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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1999

HIS MIRACLES - BY MIRACLES AND WONDERS AND SIGNS

Speaker: Bro. Jim Cowie

Study #2: The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath

Reading: Mark 2:23 - 3:6

Well, brethren and sisters and young people, we come to the second segment of our study on the miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I just wanted to point out before we launch into today's session, that I really did miss something very important in our study yesterday, and we are pretty close to Mark chapter 5, so just turning a page or so, will bring us to it. I'd like you to write into the margin 'Isaiah 65 verses 1 to 5' alongside of verses 13, 14 and 15, and what I'd like you to do in your own time, is to have a look at that passage in Isaiah 65 and see if you can see the relationship to our study yesterday, I'm sure you will; remembering b&s, that under the Law of Moses, the swine was forbidden, it was unclean because it had a cloven hoof but it did not chew the cud, and there were at this time in Israel, people who to all intents and purposes, when you beheld them, had a cloven hoof. They looked as though they were walking in the way; they were the ones, as Isaiah 65 verse 5 says, 'would say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou', yet they chewed not the cud and their mind was corrupt. I want you to read Isaiah 65 verses 1 to 5 in that context, in your own time, it just adds the icing on the cake to our very brief consideration yesterday of Legion and his healing.

Well, the next two studies before us are designed to deal with the Son of Man as Lord of the Sabbath. I'd like to point this out to you at the outset, so you don't get some wrong idea as to what we're trying to achieve here, because some of you might think after today's study, that I've lost sight of the fact, that we're here to talk about miracles; because we may not get to talk about too many miracles today. I want to lay the foundations upon which we can see why those miracles were performed, why they were performed on the Sabbath day, and why in the context of the Son of Man. It's important that we lay those foundations!

Now, in due time over the next two sessions or so, we intend to try and get through as many of these miracles which our Lord Jesus Christ performed on the Sabbath day. There is, of course, this healing of the man with the withered hand that we read about this morning; there's the case of the woman bowed with an infirmity for 18 years in Luke

13 verses 10 to 17; there's the case of the man with dropsy in the next chapter, Luke 14 verses 1 to 6; there's a man with an infirmity for 38 years in John 5 verses 1 to 16; and if we get time, the man born blind in John 9 verses 1 to 14. Now all of those miracles, notable miracles in the scheme of things, were performed on the Sabbath day. We want to try and see why the Lord performed miracles deliberately on the Sabbath day, and why the phrase 'Son of man' or, in His case, 'the Son of man' is so important, so critical to the miracles that He performed.

And so we've read Mark chapter 2 because there is at the end of that chapter just a small verse which says this, 'therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath'. You know, we dealt with this in some measure in a previous Silver Star Bible School, when we were talking about Psalm 8, and Christ in the Psalms. We covered this ground very quickly and so I'm going to go back over it, perhaps a little bit more completely than our last occasion, to see if we can establish in our minds, the fact, b&s and young people, that when we encounter the phrase the Son of man, it is not primarily talking about Christ's relationship to man. Of course, it is telling us that He was a man; of course, it is telling us that He has come in the stead of Adam, who failed. And here has arrived the second Adam, but the title 'the Son of man' is a scriptural title of our Lord Jesus Christ exercising divine dominion in the earth, as a man. And its primary purpose is to express to us that here is the One who brought divine power and divine authority to the earth, that He might exercise it for the benefit of those whom He came to save. We want to have a look at that, so I'd like to take you back to the Old Testament scriptures to do this, and we'll do this with some assistance of transparencies, so hopefully it'll be a little clearer.

But as I said, what we have here in this title, Son of man, in the Hebrew it is 'ben-a-adam' it's a title referring to Christ's delegated authority to exercise dominion over carnal things. It is drawn from Psalm 8 verse 4, and we're all familiar with that, aren't we? 'What is man that Thou art mindful of him?', saith David, in the wake of the slaughter of the Philistine, Goliath, having taken his head to Jerusalem, and laid it outside the walls of that city, in the place where the sacrifice of Christ would one day be made, of which he was totally assured. He wrote Psalm 8, 'What is man (enosh, weak mortal man) that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man (ben-a-adam) that Thou visiteth him?' He's talking about himself as a type of Christ, for he had slain the giant that represented King sin and he looked to the day when Christ would do that work; bro. Alan is dealing with that in his series. But brethren and sisters, we need to remember this, that Psalm 8 is all about exercising dominion over carnal things. Have a quick look at it!

