

# SKY Correspondence Course

## Lesson 2

### Jesus Encounters Hostility

#### Lesson Text:

Mark 2:13-17; 2:23-28; 3:1-6

Judaism of the New Testament was rooted in the Old Testament. The Hebrew Bible was the major traditional literature. The religious center was the Temple and its sacrificial system. There was a group at this time known as the Hasidaenas or Hasidhim (the pious ones'). They were not an organized sect. They were, however, faithful followers of the Law of Moses, and some of them did join the sect of the Pharisees (the separated ones). They were bound and determined to keep every rule concerning the Sabbath, tithing, and ceremonial purity.

There were popular preachers and religious sects of differing persuasions during the time of Christ. The three most popular were the scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. The scribes and Pharisees were the teachers of the law. The Pharisees were a *religious* party, while the scribes held an office. The double designation—office and religion—distinguished them from the Pharisees, although the majority of scribes also belonged to the Pharisee party which in turn recognized the legal interpretations of the law by the scribes. The powerful Pharisees were able to take the Jewish sense of nationalism and combine it with a religious *interpretation* of the Law which resulted in a feeling of superiority over other nations and people. They became a closely organized group, very loyal to the society and to each other, but separate from others, even their own people. As their traditions and interpretations of the Old Testament grew through the centuries, the Pharisees tried to follow them perfectly. They did not associate with those who did not follow their ideas and they looked down upon even other Jews. The name Pharisee means "the separated ones, separatist." In truth, the Pharisee made life difficult for themselves and bitter for others.

Therefore Jesus' ministry was offensive to the Pharisees. They put more emphasis on keeping rules than on loving people. They did not approve of Jesus when He made friends with those that the Pharisees called "sinners." In the following stories we will see the conflict and hostility that Jesus encountered.

*Read Mark 2:13-14.* Once again, Jesus went out again by the sea teaching a large crowd. There He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. Jesus said to him "Follow me." The name Levi is another name for Matthew (read Matthew 9:9)—this same Matthew wrote the gospel account. Matthew was appointed by the Romans to collect taxes from among his people. Tax collectors were despised by other Jews because they were considered dishonest. Each tax officer often extorted more than his share from those under them, adding to the burden of the people and creating a deep hatred and distrust toward the tax collectors. The Jewish people also hated the idea that their taxes payed for pagan religion and temples. The place where taxes were collected was called the "receipt of custom." This was usually in the center of town and a very busy place.

*Read Mark 2:15-16 - Luke 5:29* tells us that Levi (Matthew) gave a great feast for Jesus. Mark mentions for the first time the word "disciples." He goes on to say, "there were many." This reference means that there were more than the five disciples Mark had mentioned by name. The term "sinners" meant people who did not abide by the rigid pharisaic standards, common people, outcasts from the synagogue. In the eyes of the Pharisees Jesus had defiled (made filthy) Himself by sitting and eating with Matthew's guests. He was contaminated, not pure.

*Read Mark 2:17* - It seems Jesus must have heard the Pharisees complaint. Jesus

answered them back. He came to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The Pharisees saw no need to “repent and believe” (Mark 1:15). Jesus knew that even the righteous (especially those who saw themselves as righteous) commit sin. Those who are spiritually sick sought Jesus, while those who thought themselves healthy did not. Remember, these were men who were considered *experts* of the law—read Matthew 9:13. Jesus did not have a problem with the law of God. He did, however, see the flaw in *their* use and interpretation of the law. Their interpretations did not help and serve. Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees that while they were *ceremonially* clean on the outside, they had a corrupt heart. Godly purity is in giving to those who need help, not withholding it, and keeping yourself clean from the pollutions of the world (James 1:27).

Religious observances such as keeping the Sabbath, and keeping the holy days, help us to understand God’s ways and they can further enhance our relationship with Him. However, a religious ritual is helpful *only* if it is done with an attitude of obedience, worship, and love toward God. If your heart is far from God the ritual is a mockery to God.

*Read Mark 2:23*—It seems now, no matter where Jesus went, there were those following Him who were there to criticize and try to entrap Him. When Jesus and His disciples picked the ears of corn, they were not stealing (Leviticus 19:9, 10 and Deuteronomy 23:25). The Pharisees interpreted Jesus and the disciple’s picking of the corn and eating it as harvesting on the Sabbath. Rather what had really occurred was that Jesus and the disciples were hungry and so they picked some corn to ease their hunger. The Pharisees were so busy looking for Jesus to break the law that they missed the intent, and the action. Pulling a few ears of corn to eat is a far cry from the labor involved in harvesting a field of corn.

*Read Mark 2:24-25* - Jesus was not going to argue with the Pharisees about what was considered labor on the Sabbath, instead He used the story of David and his men eating the shewbread in the Tabernacle when they were hungry and in need (Leviticus 24:5-9). According to the Law, twelve freshly baked loaves were to be placed on the table in the holy place of the Tabernacle on the Sabbath. The twelve loaves were a symbol of God’s presence with the twelve tribes of Israel. Remember, the Pharisees were very knowledgeable and surely were aware of the stories of King David, their national hero. The evidence shows this: David and his men had a need on the Sabbath just as Jesus and His disciples had a need. This was no blatant disregard or disrespect of the Sabbath.

