

The SABBATH Basics

Preparation for this Study

As usual, before you read this study, I ask you to do four things :

Firstly, pray to only receive YHWH's truth and to not be deceived by any false information.

Secondly, I challenge you to choose to be teachable – choose to have an open mind

Thirdly, please don't believe what I have written, but check the Scriptures to "test" what I have written. (1 Thes 5:21, Acts 17:11)

Fourthly, remember that we are studying to show ourselves approved to YHWH. (2Tim 2:15)

Please refer to **Preparation for Studying YHWH's Word**, for more details.

Note : Please remember that **the foundation of all my studies must be the Bible, the inspired, revealed and written word of YHWH, in its original languages.**

Whenever I quote from YHWH's Word, in this study I am quoting from "The Scriptures" version of the Bible.

The Origin of Sabbath

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and the earth.

The Bible begins with this very commanding statement concerning the beginnings of both the heavens and the earth. From these first words of Genesis, or Bereshith, we are reminded that the world we know, did not come into existence by chance or by accident. The world of which we are part of, is the wilful work of a powerful and pre-existent being, revealed in this opening verse only as Elohim.

As the opening verses of the Bible continue to unfold, the nature and character of this Creative force becomes clearer. As we read the words about creation, we learn much about this amazing, awesome Creator. We learn that He is an Elohim (mighty one) of order and distinction. For six evenings and mornings, we witness the Creator revealing Himself through the different things that He creates. On the seventh day, He makes yet one more distinction, the finishing touch of His masterpiece.

Genesis 1:31 – 2:3

And Elohim saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there came to be evening and there came to be morning, the sixth day.

*2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their array. 2 And on the seventh day Elohim completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. 3 And **Elohim blessed the seventh day and set it apart**, because on it He rested from all His work which Elohim in creating had made. (My emphasis added)*

Elohim blessed this seventh day and set it apart from all the other days. He sanctified this day by resting from His work of creation. It is obvious that the seventh day was, and is different from every other day.

It seems odd that we do not hear of this set-apart, special day again for another 2,500 years. It is not until the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt that we again hear mention of this set-apart, seventh day. While it is probable that Adam, Noah, and the Patriarchs all honoured this sanctified day in their lifetimes, we must recognize that there is no such record in the Bible. There is one record, about 2000 years after Creation, in Gen 26:4 - 5 which speaks generally about Abraham's faithfulness to YHWH.

And I shall increase your seed like the stars of the heavens, and I shall give all these lands to your seed. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and guarded My Charge: My commands, My laws, and My Torah. (Gen 26:4-5)

We should also note that there is neither commandment nor instruction given to Adam or his descendants concerning when or how to keep the Sabbath. It is not until the children of Israel come out of Egypt, and enter the wilderness, that they receive both the commandment and the first instructions concerning the Sabbath. This commandment to keep the Sabbath would later be included in the Sinai Covenant. We should note here that the initial commandment to keep the Sabbath was to be a test for the children of Israel, as to whether they would indeed keep the Torah.

Exodus 16:4 explains this test

And יהוה said to Mosheh, "See, I am raining bread from the heavens for you. And the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, in order to try them, whether they walk in My Torah or not."

Exodus 16:21-30 explains details about Yahweh's instructions when gathering manna.

And they gathered it every morning, each one according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.

16:22 And it came to be, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Mosheh.

16:23 And he said to them, "This is what יהוה has said, 'Tomorrow is a rest, a Sabbath set-apart to יהוה. That which you bake, bake; and that which you cook, cook. And lay up for yourselves all that is left over, to keep it until morning.'"

16:24 And they laid it up till morning, as Mosheh commanded. And it did not stink, and no worm was in it.

16:25 And Mosheh said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to יהוה, today you do not find it in the field."

16:26 "Gather it six days, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there is none."

16:27 And it came to be that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none.

16:28 And יהוה said to Mosheh, "How long shall you refuse to guard My commands and My Torah¹? Footnote: ¹Torot - plural of Torah, teaching."

