

CHRIST AND THE SABBATH

1. OF what did Christ say the Son of man is Lord?

“The Son of man is Lord even *of the Sabbath day.*” **Matthew 12:8.**
See also **Mark 2:28.**

2. Who made the Sabbath?

“All things were made *by Him [Christ, the Word];* and without Him was not anything made that was made.” **John 1:3.**

3. Did Christ, while on earth, keep the Sabbath?

“As His custom was, *He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*” **Luke 4:16.**

4. Although Lord, Maker, and an observer of the Sabbath, how was He watched and spied upon by the scribes and Pharisees on this day?

“And the scribes and Pharisees watched Him, *whether He would heal on the Sabbath day;* that they might find an accusation against Him.” **Luke 6:7.**

5. With what question did Christ meet their false ideas and reasonings regarding Sabbath-keeping?

“Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; *Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?*” **Verse 9.**

6. How did they manifest their displeasure at His healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath?

“And they were *filled with madness;* and *communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.*” **Verse 11.** “And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway *took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.*” **Mark 3:6.**

NOTE — They were angry because, notwithstanding the fact that by the miracle performed Christ had given evidence that He was from God, He had shown no respect for *their views of Sabbath-keeping,* but, on the contrary, had shown these to be *wrong.* Wounded pride, obstinacy, and malice, therefore, combined to fill them with *madness;* and they went out

immediately and held council with the Herodians,— their political enemies with whom they disagreed in the matter of paying tribute to a foreign power,— for the purpose of accomplishing His death.

7. Because Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath day, and told him to take up his bed and walk, what did the Jews do?

“Therefore did the Jews *persecute Jesus*, and *sought to slay Him*, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day.” **John 5:16.**

NOTE — It is a fact worthy of note that over the question of proper Sabbath observance the Jews not only *persecuted* Jesus, but *first took counsel to kill Him*. Not the least of the malice which finally culminated in His crucifixion, was engendered over this very question of Sabbath observance. Christ did not keep the Sabbath according to their ideas of Sabbath-keeping and so they sought to kill Him. And they are not alone. Many today are cherishing this same spirit. Because some do not agree with their ideas regarding the Sabbath, or Sabbath observance, they seek to persecute and oppress them,— seek laws, and alliances with political powers, to compel respect for their views.

8. How did Jesus answer them?

“But Jesus answered them, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*” **Verse 17.**

NOTE — The ordinary operations of nature, as manifested in God’s almighty, upholding, beneficent, and healing power, go on on the Sabbath the same as on other days; and to cooperate with God and nature in the work of healing, relieving, and restoring on the Sabbath, cannot, therefore, be out of harmony with God’s will, nor a violation of His Sabbath law.

9. What effect did this answer have upon the Jews?

“Therefore the Jews *sought the more to kill Him*, because He not only had broken the Sabbath [i.e., in their estimation], but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” **Verse 18.**

10. Because the disciples plucked a few ears of corn on the Sabbath day to satisfy hunger, what accusation did the Pharisees make against them to Christ?

“And the Pharisees said unto Him *Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?*” **Mark 2:24.**

11. What was Christ’s reply?

“And He said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the showbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And He said unto them, *The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.*” **Verses 25–27.**

12. Because of Christ’s healing a woman of an infirmity on the Sabbath, what did the ruler of a certain synagogue say?

“And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, *There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.*” **Luke 13:14.**

13. How did Christ answer him?

“The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? and ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” **Verses 15, 16.**

14. What effect did Christ’s answers have upon the people?

“And when He had said these things, *all His adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.*” **Verse 17.**

15. By what method of reasoning did Christ justify acts of mercy on the Sabbath day?

“Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer Him again to these things.” **Luke 14:5, 6.** “What man shall there

be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.” **Matthew 12:11, 12.**

16. Into what perplexity did Christ’s working of miracles on the Sabbath throw the Pharisees?

“Therefore said some of the Pharisees, *This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day.* Others said, *How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.*” **John 9:16.**

NOTE — The working of these wonderful, beneficent, and gracious miracles on the Sabbath was an evidence that Christ was from God, and that His views of Sabbath-keeping were right. By these miracles God was setting the seal of His approval to Christ’s views and teachings respecting the Sabbath, and to His manner of observing it, and thus condemning the narrow and false views of the Pharisees. Hence the division.

17. According to Isaiah, what was Christ to do with the law?

“He will *magnify* the law, and *make it honorable.*” **Isaiah 42:21.**

NOTES — In nothing, perhaps, was this more strikingly fulfilled than in the matter of Sabbath observance. By their traditions, numerous regulations, and senseless restrictions the Jews had made the Sabbath a burden, and anything but a delight. Christ removed all these, and by His life and teachings put the Sabbath back in its proper place and setting, as a day of worship and beneficence, a day for doing acts of charity and mercy, as well as engaging in contemplation of God and in acts of devotion. Thus He magnified it and made it honorable. One of the most prominent features of Christ’s whole ministry was this great work of *Sabbath reform*. Christ did not *abolish* the Sabbath, nor *change* the Sabbath; but He did rescue it from the rubbish of tradition, the false ideas, and the superstitions with which it had been buried, and by which it had been degraded and turned aside from the channel of blessing and practical service to man designed by its Maker. The Pharisees had placed the institution *above* man, and *against* man. Christ

reversed the order, and said, "The Sabbath was made *for man*, and not man *for the Sabbath*." He showed that it was to minister to the happiness, the comfort, and the well-being of both man and beast.

Because of the false ideas which the Jews held concerning the Sabbath and its observance, and the conflict which Christ had with them in consequence, many of the professed followers of Christ a little later were led into the error of rejecting the Sabbath itself as Jewish, and, without any divine command or Scripture warrant, to substitute another day in its place.

18. Knowing that the unbelieving Jews would still cling to their false ideas respecting the Sabbath, and that flight from Jerusalem and Judea on that day would be attended with difficulty, for what, in view of the coming destruction and desolation of the city and people, did Christ tell His disciples to pray?

"But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, *neither on the Sabbath day*." **Matthew 24:20.**

NOTE — Christ's experience with the Jews, the chosen and professed people of God at that time, respecting the Sabbath is but a type of what, according to prophecy, is to occur in the last days . Already it is beginning to find its parallel in the movement to enforce Sunday observance by law. See studies on: "Making An Image To The Beast;" "The Powers That Be;" and "Sabbath Legislation."