

**PREPARATION FOR LESSON:** Read Harmony of the 4 Gospels, SECTIONS 49-54 (thru the Beatitudes) or Matthew 5:1-26 10:2-4; 12:1-21; Mark 2:23 - 3:19; Luke 6:1-23; John 5

## EXPLANATIONS

**Jews who collected taxes for Rome** were called tax collectors or *publicans*, meaning public servants.

- ♦ **Belief about them** Altho they are Jewish, tax collectors cannot worship in the temple or local synagogues. They can never serve as a witness in court. Their money is contaminated; anyone taking their money is contaminated. They have no hope of ever being accepted by God; repentance is impossible.
- ♦ **Attitudes towards them** Hated by all other Jews because they represent Rome and are guilty of extortion. Seen as scum of the earth, equal to traitors and criminals. In the gospels they are always mentioned with *sinners*, a polite word for *prostitutes*.

**Jesus Claims Deity** in John 5:17-18 when He refers to God as “My” Father.

In Middle East thinking, the Father and first-born son have a relationship of equality, having the same character.

Jesus is claiming the position of first-born son and therefore equality with the Father; He is claiming deity.

The Sanhedrin shows they understand His claim by their accusation and their desire to kill Him for blasphemy.

## JEWISH SANHEDRIN

**The 3 Branches in the first century** - *chief priests, scribes and elders*. Matthew 16:21

**24** chief priests - we know them as *The Sadducees*. They are pro-Greek in their views and beliefs

They oversee priests who serve in the Temple and influence who becomes high-priest. They are an elite group of priests from wealthy Jewish families.

**22** scribes - we know them as *The Scribes, Teachers of Law*. They are pro-Jewish in belief.

They are the part of the Sanhedrin who **teach and explain** the law and the expectation of the Messiah.

Originally, they only taught the 613 God-given laws of Moses. Now they spend all their time teaching *fence* laws - the Mishnah or man-made laws.

**24** elders - We know them as *The Pharisees*. They are older members of the Sanhedrin who are very pro-Jewish. They **enforce** the law. Originally, they were concerned about people breaking Moses' laws. Now all their attention is on people breaking Mishnah laws. They bring them before the Sanhedrin to reprimand, fine or put in prison.

### Their Responsibilities given by God

To teach God's Word by putting it in the language of the people and explaining it.

To preserve Jewish faith by keeping alive the expectation of the coming Messiah.

To guard the faith by investigating anyone who claims to be the Messiah. They must decide for the nation, *Yes, He is our Jewish Messiah or no, He is not our Messiah and this is why.*

### Their False belief about the...

**Mishnah** The oral laws were given at the time of Moses.

Moses' written laws and Jewish oral laws are equal.

It is a greater evil for Jews to break the Mishnah laws than Moses' laws.

**Messiah** He will be a religious leader from the Pharisees and obey all the laws of Mishnah.

He will join them in writing additional laws for Mishnah.

He will be recognized by His support of the Sanhedrin and Mishnah laws.

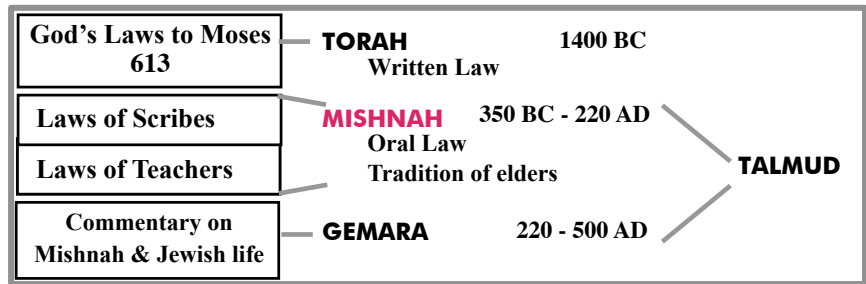
### Their Hypocrisy in Matthew 12:9-14

They criticize Jesus for **healing** on the Sabbath; yet on the Sabbath they start planning to **kill** Jesus.



## BACKGROUND

### Authoritative Jewish Laws



### 12 Apostles

*ones sent* with authority to  
preach/heal.

### Disciples

*those who learn and follow* but  
do not have authority.

