is in the present tense.

Again, there should be a chilling effect on the legalists who listened to Christ on this occasion and others like it. Will the Law of Moses be read at their judgment? It is entirely possible! How about Deuteronomy 6?

Their rejection of Moses, "46 For if you believed Moses [and you did not], you believed in Me; for he wrote about Me."

Christ now makes a very clear and pointed comment: that they do not believe in Moses!

He does this with a present unreal conditional sentence. In this construction, the protasis is considered untrue, and the apodosis simply hypothetical.

So it goes like this. If you believed (but you didn't) then you would have believed in Moses (but of course you do not).

The rejection applied to belief in Christ, "47 But if you do not believe in his writings, how can you believe in My word?"

The Pharisees do not believe in the writings of Moses - they do not believe in them at least as God intended.

The Pharisees do believe in the writings of Moses as they interpret them, but that does not count before God.

It is impossible to reject Moses and at the same time receive Christ. If you miss Moses, you will most certainly miss Christ.

Another Sabbath Controversy

Matt. 12:1-8: 1 "At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath through the grain fields, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. 2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not right to do on a Sabbath." 3 But he said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions; 4 how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not 'right' for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? 5 Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are innocent? 6 But I say to you, that something greater than the temple is here. 7 But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Mark 2:23-28 "And He happened to be passing through the grain fields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain. 24 And the Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not right on the Sabbath?" 25 And He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and became hungry, he and his companions: 26 how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not 'right' for anyone to eat except the priests, and he gave it also to those who were with him?" 27 And He was saying to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the

Sabbath. 28 Consequently, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Luke 6:1-5 "Now He happened on a certain Sabbath to be passing through some grain fields; and His disciples were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not right on the Sabbath?" 3 And Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, 4 how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not 'right' for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?" 5 And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Outline

The incident (Matthew, Mark, Luke).

The Pharisees' reaction and accusation (Matthew, Mark, Luke)

Christ's defense and counter-indictment.

The precedent of David and His companions (Matthew, Mark, Luke).

The support from the Law (Matthew).

The present day existence of a superior principle (Matthew).

The principle of relationship with God (Matthew).

The principle of priority in creation (Mark).

The principle of priority in rank (Matthew, Mark, Luke)

Harmonic Conversion

At that time Jesus and His disciples were going through a grainfield, and the disciples had just begun to pick and eat the heads of grain by rubbing them in their hands.

All three gospels contain the necessary information, but Luke is more explicit that the disciples had actually consumed some of the grain when the Pharisees issued their complaint.

Matthew and Mark make it clear that they had only just begun to pick and eat, but they are unclear as to whether the food had passed their lips.

The difference is somewhat important - they had indeed done the deed, and not just begun it.

The grain fields are not specifically located - nor is this detail important. But there is a clue here as to the timing of this event - it is late summer, near the harvest, for the grain was edible.

Rubbing a head of grain with the hands removes the chaff. That the disciples could accomplish this with an easy motion points to the ripeness of the grain.

And the Pharisees saw this, and said to Christ, "Look, why are they doing what is not right on the Sabbath?"

The Pharisees were lurking nearby. If this is near Jerusalem, their presence next to the grainfield would be understandable; if not, then they are simply hounding Christ and the disciples in order to 'get' something on them.

They think they might have it here, but they are sorely mistaken.

All three of the gospels use the Greek *e)/cestin* to denote their idea of morality. This word is closely related to *e)cousi/a*. Where the latter denotes a human right, the former moves to the more abstract realm of what is right. It is not exactly the written Law, so much as it is natural law. It concentrates on the principle behind what may be written.

They relate the activity of the disciples to their understanding of the Sabbath, and conclude that the activity is not right.

Their idea comes from the fourth commandment, recorded in Exodus 20:8-11, "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 of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy."

You will immediately notice the absence of a prohibition against picking grain. In fact, it is clear that there are no specifics at all pertaining to the

stoppage of work on this day. Therefore the complaint of the Pharisees has to do with their interpretation of work on the Sabbath.

What is left unsaid is why the disciples must eat this grain - why they have not eaten and so must use this unconventional method of provisioning. The answer to this question in turn answers the query of the Pharisees.

But He said to them...

"Have you not read what David did, when he was in need, and became hungry, he and his companions; how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not 'right' for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?"

The event to which Jesus refers is from 1 Samuel 21:1-6, but the background comes from the chapters before.

