

## The Gospel of Matthew

### Lesson 5

### Matthew 8:1 – Matthew 9:17

#### Jesus heals a leper<sup>36</sup>

**Matthew 8:**<sup>1</sup> When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. <sup>2</sup> And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." <sup>3</sup> Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." <sup>37</sup>

At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord is followed by a great number of people who have just marveled at His authoritative message. With the request of the leper, the Lord is in the position to prove that His physical power is as great as His oratorical authority.

At that time, true leprosy was incurable. However, many different skin diseases were lumped together and called leprosy, and some of them would run their course and disappear. The Mosaic Law found in Leviticus 13-14 provided a way for a leper seemingly cured to receive ceremonial cleansing from the priest in the temple.

This leper's request is one of desperation, perhaps one of last resort, and the Lord is willing to help him. It is the perfect opportunity for Jesus to show His support of the Mosaic Law which He has just stated will not go away until every single word is fulfilled. After healing the man, the Lord's instruction to send the leper to the priest coupled requesting with the required offering will resonate with Jews who are seeking to know whether Jesus is the Messiah or not.

Some seek to read many things into the Lord's words, "See that you tell no one; but go." Little should be made of this statement. Today we would say, "Go straight to the priest and don't stop to talk with anyone on the way." It is a way of saying, "Don't get side tracked on your way to fulfill the Mosaic Law."

#### A Paralyzed Servant<sup>38</sup>

**Matthew 8:**<sup>5</sup> And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, <sup>6</sup> and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented." <sup>7</sup> Jesus \*said to him, "I will come and heal him." <sup>8</sup> But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*." <sup>10</sup> Now when Jesus heard *this*, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. <sup>11</sup> "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline *at the table* with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; <sup>12</sup> but the sons of the

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<sup>36</sup> Mark 1:4--45; Luke 5:12-16

<sup>37</sup> Leviticus 14:2

<sup>38</sup> Luke 7:1-10

kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."<sup>39</sup> <sup>13</sup> And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that very moment.

The healing of the centurion's servant who was well respected by the centurion was miraculous. Actually there is no greater miracle recorded anywhere in the Gospels because it took place at a distance. Jesus did not even see the servant! He simply spoke and the man was cured.

The centurion does not feel worthy to ask anything for himself; he asks only for his beloved servant. In Luke's record, the centurion sends Jewish leaders to ask Jesus for the healing. The Jewish leaders also loved this centurion and his servant because they had built their synagogue for them. Note that this means that the synagogue in Capernaum was built by Gentiles, not Jews.

How can we account for the kindness of the centurion? The only answer is that the centurion knows the grace of God. The Spirit of God has put a new heart within him. He has heard the news of the miracle-working Great Physician and he wants healing for his servant who was his friend. As a military man, he knows how to receive orders and how to execute them. He also expects obedience to his commands and He recognizes Jesus as Master over disease with the power to compel obedience.

