

# An Identity Commentary on the Gospel of Mark

*And looking up he said "I see men, that as trees I see walking!" [Mark 8:24]*

## The Gospel of Mark - Part 10: The Withering and Flourishing of Trees

The accounts of the plucking of grain and the man with the withered hand both occurred on Sabbath days and for that reason they are deliberately paired together in all three synoptic gospels. This thematic pairing is more apparent in Matthew and Luke, because the later medieval chapter division in Mark splits the pairing between the end and beginning of its second and third chapters. We should always remember to discard these artificial chapter divisions in our minds, since no passage of Scripture exists in a vacuum apart from the larger context of its book. By carefully following the context, we can properly interpret the text and attain a deeper understanding.

These two Sabbath accounts are important passages which allow us to see the Sabbath through the eyes of Yahweh our God, and then following in His earthly footsteps as Yahshua Christ we can strive to observe the Sabbath in the way which pleases Him. In the previous account, Yahshua defended His students for plucking the grain, because as He said "[the Sabbath was for the sake of man and not man for the sake of the Sabbath](#)". It is not an esoteric and mystical day which lays down heavy burdens on our shoulders: it is a day which Yahweh described in the law as one for us to be refreshed, or *to breathe*. That means picking berries from a bush during a gentle walk in the woods is permissible, because our Creator did not use the Sabbath to restrict us from enjoying His gifts.

The students of Christ were hungry - we have to ask if the Sabbath was a burdensome day for them to starve themselves? Yahshua, as God and thus Prince of the Sabbath, defended them by citing the passage where David and those with him hungered and ate from the bread of presentation, and it could be argued that this was a more stark transgression of the law. If He permitted those actions for the sake of mercy and compassion, then how much more the plucking of a little grain? Furthermore, the Sabbath was a sign of the marriage covenant between Yahweh and Israel, and with that sign along with the feasts being taken away in their divorce, it is impossible for the nation and difficult for an individual to keep the Sabbath perfectly while in captivity. This calls for mercy, as the Sabbaths and feasts will not be restored until the consummation of the age when Israel is remarried to her God, and that is why Paul wrote "[Therefore no one must judge you in food and in drink, or in respect of feast or new month or of the Sabbaths, which are a shadow of future things.](#)"<sup>1</sup>

The entire law hangs upon loving God and brethren - which we will again see in this next passage, where Yahshua Himself takes direct action to help one of His kinsmen on the Sabbath. There are many types in this account, which mirror how Yahweh has always labored to help His people, even if it meant taking action on days of rest. He will continue to take action until the olive tree of Israel, and even the entire Adamic family tree of life, flourish and bud in the obedience of the age to come, and then we will enter into His rest.<sup>2</sup>

*There is much to explore in this third chapter of Mark, and now we begin with the account of the man with the withered hand:*

**3:1 And again He had entered into the assembly hall. And there was a man there having a withered hand. 2 And they were watching Him closely, whether He will heal him on the Sabbaths, in order that they may accuse Him. 3 And He says to the man having the withered hand: "Arise, into the middle!" 4 And He says to them: "Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good, or to do bad? To save a life or to kill?" But they were silent. 5 And looking around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He says to the man: "Extend the hand!" And he extended it and his hand had been restored. 6 And the Pharisees departing immediately with the Herodians gave counsel against Him, how they may destroy Him.**

*This pericope is recorded in all three synoptic gospels, being found at Matthew 12:9-14 and Luke 6:6-11.*

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 31:13, Hosea 2:11, Colossians 2:16-17 [...]

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 4:9

The previous Sabbath account focused on how the students of Christ were plucking the grain, and Yahshua as Prince of the Sabbath permitted them for the sake of their hunger. Here in this account, we see Yahshua take direct action for the sake of one of His brethren on the Sabbath, because loving our kinsmen is a weightier matter of the law.

**3:1 And again He had entered into the assembly hall. And there was a man there having a withered hand.**

Here we see another example of the evocative use of the word *again* (πάλιν #3825), which is employed nine times in the campfire gospel of Mark, but not once in the longer literary gospels.<sup>3</sup> Because *again* is used alongside the definite article, we can reasonably assume that Mark is referring to the assembly hall in Capernaum from the gospel's opening chapter. Later, in this same location, Yahshua would deliver His famous bread of life discourse, which is interesting, given how this pericope follows the one where Christ alluded to the shewbread.<sup>4</sup>

Picking up from the last chapter, it might appear as though this event happened on the same Sabbath as the previous account with the grainfields (2:23-28), but Luke clarifies the passing of time by writing, "Then it happened on another Sabbath that He entered into the assembly hall to teach".<sup>5</sup> It is also Luke alone who mentions that Christ was teaching, but that is certainly implied given that hearing Scripture was the main reason why people gathered in the assembly halls on the Sabbath. We can imagine that the locals would have by now become well acquainted with this new and authoritative teacher, for as we read earlier in Mark "And they go into Kapharnaoum, and immediately on the Sabbaths entering into the assembly hall He taught. And they were astonished by His teaching, for He was teaching them as if having authority and not as the scribes."<sup>6</sup>

*(Entering into the third chapter of Mark and already having three journeys into Capernaum recorded thus far; that level of regularity certainly does substantiate Matthew's testimony that Yahshua settled in the town.)<sup>7</sup>*

There was probably quite a crowd present in the assembly hall, and among them was this man with the withered hand. The word translated as *withered* is ξηραίνω (#3583), which is among other things defined by Liddell and Scott as *dried, parched, withered*. It is uncertain what condition modern "doctors" (they are mostly sorcerers) would have diagnosed this man's ailment under - it could have been atrophy resulting from a disease like polio. Whatever the cause, it was certainly a miraculous display of the power of God when it was healed in front of the crowd.

