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ABSTRACT

THE SABBATH IN THE PENTATEUCH: AN EXEGETICAL
AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Mathilde Frey

Adviser: Roy E. Gane

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE SABBATH IN THE PENTATEUCH: AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY

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Many studies have explored the seventh-day Sabbath in the Pentateuch from historical-critical, theological, and historical perspectives. However, systematic contextual exegesis and close reading of the pentateuchal Sabbath texts have been neglected. This dissertation investigates literary features of these passages in their respective contexts and develops an integrated Sabbath theology from the viewpoint of the Pentateuch as a whole.

In chapter 1, an overview of literature on the biblical Sabbath introduces the topic and describes the methodology of the study. Chapters 2 to 5 explore specific contextual, stylistic, and linguistic elements of the pentateuchal Sabbath pericopes, which contribute to expression of their theological concepts. Chapter 2 analyzes the creation Sabbath (Gen

2:1-3). Chapter 3 investigates other narrative passages involving the Sabbath (Exod 16:1-36 and Num 15:32-36). Chapter 4 examines Sabbath laws (Exod 20:8-11; 23:12; 34:21; Deut 5:12-15). Chapter 5 focuses on the Sabbath in the context of the sanctuary (Exod 31:12-17; 35:2-3; Lev 23:3; 24:5-9; Num 28:9, 10). In chapter 6, summary of the various literary features of the Sabbath texts and their interrelatedness leads to synthesis of theological aspects of the Sabbath. Chapter 7 presents the overall results of the study.

The Sabbath encapsulates and reveals God's presence in the world, regardless of its nature and condition. The Sabbath was introduced by divine cessation from work in order for holiness to enter the world for the benefit of all humanity. Holiness is the essence of the divine-human relationship, which enables human beings to fully become what they were created to be: the image of the Creator. In its rhythmic recurrence, the Sabbath signifies the Creator's constant presence in the world and his care for it. Since the Fall into sin, the Sabbath liberates people from oppressive regimes of man-made gods; it places them in proper relationships with each other; it relieves their attitude toward work in a society exhausted and stressed by hard labor; and it testifies to the sacred design in time and space whereby they can recognize and emulate the Maker of all. Thus the Sabbath is an important part of God's program for restoring *imago Dei* in fallen human beings.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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To the memory of my parents Sarah and Johann Konyen who weekly taught me to live six days in anticipation of the Sabbath, even under the most difficult conditions of life

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992.
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3d ed. Princeton, 1969
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden, 1994-2000
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JAAS	<i>Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JATS	<i>Journal of the Adventist Theological Society</i>
JBQ	<i>Jewish Biblical Quarterly</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement

JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
NICOT	The New International Commentary of the Old Testament
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis.</i> Edited by W. A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, 1997
OS	Oudtestamentische Studien
<i>PSB</i>	<i>Princeton Seminary Bulletin</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>STDJ</i>	<i>Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah</i>
TB	Tyndale Bulletin
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament.</i> Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament.</i> Edited by E. Jenni with assistance from C. Westermann. Translated by M. E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, Mass., 1997
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

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Last and foremost, I thank my God for the delight of the Sabbath.

CHAPTER I

THE SABBATH IN THE PENTATEUCH: AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY

Background of the Problem

The seventh-day Sabbath is an integral concept of the Pentateuch expressed by different literary forms: the creation account, narrative texts, and laws. The complex relationship between these literary forms is well known in biblical scholarship, but often ignored in analyzing the Sabbath texts contextually within their literary frameworks. Instead, the various Sabbath texts are often assigned to different sources and historical time settings without reading the undivided text of the Pentateuch in its final form. The vast scholarly literature without a consensus on the origin, rationale, and theology of the Sabbath testifies at least partly to the lack of a contextual and holistic reading of the Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch.

The first part of my background analysis addresses the different literary forms of the Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch, the relationships between these texts, and the state of research regarding them. The second part deals with major exegetical and theological works on the Sabbath, the contributions they have made, and their deficiencies.

The creation account, including the creation Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3), is widely debated in biblical scholarship regarding its literary genre.¹ Both the lack of a consensus regarding literary genre identification among biblical scholars and the recognition that the creation account is unparalleled in the ancient world point to the unique nature of this text.² John H. Stek suggested that the “literary type [of the creation account], as far as present knowledge goes, is without strict parallel; it is *sui generis*.”³ Walter C. Kaiser concluded that “we are dealing with the genera of historical narrative-prose, interspersed with some lists, sources, sayings, and poetical lines.”⁴ Jacques B. Doukhan identified the

¹ Biblical scholars propose the literary genres of myth, parable, story, theology, allegory, saga, hymn, poem, narrative, and cultic literature. See, Samuel H. Hooke, *Middle Eastern Mythology* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), 119-121; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1987), 10; Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 26; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 80, 236; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 65.

² Charles E. Hummel, *The Galileo Connection: Resolving Conflicts between Science and the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 216.

³ John H. Stek, “What Says Scripture?” in *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World’s Formation* (ed. Howard J. van Till, Robert E. Snow, John H. Stek, and Davis A. Young; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), 241; cf. Gerhard F. Hasel, “The ‘Days’ of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal ‘Days’ or Figurative ‘Periods/Epochs’ of Time?” *Origins* 21 (1994): 5-38. Hasel concludes that, compared with other biblical genera, the creation account is not a hymn, parable, poem, cultic liturgy, metaphor, story, or allegory.

⁴ Walter C. Kaiser, “The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11,” in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament* (ed. J. Barton Payne; Waco: Word Books, 1970), 61.

creation account as “prose-genealogy” in terms of the style of the passage and the term “generations” (תולדות) used in Gen 2:4.⁵

The unique form of the creation Sabbath becomes evident on the basis of four significant characteristics stated in Gen 2:1-3: (1) On the seventh day God’s creative work was “finished”; (2) God “ceased” from all his creative work; (3) God “blessed” the seventh day; and (4) God “made it holy.” These four characteristics bear significant meaning for ongoing human life and worship. In light of the Pentateuch as a whole, the creation Sabbath represents the archetype for the other Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch.

Two narrative texts deal with the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week: The narrative of the manna and the Sabbath in Exod 16:1-36 and the narrative about the man gathering wood on Sabbath in Num 15:32-36. In the narrative of the manna and the Sabbath, the noun שבת (“Sabbath”) appears for the first time in close relationship to the verb שבת (“to cease, stop, rest”; see Exod 16:25, 29, 30), which was used in the text of the creation Sabbath (Gen 2:3). Several key concepts link the narrative to the creation Sabbath: the use of the number 7 (Gen 2:2, 3; cf. Exod 16:26, 27, 29, 30); the pattern of six days plus the seventh day (Gen 1:31; 2:1-3; cf. Exod 16:5, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30); the concept of God ceasing from work expressed by the verb שבת (Gen 2:2, 3; cf. Exod 16:30); the concept of rest expressed by the verb נוח (Exod 16:23, 24, 33, 34);⁶ the

⁵ Jacques B. Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story: Its Literary Structure* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1978), 182. The book of Genesis is structured by the word “generations” (תולדות) in connection with each section of the book (13 times) to show that it is an account of time and history.

⁶ Although the verb נוח does not appear in the creation account, it is associated with God’s rest on the seventh day of creation in the Sabbath commandments of Exod 20:11; 23:12 and Deut 5:14.

concept of blessing (Gen 2:3; cf. Exod 16:24, 35); and the concept of Sabbath holiness (Gen 2:3; cf. Exod 16:23).

The narrative in Num 15:32-36 about the man gathering wood on Sabbath is placed between laws about remediable versus irremediable moral faults⁷ and narratives about rebellion against God (chaps. 14; 16; 17). While commentators link the narrative in Num 15:32-36 to the commandment, “Do not light a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day” (Exod 35:3),⁸ they overlook the fact that the verb used to describe the man’s capital crime of gathering wood on Sabbath relates to Israel’s slavery in Egypt, when the people went out “to gather stubble for straw” (Exod 5:7, 12). This link exemplifies the interrelatedness of narratives and laws during Israel’s desert journeys and shows that the Sabbath as a work-free day breaks the bonds of slavery.

The majority of Sabbath texts are found in the legal texts of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy (Exod 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-17; 34:21; 35:2-3; Lev 19:3, 30; 23:3; 24:5-9; Num 28:9, 10; Deut 5:12-15).⁹ These passages take up the four aspects of the creation Sabbath, but also link the Sabbath to God’s act of redemption, the covenant with Israel, and the sanctuary, its services, and feasts.

⁷ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers* (The NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 482.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 622; Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1-20* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 399. The specific commandment in Exod 35:3 occurs in the context of the sanctuary building text in Exod 35:1-40:38, a context that is different from Num 15:32-36.

⁹ Unlike other critical scholars, James Watts attributes the repetition of the Sabbath command to the strong thematic emphasis on the Sabbath in the Pentateuch. See James W. Watts, *Reading Law: The Rhetorical Shaping of the Pentateuch* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 68-69.

Linguistic connections among the various literary forms support a contextual and holistic reading of the Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch. The creation Sabbath, the Sabbath narratives, and the Sabbath laws share several verbal roots.¹⁰ The differences that exist between the Sabbath texts (especially the differences between the two Decalogue versions in Exod 20:8-11 and Deut 5:12-15) do not nullify their close relationship, but broaden and enrich the meaning and concept of the Sabbath in the Pentateuch.

A thoroughly contextual reading of the Sabbath texts has not been achieved through the numerous attempts of historical-critical scholars in their quest for the origin and basic meaning of the Sabbath. Critical studies recognize linguistic connections among the various Sabbath texts, but their focus is on elements leading to source-critical and historical-critical conclusions.¹¹ For example, a recent critical study by Baruch Schwartz assigns the Sabbath texts of the Pentateuch to the sources J, E, D, P and holds that these sources tell different stories about the origin of the Sabbath and the reason for the Sabbath in Israel's history. Schwartz argues that there is no relationship between the Sabbath texts of the Pentateuch; therefore, one cannot speak of the biblical meaning of the Sabbath.¹²

¹⁰ The Hebrew expressions for “work,” “ceasing,” “rest,” “refresh,” and “to make holy” occur in the creation text (Gen 2:1-3), the narrative of the manna (Exod 16), and the laws (Exod 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-17; Deut 5:12-15).

¹¹ See, e.g., Gnana Robinson, “The Idea of Rest in the Old Testament and the Search for the Basic Character of the Sabbath,” *ZAW* 92 (1980): 32-42. Robinson comes to the conclusion that the idea of “rest from labor” on the Sabbath is post-exilic.

¹² Baruch J. Schwartz, “The Sabbath in the Torah Sources” (Paper presented at SBL, San Diego, 2007, published at <http://www.biblicallaw.net/2007/schwartz.pdf>).

Many critical studies were conditioned by the discovery of ancient Babylonian texts and by the search for the origin of the biblical Sabbath outside the Hebrew Bible.¹³ Studies that explain elements of the Sabbath by features in extrabiblical texts tend to disregard linguistic and contextual features within the biblical text that contribute to the meaning of the Sabbath. For example, Exod 23:12 uses the expression “son of your female servant,” in contrast to the Sabbath commandments, which speak of the male servant and the female servant resting on the seventh day (Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14). In light of comparative ancient Near Eastern studies, Calum Carmichael assigns the expression “son of your female servant” in Exod 23:12 to a class of people in Israelite society, thereby ignoring linguistic and contextual markers in the biblical text.¹⁴ His

¹³ Divergent theories, all of which have proven to be unsuccessful, are known as the Babylonian hypothesis, the Kenite hypothesis, the Arabic hypothesis, the Ugaritic hypothesis, and the sociological hypothesis. See Wilhelm Lotz, *Questiones de historia Sabbati libri duo* (Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1883), 57-58, 106; Abraham Kuenen, *The Religion of Israel* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1874), 276; Johannes Helm, *Siebenzahl und Sabbat bei den Babyloniern und im Alten Testament* (Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904), 58-62, 112-114; Ernst Jenni, *Die Theologische Begründung des Sabbatgebotes im Alten Testament* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1956), 12-13; Gnana Robinson, *The Origin and Development of the Old Testament Sabbath: A Comprehensive Exegetical Approach* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1988), 171-185.

¹⁴ Calum Carmichael, *The Laws of Deuteronomy* (London: Cornell University Press, 1974), 87. Carmichael states that the female servant's son must be “the perpetual slave issuing from the union of a slave and the wife given him by his master” even though the children born in slavery are the sons or daughters of the male servant and not of the female servant (see Exod 21:4). According to Carmichael's conclusion, the reading of the text would need to be “the son of your male servant.” Since this is not the case, Carmichael states further that in the Sabbath commandment of Deut 5:14 “the son of your female servant” has been replaced by “your male servant and your female servant.” As my analysis shows, besides Exod 23:12, the only other occurrences of the expression “son of your female servant” are found in the narrative of Hagar's and Ishmael's expulsion from the household of Abraham, in which Ishmael is twice called “son of the female servant” (Gen 21:10, 13). Through a contextual and intertextual reading of the

approach leads to eisegesis, reading into the biblical text a qualification of the expression “son of your female servant” that is not indicated in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁵

Other studies on the Sabbath in the Hebrew Bible show the need for basic analysis of the pentateuchal Sabbath texts and for further theological research. Among these is the tradition-historical study by Niels-Erik Andreasen that affirmed the presence of Sabbath traditions prior to Israel’s monarchy.¹⁶ The study concluded with suggestions for further investigation of the theological significance of these Sabbath traditions in Israel’s history.

H. Ross Cole’s exegetical (but not historical-critical) dissertation is concerned with the sacred times in the Pentateuch, including the Sabbath, and their applicability as either permanent or temporary sacred times.¹⁷ Samuele Bacchiocchi mainly addresses the history of the Sabbath and speaks in theological terms about the Sabbath as good news for the Christian believer.¹⁸

Hebrew Bible, I demonstrate the connection between the Sabbath commandment in Exod 23:12 and the patriarchal history as recorded in Gen 21:1-21.

¹⁵ See my contextual analysis of Exod 23:12 in Mathilde Frey, “The Sabbath Commandment in the Book of the Covenant: Ethics on Behalf of the Outcast,” *JAAS* 9 (2006): 3-11.

¹⁶ Niels-Erik Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath* (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature Scholars Press, 1972), 261.

¹⁷ H. Ross Cole, “The Sacred Times Prescribed in the Pentateuch: Old Testament Indicators of the Extent of Their Applicability” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1996).

¹⁸ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness: A Theological Study of the Good News of the Sabbath for Today* (Berrien Springs: Biblical Perspectives, 1997); idem, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1977).

Another major work on the Sabbath is represented by a collection of papers from a symposium held at the University of Denver in 1989.¹⁹ The book includes the viewpoints of representatives from various religious traditions, including Judaism, Protestantism, and Catholicism. As the editors of the volume state, “the symposium was intended not as a ‘summit meeting’ to produce a consensus statement but rather as an opportunity to set forth and explore various theologies and practices associated with the Sabbath and Sunday in order to enhance interfaith understanding.”²⁰

Theological investigation of the Sabbath has been pursued by both Jewish and Christian scholars. Modern Jewish theology stresses law, reason, and history of the Sabbath. Orthodox Jewish scholars consider the Sabbath as a witness to the authority of God. Observing the Sabbath becomes the epitome of Orthodox existence and a symbol of God’s authoritative rule.²¹ In Reform Judaism, the Sabbath represents the means to spread monotheism and universal ethics.²² For Franz Rosenzweig, the Sabbath

¹⁹ Tamara C. Eskenazi, Daniel J. Harrington, and William H. Shea, eds., *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Crossroad, 1991).

²⁰ Ibid., xii. The papers are organized into sections containing biblical perspectives, rabbinic and New Testament perspectives, theological perspectives, liturgical perspectives, and legal and ecumenical perspectives on the Sabbath.

²¹ Samson R. Hirsch, *Horeb: A Philosophy of Jewish Laws and Observance* (2 vols; London: Soncino Press, 1962), 1:62-65; Isidor Grunfeld, *The Sabbath: A Guide to Its Understanding and Observance* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1972), 19; see also Roy Branson, “Sabbath—Heart of Jewish Unity,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 15 (1978): 716-736; idem, “The Sabbath in Modern Jewish Theology,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (ed. Kenneth A. Strand; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), 268.

²² Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publication, 1972), 161; cf. Hermann Cohen, *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen* (New York: Norton, 1971), 116-117, 155, 157-158.

commemorates the goal of creation and redemption.²³ Martin Buber shifts the focus from universal reason to personal existence,²⁴ and Abraham J. Heschel views the Sabbath as a legal institution with redemptive meaning for Jews and as a “palace in time with a kingdom for all.”²⁵

In Protestant theology, Karl Barth deals with the Sabbath not simply as a commandment, but as a revelation of God that begins with the creation Sabbath as the basis for the covenant of grace.²⁶ An unbiblical element in Barth’s theology appears when he spiritualizes the Sabbath and attempts to prove a Sunday Sabbath after the resurrection of Christ. Even though Barth treats the Sabbath commandment first among the laws, his conclusion suggests that the law in relation to the covenant is not to be taken according to the biblical text, which declares the Sabbath as an “everlasting covenant” (Exod 31:16).²⁷

Gerhard F. Hasel investigates the Sabbath in his essay, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch.”²⁸ This brief theological study interprets some of the Sabbath texts of the Pentateuch and their relationship, linking them to the themes of creation, law, and

²³ Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1970), 312-315.

²⁴ Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Scribner, 1958).

²⁵ Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951), 21.

²⁶ Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik* III-1 (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1947), 240-258.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

²⁸ Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (ed. Kenneth A. Strand; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982).

covenant. The contribution of this essay opens up the need for a comprehensive contextual reading of the Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch.

The 2008 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Boston, Massachusetts, included a consultation on “The Sabbath in Text, Tradition and Theology” (November 24), which demonstrated renewed interest in the topic of the Sabbath. The papers read at this meeting demonstrated the awareness of biblical scholars that the biblical texts on the Sabbath are in need of investigation.

Tonstad’s recent monograph about the Sabbath develops the topic from an integrative and contextual approach and offers insightful perspectives into biblical Sabbath passages.²⁹

Statement of the Problem

The history of biblical interpretation shows lack of a detailed exegetical-theological study of the Sabbath texts of the Pentateuch from the perspective of a contextual reading in the Pentateuch as a whole. The question needs to be asked: How does the canonical form of the Pentateuch present the Sabbath and Sabbath theology? This involves further questions: What are the different aspects of the Sabbath in the different literary forms of the Pentateuch? How do these different literary forms affect each other with regard to the Sabbath? How does the narrative context affect the reading of the laws, and vice versa? These questions need to be addressed in order to obtain a more complete representation and understanding of the Sabbath in the Pentateuch.

²⁹ Sigve K. Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the Sabbath texts of the Pentateuch in order to develop a Sabbath theology from the viewpoint of the Pentateuch as a whole.

Justification of the Study

At the end of the nineteenth century, biblical scholars started to recognize the importance of the seventh-day Sabbath and searched for the origin of the biblical Sabbath outside of the biblical text. Even though the studies carried out then contributed to the understanding of ancient Near Eastern literature and culture, the discussion of the origin of the Sabbath remained unfruitful. Other exegetical studies dealt with the Sabbath texts of the Hebrew Bible based upon the presuppositions of hypothetically reconstructed texts regarded as sources (J, E, D, P) for the canonical text. The interest of such studies did not contribute much to the meaning of the Sabbath texts, but led to a hypothetical reconstruction of the history of the Sabbath in Israelite religion.

As discussed above, valuable contributions of various theological studies have broadened our understanding of the Sabbath from the perspective of the whole biblical text. However, the tensions and deficiencies within these works demonstrate lack of sufficiently holistic and contextual exegesis of the various Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch.

Delimitations

This research will focus on the text of the Pentateuch in its latest stage. Detailed but not exhaustive exegesis of the Sabbath texts that deal with the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week will be undertaken in order to assess Sabbath theology in each passage.

Pentateuchal texts dealing with the sabbatical year and the Jubilee years as well as allusions to the seventh-day Sabbath such as in the Noah narrative (Gen 6-8)³⁰ and in the dialogue between Pharaoh and Moses (Exod 5:5) will not be analyzed in this study. In addition, the examination of the seventh-day Sabbath within the covenantal framework of the Pentateuch and its theological implications will be limited to the Sabbath texts under direct investigation within each chapter of the dissertation.

Methodology

In his commentary on Ezekiel, Moshe Greenberg explains holistic reading of the biblical text as follows: “There is only one way that gives any hope of eliciting the innate conventions and literary formations of a piece of ancient literature, and that is by listening to it patiently and humbly.”³¹ James Watts describes the particular way the biblical text should be dealt with: “The narrative context of Pentateuchal law confirms that the Torah is intended to be read as a whole and in order. Unlike law, the narrative invites, almost enforces, a strategy of sequential reading, of starting at the beginning and reading the text in order to the end.”³²

³⁰ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), 180-181; idem, “The Coherence of the Flood Narrative” *VT* 28 (1978), 345; idem, *Story as Torah: Reading the Old Testament Ethically* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 27.

³¹ Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 22; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 21; cf. idem, “The Vision of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 8-11: A Holistic Interpretation,” in *Divine Helmsman: Studies on God’s Control of Human Events Presented to Lou H. Silberman* (ed. J. L. Crenshaw and S. Sandmel; New York: Ktav, 1980), 148.

³² Watts, *Reading Law: The Rhetorical Shaping of the Pentateuch*, 29.

From my perspective, a holistic exegesis of the Sabbath texts tries to understand the biblical text in its present canonical form and wording, and derives theological insights and implications from a given literary unit through analysis of its context, genre, literary structure, grammar, syntax, and lexicography.

Each chapter of this dissertation will include a brief review of literature before pointing out the specific contextual and linguistic elements of the text and deriving theological concepts and implications. Chapter 2 will analyze the creation Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3). Chapter 3 will deal with narrative passages concerning the Sabbath in the Pentateuch (Exod 16:1-36 and Num 15:32-36). Chapter 4 will exegete a number of Sabbath laws in order to identify their theological concepts (Exod 20:8-11; 23:12; 34:21; Deut 5:12-15). Chapter 5 will focus on texts including their contexts that link the Sabbath to the sanctuary (Exod 31:12-17; 35:2-3; Lev 23:3; 24:5-9; Num 28:9, 10). Chapter 6 will investigate ways in which the various passages relate to each other, leading to presentation of a theological synthesis. Chapter 7 will provide the conclusions of the research.

CHAPTER II
THE CREATION SABBATH

Introduction

According to Gen 2:1-3, the seventh-day Sabbath originates in creation.¹ This passage, which first records the Sabbath in the canonical Hebrew Bible, has inspired numerous studies with regard to the role and meaning of the creation Sabbath. Of these, three major studies investigate, among other Sabbath texts, the creation Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3: Niels-Erik A. Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath: A Tradition-Historical Investigation*, Nicola Negretti, *Il Settimo Giorno*, and Gnana Robinson, *The Origin and Development of the Old Testament Sabbath: A Comprehensive Exegetical Approach*.² None of these studies attempts to analyze the creation Sabbath from the perspective of its literary context in Gen 1:1-2:3;³ neither do they offer a comprehensive literary analysis and theology of the creation Sabbath.

¹ Scholars in general agree that the weekly Sabbath is at least partly in view in Gen 2:1-3. An overview of scholarly discussions may be found in H. Ross Cole, "The Sabbath and Genesis 2:1-3," *AUSS* 41 (2003): 5, n. 3.

² Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*; Nicola Negretti, *Il Settimo Giorno* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1973); and Robinson, *The Origin and Development of the Old Testament Sabbath*.

³ Commentators are still divided over whether the first creation account ends at Gen 2:3; 2:4; or 2:4a. The examination of the seventh-day Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3 in the present study does not depend on any of these positions. Umberto Cassuto may be right when he argues that all of Gen 2:4 may be a transitory statement between the first and

Other books and articles cover major terminology, structure, and theology, but again, they do not carry out comprehensive exegetical, literary, and theological analysis.⁴ Additionally, there is a recent trend among some scholars to discuss the creation Sabbath rather loosely and subjectively in relation to issues such as social justice, ecology, eco-ethics, and eco-theology.⁵ This approach does not contribute to exegesis of the primary biblical text. The scant attention that exegetes have given to a comprehensive literary analysis and theology of the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3⁶ suggests the need for a thorough close reading of the biblical text in order to arrive at a solid understanding of the meaning of the creation Sabbath.

second creation accounts. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 96-100.

⁴ Some of these include: Shimon Bakon, "Creation, Tabernacle and Sabbath," *JBQ* 25 (1997): 79-85; Cole, "The Sabbath and Genesis 2:1-3"; Richard M. Davidson, "Sabbath, Spirituality, and Mission: Torah's Seven Dimensions of Sabbath Rest," in *Encountering God in Life and Mission: A Festschrift Honoring Jon L. Dybdahl* (ed. Rudi Meier; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2010), 3-19; Eskenazi, Harrington, and Shea, eds., *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions*; Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch"; Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*; Jenni, *Die Theologische Begründung des Sabbatgebotes im Alten Testament*; Jürgen Moltmann, "The Sabbath: The Feast of Creation," *Journal of Family Ministry* 14 (2000): 38-43; Jiri Moskala, "The Sabbath in the First Creation Account," *JATS* 13 (2002): 55-66; Robinson, "The Idea of Rest in the Old Testament and the Search for the Basic Character of the Sabbath"; Schwartz, "The Sabbath in the Torah Sources"; Klaas A. D. Smelik, "The Creation of the Sabbath (Gen 1:1-2:3)," in *Unless Some One Guide Me ... Festschrift for Karel A. Deurloo* (ed. Janet W. Dyk; Maastricht: Uitgeverich Shaker, 2001), 9-11; Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*; Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath," *ZAW* 84 (1972): 447-459.

⁵ Kathy Lancaster, ed., "General Assembly 2000: Social Justice Actions of the 212th General Assembly," *Church & Society* 90 (2000): 1-94; Richard H. Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee* (Saint Louis: Chalice, 2000); Howard N. Wallace, "Rest for the Earth? Another Look at Genesis 2.1-3," in *The Earth Story in Genesis* (ed. Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 49-59.

⁶ In the course of this study, I refer to the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3 as the first creation account.