Simon	} sons of John	<i>Peter</i> - Greek name; <i>Cephas</i> - Aramaic name both mean <i>rock</i>
Andrew		
James	} sons of Zebedee & Salome named "Sons of Thunder"	(sister of Mary, mother of Jesus) Jn 19:25; Mk. 3:17 Mt. 27:56; Mk. 16:1-2
John		
Philip		
Nathaniel		
Bartholomew		
Matthew		Levi - former tax collector; wrote the 1st gospel
Thomas		(Aramaic) Didymus (Greek) both names mean <i>twin</i>
James #2		son of Alphaeus
Judas Thaddeus		
Simon the Zealot		member of violent resistance group
Judas Iscariot		means <i>man of Kerioth</i> (town in southern Judea)

## SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Purpose – to give the requirement for Jews to enter God's kingdom.

The requirements of Moses' law as taught by the Sanhedrin was not sufficient.

God required both external and internal obedience of Moses' (God's) law.

This standard was impossible for anyone to attain - they needed a Savior.

How to **get right with God** - to meet God's standards. Matt. 5:20

Jewish **Sanhedrin** said – if you are born a Jew, you are automatically in God's kingdom

But if you want a position of honor, you have to keep the outward letter of Moses' law

The most effective way is to keep all the Mishnah laws they have written.

**Jesus** says –

What the Sanhedrin is teaching of how to get right with God is not enough to get you into God's kingdom.

What the Sanhedrin is teaching about the true requirement of Moses' law is not correct. Mt. 5:20

*Unless your rightness is greater than the rightness of the Sanhedrin, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

God requires **outward** obedience and **inward** purity of thought and motive.

The only way to meet that standard is to let God change them on the inside (a new birth)

This will happen when they believe and accept that he is their promised Messiah.

How to know if and when God has changed them - that they **are** right with God

The **Sanhedrin** said, *You will know by how much you do.*

**Jesus** says, *You will know by your changed relationships with God and with others.*

He now gives 8 qualities that prove God has changed them

humility - *poor in spirit*

sensitivity to disobedience – *grieves when disobeys*

meekness - accepting God's authority

desire to obey God - *hunger and thirst for rightness*

merciful – compassionate; responsive to others

right motivations - *pure in heart*

not power hungry - *peacemakers*

accept *persecution* that results from obeying God

Because they are right with God: they will be in His kingdom, will see God, will be called sons of God,

will experience complete comfort and satisfaction and will be enriched by the Holy Spirit (*blessed*).

These are not requirements to **become** right with God; they are evidence one **is** right with God.



## SERMON ON THE MOUNT (continued)

These qualities are in direct contrast to the history of the high priests, the leaders of the Sanhedrin over the past centuries. God had said the role of high priest was to go to the first-born in the family line.

But over the last 400 years, younger brothers or close relatives wanted this highest power of leadership.

So they spread lies, killed the first-born, gave bribes or literally gave the Jewish nation to the Romans, just so **they** could be high priest with absolute authority.

And while doing this, they claimed to be “sons of God”.

So Jesus tells the people,

*Spiritual leaders who are **worthy** to be called sons of God do not use violence and deceit to gain power.*

*They do not fight and kill to get control.*

*Enriched by the Holy Spirit are those who are not power-hungry or cause disunity among believers.*

*Enriched by the Holy Spirit are the peacemakers - for **they** will be called sons of God.*

## APPLICATION

Jesus came as the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. But if that were the only reason, He would have come as King in all the splendor and power of His deity. Instead, even while still being deity ...

Jesus chose to empty Himself of the splendor and power of that deity. Philippians 2:6-8

He chose to come into our world as a helpless human baby.

He chose to live dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit.

He chose to become obedient - to do and say only the things His Father gave Him to do and say.

He made these choices ...

...To represent us - to be one of us, so He could make payment in our place, for *our* sin.

...To be like us. This affects the way **He** prays for us and **we** pray to Him.

When He prays for us, He prays, not just with the power of deity, but also with the empathy of humanity.

He knew what it was like to be tired, hungry, grieve; to be tempted, angry, rejected.

He feels what we feel when He prays for us.

When we pray to Him, He understands how much we need His mercy and grace.