Pragmatic matters aside, I would like to once again dive into a prophetic type which can be interpreted from the account. I originally wanted to present the pair of Sabbath accounts in one single video, but the particular theme in this account seemed significant enough to merit its own spotlight. The clue towards the type lies in the fact that that ξηραίνω can mean *dried* or *parched*, and in the previous presentation, we read of how Israel became a dried tree through her divorce and deportations. Indeed, the adulterous wife was warned of this at least as early as the prophet Hosea:

**Hosea 2:2-3** Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.

Israel did not hearken to the prophet's pleading, and the fulfillment of these words was later looked upon retrospectively in the prophet Ezekiel, where the mother, symbolic of all twelve tribes, is depicted as a tree:

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<sup>3</sup> Mark 2:1, 13, 3:1, 20, 4:1, 7:31, 8:13, 10:1, 10:32, 11:27

<sup>4</sup> John 6:59

<sup>5</sup> Luke 6:6 [...]

<sup>6</sup> Mark 1:21-22

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 4:13

**Ezekiel 19:10-13** Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters. And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches. But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them. And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground.

In Ezekiel, this symbolism is hardly surprising, since trees so often represent nations, seedlines, or peoples in Scripture. One of the most beloved verses unique to Mark is when the blind man exclaims, "I see men, that as trees I see walking!"<sup>8</sup> These symbols hardly get any clearer than Yahshua's statement that a family tree is known by its fruits, a metaphor that still persists in our own saying that "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Even in the next chapter of Mark, we see Yahshua describe Israel as a tree whose branches all the bastard birds of heaven wish to nest in.

Because Israel refused to repent, as described by the prophet Ezekiel, the once well-watered and fruitful tree of Israel was plucked up, left to dry out and wither. The thirsty land in which she was placed was bereft of the Sabbaths and feasts of Yahweh her God, yet she was still encouraged to keep the Sabbaths in her dispersions, just as we read in Isaiah during the previous segment of this commentary.

**Isaiah 56:3-5** Neither let the son of the stranger [*Estranged Israelites born in captivity*], that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people [*the deportations*]: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. [*Israel became a dry tree in her divorce - Hos 2:3, Eze 19:10-13, Luke 23:31*] For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths [*only given to Israel*], and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant [*only given to Israel and none can add themselves*]; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. [*The Israelites who kept the laws even in their deportations would be greatly blessed*]

So the dry tree of Israel was still commanded to keep the Sabbaths, even after her divorce and dispersion to the isles. Then here, we see a man with a withered hand (a type for his people) and he is healed on the Sabbath. That is no coincidence. Indeed, Christ Himself is recorded as having explicitly referred to the children of Israel as the "dry tree" in the Gospel of Luke, while carrying His cross:

**Luke 23:28-31** Then turning to them Yahshua said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children, because behold, the days are coming in which they shall say 'Blessed are the sterile and the wombs which have not brought forth and breasts which have not nursed!' Then they shall go on to say to the mountains 'fall on us!' and to the hills 'cover us!' because if they do these things to the moist wood, what happens to the dry?" (*The word translated as dry in Luke 23:31 is ξηρός, and that same word is used in the parallel accounts of this man with the withered hand found in Matthew 12 and Luke 6. The word ξηρός is closely related to the word for withered here in Mark, which is ξηραίνω.*)

With these matters being established, it is evident that the healing in this account can represent the promises in the prophets that Yahweh will restore the children of Israel and make their dry tree flourish again. It will happen, and when it does the children of Israel will "blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit".<sup>9</sup>

If we would like to take a step further, and see if we can faithfully discern any type in the fact that it is the man's *hand* which is withered - I would propose that there is one. It could very much represent how the children of Israel are not able to save themselves, and that the tree can only flourish again through the mercy of Yahweh God. It is Luke alone who records that it was the man's *right hand* specifically which was withered, and the right hand in Scripture often represents a man's vehicle for taking action. Therefore, Yahweh in His display of power challenged Job, "Look on every one that is proud, and

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<sup>8</sup> Mark 8:24 [...]

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 27:6 [...]

bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.”<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, the fair olive tree of Israel will not bud again until the wicked are tread down at the Second Coming, and therefore, it is not the right hand of the children of Israel which saves them, but the right hand of God, who is Christ. In that day, the word which was written in the Messianic 118<sup>th</sup> Psalm will come to pass, where David writes “The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.”<sup>11</sup>

*Continuing with Mark:*

**3:2 And they were watching Him closely, whether He will heal him on the Sabbaths, in order that they may accuse Him.**

It does appear that it was a Sabbath day when Christ had cast out the unclean spirit in this very same assembly hall of Capernaum, where Mark writes “And they go into Kapharnaoum, and immediately on the Sabbaths entering into the assembly hall He taught. [...] And there was right away in their assembly hall a man with an unclean spirit”<sup>12</sup> We excluded that incident from our tally of Sabbath miracles in the previous video, as the gospels record no controversy over it. However, if we do count it, the number of Sabbath miracles recorded in the Gospel rises to a fitting and satisfying seven.

Since this was not the first time which Yahshua has done a wonder in this very assembly hall on the Sabbath, and since it was not the first time that He helped His people on the Sabbath in general, the Pharisees have by now learned to watch Him closely. I say Pharisees, because, although Mark does not explicitly say who were lurking ready for an accusation, Luke identifies them as the [scribes and Pharisees](#). Mark, however, *does* identify them in the reaction at the end of the account, where he writes “And the Pharisees departing immediately with the Herodians gave counsel against Him, how they may destroy Him.”<sup>13</sup>

Such a hate-driven and murderous response to the compassionate miracle confirms that at least many of them were bastards, since “Each hating his brother is a murderer, and you know that any murderer does not have eternal life abiding in him.”<sup>14</sup> Their fruits reveal their racial origin in every sense. The watching closely ([παρατηρέω #3906](#)) for an opportunity to make a dishonest accusation is exactly what the bastard workers of iniquity are described as doing in the 37<sup>th</sup> Psalm, where in the Septuagint it says “The sinner will watch ([παρατηρέω](#)) for the righteous, and gnash his teeth upon him. But the Lord shall laugh at him: for he foresees that his day will come.”<sup>15</sup> They were indeed watching the righteous Yahshua closely, and then afterwards were humiliated by the miracle which authorized His actions. They then responded by gnashing their teeth and seeking counsel on how to kill Him, but they failed for He yet lives!<sup>16</sup> Yahweh laughs at them, for He knows that the day of recompense is coming, when He will say to the bastard workers of iniquity “Never have I known you! Depart from Me, those who are working at lawlessness!”<sup>17</sup>

