

The Living Words

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~~ Sabbath ~~

*Six days you will **serve** (avad) and do all your **business** (melakah).*

Exodus 20:9

In this verse are the two words we have just reviewed, עָבַד *avad* ^[H:5647], meaning serve, and מְלָאכָה *melakhah* ^[H:4399], meaning business. Just as God did his business in six days, he directs Israel to do the same.

*But the seventh day is the **shabbat** of Yahweh your Elohiym, you will not do any business...*

Exodus 20:10

The word שַׁבָּת *shabbat* ^[H:7676] is always transliterated as “sabbath” and most assume it is simply a name for the day of the week and are unaware this word has a meaning. It is derived from the verb שָׁבַת *shavat* ^[H:7673] meaning “to cease or stop.” The noun shabbat is a time of ceasing and, as stated in the above verse, the seventh day is a time for ceasing business. This verse also states it is the “shabbat of Yahweh Elohiym” in reference to Genesis 2:2.

*And Elohiym finished his business which he did on the seventh day and he **ceased** (shavat) in the seventh day from all his business which he did.*

The word “ceased” in this passage is the verb *shavat*, the root of the word *shabbat*.

We previously studied the Hebrew verb שׁוּב *shuv* [H:7725], meaning “to turn.” The parent root to this word is שָׁב *shav* and would have been written as שָׁב in the ancient pictographic script. The שָׁב, a picture of teeth¹, represents the idea of pressing as when pressing on food with the teeth when chewing. The שָׁב is, as we have previously examined, a picture of the nomadic tent. When combined, these mean to “press to the tent/house” or “return.” This parent root is also the root of the word שַׁבָּת *shabbat* [H:7676] with the letter תָּ. This letter is written as † in the pictographic script and represents a sign or mark² as well as a covenant.

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

Exodus 31:16,17 (ASV)

On the seventh day, Israel “returns (שָׁב) to the covenant (†).”

¹ The name of the letter שָׁב is shin and is derived from the word שֵׁן *sheyn* [H:8127] meaning tooth.

² The name of the letter † is tav and is derived from the word תָּו *tav* [H:8420] meaning mark.