16:29 "See, because יהוה has given you the Sabbath, therefore He is giving you bread for two days on the sixth day. Let each one stay in his place, do not let anyone go out of his place on the seventh day."

16:30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

NB The seventh day of the week, the weekly Sabbath, was observed before the Ten Commandments were given on Mt. Sinai.

Let us next take a look at the eight commands, and the two implied commands about the Sabbath, to better understand its purpose and proclamation in our lives. I would like to point out, that, all of these commands contain “verbs”, which means, we must “do something” about each command, in order to fulfil it !

1. Remember the Sabbath

Exodus 20:8

Remember the Sabbath day, to set it apart.

To **remember the Sabbath** means that we actually recall the **seventh day of creation**. By remembering this single day in history we re-live the very event of creation, and therefore must recall the fact that there is a Creator. When we remember and keep the seventh day Sabbath, we recall and proclaim that the earth and all that is in it, came from the Holy One of Israel.

When we **remember the Sabbath**, we bring to our minds, the idea that it was Yahweh who created the world, and declared it to be good. We should also remember that the Creator made all the necessary provisions for life on this planet to continue. By remembering the Sabbath, we bring to mind, the idea that, it is not we who bring food into the world, but the Creator ! When we **remember the Sabbath**, we recall that the world spins and functions by the will of the Creator, and not by our work and whims.

2. Keep the Sabbath

Deuteronomy 5:12

keep the Sabbath day, to set it apart, as יהוה your Elohim commanded you.

When we understand that Yahweh is in charge, we are able to then **keep the Sabbath**. It is only when we believe, that YHWH is indeed, the source of our every blessing, that we can let go of the reins of our lives, cease our labour, and actually rest at peace, in the knowledge that He can get along quite well without us. It is refreshing and liberating to know that the world continues without us. Only our confidence in the Holy One of Israel allows us to let go of all normal activities, and to rest in the knowledge that YHWH Elohim is the Creator, Redeemer, Deliverer, Sustainer, and Savior of our lives.

From a Hebrew point of view, “keeping” the Sabbath is about protecting, guarding and attending to it, so that the Sabbath day will be “set-apart”.

3. Sanctify the Sabbath

(Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 5:12)

To **sanctify the Sabbath**, we must “set it apart” from any other days. We must make it very special ! There are many “traditions” that different groups have developed to set the Sabbath apart, but there is no command to do so in a specific way. We **sanctify the Sabbath** day because YHWH made it set-apart, and commanded us to make it special. By **sanctifying the Sabbath**, we are reminding ourselves of YHWH’s covenant with us; that He loves us, and that He knows what is best for us. There are no instructions about how we are to “sanctify” the Sabbath, but we are to take “action”, so that it is set-apart from the other days of the week.

4. Cease from work on the Sabbath

Exodus 20:10

but the seventh day is a Sabbath of יהוה your Elohim. You do not do any work – you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

Exodus 31:14-15

*And you shall guard the Sabbath, for it is set-apart to you. Everyone who profanes it shall certainly be put to death, for anyone who does work on it, that being shall be cut off from among his people.
15 ‘Six days work is done, and on the seventh is a Sabbath of rest, set-apart to יהוה. Everyone doing work on the Sabbath day shall certainly be put to death.*

YHWH commands us to **do no work on the Sabbath**. He gave us His example when He, Himself, rested on the seventh day of creation. By ceasing to work (including the work of creating things) on the Sabbath day, we are declaring that there is something much more important than money and things. We are acknowledging YHWH, and making Him our focus on this wonderful day.

5. Rest on the Sabbath

Exodus 23:12

“Six days you are to do your work, and on the seventh day you rest, in order that your ox and your donkey might rest, and the son of your female servant and the sojourner be refreshed.

Leviticus 23:3

‘Six days work is done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a set-apart gathering. You do no work, it is a Sabbath to יהוה in all your dwellings

Closely related to ceasing to work, is the command to **rest on the Sabbath**. YHWH is our creator, and He knows that we need to rest our bodies and minds from normal work activities. We need to do this so that we can live healthy lives. We can rest in several ways – the choice is ours – there is no instruction from YHWH about how we are to rest, only that we do rest. We need to rest so that our bodies and minds can be refreshed, rejuvenated, restored, revived, relaxed and repaired. When we have rested, we operate more efficiently. We are able to relate better to YHWH, to learn about Him more effectively, to relate to each other in better ways, and to work more successfully during the other six days of the week. YHWH knows we need rest so that our bodies, souls and spirits can function in the way He designed them. He wants us to be renewed spiritually, emotionally and physically.

