

1. Is Jesus aware that watchful eyes are upon Him when the man with the withered hand approaches Him?

2. How does Jesus avoid the trap set for him by the Pharisees?

3. Can you think of another instance where Jesus asks a question the Pharisees cannot answer without trapping themselves?

4. What is meant in verse 5 by “hardness of heart”?

5. After the healing, what do the Pharisees do? What does this say about their eagerness to accuse Jesus over a supposed transgression of the law?

Parallels in other gospels:

Healing of man’s withered hand:

Matt 12:9-14

Luke 6:6-11

Large crowds at the Sea of Galilee:

Matt 12:15-21

Who were the Pharisees?

Pharisee means “separated one.” The sect of the Pharisees arose during the time between the testaments. They opposed the growing influence of Greek culture and the secularization of the temple priests. At first the Pharisees were admired for their piety, charity, and strict adherence to Jewish laws. Even in the time of our Lord, they were considered the main authorities in spiritual matters. But by then Pharisees were obsessively concerned with minute observation of the law, and not even the actual law as given to Moses but one augmented by non-scriptural Jewish traditions. The Pharisees also emphasized the strict letter of the law while ignoring the principles behind it. This, along with their frequent hypocrisy, made them targets of Jesus’s criticism.

