

THE DAVAR BIBLE SCHOOL

Bible

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON 10

An Open Letter from the Dean

Greetings and welcome to our growing family of Davar Bible School correspondence course students. This is a totally new and different kind of Bible study course. This informative course of study will help you understand the clear, simple, plain truths of your Bible. The only textbook you will need for this correspondence course is your Bible. You will find these studies fresh and interesting, not dull and dry. You will be richly rewarded with enlightening new truth in each lesson. There is no tuition or cost to you whatsoever, this course is absolutely free of charge. Your enrollment has already been paid by the voluntary freewill tithes and offerings of those who have elected to support this teaching. Those who wish to support this work are gladly welcomed as coworkers in this important effort to proclaim truth to all people. As you read each lesson, make sure you look up each Scripture that is cited. A separate test booklet is provided for each lesson. This way you can keep the lessons for further study, returning only your test booklet to be graded by your teacher. (Alternatively you may just email your answers to us.) It is our prayer that Elohim will bless you as you seek to understand His word.

- James Trimm

Davar Bible School
Beit Netzarim Yeshiva
P.O. Box 471
Hurst, TX 76053
U.S.A.
jstrimm@yahoo.com

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LESSON 10

Most Christians today profess that Sunday is the Sabbath. Others will say that the Sabbath has been done away with and replaced by Sunday “the Lord’s Day” as the day of worship for the “Church” . This belief has been widely accommodated even in the mainline of the Messianic Jewish movement. For example regarding Sunday worship Daniel Juster writes:

"...Sabbath is a day of crucial significance to Jewish identity. The principle of weekly rest, worship and renewal is one of universal significance. In this sense, the Sabbath principle is a spiritual and humanitarian guide for all peoples. Christians are free to incorporate this principle on Sunday or other days. The seventh day Sabbath for Israel is a special central sign of the Covenant between Israel and God." (Jewish Roots p. 195)

Even the First Fruits of Zion publication Take Hold says:

"There is nothing wrong with worshipping on Sunday. There is nothing biblically wrong with going to a place of worship on a Sunday and becoming as much involved as one desires.... It [the Sabbath] can be honored fully, even if one worships on Sunday or any other day of the week.... we suggest you inform your friends... that you do not have a problem with worshipping on a Sunday just as long as they do not insist that it be called 'the Sabbath.'" (Take Hold by Ariel and D'vorah Berkowitz pp. 239-240)

And David Stern writes in his Jewish New Testament Commentary:

"There are today all kinds of sects and denominations that likewise create false guilt by non scriptural teaching-- for example... that observing one day rather than another as a day of worship is a sin..." (JNT Commentary p. 280)

Is it really true that the Sabbath is just a principle that gentile Christians are free to incorporate on Sunday? Is it really only crucial to Jewish identity? Is it really OK to make Sunday our day of worship? Is it really unscriptural to teach that observing the seventh day (Saturday) rather than Sunday as a day of worship is a sin? To find the answer to this question, lets leave what all of these men have said behind, and see what

the Scriptures actually say about this issue. Which day is the Sabbath? What day is our day of worship? Is it only a principle? Is it only for Jews?

The Sabbath was Created

In speaking of the Sabbath Yeshua said:

And he said to them, The Sabbath was created
for a son of man, and not a son of man for the Sabbath.
Thus also, the Son of Man is the Adonai of the Sabbath.
(Mark 2:27-28)

Now there is a lot of information packed into this saying of Yeshua. First of all Yeshua tells us that the Sabbath was “created”. When Elohim created the universe, he did not just create space, but time as well. The Sabbath was actually “created”. Now if we turn to Colossians 1:16 we read:

And by him (Messiah) was created everything that
is in heaven and on earth, and all that is seen, and
all that is not seen...
(Col. 1:16)

Therefore the Sabbath was created by Messiah. Yeshua is Adonai of the Sabbath because he created the Sabbath.

When did Messiah create the Sabbath? The answer is found in the Torah:

And on the sixth day Elohim finished His work which
He made; and he rested on the seventh day from all His
work which he had made.
And Elohim blessed the seventh day, and set it apart;
because that in it He rested from His work which Elohim
in creating had made.
(Gen. 2:2-3)

Elohim finished his work on the sixth day, but he finished his creation on the seventh day. Elohim created the Sabbath not by working, but by resting. Notice that he blessed the seventh day and set it apart. Not just that seventh day, but every seventh day throughout time.