Ever watchful, the Pharisees glared with hostile eyes, and the forked tongues poised to accuse are another witness that they were bastards. The courtroom is a natural den for snakes to this very day for this reason, and later in Yahshua’s ministry, Luke records that after having been exposed as racially spurious by Christ, “from that time of His coming forth the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon Him cleverly and question Him provokingly concerning many things, laying in wait for Him to catch something from His mouth.”<sup>18</sup> Of course, they were never able to catch anything from the pure mouth of Yahshua Christ, and so they had to resort to slander and false accusations, which is a

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<sup>10</sup> Job 40:12-14

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 118:15-16

<sup>12</sup> Mark 1:21, 23 [...]

<sup>13</sup> Luke 6:7, Mark 3:6

<sup>14</sup> 1 John 3:15

<sup>15</sup> Psalm 37:12-13

<sup>16</sup> Acts 25:19

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 7:24 [...]

<sup>18</sup> Luke 11:51, 53-54 (Wisdom 2:16)

transgression of the very law of Moses which they claimed to uphold.<sup>19</sup> They did not care, because to them maintaining their supposed power was more important than obeying God.<sup>20</sup>

This is quite damning, as a family tree is known by its fruits indeed, and one particularly sour and parched fruit is false accusation. The fallen angels which were cast out of heaven are identified by Christ as the False Accuser which seduced and fornicated with Eve in the garden, for as it is written in the Revelation “[And the great dragon had been cast down, that serpent of old, who is called the False Accuser and the Adversary](#)”.<sup>21</sup> With Esau having intermarried with the descendants of that serpent through Cain - his children have mixed blood in their veins and are born false accusers.<sup>22</sup> The Edomites could not trace themselves back to Adam without any adulteration, and so they were not children of Yahweh. For that reason Christ said to the Edomite portion of the Pharisees “[You are the sons of a father: the False Accuser!](#)”<sup>23</sup> Such scheming and false accusations are the hallmark of the eternal Jew. They will never change, forever doing the works of their father.<sup>24</sup>

The Pharisees could find no lawful accusation as Christ did nothing wrong. He stood on weightier matters of the law and loved His kinsman on the Sabbath. If anyone was profaning the Sabbath, it was the Pharisees themselves. They were too blind to see it, but the Sabbath is not merely profaned through work (or arbitrary motions which hypocrites define as work), but also by shamelessly sinning the other six days of the week:

**Ezekiel 22:6-12** Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow. Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains [*eating is sex*]: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD.

**Ezekiel 20:23-24** I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries; Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols.

It is evident in the prophets that if one lives in profligacy all week long then keeping the Sabbath is only pretense, and Yahweh God will expose such hypocrisy with a piercing light. There is no care for the spirit of the Sabbath which is “[for the sake of man](#)” if you afflict and abuse your fellow man every other day of the week, shedding blood and oppressing the fatherless and widows.<sup>25</sup> Many of these things listed in Ezekiel are transgressions which Christ condemned the Pharisees for in the Gospel - and so which one of them was profaning the Sabbaths? We know that the Pharisees devoured the houses of widows and gained excess through extortion (rapine).<sup>26</sup> Even in this very account, the Pharisees are recorded as having taken counsel with the Herodians, but Herod Antipas was upbraided by John the Baptist for taking his brother's wife, and so in fraternizing with the Herodians they were condoning such sin and thus profaning the Sabbath!<sup>27</sup>

Hypocrites! The humiliation which they were about to receive was just.

**3:3 And He says to the man having the withered hand: "Arise, into the middle!"**

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<sup>19</sup> Exodus 23:1

<sup>20</sup> John 11:50

<sup>21</sup> Revelation 12:9

<sup>22</sup> Malachi 1:3, Genesis 26:34-35

<sup>23</sup> John 8:44

<sup>24</sup> John 8:44, Psalm 55:19, Wisdom 12:10

<sup>25</sup> Mark 2:27

<sup>26</sup> Mark 12:40 | Matthew 23:25 / Luke 11:39

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 14:4



The direct and strong language certainly shows the strength and authority of our Messiah, and it is also evident that the man was willing to be healed on the Sabbath, which is to his credit. As we read in Isaiah, “Neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”<sup>28</sup> Again, it is no mistake that this miracle took place on a Sabbath day!

The man was commanded to arise and to stand in the *middle*, ostensibly so that everyone could witness his imminent restoration. But there is a type even in this, because in His Revelation, Yahshua Christ depicts the restored family Tree of Life (the Adamic race) as standing in the middle of a street watered with a river of water of life coming from His throne:

**Revelation 22:1-4** And he showed to me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, coming out from the throne of Yahweh and of the Lamb. In the middle of her street and with the river on the one side and the other is the tree of life producing twelve fruits, yielding each of its fruits by month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the Nations. And there shall no longer be any curse. And the throne of Yahweh and of the Lamb shall be in her, and His servants shall serve Him and shall see His face, and His Name is upon their foreheads.

