

## The Red-Letter Words of Yeshua ~ Part 20

### Plucking Grain on Shabbat

<sup>1</sup> *One Shabbat during that time, Yeshua was walking through some wheat fields. His talmidim were hungry, so they began picking heads of grain and eating them.* <sup>2</sup> *On seeing this, the P'rushim said to him, "Look! Your talmidim are violating Shabbat!"*

**Violating Shabbat!** Literally means in Greek, "**doing what is unlawful on Shabbat**," that is, doing something the **P'rushim** considered to be against the **Torah**. The argument was not over whether it was permitted to pick grain by hand from someone else's field, for that is expressly allowed by Deuteronomy 23:25, but whether it could be done on **Shabbat**. At issue behind this seemingly minor matter is whether the Pharisaic tradition - which evolved into what rabbinic **Judaism** calls the **Oral Torah**, later committed to writing in the **Mishna**, **Gemara**, and other works - is **God's** revelation to man and binding on all **Jews**.

<sup>3</sup> *But he said to them, "Haven't you ever read what David did when he and those with him were hungry?"* <sup>4</sup> *He entered the House of God and ate the Bread of the Presence!"—which was prohibited, both to him and to his companions; it is permitted only to the cohanim.*

Though Leviticus 24:5–9 allows only **cohanim** to eat the **Bread of the Presence** set aside for display before the **Ark** in the **House of God** (Tabernacle), 1 Samuel 21:2–7 recounts how **King David** and the priest **Achimelekh** violated this **mitzvah** of the **Written Torah** - which the **P'rushim** would accept as more authoritative than a rule in the **Oral Torah**.

<sup>5</sup> *"Or haven't you read in the Torah that on Shabbat the cohanim profane Shabbat and yet are blameless?"*

The **Torah** itself specifies that some **mitzvot** are more critical than others (see Yochanan 5:22–23, Galatians 2:12). Keeping **Shabbat** is essential, but the animal sacrifices required by Numbers 28:1–10 are more so that the **cohanim** work on **Shabbat** to offer them.

<sup>6</sup> *I tell you, there is in this place something greater than the Temple!* <sup>7</sup> *If you knew what 'I want compassion rather than animal sacrifice meant, you would not condemn the innocent.* <sup>8</sup> *For the Son of Man is Lord of Shabbat!"* ~ Matthew 12:1-8

### Healing A Man's Shriveled Hand

<sup>9</sup> *Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue.* <sup>10</sup> *A man there had a shriveled hand. Looking for a reason to accuse him of something, they asked him, "Is healing permitted on Shabbat?"* <sup>11</sup> *But he answered, "If you have a sheep that falls in a pit on Shabbat, which of you won't take hold of it and lift it out?"* <sup>12</sup> *How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore, what is permitted on Shabbat is to do good."* <sup>13</sup> *Then to the man, he said, "Hold out your hand." As he held it out, it became restored, as sound as the other one.* <sup>14</sup> *But the P'rushim went out and began plotting how they might do away with Yeshua.* ~ Matthew 12:9-14

One should save an animal's life on **Shabbat**, but whether lifting a sheep out of a pit would, in the first century, have been considered a violation of the rule against work (carrying) on **Shabbat** is not clear.

### Yeshua Heals Others

***15*** **Aware of this, He left that area. Many people followed Him, and He healed them all <sup>16</sup> but warned them not to make Him known. <sup>17</sup> This was to fulfill what had been spoken through **Yesha'yahu the prophet:** <sup>(42:1-40)</sup>**

***18*** **"Here is My servant, whom I have chosen,  
My beloved, with whom I am well pleased;  
I will put my Spirit on Him,  
and He will announce justice to the Gentiles.**

***19*** **He will not fight or shout,  
no one will hear His voice in the streets;**

***20*** **He will not snap off a broken reed  
or snuff out a smoldering wick  
until He has brought justice through to victory.**

***21*** **In Him the Gentiles will put their hope."** ~ Matthew 12:15-21

**Yesha'yahu** 42:1–4 is the first of several "suffering servant" passages in **Yesha'yahu** 42–53. Some parts of these passages seem to refer primarily to Israel's people, others to the Messiah yet in **Yesha'yahu's** future. This fact emphasizes the close identification of the Messiah Yeshua with the Jewish people.

Our next post will learn that **Yeshua Appoints His Emissaries, Great Crowds Gather**, and we begin to examine the **Sermon of the Mount**.