

Deuteronomy 5:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

The Sabbath command extends rest to 'thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger.' This comprehensive inclusivity demonstrates covenant compassion—even slaves, foreigners, and animals must rest. The prohibition of work extends to subordinates under one's authority, preventing exploitation. This verse reveals God's concern for the vulnerable and Creation-wide scope of Sabbath blessing. The Reformed tradition sees this as establishing principles of humane labor practices, concern for workers' wellbeing, and rest as universal human right, not class privilege.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern societies had no concept of universal rest—slaves and servants worked continuously. Israel's Sabbath was revolutionary in mandating rest for all: family, servants, foreigners residing among them, and even livestock. The Year of Jubilee extended this principle, freeing Hebrew slaves and returning ancestral lands (Leviticus 25). These laws demonstrated Israel's calling to model justice, mercy, and compassion flowing from covenant relationship with Yahweh.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the universal scope of Sabbath rest (including servants, foreigners, animals) demonstrate God's compassion for all creation?
2. What principles can Christians draw from this command regarding humane labor practices, rest, and care for those under our authority or employ?

Interlinear Text

ל אֶלָּא יְהִי זֶה
day But the seventh is the sabbath of the LORD thy God

H3117 H7637 H7676 H3068 H430 H3808

וְבָנֶךָ אַתָּה מֶלֶךְ הָכֹל מְשֻׁעַת ה
in it thou shalt not do any work thou nor thy son

H6213 H3605 H4399 H859 H1121

וְשֹׂרֵךְ וְאַמְתָּב עֲבָדָךְ וְבָתָךְ
nor thy daughter nor thy manservant and thy maidservant nor thine ox

H1323 H5650 H519 H7794

אֲשֶׁר יִסְמְךָ בְּכָמֹת בְּכָמֹת בְּכָמֹת
nor thine ass nor any of thy cattle nor thy stranger

H2543 H3605 H929 H1616 H834

וְעַד בְּשַׁעַר יְהִי לְמַעַן יְהִי עַד
that is within thy gates may rest nor thy manservant and thy maidservant

H8179 H4616 H5117 H5650 H519

כְּמַה וְכַא:

H3644

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 4:4 (References God): For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

Genesis 2:2 (References God): And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

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

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