Don't Tread on Me

The Seventh day was set apart from the time of creation. It was set apart because it's Creator was Adonai of the Sabbath and was empowered as the Creator to make it set

apart. What does it mean for something to be “set apart” (often translated “holy” or “sacred”)? Well when YHWH addressed Moshe from the burning bush He told Moshe “put off your shoes from off your feet, where the place you stand is set apart ground.” (Ex. 3:5). This ground was set apart, it belonged to YHWH not to man, it was to be treated with respect, it was not to be trampled on. In the same way the Sabbath is set apart. It belongs to YHWH not to man, it is to be treated with respect and is not to be trampled on. As we read in Isaiah 58:13-14:

If you turn away your foot because of the Sabbath,
from pursuing your business on My set apart day;
and call the Sabbath a delight,
and the set apart of YHWH honorable;
and shall honor it, not doing your wonted ways,
nor pursuing your business, nor speaking thereof;
Then shall you delight yourself in YHWH,
and I will make you to ride upon the high places of the earth,
and I will feed you with the heritage of Ya'akov your father;
for the mouth of YHWH has spoken it.
(Is. 58:13-14)

The Sabbath is set apart because it is His set apart day. It is not our day to do with as we please. We must not trample on the Sabbath and treat it as our own, it belongs to YHWH.

Who was Sabbath Made for?

Another important question is “who was the Sabbath made for?”. Some have taught that the Sabbath was first given as part of the Mosaic Covenant on Mount Sinai and is for the Jews only. Daniel Juster alludes to this idea when he says:

"...Sabbath is a day of crucial significance to Jewish identity. The principle of weekly rest, worship and renewal is one of universal significance. In this sense, the Sabbath principle is a spiritual and humanitarian guide for all peoples. Christians are free to incorporate this principle on Sunday or other days. The seventh day Sabbath for Israel is a special central sign of the Covenant between Israel and God."
(Jewish Roots p. 195)

But what does Messiah say? Who was the Sabbath made for? Why did YHWH rest on the Sabbath... was He tired? Clearly He was not tired as we read that He “faints not, neither is weary” (Is. 40:28). So although he rested on the Shabbat from his work, this was to set the example for us, he did not need to rest so he did not create the Sabbath for himself. Messiah said:

...The Sabbath was created
for a son of man, and not a son of man for the Sabbath.
Thus also, the Son of Man is the Adonai of the Sabbath.
(Mark 2:27-28)

The one who created the Sabbath tells us who he created the Sabbath for. He did not create the Sabbath for the Jews only but he created the Sabbath for “a son of man” (all men). When the commandment to keep the Sabbath was given at Sinai (Ex. 20:8) YHWH said “Remember the Sabbath...” How could YHWH ask them to remember something they had never heard of before? In fact the children of Israel were already observing the Sabbath in Exodus 16 before the ten commandments were given in Exodus 20. The Sabbath transcends the Mosaic Covenant.

However even if the Sabbath had been part of the Mosaic Covenant, it would not have meant that the Sabbath was only for Jews. The Torah says that “One Torah shall be to him that is home born, and unto the stranger that sojourns among you.” (Ex. 12:49). Yeshua sent his Jewish talmidim (disciples) out to “teach all the goyim (gentiles)... and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Mt. 28:19-20).

The Sabbath was not created simply for “the Jews” but for all mankind. Thus when there was a debate over whether gentiles needed to be circumcised to be saved, the Jerusalem assembly commented:

For Moshe, from the first generations, had proclaimers
in every city in the synagogues, who read him on every
Sabbath.
(Acts 15:21)

They assumed that gentile believers would be going to synagogue and hearing “Moses” (the Torah; the Five Books of Moses) read every Sabbath.

The Sabbath was created and set apart for all mankind at the time of creation. It was therefore kept by such as Adam, Enoch, Noah and Avraham.

Who Done It?

So if the Sabbath was created and set apart by Messiah at the time of creation, who changed the day of worship to Sunday?

Many people have been misled into believing that Constantine was responsible for the corruption and Gentilization of Christianity and moving the day of worship to Sunday.

On 7 March 321, Constantine I did in fact decree that Sunday was to be observed as the Roman day of rest saying:

On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits because it often happens that another day is not suitable for grain-sowing or vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.

While Constantine certainly added to the apostasy of early Christianity, he was not the first. It was in fact Ignatius of Antioch who rebelled against the Jerusalem Council, usurped their authority, seceded from Judaism, declared the Torah to have been abolished, replaced the Seventh Day Sabbath with Sunday worship and founded a new, non-Jewish religion which he named "Christianity".

Paul said to the Ephesians on his last visit to them:

Watch, therefore, over your nefeshot
and over the flock which the Ruach HaKodesh
has appointed you overseers [bishops]
that you feed the assembly of Messiah,
which he purchased by his blood.
I know that after I am gone
fierce wolves will enter in among you
without mercy upon the flock.
And also from among you there will rise up men speaking
perverse things, so that they might turn away the talmidim
to follow after them.
(Acts 20:28-30)

Paul seems to indicate that after his death leaders would begin to rise up from the overseers [Bishops] in his stead that would draw people to follow themselves and draw them away from Torah. In fact Paul died in 66 C.E. and the first overseer (Bishop) of Antioch to take office after his death was Ignatius in 98 C.E.. Ignatius fulfilled Paul's words precisely. After taking the office of Bishop over Antioch Ignatius sent out a series of epistles to other assemblies. His letters to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallianns, Romans, Philadelphians and Smyrnaeans as well as a personal letter to Polycarp overseer of Smyrnaea have survived to us.