There is no doubt that this man with the withered hand was a type for the entire Tree of Life as much as he was for the dry olive tree of Israel. The state of withering is evident in the members of the Adamic race, because even though the family Tree of Life will remain forever, until the consummation of this age the sons of Adam in their decaying bodies are often described as withering like grass. As James wrote, “For you are as vapor appearing for a short time, and then disappearing”, which compounds with scriptures such as where the 102<sup>nd</sup> Psalm says “My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass”.<sup>29</sup>

This mortal trial is in spite of the fact that Yahweh expressly made the Adamic race to be immortal, something which is evident in the unconditional promises concerning the Tree of Life in Genesis, and in the explicit words of Solomon where he wrote that “God created man for incorruption, and He made him an image of His Own eternity”<sup>30</sup> If the entire race of Adam is promised to be resurrected and to abide for eternity, then it is evident that the current mortal state of decay and withering must only be a temporary travail. This travail is described by Solomon in Ecclesiastes as an exercise in vanity which demonstrates the consequences of sin and the importance of obedience for the sons of Adam (1:13, 3:10). Understanding this in line with other scriptures, this life can be understood to be a lesson for the entire race, and also a test which determines each individual’s place in the Resurrection. Paul wrote on this very same topic where he told the Zerah-Judahite Romans:

**Romans 8:20-22** To transientness the creation [Adamic creation] was subjected not willingly, but on account of He who subjected it in expectation that also the creation itself shall be liberated from the bondage of decay into the freedom of the honor of the children of Yahweh. For we know that the whole creation laments together and travails together until then.

With all this being said, the man’s withered hand can be understood as representing the travail of the sons of Adam, who are in this life subject to withering like grass, something which Paul described as “transientness” and the “bondage of decay”. Indeed, Yahweh subjected the Adamic race to this travail in the expectation that they would be liberated from it in the future, and that is accomplished through Christ, because “Just as in Adam all die, then in that manner in Christ all shall be produced alive.”<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, this man’s encounter with Yahshua is emblematic of that very destiny. Being instructed by Christ to “arise” is also reminiscent of the Resurrection, for as Christ is later recorded in this gospel as saying to the twelve year-old daughter of Jahirus, “Talitha Koum!’ which is interpreted: ‘Little girl, I say to you, arise!’”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Isaiah 56:3-5

<sup>29</sup> James 4:14 [...], Psalm 102:11

<sup>30</sup> Wisdom 2:23 [...]

<sup>31</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:22

<sup>32</sup> Mark 5:41 [...]

We will further discuss how this account of the parable relates to the Adamic race shortly. For now, it is important to understand that the restoration of the Adamic Race upon the earth is a promise of God, and even the subtlest of these miracles are symbolic beacons pointing towards its assurance.

*Continuing with Mark:*

**3:4 And He says to them: "Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good, or to do bad? To save a life or to kill?" But they were silent.**

*The detail of their silence is unique to Mark.*

Yahshua knew the reasonings of the Pharisees and would not be mocked. Here again we see His adversaries ensnared in their own hypocrisy, because now their argument would be compromised if they chose either answer. The Sadducees also tested Yahshua near the close of His ministry, questioning the source of the authority by which He performed great deeds. Yet as the Scripture says, "[Answer not a fool according to his folly](#)," so Yahshua countered their inquiry with another question: whether John the Baptist's authority was from heaven or from men.<sup>33</sup> This backed them into a corner, leaving them unable to respond, just as the Pharisees are silent here.

As it is written in the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm, "[Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me](#)."<sup>34</sup> Yahshua often exposed the ignorance of His enemies, and for that they despised Him. There is a miracle very similar to this one which is recorded solely in Luke's gospel, where Christ on the Sabbath healed an edematous man in the house of one of the Pharisee leaders. He gave the same challenge, asking "[Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?](#)", and just as His opponents reacted in this account, Luke writes that "[they were silent](#)", and even that "[they were not able to argue against these things](#)" after Yahshua expounded further.<sup>35</sup>

No one can answer the wise rebuke which accords with the law of God, and so Solomon wrote that being given wisdom "[I shall be found sharp in judgment, and in the sight of rulers I shall be a marvel. I being silent, they shall wait; then proclaiming, they shall give heed; and speaking even further, they shall place a hand upon their mouths](#)."<sup>36</sup> Solomon earnestly prayed for wisdom and was given it sincerely, being wiser than all men. But who is wiser: the recipient of Wisdom or its progenitor? Thusly Christ proclaimed that "[a greater than Solomon is here!](#)"<sup>37</sup>

True wisdom is simple and not esoteric, brilliant and timeless, and it cannot be refuted. The intelligence of Yahshua's words in the Gospel puts the sophistry of foolish philosophers to shame, proving time and time again that Yahweh is true.

In remembrance of these things, we should pray that Yahweh gives us a mouth to speak so as to silence the opposition and demonstrate the truth of Yahweh, and Paul knowing this asked that the Ephesians pray on his behalf.<sup>38</sup> As Christ said, "[For I shall give to you a mouth and wisdom which all those opposing you shall not be able to withstand or contradict](#)."<sup>39</sup> (With the record of Christ saying *I* in Luke and *the Holy Spirit* in Mark - Christ once again shows that the Holy Spirit is He Himself)<sup>40</sup>

As for the challenge Yahshua posed to the Pharisees here, "[Is it lawful on the Sabbaths to do good, or to do evil? To save a life or to kill?](#)"; we should remember that if the Sabbath was "[for the sake of man](#)" then it was certainly never intended to prohibit anyone from doing good. And so Christ said in Matthew's parallel account of this passage, "[So how much better is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath!](#)"<sup>41</sup> Did the Pharisees think that Yahweh would not answer prayers on Sabbath days?

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<sup>33</sup> Proverbs 26:4 [...], Mark 11:27-33

<sup>34</sup> Psalm 119:98

<sup>35</sup> Luke 14:3 [...], 4 [...], 6

<sup>36</sup> Wisdom 8:11-12

<sup>37</sup> Matthew 12:42 [...]