We've quoted verse 4, and verse 5 goes on to say, 'But Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned Him with glory and honour. Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet'. So, the whole character of Psalm 8 is about the exercising of dominion, and we need to ask, when? When will this occur? Well, the answer is very clear, because you

see, the apostle Paul quotes Psalm 8 in Hebrews chapter 2; we are familiar with that, and in his quotation, he is talking, b&s, about the kingdom age. He makes the point that God has not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. And then he immediately launches into a quotation from Psalm 8, and Psalm 8 will not be fulfilled until Christ exercises dominion in the kingdom age. And the kingdom age happens to be described as the Sabbath, the millennial rest, the Sabbath. It's that which is referred to in verse 1, 'O Yahweh our Adoninu (actually it's a plural term), 'O Yahweh (He who will become) our rulers', of which we are included in our immortal state, b&s, 'How excellent, (how majestic) is thy name in all the earth (that is not true today, but it will be true in the Sabbath). 'Who hast set thy glory above the heavens' (that is, over all governments; He exercises complete power in the earth, hence the following passage, verses 6, 7 and 8). Every single thing is subject to this One called, the Son of man, who's made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, and who now awaits, b&s, He awaits His arrival as the Bridegroom, the second Adam, to take His bride, and to exercise dominion on the seventh day (the Sabbath day), in the same way that when God rested after six days of work, He gave authority to the man and to the woman. He said to the first Adam, 'have dominion'; when did they exercise that dominion? they exercised it on the seventh day while God rested. And, so it will be in the kingdom age, that you and I as the bride of Christ, the second Adam, will exercise dominion with Him, during the seventh day, while the angels rest. That's why Paul says in Hebrews 2, 'He has not put in subjection, the world to come, to the angels'; it's not their job. It's our job, it is our privilege as the bride of Christ to be there with Him; that's what Psalm 8 is about. Psalm 8 is based upon Genesis chapter; now we saw that in our last consideration several years ago, but we thought we'd cover that ground again.

But that's not really what I wanted to say about this subject of the 'Son of man' so much because, of course, it is a common title in the scriptures, and as you can see from the transparency, 'Son of man' is used 92 times in the book of Ezekiel, who is, of course, a type of Christ, and you never find the definite article used; he is never called the Son of man because he is only a type. There is only one the Son of man and that is our Lord Jesus Christ. But because Ezekiel is a type of Christ, b&s, he's called 'son of man', and what is Ezekiel about? Well, it begins, it bursts upon us with the vision of the cherubim sweeping through the earth to establish the throne of David which is there at the end of chapter 1, with the rainbow above it to indicate that the time of peace, after war, has come. And it ends with a series of events beginning with the restitution of Yahweh's people, Israel, chapters 36 and 37, with the overthrow of Gog (chapter 38), with the cleansing of the land and the subjugation of the nations (chapter 39). And then, in chapters 40 to 48, the specifications of the temple and of the land, and the inheritance of the tribes and of you and me as part of Abraham's seed. And all through that, b&s, Ezekiel is called 'son of man': 'son of man, set thy face against Gog of the land of Magog', why use that title? Is it referring to Ezekiel? or, as a type of Christ, is it referring to His humanity? Of course not, it is referring to His divine delegated authority to exercise dominion upon the earth. And when we read that phrase 'son of

man' in Ezekiel, let us not exclude ourselves from it, because we are there as part of the second Adam; part of His body, His bride, to exercise dominion with Him on the seventh day.