The Ancient Nazarene Historian and commentator Hegesippus (c. 180 CE) writes of the time immediately following the death of Shim'on, who succeeded Ya'akov HaTzadik as Nasi of the Nazarene Sanhedrin and who died in 98 CE:

Up to that period (98 CE) the Assembly had remained like a virgin pure and uncorrupted: for, if there were any persons who were disposed to tamper with the wholesome rule of the proclaiming of salvation, they still lurked in some dark place of concealment or other. But, when the sacred band of Emissaries had in

various ways closed their lives, and that generation of men to whom it had been vouchsafed to listen to the inspired Wisdom with their own ears had passed away, then did the confederacy of godless error take its rise through the treachery of false teachers, who, seeing that none of the emissaries any longer survived, at length attempted with bare and uplifted head to oppose the proclaiming of the truth by proclaiming "knowledge falsely so called."
(Hegesippus the Nazarene; c. 185 CE; quoted by Eusebius in Eccl. Hist. 3:32)

Hegesippus indicates the apostasy began the very same year that Ignatius became bishop of Antioch!

Up until the time of Ignatius, matters of dispute that arose at Antioch were ultimately referred to the Jerusalem Council (as in Acts 14:26-15:2). Ignatius usurped the authority of the Jerusalem council, declaring himself as the local bishop as the ultimate authority over the assembly of which he was bishop, and likewise declaring the same as true of all other bishops and their local assemblies. Ignatius writes:

...being subject to your bishop...
...run together according to the will of God.
Jesus... is sent by the will of the Father;
As the bishops... are by the will of Jesus Christ.
(Eph. 1:9, 11)

...your bishop...I think you happy who are so joined to him,
as the church is to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is to the Father... Let us take heed
therefore, that we not set ourselves
against the bishop, that we may be subject to God....
We ought to look upon the bishop, even as we would
upon the Lord himself.
(Eph. 2:1-4)

...obey your bishop...
(Mag. 1:7)

Your bishop presiding in the place of God...
...be you united to your bishop...
(Mag. 2:5, 7)

...he... that does anything without the bishop...
is not pure in his conscience...
(Tral. 2:5)

...Do nothing without the bishop.
(Phil. 2:14)

See that you all follow your bishop,
As Jesus Christ, the Father...
(Smy. 3:1)

By exalting the power of the office of bishop (overseer) and demanding the absolute authority of the bishop over the assembly, Ignatius was actually making a power grab by thus taking absolute authority over the assembly at Antioch and encouraging other Gentile overseers to follow suite.

Moreover Ignatius drew men away from Torah and declared the Torah to have been abolished, not only at Antioch but at other Gentile assemblies to which he wrote:

Be not deceived with strange doctrines;
nor with old fables which are unprofitable.
For if we still continue to live according to the Jewish Law,
we do confess ourselves not to have received grace...
(Mag. 3:1)

But if any one shall preach the Jewish law unto you,
hearken not unto him...
(Phil. 2:6)

It is also Ignatius who first replaces the Seventh Day Sabbath with Sunday worship, writing:

...no longer observing sabbaths, but keeping the Lord's day
in which also our life is sprung up by him, and through
his death...
(Magnesians 3:3)

Having seceded from the authority of Jerusalem, declared the Torah abolished and replacing the Sabbath with Sunday, Ignatius had created a new religion. Ignatius coins a new term, never before used, for this new religion which he calls "Christianity" and which he makes clear is new and distinct religion from Judaism. He writes:

let us learn to live according to the rules of Christianity,
for whosoever is called by any other name
besides this, he is not of God...
It is absurd to name Jesus Christ, and to Judaize.
For the Christian religion did not embrace the Jewish.
But the Jewish the Christian...
(Mag. 3:8, 11)

By the end of the first century Ignatius of Antioch had fulfilled Paul's warning. He seceded from Judaism and founded a new religion which he called "Christianity". A religion which rejected the Torah, and replaced the Seventh Day Sabbath with Sunday Worship.

Wasn't Yeshua Raised on Sunday?

The reason most Christians give for observing Sunday as the day of worship is that Sunday is the day that Messiah was raised from the Dead. The well known Dispensationalist Theologian F.F. Bruce in answering the question "Why do Christians observe Sunday... instead of Saturday?" writes:

... we need not look for a reason for that when we consider that our Lord's resurrection took place on that day.

