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*JESUS AND  
THE SABBATH  
IN THE  
FOUR GOSPELS*

D. A. CARSON

D. A. Carson is Associate Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

This chapter comprises exegetical examinations of passages in the synoptic Gospels that indicate Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath. Although some critics will doubt that we can know anything of Jesus' own views on the Sabbath,<sup>1</sup> I do not share their scepticism. The authenticity of many of the sayings of Jesus is finding new defense,<sup>2</sup> but I shall argue the case only in particularly contested passages where the distinction between Jesus' teaching and that of the evangelist is of special importance.

This is not to overlook the contributions and peculiar emphases of the synoptists, still less to ignore the differences among them. That is why, after examining the relevant pericopes in order to discover what Jesus held concerning the Sabbath, it is necessary to adopt as a second approach a brief examination of the manner in which the synoptic evangelists use such material. Because Luke's material is treated with Acts in chapter 5, I shall restrict myself to comments on Matthew and Mark (Luke-Acts takes up one quarter of the New Testament, and Luke's attitude toward the law has come into dispute in recent years).

Jesus' attitude toward the law in general as reflected in the synoptic Gospels (especially Matthew and Mark) could easily call forth a large volume, but that would take us too far afield. On the other hand, it would be presumptuous to attempt a presentation of Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath law without offering at least some guidelines as to how our findings fit into Jesus' attitude toward the law in general. At the risk of oversimplification, therefore, I have included a brief section (not prescriptive or detailed) on that broader question.

I shall also examine the Fourth Gospel, first focusing on the Sabbath pericopes, and then attempting to relate those findings to larger themes in John's presentation of Jesus.

#### JESUS AND THE SABBATH IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Mark 1:21–28; Luke 4:31–37<sup>3</sup>

We find Jesus teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath.<sup>4</sup> The word διδασχῆ (“teaching”) may refer to manner or content of speaking or both; Jesus evoked amazement because of His authoritative teaching. Just then (Mark has εὐθὺς) a protest erupted from a man possessed by an unclean spirit. The details of the outburst are not significant for this inquiry except to note that the initial question, τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, means “What have we in common?”<sup>5</sup> Here it may bear the force of “Mind your own business!”<sup>6</sup> or “Why do you meddle with us?” The antagonism between the unclean spirit and Jesus sets Jesus apart, exposes His mission, and portrays His authority. The words ἡλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς may be taken as a question<sup>7</sup> or as a defiant assertion: “You have come [into the world] to destroy us” (cf. Luke 10:18).<sup>8</sup> In

any case, fundamental antagonism between Jesus, the Holy One of God who has come preaching the gospel (Mark 1:14), and the unclean spirits is thus set forth at the very beginning of Mark's Gospel—and that on a Sabbath day.

Because the text contains no hint of Sabbath *conflict* here, some have thought that mention of the day takes its significance from its eschatological relation to the overthrow of darkness and the introduction of messianic authority<sup>9</sup>—authority both in teaching (Mark 1:22) and in respect of demon forces (Mark 1:27).<sup>10</sup> The note of authority, and the uncertainty among the people as to its significance, are no less strong in Luke's account. Indeed, following as it does on the story of Christ's claims made on the Sabbath spent at Nazareth (Luke 4:16–31), there is even more of an excited messianic expectation pulsating through the narrative.<sup>11</sup> But no explicit connection between eschatological, messianic authority and the Sabbath is offered in the text itself, unless Luke 4:16–31 is taken as a reference to the messianic jubilee (cf. further discussion, below). Mention of the day, in Mark at least, is related solely (and somewhat casually) to Jesus' entry into the synagogue<sup>12</sup> to teach.

The fact that Jesus does not suffer public outrage for His exorcism cannot escape notice; perhaps no Pharisees were present, but in any case a synagogue ruler must have been present, and he could have opposed Jesus' Sabbath practices (cf. Luke 13:10–17). In what immediately follows,<sup>13</sup> Jesus performs another miracle, one of healing (Mark 1:29–31, Luke 4:8–39), and again there is no adverse reaction, although it may be argued that the miracle occurred in the privacy of a home.

The absence of opposition may, however, have a more comprehensive explanation. Up to this point Jesus has been scrupulous as far as the Torah is concerned, and has not clashed even with the Sabbath regulations of the Halakah. The Halakah was designed to put a fence around Torah while still leaving the people free to perform necessary tasks and (in the majority view) acts of mercy. It is doubtful that any consideration was given in the early stages to the legitimacy of Sabbath *miracles*, since the regulations dealt with *work* on the Sabbath. If the Halakic comments about healing were intended to govern medical practitioners and the ministrations of relatives and the like, it is hard to see how Jesus committed any offense at all. It appears, then, that Jesus' Sabbath practices were not reviled by anyone at first, until opposition began to mount and *Jesus himself* was reviled. At that point, the Sabbath legislation was used against Him, and attacks against Him were rationalized on the basis of the Halakah.

The next incident (Mark 1:32–34) is related to what precedes it by the words “That evening, at sundown,” as well as by the reference to the door in 1:33 (presumably the door of the house of Simon and Andrew, 1:29). Luke 4:40–41

and Matthew 8:16–17 also suggest that what follows occurs at the close of a memorable day, although Matthew does not relate it to a Sabbath. Mark and Luke make it appear that the crowd waited until sundown, the end of the Sabbath, before they came to Jesus for healing, prompting G. B. Caird to remark, “The crowds were more scrupulous than Jesus and waited until sunset when the Sabbath ended before taking advantage of his healing power.”<sup>14</sup> Such scrupulosity need not be with respect to healing alone; some would have had to break regulations concerning a Sabbath day’s journey (one thousand cubits) to get to Jesus, and some of the patients presumably would have to be carried (*φέρω*, Mark 1:32, may mean either “bring” or “carry”), which would also violate Sabbath laws (cf. *Shab.* 7:2). The Evangelists themselves make no specific point with these details, but it is possible that they are already implicitly criticizing Pharisaic regulations that keep people from Jesus.

Finally, it is worth observing that the exorcism (Mark 1:23–28) was prompted by spontaneous demonic antagonism, and the initial healing (Mark 1:29–31) by an artless request. In neither case can there be any suggestion that Jesus was deliberately *provoking* a Sabbath confrontation.

*Mark 2:23–28; Matthew 12:1–8; Luke 6:1–5.* The questions raised by these pericopes are both intricate and far-reaching, and involve important theological, exegetical, and methodological differences of opinion.

Fifty years ago K. L. Schmidt called Mark’s account “a capital example of a particular story that is not tied down to a specific time and place.”<sup>15</sup> In terms of the specific time and place of the event, that assessment was correct; we are told only that it transpired in a field on a Sabbath.<sup>16</sup> Not a few scholars dismiss the narrative framework as artificially constructed to provide a setting for the saying of Mark 2:27.<sup>17</sup> But Taylor, noting other Sabbath controversies, remarks that because the church worshipped on the first day of the week from the earliest date (a point to be demonstrated in subsequent chapters), it was only natural that stories such as this would be preserved. Such considerations, he affirms, forbid the scepticism of Schmidt and Bultmann; and he adds, “The free use of the story of David corresponds to the manner in which He (Jesus) uses the Old Testament elsewhere, and the broad humanity is characteristic.”<sup>18</sup> Some scholars, observing that Jesus is made responsible for an action of the disciples in which He did not participate, affirm that the story is composite.<sup>19</sup> But it must be obvious that a leader is often blamed for the conduct of his followers. Why should Jesus escape such criticism?<sup>20</sup>

The Greek *ἤρξαντο ὁδὸν ποιεῖν τίλλοντες* (“and as they made their way, [his disciples] began to pluck”) could mean that the disciples began to make a road by plucking the ears of corn or perhaps that they began to advance by clearing a way for themselves in this manner. Jewett suggests that the disciples

were making a road for Jesus!<sup>21</sup> But how could a path be made merely by plucking the ears, and why was not the charge of “working on the Sabbath” clearer? The text means rather that the disciples began, as they went, to pluck and eat.<sup>22</sup> Nor should it be assumed that Jesus and the disciples were “really journeying from one place to another on the missionary work of the Kingdom,” and along the way began to stave off hunger.<sup>23</sup> Such an approach hopes to invest the offense with kingdom significance. But then why are the disciples, and Jesus not accused of breaking the restrictions concerning a Sabbath day’s journey? Why are they not traveling along the roads instead of wandering through grain fields? The scene is more plausibly a Sabbath afternoon stroll than a missionary expedition, and that is why the presence of the Pharisees is not strange.<sup>24</sup> The offense, then, is in the harvesting and preparing of food on the Sabbath and nothing else.<sup>25</sup> Gleaning itself was allowed (Deut. 23:25), but on the Sabbath it might have been considered harvesting, and thus forbidden (Exod. 34:21).

Jesus replied to the allegation by referring to David and the consecrated bread (cf. 1 Sam. 21:1–7). This is not to be construed as a messianic allusion.<sup>26</sup> Nor is our Lord conceding the principles of the Pharisees for the moment, content to point out that such rules admit of exceptions.<sup>27</sup>

Rather, the drift of the argument is that the fact that scripture does not condemn David for his action shows that the rigidity with which the Pharisees interpreted the ritual law was not in accordance with the scripture, and so was not a proper understanding of the law itself.<sup>28</sup>

Ransack the Torah as you will, it remains difficult to see what law was broken by the disciples. Regulations about harvesting and preparation of food seem to be given within a structure of “six days work and one day rest unto Yahweh.” The Sabbath entailed a sweeping rest from regular work.<sup>29</sup> But in this instance the disciples are neither farmers nor housewives who are trying to slip in a little overtime on the sly; they are ex-fishermen and ex-businessmen, itinerant preachers doing nothing amiss (Matthew’s account specifically acquits them; see further discussion, below). The Halakah, of course, has been broken, but it is precisely such legalism that Jesus repeatedly combats.<sup>30</sup>

The suggestion of some rabbis that David ate the forbidden bread on the Sabbath<sup>31</sup> (perhaps based on the fact that the consecrated bread was freshly laid out on the Sabbath), is irrelevant; David did not do something forbidden on the Sabbath but simply something forbidden. Besides, D. Daube has observed that a Haggadah (popular homiletic material) cannot properly serve as the basis for a Halakic proof from Scripture.<sup>32</sup>

Rordorf’s handling of this passage requires special treatment. After examining how 1 Samuel 21:1–7 is used, he concludes that the lack of logical

continuity between the problem and the citation makes it unlikely that the story was invented to provide a setting for the quotation (despite what Bultmann says), “since we should have to admit to some surprise that a more suitable setting had not been selected.”<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, he argues that the incident and the quotation have not belonged together from the beginning, because Mark does not mention the word “hungry” (Matt. 12:1), making the connection yet more tenuous. The addition of the word by Matthew is “an attempt to assimilate the story of the plucking of the ears of corn to the quotation from scripture.” Hence he states that the quotation and the narrative “illustration” in Mark 2:23–26 (and parallels) “are clearly (!) inappropriate to the account of the sabbath break and its justification,”<sup>34</sup> and “supposes” that Jesus’ original answer is preserved in Mark 2:27.

Rordorf’s whole argument turns on the word “hungry”; and to this we may reply: (1) For what reason other than hunger would the disciples be picking heads of grain? Is it not obvious that they were hungry? The *most* that can be inferred from Matthew’s insertion of the word is that he has made the matter explicit.<sup>35</sup> The word itself bears no theological significance, and Luke confirms this opinion; he says that the disciples were rubbing and *eating* the grain. On the other hand, one must not overplay the hunger. Sabbatarian apologists sometimes see in the disciples’ hunger adequate reason to call their plucking a work of “necessity” or “mercy.”<sup>36</sup> This is highly dubious. Jesus does not use this recognized and acceptable argument here, even though He does in other circumstances, besides, it is unlikely that their hunger—of a day’s duration at most—is to be compared with that of David and his companions. (2) Jesus’ reply (Mark 2:25–26) is typical of His other replies. He not infrequently avoids direct answers and gets to the root of the matter or else exposes the hypocrisy or false presuppositions of the questioner (cf. Mark 7:5ff.). Besides, as M. D. Hooker has pointed out, there *is* a coherent relation between the narrative and the scriptural citation in the pericope before us:

Jesus’ words about David relate how regulations which were made to safeguard something which is holy were set aside for David, who enjoyed a special position, and for “those who were with him”; he and they were allowed to eat what was normally permitted only to the priests. So now, in the case of Jesus and his disciples, the regulations which were made to safeguard something which is holy—in this case the Sabbath—are again set aside for one who is in a special position and for those with him. In this case, however, the reason is not any pressing need, but the fact that the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath.<sup>37</sup>

We are thus brought to the final sayings, Mark 2:27–28. Again there is considerable disagreement among scholars.<sup>38</sup> Not a few isolate these sayings from the cornfield episode.<sup>39</sup> Taylor advances four reasons for doing so, but

all of them can be faulted: (1) He claims that Mark 2:23–26 reaches a climax with the question about David. But as we have seen, Rordorf questions this. More to the point, if the above analysis is correct, including Hooker’s observations, the citation about David builds directly toward Jesus’ authority as the Son of man. (2) The words “And he said to them” (*καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς*) may be a formula of citation. So they may; however, they may suggest a small literary pause;<sup>40</sup> or if a formula of citation, they may indicate something Jesus said not infrequently, but in particular on this occasion.<sup>41</sup> (3) Although Taylor admits that 2:27 agrees with the ideas of 2:23–26, and 2:28 presupposes 2:27, Taylor asserts that 2:28 is awkward in its present setting. Unfortunately, he does not explain how or why; we shall shortly discuss ways of linking them. (4) The sayings of 2:27–28, he says, are gnomic as compared with the polemical utterances of 2:25–26. True, verse 27 (but not verse 28) is gnomic in *form*; but even formally gnomic sayings become highly polemical in the appropriate context. And 2:28, a christological claim with many implications, must be reckoned at least as polemical (from the perspective of the Pharisees) as anything that precedes it.