With the end of the Sermon on the Mount, a quick look at the events in the Lord's life thus far is appropriate to reveal the chronological faithfulness of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew is not concerned with all the events in the Lord's life; he wants to include only those events that prove the Messiahship of the Lord, that prove He is the true King of the Jews. We also need to notice the events included in the Gospel that are out of chronological order.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Included by Matthew</b>	<b>Out of Chronological Order</b>
Genealogy of Jesus through Mary	<i>Luke 3:23-38</i>	No	
Gabriel's announcement of John's birth	<i>Matthew 1:1-25</i>		
Gabriel's visits to Mary	<i>Luke 1:26-38</i>	No	
Mary's visits with Elizabeth, John's mother	<i>Luke 1:39-56</i>	No	
Birth of John the Baptist	<i>Luke 1:57-80</i>	No	
Angel's visit to Joseph in a dream	<i>Matthew 1:18-25</i>		
Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem	<i>Luke 2:1-7</i>	No	
Shepherds' visit to Jesus	<i>Luke 2:8-20</i>	No	
Wise men's gifts	<i>Matthew 2:1-12</i>		
Circumcision of Jesus	<i>Luke 2:21</i>	No	
Jesus presented in the Temple	<i>Luke 2:22-38</i>	No	
Joseph's family's escape to Egypt	<i>Matthew 2:13-15</i>		
Herod's wrath on Bethlehem's children	<i>Matthew 2:16-18</i>		
Joseph's family settling in Nazareth	<i>Matthew 2:19-23; Luke 2:39</i>		
Jesus' childhood	<i>Luke 2:40-52</i>	No	
Ministry of John the Baptist	<i>Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-20</i>		
John's baptism of Jesus	<i>Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23</i>		
Temptation of Jesus	<i>Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13</i>		
John's testimony about Christ	<i>John 1:19-28</i>	No	
John's recounting of Christ's baptism	<i>John 1:29-34</i>	No	
The first disciples	<i>John 1:35-51</i>	No	
The first miracle - turning water to wine	<i>John 2:1-12</i>	No	
The first temple cleansing	<i>John 2:13-25</i>	No	
Nicodemus' meeting with Jesus at night	<i>John 3:1-21</i>	No	

<sup>39</sup> Isaiah 49:12; 59:19; Malachi 1:11; Psalm 107:2-3

Disciples' baptism of many in Judea	<i>John 3:22-24</i>	No	
Disciples asking John about Jesus	<i>John 3:25-36</i>	No	
Herod's imprisonment of John the Baptist	<i>Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14; Luke 3:19-20</i>		
Jesus' withdrawal from Judea	<i>John 4:1-3</i>	No	
Samaritan woman at Jacob's well	<i>John 4:4-26</i>	No	
Disciples questioning Jesus	<i>John 4:27-38</i>	No	
Samaritans' meeting with Jesus	<i>John 4:39-42</i>	No	
Jesus' journey to Galilee	<i>Luke 4:14-15; John 4:43</i>	No	
The first rejection in Nazareth	<i>Luke 4:16-30</i>	No	
Arrival in Cana of Galilee	<i>John 4:43-45</i>	No	
The second miracle - Official's son healed	<i>John 4:46-54</i>	No	
Jesus' settling in Capernaum	<i>Matthew 4:13-17; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:31-32</i>		
Fishermen called to be disciples	<i>Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20</i>		
Demoniac in Capernaum Synagogue	<i>Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:33-37</i>	No	
Peter's mother-in-law healed	<i>Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39</i>		Yes
Many healed at sunset	<i>Mark 1:32-34; Luke 4:40-41</i>	No	
Disciples' seeking Jesus	<i>Mark 1:35-38; Luke 4:42-43</i>	No	
Jesus' sermons in the Synagogues	<i>Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 1:39; Luke 4:44</i>		
Jesus' sermon in Simon's boat	<i>Luke 5:1-3</i>	No	
Miraculous catch of fish	<i>Luke 5:4-11</i>	No	
Jesus' healing of a leper	<i>Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16</i>		Yes
Jesus' curing a paralytic	<i>Matthew 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26</i>		Yes
Matthew's (Levi) call to be a disciple	<i>Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:13-14; Luke 5:27-28</i>		Yes
Parables at Matthew's reception	<i>Matthew 9:10-17; Mark 2:15-22; Luke 5:29-39</i>		Yes
Jesus in Jerusalem at the second Passover	<i>John 5:1</i>	No	
Man healed at pools of Bethesda	<i>John 5:2-15</i>	No	
Jesus challenged for healing on Sabbath	<i>John 5:16-47</i>	No	
Disciples' picking of grain on the Sabbath	<i>Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5</i>		Yes
Man's hand healed on the Sabbath	<i>Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11</i>		Yes
Jesus' withdrawal to the sea	<i>Matthew 12:14-21; Mark 3:7</i>		Yes
Pursuit by many to be healed	<i>Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 3:7-12</i>		
Jesus' prayer on the mountain	<i>Luke 6:12</i>	No	
Jesus' selection 12 disciples	<i>Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:13-16</i>	No	
Jesus' descent and healing of the multitude	<i>Luke 6:17-19</i>	No	
Jesus' ascent to address the multitude	<i>Matthew 5:1</i>		
Sermon on the Mount	<i>Matthew 5:1-8:1; Luke 6:20-49</i>		