<sup>38</sup> Ephesians 6:19-20

<sup>39</sup> Luke 21:15

<sup>40</sup> Mark 13:11

<sup>41</sup> Matthew 12:12

Mercy and love are the weightier matters of the law, and if we claim otherwise, we are accusing Yahweh God Himself of wrongdoing. For instance, the Passover is a Sabbath day under the Hebrew calendar, and during the inaugural Passover Yahweh worked to rescue His people from bondage:

**Exodus 12:11-12** And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. **51** And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

And so Yahweh indeed saved His people on the Sabbath, and as He said to Moses beforehand: “I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver [save] them out of the hand of the Egyptians.”<sup>42</sup>

Later in His ministry, when Yahshua healed the hunch-backed woman on the Sabbath, and afterwards said to the hypocrites, “Now, she is a daughter of Abraham, who was bound by the Adversary, behold, eighteen years! Was it not necessary to release her from those bonds on the day of the Sabbath?”<sup>43</sup> It is a profound thought to remember that Christ is the same God whom roughly 1,480 years earlier released Israel from bonds on the Sabbath day. This is doing good on the Sabbath and Yahweh has *always* sought the good of Israel! As we read in the retrospective words of the book of Joshua after they were finally settled in the land promised to their fathers, “There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”<sup>44</sup>

Similarly Yahweh explained the fast He desires in Isaiah, “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?”<sup>45</sup> Would the Sabbath not be the same? Mercy is paramount and the law hangs upon the love of God and brethren. If we want to please our Father, we must be compassionate like Him through unfeigned acts of love for our kinsmen. This means lifting burdens and helping the afflicted.<sup>46</sup>

If a Pharisee saw a brother in need but shunned them so as to maintain the pretense of following the Sabbath, then they were missing its spirit entirely. This is why Paul wrote to Timothy, “Yet we know that the law is good, if one would use it lawfully.”<sup>47</sup> We are commanded to care for the widows and the fatherless, to open our hands to the poor and not to have an evil eye, to nourish the sick and defend the wronged. If we neglect these duties on a Sabbath day, then we are entirely ignorant of the law’s purpose. As James wrote, “Therefore he knowing to do good and not doing it, for him it is error.”<sup>48</sup>

The Pharisees also had no answer for the other side of this rhetorical question because they knew full well that the Sabbath could not make wrongdoing lawful. As for killing, it is worth mentioning that if your brother was caught in a ditch and you were able to pull him out but refused, then your lack of care would make you liable for his blood. It is written in the law, “Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.”<sup>49</sup> While the Hebrew phrase might not be immediately clear, it is interpreted in the NASB to be speaking of how slander may jeopardize the safety of the innocent: “You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people; and you are not to jeopardize the life of your neighbor. I am the Lord.” This principle is manifest throughout the scriptures, and can be understood to be relevant to diverse situations. Therefore, we can repeat the words of James, where he wrote that to those who know to do good but refrain, to them it is error.

With the importance of these things being loudly expressed throughout the law and prophets, the silence of the Pharisees would have been vexing:

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<sup>42</sup> Exodus 3:7-8 [...]

<sup>43</sup> Luke 13:16

<sup>44</sup> Joshua 21:45

<sup>45</sup> Isaiah 58:6

<sup>46</sup> Matthew 22:40, Luke 6:30, 2 Corinthians 6:6

<sup>47</sup> 1 Timothy 1:8

<sup>48</sup> James 4:17

<sup>49</sup> Leviticus 19:16



**3:5 And looking around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He says to the man: "Extend the hand!" And he extended it and his hand had been restored.**

*The anger of Christ and His grief with the hardness of their hearts is a detail unique to Mark.*

There is evocative campfire gospel language in the way these clauses are written, and the descriptive word περιβλέπω (*looking around*) is almost solely used by Mark, with six of its seven appearances being found in this gospel; the one exception is actually in Luke's parallel account of this event.<sup>50</sup> *Grieved* is translated from συλλυπέω, which only appears here in the Greek of the New and Old Testaments, it is a compounding of σύν (*with*) and λυπέω (*grieved or pained - a more common word*); and so it denotes to be grieved with or on account of someone or something.<sup>51</sup>

The vivid imagery here gives us insight into something which the Judaized churches tend to deny: that Yahshua Christ was capable of expressing a stern righteous anger. This detail unique to Mark displays how much our God was offended by the coldness of the Pharisees, and it is no different from how He was angered with the stubborn hearts and lack of compassion among the children of Israel in the prophets:

**Zechariah 7:9-12 (ESV)** Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart." But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the LORD of hosts.

So once again we see that Yahweh does not change. He was angered by a lack of compassion back then and He was angered by a lack of compassion here also. The Greek word is ὄργή (*a swelling anger or passion #3709*), and in Ezekiel, at the passage we cited earlier where Yahweh expressed His fervent displeasure with those who profaned His Sabbaths, we read in the Septuagint "So I have poured out my wrath upon her in the fury of mine anger (ὄργή), to accomplish it. I have recompensed their ways on their own heads, saith the Lord God."<sup>52</sup>

We also see in Zechariah that Yahweh was angered that they "made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law", just He was also grieved here with the hardness of their hearts for not following the spirit of the law!

The word translated as *hardness* is πώρωσις (#4457) and only appears here in the gospels. It is used twice by Paul of Tarsus in his epistles, once in Romans in reference to the ignorance of the Judaeans, and then in Ephesians in regards to the ignorance of the nations (both Israelite and non-Israelite).<sup>53</sup> It is the noun form of the verb πωρόω (#4456), which is literally to *petrify*, and that word is slightly more common - being used twice by Mark, once by John, and then twice in Paul's epistles.<sup>54</sup> Both of these words are literally related to the forming of a callus or stone-like covering in the body, but are used metaphorically in the scriptures to refer to the hardness of hearts. The heart was perceived by the ancients to be the seat of the mind, and the cultural perception was relevant everywhere. However, the Scriptures correctly understood the brain to be the seat of the mind ever since Moses instructed us to have the law on our foreheads (in our thoughts).<sup>55</sup>

The apostle John writing of the incredulity among the Judaeans had paraphrased Isaiah 6 in his gospel, and using the verb πωρόω he wrote "He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with the eyes and perceive with their hearts and turn about, that I shall heal them."<sup>56</sup> This scripture was cited by Christ Himself in all three synoptic gospels, but I would not believe that Christ

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<sup>50</sup> #4017 | Luke 6:10

<sup>51</sup> #4818 (from #4862 and #3076)

<sup>52</sup> Ezekiel 22:31 (LXX)