(Answers to Questions; F. F. Bruce; p. 242)

Now some Sabbatarians have argued that the resurrection was not on Sunday but on Saturday, but that is not really the point. Sabbath keepers are guilty of having allowed Sunday keepers to change the subject. The question is not "which day was Messiah resurrected?" because there is not one word in the Scriptures about observing that day as the day of worship in place of the Sabbath. The only question before us is "which day is the Sabbath?" and does man have authority to make another day set apart and transplant the day of worship to that other day?

Is Sunday Worship Mentioned in the "New Testament"?

Absolutely not. Sabbath is repeatedly represented as the day of worship (Acts 13:14-15, 42-44; 15:21; 16:12-15; 18:1-14). However there are three texts which Sunday keepers have cited to support Sunday keeping. F. F. Bruce cites Acts 20:7; 1Cor. 16:2 and Rev. 1:10 as supposed examples of Sunday keeping in the "New Testament". Let us examine each of these:

Acts 20:7 "And on the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread, Paul spoke with them because the next day he was ready to depart, And he continued to speak until the middle of the night."

In fact this meeting cannot refer to a Sunday morning "church service" because it says "he continued to speak until the middle of the night" (20:7). Certainly we are not to believe that Paul was so long winded as to have spoken for well over twelve hours! Clearly this was an evening meeting. This is also evidence in the next verse which states "there were many lamps burning in the upper room in which they were assembled"

(20:8). Jewish days run from evening to evening (Gen. 1:5-31; Lev. 23:27, 32). (Thus the Sabbath runs from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday). An evening meeting on the “first day of the week” by Jewish reckoning would be what we call Saturday night. In fact Jews have always and still do gather on Saturday night for a service called Havdalah. Havdalah is a service held to mark the end of the Sabbath and initiate the beginning of the week.

Paul had been resting on the Sabbath and was prepared to leave at daybreak (i.e. “the next day”). This usage of the phrase “the next day” or “tomorrow” to refer to daybreak rather than the next calendar day is common in ancient Jewish usage (Gen. 19:34 for example).

1Corinthians 16:2 On every first of the week, each man from you in his home, let him lay aside and keep that which he is able, lest when I should come then collections will occur.

This is another passage which F. F. Bruce (and other Sunday Keepers) cite as a supposed “Sunday Worship” service. However there is nothing in 1Cor. 16:2 to indicate a Sunday meeting is involved. In fact the Aramaic text of 1Cor. 16:2 says plainly htybb “in his home”. Unfortunately the Greek translator rendered this with par eautw “by himself” or “at home”. Many English translations from the Greek have omitted this phrase entirely. Surprisingly F. F. Bruce, who cites this passage as support for Sunday worship, admits in his commentary that this was not taking place in a Sunday assembly at all. He writes about this verse:

Nor were the individual sums to be taken to church and handed over to the community treasurer: each member is to put something aside par’ heauto, ‘at home’, and store it up there.
(1 and 2 Corinthians; F. F. Bruce; p. 158)

In one book Bruce cites 1Cor. 16:2 as evidence of a Sunday Church service, then in his own commentary to the same verse he admits that this passage takes place in individual homes and that the “sums” (more likely it was food) were never even “taken to church”.

This passage is simply telling us that on the first day of each week, the Corinthians were to start out their work week by setting aside whatever food they are able to so that no collection would need to be made at the last minute when Paul arrived.

Revelation 1:10 And I was in the spirit on the first [day] of the week...

The Aramaic has “first [day] of the week”. The Greek translator rendered this “the Lord’s Day”. There is no worship service involved in this passage. The event took place at the time of the firstfruits offering, which always occurs on the day after a Sabbath during Passover (Lev. 23:9-14) it begins the counting of seven weeks (forty nine days)

until Shavuot (Pentecost) (Lev. 23:15-22). The Book of Revelation is filled with firstfruits and Passover imagery (the lamb, the firstborn etc.). After telling us this was the first day of the week, the text tells us that Yochanan sees seven menorah's of gold (1:12) (each menorah has seven branches $7 \times 7 = 49$). These were representing the 49 days counted from the firstfruits offering on the first day of the week during Passover, until Shavuot.

What Would Yeshua Do?

A common T-shirt in Christian circles today says WWJD "What Would Jesus Do?" The implication is that we should act as Yeshua acted. As the Scripture says:

He who says, I am in him, ought to conduct himself according to his conduct.
(1Jn. 2:6)

So how did Yeshua conduct himself regarding the day of worship?
The Scriptures tell us:

And he entered the Synagogue, on the day of the Sabbath, as he was accustomed.
(Luke 4:16)

Paul himself followed this adage himself saying "Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Messiah" (1Cor. 11:1) thus we also read of Paul that he was also accustomed to going to Synagogue on the Sabbath (Acts 17:1-2).