David kills Goliath, and becomes a great hero for the nation of Israel (1 Sam 17).

David and Jonathan the son of Saul become fast friends; the women of Israel greet David as a greater hero than Saul; Saul is jealous of David; Saul twice attempts David's life; David prospers greatly; David and Michal, the daughter of Saul are to be married; Saul attempts to trick David by the great Philistine foreskin caper, and thus the hand of Michal was won; David has much success against the Philistines in battle (1 Sam 18).

Saul issues a general order to put David to death; Jonathan talks his father out of this plot; time passes and war with the Philistines resumes - David is again a great military hero; Saul resumes his jealousy and makes another personal attempt on the life of David; Saul renews the general decree against David's life; Michal assists David in his escape from the royal palace (Psalm 59); David flees to Samuel at Ramah; they flee together to Naioth; Saul sends his henchmen to capture David at Naiaoth, but they are thrice thwarted by the Spirit of God through Samuel; Saul goes there personally, and the Spirit thwarts him as well; the chapter ends with Saul naked and humiliated, prophesying for twenty four straight hours under the control of the Spirit (1 Sam 19).

David flees back to Ramah, and meets there with Jonathan; they conspire together to save David's

life; David hides in a field near Jerusalem to await the word of Jonathan; Saul learns of this conspiracy from Jonathan himself, and attempts to kill his own son; Jonathan warns David of his danger, and David flees again (1 Sam 20).

Read 1 Sam 21:1-6

David in his desperation takes the sword of Goliath from Ahimelech, and then flees to Gath, the hometown of Goliath (Psalm 34); Achish the king of Gath turns against David, and David must act insane (Psalm 56) before him in order to escape (1 Sam 21).

David arrives at the cave of Adullam (Psalm 57, 142), and there he becomes captain of a band of outcasts, ala Robin Hood; He takes his aged parents to the king of Moab in order to safeguard them there; David then sorties to the forest of Hereth (AKA Sherwood); Saul discovers that Ahimelech has aided David, and through Doeg the Edomite massacres eighty five priests along with many other men, women, children, and even animals; Ahimelech himself escapes to David; David accepts responsibility for the slaughter (1 Sam 22).

John 5:16-18, "And for this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."

Now: Christ and His disciples are David and his men; and, the Pharisees are Saul and his men.

Christ's point is that an emergency situation may warrant the breaking of the Sabbath. David's flight illustrates the principle perfectly.

Although this was not a situation in which Christ was in danger of losing His life, the Pharisees are certainly after His skin.

"Or have you not read the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are innocent?"

There is no specific verse attached to this principle, but it is certainly true.

Think about it: the priests have to work on the Sabbath; they carry out many duties every Sabbath that would constitute the prohibition against work.

Christ points out this issue, but does not make reference to the Pharisees' strict interpretation of the Law. The work of the priests on the Sabbath would comprise work in anyone's book.

This second point differs from the first, in that it points out an exception to the work prohibition that is not an emergency. This applies just as readily as the first, and even more so, because Christ has not yet finished this element of His discourse.

"But I say to you, that something greater than the temple is here."

The greater thing is the body and person of Christ.

The temple only foreshadows what would be fulfilled in every way in Him.

The work of the priests in the temple all represented aspects of Christ's life and work.

Now which is greater, the fulfillment or the shadow?

So if the priests could break the Sabbath in the foreshadowing of Christ, the mere presence of Christ would create a Sabbath negation zone.

The presence of Christ provided the opportunity to Sabbath whenever He taught doctrine, and that could be any day of the week, and any time.

With Christ present the need for the regimented weekly Sabbath was entirely negated. An hour with Him would have been far superior to any Sabbath day during the dispensation of Israel.

"But if you had know what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent."

In this third principle, Christ quotes Hosea 6:6.

There are means to the substance of the Christian life, and there is the substance itself.

The substance is always relationship with God through the Word of Truth.

During the dispensation of Israel, the means of the spiritual life were the rituals given by God through

Moses. God designed these rituals to teach the Israelites about Himself, and relationship with Him. At no time did God intend the rituals to become the substance of the spiritual life.

The Pharisees were the masters of making the means into the substance - the very thing which Hosea 6:6 refutes.

The test which the Pharisees should apply to Christ's disciples is whether their activity violates the substance. With Christ present in the world, there is the unique opportunity to enjoy the substance of the spiritual life at any time!