<sup>53</sup> Romans 11:25, Ephesians 4:18

<sup>54</sup> Mark 6:52, 8:17, John 12:40, 2 Corinthians 3:14, Romans 11:7

<sup>55</sup> Deuteronomy 6:6-8, 11:18-19

<sup>56</sup> John 12:40

was necessarily grieved with that prophetic hardening of hearts here, because it was necessary to happen.<sup>57</sup>

It is more reasonable that Yahshua was grieved with their stiffening from compassion for the afflicted kinsman, just as He was in the days of the prophets, when they “made their hearts diamond-hard” and did not “render true judgments” nor “show kindness and mercy to one another”. It is certainly written in the law that “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother” and the spirit of this law can apply to any situation which calls for compassion.<sup>58</sup> To shun those in need is what the Scripture defines as having *an evil eye*, something which proceeds from wicked hearts, as Christ later says in this very gospel.<sup>59</sup> We should be similarly grieved then with the circumstances among our people today, for Christ said concerning these days, “for reason that lawlessness is multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold.”<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, we should not assume that Yahshua’s grief by “the hardness of their hearts” was solely directed towards the Edomite portion of the Pharisees, as they were bastards who, being unable to hear and obey Yahweh’s Word, had nothing good expected of them.<sup>61</sup> Rather, His grief would have also been towards the silent gathering, for whose sake He was publicly declaring these things. They were once again making their hearts diamond-hard against His law, just as their rebellious fathers did in the wilderness, and thus Yahweh responded the same. As it is written “How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!”<sup>62</sup> We today should not harden our hearts as in the rebellion but purify and establish them for the coming of the Prince, and help our brethren turn their hearts towards God and brethren.<sup>63</sup>

The Greek word *συλλυπέω* is translated as *grieved*, where it says that Christ was “grieved with the hardness of their hearts”, but it can also be rendered as *distressed by* or *pained by*. It was certainly distressing that that no one was standing up to entreat for the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, even though Yahshua asked the assembly if it was lawful to do good and save a life. Yahweh had exhorted His people to raise up their voices for such causes in His prophets, such as through Isaiah where He said “Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”<sup>64</sup> But here they were silent, and Yahshua was angered and grieved by it, even pained, as the word *συλλυπέω* can entail: for Yahweh shares in the pain of His suffering people whose needs are ignored by others. As it is written in Isaiah, “In all their affliction he was afflicted”.<sup>65</sup>

The judgement of Christ in assembly halls and congregations such as these was evidently prophesied of in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Psalm, where it is written “God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.”<sup>66</sup>

Additionally, Christ standing in this assembly hall and performing an instantaneous, miraculous healing of the man’s withered hand must have been a truly spectacular sight for everyone to behold. It would have been evocative of the experience Moses had on Sinai when Yahweh revealed Himself through the messenger of the burning bush, a divine parallel that Christians should readily recognize.

**Exodus 4:1-9 (ESV)** Then Moses answered, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’” The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff.” And he said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. But the LORD said to Moses, “Put out your hand and catch it by the tail”—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—“that they

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<sup>57</sup> Matthew 13:14, Mark 4:12

<sup>58</sup> Deuteronomy 15:7

<sup>59</sup> Mark 7:22, Deuteronomy 15:9

<sup>60</sup> Matthew 24:12 [...]

<sup>61</sup> John 8:43, 1 John 4:6, 2 Peter 2:14-22, Isaiah 8:20, 1 Corinthians 2:14, et al

<sup>62</sup> Psalm 78:40

<sup>63</sup> Hebrews 3:15, James 4:8, 5:8, Malachi 4:6

<sup>64</sup> Isaiah 1:17

<sup>65</sup> Isaiah 63:9 [...]

<sup>66</sup> Psalm 82:1-4

may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”

Again, the LORD said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then God said, “Put your hand back inside your cloak.” So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. If they will not believe you,” God said, “or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.

If the flourishing of the hand served as a sign that Moses was indeed sent by Yahweh God, then those in the assembly hall should have recognized the miracle performed by Christ in much the same manner. But it did more than just demonstrate the authority given to Him, it also showed that He was Yahweh God Himself. It is key that He issued a direct command, exactly as Yahweh did to Moses, without any prayer or entreaty in order to perform the miracle. We should compare this account then to a very similar one in 1 Kings:

**1 Kings 13:4-6 (ESV)** And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Seize him.” And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself. The altar also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. And the king said to the man of God, “Entreat now the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me.” And the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him and became as it was before.

Jeroboam also suffered from a withered hand for a very short time. Yet unlike the unnamed prophet who prayed for Jeroboam’s restoration, Yahshua does not petition Yahweh at all. Instead, He simply tells the man to stretch out his hand, and it is healed. Christ was greater than the prophets and He was the very source of this power which the prophets called upon, namely the one and only God, Yahweh.

We discussed how the type of this account was relevant to the entire Adamic race, and now it is time to expound on that further. In Genesis, Yahweh is recorded as having promised to preserve a way to the Tree of Life, ensuring that every branch of Adam’s family tree would retain the wholeness of their eternal life despite their collective failings. As God, Yahweh certainly already knew that the patriarch Adam would sin before creating him. This life was intentionally designed as a lesson on the consequences of sin, and having always foreordained how He would save men in spite of their sin, the Lamb was slain “[from the foundation of Society](#)”.<sup>67</sup> To foreshadow this destined preservation through the Lamb, the swords were placed on the east of the Garden, where the sun (Son) rises, “[to keep \(preserve\) the way of the tree of life](#).” Being that very Way to the Tree of Life which was promised in Genesis, Christ told Thomas, “[I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one goes to the Father except through Me](#)”<sup>68</sup>

Being Yahweh God, Yahshua Christ is therefore the Father of Adam and thus the root of his family tree - that being the Tree of Life. This is why Christ testifies that He is the root (Father) and the branch (offspring) of David, and it is why He told His students that “[I am the True Vine and My Father is the Planter](#).”<sup>69</sup> Therefore, when men reach out to Him they are also reaching out to the Tree of Life itself, and the man being commanded to “[extend the hand](#)” here is symbolic of the destiny of the race of Adam, where it says in Genesis “[And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest \(an invitation\) he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:](#)”<sup>70</sup>

These matters are evocative of the language of John in the opening of his first surviving epistle, where he writes:

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<sup>67</sup> Revelation 13:8 [...]