A Sabbath Day's Journey

The Torah forbids one from going out from ones "place" on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:29). The Pharisees took this to be the "camp" which was defined by the Pharisees as a circle with a radius of 2,000 cubits extending from the center of the Temple (m.Rosh HaShanna 2:5). Now the Mt. of Olives is just outside of this circle and thus the third altar for sacrifices which were to take place "outside the camp" was located on the Mount of Olives (m.Middoth 1:3). Since Acts 1:12 refers to the distance from the Temple to the Mount of Olives as "a Sabbath Day's Journey" it would seem that the Pharisee halacha on this issue of 2,000 cubits (about .7 miles) is to be shared by Nazarenes.

Keeping the Sabbath

The Essene Halacha concerning Shabbat was the strictest of any sect of Judaism. Josephus writes of the Essenes:

"...they [Essenes] are stricter than any other of the Jews in resting from their labors on the seventh day; for they not only get their food ready the day before, that they not be obliged to kindle a fire on that day, but they will not remove any vessel out of its place, nor go to stool thereon."
(Wars 2:8:9)

There is a lengthy discussion of the Sabbath in the Damascus Document, I will include here only some key points:

"No man shall eat on the Sabbath day aught save that which is prepared or perishing (in the field). Nor shall one eat or drink unless in the camp. (If he was) on the way and went down to wash he may drink where he stands, but he shall not draw into any vessel. ... No man shall walk after the animal to pasture it outside his city more than two thousand cubits. None shall lift his hand to smite it with (his) fist. If it be stubborn he shall not remove it out of his house. No man shall carry anything from the house to the outside or from the outside into the house, and if he be in the vestibule he shall not carry anything out of it or bring in anything into it. ... Let not the nursing father take the sucking child to go out or to come in on the Sabbath. ... No man shall help an animal in its delivery on the Sabbath day. And if it falls into a pit or ditch, he shall not raise it on the Sabbath. ... And if any person falls into a place of water or into a place of... he shall not bring him up by a ladder or a cord or instrument. No man shall offer anything on the altar on the Sabbath, save the burnt-offering of the Sabbath, for so it is written 'Excepting your Sabbaths'."
(Damascus Document 10:14-11:18)

Note that the Essene Halacha was so strict as to place Sabbath observance above human life.

On the other hand, Pharisaic Halacha placed human life above the Sabbath. As we read in the Mishna:

Rabbi Mattiah ben Harash said, "He who has a pain in his throat, they drop medicine into his mouth on the Sabbath, because it is a matter of doubt as to danger to life. Any matter of doubt as to danger to life overrides the prohibitions of the Sabbath."
(m.Yoma 8:6)

In the Talmud, the Gemara to this passage elaborates on and explains the reasoning behind this halacha:

BECAUSE IT IS A POSSIBILITY OF DANGER TO [HUMAN] LIFE. Why was it

necessary to add `AND WHEREVER THERE IS DANGER TO [HUMAN] LIFE, THE LAWS OF THE SABBATH ARE SUSPENDED?—Rab Judah in the name of Rab said:

Not only in the case of a danger [to human life] on this Sabbath, but even in the case of a danger on the following Sabbath. How that? If e.g., the [diagnosis] estimates an eight-day [crisis] the first day of which falls on the Sabbath. You might have said, let them wait until the evening, so that the Sabbaths may not be profaned because of him, therefore he informs us [that we do not consider that]. Thus also was it taught: One may warm water for a sick person on the Sabbath, both for the purpose of giving him a drink or of refreshing him, and not only for [this] one Sabbath did they rule thus, but also for the following one. Nor do we say: Let us wait, because perchance he will get well, but we warm the water for him immediately, because the possibility of danger to human life renders inoperative the laws of the Sabbath, not only in case of such possibility on this one Sabbath, but also in case of such possibility on another Sabbath.

(b.Yoma 84b)

Our Rabbis taught: One must remove debris to save a life on the Sabbath, and the more eager one is, the more praiseworthy is one; and one need not obtain permission from the Beth din. How so? If one saw a child falling into the sea, he spreads a net and brings it up — the faster the better, and he need not obtain permission from the Beth din though he thereby catches fish [in his net]. If he saw a child fall into a pit, he breaks loose one segment [of the entrenchment] and pulls it up — the faster the better; and he need not obtain permission of the Beth din, even though he is thereby making a step [stairs]. If he saw a door closing upon an infant, he may break it, so as to get the child out — the faster the better; and he need not obtain permission from the Beth din, though he thereby consciously makes chips of wood. One may extinguish and isolate [the fire] in the case of a conflagration — the sooner the better, and he need not obtain permission from the Beth din, even though he subdues the flames. Now all these cases must be mentioned separately. For if only the case of the [infant falling into] the sea had been mentioned [one would have said, it is permitted there] because meantime the child might be swept away by the water, but that does not apply in the case [of its falling into] the pit, because since it remains [stays] therein, one might have thought, one may not [save it before obtaining permission], therefore it is necessary to refer to that. And if the teaching had confined itself to the case of the pit, [one would have thought, there no permission is required] because the child is terrified but in the case of a door closing upon it, one might sit outside and [amuse the child] by making a noise with nuts, therefore it was necessary [to include that too].