W. Lane argues that 2:27 is an authentic saying from another context, which is evidenced by *καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς*. He takes the next verse (2:28) to be Mark’s own conclusion to the entire pericope (2:23–27), not to 2:27 only.<sup>42</sup> However, a great deal depends on his handling of the “Son of man” saying at Mark 2:10, where he ingeniously argues that 2:10*a* is parenthetically inserted to explain the significance of the healing for *Christian* readers. Having thereby established that this one “Son of man” saying does not come from Jesus Himself, he is free to treat 2:28 similarly. This view is plausible, but not convincing; these would be the only instances in the Gospels where the expression was not from Jesus Himself as purported. Moreover, R. N. Longenecker has pointed out<sup>43</sup> that both Matthew and Luke take over Mark 2:10*a* as it is, awkward syntax included, treating it as a genuine self-designation, not a Markan editorial comment, which they would elsewhere drop. Hooker notes similarly, that although many commentators adopt Mark 2:27 as authentic and relegate 2:28 to the category of church-inspired polemic, the hard evidence—that Matthew and Luke preserve 2:28 but not 2:27—if anything argues the other way.<sup>44</sup>

Some have insisted that Mark 2:27 cannot be authentic because no Jewish teacher could have made such a remark, which, it is alleged, “sounds more like Protagoras of Abdera.”<sup>45</sup> Rordorf agrees that the statement is in some ways unique, but still judges it to be authentic. He holds that 2:27 is nothing less than an entirely new principle, one that virulently attacks not merely the caustical refinements of the Pharisees but the Sabbath commandment it-

self.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, following Käsemann,<sup>47</sup> Rordorf argues that 2:28 is a church-inspired weakening and limitation of what Jesus Himself meant in 2:27:

The primitive Church obviously (!) found man's fundamental freedom with regard to the sabbath enunciated by Jesus in this passage to be monstrous. It certainly recognized Jesus' own freedom with regard to the sabbath; the primitive Church interpreted this freedom in a messianic sense and did not claim it for itself.<sup>48</sup>

Both of these approaches fail to give enough weight to the well-known rabbinic parallel, "The Sabbath is delivered unto you, but you are not delivered unto the Sabbath."<sup>49</sup> That there is new content and significance in 2:27 is not disputed, but the assertion that no Jew could have said them is simultaneously glib and doctrinaire.

We must inquire what 2:27 and 2:28 teach in their present context, whether or not they are a unity with the pericope.

A number of scholars understand both 2:27 and 2:28 to refer to man. In this view, the expression "the Son of man" is a mistranslation of the Aramaic;<sup>50</sup> however, it is difficult to understand how an answer to the effect that man as man is lord of the Sabbath would convince the Pharisees. The interpretation would have plausibility if 2:27 were originally a detached saying, but in that case Mark chose to express something simple in desperately obscure fashion—with all the difficulties of the "Son of man" concept. On the other hand, T. W. Manson argues that the Aramaic concept "Son of man" was mistranslated in 2:27 but correctly translated in 2:28; i.e., 2:27 should read, "The sabbath was made for the Son of man, not the Son of man for the sabbath."<sup>51</sup> Manson says that the Sabbath was made for the Jews (not for man in general), and that the Aramaic "Son of man" may refer to the nation collectively as well as to Jesus specifically. The view suffers from want of evidence that Jesus taught that the Sabbath was made for the Jews, as well as from the assumption that "Son of man" has corporate significance in the New Testament.<sup>52</sup>

Although Manson thinks the Sabbath was made for the Jews, others see in "man" (*ἄνθρωπος*) generic significance and conclude that the passage supports the view of the Sabbath as a creation ordinance. Lee's view is extreme. He thinks that 2:27 means, "Man was not made for the sabbath, but the sabbath was *made for* (that is, intended to be kept by) man."<sup>53</sup> This interpretation is, quite simply, contextually impossible, as it completely destroys the antithetic parallelism, and hence any contextual meaning in the verse. This is immediately made clear when the nonsense-question is raised. "How could man be *kept by* (which Lee takes to be the meaning of *made for* in the second line) the Sabbath?"

A milder form of the same argument takes 2:27 to mean that God established the seventh day for man and not man for the day, but then goes on to see secondary support for a creation ordinance.<sup>54</sup> Some continue to insist that *ἄνθρωπος* is generic in meaning.<sup>55</sup> It has even been argued that, since the rabbis believed that the Sabbath was given to Israel alone, the use of *ἄνθρωπος* in 2:27 is a rejection of the rabbinic view in favor of a "creation ordinance" for all men. I consider this argument to be precisely the opposite kind of misinterpretation to that of Beare and Gils discussed above. In the view of Beare and Gils, it was argued that no Jew could have uttered Mark 2:27; here, it is argued that 2:27 is a conscious adaptation of a well-known Jewish opinion. That there are rabbinic parallels to 2:27 is undisputed; whether 2:27 is a deliberate correction of such parallels remains to be demonstrated. It appears that the passage is simply not dealing with the extension of rabbinic maxims to the Gentile world, but in any case, to insist that *ἄνθρωπος* has generic and racial significance is without adequate contextual warrant.<sup>56</sup>

The "creation ordinance" view further argues that the verb *ἐγένετο* (became) could refer to creation, but could not refer to the giving of the law at Sinai. In other words, Mark 2:27 asserts that the Sabbath was made (*ἐγένετο*) for man at some particular point in time; linguistically, it is argued, that point in time could not be at the giving of the law.

But this argument is linguistically unsound<sup>57</sup> and fails to observe the context and form of 2:27. The verse is an aphorism. The word "man" is used neither to limit the reference to Jews, nor to extend it to all mankind; that question is not considered. Moreover the verb *ἐγένετο* is simply a circumlocution for God's action.<sup>58</sup> The meaning of the verse is that, "The absolute obligation of the (Sabbath) commandment is . . . challenged, though its validity is not contested in principle."<sup>59</sup> Jesus is not suggesting that every individual is free to use or abuse the Sabbath as he sees fit, but that Sabbath observance in the Old Testament was a beneficial privilege, not a mere legal point—an end in itself,<sup>60</sup> as the Pharisees seemed to think.

Verse 28 is even more sweeping. If the Sabbath was made for man, it should not be too surprising (*ὥστε*, so) that the messianic Son of Man, whose authority to forgive sins has just been emphasized (2:10) should also be Lord even (*καί*) of the Sabbath. Here, as in Matthew and Luke, "lord" (*κύριος*) receives the emphasis: "The Son of man controls the sabbath, not is controlled by it,"<sup>61</sup> and Jesus is that Son of Man. Is he also "Lord of the Sabbath" in the sense that he is to be worshiped? That is not demonstrably in view; but even so, the claim is momentous, and means much more than the mere authority to tamper with the regulations of the Halakah.<sup>62</sup>

... if the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath—and is therefore entitled to abrogate the regulations concerning it if he wishes—then he possesses an authority at least equal to that of the Mosaic Law, a law which was not of human origin, but was given by God himself. Once again, therefore, the authority of the Son of man goes beyond any merely human authority: his lordship of the Sabbath is another element of the New Age, a part of man's restoration and God's activity *ἐπι τῆς γῆς* [on earth].<sup>63</sup>

At the same time, there is evidence for the fact that the Sabbath itself is associated with the theme of restoration and the messianic age.<sup>64</sup> Within such a framework the fact that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath becomes the more significant, for the very concept of Sabbath begins to undergo transformation. That Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath is not only a messianic claim of grand proportions, but it raises the possibility of a future change or reinterpretation of the Sabbath, in precisely the same way that His professed superiority over the Temple raises certain possibilities about ritual law. No details of that nature are spelled out here, but the verse arouses expectations.

The setting of the incident in Mark and Luke is identical: it follows immediately our Lord's comments about new wine in new wineskins; i.e., "the Lord taught that He had brought a complete renewal of the religious forms and their application. And now He shows that this also applies to the keeping of the Sabbath."<sup>65</sup> But Luke has no parallel to Mark 2:27; the passage leaps from the David incident to the affirmation of the lordship of the Son of Man over the Sabbath, so that the pronouncement of the authority of Jesus stands out even more.<sup>66</sup>

Matthew's account is notable in several respects. Whereas neither Mark nor Luke includes a reference to time, Matthew 12:1 begins with the phrase "At that time" (*ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ*), i.e., Matthew links the pericope with what precedes: "it is at the time when Jesus sets his 'light burden' over against that of the Pharisees that the Sabbath conflict arises."<sup>67</sup> Further, although Matthew has no parallel to Mark 2:27, he records two extra arguments, adduced from Scripture, as part of Jesus' defense.<sup>68</sup> Besides the appeal to the historical books (12:3–4 and parallels), there is one to the Torah proper (12:5f.), and another to the prophets (12:7). The appeal to Torah adds a new thought. Formally speaking, the priests break the law every Sabbath because of the work they are required to do as part of the right worship of God (cf. John 7:22–23 for a similar argument). The point is not only that some laws by their very nature formally conflict with other laws, but that the more important law or principle takes precedence. In the Old Testament, this opinion entails a startling result: some men, namely the priests, break the Sabbath repeatedly, and yet are innocent. Indeed, if the Old Testament principle were really "one day in seven for worship and rest" instead of "the seventh day for worship and rest,"

we might have expected Old Testament legislation to prescribe some other day off for the priests. The lack of such confirms the importance in Old Testament thought of the *seventh* day, as opposed to the mere one-in-seven principle so greatly relied upon by those who wish to see in Sunday the precise New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament Sabbath. More important for the passage at hand, Jesus is saying that just as the Old Testament Scriptures made provision for a certain class of persons with authority to override the Sabbath because of their work, so Jesus Himself has the authority to override the Sabbath because of His work. This does not mean that Jesus here actually breaks the Sabbath or overrides it, at least as far as Torah is concerned, but it does mean He claims authority to do so, and in a sense questions the Pharisees' right to question Him.

The argument about the priests would be meaningless unless Jesus could claim at least similar authority; in fact, He insisted that something greater than the temple priests was present (whether the greater thing was the kingdom or Jesus,<sup>69</sup> the point is clear). In the apparent conflict between what Jesus and His disciples did and the Sabbath regulations, Jesus claimed the authority to supersede the Sabbath without guilt. It is not a matter of comparing Jesus' actions with those of the priests, nor is it likely that this is an explicit reference to Jesus as High Priest. Rather, it is a question of contrasting His authority with the authority of the priests.<sup>70</sup> This interpretation is reinforced by Matthew's use of 12:8.

But we must pause at Matthew 12:7. The quotation from Hosea 6:6 (already used at Matt. 9:13) accuses the Pharisees of being unmerciful. The tables are turned; the accusers (12:2) are being accused (12:7). Not only are the disciples quite innocent, but the Pharisees are quite heartless.

Matthew 12:8 has great significance, because of the word *γάρ* (for). If *γάρ* refers to 12:6, the thought pattern is very similar to the entire passage up to and including 12:7, which is the more natural way to take it, the idea is that the disciples are innocent *because* Jesus as the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. What is potential in Mark 2:28 now becomes actual because it is spelled out.

(The disciples) were indeed without any guilt with respect to the charge made against them by the Pharisees, "for" in picking and . . . eating this food they were doing what Jesus allowed and wanted them to do.<sup>71</sup>

Rordorf's understanding of this pericope is unusual. He writes, "Matthew thinks the disciples were guiltless (12:7) because they were hungry."<sup>72</sup> He goes on to insist that, whether the disciples were hungry or not, it is improper for Matthew to argue against the binding force of the commandment: they could

have been reproached for not having prepared their meals the day before, or they could have fasted. Hence, following G. D. Kilpatrick,<sup>73</sup> he concludes that "Matthew here marks the beginning of a new Christian casuistry." But this line of approach is susceptible to many attacks. In the first place, although Matthew 12:7 does declare that the disciples were innocent, it does not establish their innocence by referring to their hunger. Such an inference is gratuitous in the light of the *γάρ* in 12:8; innocence is based on Christ's authority over the Sabbath. But even if this were not so, we may well ask what explicit Torah regulation has been broken (assuming that the laws about harvesting were given with the farmer, not the Sabbath stroller, in mind).

In all three Gospels, Jesus responds to the charge of Sabbath breaking by appealing to David's example, thereby showing that in principle at least the Sabbath law might be set aside by other considerations. In Matthew this point is reinforced by the addition of a further example from Torah itself. Mark alone records the saying about the purpose of Sabbath (2:27), but more or less the same point is made by Matthew where Jesus speaks of His easy yoke and then appends the quotation from Hosea about mercy. Matthew's concern for a liberalizing of pharisaic restrictions for the purpose of doing good is stressed also in the next pericope by all three synoptic Gospels (cf. discussion below) in the arguments for doing good on the Sabbath. Luke, by leaving out any form of Mark 2:27 and Matthew 12:5-7, jumps from the example of David to the lordship of Christ over the Sabbath, and thus may be saying in effect, "A greater than David is here." All three Gospels stress Christ's lordship over the Sabbath; Mark and Luke place the pericope after Jesus' remarks on new wineskins, and hint that in this area too Jesus makes things new. It is remarkable in all this evidence that neither Jesus nor His disciples appear to be guilty of transgressing any injunction of Torah, despite the implicit rejection of the Halakah.

One final observation may help to pave the way for subsequent discussion. In sabbatarian apologetic, it is common to distinguish between moral, ceremonial and civil law. The Sabbath commandment is then thought to be binding on all not only because it is alleged to be a "creation ordinance," but also because it is part of the Decalogue, which is classified as "moral." The distinction between moral, ceremonial, and civil law is apt, especially in terms of functional description, but it is not self-evident that either Old Testament or New Testament writers neatly classify Old Testament law in those categories in such a way as to establish continuity and discontinuity on the basis of such distinctions.<sup>74</sup> Even if such categories are applied, it should be noted that both David's law-breaking and that of the priests (found only in Matthew) come from *ceremonial* law. It is difficult, then, to resist the conclu-

sion that their applicability to the Sabbath case puts Sabbath law in the ceremonial category with them.

*Mark 3:1-6; Matthew 12:8-14; Luke 6:6-11*<sup>75</sup>

The only word in Mark 3:1-6 that links this pericope with what precedes is "again" (*πάλιν*), which probably harks back to 1:21, unless, with Bengel, we take it to mean *alio sabbato* (on another Sabbath).<sup>76</sup> The verb *παρετήρουν* (they watched) (3:2) is not impersonal, representing a passive, nor is it general, meaning that everyone watched; the enemies who watched were the scribes and the Pharisees (cf. 3:6 with Luke 6:7).<sup>77</sup> In all three Gospels the malicious intent of the watchers is stressed, although the details differ. Mark implies that Jesus discerned the thoughts of the Pharisees, and Luke explicitly states that "he knew their thoughts." This increases the impact of Jesus' first command to the man with the withered hand, beckoning him into the glare of attention. "In sharpest contrast to the secretiveness of the spies, Jesus acts perfectly openly so that all may know His attitude in the matter."<sup>78</sup> Matthew is not interested in observing that Jesus read their minds, but brings the conflict into focus by recording the *voiced* objection of the Pharisees (their comment may have been prompted by the man's coming into the inner circle of the crowd). The miracle will provide a clear and decisive answer as to whether Jesus will perform healing miracles on the Sabbath or not. Mark and Luke (but not Matthew) emphasize in addition that Jesus Himself precipitates the conflict by calling the crippled man forward. The operative word is "precipitates," which must not be understood to mean "provokes," since the antagonism was already present as they watched for an excuse to destroy Jesus. Our Lord's action brings the matter into the open.