<sup>68</sup> Genesis 3:24 [...], John 14:6 [...]

<sup>69</sup> Luke 3:38, Revelation 5:5, 22:16, John 15:1

<sup>70</sup> Genesis 3:22

**1 John 1:1-2** That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have observed, and our hands have touched concerning the Word of Life: that the life was made manifest, and we have seen and we bear witness and we announce to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has been made manifest to us.

Going back to the other type of this parable, the man can also be seen to stand as a type for the future restoration of the dry tree of Israel. As the apostles said to Christ on the day of His Ascension, "Prince, then at this time shall You restore (ἀποκαθίστημι) the Kingdom to Israel?" and Christ told them "It is not yours to know the times or the seasons which the Father has placed in His own authority."<sup>71</sup> While we can never know when those times or seasons will arrive - what we can see is a faint image of what that restoration will look like through the mirror of the prophets. A restoration (ἀποκαθίστημι #600) is literally a bringing back to an original state, and so as it is written in Isaiah, "And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city."<sup>72</sup> There are several prophecies which give a fuller picture of what this will look like, and the Messiah's actions here testified to the fulfillment of those promises.

But in a more immediate sense, this was yet another witness to the imminent healing of Israel's breaches during the First Advent, much like the raising of the paralytic or the healing of Peter's mother-in-law. As in those accounts, this miracle of the withered hand took place in Capernaum, the *village of comfort*, and it calls to mind various prophecies, such as when Yahweh says in Isaiah that "I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him." The second half of this passage was quoted by Paul of Tarsus in his epistle to the Ephesians, and the children of Israel always expected that their Messiah would be a healer.<sup>73</sup>

The breach between Yahweh and Israel was healed through the reconciliation accomplished on the cross; with the Husband's sacrifice, the wife was released from the death penalty incurred by her adultery and reconciled to her Husband. Consequently, we can turn to what seems like a Messianic prophecy in the book of Job, from the words of Elihu:

**Job 33:21-26** His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit [Hades]: I have found a ransom [Christ - Mk 10:45]. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return (ἀποκαθίστημι in the LXX) to the days of his youth [Israel's restoration - Hos 2:15]: He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face [Rev 22:4] with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

We can see these words as prophetic of Israel's restoration from the pit after the ransom of Christ. This ransom opened the way for the Kingdom's future restoration, the transformation of the dry tree into the flourishing and budding one, and here it is described as "flesh fresher than a child's" and a return "to the days of his youth" (We could imagine that after he was restored, the man's withered hand was likewise made fresher than a child's, at least in the poetic sense. Though this is conjectural, it is reasonable given that such a very description was used of Naiman the leper after his cleansing by Yahweh in the Jordan River, where upon dipping himself seven times, "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean")<sup>74</sup>

The return to the "days of his youth" described in Job reflects the promises for Israel's future restoration, when she shall sing "as in the days of her youth" and when her youth is "renewed like the eagle's".<sup>75</sup> This has not yet happened, but it was made possible through the ransom of Christ, and once it is fully accomplished at the consummation of the age, the servant race of the children of Israel will see Yahweh's face, as it says in Job. The Revelation also describes this, where it says "His servants

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<sup>71</sup> Acts 1:6-7 [...]

<sup>72</sup> Isaiah 1:26

<sup>73</sup> Isaiah 57:18-19, Ephesians 2:17

<sup>74</sup> 2 Kings 5:14

<sup>75</sup> Hosea 2:15, Psalm 103:5

shall serve Him and shall see His face, and His Name is upon their foreheads.”<sup>76</sup> This is after the description of the Tree of Life in the middle of the street, which was also relevant to the type here in Mark.

As for where Revelation mentions that “His Name is upon their foreheads”, this conveys that the thoughts of the children of Israel will at that time be fixed on their God and His commandments. When your thoughts are on God, the actions of your hands follow suit, and therefore the next verse of Revelation tells us they will “have not need for light of a lamp and for light of a sun, because Prince Yahweh shall shine upon them”. The Light represents the righteous governance of Christ, which will of course guide the works of the children of Israel’s hands, and so in that day the words Moses wrote in Psalm 90 will reach their ultimate fulfillment:

**Psalm 90:13-17** Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish [direct] thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish [direct] thou it.

With that being said, a final type we can establish is this: the healing of this man’s withered right hand can also represent the renewed direction of Israel’s purpose once their Kingdom is restored at the end of the age. This has not yet happened, but the ransom of Christ made it possible, and when that Kingdom is restored, their hands will likewise be restored—just as this man’s right hand was, which is the vehicle of action. Led in righteousness by Christ, the children of Israel will be rewarded for their obedience, in line with the blessings of the law. And so we read in Isaiah:

**Isaiah 65:22** They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

The right hand of God had restored the man whose own right hand could not save him; now we will see how the Pharisees and Herodians sought to reward Him for such love:

**3:6** And the Pharisees departing immediately with the Herodians gave counsel against Him, how they may destroy Him.

*The mention of the Herodians is unique to Mark.*

Yahshua helped His kinsman breathe on the Sabbath, but all His enemies could do was immediately depart and breathe out threats. This is the earliest recorded instance in Yahshua’s ministry of His enemies plotting His death, though the Judaeans in Jerusalem (*ostensibly - the timeline is not entirely clear*) and even His own kinsmen had sought to kill Him before this time, and even Herod “the great” while He was still an infant.<sup>77</sup>

The persecution of Yahshua at the hands of the supposed authorities was presaged by King Saul’s relentless pursuit of David. In the Psalms, David frequently laments these sufferings, and many of those laments prophetically point forward to the trials his son (the Messiah) would endure. David even wrote of his enemies taking murderous counsel in the prophetic words of the 31<sup>st</sup> Psalm:

**Psalm 31:13** For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

Yahshua was persecuted with death at the beginning of His earthly life as an infant, near the beginning of His ministry at Nazareth, and throughout the three and a half years which would follow. But those who sought to kill Him were not able to realize their ambitions, “because His hour had not yet come” . And when it came to pass that “His hour had come when He would cross over from this order to the Father”, He allowed Himself to be taken in their lawless hands and willingly laid down His life. At that time the near vision of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Psalm was fulfilled, as the countrymen in Acts cited, where it says “The

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<sup>76</sup> Revelation 22:3-4 [...]