While many biblical scholars recognize that the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3 is a text unparalleled in the ancient world and identify its literary form as *sui generis*, others classify this text according to various literary genres, such as historical narrative, prose-genealogy, myth, parable, allegory, saga, hymn, poetry, and cultic literature.⁷ Critics, who maintain that 1:1-2:4a is P material, identify a different style and language within the seventh section dealing with the Sabbath (2:1-3). However, they acknowledge that in the final form of the text these verses present a literary unit.⁸

Examination of Gen 2:1-3 indeed shows that this text contains special literary features when compared to the text of the six weekdays (1:1-31). However, at least three significant elements show that the account of the seventh day is an integral part of the first creation account and characterize the Sabbath as grounded in creation: (1) By the

⁷ See Brueggemann, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 26; Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story*, 182; Hasel, "The 'Days' of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal 'Days' or Figurative 'Periods/EPOCHS' of Time?," 5-38; Hooke, *Middle Eastern Mythology*, 119-121; Walter C. Kaiser, "The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11," 61; von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 65; Stek, "What Says Scripture?," 241; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 10; and Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, 80, 236. Cassuto and Alter point out the poetic features of this text and its stylistic and elevated language based on a structural system of the number seven. Robert Alter, *Genesis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), xxii-xxv; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 12.

⁸ Johannes G. Eichhorn and Johann Ph. Gabler, *Urgeschichte I* (Altdorf-Nürnberg, 1790), 144. Eichhorn and Gabler regarded Gen 2:1-3 as an element of disunity within the Gen 1 creation account because of its different language and style, and they searched for what they called a basic layer of the priestly tradition within Gen 2:1-3. Soon, however, they came to the conclusion that the special language and style of Gen 2:1-3 make it impossible to discover a basic layer of P. See Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), 9, 155: "Finally the investigation of the language leads to an unusual result: Nowhere in [Gen] 2:1-3 does one push through the priestly vocabulary to the bottom of the tradition. Nevertheless, the research of literary criticism in Gen 1 started with this piece of text" (my own translation). See also Odil H. Steck, *Der Schöpfungsbericht der Priesterschrift* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 178; and Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974), 230-231.

seventh day God's creative work was finished; (2) God ceased from all his creative work; and (3) God blessed and sanctified the seventh day of creation.⁹ These three elements bear significant meaning for ongoing human life and worship and mark the creation Sabbath as the archetypal text for subsequent Sabbath texts in the canonical form of the Hebrew Bible.

The present study analyzes the first creation account in the final canonical form of the Hebrew Bible. The first part will deal with linguistic, stylistic, and structural features that seem to be purposefully employed to identify similarities and differences between the account of the six weekdays and that of the seventh day. The second part will point out theological implications that are relevant for the overall meaning of the creation Sabbath in the Pentateuch.

The Sabbath in Genesis 1:1-2:3

Understood as an integral part of the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3 the Sabbath needs to be analyzed accordingly. Literary analysis of the Sabbath within the context of the first creation account deals with structural and aspectual features.

Literary Analysis

Structural Features

Studies of the first creation account have disclosed many literary and stylistic features of this text.¹⁰ Genesis 1:1-2:3 is generally understood to outline the creation

⁹ Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch," 23.

¹⁰ Bernhard W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 45; Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story*, 50; Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, 54; Steck, *Der Schöpfungsbericht der Priesterschrift*, 211.

week by a thematic and poetic arrangement and to order the various parts of the cosmos according to a block parallelism or panel structure followed by the account of the seventh day as a celebrative closure (Table 1).¹¹

Table 1. Thematic arrangement of Genesis 1:1-2:3

Unordered becomes ordered	Uninhabited becomes inhabited
Day 1: light	Day 4: lights
Day 2: air / water	Day 5: birds / fish
Day 3: land / vegetation	Day 6: animals / humans
Day 7: Sabbath	

The account of the seventh day stands outside the paralleling structure of the account of the six weekdays and forms the climactic closure of the creation week. Characterized by the verb שָׁבַת, “cease, stop” (occurring twice in Gen 2:2b, 3b),¹² the seventh day brings about a completely different perspective when compared to the previous six days. During the six weekdays God created by speaking, seeing, separating, calling, making, placing, and blessing; on the seventh day God ceases. The verb שָׁבַת highlights the contrast between the six weekdays and the seventh day. There is no more

¹¹ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 17; Steck, *Der Schöpfungsbericht der Priesterschrift*, 13.

¹² For a discussion concerning the origin of the verb שָׁבַת and the noun שַׁבָּת and the relationship between them, see Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*, 94-121; Gerhard F. Hasel, “Sabbath,” *ABD* 5:850-851; idem, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” 21-43.

work to be added, no more separation to be performed, and no more assessment to be carried out. The word **שַׁבַּת** indicates that God signifies the seventh day as the moment of termination of all creation.

The first creation account contains two sections that stand outside the structure of the six weekdays. The first section is Gen 1:1-2, which describes the bare, desolate, and uninhabited state of the earth by the use of the rare Hebrew expression **וַתְהוֹ וּבְהוֹ**¹³ and then the Spirit of God hovering over the deep (**תְהוֹם**) before the earth is ordered and filled during the six weekdays. The second section is Gen 2:1-3, where the seventh day forms the antithesis to the unformed and unfilled state of the earth. Here, the verb **שַׁבַּת** conveys a contrast to the work of creation during the six weekdays by showing that a “state of equilibrium and stability”¹⁴ is achieved by the seventh day.

There are also other structuring elements in the first creation account that show both similarities and differences between the six weekdays and the seventh day. The differences seem more obvious and demonstrate that the seventh day stands out in a number of ways:

1. The parallel structure of the six days of the creation week is marked by formulas that are reiterated throughout the text in order to reveal the six sequences of the narrative. These formulas are: **וַיְהיֶ־עֶרֶב וַיְהיֶ־בֹקֶר יוֹם**, “and there was evening and there was morning, day . . .” (1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31); **וַיְהיֶ־כֵן**, “and it was so” (vv. 8, 9, 12, 15,

¹³ Cf. Jer 4:23. For a discussion of the expression **וַתְהוֹ וּבְהוֹ**, see the study of David T. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaokampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 9-35.

¹⁴ John H. Walton, “Creation,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 165; idem, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006), 198.

24, 30); and כִּי־טוֹב, “that it was good” (vv. 4, 11, 13, 18, 21, 25) followed by הִנֵּה־טוֹב, “behold, it was very good” (v. 31) as the summary statement of the six weekdays. These formulaic expressions tie the six weekdays together as an organized structure. The seventh day breaks with the formulaic patterns established for the six weekdays. All of these formulas are missing in the account of the seventh day.

2. The subject אֱלֹהִים, “Elohim, God,” governs the account of the six weekdays as the subject of action verbs. The account of the seventh day, however, begins with “the heavens and the earth . . . and all that is in them” as the subject of a passive verb, וַיִּכְלֹ, “they were completed,” a *pu‘al* form (2:1). Following this statement, God is again the subject and remains so for the rest of the text (vv. 2, 3).

3. Each one of the accounts of the six weekdays begins with וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, “and God said” (1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24). The account of the seventh day lacks explicit reference to divine speech.

4. Each of the six weekdays ends with the formula וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם, “and it was evening and it was morning.” The account of the creation Sabbath emphasizes the seventh day by the phrase בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, “on the seventh day” (2x), and אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, “the seventh day” (1x), within three consecutive parallel lines each consisting of seven words.¹⁵

5. The account of the six weekdays shows consistency in the use of verbal forms and God (אֱלֹהִים) as the subject of these forms: Twenty-nine imperfect verbal forms with *waw*-consecutives explicitly have God as their subject. There is only one exception, Gen

¹⁵ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 61. On the significance of the number seven in Semitic languages and in the Hebrew Bible, see E. Otto, “שֶׁבַע” *šeba*; שְׁבוּעוֹת *šabu’ot*,” *TDOT* 14:336-367.

1:7, where the *waw*-consecutive form וַיִּבְרָא, “and he separated,” occurs without explicitly naming God as the subject of the verb.¹⁶ The six perfect verbal forms occurring in the account of the six weekdays all imply God as their subject (2:5, 10, 27, 29, 31). The account of the seventh day shows a mixed usage when referring to God as the subject: Two *waw*-consecutive forms explicitly have God as their subject (וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים, “and God finished,” and וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים, “and God blessed”), but two *waw*-consecutive forms only imply God as their subject (וַיִּשְׁבֹּת, “and he ceased,” and וַיְקַדְּשׁ, “and he sanctified”). Three perfect forms imply God as subject (עָשָׂה, “he made” [2x], and שָׁבַת, “he ceased”), and the account of the Sabbath ends with בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים, “God created” (v. 3). This ending explicitly includes אֱלֹהִים as subject and parallels the beginning of the creation account in chap. 1:1.

Several similarities between the account of the six weekdays and that of the seventh day point to the literary unity of the first creation account and present the creation event as a complete whole by using various linguistic elements:

1. The *inclusio* consisting of the framing clause בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים, “God created,” in both Gen 1:1 and 2:3 shows that the creation account is intended to be a literary unit.

2. In both Gen 1:1 and 2:3, the framing clause בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים is placed in an envelope structure: The prepositional phrase בְּרֵאשִׁית, “in the beginning,” which sets the starting point of the creation week, and the infinitive construct לַעֲשׂוֹת, “to make, by making,” which marks the finality of God’s creational activity, enclose בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים. Thus the overall literary framework shows a double framing and reinforces the literary unity of the first creation account.

¹⁶ See the discussion in Ronald S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1-11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23.

- A1 בראשית “in the beginning” (1:1)
 A2 ברא אלהים “God created” (1:1)
 A2’ ברא אלהים “God created” (2:3)
 A1’ לעשות “by making” (2:3)

3. The phrase “heaven and earth” is used as *merismus*, a figure of speech for the expression of totality in Gen 1:1 and 2:1. The two nouns, heaven and earth, form the object of God’s work of creation at the beginning and end of the creation account.

Throughout the text of the six weekdays, these nouns always appear as separate entities until they join in the section on the seventh day, when the totality, completeness, and interrelatedness of creation are stressed.

4. A link that connects the seventh day directly with the account of the six weekdays is provided by the relative clause אשר עשה, “which he had made.” This clause occurs at the end of the account of the sixth day (1:31) and is repeated twice in the account of the seventh day (2:2, 3).

5. Another link between the six weekdays and the seventh day is provided by the word כל, “all,” which occurs seventeen times within the creation account and suggests the idea of totality.¹⁷ In the account of the six weekdays, the word כל occurs fourteen times (two times seven). The text of the seventh day emphasizes totality by the threefold use of כל.

6. The use of the passive verb ויכלו, “they were finished” (*pu’al*; 2:1), referring to the “heavens and the earth and all their hosts” brings closure to the creative work of the six weekdays and introduces the account of the seventh day. This word momentarily diverts attention from the Creator to his creation. Immediately following is the active

¹⁷ Gen 1:21 (2x), 25, 26 (2x), 28, 29 (3x), 30 (4x), 31; 2:1, 2, 3.

form **ויכל אלהים**, “God finished” (*piel*; 2:2), which resumes focus on God as the subject, who brings about the state of completion by the seventh day.¹⁸

7. The particle **כי**, “because,” is of particular significance in Gen 1. It occurs six times throughout the account of the six weekdays in the context of God’s assessment and approval of his creational activity: **וירא אלהים כי טוב**, “God saw that it was good.” The seventh occurrence of **כי** carries culminating significance in the account of the seventh day when the text points out that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day “because” he had ceased from all his work (2:3).

The account of the seventh day is part of the first creation account, yet it is distinct. With the lack of reference to divine speech the text shows that God’s activity changes on the seventh day. God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, but he did not do any work. The repetitive phrases particular to the account of the seventh day show that this time when God ceases from work the seventh day culminates all other days.

Aspectual Features

Having demonstrated that the account of the seventh day is an integral part of the first creation account but still distinct from the portion dealing with the six weekdays, the examination of aspectual features in Gen 1:1-2:3 will further substantiate links between the six weekdays and the seventh day.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ernst Jenni, *Das Hebräische Pi‘el* (Zürich: EVZ, 1968), 20-52. Cf. W. T. Claassen, “On a Recent Proposal as to a Distinction between Pi‘el and Hiph‘il,” *JNSL* 1 (1971): 3-10; Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 433.

¹⁹ See studies on Pss 40:2-4 and 143:3-4 by Waltke and O’Conner, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 548, which demonstrate the importance of the aspect of the verbs in order to show the flow of thought within the text and its context. See also Gerald

According to studies on verbal aspect and narrative techniques in general linguistics²⁰ as well as in biblical Hebrew and Semitic languages,²¹ the perfective aspect looks at the whole situation and defines it from the outside, without necessarily distinguishing any of the internal structure of the situation. The imperfective aspect, on the other hand, looks at the situation from the inside, and as such is concerned with the internal structure of the text and with carrying forward the actions within the text. Aspectual theory, which includes theories based on tense, comparative studies in Semitic languages, and the philosophical theory advanced by Diethelm Michel, the suffix conjugation designates perfective aspect while the prefix conjugation indicates imperfective aspect.²² The distinction between perfective and imperfective as defined in Hebrew grammar and syntax corresponds to what is expressed by the *qatal* and *yiqtol* forms in biblical Hebrew.

The creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3 includes both perfect verb forms and imperfect verb forms with *waw*-consecutive.²³ The perfect form in the framing clause

A. Klingbeil, *A Comparative Study of the Ritual of Ordination as Found in Leviticus 8 and Emar 369* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1998), 117-128, 311.

²⁰ Bernard Comrie, *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Carlota S. Smith, *The Parameter of Aspect* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1997).

²¹ Mats Eskhult, *Studies in Verbal Aspect and Narrative Technique in Biblical Hebrew Prose* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 12; Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1990); Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*.

²² See the study of aspectual theories discussed by Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 455-478.

²³ Werner Schmidt recognized the perfective aspect of כָּרַח in Gen 1:1 as the author's intention to tell the creation story as a completed event, and the verbal chain of imperfect consecutive forms as subordinate to the perfect form in v. 1. Schmidt's verbal

ברא אלהים, “God created,” marks the starting and ending points of creation (1:1; 2:3). Perfect forms then occur in six places throughout the text of the six weekdays: קרא, “he called” (1:5, 10), נהתי, “I have given” (1:29), ברא, “he created” (1:27 [2x]), followed by three occurrences in the account of the seventh day (2:2, 3), עשה (2:2 [2x]), and שבת (2:3). The imperfect forms with *waw*-consecutive convey the flow of actions performed by God during the creation week.

The clause that focuses directly on God as the sole actor and subject of creation is ברא אלהים, “God created.” It is this clause that specifically frames the seven days of the creation week, marking the starting point in Gen 1:1 and the ending point of the creation week in chap. 2:3. Ellen van Wolde observes that what becomes clear by this expression is that the first creation account is not solely about the creation of humankind, nor about the creation of the earth, nor even about the way human beings should behave on earth. Genesis 1 is primarily focused on God’s creation of the heaven and the earth.²⁴ Occurring at the beginning and at the end of the creation week as a perfect verbal form, ברא reveals the intention of the author to tell the creation story from the perspective of a perfective viewpoint of creation as a complete whole event.

According to Schmidt, such a viewpoint suggests at least three major statements: God *created* everything, God created *everything* (that is, heaven and earth), and God created everything.²⁵ All creational activity within the inner section of the creation

analysis is not performed in order to investigate the literary style of the final form of the text in order to find clarification about the message of the creation story. Rather, his analysis leads to the identification of various P redactions in Gen 1 that divide the passage into old traditions, newer traditions, and late interpretations. Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, 94.

²⁴ Ellen van Wolde, “The Creation of Coherence,” *Semeia* 81 (1998): 164.

²⁵ Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, 87.

account needs to be seen from this perfective viewpoint. Michel points here specifically to the use of the verb **ברא** as a perfect form with durative and dynamic action that views creation as a completed event rather than a process.²⁶

Following the perfect form of **ברא**, “he created,” in Gen 1:1, the text of the first creation account employs a chain of *waw*-consecutives or *wayyiqtol* verbs that carry the narrative forward and place all creational activity within the parameters of creation as a whole.²⁷ Waltke and O’Connor note that *wayyiqtol* forms following a perfect verb represent a situation subjectively as perfective, which in the case of Gen 1 means that the *wayyiqtol* forms express the perfective value of the perfect verb **ברא**.²⁸

Closer observation of the chain of *wayyiqtol* verbs shows that besides identifying separation by the *hip ‘il* of the verb **בדל**, “he separated” (1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18),²⁹ the text involves six perfect forms: **קרא**, “he called” (vv. 5, 10), **ברא**, “he created” (v. 27), **נתתי**, “I gave” (v. 29), and **עשה**, “he made” (v. 31). These perfect forms highlight God’s acts of separation by expressing completion of these acts, such as when God separates day and night, earth and sea, and distinguishes between the human beings as male and female. For example, in Gen 1:5, separation and contrast are highlighted by two clauses using the same verb **קרא**, “he called,” in both clauses: **ויקרא אלהים לאור יום ולחשך קרא לילה**, “God called the light day, but the darkness he called night.” The first clause starts with the *wayyiqtol* form **ויקרא**, and is then followed by the disjunctive clause, which requires

²⁶ Diethelm Michel, *Tempora und Satzstellung in den Psalmen* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1960), 16.

²⁷ Waltke and O’Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 547.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 554.

²⁹ L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, “**בדל**,” *HALOT* 1:110.

the perfect form קרא. The syntactic disjunction stresses the identification of the contrasting periods of time, day and night. A similar disjunctive occurs in v. 10 by the use of the verb קרא, when “God called the dry land earth, but the gathering of the waters he called sea.”

The account of the sixth day reaches a different level. The moment of similarity and contrast is stressed twice. The unusual speech of God, “Let us make man as our image, according to our likeness” (v. 26), suggests resemblance and similarity.³⁰ However, when the human being is created as God’s image,³¹ the two perfect forms of ברא appear in v. 27 in clauses that complement the words ויברא אלהים, “God created,” to express individuality and distinctiveness of beings that are somewhat similar to each other. The first ברא reiterates and thereby emphasizes the creation of the human being as God’s image, that is, like God in some respects but distinct from him.³² As Westermann

³⁰ On the two terms צלם, “image,” and דמוה, “likeness,” see the 9th-century B.C. Assyrian-Aramaic bilingual inscription from Tell Fakharyiah that describes the statue of king Haddayit’î as an image and likeness of the god Hadad, using Aramaic equivalents of these two words interchangeably in lines 1 and 15. See Edward Lipinski, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta; Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1994), 48-49.

³¹ Grammarians hold that the preposition ב in the phrases בצלמנו, “in our image,” and בצלמו, “in his image” (vv. 26, 27), is a *beth essentiae* and should be translated with “as” rather than “in.” See Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 487; Cf. Eugene H. Merrill, “Image of God,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 443.

³² Oberforcher holds that the clause in Gen 1:27 ויברא אתו בצלם אלהים ברא אתו, “in his image, as God’s image he created him,” and its immediate context give the impression of distancing or distinctiveness. Robert Oberforcher, “Biblische Lesarten zur Anthropologie des Ebenbildmotivs,” in *Horizonte Biblischer Texte: Festschrift für Josef M. Oesch zum 60. Geburtstag* (ed. Andreas Vonach and Georg Fischer; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2003), 139.

puts it, mankind is created as “Gottes Gegenüber,”³³ as one who is face to face with God. The second ברא specifies the creation of the human being as male and female, similar but differentiated in terms of gender. Thus the first ברא makes it clear that האדם is not God but God’s image,³⁴ and the second ברא shows that male is not the same as female.

The four occurrences of perfect verbal forms in the first creation account (קרא in vv. 5, 10, and ברא in v. 27 [2x]) highlight the four places that establish the completeness of foundational elements of the creation order by a divine act of separation: (1) The separation between light and darkness initiates the rhythm of time; (2) the separation between earth and sea sets up the environment for life; (3) the distinction between God and the human being establishes the divine-human relationship; and (4) the distinction between male and female establishes the human-human sexual differentiation as an order of God’s creation for the sake of unity and wholeness between man and wife. The clause in v. 27 shows that the distinction between male and female means that they are in a complementary rather than contrasting relationship with each other, likely because the two of them together constitute a unity (see Table 2).

The four contrasting elements (day / night, earth / sea, God / human, and male / female) balance each other and function like *merisms* within the creation account. Day and night are separated, but when combined, they form the rhythm of time. Earth and sea are separated, but when joined together, they form the place for life on planet Earth. The human being is differentiated from God, but created to stand before God. Man and

³³ Claus Westermann, *Creation* (London: SCM Press, 1974), 56.

³⁴ Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1984), 82; Leon R. Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 37, 53.

woman are distinguished, but united to interrelate, increase life, and establish what biblical theology has called the *imago Dei*.³⁵

Table 2. Imperfect / Perfect shifts and acts of separation in Genesis 1:1-31

Imperfect forms	Perfect forms	Acts of separation
ויקרא אלהים	קרא	day / night (1:5)
ויקרא אלהים	קרא	earth / sea (1:10)
ויברא אלהים	ברא	divine / human
	ברא	male / female (1:27)

In dealing with *imago Dei*, Davidson shows that Gen 1:27 and Gen chap. 2 reveal a concept of individuality and complementarity when referring to sexual differentiation between the man and the woman.³⁶ It seems that the biblical writer's intention is to stress the concept of separation and differentiation as the means to show the divine intent for wholeness in the creation order of Gen 1.

³⁵ On the subject of the *imago Dei*, see David J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 53-103; Charles L. Feinberg, "The Image of God," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 129 (1972): 235-245; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986); Gunnlaugur A. Jónsson, *The Image of God: Genesis 1:26-28 in a Century of Old Testament Research* (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1988); and Westermann, *Genesis*, 203-214.

³⁶ Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 35-42.

Studies that analyze interruptions in sequences of verb forms show that these indicate disruptions of the narrative sequence.³⁷ These interruptions seem intended for various reasons: (1) to indicate simultaneous and opposing actions,³⁸ (2) to express foregrounding versus backgrounding,³⁹ (3) to function as boundary markers of a unit or subunit,⁴⁰ (4) to break up the continuity of the narration in order to mark pauses in the text,⁴¹ and (5) to build up tension, dramatic effect, and point to a thematic climax.⁴² With specific regard to the first creation account, the dynamic of thought is expressed by language, structure, and style and reveals that separation and contrast are used to disrupt the flow of the text, to mark sequences of creation, and correlate with the content of the text. At the same time, the principle of separation points to the completion of all creation.

³⁷ See the study on Lev 8 by Klingbeil, who observes that perfect verbal forms “interrupt” the flow of *wayyiqtol* chains in Lev 8, thus forming centerpieces of the rituals described within this text. Klingbeil, *A Comparative Study of the Ritual of Ordination as Found in Leviticus 8 and Emar 369*, 121, 311.

³⁸ Paul Joüon, S. J., and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2005), 2:391.

³⁹ Alviero Niccacci, “Analysis of Biblical Narrative,” in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics* (ed. Robert D. Bergen; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 183. See also C. John Collins, “Reading Genesis 1:1-2:3 as an Act of Communication: Discourse Analysis and Literal Interpretation,” in *Did God Create in Six Days* (ed. Joseph Pipa Jr. and David Hall; Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1999), 134.

⁴⁰ Jerome T. Walsh, *Style & Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2001), 155; Robert E. Longacre, “‘Weqatal’ Forms in Biblical Hebrew Prose: A Discourse-Modular Approach,” in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics* (ed. Robert D. Bergen; Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994), 50-98.

⁴¹ Michel, *Tempora und Satzstellung in den Psalmen*, 18.

⁴² Randall Buth, “Functional Grammar, Hebrew and Aramaic: An Integrated, Textlinguistic Approach to Syntax,” in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature: What It Is and What It Offers* (ed. Walter R. Bodine; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 99.

The account of the six weekdays reaches its climax with the use of the perfect form **נָתַתִּי** (Gen 1:29) in God's direct speech to both man and woman. This verb and its context highlights two important elements:

1. Only here, the text switches from third person to first person. Throughout the creation narrative, the narrator speaks about God. Even when God speaks at the beginning of each weekday, he expresses himself by a jussive form: **יְהִי**, "let there be." Also when God addresses the sea animals and birds with his blessing, he does so in a somewhat impersonal way by the use of imperatives, "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:22). Only after God refers to the creation of human beings and uses the word "us" or "our" three times (Gen 1:26), he addresses them directly with **נָתַתִּי לָכֶם**, "I have given to you" (Gen 1:29, my emphasis). Ellen van Wolde points out that in doing so God defines all other living creatures in relation to the earth, the air, and the sea, but the human being he defines in relation to himself.⁴³

2. For the only time within the creation account, two distinct parts of God's creation, male and female, are joined together by direct address: **נָתַתִּי לָכֶם**, "I have given to you" (plural, including both of them). These words bring God's acts of separation to an end after the indication of God's intention for a close relationship between the man and the woman. Blessed and intimately connected, they are commanded to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (v. 28). Together they are to have dominion over the earth (v. 26).

The structuring of the perfect forms, **קָרָא** and **בָּרָא**, that suggests the principle of separation by repeating each of these forms twice (vv. 5, 10, 27), concludes with the

⁴³ Ellen van Wolde, *Stories of the Beginning* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 25.

perfect form **נָתַתִּי**. This last perfect, unlike the others, stands by itself and signifies the end of the principle of separation within the creation account. Highlighted by the deictic particle **הִנֵּה**, “behold, see, look,” the verb **נָתַתִּי** calls attention to the significance of God’s unique address to the newly created human beings and conveys the direct speech of God to both male and female as the first *I-thou* encounter between God and humanity, “See, I have given to you all” (v. 29). Initiated by God through spoken word, the divine-human relationship is established on the basis of a divine gift. The verb **נָתַתִּי**, stressed by the deictic particle **הִנֵּה**, demonstrates not only that all creation is intended to be a divine gift to both man and woman, but that God cares deeply for their basic needs and well-being as well as for the needs of all living beings. God simultaneously addresses both man and woman and grants them *all* plants yielding seed and *all* fruit-trees as food; to *all* other living beings on the surface of *all* the earth *all* green plants will serve for food. The word **כָּל**, “all,” turns out to be a keyword in the direct speech of God (vv. 29, 30). This word occurs seven times in this section, out of the seventeen occurrences in the creation account, and emphasizes totality.

Table 3 shows that the perfect forms **קָרָא**, “he called,” and **בָּרָא**, “he created,” balance each other within the parallel structure of the first creation account. The center is occupied by the perfect form **נָתַתִּי**, “I have given,” which concludes the acts of separation and brings an end to the principle of separation within the creation account. More importantly, however, this perfect form marks the focus of the first encounter between God and human beings, initiated by God himself. From this point onward, creation is explicitly meaningful to the human beings as the divine gift of the Creator to them, the only creatures made in his image.