Let's take this a step further into the New Testament. When we come to this term, 'the Son of man', in the New Testament, we find that the term occurs 89 times, 85 of those in the gospel records. It is used of Christ exercising dominion as the faithful and obedient 'Second Adam' in overpowering sin and death. 32 times in Matthew, 15 times in Mark, 26 in Luke, and 12 in John. When you think about that, that's interesting: Matthew's gospel is, of course, about the King and the lion is the face of the cherubim and is the focus of attention in Matthew, the King; Mark, of course, focuses on the face of the ox of the cherubim, the servant; Luke upon the face of the man; and, John upon the face of the eagle, the spirit. We are familiar with that, but b&s, it is interesting to note that the preponderance of occurrences of this term, the 'son of man', occur in Matthew concerning the King because you see, it's all about the exercising of dominion, and that's what kings do! and we're going to see some fascinating occurrences. Now, I guess there are some people out there saying to me, 'hold on, how do you prove this?' Well, I invite you to do something, I invite you to take out a concordance and to look up the phrase 'the Son of man' in the New Testament, and to follow it through, and have a look carefully at the context of every single one of those cases, and see whether or not you can find just one, where the emphasis is upon Christ's connection with humanity (that is, that the emphasis is about Him being a man). You won't find one, what you will find are passages like those back, for instance, in Mark chapter 2.

I'll just give you a couple of cases to demonstrate this point, and you can follow up the rest for yourself. In Mark chapter 2 we read of the case of the healing of the man who had palsy; who was lowered down through the roof by his 4 friends in the early part of the chapter. Verse 5, 'And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. And the Pharisees and the scribes were horrified, and they said, (and quite rightly so from one perspective), verse 7, 'why doth this man thus speak blasphemy, who can forgive sins but God only?' Who can forgive sins, b&s, but God only! So, in that sense, they were correct. Verse 8, 'immediately when Jesus perceived in His Spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, 'why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, arise, take up thy bed and walk?'; but, look at this, 'BUT that ye may know that the Son of man has 'exousia' (1849) delegated authority) on earth to forgive sins; He saith to the sick of the palsy, Arise, etc.' See what that's saying? He forgave sins on God's behalf, He had delegated authority from His Father to exercise dominion on the earth, and part of that was to forgive sins.

Have a look at John chapter 5. (Now, we could multiply these, in fact, we could do 89 of them but we won't, we'll just take a couple.) John 5, now here's a context in which we find the Lord, (and if you read it from verse 18 it's quite a remarkable context, but we haven't got time to do that, but if you like highlighting certain things in your bible, here's a useful exercise), read from verse 17, I guess, where He said, 'My Father worketh

hitherto, and I work'; now, it's in the context of those words that He goes on to say (because they had accused Him of making Himself equal to God), verse 19, 'That the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise'. So, you see, have you got the idea? the Father does something, and the Son does it; so He's been delegated to act on God's behalf. 'My Father works hitherto, and I work', and now it's in that context as you go down and you see that He talks about what the Father does and what the Son does as well. We come down then to verse 27, 'And He hath given Him authority to execute judgment also'; so, the Father has given Christ the authority to execute judgment also, and you and I wouldn't have put this, would we? we wouldn't have said this. If I was writing this gospel uninspired, (and I wouldn't attempt it but if I was) what I would have said is, that God gave Christ authority to execute judgment because He was the Son of God, wouldn't you? (come on you can nod your head!) that's what I would have done, and so would you, but the scripture doesn't say that. It says 'because He's the Son of man', which is telling us beyond all dispute, that the title 'the Son of man' is emphasizing above all things that what we have here is a person who has that enormous privilege, just the one man who can exercise that enormous privilege of acting on behalf of God, on the earth!: To heal people, to forgive people, to exercise dominion over the ailments and afflictions of flesh, to lift the burdens from men. What an enormous privilege that was, and He recognized that and it was all summed up in that phrase, the Son of man.