(b.Yoma 84b)

R. Ishmael, R. Akiba and R. Eleazar b. Azariah were once on a journey, with Levi ha-Saddar and R. Ishmael son of R. Eleazar b. Azariah following them. Then this question was asked of them: Whence do we know that in the case of danger to human life the laws of the Sabbath are suspended? — R. Ishmael answered and said: If a thief be found breaking in. Now if in the case of this one it is doubtful whether he has come to take money or life; and although the shedding of blood pollutes the land, so that the Shechinah departs from Israel, yet it is lawful to save oneself at the cost of his life — how much more may one suspend the laws of the Sabbath to save human life! R. Akiba answered and said: If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour etc. thou shalt take him from My altar, that he may die. I.e., only off the altar, but not down from the altar. And in connection therewith Rabbah b. Bar Hana said in the name of R. Johanan: That was taught only when one's life is to be forfeited, but to save life one may take one down even from the altar. Now if in the case of this one, where it is doubtful whether there is any substance in his words or not, yet [he interrupts] the service in the Temple [which is important enough to] suspend the Sabbath, how much more should the saving of human life suspend the Sabbath laws! R. Eleazar answered and said: If circumcision, which attaches to one only of the two hundred and forty-eight members of the human body, suspends the Sabbath, how much more shall [the saving of] the whole body suspend the Sabbath! R. Jose son of R. Judah said: Only ye shall keep My Sabbaths,' one might assume under all circumstances, therefore the text reads: 'Only' viz, allowing for exceptions. R. Jonathan b. Joseph said: For it is holy unto you; I.e., it [the Sabbath] is committed to your hands, not you to its hands.

(b.Yoma 85a-b)

It is important to note that three reasons that are given in the Gemara for relaxing the Sabbath in matters where human life are in doubt are:

1) "... [he interrupts] the service in the Temple [which is important enough to] suspend the Sabbath, how much more should the saving of human life suspend the Sabbath laws!"

(b.Yoma 85b)

2) " If circumcision, which attaches to one only of the two hundred and forty-eight members of the human body, suspends the Sabbath, how much more shall [the saving of] the whole body suspend the Sabbath!"

(b.Yoma 85b; This halacha is dealt with in much greater detail in the Mishna m.Shabbat 18:3-19:2 and in the Gemara of the Talmud in b.Shabbat 128a)

3) " For it is holy unto you; I.e., it [the Sabbath] is committed to your hands, not you to its hands."
(b.Yoma 85b)

(As we will see later, Yeshua uses these exact same three arguments to argue for his own Sabbath Halacha).

However Pharisaic Halacha only permitted the Sabbath regulations to be loosed when a life was in doubt, but not for healing where no life was at stake, as the Mishna says:

They anoint and massage the stomach.
But they do not have it kneaded or scraped...
They do not induce vomiting.
And they do not straighten [the limb of] a child
or set a broken limb.
He whose hand or foot is dislocated
should not pour cold water over them.
But he washes in the usual way.
And if he is healed, he is healed.
(m.Shabbat 22:6 the Gemara is in b.Shabbat 147).

OK so lets review:

Essene Halacha was the strictest of any sect of Judaism and actually maintained that the Sabbath held priority even over a human life.

Pharisaic Halacha differed in maintaining that the Sabbath was to be loosed in matters where a life was in doubt, but did not loose the Sabbath for any healing where a life was not at stake.

Now lets look at Yeshua's Sabbath Halacha....

Plucking Grain on Shabbat (Mt. 12:1-8 = Mk. 2:23-28 = Lk. 6:1-5)

...on the Shabbat... his talmidim... began to pluck the ears from the stalks, and to eat - The activity described is clearly permitted by the Torah in general, though not necessarily on the Shabbat (Duet. 23:26 (23:25 in non-Jewish editions)). According to Pharisaic halacha threshing and reaping were forbidden (mShabbat 7:2f). This was also forbidden by Qumran halacha which stated:

A man may not go about in the field to do his desired activity on the Sabbath... A man may not eat anything on the Sabbath except food already prepared.
(Damascus Document Col. 10; lines 20-22).