Why does Matthew place some of the events in the Lord's life out of chronological order? Matthew systematically places the stories of the Lord's life in topical order rather than chronological order in the hope that the themes of His life's work will prove He is the Jews' Messiah. Matthew begins with His heritage and follows with the fulfillment of the prophecy that a forerunner of Jesus will come in the likeness of Elijah. He then establishes Jesus' knowledge of the Mosaic Law and finally sets in place His extension of the Mosaic Law with the importance of living from the heart for God and storing treasures in heaven rather than on earth. In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew presents the Lord's power over nature.

### Peter's Mother-in-law healed<sup>40</sup>

**Matthew 8:**<sup>14</sup> When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. <sup>15</sup> He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. <sup>16</sup> When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. <sup>17</sup> *This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."* <sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39

<sup>41</sup> Isaiah 53:4

The healing of Peter's mother-in-law actually occurred before the Sermon on the Mount; however, it shows the Jews the power of Jesus. When Jesus accompanies Simon to his home where his mother-in-law lies ill, the Lord performs a miracle for her that day. Only Matthew proves His power by referring to the prophet Isaiah.

### One Would-be Follower

**Matthew 8:**<sup>18</sup> Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea. <sup>19</sup> Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." <sup>20</sup> Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

In the Lord's Day, a scribe was a teacher and interpreter of the Law, a very important position in the synagogue. This scribe's offer to follow the Lord means that he is willing to give up his source of livelihood to be a disciple. The Lord's answer to the scribe is in agreement with the message the Lord gives in the Sermon on the Mount – His followers will struggle, but they will be rewarded. For this scribe, his request must have been from an impulsive urge rather than a true commitment. The foxes are not without their holes, nor do the birds of the air lack their nests; but the Son of man has to depend on the hospitality of others, and borrow the pillow whereon He lays His head. Jesus neither rejects this man's offer nor refuses him the liberty to follow Him. However, he wants him to know what he is doing and what it will cost. We do not know whether he followed the Lord or not.<sup>42</sup>

### Another Would-be Follower

**Matthew 8:**<sup>21</sup> Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." <sup>22</sup> But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."

As with the scribe, another disciple offers to follow the Lord after seeing the great miracles. The disciple does not offer to follow the Lord immediately because he has something important to do. The Lord has called the disciple to follow Him. In that day, the burial occurred on the day of death. If the man had lost his loved one that day, he would not have been with the crowd around Jesus; he would have been taking care of the duties of the funeral. Apparently, this man is speaking of a frail loved one who is about to die. It is a perfect example of the beginning of the Lord's Sermon on the Mount. Again, life as a follower will be a struggle, but the rewards will be great in the end. One will lay up treasures in heaven, the other will find its reward here on earth. We do not know if this man followed the Lord or not.<sup>43</sup>

### Storm on the Sea<sup>44</sup>

**Matthew 8:**<sup>23</sup> When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. <sup>24</sup> And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. <sup>25</sup> And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!" <sup>26</sup> He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. <sup>27</sup> The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

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<sup>42</sup> Only found in the passage and no other Gospel.

<sup>43</sup> Only found in the passage and no other Gospel.