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

Look again at the first chapter of Genesis... which came first, man or the Sabbath?

If man came first, then how could man be made for the Sabbath? It is entirely the other way around!

And why was the Sabbath made for man? So that man would take time to know God.

Believing that God made man for the Sabbath places a very wrong emphasis on the means to the substance.

The substance is not ritual for the sake of ritual. God did not make man so that he would worship the Sabbath; the Sabbath was never a god to be worshipped, and yet that is exactly what the Pharisees desired for those under their authority.

The Pharisees had manufactured an idol from the rituals which God provided. They worshipped the means, and threw away the substance of Old Testament spiritual life.

And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

The final argument of Christ concentrates on His own authority.

If God made the Sabbath for man, then the Lord of all men should rule the Sabbath indeed.

Christ is the Lord of all men, and thus the Lord of the Sabbath as well. It is therefore His prerogative to do what He desires on the Sabbath, and to direct His disciples to do as He wishes, regardless of the day of the week.

And all this over such a little thing as eating grain on the fly!

Healing on the Sabbath

Matthew 12:9-14: "9 And departing there, He went into their synagogue. And behold, a man has a withered hand. 10 And they questioned Him, saying, "Is it right to heal on the Sabbath?" - in order that they might bring charges against Him. 11 But He said to them, "What man will there be among you, who will have one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not grab it and raise it out? 12 How greatly a man differs from a sheep! So then, it is right to do good on the Sabbath." 13 Then He says to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" And he stretched it out, and it was restored to full health, like the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out, and plotted together against Him, that they might destroy Him."

Mark 3:1-6: "1 And He entered again into the synagogue; and a man was there with a badly withered hand. 2 And they were scrutinizing Him to see whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, in order that they might bring charges against Him. 3 And he says to the man with the withered hand, "Rise into the middle!" 4 And He says to them, "Is it right on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save a soul or to kill?" But they kept silent. 5 And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He says to the man, "Stretch out the hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. 6 And the Pharisees went out and immediately were plotting together with the Herodians against Him, that they might destroy Him."

Luke 6:6-11 "6 And it came about on a different Sabbath, that He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there and his right hand was withered. 7 And the scribes and the Pharisees were scrutinizing Him, to see whether He would heal on the Sabbath, in order that they might find grounds to bring charges against Him. 8 But He knew their plans, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Rise and stand in the middle!" 9 And Jesus said to them, "I

ask you, is it right on the Sabbath to do good, or to do evil, to save a soul, or to destroy it?"
 10 And after looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did, and his hand was restored. 11 But they themselves were filled with [irrational] rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus."

Outline

The Setting.

Christ is teaching in the synagogue of the persecuting Jews. "And He departed there. And it came about on a different Sabbath, that He entered their synagogue, and was teaching;"

Christ leaves from the vicinity of the grainfield, where He had just concluded a controversy with the Pharisees over the issue of the Sabbath.

On a different Sabbath, not long after the grainfield Sabbath, Christ entered their synagogue, and was teaching. Of course this was Christ's modus operandi - to teach in the synagogues, where the Jews had gathered to listen to the Word.

So the Pharisees had the home synagogue advantage.

Now this is a synagogue, and it appears that Christ has gone back to Galilee, for there were no synagogues in Jerusalem proper - there would be no need.

The opportunity - the man with the badly withered hand. "And there was a man there whose right hand was badly withered."

Luke is the doctor who notices details. Although he was not there, he would naturally inquire as to which hand was withered. It is the right hand, which would have had a profound impact on the life of the man. Luke would only say this if it mattered - the man was likely right-handed, and truly crippled by this event.

Mark records the impression of the impressionable Peter, who describes the condition with the perfect participle. This shows both severity and permanence.

The verb XERAINO and the noun CHEIROS describe the hand. These words indicate a parched, dried, and even diseased state. The problem with the hand therefore may have come from a disease,

and maybe from a terrible burn. The source does not matter - the condition does. It was a terrible, irreversible condition that was a considerable handicap.

The opposition - the Pharisees who conspire against Him. "And the scribes and the Pharisees were scrutinizing Him, to see whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, in order that they might find grounds to bring charges against Him."

The scribes and the Pharisees watch Christ like a hawk. They want Him, and they want Him badly. The verb for 'scrutinize' is PARATEREO, which means literally, 'to keep beside'. In other words, they stayed close to Him, in order to catch Him.