Table 3. Structure of the perfect forms in Genesis 1:1-2:3

ברא אלהים (1:1)	
קרא (1:5)	ברא (1:27)
קרא (1:10)	ברא (1:27)
נתתי (1:29)	
עשה (1:31; 2:2 [2x])	
שבת (2:3)	
ברא אלהים (2:3)	

The Sabbath in Genesis 2:1-3

The perfect form שבת, “he ceased,” marks the seventh day and signifies a different kind of separation than that which occurred throughout the weekdays: A part of time is set apart from the other days. Furthermore, the verb שבת is closely linked to the verb קדש, “he sanctified” (vv. 2, 3). Both verbs together seem to signify the intention of all of God’s creation activity because it is only when God ceases from all his work that there are no other objects mentioned, no other elements in sight, and God is fully present by himself. In other words, when God ceased he delineated a unit of the world-wide dimension of time for himself. Thus God’s ceasing on the seventh day presents the theocentric character of the creation Sabbath.

Literary Analysis

At the end of day six, God looked back at “all that he had made” and declared his work perfect (“very good”). The sequences of actions expressed by imperfect forms come to an end and a turning point occurs emphasized by the deictic particle הנה, “see, look, behold.” At this point, the text introduces the relative clause כל־אשר עשה, “all that he had made,” which functions as a link between the account of the six weekdays and the

account of the seventh day. For this clause is repeated two times in Gen 2:2 until the conclusion is reached by the all-inclusive relative clause **אשר-ברא אלהים לעשה**, “which God had created and made” (v. 3), as the final word about God’s creational activity. God, when looking at all that he had made, is portrayed as delighted, “see, it is very good.”

As I have pointed out earlier, Gen 2:1-3 stands out in a number of ways at the conclusion of the creation account.⁴⁴ This text breaks with the formulas that run throughout the six weekdays, binding these days together and providing the order of creation.⁴⁵ In contrast, three parallel lines, each with seven words, and the repetition of basic phrases mark the seventh day. Each of the six weekdays ended with the formulaic **ויהי-ערב ויהי-בקר יום**, “and it was evening and it was morning, day.” The account of the seventh day identifies the day with the threefold expression **ביום השביעי**, “on the seventh day” (Gen 2:2-3), but does not end with the usual formula, “it was evening and it was morning.” The repetition of specific phrases, the absence of verbs of action, the absence of the familiar formulas, and the high concentration of perfect forms within the account of the seventh day (**עשה**, “he made” [2x in v. 2], **שבת**, “he ceased” [v. 3], and **ברא אלהים**, “God created” [v. 3]), change the literary style and the rhythm of the reading, thus calling attention to the account of the seventh day.

A more important distinction between the weekdays and the seventh day, however, lies in a completely different use of the perfect forms in the account of the seventh day. The six perfect forms used throughout the six weekdays marked contrast and

⁴⁴ Wallace demonstrates convincingly the distinct features between the six weekdays and the seventh day. See Wallace, “Rest for the Earth?,” 50.

⁴⁵ The formulas are: “God said: Let there be,” “God made,” “It was so,” “God called,” “God saw that it was good,” and “There was evening and morning, day.”

separation. By that very act the six perfect forms achieved completeness within each respective sequence where the verbal shifts occurred: the section of the light period of the day called day is completed by the dark period called night (v. 5); the dry part of the earth called earth is completed by the waters called seas (v. 10); God looks into his own image, the human being; and the female complements the male, thus building a whole (v. 27). The seventh day stays in contrast to the contrasting/complementing mode of the weekdays. The account of the seventh day shows a different literary style and perspective and by that very format complements the account of the preceding six days and brings closure to the creation week. In other words, without the account of the seventh day the creation week would not be complete, thus it would not be meaningful.

On the seventh day, God did not separate objects of creation. Thus there is no need for contrast and interruption within the style and language of the text. The perfect forms of the account of the seventh day do not mark disjunctive clauses, but they are placed at the end of two relative clauses referring back to the work of the six weekdays (אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, “which he had made” [2:2]). These two perfect forms connect the seventh day to the weekdays and stress all of God’s finished work of creation (1:31). The perfect form שָׁבַת, “he ceased” occurs in a causal clause explicitly referring to God’s creative acts during the weekdays. Table 4 shows that the perfect forms of the account of the seventh day are placed in alternating order with the *wayyiqtol* forms. The text promotes a sense of equilibrium between perfective and imperfective aspect, thereby showing balance and stability.

Finally, the most important distinction between the account of the weekdays and the account of the seventh day is expressed in the rationale for the seventh day: The blessing and sanctification of this day because God had ceased from all his work.

Table 4. Alternating order of perfect and imperfect forms in Genesis 2:1-3

Perfect forms	Imperfect forms
עשה	ויכל אלהים
עשה	וישבת
שבת	ויברך אלהים
ברא אלהים	ויקדש

The rationale stands at the center of the account of the seventh day and includes a causal clause connecting the most specific verbs of this day, שבת, “he ceased,” and קדש, “he sanctified.” The particle כי, “because, that,” functions as a literary hinge between these verbs in order to express the meaning of the seventh day. Table 5 demonstrates the structural and linguistic characteristics of the account of the seventh day.

Table 5. Structure of the parallel clauses in Genesis 2:2-3

Perfect forms				Imperfect forms			
עשה	אשר	מלאכתו	השביעי	ביום	כי	ויכל אלהים	
עשה	אשר	מלאכתו	מכל-	השביעי		ביום	וישבת
			השביעי	את-יום		אתו	ויברך אלהים
				בו		אתו	ויקדש
שבת							
לעשות	ברא אלהים	מכל-	מלאכתו	אשר-			

Two imperfect forms together with their subject introduce two sections of the text (ויכל אלהים, “God completed,” in Gen 2:2a and ויברך אלהים, “God blessed,” in v. 3a). These two lines parallel each other by directly referring to the seventh day and to the work performed during the weekdays. A subsection that starts with an imperfect form without naming the subject follows each one of these two sections, the first starting with וישבת, “he ceased,” and the second starting with ויקדש, “he sanctified.” The second subsection introduced by ויקדש stands out in the text even though it suggests a close connection to the previous ויברך אלהים, “God blessed.” The significance of ויקדש is given by the particle כי, “because,” which functions as a causal conjunction between ויקדש and וישבת. The perfect verb שבת is the reason for the imperfect verb ויקדש. Thus the link between וישבת and ויקדש provides the explicit reason and rationale for the sanctification of the seventh day, that is God’s ceasing/resting from all work.

The following chiasmic structure expresses what table 5 has demonstrated, namely the center of the account of the seventh day is the line on blessing and sanctification of the seventh day:⁴⁶

- A And on the seventh day God completed his work, which he had made,
- B and he ceased on the seventh day from all his work, which he had made.
- X Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it,
- B’ because on it he ceased from all his work,
- A’ which God had created by making.

As this analysis has demonstrated so far, the creation account is not complete until it reaches the seventh day. The structure of the seven days of creation demonstrates that the seventh day has the function of a climactic closure in the sense that all creational

⁴⁶ A similar chiasmic structure has been put forth by Kenneth A. Strand, “The Sabbath,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (ed. Raoul Dederen; Hagerstown: Review & Herald, 2000), 12:495.

activity is completed, the seventh day is blessed and sanctified, and gives meaning to all of God's creation. Therefore, the seventh day is not an appendix to the creation account placed at the end for theological reasons by a priestly writer.⁴⁷ Rather, the seventh day intimates the purpose of all creation.⁴⁸ Its significance is obvious by its markedly changed language, style, and structure.

The Phrase יום השביעי “the Seventh Day”

The account of the seventh day lacks the formulaic closing “there was evening and morning, day . . .” that identifies each one of the six weekdays but uses the phrase יום השביעי, “the seventh day,” three times. Breaking the pattern in this way shows the author's intention to highlight the seventh day as the climax of the creation narrative. The number seven promotes fullness, totality, and completeness, a quality well known in Semitic languages and well recognized among biblical scholars.⁴⁹ The six/seven schema of the creation narrative sets the seventh day apart from the preceding six days by the very fact of contrasting by language, structure, and style and to highlight even more the aspect of completeness of the creation narrative.

⁴⁷ Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Vol. 1; London: SCM, 1961), 270-271; Philip P. Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* (JSOTSup 106; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 192-197; Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 104-106; Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, 154-159; Baruch J. Schwartz, “Israel's Holiness: The Torah Traditions,” in *Purity and Holiness* (eds. M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 47-59; Steck, *Der Schöpfungsbericht der Priesterschrift*, 178-199.

⁴⁸ Walton, “Creation,” 161.

⁴⁹ Regarding the significance of the number seven in Semitic languages and in the Hebrew Bible, see E. Otto, “שָׁבַע *šeba*’; שְׁבִיעוֹת *šabu’ot*,” *TDOT* 14:336-367.

The sentence, “on the seventh day God finished his work,” in Gen 2:2a has given rise to a variant in translation. Ancient commentators and translators had difficulty with this sentence, for it seemed to them out of harmony with the context in that it implied some work on God’s part on the seventh day.⁵⁰ Other commentaries point out that the preposition ב in השביעי means “by” and the *piel* ויכל, “he finished,” can be taken as a pluperfect and may thus be translated “he had finished.”⁵¹

Cassuto holds that the correct reading is “on the seventh day.”⁵² He finds his analysis on the threefold parallelism of the phrase “on the seventh day,” which shows a poetic composition in the text of the creation Sabbath, and in other texts, which use similar expressions.⁵³ Thus according to Cassuto, the reading “on the seventh day God finished his work” should be understood as, “since God was on the seventh day in the position of one who had already finished his work he ceased from work on the seventh day.”⁵⁴ According to Heschel the line “on the seventh day God finished his work” implies the creation of מנוחה, “rest,” which he understands as a unit of time filled with holiness,

⁵⁰ Samaritan Pentateuch; Septuagint; Peshitta; Jubilee 2:1, 16 all read, “On the sixth day.” Andreasen provides a summary of opinions on this issue in *The Old Testament Sabbath*, 63, n. 2.

⁵¹ Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (The JPS Commentary; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 15.

⁵² Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 61.

⁵³ Gen 17:22; 24:19; 49:33.

⁵⁴ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 62.

tranquility, and peace,⁵⁵ a palace in time detached from the weekdays that are concerned with the world of space.⁵⁶

With regard to the lack of the final formula, “there was evening and there was morning,” commentators have argued that the seventh day is not meant to be understood as a literal day. This argumentation then has led to an eschatological interpretation of the seventh day.⁵⁷ However, as part of the first creation account, the seventh day is the last of the seven sections, and the formula “there was evening and there was morning” in the account of the weekdays may be taken not only as a closing formula but also as a literary feature to anticipate what comes next within the series of sections in the creation account, that is the next day of the creation week. Functioning as a transition from one day to another the closing formula is a feature that moves the text forward throughout the six weekdays with the intention to arrive at the seventh day.⁵⁸ Once it arrives at the last section, the text highlights the identification of the seventh day by stating it three times and then has no more need for the formula because there is no eighth section following for an eighth day. Creation has come to an end, for the seventh day has arrived.

Cole argues in a similar way, and shows that the lack of the formula “there was evening and morning” is due to the break-up of the creation pattern and the climactic

⁵⁵ Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 22-23.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁷ Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee*, 90; Collins, “Reading Genesis 1:1-2:3 as an Act of Communication: Discourse Analysis and Literal Interpretation,” 137.

⁵⁸ Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, 69. Schmidt points out that the numbering of the days does not have meaning in itself, but it prepares the reader for the arrival of the seventh day in Gen 2:2-3.

conclusion that the text reaches by the seventh day.⁵⁹ Cassuto speaks of the “novel character of the seventh day.”⁶⁰ Thus the omission of the closing formula does not suggest a difference in the length of the day or the meaning of eschatological dimensions but the arrival of the seventh day.

The Noun מלאכה “Work”

The generic word מלאכה, “work,”⁶¹ used for the first time in the account of the seventh day (Gen 2:2, 3), summarizes every ברא, “he created,” עשה, “he made,” קרא, “he called,” ראה, “he saw,” אמר, “he said,” or other verb about God’s creational actions. It is important to note that the creation Sabbath, not the weekdays, identifies and defines God’s creational actions as work. Throughout the six weekdays, God’s actions are clearly differentiated and specified as creating, making, speaking, dividing, and calling. On the seventh day God ceases, his actions are regarded as completed work, and summarized under the generic word מלאכה. Also the result of God’s activity, the day and the night, the earth and the sea, the heavenly bodies, the plants and the animals, and the human beings are regarded as complete and in that sense they are considered as work (מלאכה).⁶² Throughout the weekdays the objects of creation are created, made, defined, and named, but on the seventh day they are God’s finished work.

⁵⁹ Cole, “The Sabbath and Genesis 2:1-3,” 7.

⁶⁰ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 64.

⁶¹ Koehler and Baumgartner, “מלאכה,” *HALOT* 1:586; J. Milgrom and P. Wright, “מלאכה *m^elā’kā*,” *TDOT* 8:325-331.

⁶² Milgrom and Wright, “מלאכה *m^elā’kā*,” *TDOT* 8:330.

Milgrom points out that in the Hebrew Bible, מלאכה always implies skilled work that is represented by the finished product.⁶³ This observation does not imply that unskilled work would be appropriate on the seventh day but that all work performed during the weekdays may reflect skillfulness, ability, and creativeness so that one comes to the conclusion “see, it is very good” (Gen 1:31).

The Verb כלה “Finish, Complete”

The verb כלה, “he finished, completed,” denotes an action or process that not only brings something to an end but something that is brought to its goal.⁶⁴ The first two lines of the account of the seventh day are introduced by the root כלה first in the form of a passive verb (*pu‘al*, Gen 2:1) and then in the form of an active verb (*piel*, Gen 2:2).

Critics who searched within these two lines of the Sabbath passage for what they called a basic layer of the priestly text⁶⁵ overlooked the coherence of thought within the creation account established by the repetition of the root כלה. The passive verb form “they were finished” in v. 1 and the active form “God finished” in v. 2 not only maintain

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ F. J. Helfmeyer, “כָּלָה *kālā*,” *TDOT* 7:158-162.

⁶⁵ Westermann assumed that Gen 2:1 goes back to a tradition when the creation deeds were not linked with the seven-day schema and the P writer left the sentence of Gen 2:1 in the text because of his tendency to conserve the older tradition. Westermann, *Genesis*, 231. Schmidt speaks of a summary statement. *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, 155. Steck states that Gen 2:1 should be seen as a signature component (*Teilunterschrift*) that does not refer to God’s creational activity but sums up the creation deeds so far recorded. *Der Schöpfungsbericht der Priesterschrift*, 184. Seebass indicates that Gen 2:1 should be seen as referring to the details of the creation deeds, especially since not all creation activity is directly assigned to God (activities such as in Gen 1:12). Horst Seebass, *Genesis I: Urgeschichte (1,1-11,26)* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996), 87.

a link between these verses and place the completion of heaven and earth in God's creational action of the creation week, but also demonstrate that creation is brought to its goal. For the first time within the creation account the subject changes when used with the passive form. God ceases to be the subject. This clear break indicates that the conclusion and goal of creation is reached. The line, "the heavens and the earth and all their host," reflects and brings to an end that which Gen 1:1 aimed for in the first place. However, the text stresses the fact that the finished heavens and earth are God's work brought to its goal by God's ceasing. God as the subject resumes in Gen 2:2 and remains the subject until the end of the account of the seventh day. Through his ceasing God establishes the Sabbath as his goal.

The Verb שָׁבַת "Cease"

The meaning of the verb שָׁבַת, "he ceased," and its connection to the institution of the Sabbath is still debated among biblical scholars. The basic meaning is "cease, come to an end,"⁶⁶ and only in direct or indirect connection with the Sabbath does this verb mean "rest"⁶⁷ and "celebrate."⁶⁸ This suggests that the creation of the six days has come to its conclusion and goal and is not merely interrupted by God's cessation.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ E. Haag, "שָׁבַת *šābāt*," *TDOT* 14:385; Robinson, "The Idea of Rest in the OT," 32-42.

⁶⁷ The verb שָׁבַת is frequently translated "rest" in texts dealing with the Sabbath, the seventh day or the sabbatical year: Gen 2:2; 16:30; 23:12; 31:17; 34:21; Lev 23:34-35.

⁶⁸ Koehler and Baumgartner, "שָׁבַת," *HALOT* 2:1407.

⁶⁹ Haag, "שָׁבַת *šābāt*," *TDOT* 14:385.

Another element that the verb **שבת** conveys is that this verb relates solely to God and to the seventh day. There is no object in focus that needs to be created or made. There is only God and the seventh day. Not even the only creatures, the man and the woman, who were defined in relation to God on the sixth day, are mentioned in the text. The only way the human being recognizes him/herself in the account of the seventh day is through the word **מלאכה**, “work.” At first it seems that by ceasing God distances himself from his work. However, the Hebrew text uses three times the expression **מלאכתו**, “his work,” incorporating the personal pronoun as a pronominal suffix (Gen 2:2, 3). The seventh day defines **מלאכה** as “his work” in close connection to God’s ceasing. The human being recognizes him/herself as “his work” on the seventh day, the day characterized by the **שבת**, “he ceased,” of God.

The Verb **ברך “Bless”**

The verb that links the accounts of the six days of creation with the seventh day is the verb **ברך**, “he blessed” (Gen 1:22, 28; cf. 2:3).⁷⁰ However, there seems to be a different notion to the blessing of the seventh day when compared to the blessings of the sea creatures, birds, and humans. When God blessed the fish and birds in view of their procreation (Gen 1:22) and the human beings expressing the desire for their fertility (Gen 1:28), he did so by a spoken word. The imperative forms used in these texts express God’s desire, promise, and command for continuity, prosperity, and proliferation of life. In the case of the man and the woman, the word of blessing is even made very explicit by the direct address, **ויאמר להם אלהים**, “and God said to them.” Only here the personal

⁷⁰ C. A. Keller and G. Wehmeier, “**ברך** *brk*,” *TLOT* 1:266-282; J. Scharbert, “**ברך** *brk*,” *TDOT* 2:279-308.

pronoun ׁה, “them,” is attached to the preposition ל and signifies God’s direct word to his creatures.

In the account of the seventh day, the words “blessed” and “sanctified” are placed in the same line of thought and seem to point to a specific kind of blessing that needs to be distinguished from the blessing of the sea creatures, birds, and humans. No spoken word of blessing occurs in the narrative of Gen 2:1-3. The text simply states, “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he ceased from all his work” (v. 3). Used in the *piel* form in this text the verb בִּרְךְ means that God imbued the seventh day with special power or that he declared the seventh day to be imbued with special power.⁷¹ The blessing of the seventh day seems to be a consequence of God’s ceasing together with the sanctification of this day. Set apart from all other days, the blessing of the seventh day establishes the seventh part of created time as a day when God grants his presence in the created world. It is then his presence that provides the blessing and the sanctification. The seventh day is blessed and established as the part of time that assures fruitfulness, future-orientation, continuity, and permanence for every aspect of life within the dimension of time.⁷² The seventh day is blessed by God’s presence for the sake of the created world, for all nature, and for all living beings.

⁷¹ Koehler and Baumgartner, “בִּרְךְ,” *HALOT* 1:160.

⁷² On the Hebrew concept of time as related to the human beings who live in that period of time see Jacques B. Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians: A Textbook for the Study of Biblical Hebrew in Relation to Hebrew Thinking* (Lanham, Md.: University press of America, 1993), 200-207.

The Correlation between שבת “Cease” and קדש “Sanctify”

For the first time in the Hebrew Bible, the word קדש, “he sanctified,” appears in the account of the seventh day. Regarding the etymology of the root קדש, scholars are even more divided than regarding the root שבת, “he ceased,” and its connection with the institution of the Sabbath. The understanding so far gained from the biblical text in connection with extra-biblical witnesses such as Akkadian, Ugaritic, and West Semitic inscriptions seems to support the view that קדש means “separated, isolated, different from the surroundings.”⁷³

God made the seventh day holy/sanctified it. The *piel* of קדש in Gen 2:3 is factitive and mostly translated as “make holy, consecrate” referring to God who brings something or someone into the condition of holiness.⁷⁴ Waltke states that the *piel* is sometimes associated with causation in the sense that this stem causes a state rather than an action.⁷⁵ In the context of Gen 2:3, the object of causation is the seventh day, which in lexical terms is a noun that is acted upon, and the meaning of causation is that the seventh day is being affected by God’s action of sanctification.

Cassuto speaks of the meaning of קדש with reference to the Sabbath denoting elevation and exaltation above the usual level.⁷⁶ Since the basic meaning of the word קדש

⁷³ Walter Kornfeld, “קדש *qdš*,” *TDOT* 12:523.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 528.

⁷⁵ Waltke and O’Conner, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 400.

⁷⁶ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 65.

seems to be separation and setting apart,⁷⁷ the seventh day is separated and set apart from the other days. This separation of the seventh day from the other days originates in God, thus the seventh day is God's day. Later texts will allude to the "Sabbath of the Lord"⁷⁸ and "my Sabbaths."⁷⁹ So far all other words used to describe the seventh day have pointed to the distinction of this day from the other days of the creation week.

The verb קדש, "he sanctified," however, seems not only to point to but to express the meaning of distinction by its link to the verb שבת, "he ceased," in a clause that is unique in the first creation account: ויקדש אתו כי בו שבת, "he sanctified it because he ceased in it" (v. 3). The preposition כי, "because,"⁸⁰ links the verb קדש to the verb שבת in direct relation to the seventh day. Later on in the Hebrew Bible these two roots will also occur together only in passages dealing with the Sabbath.⁸¹ This observation is

⁷⁷ Koehler and Baumgartner, "קדש," *HALOT* 2:1072; Kornfeld, "קדש *qds*," *TDOT* 12:523.

⁷⁸ Exod 16:23, 25; 20:10; 35:2; Lev 23:3, 38; Deut 5:14.

⁷⁹ Exod 31:13; Lev 19:3, 30; 26:2.

⁸⁰ The evidence of studies dealing with the particle כי suggests that this particle functions on various levels. Most scholars ascribe כי a causal meaning, but there are others who speak of emphatic, deictic, interrogative, exclamatory, demonstrative, and motivating nuances. See W. T. Claassen, "Speaker-Oriented Functions of *Ki* in Biblical Hebrew," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 11 (1983): 36; and Carl M. Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint in Biblical Hebrew Text: A Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Particle Ki* (Dallas: SIL International, 2001).

⁸¹ The root שבת occurs in the Hebrew Bible 191 times. The root קדש occurs 692 times. The two roots occur together in twenty-four passages dealing with the Sabbath: Gen 2:3; Exod 16:23; 20:8, 11; 31:13, 14, 15; 35:2; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:12; Isa 58:13; Jer 17:22, 24, 27; Ezek 20:12, 20; 22:8, 26; 44:24; Neh 9:14; 10:31, 33; 13:22 and 2 Chr 2:4.

important since the root *שבת* occurs also in places other than dealing with the seventh-day Sabbath.⁸²

Genesis 2:3 states that God sanctified the seventh day because (*כי*) he ceased from all his work. The situation described here is that *שבת* represents the condition for *ויקדש* and sanctification as the consequence of God's ceasing. Waltke and O'Connor speak of the particle *כי* introducing a situation that constitutes the basis for another situation where the situation introduced by *כי* can be described as an infinitive clause.⁸³ In this case it means that God ceased on the seventh day with the purpose to sanctify the seventh day and with the result of the sanctification of this day.

Of interest is that throughout the six weekdays the particle *כי* occurs six times within the formula *וירא אלהים כי טוב*, "and God saw that it was good" (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). At the end of the sixth day, the formula occurs twice; however, at the second time, the particle *כי* is replaced by the deictic particle *הנה*, "see, behold," thus reading *וירא אלהים . . . והנה טוב מאד*, "and God saw . . . and behold it was very good." By this linguistic change the author not only stresses a high point in the creation account but he reserves the seventh occurrence of the particle *כי* for the seventh day.

⁸² Gen 8:22; Exod 5:5; Exod 12:15; Lev 2:13; 26:6; Deut 32:26; Josh 5:12; 22:25; 2 Kings 23:5, 11; Is 13:11; 14:4; 16:10; 17:3; 21:2; 24:8; 30:11; 33:8; Jer 7:34; 16:9; 31:36; 36:29; 48:33, 35; Ezek 6:6; 7:24; 12:13; 16:41; 23:27, 48; 26:13; 30:10, 13, 18; 33:28; 34:10, 25; Hos 1:4; 7:4; Amos 8:4; Pss 8:2; 46:9; 89:44; 119:119; Job 32:1; Prov 18:18; Ruth 4:14; Lam 5:14, 15; Dan 9:27; 11:18; Neh 4:11; 6:3; 2 Chr 16:5.

⁸³ Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 640.

Although scholars agree on the emphatic use of the deictic particle כִּי,⁸⁴ Albright offers an interesting analysis regarding its use in Gen 1. In a comparative study on Amarna, Mari, and Ugarit documents he arrives at the conclusion that in all cases where an adjective follows כִּי, the particle does not have a causal meaning, but an interrogative or exclamatory meaning and should be translated as “how” instead of “that” in Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, which will then read “God saw how good it was”⁸⁵ or, in a more emphatic way, “God saw the light: it was really good” (v. 4).⁸⁶ The exclamatory meaning of כִּי in Gen 1 conveys an emotive aspect on God’s part. This aspect is then intensified in the culminating phrase in Gen v. 31 when God looks at everything that he had made. Here, the particle כִּי is replaced by the deictic הִנֵּה, which then reads, “look, it was exceedingly good.”⁸⁷

With regard to the seventh occurrence of כִּי in the account of the seventh day, the particle stands out by its emphatic, focal, and causative force in order to signify a strong emphasis and intention for the link between the verbs שָׁבַת, “he ceased,” and קִדְּשׁ, “he sanctified.” The *waw*, which introduces the clauses וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ אֱתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת, “he sanctified it because he rested in it” (Gen 2:3), may then be regarded as a *waw* carrying an emphatic meaning such as “even, yet.” In order to convey the emphatic, focal, and

⁸⁴ Follingstad, *Deictic Viewpoint in Biblical Hebrew Text: A Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Particle Ki*, 157; A. Schoors, “The Particle Ki,” in *Remembering All The Way . . .* (ed. A. S. Van Der Woude; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 256.

⁸⁵ See William F. Albright, “The Refrain ‘And God saw ki tob’ in Genesis,” in *Mélanges Bibliques Rédigés en l’Honneur de André Robert* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1956), 26. Albright found the same exclamatory meaning of the particle כִּי in Gen 18:20; Isa 22:9; 2 Sam 13:19; and Lam 3:22.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

causative force of the particle כִּי in direct relation to the *waw*, I suggest the reading: “God blessed the seventh day; *he even* sanctified it *because* he ceased in it.”