Now what about the Sabbath then, and the Son of man? We've already mentioned something about this; perhaps this might summarize what we've done thus far, and add one or two additional points. As we've suggested and as you are fully aware, the Sabbath prefigures the millennium during which divine dominion will be exercised in the earth. The Son of man, as we've seen, is a title of Christ delegated to exercise that dominion over all carnal things on earth: because Christ, the second Adam, claimed by right and His own personal performance, the position that had been forfeited by the first Adam through sin, He deliberately taught and healed on the Sabbath day. Have you got that point, b&s and young people? It wasn't that He wanted to antagonize the Jews. It wasn't that He wanted to, in some way, trample upon the Law which said, 'thou shalt do no work on the Sabbath'. None of those reasons came into the picture at all. He was compelled, He was obligated because He was the Son of man to perform miracles on the Sabbath day. He had no choice, if He had not done so, He would not have been true to the prophecy, that the second Adam would exercise dominion on the seventh day, with His bride, while God rested. I hope that that is reasonably clear in your minds, because if it isn't, we're not going to make much sense of the miracles He performed on the Sabbath day? He laid claim to the Divinely delegated authority to exercise, therefore, dominion over sin and death, and that was best done on the seventh day.

Let's now come back to Mark chapter 2, and let's focus in upon this section that we read, at the end of Mark chapter 2, and if time permits, we'll come into the 3rd chapter.

Now, what we've got here is perhaps one of the most important little summaries about this subject that you're ever likely to meet, therefore, it's very important that we get to the bottom of it. In Mark 2 and verses 27 and 28, Christ makes the statement, 'the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath'. You see, the problem with the Jews was, that through their rabbinical teachings, through their very narrow and shallow interpretation of the Sabbath law, the Sabbath ruled Jewish life, and still does to a certain extent today, it ruled Jewish life in a way that was never intended by God; it had complete dominion over man. When Christ came, He exercised dominion on the Sabbath day; He showed how the Sabbath day should have been used by man. And He, of course, being preeminent as the Son of man, went a step further than that; and we're going to see what the Sabbath was intended to do, and what we were supposed to do on the Sabbath. And I say 'we', not just Israel, but we; what we were suppose to do on the Sabbath, and we're going to see that illustrated very clearly, by a common symbol.

Everybody here in this room (and I'm not aware of anybody who doesn't have two hands), everybody in this room has in their own frame two symbols of the Sabbath day, and what they were meant to be used for. Some of you have heard this before, so it's not of any mystery to you, but there will be some of you looking at me and saying, 'this fellow is mad', Well, I'm not quite as mad as I look, and as you'll see, when we turn to the scriptures, the symbol is very clear. THE OPEN HAND, b&s and young people, the open hand is Yahweh's symbol, so that you can't miss it! You've got 2 of them, you use it all the time, every day, you're using it now; the open hand is the symbol of what we should be doing on the Sabbath day. And that's why, you see, the first time we encounter a miracle that Christ performs on the Sabbath (as far as I'm aware) it is the miracle of healing a man with a withered hand, have you got that? It's the miracle of curing this problem of a withered hand'; a withered hand is a closed hand, and the man ends up with an open hand, and the Lord does that on the Sabbath day.

Now, don't get too concerned about that, we'll get to it in due time; it's important at this point that we understand that in the context of this miracle, these words which proceeded it, are laying the foundations for what comes. So, verse 27, He says, 'the Sabbath was made for man'; now, in the Greek there is an article here, the Sabbath was made the man; the word 'for' is the Greek word 'dia' (1063) as you can see from that transparency, the Interlinear bible translates it, 'on account of'; 'dia' normally means 'through', but the idea could be 'on account of'. So, let's just read that passage again and spell it out as we've done on the transparency. 'The Sabbath was made on account of the man, and not the man on account of the Sabbath'. The Jews had it the wrong way around; the Sabbath dominated their life, it ruled them; but the Sabbath had not been made for any other purpose than that man might gain some benefit from it; and that benefit would be gained by man exercising God's authority on the Sabbath. We're going to see how that we can do that!

