

Exodus 31:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

Analysis

The Sabbath is a sign between God and Israel forever, reminding them that the LORD sanctifies them. Sabbath-keeping testified to creation (God rested on the seventh day) and sanctification (God sets apart His people). Sabbath rest prefigures the spiritual rest believers find in Christ—ceasing from self-effort, trusting His finished work (Hebrews 4:9-10). Violating the Sabbath incurred death, showing that rejecting God's rest is spiritual death.

Historical Context

The Sabbath command's placement after tabernacle instructions (before construction began) emphasized that even sacred work must pause for sacred rest. God's people rest in His timing, not working constantly even for holy purposes.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Sabbath rest prefigure ceasing from self-effort and resting in Christ's finished work?
2. What does the severity of Sabbath violation teach about rejecting God's rest?

Interlinear Text

השְׁבִיעַ יְמִינָה בְּיֹום שְׁבִתַּת
Six day be done any work day but in the seventh

לְיְהוָה כָּל שְׁבָת וְיֶשְׁבָת
in the sabbath of rest holy to the LORD be done any work

יָמִתָּה שְׁבָת בְּיֹום
day in the sabbath be put to death be put to death

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 2:2 (Parallel theme): 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 16:23 (Holy): And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

Leviticus 23:3 (Holy): Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

Exodus 34:21 (Parallel theme): Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earring time and in harvest thou shalt rest.

Exodus 31:17 (References Lord): It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

Exodus 35:2 (Holy): Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.

Luke 13:14 (Parallel theme): And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Luke 23:56 (Parallel theme): And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.