Genesis 2:3 is the only Sabbath text in the Hebrew Bible that explicitly provides the reason for the holiness of the seventh-day Sabbath by the use of the verb that identifies this day, שָׁבַת, “he ceased,” literally, “he sabbathed.”⁸⁸ For the only time the two verbs שָׁבַת and קָרַשׁ are linked together in the Hebrew Bible. This link is surprising, since there is no logical cause behind the meaning of the two verbs. In other words, the connection between “sanctify” and “cease” does not operate according to the cause-and-effect principle of the world that we know. The cause-and-effect principle of the link between holiness and ceasing seems to work according to a kind of logic that belongs solely to God’s sphere on Sabbath. Throughout the six weekdays the particle occurred at the end of divine actions and expressed the logical consequence of divine creation in an emphatic mode. With regard to the seventh occurrence, it may be suggested that the argument of holiness is entirely based on God’s will and needs to be seen as all the more forceful. The seventh-day Sabbath is sanctified by purpose. The verb קָרַשׁ does not imply a result of שָׁבַת that is logical to the human mind, but evidence for the author’s argument and intent to express the climax of the creation account and the rationale of the day.⁸⁹ The

⁸⁸ Exodus 20:11 will relate to Gen 2:3, however by the use of a different causal form, עַל־כֵּן, “therefore,” which denotes God’s blessing and sanctification of the Sabbath as a consequence of God resting (נָוַח) on Sabbath: “he rested (נָוַח) on the seventh day, therefore (עַל־כֵּן) the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

⁸⁹ Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 638. Here are examples cited where the situation that follows the conjunction כִּי is not a logical cause of an event or circumstance, but evidence for, or an argument for, the preceding assertion: 1 Kgs 1:24, 25 and 1 Sam 26:15. See also, Claassen, “Speaker-Oriented Functions of *Ki* in Biblical Hebrew,” 35-44.

text shows that the two verbal roots *שבת* and *קדש* are closely linked together, and only when used together do they give meaning to the seventh day.

Among biblical scholars, it is often understood that Gen 2:1-3 contains cultic language that links the seventh-day Sabbath to the cultic regulations of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Critical scholars ascribe cult and holiness to P in connection with sanctuary, cultic utensils, priests, and sacrifices. Holiness in P is often understood as a static element, which needs to be controlled by strict regulations. What is holy and what is profane are to be strictly distinguished.⁹⁰ This concept is then imposed upon the text of the seventh day of creation, so that it is viewed as a late cultic regulation in Israel.⁹¹

According to Gerhard von Rad, however, the Sabbath, viewed as a cultic institution of Israel, which separates sacred time from common time, is quite outside the purview of the creation narrative.⁹² Also, Fretheim, although suggesting a liturgical origin for what he considers the pre-canonical Gen 1 material, states that the first creation account as it now stands has been freed from its cultic and liturgical setting.⁹³

Against these views, the structure of the creation story and the specific language of Gen 2:1-3 show that the account of the seventh day is not a theological appendix to the creation account. Rather, it intimates the purpose of creation. The two verbs “cease” and

⁹⁰ Helmer Ringgren, “*קדש qdš*,” *TDOT* 12:534.

⁹¹ Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 1:270-271; Jenson, *Graded Holiness*, 192-197; Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence*, 104-106; Schwartz, “Israel’s Holiness,” 47-59.

⁹² Gerhard von Rad, *Das Erste Buch Mose: Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 49.

⁹³ Terence Fretheim, “Were the Days of Creation Twenty-Four Hours Long? YES,” in *The Genesis Debate: Persistent Questions about Creation and the Flood* (ed. Ronald F. Youngblood; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 28.

“sanctify” point to a perspective that opens up the meaning of the Sabbath only when the two verbs are linked together. The fact that the two verbal roots occur together only in texts concerned with the Sabbath demonstrates that the verbs “cease” and “sanctify” have a direct relationship to each other that is intended by the author and reserved for the Sabbath. It shows further that these verbs need to be studied together in order to grasp the meaning of the creation Sabbath as well as the meaning of the subsequent Sabbath texts of the Hebrew Bible. As the result of שבת, which characterizes this day as being solely God’s day because of the absence of any objects of creation, קדש identifies the seventh day with God’s exclusive presence and inherent nature of his being, holiness.

The Clause ברא אלהים “God Created”

One of the most mysterious words of the creation narrative is used to describe what God did in creation, ברא. This verb occurs seven times only in the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:4 and fourteen times in the whole Pentateuch. God is always the subject, and it is always and exclusively the God of the Hebrew Bible, never a foreign deity. Humans “make” (עשה) and so does God. But God alone “creates” (ברא).⁹⁴ The verb ברא does not denote an act that somehow can be described, but simply states that through God’s command something comes into being that had not existed before, something wonderful and new.⁹⁵ Consequently this type of creation has no analogy and is, therefore, beyond human conceptualization.⁹⁶ Sarna holds that the ultimate notion of ברא points to

⁹⁴ Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee*, 85.

⁹⁵ Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, “בָּרָא bārā’,” *TDOT* 2:247.

⁹⁶ Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, 255.

the concept of *creatio ex nihilo*, which has no human parallel and is beyond all human comprehension.⁹⁷

Ellen van Wolde argues that in the first creation account, which describes God's activity as a progressive separating, dividing, and contrasting activity, the verb **ברא** should be translated as "separate, divide," rather than "create."⁹⁸ This perspective links the Hebrew **ברא** to the biradical Semitic root *br*, "to cut, separate, divide,"⁹⁹ in spite of the etymological uncertainty expressed by others.¹⁰⁰ Doukhan counters van Wolde's interpretation with semantic, logical, literary, syntactical, linguistic, ancient Near Eastern, and translation arguments to show that the verb **ברא** denotes the act of creation, not simply separation.¹⁰¹

The Infinitive לַעֲשֶׂה "to Make"

Throughout the creation narrative the verb עָשָׂה, "he made," occurs ten times. The last word of the account of the seventh day is the infinitive לַעֲשֶׂה, "to make, by making."

⁹⁷ Sarna, *Genesis*, 5. However the Hebrew Bible knows of instances where **ברא** seems to describe a new creation, but a creation by means of already existing matter: When speaking of the creation of the human beings, Gen 1:27 uses the word **ברא** (see also Isa 45:12), but when God creates he "formed man out of the dust of the ground" (Gen 2:7). See also Ps 51:10 where God creates a clean heart by renewing it spiritually.

⁹⁸ Ellen van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies: When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009).

⁹⁹ Johannes G. Botterweck, *Der Trilateralismus im Semitischen* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1952), 64; Werner H. Schmidt, "ברא *br*' to create," *TLOT* 1:254.

¹⁰⁰ Bernhardt, "בָּרָא *bārā*,'" *TDOT* 2:245.

¹⁰¹ Jacques B. Doukhan, "When Death Was Not Yet: The Testimony of Biblical Creation" (Paper presented at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Faith and Science Committee; Andrews University, Berrien Springs, 20 October 2010), 7-8.

Interpreters have speculated regarding the use and position of the infinitive לעשת.¹⁰²

Following the thematic clause ברא אלהים, “God created,” the infinitive seems to explain God’s act of creation by the gerund “by making, by doing.”¹⁰³ Cassuto states that לעשת comes after ברא to specify the kind of creation of which the creation account speaks, namely, an act of creation that is also a “making.”¹⁰⁴ Whereas ברא, “he created,” in Gen 2:3 parallels ברא in Gen 1:1, לעשת recalls all the “makings” mentioned in the rest of the creation account.¹⁰⁵

However, the overall literary framework of 1:1 and 2:3 may also suggest that לעשת occurs as the last element of the creation account in order to contrast with the first element, בראשית, “in the beginning.” Support for this suggestion may be gained from the *inclusio* of the clauses in Gen 1:1 (A1 and A2) and 2:3 (A1’ and A2’):

A1 בראשית
 A2 ברא אלהים
 A2’ אשר-ברא אלהים
A1’ לעשת

This chiastic structure shows that the infinitive לעשת functions as a linguistic feature to bring closure to the creation account. God’s act of creation started with “in the beginning” and comes to its end “by making.”

¹⁰² *Genesis Rabba XI; Pesikta Rabbati VI*. The rabbis observed the use of the infinitive and interpreted לעשת in Gen 2:3 as something that God is “planning to make” after he finished the creation of the world and pointed here to the building of the Solomonic temple. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 70.

¹⁰³ Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 437.

¹⁰⁴ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 70.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Theological Implications

Similar features and distinct elements throughout the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3 draw the attention of the reader to the seventh day. The seventh day is part of the creation account and yet, at the same time, it stands apart.¹⁰⁶ The perfective viewpoint expressed by the perfect form **ברא אלהים**, “God created,” at the beginning and at the end of the creation narrative (1:1; 2:3) testifies to the concept of totality and wholeness. Creation is perceived as a completed event in its totality. Throughout the six days of creation, perfect verbal forms were intentionally used to stress the divine actions of separation in addition to the verb **בדל**, “he separated.” The reader became very aware of the distinct use of the sparingly placed perfect forms among long *wayyiqtol* chains. Four occurrences of perfect verbal forms, **קרא**, “he called” (used twice in 1:5, 10), and **ברא**, “he created” (used twice in v. 27), balanced each other within the paralleling structure of the creation account but also demonstrated totality by association of contrary motifs such as day and night, earth and sea, image of God and man, and male and female. The next perfect form occurs in the unique direct speech of God accentuated by the deictic particle, **הנה נתתי לכם**, “see, I gave to you” (v. 29). This clause introduces seven of the seventeen occurrences of the word **כל**, “all,” in the creation narrative and expresses by its direct meaning and usage the concept of totality. The last perfect form in the account of the weekdays, **עשה**, “he made” (v. 31), is part of a relative clause that points in both directions. It refers back to the past days of creation and at the same time connects the six weekdays with the seventh day. On the seventh day this verbal form is repeated twice, also referring back to the finished work of creation.

¹⁰⁶ Wallace, “Rest for the Earth? Another Look at Genesis 2.1-3,” 11.

While the perfect forms of the seventh day function as reflecting markers of the creation as a whole event, the imperfect forms convey the message and meaning of the Sabbath. On the seventh day God completed, ceased, blessed, and sanctified. Usually these are the verbs that are analyzed in studies concerning the seventh-day Sabbath.¹⁰⁷ These verbs mark the seventh day as distinct from the weekdays and as culmination of the creation account. However, it needs to be pointed out that even though these verbs tell of the significance of the seventh day, they still work within the literary parameters set by the creation story in Gen 1:1 and 2:3, that is, the perfective aspect of the event of creation, ברא אלהים.

A unique expression that highlights the significance of the seventh day is the causal clause in ויקדש אתו כי בו שבת, “he sanctified it because in it he ceased” (2:3). The connection of the two verbs שבת and קדש by the conjunction כי expresses that holiness is the purpose of God’s ceasing and consequently resting from all his work, thus the goal of all creation. Without any logical cause behind it but only through divine inauguration, the sanctification of the seventh day is entirely based on God’s inherent holiness, intention, and divine will. Thus the two verbal roots, שבת and קדש, lie at the heart of the rationale and meaning of the creation Sabbath.

The implications of this analysis seem to be far-reaching regarding the meaning of the seventh day of creation. The seventh day is the climax of a completed creation. The structural context consists of the synthetic parallelism of the six weekdays, the six/seven schema, and the tension of the perfect aspect and imperfect aspect within a perfected perspective of creation. The seventh day does not bring about an interruption of certain

¹⁰⁷ Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” 23-26.

sequential proceedings. Rather, it brings together all aspects of creation in order to convey the goal of creation, the seventh day, which seems to derive its meaning from the verbs “cease/rest” and “sanctify” but only when these two roots are linked together, since according to grammatical order they depend upon each other.

It may be suggested that the theological implications drawn from a close reading of the Sabbath text of the first creation account provide insights for the study of the subsequent Sabbath texts of the Pentateuch. The following theological implications consider the creation narrative as a text that needs to be studied in its own right, without superimposing the theology of the so-called P tradition or even searching for meaning of the biblical creation text based on other ancient Near Eastern contexts. The creation narrative takes a unique position within the Hebrew Bible. It is a text that speaks about a time and about life outside of human perception as we know and experience it. The following theological implications and meanings that are drawn ground themselves upon the text itself and the literary data so far analyzed, without incorporating understandings gained from other Near Eastern texts or inferring historical knowledge from outside the Hebrew Bible. In the remainder of this study I will draw out four basic concepts that I believe are at the core of the *sui generis* character of the first creation account.

Wholeness as the Foundation of Creation

Already in the first line of the creation narrative wholeness is conveyed as the foundational goal of creation. God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1). Here, the first *merismus* expresses totality through the association of two contrary motifs. Throughout the creation account, similar associations of contrary elements appear. There are light and darkness, day and night, waters above and waters below, earth and sea, grass and trees, the greater light and the smaller light, fish and birds, animals and humans, male

and female, God and humans, as well as the sixfold occurrence of evening and morning. Wholeness is achieved by contrast. However, the principle of wholeness is most perceptible on the seventh day. The statement that runs parallel to Gen 1:1 occurs in the line introducing the seventh day, speaking of God's finished or completed work, indicating the achievement of wholeness on the seventh day (Gen 2:1).

Another feature that runs through the creation narrative and demonstrates the principle of totality is the fact that God speaks and acts. The verb "speak" occurs eleven times and signifies creative speech acts. Linguistic studies on what is coined performative speech acts show that language can serve as an instrument to change reality.¹⁰⁸ God's speech in Gen 1 indeed changes reality and is unique in the sense that by his speech God can create *ex nihilo*.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, God's words and acts complementing each other throughout the weekdays demonstrate the notion of totality of creation. However, on the seventh day there is no word of God and no act (work) of God. Totality reaches its climax in the ceasing of God from all his work on the seventh day.

Another example for the principle of totality may be seen in the two main verbs of the creation account, "created" and "made." The first verb, "created," occurs six times within Gen 1:1-2:3 (the seventh occurrence is in 2:4a), and the second verb, "he made," occurs ten times within the same text. Noteworthy is the fact that on the sixth day God said, "Let us make man," but then he created man. Totality is demonstrated by the

¹⁰⁸ See John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962); Joseph H. Miller, *Speech Acts in Literature* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001); John Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).

¹⁰⁹ This contrasts with Marduk's speech in *Enuma Elish* when creation happens out of existing matter. See William Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, eds., *The Context of Scripture* (vol. 1; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 390-402.

complementary use of both God creates and God makes, something that humans cannot do. The account of the seventh day includes both **ברא**, “he created,” and **עשה**, “he made,” as part of relative clauses that sum up all of God’s creational work. Whereas both verbs point back to the work of the six weekdays, **ברא** also parallels Gen 1:1 and alludes to creation as a complete whole. Thus the account of the seventh day suggests reflection upon God’s particular actions and upon the finished and completed work of creation.

That God himself reflected upon his work is already put forth and stressed in the text at the end of the sixth day when God saw all that he had made, and look—it was very good (v. 31). God looked back at all, at the totality of his creation, and expressed his satisfaction. This enthusiastic expression implies the light and the darkness, the earth and the sea, the male and the female. All is very good in their distinctiveness as well as in their complementarity. Each one of the creational acts is included in the generic word **מלאכה**, “work,” that is stated three times and is supported by the twofold “all his work” within the account of the seventh day.

The verbs used in Gen 2:1-3 tell even more of the characteristics of the seventh day, the account that not only concludes God’s creational activity but also completes and culminates the whole of creation. On the seventh day, God ceases/rests because what has been created is complete and sufficient; it is whole as it is. Then, according to the clause “he even sanctified it, for he ceased/rested in it from all his work, which God had created to do,” sanctification seems to be the goal of all creation. Wholeness of creation brings about ceasing/resting, and ceasing/resting causes sanctification. This means that sanctification is dependent upon wholeness.

A theology of wholeness as principle and foundational goal of creation conveyed by the Gen 1 creation account makes its implications available for various areas of study:

1. Implications for the biblical concept of religion: A theology of the wholeness of creation refers to biblical religion in terms of God's revelation in the totality of creation. The biblical creation account presents creation as the great book of the revelation of God, the sole Creator and the transcendent one, who intends a relationship with man that is based on the free gift of life. God's word that brings about works of creation testifies to the principle of revelation by word. However, it is when God's work is completed and his voice unheard in the text that God's presence is most perceived in the sacredness of the seventh day.

2. Implications for the concept of human nature and life: The holistic presentation of humankind in the Gen 1 creation account implies complementarity between the sexes made equally in the likeness of God's image and intended for an *I-Thou* relationship with each other and with God. This relationship is actualized in Gen 2:15-25 and forms the counterpart to the climax of the first creation account in Gen 2:1-3.¹¹⁰ The paralleling structure of the two creation accounts demonstrates that the man and the woman experience intimate relationship within sacred time.¹¹¹

3. Implications for environmental research, ecology, and ecosystem: The concept of the wholeness of creation and the primary concern of the completion of all creation in the account of the seventh day has much to do with the interrelatedness of the whole

¹¹⁰ Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story*, 35-80. Doukhan has demonstrated that the first creation account is built in precise literary structural parallelism with the second creation account by seven sections. The account of the seventh day parallels the first marriage in Eden and suggests the sacredness of marriage similar to the sacredness of the seventh day.

¹¹¹ Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 53.

creation.¹¹² In Gen 2:1-3 the celebration of completion of the whole of creation is stressed by the repetition of the verb כָּלָה, “he finished, he completed,” the clause “all his work,” and the threefold occurrence of כָּל, “all.” The interrelatedness of the whole of creation is indicated in the statement “the heavens and the earth . . . and all that was within them” (v. 1). This statement brings together the habitats of Planet Earth as joint subjects for the first time since Gen 1:1 and indicates that all parts of God’s creation are intended and created to be in relationship to each other. Environmental and ecological issues need to be dealt with in a way that no part of creation may be left out.

4. Implications for the origins debate: Language, literary structure, and stylistic elements of the Gen 1 creation account underscore the principle of wholeness and a completed creation of Planet Earth with its three habitats, sky, water, and earth, over the period of the seven-day creation week.¹¹³

¹¹² Wallace, “Rest for the Earth? Another Look at Genesis 2.1-3,” 52.

¹¹³ For a discussion on the use of the term יוֹם, “day,” in the Old Testament, see among others Richard M. Davidson, “The Biblical Account of Origins,” *JATS* 14 (2003): 4-43; J. Ligon Duncan III and David W. Hall, “The 24-Hour View,” in *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation* (ed. David B. Hagopian; Mission Viejo: Crux, 2001), 21-66; Fretheim, “Where the Days of Creation Twenty-Four Hours Long?,” 19-20; Hasel, “The ‘Days’ of Creation in Genesis,” 5-38; reprint, *Creation, Catastrophy, and Calvary* (ed. John T. Baldwin; Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2000), 40-68; Robert V. McCabe, “A Defense of Literal Days in the Creation Week,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 5 (2000): 97-123; Henry M. Morris, *Studies in the Bible and Science* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1966), 36; idem, *Biblical Cosmology and Modern Science* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 59; Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., “From Chaos to Cosmos: A Critique of the Non-Literal Interpretations of Gen 1:1-2:3,” in *Did God Create in Six Days?* (ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., and David W. Hall; Taylors: Southern Presbyterian, 1999), 153-198; Benjamin Shaw, “The Literal Day Interpretation,” in *Did God Create in Six Days?* (ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., and David W. Hall; Taylors: Southern Presbyterian, 1999), 199-220; and Andrew E. Steinmann, “אָרְבַּע as an Ordinal Number and the Meaning of Genesis 1:5,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45 (2002): 577-584.

Separation as a Principle of Creation

Scholars have observed that the main principle of creation as recorded in the first creation account is the principle of separation, which includes several theological implications:

1. Divine acts of separation and distinction bring not only order to the cosmos and establish functions and roles¹¹⁴ such as the rhythm of time or the place for life but served God's particular purpose to create life on earth.¹¹⁵ Several literary elements demonstrate this: The verb בָּדַל, "he separated," occurs five times (vv. 4, 6, 7, 14, 18); different lights, the greater and the smaller light, have assigned to them distinct roles, namely to separate the day and the night; the expression לְמִינֵהוּ, "after their kind," occurs ten times with regard to fecundity and speaks of distinct species of plants and animals (vv. 11, 12, 21, 24, 25).¹¹⁶

2. The principle of separation reaches its culminating point when God said, "Let us make (נַעֲשֶׂה) man in our image according to our likeness" (v. 26). Immediately the following text states, "God created (יִבְרָא) man in his own image, in the image of God he created (בְּרָא) him, male and female he created (בְּרָא) them" (v. 27). The verb בָּרָא occurs three times in this verse and likewise suggests separation as an operating principle in the creation of the human being. The most obvious here is sexual distinction, which is presented as a creation order and not part of the divine realm.¹¹⁷ Sexual distinction as a

¹¹⁴ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 190.

¹¹⁵ Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 32.

¹¹⁶ A. Rahel Davidson Schafer, "The 'Kinds' of Gen 1: What Is the Meaning of Min?" *JATS* 14 (2003): 86-100.

¹¹⁷ For a comprehensive study regarding the expression "male and female he created them," see Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 17-48.

divine creation order provides the basic element upon which the loving relationship between man and woman can be built and grow.

3. The word about the creation of man according to God's image tells of both similarity and distinction between God and the human being. God created the human being as his image but distinct from God. The text (Gen 1:28) calls for all human beings to behave as rulers and stewards of a completed creation in the manner of God who worked for six days and then rested from all that he had made on the seventh day. Here, humanity is presented as representative of God on earth. Thus the theological idea of the *imago Dei* needs first and foremost to take into account the model and pattern that God set for the human being before an interpretation can be made on a human level. Christian theology has proven that the inversion of this principle has led to the inversion of the creation order, as when Feuerbach put forth his thesis that human beings discovered and created gods in man's image.¹¹⁸ Westermann rightly states that the meaning of the *imago Dei* can only be understood from what has preceded the creation of the human being: The text does not make a declaration about man, but about the creation of man.¹¹⁹ Built upon the context of the biblical text, the concept of the *imago Dei* states that God is not man and man is not God. The theological implication here demonstrates that the human being as God's image and representative on earth is to imitate God's creation pattern of work and cessation from work on the seventh day.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Religion: God the Image of Man* (London: Progressive Publishing Company, 1890). Already the subtitle of Feuerbach's work demonstrates his idea and shows his critical humanism.

¹¹⁹ Claus Westermann, *Schöpfung* (Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag, 1971), 81.

¹²⁰ Note that the two nouns צֶלֶם, "image," and דְּמוּת, "likeness," seem to possess overlapping meanings emphasizing respectively the concrete and abstract aspects of the

The principle of separation seems to give room and even serve the divine encounter with the human being. Separation did not take place for the sake of God but for the sake of the human. The very moment when God addresses the human being directly, “See, I have given to you” (Gen 1:29), God’s separation activities come to an end and the first encounter takes place between God and the human being on the basis of God’s free gift of food. When man stands before God as one who receives life freely, he recognizes his dependence upon God and his identity as a created being. Thus the principle of separation leads up to this very moment of the divine-human encounter and includes implications for biblical theology to reflect upon the fundamental question regarding the identity of the human being who comes to realize, “I know who I am” when she is standing before the Creator God.

4. Theological considerations regarding the biblical day of rest need to focus on the climactic distinction of the seventh day. Biblical scholars in general agree that the principle of separation finds its climax and concludes with the seventh-day Sabbath.¹²¹ Westermann emphasizes that “the sanctification of the Sabbath constitutes an order for humankind according to which time is divided into time and holy time, time to work and

human being in relation to God. See David M. Carr, *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 17-26; Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 36; Ilona Rashkow, *Taboo or Not Taboo* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 61.

¹²¹ There seem to exist striking similarities between the Gen 1 creation account and ancient Near Eastern temple building texts such as the Gudea temple building and dedication text. See L. R. Fisher, “Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament,” *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965): 313-324; Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 335-337. However, contrary to the rest of the ancient Near East, Gen 1 does not portray the ordering of the cosmos and the deity’s rest as the result of resolved conflict in the divine realm. See Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 199; cf. the Ugaritic Baal myth and the Mesopotamian Enuma Elish; Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 1.

time to rest;”¹²² Kass speaks of distinction as God’s principle of holiness;¹²³ Schwartz refers to the whole reality of ancient Israelite life as divided into two categories, the holy and the common, with the Sabbath as God’s holy day.¹²⁴

Nevertheless, as the analysis of this study has demonstrated, the principle of separation that runs through the entire creation narrative and places the seventh day into a unique position comes to an end in the encounter between God and the human being (Gen 1:29). The part of the creation narrative that follows the divine-human encounter and concludes the narrative suggests the decisive shift in the text by the lack of additional acts of separation. From now on, God’s creative word ceases and separation does not bring about further objects of life but a day—the seventh day, which is God’s day and at the same time, the first day of human life.

Separated from the other days the seventh day embodies the principle of separation and functions as the foundation and preservation of created life aimed at from the beginning of the creation week. Incorporating the principle of separation the seventh day is paramount in its significance for life on earth. God who creates life founds the seventh day by ceasing and sanctifying it in order to preserve life. Thus sanctification or holiness is a positive concept established for the sake of life. Milgrom sums this up when he points out that “holiness means not only ‘separation from’ but ‘separation to’. It is a

¹²² Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 171.

¹²³ Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 52.

¹²⁴ Schwartz, “The Sabbath in the Torah Sources,” 10.

positive concept, an inspiration and a goal associated with God's nature and his desire for man."¹²⁵

Ceasing as the Reason for Holiness

The statement of the only causal clause, which provides the reason for the sanctification of the seventh day, comes as a surprise to the reader because it does not present a logical argument but the exclusive will of God: "he even sanctified it, because he ceased in it" (Gen 2:3). Nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible is there an explicit reason provided for holiness such as God's ceasing from work. In numerous other texts holiness is (1) presented as an attribute of God and his character,¹²⁶ (2) it is required of the human being as a reason for the relationship with God,¹²⁷ and (3) places and objects are made holy in connection with the sanctuary.¹²⁸ In these cases, holiness is understood mainly to be an implication of God's presence and his relationship with the human being but in no case is there a reason that explains the cause for holiness, except for the sanctification of the seventh-day Sabbath. This fact implies that the concept of holiness, which is developed in great detail in subsequent texts of the Pentateuch and includes practically all aspects of life in relation to God, is closely related to the creation Sabbath: "he even sanctified it, because he ceased in it" (Gen 2:3). Therefore, I suggest that the task of biblical theology to understanding holiness in the Pentateuch and in the Hebrew Bible

¹²⁵ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 731.

¹²⁶ Exod 15:11; Lev 21:8.

¹²⁷ Exod 19:10, 14, 22; 22:31; 28:36; 29:44; see especially Lev 11:44.

¹²⁸ Exod 28:2; 29:29, 37; 30:27, 35, 37; 31:10; 40:10; Lev 21:22; Num 5:9; 1 Kgs 8:4.

needs to start from the basic argument of God ceasing on the creation Sabbath when searching for meaning.