<sup>77</sup> John 5:18, Luke 4:29, Matthew 2:13



kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”<sup>78</sup>

But the guile of His enemies failed, because Yahshua was resurrected to their incredulous bewilderment and later ascended to the right hand of Yahweh. Then the Roman kinsman avengers would come thirty-eight years later and destroy Jerusalem, as vengeance for the murder of Christ, and this was prophesied as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Psalm continues, “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.”<sup>79</sup>

On that note, and having spoken of trees in this commentary, it seems fitting to conclude by considering yet another tree, which is corrupt down to the root. That is the bad fig tree of Jerusalem, a city which was principally inhabited by Edomites at the time of Christ and especially now, who were themselves branches of the family tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil:

**Mark 11:20** And passing by in the morning they saw the fig tree had withered from the roots.

When Christ cursed the fig tree outside Jerusalem near the end of His ministry, it was symbolic of the bad-fig Edomites who rejected Him and remained fruitless throughout the three-and-a-half years He spent teaching and performing miracles in their midst. A bad family tree cannot bear good fruit, and therefore even though they were given ample opportunity to repent, they did not. Rather the writings were fulfilled where it written, “They have hated Me for naught.”<sup>80</sup>

Christ had elaborated on what the cursing of the fig tree would represent when He gave a prophetic parable earlier in His ministry:

**Luke 13:6-9** Then He spoke this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit in it and found none. And he said to the vine-dresser, 'Look, it is three years from which I have come seeking fruit in this fig tree and I find none. Cut it down, for why should the land be useless?' But answering he says to him: 'Master, leave it this year also, until when I should dig around it and cast manure and so then it may produce fruit in the future, but otherwise if not, you shall cut it down.'"

To clarify, the three-and-a-half-year length of Christ’s ministry becomes clear by aligning the timeline in Daniel with the dating of Yahshua’s immersion in Luke, and then counting the Passovers in John’s Gospel. Thus, the serpent-seed Edomites had that three year window in the parable to bear fruits worthy of repentance, as John the Baptist challenged them to do. Because they were bastards, they failed, and John the Baptist knew they would fail.

**Luke 3:7-9** [...] Race of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? You should really make fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin by saying among yourselves 'We have Abraham for a father'. For I say to you that Yahweh is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones! But already even the axe is laid to the root of the trees: surely any tree not producing good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire!" [John the Baptist’s point is rhetorical. Just because the Edomites were descended from Abraham through Esau meant nothing; they were children of the flesh rather than children of the promise. Yahweh could raise children of Abraham from stones if He wished, but that doesn’t mean He would profane the promises reserved exclusively for the seed of Isaac and Jacob by passing them onto those stones. The Edomites were no better than lifeless rocks.]

These Edomites were thieves from outside the race of Israel, caring nothing for the sheep and harming them with their vain traditions, just as Christ depicted in the parable of the Good Shepherd.<sup>81</sup> The due punishment for thievish and foolish shepherds was described in Zechariah: “Woe to my worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! Let his arm be wholly withered, his right eye utterly blinded!”<sup>82</sup> In the same vein, Christ’s parable says, “cut it down,” and so the bad-fig Judaeans were made desolate and withered when they were trampled by the sword of the Roman kinsman-avengers in 70 AD. The Edomites had sought to kill Christ for healing the man with

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<sup>78</sup> John 8:20 [...], 13:1 [...], 10:18, Acts 2:23 | Psalm 2:2-3, Acts 4:25-26

<sup>79</sup> Psalm 2:4-5

<sup>80</sup> John 15:25, Psalm 35:19, 69:4

<sup>81</sup> John 10:10

<sup>82</sup> Zechariah 11:17 (ESV)



the withered hand; in turn, it was only fitting that their own fig tree should wither. It is poetic justice, for Yahweh punishes men with their own sin.

The Edomites among the Pharisees thought they were knowledgeable of the law; but who was withered now? The words came to pass, “[Where is the cunning? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age?](#)”<sup>83</sup>

Of course, it was revealed through the prophet Malachi that they would return and rebuild the desolate places. That return in 1948 was the budding of the fig tree, signaling that the end times were drawing near.<sup>84</sup> Yet they, along with the rest of the family Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, will be cut down to the roots at the Second Coming, and therefore as Obadiah says, there will be no survivors of the house of Esau.<sup>85</sup> And as it says in Psalm 37, in words prophetic of these times, “[I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.](#)”<sup>86</sup>

Indeed, once the wicked are cut off, Yahweh’s work will be complete, and He will rest with His people. The Tree of Life will remain for eternity, among its branches the children of Israel and their twelve manners of fruit. But the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil will be gone, as though it had never existed, and for that reason it has no mention in the Kingdom of God in the Revelation.

**Psalm 37:1-2** A Psalm of David. Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

**Psalm 92:7-15** When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever. But thou, LORD, art most high for evermore. For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil. Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me. The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

In our next commentary, we will delve more deeply into the Pharisees and Herodians, revealing how that such pernicious alliances persist even to this day in the form of the Judaized churches and the governments they worship. Thank you for reading, and praise Yahweh, the God of Israel.

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**Published:** March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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<sup>83</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:20 [...], Isaiah 19:12, 33:18

<sup>84</sup> Matthew 24:32, Mark 13:28, Luke 21:29

<sup>85</sup> Malachi 4:1; Matthew 3:10, Luke 3:9; Obadiah 1:18

<sup>86</sup> Psalm 37:35-36