



**Gutenberg College Summer Institute 2015
REUNION: Tanakh and the Gospel of Matthew**

**Talk 13: Background to Matthew 9:13 and 12:7
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I. A few issues in Matthew

A. Matthew 9:13 and 12:7—"I desire compassion"

1. The Greek word is *eleos*, which typically means "mercy," "compassion."
2. A good example: James 2:13. "For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no **mercy**; **mercy** triumphs over judgment." (See also Paul's "vessels of mercy" vs. "vessels of wrath.")
3. But the word *eleos* was typically used in the LXX to translate *hesed*; has the meaning been "pulled" toward the OT?

B. Matthew 9:11—"tax gatherers and sinners"

1. Tax gatherers: Jews who collaborated with Rome to collect taxes (and often extort large amounts for themselves); they were hated by the people.
2. Sinners: Some argue that the Pharisees would describe as "sinners" anyone who did not follow their meticulous law-keeping. Others argue that this was a stronger category: those (like prostitutes) who lived in open defiance of the law.
3. Why did the Pharisees see it as wrong to eat with them?

C. Matthew 12:2—"not lawful to do on a Sabbath"

1. Doesn't seem to be specifically prohibited in the Torah.
2. Seems to violate the Rabbinic explanations of how, as a practical matter, one avoided "working" on the Sabbath.

D. Matthew 12:3—"what David did"

1. 1 Samuel 21:1-6. Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David, and said to him, "Why are you alone and no one with you?" And David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has commissioned me with a matter, and has said to me, 'Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place.' Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found." And the priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women." And David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels be holy?" So the priest gave him consecrated bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place when it was taken away.