The first creation account presents the sanctification of the seventh day as the goal upon which God focused already throughout the weekdays. Throughout the six weekdays the focus particle כִּי emphasized six times God's own surprise and delight when looking at his work. At the end of the sixth day, after all work was done, the focus on God's delight is even more stressed by an additional word of surprise and delight using a different particle, וַיִּבְרָא, "And God saw . . . and behold, it was very good" (Gen 1:31). Now, in the account of the seventh day (Gen 2:1-3), one would expect to find an even more heightened articulation such as, 'and God ceased and, behold, it was exceedingly good'. But the Sabbath is not regarded as good, very good or even exceedingly good;¹²⁹ it is holy because God ceased/rested on it. In the account of the seventh day the focus particle כִּי, "because," is used for the seventh time but the text changes its style completely and transforms the emphatic and exclamatory meaning of כִּי into a causal force. This grammatical shift speaks by itself of the intention of the author to draw attention to the prominence of the seventh day and to the exclusive will of God for sanctification.¹³⁰ God's ceasing is the reason for the sanctification of the seventh-day Sabbath.

God's ceasing on the seventh day implies that God's involvement with his creation changes during the creation week. Over the span of six days, vast spaces, immeasurable distances, great and small bodies, large numbers, all kinds of species,

¹²⁹ See the discussion of the phrase "it is good" in the context of Gen 3 by Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*, 55-59.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

and—the crown of all—the human beings appear. In the text of the seventh day, God is depicted as being by himself. Over the span of six days roles and commissions were imparted. On the seventh day all is complete. Over the span of six days assessments were made and admiration expressed. The seventh day is blessed and declared holy. The seventh day is exclusively God’s day filled with his presence and imbued with qualities belonging to him only. Thus ceasing, blessing, and holiness, the qualities that set this day apart, speak of God’s full presence within created time.¹³¹ No other day and no place contain his full presence as the seventh day does. Heschel alludes to God’s full presence in time rather than in space: “There is no quality that space has in common with the essence of God. There is not enough freedom on the top of the mountain; there is not enough glory in the silence of the sea. Yet the likeness of God can be found in time.”¹³²

Gerhard von Rad comes close to this consideration when he speaks of God’s rest on the seventh day that “is in every respect a new thing along with the process of creation, not simply the negative sign of its end; it is anything but an appendix.”¹³³ Rather, the creation narrative speaks of one aspect of God, which is turned towards the world.¹³⁴ Canale points out that it is the relational character of God who makes room for the “other.”¹³⁵ “Creation thus becomes the necessary condition for the possibility of

¹³¹ Fernando Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), 253-254.

¹³² Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 16.

¹³³ von Rad, *Das Erste Buch Mose: Genesis*, 48, 49.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹³⁵ Fernando Canale, *Basic Elements of Christian Theology* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), 201-202.

God's relationship with creatures"¹³⁶ and reaches its intended spiritual climax on the seventh day to be a time set apart for personal and direct relation between the creator and his creatures.¹³⁷ Thus God's presence within the time of the seventh day is relational in essence. As a day that witnesses the event of creation to the human being it also contains the reality of God's presence and has the potential to bring the human being into this reality. Doukhan points out that "the Sabbath was designed to become the place of encounter between God the creator and man the creature, the occasion for the vertical relationship."¹³⁸ Jesus expressed the relational character of the Sabbath with the remarkable words: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

Holiness as the Goal of All Creation

"Holiness . . . makes its entrance into the world through the Sabbath."¹³⁹ In general when Old Testament studies explore the word "holy" or the concept of holiness, they locate themselves between Exod 25 and Num 36 where most of the occurrences of the Hebrew קדש are found.¹⁴⁰ However, the first place where the word occurs and where the reason for holiness is provided is the seventh-day Sabbath in Gen 2:3, "He even sanctified it, for he ceased/rested on the seventh day from all his work, which God had

¹³⁶ Ibid., 202.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 216.

¹³⁸ Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story*, 222.

¹³⁹ David S. Shapiro, "The Meaning of Holiness in Judaism," *Tradition* 7 (1965): 51.

¹⁴⁰ The root קדש occurs 205 times within Exod 25-Num 36 out of the 322 occurrences within the entire Pentateuch.

created making.” The creation Sabbath is the first realm in the created world to be sanctified.

Three foundational works on the concept of holiness have so far influenced biblical theology: Nathan Söderblom’s article on “Holiness” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*,¹⁴¹ Rudolph Otto’s *The Idea of the Holy*,¹⁴² and Mircea Eliade’s *The Sacred and the Profane*.¹⁴³ None of these works starts out with the biblical concept of holiness as it is introduced in Gen 2:3. According to Söderblom, “holiness is the great word in religion; it is even more essential than the notion of God. Real religion may exist without a definite conception of divinity.”¹⁴⁴ Otto identified the holy with the numinous, the “wholly other,” the *mysterium tremendum* in whose presence the human being stands in radical fear. According to Eliade, the sacred is equivalent to a power, to reality, to being, and the “religious man deeply desires *to be*, to participate in *reality*, to be saturated with power.”¹⁴⁵ While these ideas may be true for religion in general, and are often used as foundational ideas for the biblical concept of holiness, they do not do justice to the biblical concept of holiness as it comes into the world on the seventh day of creation.

¹⁴¹ Nathan Söderblom, “Holiness (General and Primitive),” *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (ed. James Hastings; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1913), 6:731-741.

¹⁴² Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958).

¹⁴³ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1959).

¹⁴⁴ Söderblom, “Holiness,” 6:731.

¹⁴⁵ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 13.

In the biblical context, holiness seems to be a direct result of the manifestation of the divine presence, for only God is inherently holy and all holiness derives from him.¹⁴⁶ Holiness, especially holiness in relation to the Sabbath, manifests itself then in the establishment of a personal relationship with God.¹⁴⁷ This conception of holiness expresses the distinctively scriptural perception of God as both transcendent or utterly separate and powerfully immanent in his relationship with the world. The first element that the account of the seventh day conveys, along with the entire creation narrative, is that God is the only being in view on the seventh day. Even though the man and woman are already created, they are absent from the Sabbath text. There is only God and the day. Within these parameters, holiness may be perceived as something unexplained and mysterious. Kass states that “the seventh day and its holiness are, to begin with, beyond the human realm altogether. A major concern of the subsequent biblical teaching will be to bring the human into relation to the holy and the holy into everyday human life. But for now, the holy is altogether mysterious.”¹⁴⁸

While the seventh day contains a mysterious element when speaking of holiness, it also needs to be pointed out that God ceased creating so that he can enter into relationship with his creation. The notion of holiness as a separation for relationship begins with the creation Sabbath. Milgrom’s conclusion on holiness is worth repeating here: “Holiness means not only ‘separation from’ but ‘separation to’. It is a positive

¹⁴⁶ The most perceptible idea of holiness related to God’s presence is portrayed in Exod 3:5 where the place is holy because of God’s presence. Other texts such as Lev 11:44; 20:7; 21:8; Pss 60:6; 108:7 speak of God’s holiness.

¹⁴⁷ See Exod 31:13.

¹⁴⁸ Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 53.

concept, an inspiration and a goal associated with God's nature and his desire for man."¹⁴⁹ Even though the passage of the seventh day does not mention the man and the woman, and the text makes clear that God is the only being in view, the reader cannot forget God's astonishing desire for relationship when he exclaimed, "Let us make man as our image, according to our likeness" (Gen 1:26). Immediately after the creation of man God grants his gift to both man and woman, namely all creation (v. 29). Therefore, on the seventh day God not only establishes an imitating pattern of rhythm for life to be followed by man, but also places himself within this day¹⁵⁰ by sanctifying it for the sake of open access between him and human existence. God makes himself available to humanity, even to all of his creation. Sanctified time is what guarantees life on earth and humanity's relationship with the Creator. Within this context, Westermann's word of mankind standing before God makes perfect sense: "The meaning is that mankind is created so that something can happen between God and man: mankind is created to stand face to face with God."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 731.

¹⁵⁰ Canale develops a model for theological reason based on biblical exegesis and theology regarding God's temporal eternity and his acting within time versus classical and modern theologies that ground themselves on Plato's philosophical system on the timelessness of God. Canale's investigation starts out as his Ph.D. dissertation, "Toward a Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions," and follows in the writing of several books and articles. Some of them are, idem, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1987); idem, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005), 248. See also Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians*, 213-214.

¹⁵¹ Westermann, *Creation*, 56. The German text in *Schöpfung*, 82, reads: "Von der Menschheit wird gesagt, dass sie geschaffen ist, damit etwas geschehe zwischen Gott und Mensch: die Menschheit ist zu Gottes Gegenüber geschaffen."

CHAPTER III

SABBATH NARRATIVES IN THE PENTATEUCH

Introduction

Two narratives tell about the Sabbath in the Pentateuch: Exod 16:1-36 and Num 15:32-36. Exodus 16 records events related to the Sabbath before the giving of the law, including the Sabbath commandment, on Mount Sinai. But Num 15:32-36 tells of an incident related to the Sabbath after the giving of the law. In the narrative of the manna (Exod 16), the people's disobedience regarding the Sabbath was not punished, but the man gathering wood on Sabbath was executed by stoning (Num 15:36).

The respective literary contexts illuminate the differences between the two narratives: Exodus 16 occupies the middle part of a section of three stories dealing with the people's grumbling and rebellious attitude against both their leaders and God (Exod 15:22-27; 16:1-36; 17:1-7). God does not punish the people but responds with provisions of water and food and the gift of the Sabbath. Numbers 15:32-36 is also placed between two narratives that report Israel's rebellion in the wilderness (Num 14:1-45 and 16:1-50). However, its thematic connection with the preceding law section (15:1-31) indicates that the woodgatherer's behavior on Sabbath is considered as inexpiable sin (vv. 30-31).¹

¹ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 622.

Commentators link the story of the man gathering wood on Sabbath to the prohibition of gathering manna on Sabbath.² While there are elements connecting the two narratives, there are also differences with regard to linguistic, structural, and thematic features that make each of these narratives and their messages unique.

For the vast majority of scholars and commentators, both texts, Exod 16 and Num 15:32-36, present difficulties regarding authorship, sources, traditions, and redactions. Repetitions in the text and arrangements that appear out of chronological sequence in Exod 16³ and textual difficulties in the legal prescriptions of Num 15⁴ have distracted scholars from considering the literary structures of these chapters, including placement of specific key words, as ways to convey theological meaning.

The Sabbath in Exodus 16:1-36

Frankel states that current scholarship on Exod 16 has arrived at an impasse regarding higher critical issues.⁵ Maiberger's extensive monograph offers detailed

² Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 622. See also Thomas B. Dozeman, "The Book of Numbers," *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 2:128.

³ Some of these apparent chronological inconsistencies are: The Sabbath and its prohibitions are spoken of as matters that are already known, although the Sabbath commandment is not yet proclaimed; Exod 16:34 mentions the expression "before the Testimony," although the sanctuary is not yet in existence; Moses announces in Exod 16:8 something that he was told by the Lord only subsequently in Exod 16:11-12. See Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 186.

⁴ Among critics, it is widely accepted that Num 15:32-36 is a late element placed within the so-called P material of the book of Numbers. See the discussion in Philip J. Budd, *Numbers* (WBC 5; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1984), 175. The recent study by Novick ascribes its redaction to the exilic period, particularly to H. See Tzvi Novick, "Law and Loss: Response to Catastrophe in Numbers 15," *HTR* 101 (2008): 1-14.

⁵ David Frankel, *The Murmuring Stories of the Priestly School* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 63. See also Ruprecht, who acknowledged already in his 1974 article that source

insights into the unsuccessful undertaking of source division, removal of verses, and rearrangements of this chapter.⁶ Andreasen recognizes in Exod 16 “unusual unevenness and . . . extraordinary difficulties for the literary analyst.”⁷ Cassuto acknowledges that this is one of the most difficult chapters in the book of Exodus because it does not follow a readily apparent logical thought process or a chronological and sequential reading but a narrative arrangement based on thematic and verbal association.⁸ He then calls for a holistic reading, known as “organic thinking” in Jewish theology,⁹ in order to understand the intention of Exod 16 in the final form of the text.

As it is well known in studies of the Hebrew Bible, narrative arrangements often include repetitions of single words or larger text units, rather than synonymous variations,¹⁰ in order to achieve various kinds of parallelisms and chiasms that often highlight the center of the narrative and expose the theological message of the text.

division in Exod 16 reached its limits. Eberhard Ruprecht, “Stellung und Bedeutung der Erzählung vom Mannawunder (Ex 16) im Aufbau der Priesterschrift,” *ZAW* 86 (1974): 269-307.

⁶ Paul Maiberger, *Das Manna: Eine Literarische, Etymologische und Naturkundliche Untersuchung* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983). See also Frankel, *The Murmuring Stories of the Priestly School*, 63-117.

⁷ Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*, 67.

⁸ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 186-188.

⁹ Isaac Heinemann, *Darkhei ha-Aggadah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1974), 8; Joseph Heinemann, *Aggadah and Its Development* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974); Max Kadushin, *Organic Thinking: A Study in Rabbinic Thought* (New York: Behrman’s Jewish Book House, 1938); idem, *The Rabbinic Mind* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1952).

¹⁰ Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), xxvi.

Critics, however, often regard repetitions as literary disunity¹¹ and redundancy,¹² and they are divided over whether Exod 16 should be identified as, (1) primarily priestly material,¹³ (2) two continuous narratives, one priestly and one non-priestly belonging to J,¹⁴ or (3) a composite of six or even seven different strands or levels.¹⁵

Propp deals in detail with source analysis of Exod 16, which he views as characterized by “the greatest redundancy and disorganization.”¹⁶ He then proceeds with redaction analysis and ascribes the “coherence” of Exod 16 to a redactor who cut and rearranged the text in an unsatisfying manner.¹⁷

The following literary analysis attempts to investigate the narrative structure of Exod 16, including key expressions and structural elements in the final form of the text. If such features are closely connected to the seventh-day Sabbath, it may be concluded that the Sabbath represents a primary concept in Exod 16.

¹¹ Martin Noth, *Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 131.

¹² William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 589-590.

¹³ Childs assumes the following source division: P: 1-3, 6-13a, 16-26, 32-35a; J: 4-5, 13b-15, 21b, 27-31, 35b; v. 36: gloss. Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 275; also Ludwig Schmidt, “Die Priesterschrift in Exodus 16,” *ZAW* 119/4 (2007): 483-498.

¹⁴ Stephen A. Geller, “Manna and Sabbath: A Literary-Theological Reading of Exodus 16,” *Interpretation* 59 (2005): 5-16; Schwartz, “The Sabbath in the Torah Sources,” 3-7.

¹⁵ Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 582-592.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 589.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 590-592.

Literary Analysis

Literary Context

The literary context of Exod 16 presents the Sabbath as an essential part of Israel's life before the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. The narrative in Exod 16 reports the establishment of a weekly rhythm in time defined by the seventh-day Sabbath (vv 23-30). After their departure from Egypt and until their entry into Canaan the Israelites follow this rhythm over the course of forty years (Exod 16:1, 35).

Exodus 16 further shows that when the Sabbath appears for the second time in the canonical Hebrew Bible and is given to the Israelites, it is not in the paradise-like Elim with its restful palms and fresh water (Exod 15:27); nor when Israel received the law at Mount Sinai and agreed to the covenant relationship with God (Exod 19-20). Rather, the Sabbath appears when the liberated Israelites need to learn full dependence upon their God. Here in the uninhabited desert, they must relearn the weekly rhythm of time defined by the Sabbath in creation times, which is now emphasized by the weekly cycle of manna (Exod 16:26). Hoffmeier finds support for the establishment of the weekly rhythm in Exod 16 by the reason that the Israelites needed to abandon the Egyptian ten-day week of which eight days were given to work in favor of the six-workday system followed by the Sabbath as a day of rest that was rooted in creation (Gen 2:1-3).¹⁸

¹⁸ James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 173. Hoffmeier does not further explain the connection between the Sabbath in Exod 16 and in Gen 2:1-3. Cf. Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 203-206; Ann M. Roth, "Work Force," *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 523.

The following observations based on the context of Exod 15-18 indicate that the Israelites were not unaware of divine laws in general and of the Sabbath commandment in particular before they received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai:

1. Exodus 16:28 shows that this was true with special regard of the Sabbath law:¹⁹ After some of the people went out to gather manna on Sabbath, God rebuked the Israelites by asking rhetorically, “How long do you refuse to keep my commandments [מִצְוֹתַי] and my laws [וְתֹרַתַי]?” (Exod 16:28). Martin Buber in referring to this text notes, “Here, too, it is proclaimed as something which is already in existence.”²⁰ Childs observes, “the existence of the Sabbath is assumed by the writer.”²¹

2. Exodus 15:25-26 notes that after the miracle at Marah God set up a statue and a regulation (חֶק וּמִשְׁפַּת) and tested (נִסָּה) the Israelites and called them to “listen to his commandments [לְמִצְוֹתָיו] and keep all his statutes [חֻקָּיו].”

3. Careful analysis of law-related terminology within the context of Exod 16 shows that legal concepts were present among Israel and that legal vocabulary does not appear suddenly or only in relation to the Sabbath. Law-related terminology occurs in clusters within the narrative texts that recount Israel’s journey after the departure from

¹⁹ Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” 26-27; Jenni, *Die Theologische Begründung des Sabbatgebotes im Alten Testament*, 20, 31; F. Maass, “חֻקֵי הַלֵּל hll pi. entweihen,” *THAT* 1:537; Robinson, *The Origin and Development of the Old Testament Sabbath*, 239.

²⁰ Martin Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant* (New York: Harper, 1958), 80.

²¹ Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 290.

Egypt (see Table 6). The entire text of Exod 15-18 contains words for law, instruction, or compliance.²²

Table 6. Law-related terminology in Exodus 15-18

Terminology	Exod 15	Exod 16	Exod 18
תורה "instruction"		16:4, 28	18:16, 20
מצוה "commandment"	15:26	16:28	
חק "decree"	15:25, 26		18:16, 20
משפט "judgment"	15:25		
שפט "to judge"			18:13, 16, 22, 26
צוה "to command"		16:16, 24, 32, 34	18:23
שמר "to keep"	15:26	16:28	
שמע "to obey"	15:14, 26		18:19, 24

This information is evidence that the people of Israel were guided by instructions and laws from the beginning of their desert journeys and did not live in a state of anarchy before they received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. In addition, it suggests that God enjoined the Israelites to keep a body of law that the writer of Exod 15-18 assumes was known to them. Support for this suggestion is found in Gen 18:19 and 26:5 where Abraham is charged to keep God's laws, statutes, and commandments, and to entrust them to his household and his descendents.

²² See Arie C. Leder, "The Coherence of Exodus: Narrative Unity and Meaning," *CTJ* 36 (2001): 258.

4. Further study on the context of Exod 16 is based upon the structural arrangement of the narratives in the Pentateuch and explains the sabbatical principle of this chapter. This principle comes to view in Dorsey's analysis, showing the structural arrangement of the narratives in Gen 1-50 and Exod 1-18 that serve as a historical prologue to the establishment of the covenant between God and Israel at Mount Sinai.²³ According to Dorsey, this historical prologue contains seven units, with the seventh unit (Exod 13:17-19:2) focusing on Israel's victory over the Egyptians and on God's graceful provisions for Israel, including the provision of food in direct relation to the Sabbath.²⁴ The structural composition of the book of Exodus demonstrates that this book is composed of three major parts delineated by the Israelites' geographical location:²⁵

- Part One: Israel in Egypt (Exod 1:1-13:16)
- Part Two: Israel in the Wilderness (Exod 13:17-18:27)
- Part Three: Israel at Sinai (Exod 19:1-40:38)

Again, Dorsey shows that each of these parts is composed of several sections, and each section contains seven units.²⁶ A closer look at Part Two: Israel in the Wilderness (Exod 13:1-18:27) reveals that Exod 16, with the manna and Sabbath narratives, is highlighted by placement at the center of this part, and the stories about provision of water, military victory, and other events parallel each other. So Part Two is chiasmic.²⁷

²³ Ibid., 48.

²⁴ Ibid., 70.

²⁵ David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 63-77; John I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1987), xxx.

²⁶ Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 63-77.

²⁷ Ibid., 67-68.

- A God leads the people (13:17-22)
- B Victory over the Egyptians (14:1-15:21)
 - C Provision of water at Marah (15:22-27)
 - X Provision of manna and Sabbath (16:1-36)
 - C Provision of water at Rephidim (17:1-7)
 - B Victory over the Amalekites (17:8-16)
- A Moses judges the people (18:1-27)

Prominence of the sabbatical principle is also supported in Labuschagne's elaborate investigation of divine speech patterns in the Pentateuch. In his examination of various divine speech formulas, he shows that the Sabbath in Exod 16 is in the seventh section of the book.²⁸

Literary Setting

The setting of the Sabbath in the wilderness is the murmuring of the whole Israelite congregation against their leaders, Moses and Aaron (Exod 16:1-3), who in turn clearly indicate that this complaining is against the Lord (Exod 16:7-8). This becomes obvious by God's response to the people's complaints in the beginning of the narrative (Exod 16:4-5). God reacts to the complaints and assures that he will rain bread from heaven. On the first five days the people shall go out and gather one portion per person, but on the sixth day the quantity of the bread from heaven will be twice as much. Following this instruction, Exod 16:22 states that on the sixth day the people gathered twice as much manna and Moses explained to the leaders of the congregation that "this is what YHWH has said, 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to YHWH.

²⁸ Casper J. Labuschagne, "The Pattern of the Divine Speech Formulas in the Pentateuch," *VT* 32 (1982): 276-277, 286-288. A similar pattern of speech formulas occurs in Exod 25-40, where the Sabbath appears again in Exod 31:12-17 as the seventh divine speech in the instructions for building the wilderness sanctuary. See Peter J. Kearny, "Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Exod 25-40," *ZAW* 89 (1977): 375-387.

Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning” (Exod 16:23).

Critics place Exod 16:4-5 as contextually isolated from the rest of the chapter and ascribe these verses and v. 23 to different sources.²⁹ The division between Exod 16:4-5 and 23 is based on the critic’s supposition that v. 5 refers to the miracle of the double portion of manna without stating the rule to prepare the double portion for the Sabbath, and it is only v. 23 that contains the rule about the preparation of the double portion. Beuken, however, has pointed out that both verses, Exod 16:5 and 23, contain a rule or commandment regarding the keeping of the Sabbath.³⁰ In both verses the rule coincides with the announcement of a miraculous event: On a regular weekday YHWH will rain bread from heaven and every person will gather one portion. On the sixth day, however, there will be a double portion of manna available for each person. On the sixth day the people must prepare the manna and what is left over must be kept overnight. On the

²⁹ See Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 286. Critics are divided regarding Exod 16:5 and Exod 16:23: Noth, Coats, Fritz, and Schwartz ascribe v. 5 to the J (Jahwist). George W. Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 83f.; Volkmar Fritz, *Israel in der Wüste; Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung der Wüstenüberlieferungen des Jahwisten* (Marburg: Elwert, 1970), 9, 42, 47; Noth, *Exodus*, 132; Schwartz, “The Sabbath in the Torah Sources.” Jülicher and Ruprecht ascribe v. 5 to what they call a Deuteronomian Editor. Adolf Jülicher, *Die Quellen von Exodus VII,8 – XXIV,11* (Halle: Halis Saxonum, 1880), 288; Ruprecht, “Stellung und Bedeutung der Erzählung vom Mannawunder (Ex 16) im Aufbau der Priesterschrift,” 279, 298. Gressmann assumes a redactor for v. 5. Hugo Gressmann, *Mose und Seine Zeit. Ein Kommentar zu den Mose-Sagen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), 127; Eerdmans speaks of a glossator regarding v. 5. Bernhard D. Eerdmans, *Das Buch Exodus* (Giessen: A. Topelmann, 1910), 50. With regard to v. 23, generally P is assumed. Schwartz, however, ascribes this verse to J but excludes the phrase “a holy Sabbath.” Schwartz, “The Sabbath in the Torah Sources.”

³⁰ W. A. M. Beuken, “Exodus 16.5, 23: A Rule Regarding the Keeping of the Sabbath,” *JSOT* 32 (1985): 3-14. See also Ruprecht, “Stellung und Bedeutung der Erzählung vom Mannawunder (Ex 16) im Aufbau der Priesterschrift,” 279.

seventh day it will be unspoiled and edible. Explained in this way, the two verses 5 and 23, do not contradict each other but are complementary.

Further support for the explanation that Exod 16:5 contains a commandment referring to the observance of the Sabbath can be gained from the chiasm of vv. 4-5:

A the people shall go out (יֵצֵא) and gather (לִקְט) a day's portion every day (דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ) (v. 4)
X that I may test (נִסָּה) them, whether or not they will walk (הֵלֵךְ) in my instruction (תּוֹרָה) (v. 4)
A' on the sixth day when they prepare (כִּוֵּן) what they bring in (בֹּא) it will be twice as much as they gather (לִקְט) daily (יוֹם יוֹם) (v. 5)

The chiasm shows in several ways that there occurs a test based on YHWH's תּוֹרָה "instruction" for both the going out and gathering of the manna on a regular day and the bringing in and preparing the manna on the sixth day:

1. The two verses, 4b and 5, are structured chiasmically by the verbs יֵצֵא, "go out," and לִקְט, "gather," which correspond to the verbs בֹּא, "bring in," and כִּוֵּן, "prepare."

2. Both pairs of verbs are followed by corresponding objects, "a day's portion every day" (דְּבַר־יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ) and "twice as much as they gather daily" (יוֹם יוֹם).

3. The test (נִסָּה) in the center of the chiasm is based on God's תּוֹרָה, "instruction," which is mentioned again in YHWH's speech after some of the people went out to gather manna on Sabbath: "How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my instructions (תּוֹרָתִי)?" (v. 28).³¹

4. The test stands in the center, both of the rule to go out on each of the weekdays and gather a day's portion and the rule to prepare the double portion of the manna that the people bring in on the sixth day. For both the gathering of the daily portion and the

³¹ Note the plural of מִצְוֹתַי, "my commandments," and תּוֹרָתַי, "my instructions," in Exod 16:28.

gathering of the double portion, a testing is intended that calls for a decision on the basis of the instruction regarding the people's faithfulness.

Thus Exod 16:4-5 not only announces the miracle of the manna of an ordinary day and the miracle that will happen on the sixth day, but also anticipates the keeping of the commandment regarding the Sabbath, which is then explicitly stated in v. 23: "This is what YHWH meant: Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to YHWH. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning." In anticipation of the Sabbath, the people of Israel are instructed to be prepared. The flow of the story in Exod 16 and the chiasmic arrangement of vv. 4-5 show that a rule is established for gathering a double portion of manna and preparing it on the sixth day (v. 5), and then a prohibition is given against gathering manna on Sabbath (v. 23).