<sup>44</sup> Mark 4:36-41; Luke 8:23-25

The Lord has made the decision to go to Gadarenes to minister. Instead of walking around the seashore of Galilee, He and the disciples get into small boats and begin to row across the sea. According to Mark, several small boats are sailing together and the Lord is at the back of one, sleeping on a pillow. The Sea of Galilee is 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea. It is common for the sea breeze of the Mediterranean to heat up as it crosses the land. After climbing Mt. Herman, the wind can rush down the mountainside to cause a cyclonic turbulence across the Sea of Galilee. Today, dangerous storms suddenly occur on the sea and endanger the lives of those in small boats. On this day, one of these storms occurs, frightening the men who are in fear for their lives, yet Jesus is peacefully asleep at the back of one of the boats. The men wake Him up and He calms the storm. The Lord's power over nature frightens the men as much as the storm. Clearly they have accepted His Messiahship, but they have failed to conceptualize the total authority of His Godship. Even asleep at the back of the boat, He is still God. His disciples now begin to grasp the true nature of Jesus as God in the flesh. He can control the winds and the elements and He can cast out demons; He must be God. As they arrive at Gadarenes, there are more demons waiting to be cast out.

### **Two demon-possessed Men<sup>45</sup>**

**Matthew 8:**<sup>28</sup> When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. *They were* so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. <sup>29</sup> And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"<sup>46</sup> <sup>30</sup> Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them. <sup>31</sup> The demons *began* to entreat Him, saying, "If You *are going to* cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." <sup>32</sup> And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. <sup>33</sup> The herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs. <sup>34</sup> And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.

At the shoreline of Gadarenes, the Lord is approached by two demon-possessed men. In the Mark passage just one man is possessed by a whole legion of demons. In both passages, the demons are handled the same way. It is not clear whether a legion of demons is the same as a legion of Roman soldiers, but the comparison is interesting. A Roman legion contained 6,826 men, quite a large number of demons for one man. Although we do not know exactly how many demons are in the man, there are enough to fill a herd of about 2,000 pigs when the Lord casts them out. It is also interesting that the Lord is commanding the demons to come out of the man, but they resist because they do not want to return to their home in the abyss, so they suggest that they be placed in pigs instead. Notice that there is no doubt in the minds of the demons concerning Jesus. To them, He is the Son of the Most High God. They obey the command of the Lord and into the pigs they go, but the Lord then drives the pigs into the sea and the pigs drown, requiring the demons to return to their home in the abyss after all.

### **A Paralytic on a Bed<sup>47</sup>**

**Matthew 9:**<sup>1</sup> Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over *the sea* and came to His own city. <sup>2</sup> And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the

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<sup>45</sup> Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-37

<sup>46</sup> Judges 11:12; 2 Samuel 16:10

<sup>47</sup> Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26

paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." <sup>3</sup> And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This *fellow* blasphemes." <sup>4</sup> And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? <sup>5</sup> "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? <sup>6</sup> "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He \*said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." <sup>7</sup> And he got up and went home. <sup>8</sup> But when the crowds saw *this*, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Only God can forgive sins. How can Jesus forgive the sins of a paralytic? A greater trait might be that only God can read the true heart of a man. How can Jesus read the heart of a man? Only one answer applies – He is God. Wherever Jesus settles, a crowd begins to gather, and this time they gather in Simon's home. The crowd includes people from all walks of life - fishermen, bakers, farmers, herdsmen, rabbis and scribes. On this occasion the scribes question in their hearts the words of Jesus. Only God could forgive the sin of this paralytic; how dare He present Himself as God! The scribes had made their way into Simon's home to pick apart the teaching of Jesus and to discover the secrets behind His miraculous healing powers. Nothing can be found in any of the Gospels to indicate that the scribes speak a single word to Jesus; they do not have to speak because the Lord knows the intent and thoughts of their hearts. Jesus asks them which would be easiest, to forgive this man's sins or heal his body? In reality, Jesus does the harder thing first; He heals the unseen thoughts of the man. Secondly, He does what is easy; He heals the man's body. As God, He has every right and all the power needed to heal the body and forgive his sins.