Now Yeshua gives the following arguments:

Yeshua cites the story of 1Sam. 21:1-6 (2-7 non-Jewish versions) where David and his men ate the show bread which was only loosed to the cohanim (Lev. 24:5-9). Yeshua argues that the priests do their work on the Shabbat. circumcision (Jn. 7:21-24 & m.Shabbat 18:3-19:2) and sacrifice.

Note the following from Qumran:

No one should offer any sacrifice on the Sabbath except the Sabbath whole burnt offering, for so it is written, "besides your Sabbaths" (Lev. 23:38) (Damascus Document Col. 11 lines 17-18)

Yeshua cites Hosea 6:6 comparing priority of mercy and sacrifice. The word for mercy here is "chesed."

That the Sabbath was created for man and not man for the Sabbath (Mk. 2:27-28) the Talmud makes a similar statement:

Rabbi Jonathan ben Joseph said:
"For it [Sabbath] is holy to you" (Ex. 31:14).
That is, it is committed into your hands, not you into its hands.
(b.Yoma 85b)

Therefore Yeshua argues, "The Son of Man is Adon of the Sabbath." The HRV has the Son of Man as a reference to Yeshua rather than "a son of man" as the common idiom for a human being for two reasons:

1. Context, (as shown here-in)
2. The DuTillet Hebrew texts distinguishes between the two with "Ben HaAdam" for "the Son of Man" and simply "ben adam" for "a son of man." Here DuTillet reads "Ben HaAdam."

Yeshua is not teaching that anyone may pluck and harvest anytime. By comparison under normal circumstances the show bread may not be eaten by a non-cohan. Yeshua's parallel in the argument seems to be that both Yeshua and his students, and David and his mighty men, were on a special mission that was of greater weight than the show bread halacha. He also argues that priestly work, including sacrifice, is loosed on the Sabbath. Again this falls into the same general category, the priests are on a special mission. He argues from Hosea 6:6 that CHESED is of greater weight than the sacrifices. Since CHESED out weighs sacrifice, and sacrifice out weighs Shabbat, then CHESED out weighs Shabbat. Now Yeshua's mission as the Son of Man is of at least as much weight of that of the

Priests and King David, because Yeshua is the Melchizadek figure of Ps. 110:1, 4 who combines both. (note how often Yeshua combines the Son of Man passage of Dan. 7:13 with the Melchizadek passage of Ps. 110:1). So what do we learn? Acts of at least as great a weight as reaping and harvesting, consuming showbread and sacrificing may be performed if CHESED demands it. This was true of King David's mission, the Priest's work, and Yeshua's mission.

Healing the Withered Hand
(Mt. 12:9-13 = Mk. 3:1-6 = Lk. 6:6-11)

The fourth Century "Church Father" Jerome gives the following additional information about this story taken from the Goodnews according to the Hebrews:

In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use which I have lately translated into Greek from the Hebrew and which is called by many people the original of Matthew, this man who has the withered hand is described as a mason, who prays for help in such words as these: "I was a mason seeking a livelihood with my hands: I pray you Yeshua, to restore me my health, that I may not beg meanly for food."
(Jerome; On. Mt. 12:13)

Moreover an 8th to 9th century Commentary on Matthew gives further information which it also cites from the Goodnews according to the Hebrews:

"a man" by name Malchus [Melekh] and he was a mason.
(Commentary on Matthew 12:10; MS: Wurzburg, M.p.th. fol. 61, 8th-9th Century; cited by Bischoff in Sacris Erudiri VI, 1954, 252)

The account in the Goodnews according to the Hebrews adds the added dimension that a mason is here praying on the Sabbath that his hand be healed so that he may engage in work. So we also have here the issue of a work related prayer on the Sabbath.

The man with the withered hand did not have his life in danger. Neither did the lame man or blind man in John nor the woman with an issue of blood or the man with epilepsy in Luke.

Yeshua argues in favor of his halacha in the following ways:

By kol V'khomer (light and heavy). Kol V'Khomer is the first rule of Hillel. It is an argument based on weight. Some mitzvot are of greater weight than others (Mt. 23:23). A Kol V'Khomer argument argues based on weight. If x is true of y then x must even more so be true of z.

Yeshua argues that since it is permitted to rescue an animal from a pit. (Mt. 12:11 and Lk. 14:3-6) it must even more so be permitted to heal a person on the Sabbath. This was in direct conflict with Qumran Halachah:

...if it [an animal] falls into a well or a pit, he may not lift it out on the Sabbath.
(Damascus Document Col. 11 lines13-14)

Yeshua also applies this whole concept to "good deeds" in general:

Mt. 12:12 And is not a man better (tov) than a sheep?
Therefore it is lawful to do well (tov) on the Shabbat.