6. Cause no one else to work on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10)

When we cease from our own labours and **cause no one else to work on the Sabbath** either, we are blessing them so that they too, will be able to keep YHWH's wonderful Sabbath. We are really saying, that we do not need to rely on the strength and skill of others on this day of YHWH's.

7. Sabbath is a set-apart gathering (Leviticus 23:3)

We are commanded to have a set-apart gathering on Sabbath. This does not mean that we should go out and hire a hall and come together. Although Exodus 16:29, says that the people in the wilderness were to stay in "his place", it appears to be in relation to gathering manna.

Exodus 16:29

See, because הוֹרָה has given you the Sabbath, therefore He is giving you bread for two days on the sixth day. Let each one stay in his place, do not let anyone go out of his place on the seventh day."

Once the children of Israel were settled in the promised land, it seems clear that the set-apart gathering was conducted in the local synagogue. Acts 13:27 and 15:21 support this.

Acts 13:27

For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him.

Acts 15:21

For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day

During these set-apart gatherings, the Word of YHWH (the Tanach or Old Testament), was read and discussed. We should do the same. Once again, there is no instruction from YHWH about what to do at these set-apart gatherings, but honouring and worshipping YHWH in various ways, seems appropriate.

8. Kindle no fire on the Sabbath

Exodus 35:3

Do not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day

We are **not to kindle a fire on Sabbath**. Essentially, this command is telling us, not to do anything more than we need to do, especially in connection with food preparation. We should prepare for Sabbath by having meals ready before the start of Sabbath, so that we can spend as much time as possible with YHWH, doing His things. Since YHWH is very practical, I do not believe He means we are not to light fires to keep us warm for example.

9. Do not buy and sell on Sabbath

Neh 10:31

and that if the peoples of the land bring wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a set-apart day,

Neh 13:14-18

14 Remember me, O my Elohim, concerning this, and do not wipe out my kind deeds that I have done for the House of my Elohim, and for its charges!

15 In those days I saw in Yehudah those treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, and figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Yerushalayim on the Sabbath day. So I warned them on the day they sold food.

16 And men of Tsor dwelt there, bringing in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Yehudah, and in Yerushalayim.

17 Then I contended with the nobles of Yehudah, and said to them, "What evil matter is this that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day?"

*18 "Did not your fathers do the same so that our Elohim brought all this evil on us and on this city? **Yet you bring added wrath on Yisra'el by profaning the Sabbath.**"*

We **do not buy or sell on Sabbath**. This is connected to "ceasing to work on Sabbath", and to "causing no one else to work on Sabbath" commands. It is another way of bringing glory and honour to YHWH. By keeping this command, we are not working ourselves, and not causing others to work either. We are therefore keeping all the Sabbath commands, and we are not causing others to transgress the Sabbath.

10. Do not do things for your own pleasure on Sabbath

Isaiah 58:13-14

on My set-apart day, and shall call the Sabbath 'a delight,' the set-apart day of הוהי 'esteemed,' and shall esteem it, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, 14 then you shall delight yourself in הוהי.

The Sabbath day is YHWH's day. It is the day of the week we should look forward to. We are encouraged to **avoid doing things for our own pleasure**, to yield up all of our own plans and agendas, to defer all of our ambitions, to surrender our need to control and plan, so that YHWH is the centre of this special day – His Sabbath.

The Sabbath should be the focus of our week – the day when we elevate YHWH, for He is the creator and ruler of all that there is. Sabbath is the day to be in YHWH's Word, to be around Him. It is a day to bear no burdens of any kind – physical, emotional or intellectual. We should leave the world behind, and enter His realm for 24 hours – from sunset on Friday night to sundown on Saturday night. For those 24 hours, we enter into the “rest” of eternity ! We get a glimpse of what it will be like to spend eternity with YHWH in His Kingdom.