*Read Mark 2:26-28* - The Sabbath was made for man and Jesus made that very clear. The Sabbath is not to be burdensome with a lot of do’s and don’ts. Jesus made the point quite clear, it is never wrong to do helpful and necessary things on the Sabbath. In other words, there is never a wrong time to do that which is right. The Sabbath is a time for restoration and rejuvenation. Since Jesus is “Lord of the Sabbath” He has sovereign authority over the use of the Sabbath.

*Read Mark 3:1-2; Luke 6:6*. On the Sabbath, critics were in the synagogue watching to see if Jesus would heal the crippled man. Here the Pharisees had total disregard for the crippled man. They saw him merely as the bait to use in their attempt to trap and catch Jesus at doing something they deemed wrong on the Sabbath. They were looking for a way to condemn Him. They knew that the message Jesus preached to the people excited, and gave the people hope. It was the good news of salvation and the coming Kingdom of God. It is the same message today that brings people to Jesus.

*Read Mark 3:3-4* - Luke 6:8 says that Jesus “knew their thoughts.” Jesus asked them a rhetorical question. A rhetorical question is one that is asked only for effect, no answer is expected. We all know, regardless of the day of the week, we should do good and not evil (Matthew 12:11,12.) The questions that Jesus asked revealed how hypocritical the Pharisees were. Hypocritical means pretending to be what you are not. Jesus was showing the Pharisees that the issue of “doing good” was a moral decision not a legal point. Do good because it is right, not because it is required.

*Read Mark 3:5-6* - The anger that Jesus showed was not that of a temper. This anger was a display of deep sorrow, grief, and intense displeasure for the use of the Temple. Those appearing to help others to worship God were in reality hard of heart and serving themselves while cheating people—it was a “den of thieves.” To become “hard of heart” means to feel or demonstrate a lack of sympathy, mercy, and pity for another. It is being stubborn and unreasonable when logic has been demonstrated. Publicly the Pharisees plot to catch Jesus breaking the Sabbath. Jesus had asked them the question, was it best to “save life, (on the Sabbath) or to kill?” Apparently, on this Sabbath day, the Pharisees plotted to kill!

*A verse worthy to remember from this story:*

**“I came not to call the righteous,  
but sinners to repentance”  
(Mark 2:17).**

# SKY

## Lesson 2

### Correspondence Course

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

## Questions and Answers

- Who were called the "pious ones"?
  - Christians
  - Jews
  - Hasidhim
- Which sentence best describes the Pharisees?
  - Men who worked as tax collectors.
  - An important and powerful political party.
  - A strict and influential religious group that interpreted the Law.
- The term receipt of custom is:
  - A slip of paper you show to leave the Tabernacle.
  - A place where taxes were collected.
  - A slip of paper proving you paid your taxes.
- The sentence "When we are clean on the inside, our cleanliness on the outside isn't a sham" is a good definition for the word \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Sinners
  - Purity
  - Faithful
- Jesus ate with sinners and was criticized. If someone has a alcohol, smoking, or drug problem, should we refuse to have them come to church? Explain your answer.

---

---

---

- Why do we keep the Sabbath?
  - Because God rested from His work on the seventh day and He made the day for us.
  - Because we are tired after a full week of school and/or work.
  - Because our parents observe it.
- What is the significance in remembering the Sabbath, and where is the command found in the Bible?

---

---

---

8. Where did the Pharisees err when they judged Jesus and the disciples for eating grain in the fields on the Sabbath? Explain.

---

---

---

9. Which disciple's name was also Levi?

- A. Mark
- B. Luke
- C. Matthew

10. What principal do we learn from Jesus when He said, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath"?

- A. The Sabbath was made by God for mankind's benefit and refreshment.
- B. The Sabbath was given to man with burdensome regulations.
- C. The Sabbath was made by God so the Pharisees would have something to regulate.

11. Who is "Lord of the Sabbath"?

- A. John the Baptist
- B. Man
- C. Jesus

12. In their zeal to enforce the law, the Pharisees were critics seeking to find errors in Jesus' behavior.

True or False? \_\_\_\_\_

13. The righteous are without sin.

True or False? \_\_\_\_\_

14. How did Jesus handle the hostility He faced?

---

---

---

---

15. Give two examples from this lesson that show the Pharisees' lack of understanding of the Law's intent.

---

---

---

---

---

16. Why should you go to church? What should be your motive behind *your* offerings and sacrifices?

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Answers

### Lesson 2 - Jesus Encounters Hostility

1. None of the above. It was the Hasidaenas or Hasidhim
2. C
3. B
4. B
5. No, because church is a place for all people to go and ask for help and repent.
6. A
7. The Sabbath is for us to help us understand God and be closer to Jesus. The command is in Exodus 20:11 and Deuteronomy 5:15.
8. They were so concerned with following the letter of the law exactly that they forgot the intent. They were looking to see if Jesus would make a mistake.
9. C
10. A
11. C
12. T
13. F
14. He quoted scriptures and used examples from the Old Testament which the Pharisees knew very well. He never got mad.
15.
  1. They thought that you shouldn't get food to eat on the Sabbath.
  2. They thought that you shouldn't help those who need help, such as healing a person on the Sabbath.
16. I should go to church because God says to. By going to church I am being obedient to God. My motive is showing love and obedience.