Jesus' reply (Mark 3:4) has called forth varied interpretations. Several commentators think that Jesus here teaches that failure to do good is itself an evil thing.<sup>79</sup> W. Manson writes:

Nothing could better illustrate the uncompromising positiveness of Jesus' whole conception of moral obligation than the issue here formulated. Jesus will recognize no alternative to the doing of good except the doing of evil. The refusing to save life is tantamount to the taking of it. Therefore he invalidates at one stroke the do-nothing attitude, which, under cover of the principle of not working on the Sabbath, his contemporaries mistook for obedience to the will of God.<sup>80</sup>

This interpretation, however, is a trifle simplistic. In the first place, it fails to give sufficient weight to two exegetical points: (1) Jesus is talking about what is lawful (*ἐξεστίν*), not what is required, (2) Jesus' answer concerns what is permitted *on the Sabbath*, not what is demanded throughout all of life. Second, someone must decide what is good and what is evil, and the

Pharisees would surely argue that keeping the Sabbath is good, and breaking it is evil. In other words, even within Manson's framework of interpretation, Jesus' reply makes little sense, and does not really come to grips with the issues. Third, if the refusal to do good is itself evil, then no man ever has the right to any rest whatsoever, and that is patently absurd; Jesus Himself recognized the need for rest both of a physical kind (Mark 6:31) and of a more deeply rooted variety (Matt. 11:28–30).

Jesus' answer does indeed set doing right on the Sabbath over doing wrong, but His statement has a particular reference. It was wrong for the Pharisees to accuse Jesus. Jesus Himself, on the other hand, was about to do good by healing the man.<sup>81</sup> It may be objected that such an interpretation is too subtle, but it is difficult to see the force of the objection, since Jesus by His reply reduced His opponents to guilty silence when they might otherwise have argued that the man could have waited until the next day; his case was not urgent.<sup>82</sup>

Implicitly, of course, there is an attack on the Halakah, or at least on their application of the Halakah to this case. The Torah itself says nothing about healing on the Sabbath, but the rabbis interpreted healing as proscribed work (Exod. 31:14) and then modified this stringent rule to allow exceptions in a case of threatening death (e.g., *Shab.* 18:3; *Yoma* 8:6). But Jesus was not a medical professional or a ministering relative; He does not fit the usual categories. "Even from their own point of view the Pharisees must have found it difficult to call this breaking the Sabbath, for Jesus used no remedy, performed no action, simply spoke a word, and the man merely stretched forth his hand."<sup>83</sup>

Mark records (3:4) that Jesus looked around in anger and was grieved<sup>84</sup> by their insensitivity. It is difficult to be certain precisely what evoked this reaction from our Lord. It may have been the Pharisees' insensitivity to the needs of their fellow-men, or their hypocrisy about scrupulous Sabbath regulations when their avowed intent was to ensnare Jesus, or their failure to grasp the weighty matters of the Torah, or their blindness to the inbreaking of the kingdom and the witness of the Messiah's words and deeds.

And so the man was healed, and the cure itself was both an act of benevolence and a reply to their unbelieving accusation. This pericope, situated where it is in all three of the synoptic Gospels, serves as the climactic demonstration that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath. Moreover, it is Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath that fills the Pharisees with rage (Luke 6:11) and brings about the strange alliance with the Herodians,<sup>85</sup> a major factor contributing to the Cross, which begins to loom large on the horizon (Mark 3:6). Later, we must at least ask why, in the light of the fact that Jesus' actions on the Sabbath

contributed to opposition against Him, the charge of Sabbath breaking was not levelled against Him at His trial.

The material found in Matthew 12:11–12 will be discussed later in connection with the parallels in Luke 13:15 and 14:5.

*Mark 6:1–6a*,<sup>86</sup> *Matthew 13:54–58*; *Luke 4:16–30*<sup>87</sup>

In Mark 6:1, the use of *ἐκεῖθεν* (from there) suggests that Jesus went from the home of Jairus in Capernaum to His home town of Nazareth. The reference to His disciples probably indicates that this was not a private visit, although Swete's conclusion is probably overstated: "He came as a Rabbi, surrounded by His scholars."<sup>88</sup>

Jesus apparently uses the Sabbath synagogue service as an opportunity to teach.<sup>89</sup> In Mark's account, astonishment and anger (6:2–3) prompt the reader to wonder if the sermon included distinctive messianic claims: such a supposition links Mark and Luke rather neatly. The words *αἱ δυνάμεις τοιαῦται* (what mighty works) do not demonstrably refer to miracles performed *on that Sabbath*.<sup>90</sup> The antagonism, therefore, has not been evoked by alleged Sabbath breaking by healing, but because the people are offended by Jesus' unique claims and authoritative teaching. The only answer is that home towns and near relatives will not honor local prophets; they are simultaneously so skeptical and so proud that they assume the prophet is putting on airs, especially if there is a suspicion that the prophet is an illegitimate child.<sup>91</sup>

That no opposition is aroused by alleged contravention of Sabbath law seems to be confirmed by Matthew's omission of the fact that it is a Sabbath. Mark's mention of this detail appears to be part of the rationale for Jesus' ministry in the synagogue rather than the cause of any antipathy. The same thing appears to be true of Luke's account, in which the addition of the words "as his custom was" (Luke 4:16) has the same function; it establishes the reason for Jesus' presence and ministry on this occasion.

Luke, however, does tell us more of the circumstances and content of Jesus' preaching. When he rose to read, the scroll of Isaiah was handed to him. Whether or not Isaiah 61:1, 2 was part of the prescribed lection for that Sabbath is impossible to say with certainty.<sup>92</sup> The original Isaiah passage describes Yahweh's ideal Servant; it promises release of the captives, return to Jerusalem, and a liberty like that of a year of jubilee. But the words are fulfilled in a higher sense in Christ, and it "is obvious that both figures, the return from exile and the release of the jubilee, admirably express Christ's work of redemption."<sup>93</sup> Such, at least, was the view of most older commentators;<sup>94</sup> and this interpretation has been revived by R. B. Sloan.<sup>95</sup> Even if Sloan forges too tight a link between Sabbath and jubilee (cf. M. M. B.



Turner, chapter 5 in this volume), nevertheless it is clear that the great eschatological event has arrived, and probably Luke is telling us that Jesus the Messiah brings with Him the climactic rest of the year of jubilee.<sup>96</sup> But the people, far from being intrigued and relieved by promise of rest, are incensed at the audacity of the claim, so much so that they almost commit murder on the Sabbath day. The primary offense does not concern the Sabbath regulations, but the messianic claim itself (Luke 4:18–21), including the reference to the extension of God's mercy in Old Testament times to non-Jews (4:25–27).

#### Luke 13:10–17

This is the last mention of Jesus' synagogue ministry in Luke. Jesus healed a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years. The duration of the infirmity is evidence that this was not an emergency case, even though it was tragic. Jesus took the initiative; no request from her is recorded. The cure drew sharp rebuke from the ruler of the synagogue, however. "He indirectly censures the act of Jesus by addressing the people as represented by the woman."<sup>97</sup>

Jesus addressed His opponents as hypocrites (*ὑποκριταί*), indicating that others were siding with the ruler of the synagogue, referred to in verse 17 as "his adversaries" (*ἀντικείμενοι*). Their hypocrisy is seen superficially in the fact that they profess zeal for the law when their real motive is resentment directed against the healer. Their own Sabbath behavior is inconsistent, they are prepared to untie an ox or an ass from its stall and lead it to drink on the Sabbath,<sup>98</sup> but they will not allow a fellow Israelite, a daughter of Abraham, to be released from her bondage to Satan.<sup>99</sup> There are two deductions that should be made *a minori ad maius* ("from the lesser to the greater"):<sup>100</sup> if an animal was to be helped, how much more a daughter of Abraham? and if being bound for a few hours and unable to drink should cause pity for an animal, how much more being bound by Satan for eighteen years?

Caird and others have argued on the basis of 13:16 that this pericope teaches that the Sabbath is particularly appropriate for the works of the kingdom.<sup>101</sup> However, under such an interpretation one might also conclude that the Sabbath is particularly appropriate for untying donkeys. It seems better to understand Jesus' argument that kingdom activity, as well as humane treatment of animals, must go on seven days a week.

Again, it is difficult to see how Jesus here breaks any precept in the Torah. Moreover, the initiative taken by Jesus testifies to His concern for getting on with His mission, rather than to any putative desire to rock the boat of legalism, otherwise Jesus might have noticed the woman during the week and

then waited until the Sabbath to heal her. Although there is no obvious attempt to overthrow the Sabbath (even if the sensitivities of the synagogue rules are ignored), there is a hint that the real significance of Sabbath is release from bondage.

#### Luke 14:1–6

This pericope is peculiar to Luke. It was not uncommon to invite guests to dinner after the synagogue service,<sup>102</sup> but the man suffering from dropsy seems out of place.<sup>102</sup> Conceivably, he may have been invited in anticipation of a Sabbath violation, but one might have expected γάρ (for) in verse 2 in that case. Further, both "behold" (*ἰδοὺ*, 14:2), and "let him go" (*ἀπέλυσεν*, 14:4), suggest that the man was not an invited guest.<sup>103</sup> The man may have been there seeking Jesus, like the woman in 7:36–38, and the "watching" of the Pharisees may have been broader initially, before it focused on the Sabbath healing question.

Jesus' question, "Is it lawful to heal or not?" is directed toward their critical thoughts, and is typical (cf ". . . to do good or to do harm?" [6:8] and ". . . from heaven or from men?" [20:4]). The alternative is clear, for even if they suggest that the man should wait until the Sabbath is over, they are in effect answering no to the question. The Pharisees can scarcely answer yes without removing their ground of complaint; they cannot answer no without appearing harsh. So they keep silent, thus forfeiting the right to criticize afterward.

Having cured the man, Jesus asked another unanswerable question; Which of them would refuse to rescue a son<sup>104</sup> or (even) an ox from a well, on the Sabbath? The form of the question suggests that Jesus was appealing to the actual practice of his opponents;<sup>105</sup> their guilty consciences render them quite powerless to reply. As in Matthew 12:11–12, the comparison between an animal and a man isolates the double standard to which Sabbath legalism had led. P. K. Jewett misses the bluntness of Jesus' words; he thinks it is difficult to justify the example Jesus gives because the element of emergency has been introduced. Therefore, he concludes that Jesus is really saying that each of His healings was an emergency healing.<sup>106</sup> But Jewett's approach is too subtle; Jesus does not argue that His healings are emergency cases, in order to submit to the framework of the Halakah. Rather, He performs what is good and defends it on the that ground, attacking His critics for their own inconsistency. Thus, He implicitly rejects the framework of the Halakah.

#### Matthew 24:20

Matthew alone preserves this reference to the Sabbath. It is not to be taken to mean that Jesus taught His disciples that any kind of travel, including

escape, on the Sabbath day was wrong. He does not suggest they refrain from fleeing on the Sabbath, but presupposing that they will flee, He exhorts them to pray that their flight may be on another day. Nursing mothers (24:19) and winter rains and cold (24:20a) would slow them down and cause loss of life, and so also would the Sabbath regulations, since gates would be shut, shops would be closed, and there would be impediments for any who attempted to exceed the travel distance allowable on the Sabbath day.<sup>107</sup>

It is not legitimate to deduce from this passage that Jesus Himself never envisaged the abandonment of Sabbath. When Jerusalem finally fell, Sabbath keeping Jews (Christian or no) made up most of the population, so the Sabbath restrictions would be everywhere. In any case, to demand too much from this text is to demand that the text be adjudged anachronistic.<sup>108</sup>

#### EMPHASES IN MARK AND MATTHEW

Mark immediately refers to the beginning of the gospel (1:1) and, at the end of his prologue, outlines its basic content: "The time has come, the kingdom of God is near; repent and believe the gospel" (1:14–15; cf. 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9).<sup>109</sup> Thus, Mark immediately adopts an eschatological orientation, which proclaims that the long-awaited time *has come*: in Jesus, God is working out His ultimate purpose of victory.

This kingdom is seen in Jesus' works: we are immediately told of an exorcism (1:21–28), which establishes His authority (1:27). The initial drama is repeated many times (1:32–34, et al.). The fact that the first exorcism recorded by Mark takes place on a Sabbath (1:21) sets the stage for the Sabbath works and healings that follow (2:23–3:6). Before these are presented, Mark again stresses Jesus' extraordinary authority—authority even to forgive sins (2:10). When Jesus is questioned about His disciples' carelessness in regard to fasting (2:18–20), He replies that the joy of *His own presence* is more significant. Mark immediately appends the saying about new wineskins (2:21–22); not only are Jesus' person and authority central to the content of the "gospel," but there are new forms as well as new content. It is no accident that two Sabbath controversies immediately follow;<sup>110</sup> both of these pericopes focus on the saying that the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath (2:28).

Even in the Sabbath controversy in Nazareth (Mark 6:1–6a), the central point is that Jesus is not honored as He ought to be. His own villages had no faith, in marked contrast to the faith exhibited at the end of the previous chapter (5:21–43). The different responses, however, reflect Mark's *Messiasgeheimnis* (messianic secret) theme;<sup>111</sup> they do not call in doubt that Jesus should have been better treated than He was.

Matthew does not introduce any Sabbath controversy until almost half way

through his Gospel. Two Sabbath pericopes (Matt. 12:1–14), appear immediately after Jesus' invitation to the burdened and weary to find rest in His easy yoke. As if such a juxtaposition were not enough, Matthew then carefully points out that the Sabbath conflicts occurred "at that time" (*ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ*)—presumably at or near the time when Jesus had spoken of His rest. This is as much as to say that the rest He offers surpasses the rest that the Pharisees wanted the people to observe.

Bacchiocchi passes too quickly from similar observations to the conclusion that "Christ made the Sabbath the fitting symbol of His redemptive mission."<sup>112</sup> It is true that the "rest" of Matthew 11:28–30 refers to Jesus' teaching and mission,<sup>113</sup> and that this is linked in some way with the Sabbath, but there is a question about the nature of that link. Elsewhere, for instance, Jesus links His mission with the temple, but the temple is not a *symbol* of His mission but something that *pointed toward* His mission. Jesus, after all, sees Himself as greater than the temple (Matt. 12:6). Neither Stephen (Acts 7) nor the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews falsely construes the thrust of Jesus' thought in this regard. John admits that the relationship between Jesus and the temple was obscure until after the Resurrection (John 2:22), but it is not obvious that John's later understanding is a misrepresentation of what Jesus had in mind. Clearly, Jesus saw Himself as the focal point in redemptive history, for even the temple pointed to Him. In this sense, the temple does not now serve as the symbol of Christ's mission; rather, it lived out its life as a pointer toward Christ's mission.

