

Mark 2:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Analysis

Jesus prophesies His death: 'But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them.' The phrase 'taken from them' (ἀπαρθῆ) suggests violent removal, foreshadowing crucifixion. This is Mark's first explicit reference to Jesus' coming passion. The verb echoes Isaiah 53:8: 'He was taken from the earth,' identifying Jesus as the suffering servant. Jesus predicts mourning that will accompany His death—appropriate occasion for fasting. This validates fasting as proper response to Christ's absence, not as merit-earning work. Reformed theology distinguishes Old Covenant fasting (anticipating Messiah) from New Covenant fasting (mourning Christ's physical absence while awaiting return).

Historical Context

This prediction came early in Jesus' ministry, indicating Jesus' clear awareness of His mission from the beginning. The disciples likely didn't grasp its significance until after resurrection. Violent death contrasted sharply with messianic expectations of political-military triumph. Early Christian fasting (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23) expressed dependence on God and mourning over Christ's physical absence, while maintaining joy in His spiritual presence.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does fasting express longing for Christ's return and help mortify flesh's demands?
2. In what ways do you live in tension between joy at Christ's presence and sorrow at His absence?
3. How does anticipating Christ's return affect your current spiritual disciplines and priorities?

Interlinear Text

ἐλεύσονται	δὲ	ἡμέραις	ὅταν	ἀπαρθῆ	ἀπ'	αὐτῶν	
will come	But	days	when	shall be taken away	from	them	
G2064	G1161	G2250	G3752	G522	G575	G846	
ο	νυμφίος	καὶ	τότε	νηστεύσουσιν	ἐν	ἐκείναις	ταῖς
G3588	the bridegroom	and	then	shall they fast	in	those	G3588
	G3566	G2532	G5119	G3522	G1722	G1565	
ἡμέραις							
	days						
	G2250						

Additional Cross-References

Luke 17:22 (Parallel theme): And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

Revelation 19:7 (Parallel theme): Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Revelation 21:9 (Parallel theme): And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

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