Literary "Disorganization"

The fourteen direct speeches in Exod 16 involve all of the main characters: the people, God, Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the congregation. These speeches portray situations full of activity and movement, and at first sight they seem to lack orderly arrangement. Critical commentators often regard them as the disorganized result of different layers of sources pasted together by ignorant redactors.³²

However, a close reading and analysis of these speeches may disclose a different perspective, namely that they are systematically arranged in chiasmic and parallel structures. The fourteen speeches may be arranged in two parts, the first part containing seven speeches in the form of dialogues. The second part contains seven speeches in the

³² Durham, *Exodus*, 221; Propp, *Exodus*, 589.

form of commands. The fourteen speeches convey the dynamics of the narrative, portray the ups and downs of Israel's life in the desert, and provide a sense of reason and purpose as the driving force behind the events recorded in this chapter.

Part I:

- A People speak (v. 3)
- B YHWH speaks to Moses (vv. 4-5)
- C Moses and Aaron speak (vv. 6-7)
- X Moses speaks (v. 8)
- C' Moses speaks to Aaron (v. 9)
- B' YHWH speaks to Moses (vv. 11-12)
- A' People speak (v. 15a)

Part II:

- A Moses: "This is the word that YHWH has commanded" (vv. 15b, 16)
- B Moses speaks (v. 19)
- A' Moses: "This is what YHWH has commanded" (v. 23)
- B' Moses speaks (vv. 25-26)
- X YHWH speaks (vv. 28-29)
- A'' Moses: "This is the word that YHWH has commanded" (v. 32)
- B'' Moses speaks (v. 33)

The dialogues of Part 1 contain the following speeches: two speeches of the people, including murmuring (v. 3) and a query after the miraculous appearance of the manna (v. 15a); YHWH's speeches to Moses (vv. 4-5, 11-12); the interaction of Moses and Aaron (vv. 6-7, 9); and Moses' speech in the center of the chiasm (v. 8). The uniqueness of this structure suggests that it is Moses' speech in v. 8, the very verse that critics most question as part of this chapter,³³ that cannot be discounted as a gloss or redundancy because it is placed at the center of the chiastic structure to highlight Moses' direct answer to the people's complaints. This verse conveys the heart of the message: "Your grumbings are not against us but against YHWH."

³³ See a summary of scholarly discussion regarding Exod 16:1-12, including questions regarding v. 8 in Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 278-280; Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness*, 84; and Maiberg, *Manna*, 207.

The discovery of the manna as YHWH's gift (v. 15b) links Parts 1 and 2. Part 2 is dominated by commandments of YHWH (vv. 16, 23, 32) and identifies the gift of the manna in direct relation to the Sabbath and to future generations (vv. 23-33). The speech of YHWH concerning the Sabbath stands out and marks the center of the chiasmic structure (vv. 28-29).

Literary Structure

The structural outline of Exod 16:16-36 demonstrates that this text is arranged in three sections: The first section narrates the events regarding the manna for the weekdays (vv. 16-21); the second section speaks of the manna for the Sabbath (vv. 22-31); and the third section addresses the manna for the future generations deposited in the sanctuary (vv. 32-36). These sections contain paralleling segments that can be easily recognized by two characteristics:

1. The first characteristic is the wording that identifies the three sections in Exod 16. The words and sentence structures for the two outer sections (the section on the manna for the weekdays and the section on the manna for the sanctuary) are exactly the same: **זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה**, “this is the word that YHWH has commanded” (vv. 16, 32). The middle section (section on the manna for the Sabbath) is similar, but distinct in its wording: **הוּא אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה**, “this is what YHWH has commanded” (v. 23).

2. The second characteristic that runs through all three sections in a paralleling mode is the outline arranged according to the pattern: command–reaction–result. This pattern is most obvious in the last section dealing with the manna for the future generations (vv. 34-35). Here, God gives a command, Moses communicates it to Aaron, Aaron obeys, and the people follow up. However, this smooth procedure did not come without problems and difficulties. That may be the reason why the first two sections on

the manna for the weekdays and the manna for the Sabbath are much longer than the third section on the manna for the sanctuary, and they convey the didactic character of Exod 16. These longer sections include a second command, a rationale for the command, positive and negative reactions of the people, and reactions from Moses and God, until a positive outcome is reached.

The paralleling character of the three sections allows the middle section on the manna for the Sabbath to be highlighted by specific literary and thematic features. In this way, the instructions for the Sabbath emerge as prominent components of Exod 16. Table 7 demonstrates that Exod 16:16-36 is a structural unit dealing with the manna in three sections paralleling each other in terms of command–reaction–result.

The following part discusses the outline of the three sections of Exod 16:16-36 in more detail:

Command I. In all three sections, Moses communicates the word or command of YHWH. However, he does so in different ways. In the section of the manna for the weekdays Moses speaks to the whole community of the people (Exod 16:16). In the section of the manna that was to be kept in the sanctuary for the future generations Moses speaks first to the people but then specifically addresses Aaron (vv. 32-33) who has access to the sanctuary and establishes the priesthood for the future generations of the people of Israel (Exod 28:1). However, in the section of the manna for the Sabbath, Moses communicates only with the leaders (נְשִׂיָא) of the community (Exod 16:22-23). The context then shows that the leaders must have fulfilled their duty of transmitting the Sabbath command to the people because they did as Moses had ordered and kept the extra portion of the manna on the sixth day for the Sabbath (v. 24a).

Table 7. Outline and sections of Exodus 16:16-36

Outline	Section 1: Manna for the Weekdays	Section 2: Manna for the Sabbath	Section 3: Manna for the Sanctuary
Command I	<p>And Moses said to them, . . . “This is the word that YHWH has commanded, ‘Gather of it every man as much as he should eat; you shall take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent.’” (v. 16)</p>	<p>When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, then he said to them, “This is what YHWH has commanded: Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to YHWH. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning.” (vv. 22b-23)</p>	<p>Then Moses said, “This is the word that YHWH has commanded, ‘Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before YHWH to be kept throughout your generations.” (vv. 32-33)</p>
Reaction: Obedience	<p>The sons of Israel did so, and <i>some</i> gathered much and <i>some</i> little. (v. 17)</p>	<p>So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, (v. 24a)</p>	<p>As YHWH commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Testimony, to be kept. The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; (vv. 34-35a)</p>
Result	<p>When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat. (v. 18)</p>	<p>and it did not become foul nor was there any worm in it. (v. 24b)</p>	<p>they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. (Now an omer is a tenth of an ephah.) (vv. 35b-36)</p>
Command II	<p>Moses said to them, “Let no man leave any of it until morning.” (v. 19)</p>	<p>Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to YHWH; today you will not find it in the open country. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, <i>the</i> Sabbath, there will be none.” (vv. 25-26)</p>	

Table 7—Continued.

Outline	Section 1: Manna for the Weekdays	Section 2: Manna for the Sabbath	Section 3: Manna for the Sanctuary
Reaction: Disobedience	But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, (v. 20a)	It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, (v. 27a)	
Result	and it bred worms and became foul; (v. 20b)	but they found none. (v. 27b)	
Reaction: Disapproval	and Moses was angry with them. (v. 20c)	Then YHWH said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my instructions? (v. 28)	
Rationale for the Sabbath		See, YHWH has given you the Sabbath; therefore he gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. (v. 29a)	
Command III		Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.” (v. 29b)	
Reaction: Obedience	They gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; (v. 21a)	So the people rested on the seventh day. (v. 30)	
Description	but when the sun grew hot, it would melt. (v. 21b)	The house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed, white, and its taste was like wafers with honey. (v. 31)	

Reaction: Obedience. The paralleling style is evidenced by similar phraseology at the beginning of each of the three sections. In the case of the manna for the weekdays and for the sanctuary, the phraseology is exactly the same: *זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה*, “this is the word that YHWH has commanded” (vv. 16, 32). But the text highlights the account

of the manna for the Sabbath by short and precise wording, which is similar but stands out: *הוא אשר דבר יהוה*, “this is what YHWH has commanded” (v. 23).

The expression *הוא אשר דבר* occurs five times in the Hebrew Bible,³⁴ two times with YHWH as the subject (Exod 16:23; Lev 10:3). In all five occurrences, the events happening and the speeches taking place lead up to a culminating point in the story where the main character exclaims: *הוא אשר דבר*, “this is what I/he said/commanded.” For example, when Joseph meets his brothers in Egypt (Gen 42), he questions them, accuses them twice of being spies, and finally exclaims: *הוא אשר דברתי*, “it is as I said” (Gen 42:14). Then he takes action and arrests the brothers (v. 17). The literary structure of this narrative shows continuous development of action until the culminating point introduced by *הוא אשר דבר*. This expression appears to function likewise as a literary device in Exod 16:23 for introducing the culminating command regarding the manna for the Sabbath.

Result. In all three sections a command is given. However, the command of the manna for the Sabbath is introduced by a unique phrase that shows the significance of the Sabbath: *שבתון שבת־קדש ליהוה*, “Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to YHWH” (literal translation of v. 23). This phrase contains the nouns *שבת*, “Sabbath,” and *שבתון*, “Sabbath observance, Sabbath feast,”³⁵ that appear for the first time in the canonical Hebrew Bible. The noun *שבת* is further qualified by the adjective *קדש*. This appears to be an allusion to the seventh day of creation, since it was only this day of the creation week that was made holy by God (Gen 1:31-2:3). The Pentateuch includes other days and

³⁴ Gen 42:14; Exod 16:23; Lev 10:3; 2 Kgs 9:36; Ezek 38:17.

³⁵ See also Exod 31:15; Lev 23:24, 39.

festivals that are called “holy convocations” (מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ)³⁶ of the people, including the seventh-day Sabbath, but it is only the weekly Sabbath that is called a holy day,³⁷ a day made holy by God,³⁸ or a day to be kept holy by the people.³⁹ Also the word “tomorrow,” which announces that the Sabbath rest is on the day following the sixth day (Exod 16:22-23), correlates with the fact that the seventh day of creation followed the sixth day and was characterized by the verb שָׁבַת, “cease/rest.” Thus Exod 16:23 links the Sabbath with the seventh day of creation.

The commands regarding the manna for the weekdays and the manna for the sanctuary each consist of two imperatives (לִקְטוּ, “gather,” תִּקְחוּ, “take” [v. 16], and קַח, “take,” הֵן, “place, set” [v. 33]). However, in the section of the manna for the Sabbath, the command highlights the Sabbath by using three imperatives: “Bake what you will bake (אֶת אֲשֶׁר-תֵּאֲפֹן אֲפֹן) and boil what you will boil (אֶת אֲשֶׁר-תִּבְשֹׁל בִּשְׁלוּ), and all that is left over put aside (הַנִּיחָהוּ) to be kept until morning” (v. 23). Two of these imperatives emphasize the verbs אָפַה, “bake,” and בִּשַׁל, “boil,” by doubling them. The third imperative, נָוָה, “rest,” occurs four times in Exod 16, referring to the manna that was kept for the Sabbath and for the future generation in the sanctuary (vv. 23, 24, 33, 34). This verb appears again in the Sabbath command in Exod 20:11, referring to YHWH’s rest on the seventh day of creation.

³⁶ Exod 12:16; Lev 23:2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 21, 24, 27, 35, 36, 37; Num 28:18, 25, 26; 29:1, 7, 12.

³⁷ Exod 16:23; 31:14, 15. The only other time that the adjective קֹדֶשׁ is used with reference to a time unit is in Lev 25:12, where the jubilee year is called holy. As a sabbatical year, the jubilee is related to the weekly Sabbath.

³⁸ Gen 2:3; Exod 20:11.

³⁹ Exod 20:8; Deut 5:12.

With regard to the obedience of the people and the result of their obedience in the sections on the manna for the weekdays (Exod 16:17-18) and the manna for the future generations (vv. 34-35), the text concentrates on the lasting abundance of the manna that the people gathered and ate every day for forty years. In the section of the manna for the Sabbath, the text stresses the unspoiled nature of the manna for the Sabbath (v. 24).

At this point the section of the manna for the sanctuary comes to an end. The structural chain of command–obedience–positive outcome of this section is complete and nothing needs to be added. YHWH commanded, Moses transmitted the command, Aaron obeyed, and the people succeeded (vv. 34-35). Only the sections of the manna for the weekdays and the manna for the Sabbath continue the paralleling structure.

Command II. After the positive result recorded in Exod 16:18 and 24b, Moses gives a second command in both cases (vv. 19, 25). The command regarding the manna for the weekdays states that the people should not leave the manna overnight (v. 19). The command of the manna for the Sabbath stresses the importance of the Sabbath by the threefold use of הַיּוֹם, “today, the day,” that includes the definite article and makes clear that the Sabbath is *now*: “Eat it today (הַיּוֹם), for today (הַיּוֹם) is a Sabbath to YHWH; today (הַיּוֹם) you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, Sabbath, there will be none” (vv. 25-26).

Reaction: Disobedience. The text tells of the people’s disobedience in both cases (Exod 16:20a, 27a), and the results are disappointing (vv. 20b, 27b). In the case of the manna for the weekdays, Moses reacts angrily (v. 20c). However, in the case of the manna for the Sabbath, it is YHWH who reacts and interrogates Moses as the top leader by referring to “my commandments and my instructions,” which some of the people neglected when they went out searching for manna on the Sabbath (v. 28).

Rationale for the Sabbath. A rationale is given only for the Sabbath, starting with an imperative verb: “See (רֵאֵן), YHWH has given you the Sabbath; therefore (עַל־כֵּן) he gives you bread for two days on the sixth day” (v. 29a). This rationale places the gift of the Sabbath before the “double” gift of the bread and considers the latter as the logical result of the former. This rationale is surprising because it twists the entire flow of the narrative and suggests that the gift of the Sabbath is first in priority in Exod 16 even though the gift of the manna is first chronologically.

Command III. A third command, only for the Sabbath, reinforces the instructions of the manna for the Sabbath and includes two additional imperatives forming an antithetical parallelism (Exod 16:29b): “Remain (שָׁבוּ) every man in his place; let no man go out (אַל־יֵצֵא) of his place on the seventh day.”

Reaction: Obedience. Finally the people obey in both cases. In the case of the manna for the Sabbath, Exod 16 cites directly from the account of the creation Sabbath, paralleling the people’s rest with God’s rest on the seventh day of creation:

וַיִּשְׁבְּתוּ הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	“and the people rested on the seventh day” (Exod 16:30)
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי	“and he [God] rested on the seventh day” (Gen 2:2)

Description. The manna for the weekdays melted when the sun grew hot (Exod 16:21b). Only after the record about Sabbath rest the manna is named and described by its color, form, and taste (v. 31).

Structural Units

The following analysis of Exod 16 shows a complex structural arrangement of this chapter, which employs five structural units. All five units interlink texts that critics consider to be of different sources or redactions. The artistic arrangement of these structures shows that their members match each other not only by parallelism, but also by

contrast, allusion of specific terms, or by stylistic and rhetorical devices such as imagery, irony, and diction. The present study concurs here with Warning's analysis regarding the literary composition of the book of Leviticus in recognizing similar structural features in Exod 16, such as chiasms, parallel structures, and terminological patterns.⁴⁰ These structural arrangements and literary devices seem intended to convey the theological themes of this chapter.

The evidence of interrelated structural arrangements demonstrates that Exod 16 is a text where a distinction between sources or redactions is seemingly irrelevant or even non-existent, at least in the final form of the text. Each of these chiasmic structures shows both a complex artistic composition and a meaningful theological message. The careful blend of form and content suggests that more emphasis was placed on the structural outline of this chapter than on chronological factors for the sake of logical instruction regarding its main themes.

The following investigation will deal with each of the five structural units, their individual characteristic features, significant peculiarities, and meaning. In addition, the study will investigate how these units interact with each other and give meaning to the chapter as a whole.

The first structural unit (Exod 16:2-8) is arranged chiastically by means of specific key words:

A grumble (לִין), eat (אכל), meat (בשר), bread (לחם), to the full (לשבע),
YHWH (יהוה) (vv. 2-3a)

⁴⁰ Warning has demonstrated in great detail that literary artistic composition exists in the book of Leviticus on both microstructural and macrostructural levels, and literary devices, such as terminological patterns, chiasmic structures, and other kinds of structures, provide a key to better understand the theological message. Wilfried Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

- B people: you have brought us out (יִצֵא) (v. 3b)
 C go out (יִצֵא), gather (לָקַט), a day's portion daily (יּוֹם בַּיּוֹמוֹ) (v. 4a)
 X test (נִסָּה), Torah (תּוֹרָה) (v. 4b)
 C' prepare (כּוּן), bring in (בּוֹא), gather (לָקַט), daily (יּוֹם יּוֹם) (v. 5)
 B' Moses: the Lord has brought you out (יִצֵא) (vv. 6-7)
 A' grumble (לִינֵן), eat (אָכַל), meat (בָּשָׂר), bread (לֶחֶם), to the full (לְשַׂבַּע),
 YHWH (יְהוָה) (v. 8)

This chiasm shows that even though the complaints and murmurings of the people are addressed toward Moses and Aaron, they are ultimately directed at YHWH. However, he will deal with the situation in a miraculous way. Both Moses and Aaron respond to the accusations made against them with the words: “At evening you will know that YHWH has brought you out of Egypt and in the morning you will see the glory of YHWH” (Exod 16:6-7). The sequence evening–morning evokes the rhythm of creation as presented in Gen 1 and casts the miracle that is to come as belonging to the realm of the Creator God.

Verse 8, which is generally seen as awkward and incomplete,⁴¹ responds directly to the complaints of the people (v. 3) rather than repeating vv. 6-7. For in v. 8 Moses takes the stand not only by explaining the statements made by him and Aaron,⁴² but by specifically speaking of the meat in the evening and the bread in the morning he alludes directly to the meat and bread for which the people are craving (v. 3). Furthermore, in v.

⁴¹ Critics speak of v. 8 as a gloss that is placed here in a wrong position by an unskillful compiler. See Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness*, 84; Maiberger, *Manna*, 207; Ruprecht, “Stellung und Bedeutung der Erzählung vom Mannawunder (Ex 16) im Aufbau der Priesterschrift,” 280.

⁴² “When there is a repetition like *And said . . . — And said . . .* with reference to the same subject, only the first *said* [the first time in v. 6] introduces the actual words spoken, whereas the second *said* [in v. 8] merely elucidates the inner purport of these words. . . . And it is precisely because the sentence is only explanatory that it is incomplete and its first part is not expressly stated.” See Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 192.

8 Moses points out the contradiction between YHWH as the giver of the means of life (meat and bread) and the people's bizarre wish to have died by YHWH's hand when eating meat and bread in Egypt (v. 3).

The climax of the chiasm in v. 4b includes the test based on YHWH's תורה, indicating that this is the foundation upon which the whole narrative builds its arguments and follow-ups. The תורה then reappears in the question of YHWH: "How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my instructions (תורה)?" (v. 28) as part of the fourth structural unit dealing with the manna for the Sabbath. This link reveals that the first structure is complemented by the fourth and that the instructions of the entire chapter Exod 16 regarding both the manna for the weekdays and the manna for the Sabbath must be seen as one literary unit and must be read together in order to realize that the instructions for the Sabbath are in view from the beginning of the narrative.

The second structural unit (Exod 16:9-15) is also arranged chiastically by means of key words that either parallel or complement each other:

- A Aaron's request to the sons of Israel (בני ישראל): "Come near before YHWH" (קרבו לפני יהוה), say (אמר) (v. 9)
- B behold (והנה), the glory of YHWH (כבוד יהוה) (v. 10)
- C between evenings/at twilight (בין הערבים), meat (בשר), and in the morning (ובבקר), bread (vv. 11-12a)
- X for I am YHWH your God (כי אני יהוה אלהיכם) (v. 12b)
- C' at evening (בערב), the quails (השלו), and in the morning (ובבקר), the dew (הטל) (v. 13)
- B' behold (והנה), a fine flake-like thing (מחספס דק) (v. 14)
- A' response of the sons of Israel (בני ישראל): "What is it?" (מן הוא), say (אמר), YHWH (יהוה) (v. 15)

This chiasm focuses on the presence of YHWH as the God of Israel, depicting his presence as an unusual and amazing event, even though the book of Exodus tells of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night as YHWH's continuous presence

during Israel's desert journeys.⁴³ This theophany of YHWH corresponds to the miraculous appearance of the manna after the morning dew evaporated. Then, as YHWH promised, the quails came in the evening and the dew covered the camp in the morning to fulfill the promise of meat and bread. However, the entire scene of this chiasm develops around the center: "and you shall know that I am YHWH your God" (v. 12).

The importance of the verbless clause, **אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם**, "I am YHWH your God," is shown by its thirty-one occurrences in the Pentateuch where it appears as YHWH's emphatic pledge to the people of Israel during their desert journeys.⁴⁴ This clause guarantees God's promise and presence. It is attested in the patriarchal period, when God assured Abraham: "I am YHWH who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it" (Gen 15:7). It brings to mind the miraculous deliverance of the people from Egypt: "I am YHWH, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am YHWH your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Exod 6:6-7; 10:2). It reaches forward to Mount Sinai, where God delivered the law: "I am YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Exod 20:2). It expresses the reason for God's desire to dwell in the midst of the people: "They shall know that I am YHWH their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am YHWH their God" (Exod 29:46).

⁴³ Exod 13:21-22; 40:36-38.

⁴⁴ Exod 6:7; 16:12; 29:46; Lev 11:44; 18:2, 4, 30; 19:2, 3, 4, 10, 25, 31, 34, 36; 20:7, 24; 23:22, 43; 24:22; 25:17, 38, 55; 26:1, 13, 44; Num 10:10; 15:41; Deut 24:6.

The first and second structural units of Exod 16 are closely interconnected through references to the manna and the glory of YHWH. The following pattern of the terms לחם, “bread” (i.e., manna), and כבוד, “glory,” reveals the artistic arrangement and interconnectedness between the two units. The “bread” announced by Moses (v. 8) is placed at the center of the structure conveying the miraculous appearance of the bread in relation to the appearance of the glorious presence of YHWH in the desert:

A	לחם	(v. 3)
A	לחם	(v. 4)
	B	כבוד (v. 7)
A	לחם	(v. 8)
	B	כבוד (v. 10)
A	לחם	(v. 12)
A	לחם	(v. 15)

Starting with Exod 16:16 the literary arrangement changes from a chiasmic structure to a more intricate pattern that includes panel structures, chiasm, and linear arrangement. As already pointed out above, verses 16-35 are arranged according to a paralleling outline of three sections (vv. 16-21; 22-31; 32-35) that indicates a didactic purpose and is marked by the phrases “This is the word that YHWH has commanded” (vv. 16, 32) and “This is what YHWH commanded” (v. 16:22). The pattern “command–reaction–result” that runs through these three sections impacts the microstructure of each of these sections and generates a similar pattern: “command–obedience or command–disobedience–obedience.” The following analysis will analyze the literary structure of these three sections in more detail.

The third structural unit (vv. 16-21) is arranged according to a parallel pattern, with an additional member at the end: (A–A' / B–B' / C).

A	Command: gather (לקט) it, every man as much as he should eat (איש לפי אכלו), according to the number of persons (v. 16)
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- A' Obedience: they did so (ויעשו־כן), they gathered (וילקטו) (v. 17)
 every man gathered (לקט) as much as he should eat (איש לפי־אכלו) (v. 18)
- B Command: do not leave (אל־יותר), any of it (ממנו),
 until morning (עד־בקר) (v. 19)
- B' Disobedience: they did not listen (ולא־שמעו); they left (ויותרו)
 of it (ממנו), until morning (עד־בקר) (v. 20)
- C Obedience: they gathered it (לקט),
 morning by morning (בבקר בבקר),
 every man as much as he should eat (איש כפי אכלו) (v. 21)

This structure deals with the manna for the weekdays and shows that there is an initial command to gather a day's portion for each member of the household. The people followed this command and everything seemed to go well until Moses delivered a second command, which identifies the issue that decides between obedience and disobedience: "Let no man leave any of it [manna] until morning" (v. 19). The outline above shows that some of the people did not listen to Moses and left part of the gathered manna until morning, when it became wormy and odious (v. 20). Then after the remark about Moses' anger, the structure concludes with a positive report on the people's obedience. This report sets the answer to both commands (vv. 16 and 19).

The fourth structural unit (Exod 16:22-30) contains the most detailed and intricate structure: a chiasm that centers on the threefold expression of the Sabbath as *the* day (היום) of YHWH (A-A' / B-X-B' / A''-A'''):

- A *Rationale and Command*: On the sixth day (ביום הששי), they gathered twice as much bread (לקטו לחם משנה שני), two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, then he said to them: This is what YHWH said: bake (אפו) what you will bake and boil (בשל) what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside (הניהו) to be kept until morning (vv. 22-23)
- B *Obedience*: So they put it aside (ויניחו) until morning as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul (ולא הבאיש) nor was there any worm in it (ורמה לא־היתה בו) (v. 24)
- C *Sabbath Command*: Moses said: Eat it (אכלהו) today (היום), for today (היום) is a Sabbath to YHWH (כִּי־שבת היום ליהוה) today (היום) you will not find it in the field. Six days (ששת ימים) you

shall gather (לקט) it, but on the seventh day (ביום השביעי), Sabbath (שבת), there will be none (לא יהיה בו) (vv. 25-26)

C' *Sabbath Violation*: It came about on the seventh day (ביום השביעי), that some of the people went out (יצא) to gather (לקט), but they found none (ולא מצאו) (v. 27)

X *Challenge*: Then YHWH said to Moses: “How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my instructions?” (v. 28)

A' *Rationale and Command*: See (ראו), YHWH has given you the Sabbath; therefore he gives you bread for two days (להם יומימי), on the sixth day (ביום הששי). Remain (שבו) every man in his place, let no man go out (אל-יצא) of his place (vv. 28-29)

B' *Obedience*: So the people rested (וישבתו) on the seventh day (ביום השביעי) (v. 30)

This structure deals specifically with the instructions of the manna for the Sabbath. The command to prepare the manna for the Sabbath is followed by obedience. But then Moses issues a direct Sabbath command, even providing the reason for eating the manna that was kept overnight, with strong emphasis on the Sabbath as *the* day (היום). However, some of the people violate the Sabbath and YHWH challenges Moses as the representative of the people by pointing to his commandments and laws. Another command is then issued including the rationale for the double portion of the manna. Finally, the people obey and cease (שבת) work on the seventh day.

The paralleling nature of the structure shows that gathering a double portion of manna on the sixth day (v. 22) has as its consequence the people's rest on the seventh day (v. 30). Moses' interaction with the leaders of the congregation (v. 22) is paralleled by God's interaction with Moses (v. 28) as the chief leader. The threefold היום, “today,” at the center is followed by four other occurrences of this word. This total of seven occurrences correlates with the fact that the seventh day is the Sabbath (vv. 25, 26, 27, 29, 30).