This interpretation, to be valid must agree with the evangelists' presentation of the relationship between Jesus and the law. This thorny question I shall consider briefly in the next section. Perhaps it is worth noting in passing that at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–8), the whole point of the Matthean account is that Jesus alone and not even Moses or Elijah is to be heard as the voice of God; "Listen to him!"<sup>114</sup>

By an analogous argument, then, it may be premature to conclude, with Bacchiocchi, that the juxtaposition of Matthew 11:28–30 and Matthew 12:1–14 suggests that the Sabbath is presented as the symbol of the messianic rest. Rather, the Sabbath is another of the Old Testament pointers to the messianic rest. Matthew 12:1–14 shows how the Sabbath was misconstrued and abused; the first of these two pericopes concludes by affirming the Son of man's lordship over the Sabbath, and the second pictures Jesus performing a messianic healing on that day. This, then, agrees with Matthew's fulfillment motifs. The gospel rest to which the Sabbath had always pointed was now dawning.

In short, as R. Banks says, Jesus "takes a position above [the Sabbath] so that it is incorporated into an entirely new framework and viewed from a quite

different perspective. As a result, what is acceptable or unacceptable in the way of conduct upon it is defined in relation to an altogether new reference point i.e., Christ's estimate of the situation."<sup>115</sup>

JESUS AND THE LAW IN THE SYNOPTIC TRADITION  
(especially Matthew and Mark)<sup>116</sup>

Limitations of space require brevity; therefore, I treat this subject suggestively, not exhaustively. There is not room even to survey the multiplicity of ideas that have been advanced to express Jesus' view of the law. Even the last few years have witnessed the publication of several lengthy monographs on Matthew's presentation of Jesus and the law.<sup>117</sup> The following paragraphs indicate tentative conclusions; in particular, I am concerned to show how Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath may be placed within a reasonable and believable description of His attitude toward the law.

Jeremias is correct when he warns us that in order to assess Jesus' attitude to the law, it is mandatory that we separate the Torah from the Halakah and examine them independently.<sup>118</sup> By the end of the second century A.D. the oral Torah (or Halakah) had come to be regarded as no less authoritative than the written Torah. Both, it was believed, were given to Moses on Sinai and transmitted down an unbroken line to the contemporary times. There is no compelling reason to think that such a view prevailed in Jesus' day, but at least the Halakah was widely accepted as authoritative, even if its authority did not equal that of Torah.

In general, Jesus rejects the Halakah in a radical way, without sympathy and without equivocation, especially when it conflicts with His own use of the Old Testament, or with His kingdom teaching.<sup>119</sup> For example, some of His most trenchant remarks deal with the *corban* casuistry (Mark 7:9–13, par.; cf. SBK 1:711–17; see also Matt. 16:5–12; 23:1–39, par.). A possible exception is Matthew 23:3; but the verse is limited by both the immediate context and the more extended one (e.g., Matt. 15:6), and indeed may be irony. It is certainly not meant to express an unqualified approval of the Halakah; rather, the stress lies in the second half of the verse with its sharp condemnation of the attitude of the scribes, an attitude that gives the lie to all their theology.<sup>120</sup>

On the other hand, Jesus' attitude to the written Torah is more positive and more varied. He cites the Old Testament frequently as the Word of God. "Only when this basic attitude of Jesus has been made clear can one assess what it means that Jesus should venture to make more radical, to criticize, indeed to supersede the words of Torah."<sup>121</sup> This includes intensification of Old Testament law (e.g., Exod. 20:13–14; Matt 5:21–22, 27–28) and repeal (e.g. Mark 7:14–23).<sup>122</sup>

The crucial passage is Matthew 5:17–20, and the operative word is *πληρῶσαι* ("to fulfill," v. 17). The verb has been interpreted in different ways;<sup>123</sup> but the most helpful suggestion has come from Robert Banks.<sup>124</sup> Many have noted that "to fulfill *prophecy*" means to answer to it, to be the realization of it; the problem is how to understand what "to fulfill the *law*" can mean.<sup>125</sup> Resort is commonly made to "inner-outer" distinctions; Jesus has come to show what the law really means.<sup>126</sup> Others say that Jesus "fulfills" the law in that He performs it perfectly. Banks, however, argues that the same thing applies to law as to prophecy;<sup>127</sup> he interprets the verb eschatologically. Matthew elsewhere explicitly insists that both the prophets and the law *prophecy* (11:13).

The word "fulfill" in 5:17, then, includes not only an element of discontinuity (that which is more than the Law has now been realised) but an element of continuity as well (that which transcends the Law is nevertheless something to which the Law itself pointed forward).<sup>128</sup>

In short, the antithesis of 5:17 is not between abolishing the law and preserving it in the same form, but between abolishing it and fulfilling it. I have elsewhere argued that

Jesus does not conceive of his life and ministry in terms of *opposition* to the Old Testament, but in terms of *bringing to fruition* that toward which it points. Thus, the Law and the Prophets, far from being abolished, find their valid continuity in terms of their outworking in Jesus. The detailed prescriptions of the Old Testament may well be superseded, because whatever is prophetic must be in some sense provisional. But whatever is prophetic likewise discovers its legitimate continuity in the happy arrival of that toward which it has pointed.<sup>129</sup>

Within this interpretive framework, the next verse, Matthew 5:18, will not require efforts to restrict the extent of its reference (an iota or a dot). Some have said that it is only the moral law that will not pass away (e.g., J. Hänel; M.-J. Lagrange); others say the wholeness of the law without reference to details is intended (e.g., H. Ljungman; K. Benz); another view is that the Decalogue and/or love commandments are permanent (S. Schulz), and some scholars dismiss the saying as barbed irony aimed at the Pharisees (T. W. Manson). The whole law (Old Testament Scripture?—so A. Schlatter) will not pass away, until "heaven and earth pass away," "until all is fulfilled, accomplished." The first qualifying clause may be a rhetorical figure that emphasizes how hard it is for the law to pass away;<sup>130</sup> but objections have been offered against that view.<sup>131</sup> The second, I submit, clarifies the problem; it refers to the fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture in the person and work of Christ.<sup>132</sup> If we understand this fulfillment to take place in the ministry, passion, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus as well as in His subsequent reign

*culminating in the age to come*, then the phrase “until heaven and earth pass away” may be taken literally. Some of the law is fulfilled immediately in the coming of Christ and the dawning of His kingdom; some of the promises must await the return of Christ for their fulfillment. It is in this sense that the second clause clarifies the first.<sup>133</sup>

E. Lohmeyer, J. M. Gibbs, and R. Banks,<sup>134</sup> then go on to argue that the best contextual sense of “one of the least of these commandments” in 5:19 is that Jesus is not referring to Old Testament law, but to his own teaching. Other features, at first glance, appear to support this view. For example, although *ἐντολή* (“commandment”) commonly refers to Old Testament commandments, it can be used of Jesus’ commands (cf. 28:20, as a verb); and *ἀνομία* (“lawlessness”) occurs more frequently with respect to Jesus’ commands than with respect to the Old Testament. In context, “these commandments” might be thought to contrast with “law.” Moreover, those who keep these commandments are ranked within the kingdom, and as a group are set over against the Pharisees and scribes who do not enter it (5:20). All three Synoptists record that Jesus insisted His own words would not pass away (Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). In other words, Jesus not only “fulfills” the law and the prophets in the sense outlined above, but His own teaching has full divine authority behind it. Nevertheless, a small refinement removes the awkward fact that in Matthew *ἐντολή* nowhere clearly refers to Jesus’ teaching; we ought to understand that in 5:19 it does not refer to Old Testament commandments over against Jesus’ teaching, nor to Jesus’ teaching over against Old Testament commandments, but rather to Old Testament law in the relation to Jesus’ teaching, which has just been described in the previous two verses.<sup>135</sup>

In this interpretive framework, Matthew 5:20 makes admirable sense. Jewish readers would not be likely to take it to mean that the kingdom of heaven can be attained only by a stricter observance of the rules than that practiced by the scribes and Pharisees. What is needed is greater righteousness than theirs, greater than that which can be obtained by keeping rules. How this is obtainable comes out of the corpus of the teaching of *Jesus*, who has come to fulfill the *law and the prophets*. The clear implication of such stupendous authority is that it must be nothing less than divine; for was not the mosaic law divine in origin?

The development of the distinctions “moral law,” “ceremonial law,” and “civil law,” is traced in later chapters of this volume, but it must be insisted that to read such categories back into Matthew 5:17–20 and conclude that only moral law is in view would be anachronistic. This is not to deny that Jesus Himself makes no distinctions whatever in Old Testament law,<sup>136</sup> nor to

say that the distinctions are always invalid. Rather, it is to say that the New Testament writers do not in any case appear to establish patterns of continuity or discontinuity on the basis of such distinctions. Certainly the phrase “an iota or a dot” excludes any interpretation of the passage that claims that only “moral” law is in view.

I am aware how uncertain the results of the exegesis of this difficult passage must remain. Nevertheless, it must be vigorously insisted that sabbatarian appeal to the eternal validity of the Old Testament law—including Sabbath law—on the basis of Matthew 5:17–20 bristles with problems. If “abolish” in 5:17 is given absolute force, for example, consistency demands the conclusion that our Lord’s abolition of the food laws was a mistake. And if, instead, “fulfillment” is taken to mean something like “show what the true meaning is,” that same interpretation must be applied to Old Testament Sabbath law as well—and then we are back to our attempt at surveying just how the New Testament takes up the Sabbath theme. Matthew 5:17–20 is a difficult passage of primary importance in trying to understand Jesus’ attitude to the law. But it is not a panacea for any particular hard-pressed interpretation of how the New Testament writers view the Sabbath, despite the impression given by certain Sabbatarian publications.

Part of the problem in grappling with Jesus’ view of the law is that although Jesus Himself lived under the old covenant, He was the messenger of the new, and actually introduced the eschatological aeon by His death, resurrection, and exaltation. The Christian community, then, becomes the heir and the validation of God’s promises.<sup>137</sup> We have already noticed that Jesus clearly and authoritatively modified, intensified, repealed, or invested with deeper meaning, various parts of the Old Testament, but there is no undisputed example of a specific precept of the written Torah that He Himself actually contravened.<sup>138</sup> Rather, Jesus’ authoritative teaching *anticipates* the change, which does not actually come until the Resurrection. As Paul puts it, Jesus was “born under the law” (Gal. 4:4). Hence, Jesus demands that the temple be hallowed (Mark 11:15–18 par.; Matt. 23:16–22); He even extends His comments to sacrificial worship (Matt. 5:23–24). Yet at the same time He predicts that the temple is doomed, on its way to collapse, and then insists that the real temple is His body. Our Lord in such fashion gathers up the law in Himself, recapitulating Israel’s history and taking over its institutions in His own being (a theme especially important in Matthew and John).

Thus it was Jesus himself who shook the foundations of the ancient people of God. His criticism of the *Torah* [I doubt that this phrase is accurate]; coupled with his announcement of the end of the cult; his ejection of the *Halakah* and his claim to announce the final will of God, were the decisive occasion for the action of the

leaders of the people against him, finally brought into action by the cleansing of the Temple. They took Jesus to be a false prophet. . . . This accusation brought him to the cross.<sup>139</sup>

The general argument may be established from a broader scrutiny of the Gospels. Although I am not entirely satisfied with all of R. Banks's conclusions, his central points are, I think, amply justified by the evidence. Throughout the synoptic tradition, the person and ministry of Christ dominate, and the law as a whole points to, prophesies of, and anticipates Him. But He Himself teaches like a sovereign, not like the teachers of His day (Mark 1:27). If we may adopt the standard dogmatic categories, even the "moral law" within the Torah points prophetically to Jesus' teaching and lives on in His teaching. This in no way denies that there is an eternal moral law bound up with the character of God. What it does rather is to try to approach the Old Testament from Jesus' perspective as that perspective has been preserved for us, so that the bounds of the "moral" content of the law, as those of any other content, are determined finally by reference to Him.

Jesus' view of the law appears to be ambivalent: He emphasizes that it is from God and that Scripture cannot be broken; yet in another sense, "law" continues only until John, and then the kingdom to which it points takes over. Although this is emphasized in Matthew, it is not peculiar to his gospel, for Jesus is the eschatological center of Mark as well,<sup>140</sup> even though Mark does not treat fulfillment themes extensively. And in Luke, the fulfillment motifs again come to the fore, albeit with slightly different emphases (cf. Luke 24:27-44).

Into this matrix of relationships between Jesus and the law, Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath fits coherently and consistently. And, along with Machen, Longenecker, Jüngel, Ridderbos and others, I submit that the teaching of Jesus in this area is the *presupposition* behind Paul's teaching on the law.<sup>141</sup>

#### THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Because Jesus' attitude to the Sabbath as recorded in John is similar in many respects to what is recorded in the Synoptics, the following remarks are restricted to what is distinctive in John.<sup>142</sup>

*John 5:1-18*<sup>143</sup>

The invalid whom Jesus heals in this chapter is singularly dull and backward.<sup>144</sup> He is skeptical when Jesus asks him if he wants to get better: the healing is due solely to the initiative of Jesus. Further, he lets his benefactor slip away without discovering so much as His name, and then, when he does

find out, promptly informs the religious authorities. This background must be weighed carefully when we consider whether or not John expects his readers to believe that Jesus performed this miracle to *provoke* a confrontation. The man is so slow there is progress only when Jesus does seize the initiative (5:6-8, 14). Verse 6 suggests that Jesus saw the man there, and, as usual, brooked no delay in performing the cure. On the other hand, there was a multitude of sick, blind, lame, and impotent folk gathered at the same place (5:3). Does not the healing of one of them raise questions about the real motivation behind the cure?

Yet all this may be better explained in terms of the strong predestinarian note in this gospel.<sup>145</sup> Even the command to carry the pallet on the Sabbath day contravenes no clear proscription in Torah (although it is implicitly forbidden in *Shab.* 7:2, last item; and 10:5).<sup>146</sup> Moreover, elsewhere Jesus gives the same command to other paralytics when the Sabbath is not involved (Mark 2:9, 11, par.). In short, although it is remotely possible that Jesus is here presented as provoking a clash over rabbinical legalism about the Sabbath, there is no compelling reason to suppose He is precipitating a crisis over the Torah.