There is an obvious connection between the Hebrew word TOV in each phrase. The TOV that it is "lawful to do... on Shabbat" in line two is connected to the TOV in the halachic comparison in line one. In other words, the activities permitted in line two are limited by the argument on line one. Unfortunately this very important detail of the wording of this verse is lost in the Aramaic and Greek.

Healing a Crippled Woman
(Lk. 13:10-17)

Yeshua argues that if it is permitted to water an animal on Shabbat, it must also be permitted to heal a person. (Lk. 13:14-17) Even the Qumran Community allowed leading an animal to graze on the Shabbat so long as the animal was not disciplined:

A man may walk behind an animal to graze it outside his city up to two thousand cubits.... If it is uncooperative, he should leave it inside.
(Damascus Document Col. 11 lines 5-7)

Healing a Man with Dropsy
(Lk. 14:1-6)

This passage was discussed above with Matt. 12:11.

Healing a Lame Man (Jn. 5:1-18)

Jn. 5:10 ... It is the Sabbath. It is not permitted to carry your pallet. - Normally carrying an object would be a violation of Shabbat (Jer. 17:21-22) however Yeshua's halacha on Shabbat based on Hosea 6:6 permits acts of CHESED (loving kindness; mercy) on the Shabbat (see comments to Mt. 12:7 for detailed explanation of this halacha). Hosea 6:6 uses "knowledge of Elohim" in synonymous poetic parallelism with CHESED (mercy; loving kindness). Thus if acts of CHESED are permitted based on Hosea 6:6 (as explained in comments to Mt. 12:7) then so are acts which express the "knowledge of Elohim. Since the act of this man who had been lame for 38 years openly carrying his pallet home declared the power of Elohim and expressed the "knowledge of Elohim" to all who saw it, it was permitted by Yeshua's Sabbath halacha.

Circumcision and the Sabbath (Jn. 7:21-24)

7:23 If a man is circumcised on the day of the Sabbath that the Torah of Moshe be not loosed, do you murmur against me because I have healed a whole man on the Sabbath day? (referring back to John 5:1f?)

Similarly we read in the Talmud:

Rabbi Eleazar answered and said: If circumcision which attaches to one only of the two hundred and forty eight members of the human body, suspends the Sabbath, how much more shall [the saving of] the whole body suspend the Sabbath!
b.Yoma 85b

Yeshua here cites an Oral Law halachah of Pharisaic Judaism which permits circumcision on the Shabbat. This halachah he is citing is taught in the Mishna (m.Shabbat 18:3-19:2) and expounded in the Gemara (b.Shabbat 128a).

Healing a Beggar Born Blind (Jn. 9:1-41)

9:16 ...and he formed clay – The phrase appears only in the Old Syriac and adds depth of meaning to the Sabbath healing of John 9. In the Aramaic of the Old Syriac the Pharisaic objection is not that Yeshua healed the man on the Sabbath, but that he formed clay to do so. Forming clay (kneading) is one of the categories of work normally forbidden on the Sabbath (m.Shabbat 7:2).

Conclusion

Yeshua argues that healing on Shabbat must be permitted since the following items of lesser weight are permitted:

- 1) The priests "profane" the Sabbath and are blameless. (Mt. 12), that is, the Priests perform the offerings on the Sabbath, thus the offerings outweigh the Sabbath.
- 2) "If a man is circumcised on the day of the Sabbath that the Torah of Moshe be not loosed, do you murmur against me because I have healed a whole man on the Sabbath day?" (Jn. 7:23)
- 3) The Sabbath was created for man and not man for the Sabbath (Mk. 2:27-28)
- 4) It is permitted to water an animal. (Lk. 13:14-17) Even the Qumran Community allowed leading an animal to graze on the Shabbat so long as the animal was not disciplined:

A man may walk behind an animal to graze it outside his city up to two thousand cubits.... If it is uncooperative, he should leave it inside.

(Damascus Document Col. 11 lines 5-7)

- 5) It is permitted to rescue an animal from a pit. (Mt. 12:11 and Lk. 14:3-6) This was in direct conflict with Qumran Halachah:

...if it [an animal] falls into a well or a pit, he may not lift it out on the Sabbath.

(Damascus Document Col. 11 lines 13-14)

What can we conclude as Nazarene Halacha regarding healing (and good deeds) on the Shabbat?

Healing and good deeds are permitted on the Sabbath, if the matter is of at least as great of halachic weight as: watering an animal; rescuing an animal from a pit or circumcision. Illnesses Yeshua specifically includes in that category are: withered hand; blindness; lameness; issue of blood and dropsy. By making clay on the Sabbath (Jn. 9) to heal the blind man Yeshua gave us Halachic information to define the other side of the matter as well. Matters of at least as low of a halachic weight as making clay, (building and kneading) may be loosed to heal or for good deeds.

(End of lesson ten)