

Luke 14:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

Analysis

Jesus takes the initiative: 'And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?' Though no one had spoken, Jesus 'answering' (ἀποκριθεὶς, apokritheis) responds to their unspoken thoughts and hostile intentions. He addresses 'the lawyers and Pharisees'—experts in religious law who should know Scripture's true meaning. His question 'Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?' (Ἐξεστὶν τῷ σαββάτῳ θεραπεῦσαι ἢ οὐ; Exestin tō sabbatō therapeusai ē ou;) forces them to declare their position publicly. The question is brilliantly framed—answering 'yes' contradicts their tradition; answering 'no' exposes their cruelty.

Historical Context

Jewish Sabbath law, as interpreted by Pharisees, permitted healing only when life was immediately threatened. This man's chronic condition didn't qualify as life-threatening emergency. Jesus consistently challenged this restrictive interpretation, arguing that the Sabbath was made for human benefit, not human burden (Mark 2:27). His Sabbath healings demonstrated that God's rest celebrates His redemptive work, making the Sabbath the perfect day for liberation and restoration. The lawyers' (νομικοί, nomikoi, legal experts) presence indicates this was a formal gathering where Jesus' teaching would be scrutinized.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' preemptive question demonstrate His wisdom in handling entrapment?
2. What does this incident teach about the difference between biblical law and human tradition?
3. How should Christians navigate situations where religious authorities demand conformity to unbiblical rules?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν πρὸς τοὺς νομικοὺς
And **answering** ^{G3588} **Jesus** **spake** **unto** ^{G3588} **the lawyers**
G2532 G611 G2424 G2036 G4314 G3544

καὶ Φαρισαίους λέγων, Ἐὶ ἔξεστιν τῷ σαββάτῳ
And **Pharisees** **saying** **Is it** **lawful** ^{G3588} **on the sabbath day**
G2532 G5330 G3004 G1487 G1832 G4521

θεραπεύειν
to heal
G2323

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 12:10 (Word): And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

Mark 3:4 (Word): And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

Luke 6:9 (Word): Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

John 7:23 (Word): If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

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