As elsewhere (cf. 9:14), John remarks that the day of the cure was a Sabbath only after the description of the healing itself (5:9). Carrying the pallet attracts antagonistic attention, and the healed man, not anxious to be a hero, promptly blames his benefactor. That the Pharisees probe the man about the person who commanded him to carry his pallet, but ask nothing about the healing (5:11-12), is characteristic of John, and is calculated to draw attention to their hypocrisy. It also suggests that the pallet-carrying charge was potentially more serious and less debatable than the charge of breaking the Sabbath by healing.

When Jesus finds the man again, He warns him not to sin any more lest something worse befall him. Although illness is not inevitably the direct result of sin (cf. 9:3), that is the implication in this instance; therefore this Sabbath cure is more directly related to the soteriological work for which the Lamb of God came into the world (1:29).

All this takes on added significance when we examine Jesus' reply to the Pharisees, "My Father is working still, and I am working."<sup>147</sup> The reply not only has eschatological significance,<sup>148</sup> but is also a claim to equality with God (5:18).<sup>149</sup> As such the answer is not far removed from Mark 2:28 and parallels; indeed, if anything it is weightier.<sup>150</sup> Instead of pointing out that He has not really broken the Torah even if He has transgressed Halakah, Jesus replies that He can work on the Sabbath because His work is of a piece with God's work. That work is more fully described in verses 19-29. Jesus' claim

takes the discussion out of the realm of Sabbath controversy, which subject cannot properly be assessed until the claim is dealt with, and for this reason the theme of Sabbath drops from view (to be picked up again later, in chap. 7) as the Christological implications override it.

S. Bacchiocchi has rightly protested<sup>151</sup> against those commentators who insist that John intends by 5:17–18 to abolish the Sabbath. But he goes too far when he insists that John is in reality reaffirming the Sabbath, linking it to Jesus' redemptive mission.<sup>152</sup> To reverse a common phrase: Bacchiocchi is right in what he denies but wrong in what he affirms. It would be better to say that John, by taking the discussion into Christological and eschatological realms, does not deal explicitly with the question of whether or not Christians are to observe the weekly Sabbath. That question, however, might find an answer in relating John's treatment of the Sabbath to some larger Johannine themes.

In the light of the entire narrative, it appears that the Pharisees approach Jesus not only about the offense of His healing, but especially about the offense of His command to carry a pallet. If this be so, then Jesus' reply in 5:17 is designed to exonerate not only Himself, with respect to His own actions, but also the paralytic, since the "illegal" activity of the latter sprang from Jesus' work and word. The point to be noticed is that His claim affects not only His own conduct but also that of others.

#### John 7:19–24

These verses appear to refer to the healing in John 5. Jesus' argument about circumcision accurately reflects rabbinic theory.<sup>153</sup> The point is, once again, that some laws override other laws; and this is evidenced by "the Jews'" own practices, in which circumcision overrides Sabbath. Shall not an act as important as healing likewise take pride of place? What sort of Halakah is it which forbids making a man well on the Sabbath? The form of the argument is *a minori ad maius* ("from the lesser to the greater"); the content is barbed and directed toward the inconsistency of legalism.

#### John 9:1–41

Technically speaking there are several breaches of Sabbath Halakah here, apart from the healing itself. Mixing is forbidden (*Shab.* 24:3), and kneading is one of the thirty-nine classes of prohibited work (*Shab.* 7:2). Smearing the clay on the eyes of the blind man might well come under prohibited anointings (*Shab.* 14:4). Such rules, of course, are nowhere to be found in the written Torah.

The debate that develops between the tribunal of Pharisees and the once

congenitally blind man serves to confirm what we have already learned about Jesus' attitude to the Sabbath.<sup>154</sup> We should notice, however, that it is the result of this conflict that draws from Jesus the condemnation of 9:39–41. The Pharisees think they have sight; they refuse to acknowledge their blindness, and therefore their sin remains. But even in the context of this chapter, it is not so much their unbending attitude regarding the Sabbath that prevents them from seeing who Jesus really is, as their implacable enmity toward Him. They deny the obvious evidence before them and use alleged Sabbath offenses as a basis for rejecting Him (9:13–16, 19). Some of the Pharisees are at first troubled by the apparent healing (9:16b), but the problem is resolved as skepticism wins the day (9:19). At issue again is the authority of Jesus; if the authorities admitted to the healing and therefore to the messianic implications that John sees, their own authority, including their interpretation of Sabbath law, would have to bow to Jesus. The Pharisees think they have light, light which includes their own interpretations; but they are blind to Jesus' person and work even while they are certain that they see, and so fall under the condemnation of 9:41. If, on the other hand, a person believes in the Son of man (9:35), he is given light to see, and in that case there is no more effort to resolve the alleged breaches; the authority of the Son of man overrides everything.

#### LARGER CONSIDERATIONS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Wayne Meeks is correct when he writes:

In each passage which mentions the Law or Scripture of Moses, the Fourth Gospel indicates a direct relationship between that Law and Jesus. The relationship is emphatically ambivalent. On the one hand, Jesus and his revelation stand over against or at least superior to the Torah (cf. 1:17; 8:17). . . . On the other hand, Jesus is the one of whom "Moses wrote in the Law" (1:45; 5:46), so that a faithful comprehension of "the Scriptures" would discover testimony to Jesus (5:39, 46–47).<sup>155</sup>

Pancaro has clearly shown that for the Christian Jews among John's readers, the Old Testament law was being followed in the teaching and praxis of the church, which enjoyed the *fulfillment* of the law brought about by Christ.<sup>156</sup> In short, the Christian understanding of the Old Testament was the only correct one.

But we may go further: since the publication of W. D. Davies's *The Gospel and the Land*,<sup>157</sup> scholars have been made sensitive to the *replacement* themes in John's Gospel, where various institutions point toward Christ, who in some sense *replaces* them. Some of these themes are explicit; some are merely hinted at. Jesus replaces the temple, various feasts, Israel as the vine,

and so on. Against the prevailing view, some have suggested that even *ἀντι* (John 1:1b, “upon, against”) refers to replacement rather than accumulation.<sup>158</sup> It is just possible that, in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus Himself replaces the Sabbath.<sup>159</sup> If so, it is a suggestion that owes most of its potency to its surroundings. If present, such a theme might well be linked with Hebrews 4.

#### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

We are now in a better position to formulate some of the findings that have emerged from this exegetical study and to tie up a few loose ends. No attempt is made to bring together all the relevant observations stemming from the exegesis; I shall merely try to pick up the most important threads of thought and weave them into a pattern that may be helpful as a background to chapter 12.

1. There is no hard evidence that Jesus Himself ever contravened any written precept of the Torah concerning the Sabbath.<sup>160</sup> Nevertheless, one must not make too much of this observation.<sup>161</sup> One dare not conclude on this basis that Sabbath observance is still mandatory. The same argument would require that we continue to sacrifice in the temple. Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath cannot rightly be assessed apart from the consideration of His relationship to the law.

2. On the other hand, Jesus did contravene Halakic Sabbath regulations.<sup>162</sup> The rigor of the Halakah is contrary to the will of God as far as Jesus is concerned. “The rules about the Sabbath . . . are as mountains hanging by a hair, for (teaching of) Scripture (thereon) is scanty and the rules many.”<sup>163</sup>

3. There is no compelling evidence that Jesus went out of His way to make Sabbath conduct an issue. Indeed, there is some evidence that hatred toward Jesus prompted the Pharisees' use of Sabbath regulations against Him, so that Jesus did not initiate these confrontations.

4. Some of the Sabbath controversies became springboards for messianic claims. This was only natural, since ultimately the question was part and parcel of Jesus' whole relationship to the law (the most important of these controversies are Mark 2:23–28, par., and John 5:1–47). The lordship of Jesus over the Sabbath is ultimate; and the insistence on this fact by all four evangelists moves the argument away from purely legal questions to essentially christological ones.

5. Jesus views the law as essentially prophetic of Himself and His ministry. It is within the framework of this central motif that other emphases are best understood; Jesus' attitude toward the Sabbath is most readily understood as an example of this.

6. Although the Sabbath controversies contributed to the condemnation of

Jesus (Mark 3:6), the absence of any formal charge of Sabbath breaking at Jesus' trial is not surprising. There may have been difficulty in finding consistent witnesses (Mark 14:56–58) or the authority of Halakah may not at that time have been sufficient for the death sentence. Moreover, all but one of the recorded Sabbath conflicts concerned exorcism or healing, and it would not be psychologically advantageous to press such charges when there was so much in the defendant's favor. Blasphemy, temple destruction, and insurrection were perhaps much more promising.

7. It appears that much (but not all; cf. Mark 2:27–28) of Jesus' explicit treatment of the Sabbath is not so much in terms of *positive* formulation as in terms of *negative* formulation, i.e., He shows what is *not* meant by the law rather than what *is* meant by it. Nevertheless, there are suggestions that the Sabbath rest is intrinsically bound up with God's eschatological purpose of salvation. These hints come to clearest expression in John 5. Because the eschatological significance of Sabbath rest in the New Testament is being explored in chapter 7, I have merely touched on these points in passing.

8. There is no hint anywhere in the ministry of Jesus that the first day of the week is to take on the character of the Sabbath and replace it.

9. The first Christians would never have treated the Sabbath as a shadow of the past—as indeed they did—unless they had grasped the significance of Jesus' teaching in this connection.<sup>164</sup> But to enlarge on the Sabbath practice of the early church would be to step beyond the limits of this chapter.

10. In passing, one should also observe that although the mosaic Sabbath met a human need, so also did the law requiring the return of land in the Jubilee year, the prescribed punishment for blasphemy, and many of the food laws, etc. Everyone, including Jesus (Mark 6:31), would agree that human beings need rest; but that observation must not be used to introduce the notion that the mosaic Sabbath was therefore “moral” law, unless one is prepared on similar grounds to draw the same conclusion from all demonstrably useful laws in the Old Testament.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>E.g., R. Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (London: C. Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. C. Hinz, “Jesus und der Sabbat,” *KerDog* 19 (1973) p. 91. “Because of the freedom of the disciples with respect to Sabbath law the Pharisees and orthodox Jews took offense. But behind the controversy of the disciples' community stands the historical kernel of Jesus himself.” On the general question of the authenticity of the sayings of Jesus, cf. R. T. France, “The Authenticity of the Sayings of Jesus,” *History, Criticism and Faith*, ed. C. Brown (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), pp. 101–143; I. H. Marshall, *The Origins of New Testament Christology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1976), pp. 43–62; and, with respect to the Gospel of John, D. A. Carson, “Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel: After Dodd, What?” *Gospel Perspectives*, Vol. 2, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), pp. 83–145.



<sup>3</sup>R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963) pp. 208–209, identifies this pericope as a “miracle-story” and considers it irrelevant to Jesus’ view of the Sabbath. Because its form does not meet all of M. Dibelius’s specifications, he calls it a paradigm “of a less pure type” (*From Tradition to Gospel* [London: Ivor, Nicholson and Watson, 1943], p. 43). But form criticism is being abused when, instead of identifying forms, it begins to legislate what forms ought to be present, as Bultmann then attempts to do. Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 71: “To try to force this section into conformity with the specifications of a form-critic’s ideal miracle-story by the use of Procrustean methods is doctrinaire. The truth is that we have here a story more primitive than the rounded form of the common miracle-story. . . .” Similarly, V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 171, concludes that the material is Petrine.

<sup>4</sup>The words *τοῖς σάββασι* (Sabbaths) are plural only in form; *σάββατον* (Sabbath) is a second declension noun, but in the New Testament it has a third declension ending in the dative plural. “Successive sabbaths are not meant, for the plural is usual when feasts are mentioned” (Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 172). Cf. similarly *τὰ ἄζυμα* (Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread), *τὰ ἐγκαινία* (Jewish Feast of Dedication), *τὰ γενέσια* (birthday celebration). In Acts 17:2 *σάββατον* occurs as a plural in sense. Cf. R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 1:120.

<sup>5</sup>For examples, cf. *LSJ*, “*εἶμι* (sum),” C.III.2.

<sup>6</sup>So Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 75. The expression no doubt represents Hebrew idiom (cf. Josh. 22:24; Judg. 11:12; 1 Kings 17:18; etc.).

<sup>7</sup>E.g., H. B. Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1902), p. 19; M.-J. Lagrange, *Saint Marc*, (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1947), p. 23; A. Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), p. 67.

<sup>8</sup>E.G., A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark* (London: Methuen, 1942), p. 16; E. Klostermann, *Das Markusevangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1936), p. 16.

<sup>9</sup>E.g., H. Riesenfeld, “The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day in Judaism, the Preaching of Jesus and Early Christianity,” *The Gospel Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), p. 118: “Therefore deeds of healing on Sabbath days must be interpreted as signs that in the person of Jesus was being realized something of what the Sabbath had pointed forward to in the eschatological expectations of the Jewish people.”

<sup>10</sup>SBK 4:527, notes that according to Jewish traditions, demonic power would be crushed in the messianic age. There are complicated textual problems in Mark 1:27b: cf. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 176 n.2; B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Society, 1971), p. 75. In addition, commentators are divided as to whether to take *κατ’ ἐξουσίαν* (with authority) with the following clause, or with *διδαχὴν καινὴν* (a new teaching). The former alternative may be an assimilation to Luke 4:36; but the difference is negligible in light of the last clause of Mark 1:27, even if that clause stands alone. For discussion, cf., G. D. Kilpatrick, “Some problems in New Testament Text and Language,” *Neotestamentica et Semitica*, ed. E. E. Ellis and M. Wilcox (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1969), pp. 198–201.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Nelson, 1969), p. 99: “The ultimate meaning of the ministry in Capernaum is not the healings or the edification of the people. It is who and what these actions reveal. The significance is lost on the people.”

<sup>12</sup>Luke does not mention the synagogue at the beginning of the pericope (4:31), but it is implied that the teaching took place in the Capernaum synagogue (4:38).

<sup>13</sup>Mark’s connection is ambiguous, since *εὐθὺς* could mean “so then,” but it is natural to take the word to mean “immediately.” This is certainly the force of Luke 4:38. Matthew 8:16–17 records the incident but does not tie it in with a Sabbath.

<sup>14</sup>*The Gospel of St. Luke* (London: A. and C. Black, 1963), p. 89.

<sup>15</sup>*Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesus* (Berlin: Kösel, 1919), p. 89.