The next verse, verse 28 says,(and this is the conclusion), 'Therefore, the Son of man

is Lord also of the Sabbath'. Now, when it says 'Lord' there, that's the word 'kurios' in the Greek (2962), and it means 'supreme in authority' or 'the controller' of the Sabbath. So, you see: He was the second Adam; He came without sin; He was, therefore, able to exercise dominion over carnal things; He took control on the Sabbath; and, while all the Jews were saying, 'oh, no, you can't do that', He was out there with the open hand, healing, curing, helping, giving. That was the difference, b&s, the Sabbath ruled them, He ruled the Sabbath. Isn't that amazing, it is so typical, isn't it, of the Jews, that they had the whole thing upside down; here were the people who had the Law given to them, didn't have the faintest clue what it meant. And we need to understand what it means because it applies equally to ourselves, as we shall see.

Let's just take the example that He uses in Mark chapter 2 and verse 23: 'And it came to pass that He went through the cornfield on the Sabbath day, and His disciples began as they went to pluck the ears of corn' (that was against Jewish law; rabbinical law said that if you plucked ears of corn, rubbed them in your hands to free the grain, to eat it, that was harvesting and threshing. Alright? 'Rabbinical law forbid it). 'And the Pharisees said, 'Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful? He said to them, have you never read what David did when he had need and was an hungered, he and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God, in the days of Abiathar (it was actually another priest) and did eat the showbread which is not lawful to eat, and gave also to them that were with Him?' Have you ever examined that, b&s? the record of that is back, of course, in 1 Samuel chapter 21, it wouldn't do any harm just to take a quick look at that.

The record of 1 Samuel 21 verses 4 to 6, David comes to Nob, and he asks Ahimelech the priest, the father of Abiathar, if there was any bread in the place. And in verse 4, the priest answered David and said, 'there's no common bread under my hand but there is hallowed bread, and if the young men had at least kept themselves from women. And David answered the priest and said unto him, Of a truth, women have been kept from us for about three days since I came out and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. So the priest gave him hallowed bread, for there was no bread there but the showbread that was taken' (now you need to understand that when it says 'that was taken', it should be rendered, 'which had to be removed from before Yahweh to put hot bread in the day that it was taken away'. Now what we're being told here is that David came to Nob on the Sabbath day, and you can follow this through because the showbread was replaced on the Sabbath day. Leviticus 24 verse 8 tells us that that's when they swapped it; the new loaves of bread were placed on the table of shewbread and the old ones taken and removed. And another passage that you can see on the base of that transparency, 1 Chronicles 9 and verse 32 also is helpful in that regard. But the bottom line is this, that David came to Nob on the Sabbath day, and the priests had just taken in the new loaves of showbread and placed them on the table of showbread and taken the old ones out, and he took them and said, 'I'll have them, thank you very much! Now, that's an awesome request, isn't it? he had no right to that

as an ordinary citizen of Israel, why would he ask for it? Have you ever thought about that? Well, I'll tell you something, b&s, we could spend a whole bible school on the mind of David, and not exhaust the subject, and demonstrate that David already knew, he already knew that he would be king of Israel, and that when he became king of Israel, he would bring the ark of God from its resting place, to a tent that he prepared for it, which would be quite separate from the tabernacle which was then at Gibeon, and that when the ark came to Zion he would go out, not in kingly robes, but in a linen ephod, the ephod of the priest, that he would act both as a king and a priest on that day, after the order of Melchizedek, and like Melchizedek he would distribute (as he did) bread and wine to his people, who consisted not just of Jews, but of, at least half a million, Gentiles as well, who would join themselves to the covenants of Israel, and who are now part of the family of God. He got all of that from Genesis chapter 14. He understood all about the work of Christ from Genesis 22. He knew it was all centred in Jerusalem, in Zion, that's why he brought the ark there. And he knew it would be over and above the Law, that's why he didn't put the ark in the tabernacle of Moses; it was bereft of its most important piece of furniture because the ark was placed in a separate tent that David constructed in Zion.