#### **Matthews Call<sup>48</sup>**

**Matthew 9:**<sup>9</sup> As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him. <sup>10</sup> Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining *at the table* in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

The Lord calls Matthew to follow Him and then goes to his house to fellowship. This event actually occurs before the Sermon on the Mount. There in Matthew's house are all the sinful tax collectors as well as the followers of the Lord. The scribes cannot withhold their disgust and complain to the Lord's disciples. Matthew has arranged the fellowship at his house and has invited all the guests. The issue of the complaints by the scribes stems from the willingness of Matthew to follow the Lord. Matthew, in turn, invites all his friends to follow the Lord, and all the friends accept the call. They all join the crowd as disciples of Jesus, infuriating the scribes, the teachers of the Law of God. Who will they teach since Jesus has taken their students away? The scribes proclaim their righteousness; the tax collectors know their sickness and sin. They need a physician to cure their illness and they find him in the Lord Jesus. Those who believe themselves to be well never seek out a physician even though they may be riddled with disease. When they finally seek the aid of a physician, the disease, most often, has taken them to death's door.

#### **Pharisees Come to Accuse Jesus<sup>49</sup>**

**Matthew 9:**<sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>12</sup> But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, "*It is* not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Mark 2:13-14; Luke 5:27-28

<sup>49</sup> Mark 2:15-22; Luke 5:29-39

"But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." <sup>50</sup>

The scribes and the Pharisees remain quiet for the first eighteen months, simply enjoying the fascination with both John the Baptist and Jesus. But the ministry and message begin to strike at the root of their established rituals and they become angry with them both. Their efforts have already put John in prison; now they have begun questioning Jesus' ministry, seeking to catch Him in some blasphemy worthy of death. By forgiving the sins of the paralytic, Jesus causes the established religious leadership to begin a constant bombardment of questions. Jesus says to them, "I desire compassion, and not sacrifice," an Old Testament passage that will ring in the Jew's memory. It is a setup for the next question which concerns the requirement of fasting, a man-made requirement, not one imposed by God.

### John's Disciples' and Fasting

**Matthew 9:**<sup>14</sup> Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" <sup>15</sup> And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. <sup>16</sup> "But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results. <sup>17</sup> "Nor do *people* put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."

The call of Matthew and the ensuing feast at his house occurs on one of the regular "fast" days during the week. The strictest sects of the Jewish faith, steeped in the man-made rituals of the Pharisaical law, required its followers to fast on both Monday and Thursday of every week. Jesus' followers, huge in number by this time, break the law by feasting on a regular fast day. His three-part answer reveals the Lord's view on fasting. It should also be our view.

First, the Lord associates Himself with the bridegroom of the Old Testament prophet Hosea, who had to contend with his unfaithful wife. The Pharisees clearly understand both the connotation and connection Jesus alludes to in this answer. On the surface, it means nothing to today's reader, but it insults the Pharisees greatly. The Pharisees do not see themselves as wayward sinners as illustrated in the prophecy of Hosea. The joyous celebration of a wedding hardly seems like a time to mourn over a previous sin by fasting twice a week as required by the Pharisees. In His reply, Jesus associates His ministry with the faithful bridegroom who has redeemed his bride from a life of harlotry. Mourning over her sin does not belong at this celebration. One day the bridegroom will leave and the bride will mourn, but mourning should not be done during their marriage and union together.

Second, Jesus uses the illustration of the unshrunk cloth to chip away at the Judaic life for which He has come to bring to an end. The Lord never instructs the Jews to fast in the Old Testament. Remember that the Jews had picked up the ritual during their stay in Egypt and failed to leave it behind when they left. Just as they would never use an unshrunk patch on an old garment, fasting is never to become part of the New Covenant with the Lord.

Third, the Lord uses the illustration of the new wine and old wine skins to further drive home the uselessness not only of fasting, but in a greater sense, of all the rituals of the old

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<sup>50</sup> Hosea 6:6

Judaic faith. The New Covenant of the Lord never fits into the old system of ritual religion. Jesus came to do away with the old system and move to a new system. This answer angers the Pharisees and they look for another opportunity to question the Lord about breaking one of their laws. It occurs on the following Sabbath.