

Mark 3:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

Analysis

The religious leaders 'watched him'—imperfect tense indicating continuous, intense observation suggesting hostile scrutiny. They monitored Jesus to see 'whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.' Their purpose was accusation—formal legal charge, revealing hearts opposed to Jesus despite witnessing His power. They prioritized tradition over mercy. Their question wasn't whether Jesus could heal but whether He would violate Sabbath regulations. Reformed theology warns that unconverted religious people can be gospel's fiercest opponents.

Historical Context

Pharisaic Sabbath tradition permitted healing only if life was immediately threatened. Non-emergency healing could wait. Since the withered hand wasn't life-threatening, they expected Jesus to postpone healing. This trap-setting demonstrates spiritual blindness—witnessing divine power yet seeking to destroy its source. This pattern escalates throughout Mark, culminating in crucifixion.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. In what ways do you scrutinize others' actions to find fault rather than celebrating God's work?
2. How can theological knowledge become a weapon that opposes Christ?
3. What does this passage reveal about prioritizing tradition over mercy?

Interlinear Text

καὶ παρήκουν αὐτοῦ εἰ τοῖς σάββασις
And **they watched** **him** **whether** ^{G3588} **on the sabbath day**
G2532 G3906 G846 G1487 G4521

θεραπεύσει αὐτοῦ ἵνα κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ
he would heal **him** **that** **they might accuse** **him**
G2323 G846 G2443 G2723 G846

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 37:32 (Parallel theme): The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

Luke 14:1 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

Luke 6:7 (Parallel theme): And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

Luke 20:20 (Parallel theme): And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

Matthew 12:10 (Parallel theme): 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.

John 9:16 (Parallel theme): Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

Daniel 6:4 (Parallel theme): Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

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