They were looking for grounds for a legal accusation, and they felt they could get it if Christ healed this man on the Sabbath. KATEGOREO is a Greek verb which meant to bring formal charges against a person. Our own English verb categorize does not quite have this meaning, but if you employ it in the personal judgment of a person it comes close.

The scribes and the Pharisees had quite a dilemma. They could not kill Christ outright, for that would be murder. They did not want Him assassinated, for that would create a martyr. Their only other option was religious vilification combined with capital punishment. They initiated that policy here, even though they would not succeed for another two years.

The charge: healing on the Sabbath. "And they questioned Him, saying, "Is it right to heal on the Sabbath?""

The Pharisees were never ones to let manners interfere with their regulation of events. They interrupted Christ's teaching in order to bring up the subject of healing on the Sabbath.

Again they use the verb EXESTIN to define the issue. In their minds, is it right to heal on the Sabbath. The verb goes all the way back to natural law.

The Reply. "But He had known their plans, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Rise and stand in the middle!" Christ knew their plans - the pluperfect tense of OIDA. In fact He had known them (John 5:16,18), and from this knowledge knew exactly what to do. The command to stand in

the middle MESON has in mind the common synagogue layout of the day, which kept a platform in the middle, and seating in the round.

The illustration of the endangered sheep. "And He said to them, "What man will there be among you, who will have one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not grab it and raise it out? How greatly a man differs from a sheep!""

I have retained the future tense, although smoother translation would be in the present, "What man is there among you..."

Christ confronts the Pharisees here - and tells them of their own practice of breaking the Sabbath. This makes it clear that the Pharisees must arrest themselves if they are to arrest Jesus.

A fundamental point to Christ's argument is that the man in the illustration has only one sheep. If a man has only one sheep, then that sheep is of paramount importance. The livestock of the ancient world was rather like the modern automobile - it was both a sign of wealth and a means to wealth.

If the sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath, it may well die in the next twenty four hours, who would allow such a torturous death on his own animal? Wouldn't it be merciful and God-like to rescue it?

The grabbing and lifting would certainly be considered work by any objective standard, and not just by the stringent definition of the Pharisees.

But the grabbing and lifting would be an act of mercy, and so would fit within the frame of reference of healing as well.

A contrast arises: when Christ heals, it is by the power of God, and not by His own effort; yet when the Pharisees would rescue their one sheep, it would be by human effort alone.

Then Christ turns their attention to the man, standing on the platform with Him. His argument is truly flawless.

And recall that Christ does this for the benefit of the Pharisees and scribes, so that they would see that He is correct, and find the true nature of compassion.

The principle: a good work is not 'Sabbath' work. "And then He said to them, "I ask you, is it right on the Sabbath to do good, or to do evil, to save a

soul, or to destroy it? So then, it is right to do good on the Sabbath." But they kept silent."

A good work or a bad deed does not come into play in the Sabbath frame of reference.

The question that Christ brings to the fore is an excellent one: does one refrain from the application of the truth on the Sabbath? Of course not!

Saving a sheep is an application of truth; so also healing a man.

Good deeds and saving a soul PSUCHEN are in the same category. Saving a soul actually refers to saving a life - that is, keeping the soul in the human body. It is not really saving a soul in the context of eternal salvation. Here, it connects with the soul of the endangered sheep, while the good deed would be the healing of the man with the withered hand.

Bad deeds and destroying souls are in another category. If you left the sheep, you would be doing a bad deed - it would be sinful to let it die in agony. In the same way, it would be sinful not to heal the man before them on the Sabbath.

Christ come to a conclusion for all who are present: it is right to do good on the Sabbath!

But the scribes and Pharisees kept silent. What a strong expression of negative volition. Christ presents a brilliant argument - one that is extremely convincing. And yet, they keep silent. Now this is arrogance of the first degree.

The Healing. "And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" And he stretched it out, and it was restored to full health, like the other."

Hardness of heart is the same as spiritual blindness. It is a characteristic of those who have repeatedly rejected the truth of God, and accepted the cosmic counterfeits and lies. Their motive is most likely power lust.

Christ is grieved, sullupe/omai is a compound verb, composed of the preposition sun and the verb lupe/omai. The addition of the preposition only adds strength to the basic meaning of the verb, which is "to receive offense". It is not grief

in the sense of mourning, but offense in the sense that someone has done something to hurt you.

