

John 5:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

Analysis

Jesus defends His Sabbath work: 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' God doesn't cease all activity on Sabbath—He sustains creation, gives life, exercises providence. If the Father works, the Son works. This claim to partnership with God in continuous divine activity asserts equality. Jesus' Sabbath healing isn't law-breaking but God-imitating. He shares the Father's prerogative of sovereign beneficence.

Historical Context

Jewish theology recognized God's ongoing activity on Sabbath—babies are born, people die, providence continues. Jesus claims the same authority. The Jews immediately recognized this as a claim to deity (verse 18), escalating their opposition from Sabbath-breaking to blasphemy charges.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' claim to work as the Father works assert His deity?
2. What does God's continuous work teach about the purpose of Sabbath rest?

Interlinear Text

ό	δὲ	Ἰησοῦς	ἀπεκρίνατο	αὐτοῖς	Ὥ	πατέρ	μου	ἕως
G3588	But	Jesus	answered	them	G3588	Father	My	hitherto
G1161		G2424		G611		G3962	G3450	
								G2193
ἄρτι	ἔργάζομαι	κάγὼ	ἔργάζομαι					
G737	work	and I	work					
	G2038		G2504		G2038			

Additional Cross-References

John 14:10 (Parallel theme): Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

John 9:4 (Parallel theme): I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

Colossians 1:16 (Parallel theme): For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

1 Corinthians 12:6 (Parallel theme): And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Hebrews 1:3 (Parallel theme): Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Acts 17:28 (Parallel theme): For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Isaiah 40:26 (Parallel theme): Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

Acts 14:17 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Matthew 10:29 (Parallel theme): Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.