

Mark 2:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

Analysis

Jesus states a foundational principle: 'The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.' This revolutionizes Sabbath understanding. The verb 'was made' (ἐγένετο) indicates creation/institution—God designed Sabbath as gift to humanity. The prepositional phrase 'for man' expresses purpose—Sabbath exists to benefit humanity, not burden it. God instituted Sabbath rest as blessing: physical refreshment, spiritual renewal, worship opportunity. The Pharisees inverted this relationship, making humanity exist to serve Sabbath regulations. Jesus reclaims Sabbath's original purpose. Reformed theology applies this: all God's commands exist for human flourishing and God's glory.

Historical Context

Genesis 2:2-3 establishes Sabbath at creation. Exodus 20:8-11 commands Sabbath observance, commemorating creation. Deuteronomy 5:12-15 adds exodus motivation—remembering deliverance from slavery's ceaseless labor. By Jesus' time, 1,521 Sabbath regulations existed, transforming gift into burden. Early Christians met on Sunday, honoring resurrection. Sabbath principles remain (work-rest rhythm, worship priority), but Christian liberty governs application.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you view God's commands—as burdensome restrictions or loving gifts for your flourishing?
2. In what ways do you rest in Christ's finished work rather than striving to earn favor?
3. What does this principle reveal about God's heart and the purpose of His law?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἔλεγεν	αὐτοῖς	Τὸ	σάββατον·	διὰ	τὸν	ἄνθρωπος
And	he said	unto them	G3588	The sabbath	for	G3588	man
G2532	G3004	G846		G4521		G1223	G444
ἐγένετο	οὐχ	ό	ἄνθρωπος	διὰ	τὸ	σάββατον·	
was made	and not	G3588	man	for	G3588	The sabbath	
G1096	G3756		G444		G1223		G4521

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 2:16 (Parallel theme): Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

Deuteronomy 5:14 (Parallel theme): But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

Luke 6:9 (Parallel theme): 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?

Isaiah 58:13 (Parallel theme): If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the

LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

Ezekiel 20:12 (Parallel theme): Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.

Ezekiel 20:20 (Parallel theme): And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God.

Exodus 23:12 (Parallel theme): Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.

John 7:23 (Creation): 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?

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org