<sup>16</sup>Luke’s mysterious *δευτεροπρωτῶ* (“on the second Sabbath after the first”) need not detain

us; even if the text were certain, few claim certainty as to what it means. Cf. discussion in Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, pp. 165–66; H. S. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 1:302; and I. H. Marshall, *Commentary on Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 230. In view of these uncertainties, W. Rordorf, *Sunday* (London: S. Con, 1968), pp. 61–62 is a trifle too certain about the Lukan redaction. Cf. also discussion by J. M. Baumgarten, “The Counting of Sabbath in Ancient Sources,” *VT* 16 (1966): 282ff.; E. Delebecque, “Sur un certain sabbat, en Luc. 6.1,” *Revue de Philologie* 48 (1974): 26–29; E. Metzger, “Le sabbat ‘second-premier’ de Luc,” *TZ* 32 (1976): 138–43.

<sup>17</sup>E.g., Bultmann, *History*, pp. 16–17; F. W. Beare, “The Sabbath Was Made for Man?” *JBL*, 79 (1966): 130–36.

<sup>18</sup>*The Gospel According to St. Mark*, pp. 214–15.

<sup>19</sup>E.g., Bultmann, *History*, p. 17; Lohse, *σάββατον*, TDNT 7:20 and n. 172; E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1953), pp. 62–63.

<sup>20</sup>W. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1974), p. 115, says that among scribes “it was assumed that a teacher was responsible for the behaviour of his disciples.” The question the Pharisees raise concerns what is permitted of prohibited; cf. E. Lohse, “Jesu Worte Über den Sabbat,” *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche*, ed. W. Eltester (Berlin, Töpelmann, 1960), p. 86 and n. 27. Note that Jesus’ answer in verse 26 is also couched in legal language.

<sup>21</sup>P. K. Jewett, *The Lord’s Day* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 37. The suggestion goes back at least as far as B. W. Bacon, *The Beginnings of Gospel Story* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1925), pp. 30–31.

<sup>22</sup>So Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 47; Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, p. 94; Lagrange, *Saint Marc*, p. 51; Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 215; H. Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark* (London: Oliphants, 1976), p. 109; and most commentators. Matthew has *ἤρξαντο τὶλλεῖν* (“they began to pluck”), and Luke has *ἐπιλλον* (“they were plucking”). M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1963), par. 376, is no doubt right when he suggests the participle sometimes functions as the main verb.

<sup>23</sup>T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1949), p. 190.

<sup>24</sup>Despite F. W. Beare, “The Sabbath Was Made for Man?” p. 133, and Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, p. 63, who comments, “How the Pharisees come to be there, one is not supposed to ask.” The presence of the Pharisees likewise tells against the suggestion of S. Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), p. 50, following R. G. Hirsch, to the effect that the quotation from Hosea 6:6 (“I desire mercy and not sacrifice”), cited in Matthew 12:7, suggests a rebuke from Jesus to the Pharisees for failing to take Jesus and His disciples home for lunch after synagogue service; this alleged discourtesy was the cause of the disciples’ hunger. But if the Pharisees had been home having lunch, they would not have been in the field. Such reconstructions are speculative, and far removed from the text.

<sup>25</sup>On the thirty-nine major classes of work forbidden by the rabbis, cf. *Shab.* 7:2; also SBK 1:615–18; 623–29; TDNT 7:11–14. For a summary of the detailed applications (many of them later than Jesus’ day), cf. A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, rep. 1967), p. 2, App. 17.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, p. 34; Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 115.

<sup>27</sup>Despite Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 48.

<sup>28</sup>Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, pp. 11–12; cf., also Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, p. 117.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. H. H. P. Dressler, chapter 2 of this volume.

<sup>30</sup>In *j. Shab.* VII.c.9c, the plucking of grain is an act of reaping. C. G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels* (London: Macmillan, 1927), 1:63–64, rightly points out that, in spite of the many Sabbath regulations, “the Sabbath was upon the whole a joy and a blessing to the immense majority of Jews throughout the Rabbinic period.” Similarly, Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, pp. 189–190; and many others. No doubt the Jews’ custom of eating well on the Sabbath contributed to their festal joy (cf. SBK 1:611f.), but when all allowances are made for the Pharisees’ causticity



as a sincere effort to lighten the burden of Sabbath law, it should be noted that the burden was largely self-imposed by the Halakah itself, but also by the rigid interpretation of the written Torah presupposed in the Halakic regulations on the Sabbath. Moreover, it must not be assumed that the ethical grandeur of the rabbinic literature can be read back into the attitudes of the Pharisees of Jesus' day. By the time the Mishnah had been compiled, Jerusalem itself had been destroyed, Christianity had experienced great success, and rabbinic Judaism had undergone something of a Counter Reformation.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. SBK 1:618–19; Lohse, TDNT 7:22.

<sup>32</sup>*The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Athlone Press, 1956), pp. 77ff.

<sup>33</sup>*Sunday*, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 61. E. Delebecque, "Les épis "égrenés" dans les Synoptiques," *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 88 (1975): 133–42, likewise draws momentous conclusions from these details.

<sup>35</sup>A. Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus* (Stuttgart: Colmer Verlag, rep. 1959), p. 392, argues for the priority of Matthew, and says that Mark intentionally dropped the word "hungry."

<sup>36</sup>E.g., Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 52.

<sup>37</sup>*The Son of Man in Mark* (London: SPCK, 1967), pp. 97–98.

<sup>38</sup>For useful summaries, cf. F. Gils, "Le sabbat a été fait pour l'homme et non l'homme pour le sabbat (Mark 2, 27)," RB 69 (1962): 506–13; Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 1:16; F. Neirynek, "Jesus and the Sabbath: Some Observations on Mark II, 27," in *Jésus aux origines de la christologie* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1975), pp. 228–70; and G. Gnlika, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* 1. Teilband (Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), pp. 119ff.

<sup>39</sup>E.g., Bultmann, *History*, pp. 16–17; Schmidt, *Das Rahmen der Geschichte Jesus*, p. 97; V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 218.

<sup>40</sup>Lagrange, *Saint Marc*, p. 56.

<sup>41</sup>Rordorf has no difficulty with *καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς* under his reconstruction, since he is persuaded that 2:25–26 has already been interpolated into Mark.

<sup>42</sup>*The Gospel According to Mark*, pp. 118–20. On page 120, note 103, Lane says that *ὡστε* (2:28) designates the conclusion that Mark draws from the act and word of Jesus. Similarly Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, p. 111.

<sup>43</sup>"Son of Man" Imagery: Some Implications for Theology and Discipleship," *JETS* 18 (1975): 8, n. 12. Cf. also Marshall, *Origins*, pp. 63–82.

<sup>44</sup>*The Son of Man in Mark*, pp. 94–95, 98. Since Mark 2:27 is missing from *Daceffi*, and in addition 2:27b is absent from *Wysyrin*, a case could be made for the suggestion that 2:27 is a Western non-interpolation, but few commentators accept this. Another reason for rejecting the unity of 2:27 and 2:28 is expressed by W. Thissen, *Erzählung der Befreiung: Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu Mk 2,1–3,6* (Würzburg: Echter, 1976), p. 72, viz. "man" and "son of man" probably do not refer to the same thing in these verses. But cf. further discussion below.

<sup>45</sup>Beare, "The Sabbath Was Made for Man?," p. 32; similarly, Gils, "Le sabbat a été fait," pp. 516–521.

<sup>46</sup>P. 63ff.

<sup>47</sup>E. Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM, 1964), p. 39.

<sup>48</sup>P. 65.

<sup>49</sup>*Mekilta Shabbata I* to Exod. 31:13–14; SBK 2:5. Cf. B. *Yoma* 85b, where the same saying is attributed to Jonathan ben Joseph, instead of to R. Simeon ben Menasya. See also the statement of Mattathias in 1 Macc. 2:38–41.

<sup>50</sup>E.g., J. Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Marci* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1903), p. 22; Bultmann, *History*, pp. 16–17; A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan, 1915), p. 170; O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1963), p. 152ff.; Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 64.

<sup>51</sup>T. W. Manson, "Mark ii. 27f.," *Coniectanea Neotestamentica* XI (Lund: Gleerup, 1947), pp. 138–46.

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Hooker, *The Son of Man*; Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, pp. 272–77;

and esp. cf. A. J. B. Higgins, "Son of Man-Forschung since 'The Teaching of Jesus,'" *New Testament Essays*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1959), pp. 126–27, who summarizes criticism against Manson's idea that "Son of man" can be identified simply with the Christian community.

<sup>53</sup>F. N. Lee, *The Covenantal Sabbath* (London: LDCOS, 1969), p. 195.

<sup>54</sup>The number of writers who reason thus is staggering. See, among others, J. A. Schep, "Lord's Day Keeping from the Practical and Pastoral Point of View" in *The Sabbath-Sunday Problem*, ed. G. van Groningen (Geelong: Hilltop Press, 1968), pp. 142–43; Lee, *The Covenantal Sabbath*, p. 195; Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 49; R. T. Beckwith and W. Stott, *This Is the Day* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1978), pp. 7, 11.

<sup>55</sup>E.g., R. A. Zorn, "The New Testament and the Sabbath-Sunday Problem," *The Sabbath-Sunday Problem*, pp. 48–49.

<sup>56</sup>J. A. Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1860), commenting on this passage, actually says that τὸν ἄνθρωπον ("the man") = Adam! The noun ἄνθρωπος occurs in Mark as follows: (1) in the expression "sons of men," 3:28; (2) in "Son of Man," 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21 (twice), 41, 62; (3) with reference to a particular man or men, 1:23; 3:1, 3, 5; 4:26; 5:2, 8; 8:24, 27; 12:1; 13:34; 14:13, 21 (twice), 71; 15:39; (4) as "man" generically, 1:17; 7:7–8, 15 (three times), 18, 20 (twice), 21, 23; 8:33, 36–37; 10:7, 9, 27; 11:2, 30, 32; 12:14. The distinction between (3) and (4) may be artificial, as in 12:1 or the parables. Neither the article nor the number changes the meaning of the noun itself (cf. 7:21 and 7:23). It must be concluded, therefore, that 2:27 cannot refer to "mankind" merely on the basis of the word ἄνθρωπος.

<sup>57</sup>Mark's use of γίνομαι is significant: (1) It is used in a manner analogous to the Hebrew *waw-consecutive*, in particular, it is similar to וַיִּבְרָא in use; although it is not a Greek idiom, the LXX usually translates the Hebrew expression by *καὶ ἐγένετο . . . καὶ* (e.g., Genesis 4:8). This idiom becomes rare in the Apocrypha. In the New Testament, it is found in the Synoptics and Acts (not John); Luke especially preserves it (39 times). Matthew has the idiom five times, and Mark four times; they tend to omit *καὶ* in the second clause. F. Büchsel, TDNT 1:682, regards the form as a conscious imitation of the style of the LXX. The four instances in Mark are: 1:9; 2:23; 4:4; 9:7. (2) There is one occurrence, at 2:15, of a more Greek-like structure for the same thought: "and it comes about." (3) There are also time references involving this verb; all but one (11:19) are aorist participles. (4) The last category is more difficult. Often the verb means simply "to be," but sometimes it has the meaning, "to become." This distinction may be difficult to detect, but when it has the latter sense, it may require a different verb in English. For example, note Mark 4:37, "a great storm arose" (*γίνεται*). See also Mark 4:39. The meaning of *ἐγένετο* in Mark 2:27 follows the same pattern: the Sabbath *was or became* for man, and so we say in English that it "was made for man." In Greek, *γίνομαι* often served as the passive of *ποιέω*, but to understand it here as a technical word for "created" would be tenuous (some of the early copyists made this mistake: W, fl, and syr have "was created"). To quote Büchsel, TDNT 1:681: "Usually the term has no particular religious or theological interest in the NT," although he cites John 8:58 as an exception. But what is to be made of the use of *ἐγένετο* with reference to creation (e.g., John 1:3)? The construction is not the same as in Mark 2:27, where *διὰ* with the accusative shows the *reason* for the Sabbath. By contrast, in John 1:3 the preposition is followed by the genitive to denote the *agent* of creation. In another construction, the same verb has reference to the introduction of law (Gal. 3:14). These observations are meant to show that the verb itself, as used in Mark 2:27, in no way entails a reference to a creation ordinance. Cf. also Jewett, *The Lord's Day*, p. 38: "Some have argued that when Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man, he meant mankind in general, not just the Jews in particular. Thus the obligation to keep the Sabbath, that is, the Lord's Day, is given a universal scope. But this is to discover a meaning quite alien to the context, which has to do not with the universal scope, but with the ultimate purpose of the Sabbath rest."

<sup>58</sup>J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (London: SCM, 1971), 1:10 n. 18.

<sup>59</sup>Lohse, "Jesu Worte über den Sabbat," p. 22.

<sup>60</sup>This is the true significance of Mark's use of this saying, as opposed to the meaning when analogous statements are found on the lips of rabbis. The rabbinic principle "would only mean that where life was at stake, things might be done on the Sabbath which otherwise would be forbidden. If v. 27 is closely connected with vv. 23–6, what Jesus is saying has a much more general application, for there is no indication that the disciples were in danger of starvation" (Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 117). Some have also tried to draw a parallel between this passage and Jesus' attitude toward divorce: note His appeal to the order of things at the creation (Matt. 19:4–9). Was Jesus perhaps appealing to creation here as well? But that begs the question since there is no "from the beginning" expressed here. He is not appealing to a determinate time, but to a determinate purpose.

<sup>61</sup>Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, p. 162. This interpretation of the *ὡστε*, a simple *a minori ad maius* (from the lesser to the greater) argument, is to be preferred above that of Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 59, who must postulate an unexpressed jump.

<sup>62</sup>Despite Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, p. 168; J. N. Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1951), p. 200; and others.

<sup>63</sup>Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark*, p. 102.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.* pp. 99–102; F. H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* (London: SCM, 1967), p. 322; cf. notes below on Luke 4:16–30. E. C. Hoskyns, "Jesus the Messiah," *Mysterium Christi*, ed. G. K. A. Bess and A. Deissmann (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930), p. 74ff., argues that Jesus attaches primary significance to the Sabbath not as the hallmark of God's people but as a ritual anticipation of the messianic age.

<sup>65</sup>Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, p. 199.

<sup>66</sup>Cf. Caird, *The Gospel of St. Luke*, p. 99. For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that in Codex Bezae (D), Luke 6:5 is displaced to follow 6:10, and in its stead are inserted the lines (in Greek): "The same day, seeing someone working on the Sabbath, he said to him, 'Fellow, if you know what you are doing, you are blessed; but if not, you are cursed and a transgressor of the law.'" J. Jeremias, *Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1958), pp. 49–53, thinks the saying is authentic. Rordorf, *Sunday*, pp. 87–88, more convincingly, does not; and few, in any case, would consider it part of Luke.

