

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

Psalm 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

אַתָּה לְעַשׂ וֹתֶן
ישְׁמַר וְ
shall keep Wherefore the children
H8104 H1121 H3478 H853 H7676 H6213

בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַשְׁבָּת תְּ
the sabbath throughout their generations
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.

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