The mind of that man, b&s, was absolutely amazing; no wonder he is called 'a man after God's own heart'. That's not necessarily talking about David's character as such, although he was a merciful man and a just man, it's talking about David's understanding of the Divine mind, of the wonderful concepts that were there in the early books of the bible, which he studied diligently; there was no one like him with the understanding of divine things in his times. He was head and shoulders, like Saul physically David was head and shoulders above the rest of the nation spiritually. His mind, b&s, was steeped in these principles; and when He came to Ahimelech at Nob and it was the Sabbath day, David looking back upon all of those things and going right back to Genesis chapter 1, and knowing he was the anointed king of Israel, not with any conceit or pride, could say to the priest, 'that's mine, thank you, I'll have that!'

Isn't that awesome? and that's the case that Christ quotes, as the omni-present critic, the Pharisee - 'but that's not lawful'. The Son of man is supreme in the Sabbath! He's Lord of the Sabbath! You see, b&s, He knew where He was in the scheme of things, He knew why He'd been sent and He was determined to exercise dominion on the Sabbath day. And there's a greater day coming when He will exercise that together with you and me.

Now for our second platform. The matter of the open hand! I want to quickly take you through several Old Testament passages, (excuse me if I get a bit excited about this, but it's very hard not to do so). I want you to come back with me, b&s, to Deuteronomy chapter 15 and I want to demonstrate beyond all dispute in your minds that whenever you think of the Sabbath, and what ought to be done upon it, you'll think of the open hand; that when you look at your open hand you'll think 'Sabbath'. Okay? Now, we are human beings that very often live by habit, second nature they call it. I want you to



try and exercise that this week till you get to the point where, open hand means to you 'principles of the Sabbath'.

Deuteronomy 15, have a look at this chapter, this is the chapter that deals with the year of release in the 7th year, the Sabbath year. You'll see that that is, of course, the subject of verse 1; 'At the end of every 7 years thou shalt make a release (a remitting), and this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth aught unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother, because it is called Yahweh's release. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again; but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release'. Now for the first time in the English we've met the word 'hand', but actually there are 6 occurrences of the Hebrew word 'yad' (3027) in this chapter, and the first one occurs in verse 2. You can't see it there in the English because in the second line where it says 'every creditor', if you've got the same margin in your bible as I have in mine, in my margin it says for the word 'creditor', Heb. 'master of the lending of his hand'. That is an actual, literal translation of the Hebrew (1167, 4874, 3027) and one of the Hebrew words used there is the word 'yad'. You might like to make note of the fact that that word in the margin, hand, is 'yad'; it is the first of 6 occurrences of the term 'hand' in this chapter. You may wish to highlight the others: we read verse 3 towards the end; come down to verse 7 towards the end; in the beginning of verse 8; towards the end of verse 10; and, in verse 11, you'll find that word 'yad' used; 6 times, b&s, 6 the number of man, 6,000 years, the opportunity for man, 6 days, and the 7th day is a year of release! A Sabbath rest, so the term 'hand' is here deliberately used 6 times in the context of the Sabbath. Let's see if we can ascertain why it is used that way!

Verse 3 told us that 'that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release'. How do you release something with your hand? Well, if I happen to have my hand on this podium (as you call it in this country) and I want to release it, I open it. It's as simple as that! Read on with me, verse 4: 'Save when there shall be no poor among you: (and that was rare) for Yahweh shall greatly bless thee (and, by the way, the word 'bless' 'barak' (1288) is used 5 times in this context, 'grace'); 'Yahweh shall greatly bless thee in the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it. Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy God'. This is about sensitivity, isn't it, b&s? this is all about sensitivity to the way God works. He's blessed you, how about you responding, He's saying in this context; how about you responding and acting like your God! how about you exercising some of the delegated authority He's given to you! He's given blessings into your hands, you haven't earned those things in your own right, you're not worthy of those things, God's given them to you, He's delegated them to you, how about you exercising some of that authority! How are you going to do that!

