


## ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION LESSONS 11-20

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### *Lesson 13 Spiritual Hunger*

#### *Matthew 12 1-45*

#### *Jesus teaches the need for spiritual hunger*

#### *Hunger for love and faithfulness*

The cornfields offered grain and rubbing the corn was threshing-work forbidden by strict rabbinic reading of the law. The finger of condemnation by Pharisees drew from Jesus four quotes -one from 1 Samuel 21.6 where David in ravaging hunger was given the bread set on the table of fellowship in the tabernacle. It was compassion offered those loaves. *Second*, the priests in Numbers 28 9-10 should make a Sabbath offering of fine-flour besides other things-which they overlooked-yet the Lord did not blame them! *Third*, as recorded in Isaiah 66 .1 Jesus owns His prerogative as speaker "whose throne is heaven -who is greater than the house men build for Him" *Fourth*, as in Hosea 6.6 the Lord bids the accusers of his disciples value "covenant love" above sacrifice. So he directs the detractors to read about and share His hunger for "covenant love"

#### *Hunger for souls and their welfare*

The man with the withered hand was recognised by the Pharisees as an impossible concomitant of worship when Jesus was there. Neither death nor sickness was possible where He was present and worshipped-*cf* "the woman with the issue". The corollary was-He would heal Sabbath or no Sabbath. This supplied a second ground for contest to Pharisees who considered the practice of healing to be work. For ever Jesus put paid to this view by reference to "pulling a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath". The care of souls and their bodily needs comes first

#### *Hunger for justice-worldwide*

Next the Pharisees take counsel to kill Jesus. The Lord did not court earthly fame. His only plea to those He healed was, "Don't make me famous or widely known." How did this lie with seeking to win the world? The answer lies in Isaiah. He would not discourage the one who was hurt or the one who was weak in witness-He would speak quietly and act as the beloved Son only could-as a Servant and take that humility to the cross-so that the world might see His love for their souls and believe. This message He would declare through those He chose by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. He would win the world by self-giving love.

#### *Hunger (or zeal) for holiness -and the overthrow of Satan in human lives*

The case of the healing of a "blind and speechless man" who was afflicted in his power to communicate and to understand as well as in his spirit by the depressing and possessive power of Satan shows how Christ can reverse the effects of the fall and of disobedience. The depth or invasive nature of this healing is awesome-yet it is painless. The thoroughness is uniquely typical of Jesus. The charge of Beelzebul is countered by the argument that "this would be to weaken any state or city"-it would be folly-and the second argument-"by whom do your children cast out demons?" -and the third "If it is by the power of the Spirit of God-God's kingdom has taken you by surprise-or come before you realised upon you (Greek *φθανα*). The Spirit like a "strong man" keeps the soul Jesus purchased against the invasive power of Satan. So it is gathering in fellowship and healing or scattering and poisoning-we are doing one or other.

#### *Hunger to forgive-for clean lips and a pure heart among men*

Matthew 12.31 is a verse of great significance for the writer. At the age of 13 in 1955 I was converted during an autumn mission held in Newcastle Co. Down following conviction by the Holy Spirit through this text preached by Victor McManus. God searched my whole being and showed me the danger of remaining unforgiven. The heart is like a treasury-of good or evil. The lips are like branches bearing fruit from the root of the heart. Speech in its most offensive form-blasphemy is forgivable-but not when a man says "No" to God and "No" to repenting as the Spirit speaks. Such speech is poison and can be traced to the viper like enmity of unrepentant human nature. Jesus speaks plain about this-for He desires to warn and save and cleanse!

#### *Jesus hunger for the kingdom -and new birth-which is at the heart of life!*

These sought signs like men demanding proof of virginity before marriage. The Lord gave a sign for what it was worth-He would be in the seat of life of the earth (Greek *καρδια*) in the course of Friday Saturday and Sunday.

Jonah reflects well death by his being "swallowed up" but also life and hope by his being maintained and wrestling in another place as Christ in the realm of the dead. So at that time matters vital for the saints who died and the saints who live were executed. He was at the heart of earth's hope of eternal life. His wresting of spirits from prison is a ministry greater excelling Jonah's, as His drawing of men and nations into His kingdom now and in future time is greater than the glory of Solomon's fabulous kingdom. As in death so in exorcise a spirit leaves-but only in new birth will the Spirit enter to promote that life that ends the invasion of Satan-and brings life!

#### *Paper to practice*

Think of an example of hunger for "faithfulness"; for "justice"; for "holiness"; for "forgiveness"; for "the kingdom" and for "conversion" in your experience. Discipleship should manifest these aspects of zeal