Christ looks around at them in anger, ORGES. Having taken offense at their spiritual blindness.

Christ is not out of fellowship over this. His anger is not irrational, nor is it unfounded. What this verse conveys is that the Pharisees do wrong to Christ by rejecting His perfect rationale for healing the man before them, and that Christ knows that they have done this to spite Him.

Christ does what is right then, and at the same time demonstrates that their hardness of heart has no effect on His doing what is right. Christ must do what is right, even if others think it wrong.

The Response of the Pharisees. "But they themselves were filled with [irrational] rage, and they were plotting together with the Herodians against Him, that they might destroy Him."

It is so important to see the contrast between the ORGES of Christ and the irrational rage of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees were filled EPLESTHESAN with irrational rage ANOIAS.

The verb is in the passive voice, showing that the subject receives its action. Here the subjects are the scribes and Pharisees. This portrays the out of control nature of their emotion.

The noun is really a compound word which literally means "unthinking".

The Herodians were men of influence and partisans of the Herodian house. They were much the same as the Sadducees with regard to their religious beliefs. They would have been strange bedfellows, but for their common hatred of Christ.

This does not bring anything new from the viewpoint of the Pharisees, but Mark mentions the plot in order to bring in the Herodians. The Sadducees.

This religious group came into being about 300 years before Christ. They are characterized by their aristocracy, their cultural surrender to the Greeks and others, and their opposition to everything Pharaonic.

Their name comes from the Aramaic Sadduqim, which meant 'righteousness'. However, those who

were in opposition to them called them saddiqim, which meant 'destruction'.

They came from the ranks of the priests and high priests of Israel, during the time of the Greek occupation. Their desire was to give in to the Hellenizing influences of the Greeks, and thus retain their favor.

The Sadducees had a lot to lose to the occupation forces of the Greeks, because they were mostly prosperous, aristocratic people. In order to maintain their lifestyles and possessions, they placated the Greeks, giving in to their cultural and even religious influences.

During the Maccabean revolt, they stayed in the background. They were in fact very unpopular. When Jonathan Maccabee was appointed high priest by popular demand, it looked like the Sadducees would be gone forever. At the time, almost all of the people in the land were willing to sacrifice anything for their freedom. The strong oppression of the Syrians drove them to this sacrificial attitude.

After about 40 years of on and off civil war, the Jews became tired of the bloodshed, and popular opinion tended toward peace. In this case, peace meant compromise, and compromise was the game of the Sadducees. John Hyrcanus, of the Maccabees, was really very close to the Sadducee way of thinking.

However, the compromising policy of Hyrcanus became unpopular in a few years, and so the Pharisees came into power.

Due to the double tyranny of the Pharisees and king Herod, the Sadducees had made a great comeback not long before the birth of Christ. Let's face it: the Pharisees were no fun at all.

The religious beliefs of the Sadducees can be summed up in a single thought: they were always opposed to what the Pharisees believed.

They believed that only the written Law is binding, whereas the Pharisees believed that the body of tradition and written interpretation were just as important as the Law itself.

The Sadducees punished breaches of the Law severely, but the Pharisees often interpreted their

way around the written Law, and thus got out of the proscribed punishment.

They had a strong belief in human free will, while the Pharisees believed in predestination to the point of being fatalistic.

They denied the resurrection, and any kind of continued existence of the soul after physical death. This led to their inordinate value of private property and possessions. The Pharisees, however, believed that the soul continued after death, and that there would be a severe judgement in eternity.

The Sadducees did not believe in angelic beings, or demons, and any reference to such in Scripture was converted to a manifestation of God Himself. The Pharisees did believe in angels.

The Sadducees always reserved the right of private opinion about Scripture and the Law, while the Pharisees rejected that right, tyrannically imposing their opinions on all.

The Sadducees were a mixture of both the conservative and the liberal from today's American society. The pressures of history and their religious beliefs worked together to make them what they were. Although they had some good elements to their philosophy, they were just as spiritually and morally bankrupt as the Pharisees. They are a good example of wrong reaction for the right reason. It was a good thing to be opposed to the religious tyranny of the Pharisees, but the motives of the Sadducees were wrong, and thus their beliefs went in the wrong direction. Although religion was important to them, relationship with God was not, and so they destroyed themselves. They left the pages of history forever after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