Verse 7, 'If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee' (you see the emphasis?) 'thou

shalt not harden thine heart (which human beings are inclined to do) nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother'. Shut thine hand, what are you doing with a shut hand? Well, you can't give anything, can you? nothing can come from a shut hand, but much can flow from an open hand. Read on, down to verse 10, 'thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing Yahweh thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: (Christ quotes those words) therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land'. So, in the 7th year, the Sabbath year, Israel were taught, b&s, to open wide their hand because that is the principle of the Sabbath! The Sabbath is about exercising dominion, dominion over what God has delegated to us. He has blessed us, He has given us abundantly, He expects us to respond to that blessing by opening the hand to give. And if it's in the power of your hand, says the Proverb, don't hold back! You've got the power, you've got the decision in your mind; you can harden your heart and close your hand, or you can respond and open it. And that was to be done in the 7th year.

Now, take the next one. Let's come to Isaiah's prophecy; again we could spend a lot of time here, we don't have that time, let's just briefly review it. Isaiah 56, you'll all know it, we were here yesterday in Isaiah 55. Well, in the next chapter of Isaiah, where the Gentiles are referred to again, together with the Jews, we read in verse 1, 'Thus saith Yahweh, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man (the word 'man' is 'enosh') Blessed is the weak mortal man that doeth this, and the son of man' (ben-a-adam, isn't that interesting? the Son of man, son of man - someone delegated with divine authority), 'the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it'. (Now, you want scriptural proof that what speakers are saying is right, don't you? if you didn't, b&s, then there's no use us standing on this platform; people come to bible school to learn and you want to be sure that you're right, don't you? I do, when I'm sitting out there, someone says something, I want to know it's right, I want to see it with my own eyes.) Look at verse 2 again, 'that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it', (what comes next?) 'and keepeth his hand from doing any evil'. Is there a connection between the Sabbath and the hand? Verse 3, 'Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to Yahweh, speak, saying, I'm a dry tree'. Verse 4, 'Thus saith Yahweh to the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please Me, and take hold of my covenant' (chazaq - 2388 = to seize). How do you seize something? how do you hold something? you do it with the hand, don't you? Verse 6 says the same thing towards the end, this is a context about people who will end up in Yahweh's house of prayer (verses 7 and 8), both Jew and Gentile, the outcasts of Israel and the stranger that joined himself to Yahweh. We're in there, b&s, and will be there if we've learnt the principle of the Sabbath.

Now, turn a page or so to Isaiah 58, (very quickly). This is a classic context, the prophet is called upon to cry aloud with the throat, verse 1, as the word means. 'To cry

aloud with the throat and to spare not, to lift up his voice like a trumpet and show My people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins'. 'Here were a people, (says verse 2), that seek Me daily, that delight to know my ways as a nation that had done righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God'. Ah! yes, to all intents and purposes, by appearance they were doing the right thing; but what were they really doing? Verse 3) 'Wherefore have we fasted, say they?' (they bring back their recriminations against God) Thou seest not. Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and drive on all your labourers'. What day did they fast? principally, the Sabbath day: you know, the Pharisee of the parable of Luke said, 'I fast twice in a week' (look up the word 'week' (4521) in the Greek and you'll find it's the word 'Sabbath'. I fast twice in the Sabbath, and it's like I was saying, 'I went to two memorial meetings on Sunday'. It was that kind of attitude! They fasted on the Sabbath, 'in your fast ye find pleasure and you drive on all your labourers', so here's all these religious Jews, the religious elite of Israel sitting in the temple debating, (as we shall see in a moment), debating between themselves, fasting with sackcloth on their flesh and dust upon their heads, while out in the field, on the Sabbath day, they are driving on their labourers giving them no rest.

Verse 4, 'Behold, he says, you fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness'. How do you make a fist? you take an open hand and you close it up until it goes white, and you beat someone with it. 'Is it such a fast that I have chosen? one day' (as it should read), 'one day in a week for a man to afflict his soul? to bow down his head as a bulrush, spread sackcloth under him? do you call this a fast? it's a farce not a fast! What is an acceptable fast to Yahweh?' Verse 6, '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?' How do you do those things, b&s? HOW DO YOU LOOSE THE BANDS OF WICKEDNESS? Ever try and untie a knot with a closed hand? Have you ever tried to undo heavy burdens with a fist? Is it possible to let people go free and to break yokes with a fist? Can you do what verse 7 says with a closed fist? 'Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and hide not thyself from thine own flesh?' Well, of course, you can't do any of those things with a closed hand or a fist!

