

New Testament # 11
March 11-17
These Twelve Jesus Sent Forth
Matthew 10-12; Mark 2; Luke 7, 11
By Lenet Hadley Read

(The Lord sent Twelve to heal. Why His yoke is light. Full meanings of the Sabbath)

I. The Lord not only healed others Himself, He called Twelve and gave them power to do likewise. Thus He offered a form of “Rest” to all those who were physically and spiritually healed.

A. ”He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease” (Matthew 10:1).

B. In our dispensation, these powers reside not only in the Twelve, but are **given to many priesthood holders**. And there are a vast number of healings as a result.

C. Thus from the beginning the Lord sent out Twelve, and Seventy, and called many other priesthood bearers to help us all bear our burdens, and to help give us Rest.

II. Jesus encouraged all to “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall **find rest unto your souls**” (Matthew 11:28).

A. He is referring to His Yoke as opposed to “The Yoke of the Law.”

B. Among Israelites keeping the Mosaic Law meant “**bearing The Yoke of the Law.**”

1. Actually the original Mosaic Law had been made heavy because it was a schoolmaster to bring people to Christ.

2. Many of its observances were witnesses of what Christ would suffer through His death and resurrection.

3. Leviticus (Ch. 1-3) gives examples of how animal and other sacrifices had to be prepared in very time consuming ways.

a. Animals and grains must be anointed with oil and frankincense, beaten [or finely ground if grains], passed through fire (parched, roasted, etc.). **All these preparations prophesied of the suffering and trials of Jesus Christ to bring Atonement for sins.**

b. A Jewish friend of mine once complained about the great work of keeping the Passover with all its changes of dishes, etc. The Mosaic Law remains a burdensome law, even today.

C. In addition, the Law had been made even heavier through many centuries by legalists who complicated it with technicalities.

1. “... long before the advent of Christ... the technicalities prescribed as rules appended to the law were almost innumerable; **and the burden thus forced upon the people had become well-nigh unbearable**” (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 205).

2. Brother Talmage related when and how Jewish scribes and others came to add many technicalities to the original law (*Jesus the Christ*), p. 64.

III. Christ came to fulfill those portions of the Law which pointed to His Atonement, Crucifixion and Resurrection.

A. Thus much of the burden of the Law was lifted **because He fulfilled it. He offered instead a Yoke of Mercy thus giving Israel "Rest."**

B. Jesus rebuked the church leaders of that day for the burdens they had added, saying, "[they] bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; **but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers**" (Matthew 23:3-4). (Emphasis added).

C. Meanwhile, Jesus would remove those given to teach of Him by fulfilling them. And His followers were freed from false burdens which God had never required

IV. The Law was particularly heavy in regard to the Sabbath, and even small infractions were severely punished.

A. Talmage explains "the hedge" scribes had made around the Law (p. 64).

B. "The 'hedge' which by unwarranted assumption [the Jewish leaders] professedly set about the law, was particularly thorny in the sections devoted to the Jewish Sabbath. **Even trifling infractions of traditional rules were severely punished, and the capital penalty was held before the eyes of the people...**" (p. 205) (Emphasis added).

V. Israel's leaders were particularly harsh to Jesus for healing on the Sabbath.

A. They totally missed the meaning of The Sabbath and its relationship to Christ.

1. He was then and even now considered a "Sabbath-breaker."

B. But the real **meaning of The Sabbath and particularly its "Rest" was "to enter into the presence of the Lord" --- who was Jesus Christ.**

C. Jesus' entire time on earth was "The Day of the Lord," and thus **His entire time among men was "An Ultimate Sabbath."**

1. His Time among them was "His Time to bring Rest!"

a. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (See Matthew 11:28-30, and note His other references to "Rest)."

b. Enoch also equated "The Day of the Lord" and His "Rest" (Moses 7:48-69).

D. It was absolutely impossible for Jesus to break the Sabbath. He was the Lord who had commanded the Sabbath. Part of its purpose was to point to His Time among Men!

E. Above all, **He would give Rest by removing the bondage to sin, Death and Hell, to all who would repent and accept His Atonement** (See Luke 7:35-50).

F. His healing of the blind, the lame, etc., on any the Sabbath was a witness that **He had come to heal the spiritually blind, cleanse the spiritually lame, etc., during His Sabbath Time. For "The Day of the Lord" [the Highest of Sabbaths] had come.**

VI. The Sabbath Day also has great meaning for the future.

A. **Eventually, the obedient will enter into another Sabbath, Christ's Full Rest --- His Kingdom in Heaven (Beginning with the Millennium).**

1. "[There are] seven great days during which Mother earth will fulfill her mortal mission, laboring six days and resting upon the seventh, her period of sanctification...Morning will break upon the Millennium, the thousand years of peace, the Sabbath of the World" (Orson F. Whitney, "Saturday Night Thoughts," *The Deseret News*, May, 1921, pp. 9-10).

- B. In that Sabbath all physical labors will be lifted. When man came into the world, he was warned that on earth he must “earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.” But not then.
- C. In that Sabbath, spiritual burdens will be lifted.
 - 1. No longer must we struggle only in blind faith. We will see all things clearly.
- D. While the Seventh Day Sabbath pointed to the time of the Millennial Rest, **our Eighth Day [First day of a new week] Sabbath points to that Great Day [after the Millennium] when men will enter into their Full Rest --- their Kingdom of Glory.**
 - 1. See D&C 77: 12; Orson F. Whitney, op.cit.; George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. I* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955), pp. 375-76.

VII. Unfortunately, many Christians misunderstand Jesus’ comments about the Sabbath and read into them that He was indifferent to the Sabbath. Therefore they have come to feel it okay to use the day as a time for shopping, work, sports events, or other entertainment. But nothing could be further from the truth!

- A. It was Jesus as Jehovah who commanded its keeping from the beginning.
- B. As Jehovah He reinforced its sacredness at Mt. Sinai.
- C. As Jehovah, He gave impressive experiences to the Israelites to seal its sacredness (Exodus 16).
- D. Through His prophets He repeatedly stressed the need to keep it holy (Isaiah 56:2; Ezekiel 20:13; Nehemiah 10).
- E. He established a New Sabbath Day, the first day of the week, through His Resurrection.
- F. Through Latter-day revelation, He has reiterated the sacredness of the Sabbath (D&C 59-7, 13).
- G. **In every way the Sabbath points to Him and to Eternal Life with Him!**

VIII. Now as then, Jesus’ Yoke is actually light because He is our Yoke Mate.

- A. Remember that many yokes have places for **two** to pull.
 - 1. Under Christ’s yoke, He helps us carry our burdens, making them easier to bear.
 - a. Among the Saints who have struggled with the heaviest burdens were the handcart pioneers, caught in winter storms as they pulled all their possessions in handcarts. Many have wondered how they could have endured all that they did. But there were many who said they felt supernatural powers helping them to endure and carry those burdens.
 - b. So too can we! Jesus is always with us, as our Yoke Mate. He is always there to help us carry our burdens.

IX. Jesus’ yoke will always be easier, because “[He is] meek and lowly of heart.”

- A. Christ’s yoke is easy because He is meek and lowly. So all that He asks us to do is not for His Pride, but for righteous purposes and for our own eventual good!
- B. Thus, while He does give us commandment to keep, they come out of love and for righteousness sake. And they will in the end us spare us from far greater burdens.

Jesus’ Yoke is Light because He Offers a Yoke of Mercy, fulfilling the Law. He frees us from Satan’s bondage. He helps us lift our burdens. He sent twelve to help us too!