

Exodus 31:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

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

וְשָׁמַר ו	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	אֶת	הַשַּׁבָּת	לַעֲשׂוֹת וְ	אֶת
shall keep	Wherefore the children	of Israel	H853	the sabbath	to observe	H853
H8104	H1121	H3478		H7676	H6213	
הַשַּׁבָּת	לְדֹרֹתָם	בְּרִית	עוֹלָם:			
the sabbath	throughout their generations	covenant	for a perpetual			
H7676	H1755	H1285	H5769			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 50:5 (Covenant): They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.