<sup>67</sup>D. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Oliphants, 1972), pp. 209–10.

<sup>68</sup>M. Cohen, "La controverse de Jésus et des Pharisiens à propos de la cueillette des épis, selon l'Évangile de saint Matthieu," *MéSciRel* 34 (1977): 3–12, argues that Matthew adds these two arguments because only he among the three evangelists perceived that the first argument, concerning David, wasn't very convincing. But if this paper is correct, Cohen has himself misunderstood the significance of that first argument.

<sup>69</sup>G. Gander, *L'Évangile de l'Église* (Aix-en-Provence: Faculté libre, 1970), 1:109–10, makes a good case for the latter.

<sup>70</sup>Cf. Jewett, *The Lord's Day*, p. 37. It is the failure to note this stress on Jesus' authority that mars the arguments of D. M. Cohn-Sherbok, "An Analysis of Jesus' Arguments Concerning the Plucking of Grain on the Sabbath," *JSNT* 2 (1979): 31–41. To focus on the hunger of Jesus' disciples and note (correctly) that their hunger was not extreme, or to observe (again correctly) that the plucking of the grain was not a religious activity akin to that of the priests, is rather to miss the point. Equally, despite the arguments of E. Levine, "The Sabbath Controversy According to Matthew," *NTS* 22 (1975–76): 480–83, it is not at all clear that Matthew has in mind the duty of reaping the first sheaves. It is possible that Jesus is implicitly claiming to be a priest, if we accept the arguments for the existence of this class offered by C. E. Armerding, "Were David's Sons Really Priests?" *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 75–86; but Matthew 12:3–4 does not make such a contrast very obvious (it could have by inserting the word "levitical" before the word "priests").

<sup>71</sup>W. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), p. 515.

<sup>72</sup>*Sunday*, p. 61 n. 3.

<sup>73</sup>*The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 116–17.

<sup>74</sup>This is not to deny that "moral law" exists, in the sense of unchangeable prescriptions of right and wrong, or that some laws are ceremonial and others civil. But I question the view that this classic three-fold distinction was used by New Testament writers in their presentation of the relationship between law and gospel. I shall say more on this matter later.

<sup>75</sup>Both Bultmann, *History*, p. 12, and Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 220, deny that this is a miracle story and prefer to describe it as an apophthegm (Bultmann) or Pronouncement Story (Taylor) because the healing is subordinate to the religious question of the Sabbath. Such alternating concern with form and content reveals the limitations of rigid literary categories. E. Lohse, "Jesu Worte über den Sabbat," pp. 83–85, insists that this account reflects an authentic incident in Jesus' ministry.

<sup>76</sup>Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, 1:173. Matthew has *μεταβάς ἐκείθεν* (he went on from there), which taken by itself would suggest but not require the same Sabbath as the grain-plucking episode; Luke has *ἐν ἑτέρῳ σαββάτῳ* (on another Sabbath). Whether Mark 3:1 includes the article before *συναγωγῆν* (synagogue) is not important for this study: cf. J. S. Sibinga, "Text and Literary Art in Mark 3:1–6," *Studies in New Testament Language and Text*, ed. J. K. Elliot (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 357–365.

<sup>77</sup>Cf. Lagrange, *Saint Marc*, p. 57; Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 221; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 119.

<sup>78</sup>Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, p. 212.

<sup>79</sup>E.g., Klostermann, *Das Markusevangelium*, p. 31; Plummer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, p. 169; Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 120; Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, pp. 202–204. Cf. the excellent discussion in Gnlika, *Evangelium*, pp. 127–128.

<sup>80</sup>W. Manson, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 60.

<sup>81</sup>So, for example, Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 52; Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, p. 36; Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, p. 69; Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 222. Cf. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, p. 125: "Jesus answered the question of what is permitted on the Sabbath by healing the man with the withered hand. Ironically, the guardians of the Sabbath determine to do harm and to kill (cf. 3:6)."

<sup>82</sup>Cf. SBK 1:623ff. D. Flusser, in the foreword to R. L. Lindsay, *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark* (Jerusalem: Dugith, 1973), pp. 4–5, is not convincing when he puts Luke against Matthew and Mark, and claims that Luke alone does not present any *plot* among the Pharisees, but only further *discussion* (*καὶ διελάουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους*, "they were discussing among themselves"). But this not only fails to reckon with Luke's insistence that the Pharisees were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, it also overlooks his witness that the event called forth their fury ("But they were filled with fury" [Luke 6:11]). Cf. the more nuanced discussion by Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, p. 236.

<sup>83</sup>J. A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Valley Forge: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), p. 262.

<sup>84</sup>The verb *συλλυπέω* is used only here in the New Testament; the active meaning is "hurt with," and the passive means "to sympathize, share in grief." Neither of these meanings quite suits the context. M. 2:325 suggests the meaning is perfective, i.e., "utterly distressed," and although there is no other example of such usage, it is required by the context. W. L. Knox, *Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity* (London: Published for the British Academy by H. Milford, 1944), p. 6 n. 4, observing that Latin *contristari* has this meaning as early as Seneca (*Ep.* 85:14), wonders if "we might have here an isolated instance of a Latin influence on the *koine*, the lack of parallels being due to chance" Cf. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 223. G. Stählin, TDNT 5:428, and R. Bultmann, TDNT 4:323–24, who conclude that the verb here means Jesus was grieved.

<sup>85</sup>The Herodians were not a religious sect or an organized party, but friends and supporters of Herod Antipas (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* xiv.450). Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, p. 67.

objects that Pharisees would never make a league with Herodian pragmatists, but common hostilities, like shared grief, produce strange unions (cf. Luke 23:12). E. A. Russell, "Mk 2<sup>23</sup> - 3<sup>6</sup>—A Judean Setting?" SE 6 (1973): 466–72, finds in references to Pharisees and Herodians a prime reason for ascribing a Judean setting and a late period in Jesus' ministry to Mark 2:23–26. However, he does not adequately explain the reason for the present setting, and questions so many details of the text as we have it, that he arouses suspicions that the text is being made to fit the theory.

<sup>86</sup>Again, the form critics do not agree. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, p. 43, classifies this pericope as a paradigm "of a less pure type"; Bultmann, an apophthegm, indeed a *Musterbeispiel* (a master example) of an ideal scene constructed from an Oxyrhynchus saying. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 298, responds, "This hypothesis is surely a *Musterbeispiel* of subjective criticism," and insists this be called quite simply a story about Jesus.

<sup>87</sup>Most writers agree that the Lukan passage refers to the same incident as do the other two (despite Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, p. 201, n.2, who theorizes that two visits to Nazareth are recorded by the Synoptists); but it is far more difficult to decide what extra source material was available to Luke. Cf. discussion in Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, p. 179ff.

<sup>88</sup>Swete, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 111.

<sup>89</sup>Cf. Philo, *de Sept.* 2.

<sup>90</sup>Cf. 6:5–6; Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, p. 201.

<sup>91</sup>Assuming that the reading ὁ υἱὸς τῆς Μαρίας ("the Son of Mary") is correct (cf. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 300; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, pp. 88f.), it is likely that this description of Jesus implicitly declares Him to be illegitimate for "to call someone the son of his mother in Eastern lands is to cast a slur on his true sonship" (R. P. Martin, *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian* [Exeter: Paternoster, 1972], p. 123, following E. Stauffer, "Jeschu ben Mirjam," *Neotestamentica et Semitica*, ed. E. Earle Ellis and M. Wilcox [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969], pp. 119–28).

<sup>92</sup>No one knows whether the Jewish lectionary cycle stretches back that far. Cf. L. Morris, *The New Testament and the Jewish Lectionaries* (London: Tyndale, 1964); W. A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), p. 92, n.2; J. Heinemann, "The Triennial Lectionary Cycle," *JJS* 19 (1968): 42–48.

<sup>93</sup>Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, p. 121.

<sup>94</sup>Cf. R. B. Sloan, *The Favorable Year of the Lord: A Study of the Jubilarly Theology in the Gospel of Luke* (Austin: Schola Press, 1977), p. 19, n.4. The debate over the length of the jubilee year is incidental; cf. most recently S. B. Hoenig, "Sabbatical Years and the Year of Jubilee," *JQR* 59 (1968–69): 222–36.

<sup>95</sup>*The Favorable Year of the Lord*.

<sup>96</sup>Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* 1:206–7, points out that in 4:18–19 Jesus breaks off in mid-sentence, omitting the words "and the day of vengeance of our God"—i.e., the day of vengeance on the Gentiles. The reaction of the crowd to Jesus' preaching is expressed in 4:22 "all spoke well of him and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." In Greek, both verbs are ambiguous; *μαρτυρεῖν* with the dative can mean "witness for" or "witness against," and *θαυμάζειν* can mean "be enthusiastic about" or "be shocked about." Jeremias chooses the negative meaning in both cases: "The continuation of the pericope shows that the word must be interpreted in *malem partem* [in the bad sense]." He thinks the words ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος ("at the gracious words") explain that the people of Nazareth are shocked that Jesus quotes only the words of grace from Isaiah 61 and omits the rest. This interpretation has attractive features, and is not unimportant with respect to a later section of this chapter dealing with Jesus' attitude to the law, but its serious weakness is that the text portrays the offense of the synagogue crowd in terms of Jesus' personal claims, rather than in terms of Jesus' authoritative use of Scripture. At best, Jeremias's view is a secondary motif, a merely possible one at that.

<sup>97</sup>Plummer, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, p. 342.

<sup>98</sup>As far as the Mishnah is concerned, cf. *Shab.* 5:1–4 for rules about watering cattle, 7:2 on tying knots, 15:1–2 on important exceptions. Cf. also *ʿErub.* 2:1–4. The Talmud expresses

reservations: water can be drawn for an animal but must not be carried to it in a vessel. Cf. discussion in E. Lohse, TDNT 7:1.

<sup>99</sup>There is no reason to think that the woman's bondage was due to some specific sin.

<sup>100</sup>This was an accepted rabbinical method of arguing, the so-called *qal wahomer* ("light and heavy") principle.

<sup>101</sup>Caird, *The Gospel of St. Luke*, pp. 107–8. Cf. also W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), pp. 278–281; Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 185; Baccchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 37.

<sup>102</sup>Cf. SBK on this passage. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, p. 290, suggests a Jerusalem setting since the host is a "ruler" of the Pharisees. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 192, points out that the contrast between the invited guest and the unfortunate intruder provides the backdrop for the entire episode, i.e., not just the healing, but also the two precepts (14:7–11, 12–14) and the concluding parable (14:15–24).

<sup>103</sup>Despite T. Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Lucas* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1913), pp. 544–45, followed by Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, p. 388, who argues that καὶ ἰδοὺ ("and behold") following παρατηρούμενοι ("they were watching him") suggests that the presence of the ill man was unexpected by Jesus but arranged by the Pharisees as an intentional trap.

<sup>104</sup>This is the most likely reading. Cf. Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, pp. 579–80.

<sup>105</sup>*Zadokite Fragments* (=CD) 13:22ff., discusses the case of the animal in the well and arrives at the opposite conclusion; but Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, p. 188, says that this document does not represent "normative Judaism" (whatever that is). Cf. also CD 11:16–17; plus K. Schubert, in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. K. Stendahl (New York: Harper, 1958), pp. 127–28.

<sup>106</sup>*The Lord's Day*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>107</sup>See Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 321; Gander, 2:426. There is no need to take μηδὲ σαββάτω ("or on a Sabbath") as a Matthean redaction reflecting Jewish Christianity (so among others, L. Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times* (London: Black, 1970), p. 204.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. R. A. Morey, "Is Sunday the 'Christian Sabbath?'" *BRR* 8/1 (1979): 13–14.

<sup>109</sup>Cf. R. P. Martin, "The Theology of Mark's Gospel," *SwJT* 21 (1978): 33–34.

<sup>110</sup>Cf. also A. B. Kolenkow, "Healing Controversy as a Tie Between Miracle and Passion Material for a Proto-Gospel," *JBL* 95 (1976): 623–38.

<sup>111</sup>Cf. the brief but elegant treatment by G. R. Beasley-Murray, "Eschatology in the Gospel of Mark," *SwJT* 21 (1978): esp. 42–45.

<sup>112</sup>*From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 62.

<sup>113</sup>Cf. among other works M. Maher, "'Take my yoke upon you' (Matt.xi.29)," *NTS* 22 (1975–76): 97–103.

<sup>114</sup>Cf. J. Zens, "'This is my beloved Son . . . hear him': A Study of the Development of Law in the History of Redemption," *BRR* 7/1 (1978): 15–52, esp. 27.

<sup>115</sup>R. Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 122–23.

<sup>116</sup>Again, the reader is referred to the next chapter for a consideration of Luke's treatment of the law.

<sup>117</sup>E.g., A. Sand, *Das Gesetz und die Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Evangeliums nach Matthäus* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1974); Banks, *Jesus and the Law*; J. P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel: A Redactional Study of Mt. 5:17–48* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976); K. Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu: Ihr historischer Hintergrund im Judentum und im Alten Testament*. Teil I: *Markus und Parallelen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972). Cf. also the unpublished doctoral dissertation of B. L. Martin, "Matthew and Paul on Christ and the Law: Compatible or Incompatible Theologies?" (McMaster University, 1976). Matthew's Gospel is particularly important: background studies are nicely summarized by J. Rohde, *Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists* (London: SCM, 1968); and by D. J. Harrington, "Matthean Studies since Joachim Rohde," *HeyJ* 16 (1975): 375–88, who rightly notes that one of the emerging trends is a growing recognition of the complexity of Matthew's attitude to the law.

<sup>118</sup>New Testament Theology, 1:206.

<sup>119</sup>One might envisage a theoretical situation in which Jesus complied with Halakah for the sake of the Kingdom; there is no unambiguous record of such, whether in the synoptic Gospels or in the fourth Gospel.

<sup>120</sup>M. Hubaut, "Jésus et la Loi de Moïse," *RevTheolLouv* 7 (1976): 401–25, attempts to qualify Banks; but he is not convincing. Moreover, the above interpretation does not at all raise the question whether or not Jesus' own teachings may properly be classified as Halakic as P. Sigal ("The Halakah of Jesus of Nazareth according to the Gospel of Matthew," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1979) claims (I have not yet read this work; I am indebted for the reference to Dr. Peter Davids.).

<sup>121</sup>Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 206; similarly, H. von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible* (London: Black, 1972), p. 5ff.