Exodus 31:13 reminds us that the Sabbath is a sign between YHWH and His people throughout the generations.

Exodus 31:13

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am Yahweh that doth sanctify you.

Looking through the Scriptures, there are several activities that were carried out of the Sabbath day. These include :

Healing on the Sabbath

Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11; 13:John 5:9; 9:14

Teaching the Word of Elohim

Mark 6:2; Luke 4:16-27,31; Acts 15-48; 15:21; 16:13; 17:18:4

Preaching (in the Sabbath assembly)

Acts 13:42; 21

Exhorting One Another (in the Sabbath assembly)

Acts 13:15

All the Gifts of the Spirit Were Allowed to Operate in the Assembly

Corinthians 12 and 14

Reading Scripture

Luke 4:16; Acts 13:15 (the Torah and the Prophets)

Circumcision Can Be Performed on the Sabbath

John 7:23



Summary

The Sabbath day is the seventh day of the week

– Friday sunset to Saturday sundown.

There are eight commands and two implied commands regarding the Sabbath

- 1 Remember the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8)
- 2 Keep the Sabbath (Deut 5:12)
- 3 Sanctify the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8, Deut 5:12)
- 4 Cease from work on the Sabbath (Exodus) 31:14-15)
- 5 Rest on the Sabbath (Lev 23:3)
- 6 Cause no one else to work on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10)
- 7 Sabbath is a set-apart gathering (Lev 23:3)
- 8 Kindle no fire on the Sabbath (Exodus 35:3)

There are also two other points that are implied from 4 and 2 respectively.

- 9 Do not buy and sell on Sabbath (Neh 10:31, 13:14-18)
- 10 Do not do things for your own pleasure on Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13-14)

As usual, I encourage you to test what I have written. From my study, I believe the information I have provided is correct. I never want to be deceived, and so, if I have made mistakes, please point them out, describing your scriptural references. I pray that this study has been a blessing to you.

Blessings and Shalom to each of you, and all Praise and Glory to YHWH.

Peter Guiren 1 August 2009

Appendix

The Meaning of the Word Sabbath (Shabbat)

The word *Sabbath* is represented by several related Hebrew words. Let's look at each of these words to see how Scripture uses each one.

Shabbat; Strong's Hebrew Dictionary word H7673; a primitive root word meaning *to repose, rest, desist (from exertion or labor), cease*. It is translated in the KJV by the following words: *cease* (47 times), *rest* (11times), *away* (3 times), *fail* (2times), *celebrate* (1time), misc. (7 times)

Shabbat; Strong's Hebrew Dictionary word H7676; from 7673 and means *intermission, i.e. (specifically) the Sabbath* and is used in reference to the weekly Sabbath, the Day of Atonement, the sabbatical year, weeks and is translated in the KJV as *Sabbath* (107 times).

Examples of its usage:

Weekly Sabbath: Exod. 16:25; 20:8, 10; 31:15; Deut. 5:10, 12, Lev. 23:3

Day of Atonement: Lev. 31; 32

Sabbath (sabbatical) year: Lev. 25:4; 26:34, 43; Chr. 36:21

Weeks of Sabbaths: Lev. 23:15 (seven Sabbaths or weeks)

Bibliography

The Bible verses quoted are mostly from The Scriptures version.

I have paraphrased some of the teaching of Glenn McWilliams' study called "Shavua Tov", Weekly Parsha, a Rood Awakening ! Torah Commentary for the Torah Portion – Behar.

I have also referred to Natan Lawrence's teaching on "The Sabbath (Shabbat) : Spirit and Truth", as well as Yedidah of laydownlife.com's work "Sabbath is Eternal".

Strong's Hebrew Dictionary has also been used.

Personal Study

- 1 Look at each of the commands associated with Sabbath, and decide how you will fulfil each command in your own Sabbath celebration
- 2 Do your own research on Sabbath, by searching for scripture verses about Sabbath in E-Sword or some similar computer program.