What's this context all about? Keeping a fast, a proper fast on the Sabbath. You come down with me to verse 13, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of Yahweh, honourable; and shalt honour it (not him, 'it', that's how it should read), honour it, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; Then shalt thou delight thyself in Yahweh;' (the word 'delight' (6026) has the idea, b&s, of exquisite delight). 'And I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father'. How would you interpret the phrase 'riding upon the high places of the earth'? If I was asked to interpret that I

would say that's Christ and the saints exercising dominion in the earth, isn't it? that's them exercising government, riding upon the high places of the earth? Isn't that what the Sabbath's all about? And these people are going to be there because they've learnt to open their hand. They've learnt to undo heavy burdens, they've learnt to take off the bonds and the yoke, and to free people; they give and they keep giving! Do you see what they're called back in Isaiah 58 verse 12, 'and they that shall be of Thee shall build the old waste places' (they're builders) and thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in'. These are people who are positive, they're givers, they know what God's given them, He's given them wonderful blessings and they pass them on with an open hand; and they're doing exactly what their God does.

Have a look at verse 1 of chapter 59, 'Behold, Yahweh's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save'. How do you shorten the hand? Well, we could go to Auntie Marlene and get a knife and cut the fingers off, it would be very effective! but I would much prefer a simpler method: how do you shorten a hand? you close it up like that. Yahweh's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; BUT, verse 3, 'Your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity', how do you get blood on your hands? Well, you get hold of a knife, and clenched it with a fist, and stab someone, or you beat them with it. 'Yahweh's hand is not shortened', have a look at verse 16, 'And He saw that there was no 'ish', no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him'. And on the end of the divine arm, b&s, there was an open hand. Are you beginning to see why the Lord Jesus Christ did miracles on the Sabbath day? and why the first Sabbath miracle was a man cured of a withered hand?

You come back to Mark chapter 3. Verse 1 says, 'He entered again into the synagogue', (another Sabbath; note down there Luke 6:6, the first Sabbath after Passover, not the one of the previous chapter where they had gathered the corn), 'and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched Him', (can you see them, the omnipresent critic, they watched Him), 'whether He would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse Him. And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth'. (He was in the middle of their synagogue, when He stood forth; you can have a look at other contexts, but note the margin for Mark 3:3 for the 'stand forth' in the Greek, arise, stand forth in the midst, Luke 6:8 reads like that). Now, if I got someone to stand up, someone at the back, a withered hand man (we haven't got any here, but just imagine we've got one), 'you, you over there, you stand forth in the midst!' can you imagine what the effect would be? Everybody would be looking at him! Why does the Lord ask him to stand in the middle? because He wants him to represent everybody in that synagogue because all of these people who stood there, the critic, all of them, b&s, if you were to look inside their brain spiritually to see the shape of their brain, it was like that! shrivelled up - waiting for Christ, 'we'll get Him; you wait, we'll get Him'. Have a look at verse 6, 'they took counsel straightway, how they might destroy Him'; so, when they went out the doors of the synagogue they all

went out with brains like that! STAND FORTH IN THE MIDST, because you, my son, represent their way of thinking, and your withered hand is like their brains!

Verse 4, 'He said to them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil?' (Lawful, to save life or to kill!) 'But they held their peace' (because their brain was like a clenched fist). 'And when He had looked (can you see the exasperation on the face of our Lord, b&s, here is the Son of man who is Lord of the Sabbath,) 'He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts' (like a fist). 'He said to the man, Stretch forth thine hand, and it was restored whole like the other'. He was trying to do for them, b&s, what our God is trying to do for us. He had delegated us to act like He acts: to have an open mind, to give, to freely give, to be positive, to build, to restore, to release, to cover the naked, to give and to keep on giving until it hurts, because that's what it means to be the bride of the Son of man; for tomorrow with Him we shall exercise dominion together on the Sabbath.