<sup>122</sup>Despite H. J. Schoeps, "Jésus et la loi juive," *RHPR* 33 (1953): 15–17. For adequate comment, cf. W. D. Davies, "Matthew 5:17–18," *Christian Origins and Judaism* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1962), pp. 37–43; and cf. R. Longenecker, *Paul: Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper, 1964), pp. 138–42. Besides the commentaries on Mark 7:1–23, cf. especially J. Lambrecht, "Jesus and the Law: An Investigation of Mark 7:1–23," *EphTheolLouv* 53 (1977): 24–82. Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu*, pp. 534–35, may be taken as representative of those who deny the authenticity of Mark 7, 15; but cf. H. Hubner, "Mark vii. 1–23 und das 'Jüdisch-Hellenistische' Gesetzesverständnis," *NTS* 22 (1975–76): 319–45.

<sup>123</sup>For a survey of the literature, cf. W. D. Davies, "Matthew 5:17, 18," 31ff.; and R. Banks, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law: Authenticity and Interpretation in Matthew 5:17–20," *JBL* 93 (1974): 226–42; and the monographs already cited.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid. Cf. also his book, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition*.

<sup>125</sup>Cf. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, pp. 82–85, who on the basis of this difficulty takes the verb to mean "to fill up," "to complete."

<sup>126</sup>E. g., D. Wenham, "Jesus and the Law: An Exegesis on Matthew 5:17–20," *Themelios* 4 (1978–79): 92–96.

<sup>127</sup>Banks, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law."

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., p. 231. On the antithetical structure of 5:17, see R. A. Guelich, "Not to Annul the Law Rather to Fulfill the Law and the Prophets," Hamburg, Diss., 1967, which Banks also cites. The sense of "fulfill" as related to prophecy is richer than mere prediction/fulfillment, but is most akin to C. F. D. Moule's third category: cf. his article, "Fulfillment-Words in the New Testament: Use and Abuse," *NTS* 14 (1967–68): 293–320. Several scholars who do not adopt Banks' entire structure nevertheless concur with his essentially eschatological understanding of "to fulfill." For example, cf. R. E. Nixon, "Fulfilling the Law: The Gospels and Acts," *Law, Morality and the Bible*, ed. B. Kaye and G. Wenham (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1978), pp. 55–56; B. L. Martin, "Matthew and Paul," p. 54; and especially, J. P. Meier, pp. 79–80; J. Zens, pp. 23–24.

<sup>129</sup>D. A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Evangelical Exposition of Matthew 5–7* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), p. 37.

<sup>130</sup>Cf. W. Trilling, *Das wahre Israel* (München: Kösel, 1964), pp. 167–68.

<sup>131</sup>E. g., Wenham, *Jesus and the Law*; G. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nutley: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977), pp. 76–78.

<sup>132</sup>W. D. Davies, "Matthew 5:17, 18" (cf. also his *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963], on the same subject), suggests that the reference is eschatological. The eschatological age has been inaugurated by Jesus' death and resurrection (A. Feuillet, "Le Discours de Jésus sur la Ruine du Temple," *RB* 56 (1949): 85, prefers the fall of Jerusalem.). Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, 1:207, argues similarly: "Jesus is claiming to be the eschatological messenger of God." Part of the strength of Davies' approach rests on his belief that there was a marked amount of Jewish speculation that the new age would bring significant transformation to Torah: cf. his *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come* (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1952), incorporated into his *Setting*, pp. 109ff. This view has

also been supported by H. M. Teeple and R. Longenecker. An even stronger position—that the new Torah would displace the old, not merely modify it—was held, among others, by G. Dalman and A. Edersheim, and reiterated recently by H. Schoeps and J. Jocz. But E. Bammel, G. Barth, and, most comprehensively, R. Banks, "The Eschatological Role of Law in Pre- and Post-Christian Jewish Thought," *Reconciliation and Hope*, ed. R. Banks, (Exeter: Paternoster, 1974), pp. 173ff., have strenuously and persuasively denied the existence of such speculation in the first century.

<sup>133</sup>I have not found this interpretation of the two clauses elsewhere; and by suggesting it, I am abandoning my support of Trilling (n. 130; as found in Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*). It seems to me that such a fit is consistent with the passage, with linguistic usage, and with Matthean theology; and it is far simpler than the detailed delineation of a mixed crowd among the readers, thought possible by R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Attitudes to the Law in Matthew's Gospel: A Discussion of Matthew 5:18" *BR17* (1972): 19–32; J. Zumstein, *La condition du croyant dans l'Evangile selon Matthieu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977). It is also much to be preferred above the approach of Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, who rightly notes the exhaustive force of *ἰῶτα ἐν ἡ μίᾳ κεραία* ("not an iota, not a dot"), but who takes *πληρῶσαι* ("to fulfill") to mean "confirm, ratify," and takes the phrase "until heaven and earth pass away" in the most absolute sense. Bahnsen fails to come to grips with the New Testament's perspective on redemptive history.

<sup>134</sup>E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956), pp. 111–12; J. M. Gibbs, "The Son of God as Torah Incarnate in Matthew," *SE* 4 (1968): 43; R. Banks, "Matthew 5:17–20," pp. 238–40.

<sup>135</sup>For this suggestion I am indebted to Andrew Lincoln. For further discussion cf. chapter 12, esp. n. 82.

<sup>136</sup>E. g., Matthew 23:23! Cf. W. C. Kaiser, "The Weightier and Lighter Matters of the Law: Moses, Jesus and Paul," *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 176–192. It is important to note that Jesus never treats the Decalogue as the perfect sum of moral law; cf. the excellent if brief discussion by R. E. Nixon, pp. 64–65. In this Jesus is like the rabbis and unlike Philo; cf. E. E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975), p. 360. For further discussion cf. F. E. Vokes, "The Ten Commandments in the New Testament and in First Century Judaism," *SE* 5 (1968): 146–54.

<sup>137</sup>Cf. H. Frankmölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi: Studien zur Form und Traditionsgeschichte des Evangeliums nach Matthäus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1974).

<sup>138</sup>Cf. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, pp. 138–40 (esp. p. 140). C. F. D. Moule, "From Defendant to Judge—and Deliverer," *SNTS* 3 (1952): 52–53, followed by W. D. Davies, "Matthew 5:17–18," pp. 56ff., argue persuasively that if Jesus lived in the consciousness that as the Servant of Yahweh He was destined to die, then until that death occurred there was need for a certain reserve about the claims He might advance concerning Himself. The reticence is caused not so much by the disciples' unpreparedness, as by Jesus' awareness that only through death could He fulfill His mission.

<sup>139</sup>Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 211.

<sup>140</sup>G. R. Beasley-Murray, "Eschatology."

<sup>141</sup>Respectively, J. G. Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprint 1970); Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, esp. pp. 128–55; E. Jünger, *Paulus und Jesus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1972), pp. 268–73; H. Ridderbos, *Paul and Jesus* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1957). I am not arguing that these writers would support my understanding of Jesus and the law.

<sup>142</sup>For detailed study of these passages, besides the commentaries, see especially S. Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

<sup>143</sup>On the unity and coherence of this section, cf. especially J. Bernard, "La guérison de Bethesda: Harmoniques judéo-hellénistiques d'un récit de miracle un jour de sabbat," *MéSciRel* 33 (1976): 3–34; 34 (1977): 13–44.

<sup>144</sup>Cf. R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (London: Chapman, 1966), 1:209.

<sup>145</sup>Cf. D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Some Aspects of Johannean Theology Against Jewish Background* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1981).

<sup>146</sup>The prohibition against carrying things in Jeremiah 17:19–22 apparently has commerce in view, not a pallet carried by a miraculously healed man.

<sup>147</sup>The first clause of Jesus' reply is not unrelated to the much debated question in both Hellenistic and rabbinic Judaism as to whether God Himself kept the Sabbath. Both groups decided negatively: there are some areas, e.g., moral government, in which God works all the time (Cf. SBK 2:461–62; Philo, esp. *Leg. All* 1, 6;—Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953], pp. 320–28).

<sup>148</sup>By relating John 5:17 to Mark 2:27, R. Maddox, "The Function of the Son of Man According to the Synoptic Gospels," *NTS* 15(1968–69): 67–68, tries to invest Mark 2:27 with eschatological significance. He thus approves the study by H. Riesenfeld, "Sabbat et jour du Seigneur," *New Testament Essays*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 210–17. But whereas it is difficult to avoid the eschatological overtones of John 5, it seems to me that to discover them in Mark 2:27 would be eisegesis. Both passages are richer in christological than eschatological affirmations. On another note, O. Cullman, "Sabbat und Sonntag nach dem Johannesevangelium," *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1966), pp. 187–91, says that ἕως ἄρτι ("until now" 5:17) refers both to Jesus' resurrection (on the first day of the week) and to the rest of the new creation "at the End" and on this basis he concludes that the text is "an indirect theological reflection" that connects the Old Testament God-ordained *Ruhetag* ("day of rest") with the primitive Christian *Auferstehungstag* ("Resurrection day").

<sup>149</sup>Cf. Lohse, TDNT 7:277: "The story of the breaking of the Sabbath raises the decisive question whether the authority of Jesus as the One whom God has sent is recognized or not." It is exegetically unreasonable to take this statement as a paradigm of human behavior, in the fashion of some older writers: e.g., W. B. Trevelyan *Sunday* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902), p. 134: "The eternal energy of God forbids us to interpret rest as equal to idleness. . . . (Man's) true rest is not a rest from earthly labour, but a rest for divine heavenly labour." J. Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 33, makes the same leap from Jesus to the believer, only in a more sophisticated fashion and within a different theological framework: "Jesus is not here obliterating the rest of the sabbath; he is not saying that the sabbath has been abrogated. He is indicating the work he performed as consonant with the rest of the sabbath precisely because the rest of the sabbath requires is not the rest of inaction. Sabbath rest is not inactivity; it is not unemployment, but employment of another sort from that of the six days." The leap from Jesus to the believer is a basis for ethical behavior in some places in the New Testament; but there is no evidence for it here. In addition to the leap from Jesus to the believer, there are two other reasons for rejecting the view that John 5 has as secondary motif the idea that God's rest serves as a paradigm for man's weekly rest. First, "inactivity" accurately sums up the way Sabbath prescriptions in the Old Testament are largely formulated. Second, there is no mention in John 5 of the change in God's work over the course of a seven day cycle, but only of the constancy of God's work. Indeed, elsewhere in the fourth Gospel, we read that the disciples join Jesus in the work (9:4). Jesus' "Sabbath" work is thus the constant eschatological work of the One sent down from heaven. Whether or not this work is in John climaxed by the Cross which introduces the Sabbath of eternal rest (as P. Ricca, *Die Eschatologie des Vierten Evangeliums* [Zürich: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1966], p. 63ff., argues on 19:28–31) cannot be argued here. But the following remarks by A. Corell, *Consumatum Est* (London: SPCK, 1958), p. 63, deserve being weighed: "It is not merely a question of the Jewish Sabbath versus the Christian Sunday; rather is it a question of the old dispensation versus the new. The old Sabbath was but a preparation for, and a pledge of, this new dispensation. Now, however, the time of fulfillment has come while the ancient eschatological promises are being realized in the works of Christ. Indeed, it was by an appeal to the nature of his works that Jesus refuted the Jews when they accused him of breaking the Sabbath—'My Father worketh even until now and I work' (v. 17). Thus he pointed out that, while the Law of Moses forbade that man should do their own work on the Sabbath, it could in

no wise forbid or prevent the accomplishment of God's work on that day. He, himself, had come to do the works of God . . . which, being of eschatological significance, belonged to the Sabbath in a very special way. . . . Indeed, his very doing of these things was a sure sign that the real Sabbath of fulfillment had come. Since, moreover, the risen and ascended Christ lives and works within the Church, her life itself is one continuous Sabbath—a pledge and foretaste of the consummation and the great Sabbath of eternity."

<sup>150</sup>Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark*, pp. 101–2, writes that "the Johannine interpretation is perhaps only a clear expression of the idea that is implicit in Jesus' words (in Mark 2:28)." Note, too, that Mark 2:1–12 deals with Jesus' authority to forgive sin, an idea not unrelated to John 5:8–9, 14.

<sup>151</sup>S. Bacchiocchi, "John 5:17: Negation or Clarification of the Sabbath," a paper presented at the annual meeting of SBL, Nov. 21, 1978. Cf. also W. Stott, NIDNTT 3:409.

<sup>152</sup>The title itself (ibid.) reveals a forced pair of alternatives. John's treatment of the Sabbath may be neither "negation" nor "clarification" but an instance of prophecy/fulfillment or of transcended categories. Moreover, on a point of detail important to Bacchiocchi, ἕως ἄρτι ("until now") does not necessarily mean precisely *usque hoc* ("until now"); it can mean "until now" without reference to whether or not there is continuity beyond the "now," as lexical study reveals, and as C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958), pp. 255–56, rightly notes.

<sup>153</sup>E.g., *Shab*. 18:3; 19:6.

<sup>154</sup>For an excellent analysis of the proceedings, cf. C. H. Dodd, *Interpretation*, pp. 79–81. The intricate questions connected with 7:32–33, 35, need not be probed here. In the last few years the work of J. L. Martyn, recently revised (*History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1979]), has focused a great deal of attention on John 9, and he has concluded that everything from verse 8 on refers to the polemics of John's day and not to events in Jesus' day. Although I am inclined to agree with Martyn's thesis that John is concerned with certain church/synagogue polemics of his own day, I am not at all persuaded that any of the verses are on this account inauthentic. Cf. the discussion of parts of Martyn's book in Carson, "Historical Tradition."

<sup>155</sup>W. A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King* (Leiden: Brill, 1954), p. 288.

<sup>156</sup>*The Law in the Fourth Gospel*.

<sup>157</sup>(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974). Cf. also the last few pages of Richard Morgan, "Fulfillment in the Fourth Gospel: The Old Testament Foundation," *Int* 11 (1957): 155–65.

<sup>158</sup>E.g., J. S. King, "The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel: Some Unsolved Problems," *ExpT* 86 (1974–75): 372–75.

<sup>159</sup>Not only the possibility of taking John 5 this way springs to mind, but one also wonders at the irony in John 19:31, for there the Jews want to take Jesus' body down from the cross because of the onset of the Sabbath—indeed, a special Sabbath!

<sup>160</sup>So, rightly, E. J. Young, "Sabbath," *NBD*, pp. 1110–11.

<sup>161</sup>E.g., Beckwith, *This Is the Day*, pp. 22–24.

<sup>162</sup>Since Rordorf, *Sunday*, pp. 65–66, fails to make this distinction, his conclusions are invalid.

<sup>163</sup>Mishnah, *Hag*. 1:8.

<sup>164</sup>Cf. H. Riesenfeld, "Sabbat et Jour du Seigneur," pp. 214–15.