The three commands in the section of the manna for the Sabbath (vv. 23, 25, 29) suggest the high importance of the Sabbath section (vv. 22-31), as compared with the other sections, which contain less commands: two in the section of the manna for the weekdays (vv. 16, 19) and one in the section of the manna for the future generations (v. 33). Furthermore, the commands of the Sabbath section contain seven imperative verbs, out of the fourteen imperatives in the entire chapter. The first command (A) includes three imperatives: אָפּוּ, “bake” (*qal impv.*), בִּשְׁלוּ, “boil” (*qal impv.*), and הִנִּיחוּ, “put to rest, set aside” (*hiphil impv.*) (Exod 16:23). This parallels the third command (A’), also with three imperatives, רְאוּ, “see” (*qal impv.*), שִׁבוּ, “remain” (*qal impv.*), and אַל־יֵצֵא, “let not go out” (*qal impf. jussive*) (v. 29). The Sabbath command (C) contains one imperative verb: אֲכַלְהוּ, “eat” (*qal impv.*), in connection to the Sabbath as the defined day, “today,” the day of YHWH (v. 25). This emphasizes the fact that obedience versus disobedience in relation to the manna (vv. 24, 27) is decided in terms of whether the people comply with the Sabbath command.

The chiasmic correspondence between the first command, “Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning” (v. 23), and the third command in the Sabbath section, “Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place” (v. 29), indicates that all imperative verbs give instructions regarding the Sabbath. The imperatives “bake,” “boil,” and “put to rest / set aside” give instructions for the sixth day in order to be prepared for the Sabbath day and to refrain from activities of food preparation on the Sabbath. The manna may be baked

and boiled on the sixth day and what is left may be kept raw overnight.⁴⁵ The miracle here is that it will not be spoiled under any condition. The imperatives “see,” “remain,” and “do not go out” refer directly to the Sabbath and contain clear Sabbath instructions as part of “my commandments and my instructions” (v. 28).⁴⁶

The center of the structural unit on the Sabbath contains the imperative verb **אכלהו**, “eat it,” followed by a threefold **היום**, “today,”⁴⁷ pointing to the miracle of fresh manna that had been kept overnight for the Sabbath. *Today* identifies the Sabbath as the day when the people are to enjoy food. *Today* is the day of YHWH. *Today* is the day when the fields remain empty and bread is truly a miracle of the Sabbath.

An interesting twist occurs in Exod 16:29 with the gift of the Sabbath placed first and identified as the cause for the double gift of the manna by the use of the preposition of causality **על-כן**, “because of, thus, therefore.”⁴⁸ In addition, this text includes an ironic comment on v. 3 by the use of the roots **ישב**, “dwell, sit, remain,” and **צא**, “go out,” in both verses. At the beginning of the narrative, the people remember how they sat (**ישב**) by the pots of meat and ate bread to the full in Egypt, and then they accuse Moses and Aaron for bringing them out (**יצא**) from there (v. 3). Now, on the Sabbath, YHWH commands that the people should dwell or remain (**ישב**) in their own place and not go out

⁴⁵ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 198; Rashi in M. Rosenbaum and A. M. Silbermann, *Pentateuch with Targum Onkrlos, Haphtaroth and Rashi's Commentary translated into English and annotated: II Exodus* (Jerusalem, 5733), 85.

⁴⁶ Contrary to Beuken who holds that Exod 16:23 does not mean that one must refrain from the activities of baking and boiling, but that one does not go out to gather manna. Beuken, “Exodus 16.5, 23: A Rule Regarding the Keeping of the Sabbath,” 10.

⁴⁷ Childs understands the threefold “today” as carrying “a festive ring,” in *The Book of Exodus*, 290.

⁴⁸ Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 639.

(וַיִּצְא) to gather the manna (v. 29). The irony of these two verses shows that it takes a command of YHWH to implement what the people initially wished for, to sit or dwell and eat, and that this desire can be fulfilled only on the Sabbath.

The fifth structural unit (Exod 16:32-35a) is shorter and seems almost like an appendix to the chapter. It is arranged according to a linear pattern (A–B–C–D), demonstrating the ideal model of divine communication and human response: command followed by instant obedience:

- A Command (צוה): YHWH (יהוה), Moses (משה), an omerful (מלא העמר), to be kept (למשמרת), throughout your generations (לדורותיכם), bread (לחם) (v. 32)
- B Command: specifically given to Aaron (אהרן): an omerful (מלא העמר), to be kept (למשמרת), throughout your generations (לדורותיכם), manna (מן), placed it before YHWH (והנח אתו לפני יהוה) (v. 33)
- C Obedience: command (צוה) followed, YHWH (יהוה), Moses (משה), Aaron (אהרן), to be kept (למשמרת), before the Testimony (לפני העדות) (v. 34)
- D Obedience: the sons of Israel ate the manna (המין) forty years until they came to an inhabited (נושבת) land (v. 35a)

The command to keep a jar of manna for future generations so that they will see the bread that YHWH gave Israel throughout the desert journeys is immediately implemented by Aaron, and the people follow up by cooperating with God to receive manna during the entire desert journey until they reach the Promised Land.

Structural Coherence

The interconnectedness of all five structural units seems to be accomplished by a key word that occurs five times in Exod 16: ראה, “see” (vv. 7, 10, 15, 29, 32). In the first structural unit, the people receive the promise that they will *see* the glory of YHWH in the morning (v. 7). In the second unit the glory of YHWH *appears* to the people (v. 10) and they *see* the manna after the layer of dew evaporates (v. 15). In the fourth structural

unit, the people are urged to *see* that YHWH has given them the Sabbath and therefore they receive a double portion of bread on the sixth day (v. 29). In the fifth structural unit, the manna needs to be kept so that the future generations will *see* it and know that YHWH sustained his people after he brought them out of Egypt (see table 8).

Table 8. Interconnectedness in Exodus 16

Unit	The key-word רָאָה “see”
Glory of YHWH:	“in the morning you will see (רָאָה) the glory of YHWH” (v. 7)
Glory of YHWH:	“behold, the glory of YHWH appeared (נִרְאָה) in the cloud” (v. 10)
Bread of YHWH:	“When the sons of Israel looked (רָאָה), they said to one another, ‘What is it?’” (v. 15)
Sabbath of YHWH:	“See (רָאָה), YHWH has given you the Sabbath, therefore he gives you bread for two days on the sixth day” (v. 29)
Bread of YHWH:	“Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see (רָאָה) the bread that I fed you in the wilderness.” (v. 32)

By repeating the verb רָאָה, the narrative binds all events of Exod 16 together into a coherent whole. The interrelated structures demonstrate that the glorious presence of YHWH, the bread given by YHWH, the Sabbath of YHWH, and the bread that the future generations will regard as the bread of YHWH convey the theological message that *YHWH* is the sustainer of the Israelites’ life and at the center of their experience.

***Leitworte* and Key Words**

Exodus 16 is saturated with *Leitworte* (“leading words”) that employ the rhetorical device of alliteration of the consonants שׁ (*shin*) and בֵּ (*bet*) to refer directly to

the Sabbath or evoke significant concepts regarding it: the noun *שַׁבָּת*, “Sabbath” (vv. 23, 25, 26, 29), the noun *שַׁבְּתוֹן*, “Sabbath of Sabbaths”⁴⁹ (v. 23), the verb *שָׁבַת*, “cease/rest” (v. 30), the ordinal number *הַשְּׁבִיעִי*, “the seventh” (vv. 26, 27, 29, 30), and the root *יָשַׁב*, “dwell, sit” (vv. 3, 29, 35).⁵⁰ These *Leitworte* are essential to the overall meaning of Exod 16 and convey that the Sabbath is the main theme of this chapter.

In addition, several key words dominate this chapter such as the word *יוֹם*, “day.” This word occurs seventeen times in Exod 16.⁵¹ Without the article, it occurs seven times,⁵² and with the article, *הַיּוֹם*, “the day,” or *בַּיּוֹם*, “on the day,” occurs ten times, three times referring to the sixth day⁵³ and seven times to the seventh day.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Exod 16 mentions both the weekdays, including the sixth day, seven times (vv. 4, 5, 22, 26, 29), and speaks of the Sabbath seven times (vv. 25, 26, 29, 30). This balancing of the

⁴⁹ See Exod 16:23; 31:15; Lev 23:24, 39; Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, 948; Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” 27, 40, n. 78. When *שַׁבְּתוֹן* occurs together with *שָׁנָה* it means “sabbatical year” (Lev 25:5) and in the expression *שַׁבְּתוֹן* it means “most solemn Sabbath” (Exod 35:2; Lev 23:3; 25:4). This can be the Day of Atonement (Exod 16:31; 23:32). See further, Roy Gane, *Cult and Character* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 310, where Gane identifies the expression *שַׁבְּתוֹן* as “super-Sabbath,” referring to Levine, who explains that this expression conveys the force of a superlative. See Baruch Levine, *Leviticus* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 109.

⁵⁰ Geller, “Manna and Sabbath,” 6-7. Geller suggests that the root *שָׁבַע*, “satisfy, fill” (Exod 16:3, 8, 12), may be added to this list of *Leitworte*, since the consonant *שׁ* (*sin*) is very close to *שׁ* (*shin*).

⁵¹ Exod 16:1, 4 (2x), 5, 22, 25 (3x), 26 (2x), 27, 29 (3x), 30.

⁵² Exod 16:1, 4 (2x), 5 (2x), 26, 29.

⁵³ Exod 16:5, 22, 29.

⁵⁴ Exod 16:25 (3x), 26, 27, 29, 30.

number seven between the weekdays and the Sabbath may be seen in the context of the gift of the manna as a miracle for both the weekdays and the Sabbath.

The following points show the significance that the particular command in Exod 16:25 holds with its emphasis on the Sabbath as *the* day of YHWH:

1. The command reads: “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to YHWH; today you will not find it in the open country.” This is the first time in the Pentateuch that an explicit link occurs between **הַיּוֹם** and the noun **שַׁבָּת**, “Sabbath.” This link is emphasized by the threefold use of **הַיּוֹם**.

2. For the first time in the Pentateuch (and therefore in the canonical scriptures), the Sabbath is incorporated in an explicit command for human beings.

3. The command of the Sabbath is closely related to the gift of food: “Eat it (**אֲכַלְהוּ**) *today* (**הַיּוֹם**), for *today* is a Sabbath to YHWH (**לַיהוָה הַיּוֹם לְיְהוָה**), *today* (**הַיּוֹם**) you will not find it in the open country” (v. 25). The order of the gift of food followed by the Sabbath also occurs in Gen 1:29-2:3 and expands the intertextual relationship between Exod 16 and the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3.

Another prominent key word is **יָצָא**, “go out.” It occurs seven times in Exod 16 in a chiasmic arrangement:

- A “their departure (**לְיָצֵאתָם**) from the land of Egypt” (v. 1)
- B “for you have brought us out (**כִּי־הוֹצֵאתָם**) into this wilderness” (v. 3)
- C “go out (**יָצֵא**) and gather a day’s portion every day” (v. 4)
- X “you will know that YHWH has brought you out (**הוֹצִיא**) of the land of Egypt” (v. 6)
- C’ “on the seventh day some of the people went out (**יָצְאוּ**) to gather, but they found none” (v. 27)
- B’ “let no man go out (**אֶל־יָצֵא**) of his place on the seventh day” (v. 29)
- A’ “I brought you out (**בְּהוֹצִיאִי**) of the land of Egypt” (v. 32)

The chiasmic arrangement of this word emphasizes that the departure from the land of Egypt (Exod 16:1) is ultimately the work of YHWH (vv. 6, 32). This statement is

emphasized in the center of the chiasm and then at the concluding frame of the chiastic arrangement. The accusations of the people that Moses and Aaron brought them out to kill them with hunger are countered by YHWH's command not to go out on the seventh day because they have enough bread to be satisfied. Also, the command to go out and gather a day's portion daily is opposed by the disobedience of some of the people, who went out to gather bread on the seventh day but found none. This chiastic arrangement adds to the literary unity of Exod 16 by showing that the section of the chapter that focuses on the murmuring of the people is directly linked to the Sabbath.

A word that is used only once in Exod 16, but proves to be of great importance, is the verb **נִסָּה**, “test, try” (v. 4). The intrinsic didactic character of the narrative teaching about the weekly rhythm of time defined by the Sabbath and the gift of the manna seems to be developed upon the concept of the test. The verb **נִסָּה** appears first in the canonical Hebrew Bible in Gen 22:1, where God tested Abraham when he called him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Now, after the exodus, the verb occurs in three stories about Israel's complaining attitude: (1) At Marah, the people complain about the bitter water, a miracle occurs, and the text observes: “There he made for them a statute and regulation, and there he tested (**נִסָּה**) them” (Exod 15:25); (2) in the desert of Sin, where the people complain about their lack of food, YHWH personally answers: “I may test (**נִסָּה**) them, whether or not they will walk in my instruction” (Exod 16:4); and (3) at Rephidim, where the people quarrel about the lack of water, Moses asks: “Why do you test (**נִסָּה**) YHWH?” (Exod 17:2).

In Exod 16:4, **נִסָּה** occurs in YHWH's first reaction to the people's complaints and occupies the center of the chiasm in Exod 16:4-5. As already pointed out, the chiastic structure demonstrates that the testing covers both the going out and gathering of the

daily portion of bread and the bringing in and preparing of the double portion on the sixth day. The instructions for the sixth day in v. 5, however, anticipate the instructions in v. 23 that are given specifically in view of the Sabbath, thus placing both the gathering of the manna and the instructions for the Sabbath under the weight of its theological meaning:

1. The instructions for the daily activities belong together with the instructions for the sixth day as the preparation day for the Sabbath.

2. Refusal to follow the instructions means a refusal to obey God's will as expressed in his commandments and laws.⁵⁵

3. The Sabbath has the character of a test of obedience and faithfulness,⁵⁶ and represents the ultimate sign (cf. Exod 31:12-17), indicating the people's attitude towards God and their relationship with God.

The highly complex structure of Exod 16 shows that the artistic arrangement of this narrative underlines its thematic unity on both the structural and theological levels. By underscoring that Exod 16 is historical in nature, the narrative places the miraculous events of the seventh week after the departure from Egypt within the broad theological message of the book of Exodus, where the seventh day, the holy Sabbath of YHWH, originates in the seventh day of creation (see Exod 20:8-11).

Theological Implications

Literary analysis of Exod 16 indicates that this text is cast into the form of a narrative that displays different scenes arranged in five structural units, which interconnect to build one whole literary entity. The narrative shows a positive outcome of

⁵⁵ Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch," 27.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

the events in the desert of Sin, while reflecting upon these events in a didactic and theological manner, rather than by following the chronological sequence of the events. The narrative seems to link the past event of creation to the present events in the desert of Sin and to point to future events in Israel's journey through the desert. In this way Exod 16 appears to be a condensed and concentrated text, or, as Meyers puts it, "a microcosm of the Israelite experience"⁵⁷ that builds a bridge between the past and the future, while developing and teaching the theme of the Sabbath from the theological perspective about the gift of food.

Sabbath as the Reason for the Manna

The interconnectedness of the events in Exod 16 begins with the theme of the people's complaining and ungrateful attitude toward YHWH. Unlike the narratives that frame Exod 16, where Moses needs to intervene when the people complain about water (Exod 15:22-26; Exod 17:1-7), here it is YHWH who immediately responds when the people complain about food. It appears that the matter of food is something that concerns YHWH in a way different from the matter of water.

YHWH's immediate response in relation to food may imply an allusion to the first words spoken by God to human beings, also in relation to food: "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you" (Gen 1:29). These words identified the relationship that God established with humanity at the time of creation. This relationship needs to be tested, "whether or not they will walk in my instruction" (Exod 16:4). The test, however, is placed within the context of YHWH's promise that he will

⁵⁷ Carol Meyers, *Exodus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 130.

provide food, because he is the God of the Israelites, “I am YHWH your God” (Exod 16:12). Both YHWH’s assurance about the food and his pledge to be the personal God (Exod 16:4, 12) carry covenantal significance (Gen 15:7; 17:7; Exod 6:7) and underscore the already existing relationship between Israel and the Lord.

The existing relationship that caused YHWH to remember (Exod 2:24; 3:7-10) and to deliver the Israelites is anchored in the creation order because only in accordance with this original order is the manna given by YHWH as a new work of creation and gift for life. Otherwise, this food would be just bread like that of the “land of Egypt” that the Israelites craved for and linked to their strange wish to have died “by YHWH’s hand” in the land of Egypt (Exod 16:3).

The theme of creation as the basis for the gift of bread is presented by parallelism between key elements in Exod 16:14-15 and Gen 1:29. In both texts, God gives the food as a miraculous and free gift to human beings.

Gen 1:29

“Behold (הנה), I have given you you (נתתי לכם) every plant yielding seed that is on the surface (על־פני) of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you (לאכלה).”

Exod 16:14-15

“When the layer of dew evaporated, behold (הנה), on the surface (על־פני) of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing. . . . When the sons of Israel saw *it*, they said to one another, “What is it?” . . . And Moses said to them, “It is the bread which YHWH has given you (לאכלה) for food (נתן לכם).”

In both the creation and manna narratives, God grants food as a gift for life in relation to the Sabbath. On the sixth day of creation, food is God’s last creation activity before the concluding remark: “and God saw all that he had made and it was very good” (Gen 1:31). Then the seventh day follows (Gen 2:1-3). In the narrative of Exod 16, the sixth day is marked by the double gift of manna, followed by the seventh day, the Sabbath (vv. 22, 23, 29).

The narrative in Exod 16 situates the Sabbath in the culminating position as the reason for the double portion of bread on the sixth day. In a similar way, the first creation account shows the Sabbath's culminating position and Sabbath blessing and holiness as the goal of all creation.⁵⁸

Genesis 2:3

“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because (כי) in it he rested (שבת) from all his work which God had created and made.”

Exodus 16:29

“See, YHWH has given you the Sabbath (השבת); therefore (על-כן) he gives you bread for two days on the sixth day.”

The relational character of the Sabbath is conveyed in the comment that follows after the people rested (ישבתו) on the seventh day: “The house of Israel named it manna” (Exod 16:31). Here, for the first time in the canonical Hebrew Bible, the term *בית-ישראל*, “house of Israel” appears. It will recur only seven more times in the whole Pentateuch, as compared with the term *בני ישראל*, “sons of Israel,” which occurs 376 times, and *עדת בני-ישראל*, “congregation of the sons of Israel” (25x). The second time when *בית-ישראל* is used, the book of Exodus summarizes the experience of Israel during forty years in proximity to the sanctuary filled with the glory of YHWH: “For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of YHWH was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel (*בית-ישראל*)” (Exod 40:38).

It seems that the expression “house of Israel” occupies a special place in the Pentateuch and is employed when the text wants to emphasize the matter of divine – human relationship as well as relationship among the people, i.e., as they mourn at the death of Aaron's sons (Lev 10:6) and the death of Aaron (Num 20:29). Elsewhere in the

⁵⁸ See theological implications of the creation Sabbath in chapter 2.

Pentateuch,⁵⁹ the term “house of Israel” seems to emphasize a strong bond between the people established by the presence of YHWH. In Exod 16 this close relationship exists because of YHWH who manifested himself in the cloud of his glory presence (vv. 6-10) and because of YHWH of the Sabbath (vv. 23, 29). Likewise, in Exod 39-40, a text that contains key concepts and echoes of the creation Sabbath,⁶⁰ the glory presence of YHWH and the Sabbath are at the center of the narrative.

Sabbath as a Test of Faith

Exodus 16 shows that along with the gift of the manna goes a test: “that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in my instruction” (v. 4). As the chiasmic structure of Exod 16:4-5 has already demonstrated, the testing is intended for both the work of the weekdays and for the specific preparation that needs to take place on the sixth day for the arrival of the Sabbath: “On the sixth day they prepare what they bring in” (v. 5) and “Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning” (v. 23). This testing is a call for active decision on the basis of the *תורה* regarding the people’s faithfulness.

Three aspects characterize the testing in Exod 16:4. First, it is a testing coming out of an already existing relationship between YHWH and Israel. YHWH has made himself known as the God of Israel’s ancestors, with whom he made an everlasting covenant, and as the God who delivered Israel from Egypt through miraculous signs and wonders. Second, the testing comes after God set up statutes and regulations for the people and is based on YHWH’s Torah (Exod 15:25; 16:4). Third, the testing comes in

⁵⁹ Exod 16:31; 40:38; Lev 17:3, 8, 10; 22:18.

⁶⁰ Exod 39:32, 43; 40:2; cf. Gen 1:31; 2:1-3.

the context of YHWH's pledge, "I will rain bread from heaven for you" (Exod 16:4). Before the Lord tests his people, he abundantly provides for them.

The theological meaning may then suggest the following: (1) The divine instructions for daily activities are closely related to the instructions for the sixth day as the preparation day for the Sabbath; (2) a refusal to follow the instructions means a refusal to obey God's will, as expressed in his commandments and laws;⁶¹ and (3) the Sabbath has the character of a test of obedience and faith,⁶² and thus represents a crucial sign regarding the relationship between the people and their God.

The testing of Exod 16 shows remarkable parallels with the testing of Abraham in Gen 22. It is only in these two narratives that the theological theme of testing covers multiple scenes: (1) In both narratives, the verb נִסָּה, "test" is placed at the beginning (Gen 22:1; cf., Exod 16:4); (2) in both narratives the testing is a theme that runs through the entirety of both chapters; (3) in both narratives the testing leads to a positive ending (because of the obedience of Abraham in Gen 22:16-17; because of the obedience of Aaron in Exod 16:34); and (4) as a result of the positive outcome of the test, both narratives conclude with reference to the covenant between God and the generations to come (Gen 22:17-18; cf. Exod 16:31-35).

In both Gen 22 and Exod 16, the testing is characterized as a journey. In Gen 22 the verb הֵלַךְ, "go," occurs seven times, including God's impressive call לֵךְ-לֵךְ, "go!" (Gen 22:2), which evokes the first call of Abraham (Gen 12:1). Throughout the narrative,

⁶¹ The plural of מִצְוֹתַי, "my commandments," and תּוֹרָתִי, "my instructions," in Exod 16:28 shows that this verse implies all of God's commandments and the whole Torah. See also Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch," 27.

⁶² Ibid.

Abraham is on his way: Six times the verb is used for Abraham's way going up to the place where he will offer his son, before he receives the covenantal blessing and then finds his way down again to Beersheba.

In Exod 16, on the other hand, the verb הלך is used only once, but then it appears in direct connection with the testing and the Torah, "that I may test them, whether or not they will walk (הלך) in my instruction (תורה)" (Exod 16:4). The desert journey of the Israelites, which means actual physical walking, seems to come to a standstill in the wilderness of Sin. For the first time after the exodus event, the verb הלך does not refer to physical traveling, but takes a meaning that alludes to a prior call of God to Abraham: "I am God Almighty; walk (התהלך , *hitpael* impv.) before me, and be blameless" (Gen 17:1). To walk before God or to walk in his instruction (תורה) is to pass the test. However, the testing in Exod 16 takes the course further into the dimension of time: For six days the people are to go out and gather the manna, but on the seventh day they are to sit/dwell (ישב) in their place and enjoy the gift of the bread. In the end, the Sabbath is the testing ground for the people's obedience and willingness to depend on God.

Finally, in both narratives the verb ראה , "see," plays a significant role by its fivefold use in each of the chapters. In Gen 22 it is YHWH who provided (ראה) the ram (Gen 22:14), and in Exod 16 YHWH provided the Sabbath so that the future generations would be able to see the bread that YHWH gave to the people during their desert journeys: "See (ראה), YHWH has given you the Sabbath, therefore he gave you bread" (vv. 29, 32). The seeing seems to be connected to the test. For just as Abraham needed to go up and look upwards to the mountain, even if he did not know yet about the gift of the ram, so also the people of Israel needed to go out and see the glory of YHWH (vv. 7, 10) and the manna (v. 15) so that they could become aware of the gift of the Sabbath. Thus

the seeing in both narratives requires human participation so that one may become aware of YHWH's gifts.

The test, therefore, is not a temptation from God's part to expose human failure, but to lead to a positive end (Deut 8:16), for the gift is always there before God calls to the test. Provision is already made. What is still an open question is whether the relationship between the human being and God is strong enough to follow his תורה, to go up and see the ram, as in Abraham's case, or to go out and see the glory and the manna, as in the case of the Israelites. The link between Exod 16 and Gen 22 is the concept of total dependence upon God in order to receive and appreciate the free gift of life.

Sabbath as Rationale for Sanctuary Worship

Scholars recognize several expressions as cultic language in Exod 16, even though the sanctuary and its services were not yet built and established. One of these is "come near before YHWH (לפני יהוה)" (Exod 16:9), which later appears in the context of worship at the sanctuary (Lev 9:2; 10:1; Num 16:17). However, its rich theological meaning also derives from narratives that tell of past events, such as Cain leaving "the presence of YHWH (מלפני יהוה)" (Gen 4:16); Nimrod, who is called a mighty hunter "before YHWH (לפני יהוה)" (Gen 10:9); Abraham who stood "before YHWH (יהוה לפני)" (Gen 18:22); and Jacob who was blessed in the "presence of YHWH (לפני יהוה)" (Gen 27:7). In this way Exod 16 shows that the people of Israel, as the descendants of the patriarchs, are called to stand in the tradition of the forefathers. Sanctuary worship, with its frequent call to come before YHWH or to worship before YHWH, would grow out of this past relationship between YHWH and Israel's forefathers.

Another expression is "the glory of YHWH appeared in the cloud" (Exod 16:10). This points to the cloud by day and the fire pillar by night that continuously guided the

people during their desert journeys (Exod 13:21, 22; 40:38). This cloud moved to the tabernacle and filled it so that Moses could not enter (Exod 40:34).

The term *העדה*, “testimony, witness”⁶³ (Exod 16:34), appears together with the six occurrences of *העדה*, “the congregation, assembly”⁶⁴ (vv. 1, 2, 9, 10, 22; 17:1). While there is no support for an etymological connection between these words, Milgrom observes that the congregation or assembly has an important function as the witness to significant events in ritual contexts (Lev 8:3-5; 9:5; Num 8:9-20; 20:27-29).⁶⁵ In Exod 16 the witnessing aspect may be recognized when the “congregation” (*העדה*) is called “before YHWH” (*לפני יהוה*) to see (*ראה*) his glory (Exod 16:9-10). Also, the bread placed before the “testimony” (*העדה*) “before YHWH” (*לפני יהוה*) is to be seen (*ראה*) by the future generations (vv. 32-34).

Another connection exists between the bread in the Sabbath instructions (vv. 23-24) and the bread in Aaron’s instructions for the sanctuary (vv. 33-34). In the instructions for the Sabbath, the people are to “put aside” (*נודח*) the bread for the Sabbath and in the instructions for Aaron he has to “put aside” (*נודח*) the bread for the future generations. Both the people and Aaron followed these instructions and the bread that was put aside for the Sabbath did not become spoiled (v. 24), and the bread for the future generations was placed before the “testimony” (v. 34). The parallelism then suggests that the bread put aside before the testimony is similar to the bread put aside for the Sabbath, that is, it did not become spoiled (see table 9).

⁶³ H. Simian-Yofre, “*עוד* ‘*wd*,” *TDOT* 10:512.

⁶⁴ J. Milgrom, “*עדע* ‘*eda*,” *TDOT* 10:468-80.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 473.

Table 9. Parallelism between the Sabbath manna and the sanctuary manna

Manna for the Sabbath	Manna for the Sanctuary
<p>וְאֵת כָּל־הַעֲדָף הַנִּיחֹו לָכֶם לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת עַד־הַבֹּקֶר</p> <p>“and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning”</p>	<p>וְהֵנַח אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם</p> <p>“and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout your generations”</p>
<p>וַיִּנִּיחוּ אֹתוֹ עַד־הַבֹּקֶר</p> <p>“so they put it aside until morning”</p>	<p>וַיִּנִּיחֶהוּ אַהֲרֹן לִפְנֵי הָעֵדוּת לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת</p> <p>“so Aaron placed it before the Testimony, to be kept”</p>

As already mentioned in the literary analysis, the Hebrew root נָוַח, “rest,” which occurs here as the key word for the parallelism between the Sabbath and the sanctuary, will appear again in the Sabbath commandment of the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:8-11) and in the Sabbath speech regarding the instructions for the building of the sanctuary (Exod 31:11-17). Here too, the book of Exodus links the Sabbath with the sanctuary by referring to YHWH’s rest (נָוַח) on the seventh day of creation. This close link, found for the first time in the canonical Hebrew Bible in Exod 16, may establish the basis for the bread of the Presence exchanged in the holy place every Sabbath as an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel (Lev 24:5-9). Therefore, Gane has rightly pointed out with reference to the bread of the Presence and the Sabbath that within the instructions of Lev 24 “the Sabbath is a common denominator between the ‘bread of the presence’ and creation.”⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Roy Gane, “‘Bread of the Presence’ and Creator-in-Residence,” *VT* 42 (1992): 202.

The theological significance of the link between the manna and the Sabbath in relation to the sanctuary correlates with the fact that the sanctuary services are characterized by the creation Sabbath because they function on the basis of the weekly rhythm of the seventh-day Sabbath. In addition, the sanctuary services obtain their own meaning from the Sabbath as the day of the Creator God, who dwells in his sanctuary to meet with Israel on the Sabbath in a special way. Finally, the Lord will not consume the bread himself, as other ancient Near Eastern deities do,⁶⁷ but will continually assure the provision of the bread as a gift for life to human beings.

This life-providing aspect of the Sabbath in close connection with the bread given by the Creator God was expressed by Moses to the new generation of Israel shortly before they entered Canaan, when he reiterated the manna experience of their fathers and added the words, “man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of YHWH” (Deut 8:3).

The Sabbath in Numbers 15:32-36

The second Sabbath narrative in the Pentateuch tells the incident of an unnamed man gathering wood on Sabbath in the wilderness. The man is caught and brought before Moses, Aaron, and the whole congregation of Israel. The narrative briefly records this event, with the only speech coming directly from YHWH, who declares: “The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp”

⁶⁷ Horst Steible, *Die Altsumerischen Bau- und Weihinschriften* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1982), 1:304-305; Jerrold S. Cooper, *Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border Conflict* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983), 60. See also Gane, “‘Bread of the Presence’ and Creator-in-Residence,” 190-191, 202.

(Num 15:35). The congregation acts immediately and stones the man to death according to the command of YHWH.

At first glance this brief report seems to be used as an example of defiant sin in the context of the cultic legislation about offerings for expiation of inadvertent versus defiant sins (vv. 22-31) that precedes the narrative about the wood-gatherer. Some commentators conclude that the narrative serves to impress upon the hearer/reader the severity of religious prohibitions, especially the severity of the Sabbath command.⁶⁸ However, the narrative context, which deals with Israel's community and leadership crisis in the desert (Num 14 and 16), adds more information and shows that the focal subject in the wood-gatherer's case is the significance of the Sabbath as a sign of freedom from slavery and a solemn and binding agreement between YHWH and each individual of the Israelite congregation.

In scholarly opinions, Num 15 is viewed as a strange collection of cultic laws⁶⁹ and as an appendix to other cultic codes, especially those of Lev 4-5.⁷⁰ In particular, the section on inadvertent versus defiant sin in Num 15:22-31 is seen as full of difficulties⁷¹ and, in Milgrom's words, it "may be the displaced conclusion of another legal section."⁷²

⁶⁸ Levine, *Numbers 1-20*, 386.

⁶⁹ Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 126.

⁷⁰ Levine, *Numbers 1-20*, 386.

⁷¹ Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Bamidbar: Numbers* (Jerusalem: Haomanim, 1995), 150.

⁷² Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (The JPS Torah Commentary; New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 405.

When analyzing the literary structure of Num 15, several significant characteristics and subjects establish the building blocks of this chapter, and in so doing lead to the narrative section on the Sabbath. These building blocks are: (1) Num 15 consists of seven laws concerning offerings and violations of both the congregation and the individual; (2) the offerings mentioned in Num 15 consist of burnt offerings and offerings for special vows (לְפִלְא־נֹדֶד), freewill offerings (בְּנִדְבָה), or well-being offerings (שְׁלָמִים; vv. 3, 8); (3) these offerings may be performed “at your appointed times” (v. 3); (4) the verb קָשַׁשׁ, “gather” (vv. 32, 33), describes deliberate activity on the part of the wood-gatherer, in violation of repeated divine commands against work on the Sabbath (Exod 16:28, 29; 20:9, 10; 31:14, 15; 35:2), thereby revealing his rebellious attitude toward YHWH and rejection of the liberation from slavery; and (5) the tassels on the garments are required to remind the Israelites of the laws of the covenant (Num 15:37-41).

This study examines the Sabbath narrative in Num 15:32-36 from the contextual perspective of cultic legislation prescribed in Num 15 and attempts to demonstrate the literary relationship that seems to exist between these legal prescriptions and the wood-gatherer’s rebellious act on Sabbath. Furthermore, the Sabbath narrative seems to contain intertextual connections with the account of Israel’s life in slavery (Exod 5), which, according to the narrative context in Num 14 and 16, appears to the Israelites to be a more favorable choice than to continue the journey to the Promised Land under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Therefore, the case of the man gathering wood on Sabbath not only illustrates the law and the consequences of defiant sin, but reveals the significance that the Sabbath carries for the covenant relationship of the whole Israelite community, as well as for each individual Israelite as a liberated slave from Egypt.

Literary Analysis

Literary Structure

The literary structure of Num 15 shows that the defiant sin of one individual on the Sabbath affects the whole congregation. The structure of Num 15 pointed out by Sailhamer favors the literary unity of this chapter by showing that it consists of seven laws, followed by the narrative of the man gathering wood on Sabbath.⁷³ The first three laws specify in ascending order the amounts of grain and drink offerings that must accompany each animal sacrifice, sheep or goat, ram, and bull, in accordance with its size or value.⁷⁴ The fourth law prescribes a different kind of grain offering, a cake made from the dough of the first fruits of the land. The last three laws deal with expiation offerings for inadvertent sins of the whole congregation as well as the offering for the individual followed by the extirpation of the defiant sinner, for whom no offering is possible. The seven laws are:

1. Grain and drink offerings with a lamb (vv. 3-5)
2. Grain and drink offerings with a ram (vv. 6-7)
3. Grain and drink offerings with a bull (vv. 8-16)
4. Offering of a cake from the first dough (vv. 17-21)
5. Offering for the inadvertent sin of the whole community (vv. 22-26)
6. Offering for the inadvertent sin of an individual (vv. 27-29)
7. Penalty for a defiant sin (vv. 30-31).

Numbers 15:22-36 includes the legal prescriptions for inadvertent and defiant sins and the Sabbath narrative, and displays an interesting chiastic arrangement by parallelisms (especially through repetitions of כָּל־הָעֵדָה) and contrasts between different parts:

⁷³ John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992), 390.

⁷⁴ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 620.

- A But when you unwittingly fail and do not observe all these commandments, which YHWH has spoken to Moses, *even* all that YHWH has commanded you through Moses, from the day when YHWH gave commandment and onward throughout your generations, then it shall be, if it is done unintentionally, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation (כָּל־הָעֵדָה) shall offer one bull for a burnt offering, as a soothing aroma to YHWH, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one male goat for a sin offering (v. 22-24)
- B Then the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation (כָּל־הָעֵדָה) of the Israelites, and they will be forgiven; for it was an error, and they have brought their offering, a food gift to YHWH and their sin offering before YHWH, for their error. So all the congregation (כָּל־הָעֵדָה) of the Israelites will be forgiven, with the alien who sojourns among them, for *it happened* to all the people through error. (v. 25-26)
- X Also if one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering. The priest shall make atonement before YHWH for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven. You shall have one law for him who does *anything* unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them. (v. 27-29)
- X' But the person who does *anything* defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming YHWH; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. 'Because he has despised the word of YHWH and has broken his commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt *will be* on him (v. 30-31)
- B' Now while the Israelites were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation (כָּל־הָעֵדָה); and they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him. Then YHWH said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation (כָּל־הָעֵדָה) shall stone him with stones outside the camp." (v. 32-35)
- A' So all the congregation (כָּל־הָעֵדָה) brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones and he died, just as YHWH had commanded Moses." (v. 36)

This chiastic structure is built upon the concept of Israel as a community and its involvement in inadvertent versus defiant sin. The phrase כָּל־הָעֵדָה, "all the congregation" occurring three times in the passage about inadvertent sin (A and B) corresponds to the threefold occurrence in the passage about defiant sin (B' and A'). The

center of the chiasm (X and X') focuses on the distinction between inadvertent versus defiant sin and emphasizes the same law for the native and the alien.

The passage on inadvertent sins of the community (A and B) prescribes that “all the congregation” (כל־העדה) shall offer one bull for a burnt offering with its accompaniments, as prescribed in Num 15:1-10, and one male goat for a sin offering. Then the priest will make atonement for “all the congregation” (כל־העדה) and “all the congregation” (כל־העדה) will be forgiven (vv. 24, 25, 26). The passage on defiant sin narrates the case of the wood-gatherer as an individual person (B' and A') who sinned against the Lord. The wood-gatherer was brought before Moses and Aaron and “all the congregation” (כל־העדה).⁷⁵ Moses, after inquiring with YHWH, received the instruction that “all the congregation” (כל־העדה) shall stone the man to death outside the camp. “All the congregation” (כל־העדה) followed this command, took the man outside the camp, and stoned him to death (vv. 33, 35, 36). The whole congregation was called to take up a certain responsibility by imposing capital punishment on this man.

This structure supports the literary unity of Num 15:22-36 and shows that the focus of the text is placed upon the specific role of the whole congregation, with one law for both the native and the alien (see center X). The Sabbath narrative involves the whole congregation, despite the fact that the rebellious act of wood-gathering on Sabbath was the sin of one individual person and not that of the community. This shows that the Sabbath contains a decisive meaning for the covenantal relationship between the whole congregation and YHWH. The sin of one individual performed on the Sabbath affected and disturbed the life of the whole community.

⁷⁵ This is not the case in Lev 24:10-16, the narrative of the blasphemer, which displays parallels with Num 15:32-36. The blasphemer was brought only before Moses.

Key Words

Key words in Num 15:32-36 show that the Sabbath is the day that decides between life of slavery and life of freedom. Various readings of this passage propose a close connection between this narrative about gathering wood on Sabbath, the narrative about gathering manna on Sabbath (Exod 16:5, 23), and the prohibition of kindling a fire on Sabbath (Exod 35:3). Weingreen, in dealing with Num 15:32-36 in a critical way, suggests that the gathering of wood on Sabbath could have been construed as being a manifest prelude to the kindling of fire.⁷⁶ Levine assumes that in this instance, wood was being gathered in order to make a fire for cooking, which is expressly forbidden on Sabbath according to Exod 35:3.⁷⁷

Gane approaches Num 15:32-36 from a thematic perspective and shows that this narrative illustrates inexpressible sin because “the man violated the Sabbath command of the Decalogue (Exod 20:8-11), of which the people were reminded every weekend when they received a double portion of manna on Friday and none on the Sabbath (16:22-30)”⁷⁸ by gathering wood for a fire even though “the climate was warm and the people had manna to eat (Exod 16:35). So a fire for warmth or cooking would not have been urgent even if it were not Sabbath.”⁷⁹

However, one verb reveals a different aspect that scholars have so far more or less neglected. This is the verb קָשַׁף, “gather,” which occurs eight times in the Hebrew

⁷⁶ Jacob Weingreen, “Case of the Woodgatherer: Numbers 15:32-36,” *VT* 16 (1966): 362.

⁷⁷ Levine, *Numbers 1-20*, 399.

⁷⁸ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 622.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Bible.⁸⁰ The Pentateuch employs this verb four times, twice when describing the toil and oppression of the Israelites in Egypt (Exod 5:7, 12) and twice when narrating the wood-gatherer's behavior on Sabbath after his deliverance from Egypt (Num 15:32, 33). The telling link that Num 15 draws between the Israelite slaves who were forced to gather straw to make bricks and the man gathering wood on Sabbath reveals the intention of the text to show that the Israelite man, even though freed from slavery, consciously chose to act against the law of freedom and thereby placed himself back into the position of a slave.⁸¹

After the man was found gathering wood on Sabbath, he was kept in custody (verb נִוּחַ). The importance of the verb נִוּחַ, "rest," is unquestionable in the context of the Sabbath (Exod 16:23, 24, 33, 34; 20:11; 23:12; Deut 5:14). Here also, in Num 15:34, the verb נִוּחַ identifies the Sabbath as the day of rest of "YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Exod 20:2), for it is this same Lord who "rested on the seventh day" after he "made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them" (Exod 20:11). The *hip'il* form of the verb נִוּחַ in close connection with the Sabbath in Num 15:34 shows that the man "was caused to rest" by Moses, Aaron, and the whole congregation, for, indeed, it was Sabbath, the day of rest. Sadly, this rest that he could have enjoyed in freedom, he now had to endure in confinement as a "slave."

While the question what to do with this man was initially Moses' and Aaron's concern, it has also produced much scholarly discussion in studies of the Hebrew Bible. The rabbis argued that "our Master Moses knew that the wood gatherer [had incurred the

⁸⁰ Exod 5:7, 12; Num 15:32, 33; 1 Kgs 17:10, 12; Zeph 2:1.

⁸¹ See the recent article by Novick who briefly alludes to this aspect of the verb "gather." Novick, "Law and Loss: Response to a Catastrophe in Numbers 15," 5.

penalty of] death, as it is said, ‘He who desecrates it shall be put to death’ (Exod 31:14), but did not know by what mode of execution he should be killed.”⁸² Moses then consulted the divine oracle and the response was “death by stoning”⁸³ Milgrom comes to the conclusion that this answer is unconvincing and proposes that the case of the wood-gatherer provided the precedent for the principle that all work on Sabbath would be punishable by death and be כרת, “cut off,” because this narrative was placed here in juxtaposition to the כרת law of Num 15:30-31 for the reason that violation of the Sabbath shall be not only punished by כרת but also by stoning to death.⁸⁴

In his study on defiant or “high-handed” sins versus inadvertent sins, Gane concludes that “wrongs that are open, bold, and shameless . . . may be undetectable by human beings,”⁸⁵ however, before God these sins cannot be covered up.⁸⁶ In the case of the wood-gatherer, the context shows that he committed openly defiant sin that could not be expiated through animal sacrifice because of the rebellious attitude and affront against the authority of YHWH. The expression בִּיד רָמָה, “high-handed” (Num 15:30), signifies

⁸² *Sanh.* 78b.

⁸³ *Sif. Num.* 112; *Sif. Emor* 14:5; *Targ. Jon.* on v. 32; *Shab.* 96b.

⁸⁴ Milgrom, *Numbers*, 408, 409.

⁸⁵ Roy Gane, “Numbers 15:22-31 and the Spectrum of Moral Faults,” in *Inicios, Paradigmas y Fundamentos: Estudios teológicos y exegeticos en el Pentateuco* (ed. Gerald Klingbeil; Libertador San Martin, Entre Rios, Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2004), 155.

⁸⁶ See Achan’s sin that was revealed by God (Josh 7).

“the physical gesture of the raised hand, with or without a weapon in it, which indicates that one is triumphantly determined to fight and to win.”⁸⁷

The laws about inadvertent versus defiant sin in Num 15:22-31 seem to contrast expiation and forgiveness as a result of the sacrifice that was available for inadvertent sins against the severity of being “cut off” that cannot be reversed in the case of defiant sins. The strategic positioning of these laws between narratives that describe open rebellion (Num 14 and 16) is highlighted by the narrative of the wood-gatherer, who committed inexcusable violation of the Sabbath with the result of being “cut off” according to the law in Num 15:30-31 and put to death by the Israelite congregation.

Theological Implications

Sabbath and Rebellion

The narrative context of Num 15, which deals with corporate rebellion of the Israelite community in Num 14 and 16, may reveal further information regarding the crucial aspect of the Sabbath within the covenant relationship between God and Israel. The context recounts the crisis of the congregation and its leaders during the desert journey and shows that this crisis became extremely serious after the discouraging report of ten of the twelve spies so that “the whole congregation” regretted leaving Egypt and were determined to appoint a leader to take them back to slavery (Num 14:2-4). Only because of the intense intervention by Moses and Aaron before the congregation and before YHWH does the story in Num 14 disclose a turn by the remark “and the people mourned greatly” (Num 14:39).

⁸⁷ Caspar J. Labuschagne, “The Meaning of *beyad rama* in the Old Testament,” in *Von Kanaan bis Kerala: Festschrift for J. P. M. van der Ploeg* (ed. W. C. Delsman et al.; AOAT 211; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Butzon & Bercker/Neukirchener, 1982), 146.

The narrative that follows is divided in two parts, Num 14:40-45 and Num 21:1-3. Numbers 14:40-44 tells that the people mourned greatly after YHWH's word that they will die in the wilderness and after they witnessed the abnormal death of the ten spies (vv. 20-35). However, they rose up on the next morning, went up to the top of the mountain, and exclaimed boldly: "See, here we are, we will go up to the place that YHWH has promised, for we have sinned" (v. 40). Against Moses' warning about the Amalekites and Canaanites and against the direct command not to go to war, the people went up heedlessly or conceitedly (עָבַל, "swell, presume"), but Moses and the ark of the covenant remained in the camp. The end of the story reveals that "the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down, and struck them and beat them down as far as Hormah" (v. 45). Then, the story is picked up again in Num 21:1-3, telling of Israel's victory, the subsequent vow to YHWH, and the positive outcome at Hormah: "So Israel made a vow to YHWH and said: 'If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.' YHWH heard the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites; then they utterly destroyed them and their cities. Thus the name of the place was called Hormah."

In Num 16 corporate rebellion does not come about "heedlessly" by a chaotic crowd (Num 14:44) but is well-organized by Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On together with 250 of the most prestigious leaders of the Israelite congregation (Num 16:2). The issue of the revolt is leadership by Moses and Aaron, and God himself issued and executed the capital punishment: בְּרִיאָה יִבְרָא יְהוָה, "YHWH created a creation," or "YHWH brought about an entirely new thing" (Num 16:30) when "the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up" (v. 32).

Numbers 15, with its laws on offerings and their accompaniments and the prescription about inadvertent sin of the whole congregation and defiant sin of the individual, is placed in between these narratives and implicitly promises to the Israelite community that in spite of what happened in Num 14, the younger generation will enjoy life in the Promised Land in the future, because God regulates such life.

Novick argues that the question of Moses, Aaron, and the congregation does not concern the content of the covenant law, but its applicability and asks the question: Does the covenant law that prohibits work on Sabbath (Exod 20:8-11; 31:12-17) remain valid and in force even for the generation that will not enter the Promised Land according to the words of YHWH in Num 14:22-35?⁸⁸ Novick holds that although the wood-gatherer acts alone, he gives expression through his action to the doubt of the whole congregation. For the law, under which the wood-gatherer must die, is well known, but the people wonder, rather, whether the wood-gatherer is correct in supposing that the law no longer carries force.⁸⁹

In response to Novick's argumentation, three particular observations show that the narrative context does not leave the impression that the covenant, including the law of the Sabbath, is no longer valid for the adult generation of the Israelites in the wilderness. Rather, the covenant between God and Israel and the commandments have binding force for the wilderness generation because of God's faithfulness and trustworthiness:

First, after the people's rebellion, Moses pleaded with almost the same words that he used after the fiasco with the golden calf (Exod 34:6-7) and likewise YHWH grants

⁸⁸ Novick, "Law and Loss: Response to a Catastrophe in Numbers 15," 5.

⁸⁹ Ibid.; Arnold B. Ehrlich, *Mikra ki-Peshuto: The Bible According to Its Literal Meaning* (New York: Ktav, 1969), 1:268.

forgiveness (Num 14:20). This act is made possible because of YHWH's faithfulness to his covenant relationship with Israel. He even issues a further command, namely to turn around and set out toward the Red Sea (Num 14:25, 41-43).

Second, the promise of YHWH that the new generation will enter the Promised Land implies the assignment of a significant role to the parents in the lives of their children as the future generation. They have to take upon themselves the responsibility in guiding and teaching their children the law of the covenant over the course of almost forty years of their desert journeys so that the children will reach the land that the parents failed. Furthermore, the command to make tassels on their garments that immediately follows the narrative of the wood-gatherer is given for the specific purpose so "that you may remember to do all my commandments and be holy to your God" (Num 15:40). This context shows that all the commandments are in effect even for the adult generation destined to die in the desert.

Third, the book of Numbers shows that the daily miracle of the gift of the manna including the manna miracle of the Sabbath did not cease after YHWH's pledge that the adult generation will die in the wilderness but continued for the entire time (Num 11:1-9; 21:5). This miraculous event implies that the prohibition of work on Sabbath was in force over the entire period of the forty years in the desert (Exod 16:35; Josh 5:12).

These contextual characteristics imply that the Sabbath is a testing marker for the people's loyalty toward the covenant with God. The rebellious act of the wood-gatherer occurs in between the corporate rebellions of Num 14 and 16 and seems to function as a microcosm of the whole Israelite congregation when they rebelled and preferred slavery in Egypt to leadership by God under Moses and Aaron. The wood-gatherer acted out his personal decision to openly renounce the freedom gained by his liberation from slavery

and demonstrated his choice to turn back to Egypt. He chose the Sabbath to show his determination to break out of the covenant relationship with YHWH, for it is indeed the Sabbath that signified his personal covenant relationship with YHWH (Exod 31:12-17). By requiring the whole congregation to stone this man, God appealed to the whole congregation to reject the rebellious attitude that in a larger sense they all shared. Thus the narrative context of Num 15 reveals that the Sabbath is indeed the sign of freedom from slavery and the individual person's behavior on the Sabbath shows his choice between "going back to Egypt" (Num 14:4) or going forward to "enter the land, which YHWH is giving you" (Num 15:2).

Sabbath and Remembering

The law that follows the narrative of the wood-gatherer instructs the Israelites to make tassels for themselves in order to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord. The Pentateuch uses the two verbs זָכַר, "remember," and רָאָה, "see, look," in close relationship only in the context of the covenant in two places, in Gen 9:16 and Num 15:39. Thus the instruction to make tassels in order to look at and remember may indicate an allusion to God himself who once promised Noah and his family to look at the rainbow in the clouds and remember the everlasting covenant between himself and every living being on the earth (Gen 9:16). Now after the tragedy of the wood-gatherer that affected the whole congregation, the people are asked to imitate God who remembers his covenant when he looks at the sign of the covenant. The people also, are asked to look and remember in order to fulfill their part of the covenant by keeping or doing all the commandments (Num 15:37-41). Thus, the prohibition of gathering wood on Sabbath is not limited to the wilderness. It promotes Sabbath ethics that reach far into the future,

when each generation and each individual is called to live a life free of slavery and its oppression.

This law further evokes the narrative of the spies in Num 13-14 by striking verbal connections. According to Num 15:39, the Israelites are called to look (רָאֶה) at the tassels and remember God's commandments. By doing this they will not "explore" (תִּוָּדַע) or "stray" (זָנָה) adulterously after their own heart or after their own eyes (עֵינֵי). The tassels are a reminder of the sin of the spies, who explored (תִּוָּדַע) the land and saw (רָאֶה) tall men, and in their own eyes (עֵינֵי) they saw themselves as grasshoppers. Then they discouraged the Israelites who strayed (זָנָה) from God (Num 13:32-33; 14:33).⁹⁰

Therefore, the people needed tassels and cords⁹¹ to "do all my commandments and be holy to your God" (Num 15:40) and remember that "I am YHWH your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am YHWH your God" (Num 15:41). These last words fit in well with the meaning of the Sabbath as YHWH's sign of freedom from Egyptian slavery. Indeed, violation of the Sabbath demonstrates revolt against YHWH, who liberated Israel from slavery. The narrative of the wood-gatherer is incorporated in the overall theme of the covenant, where the Sabbath constitutes the essence of the covenant relationship between God and Israel.

⁹⁰ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 622; Novick, "Law and Loss," 3.

⁹¹ On the violet cords attached to the tassels in the context of the high priest's robe see Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 623.

CHAPTER IV

SABBATH LAWS IN THE PENTATEUCH

Introduction

The Pentateuch includes four laws on Sabbath observance in sections that contain legal material intended to regulate various aspects of life in Israelite society. These laws occur: (1) in the Decalogue: Exod 20:8-11; (2) in the Covenant Code: Exod 23:12; (3) in the restatement of the Covenant Code after the incident with the golden calf: Exod 34:21; and (4) in the reiteration of the Decalogue in the plains of Moab: Deut 5:12-15. An examination of similarities and differences between these laws, especially between those in Exod 20:8-11 and Deut 5:12-15, has produced much scholarly discussion.¹ The aim of the present analysis is to analyze the four Sabbath commandments independently and explore their meaning in their individual literary contexts within the canonical text of the Pentateuch.

¹ Charles R. Biggs, "Exposition and Adaptation of the Sabbath Commandment in the OT," *Australian Biblical Review* 23 (1975): 13-23; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, *Der Dekalog* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982); Gerald A. Klingbeil, "The Sabbath Law in the Decalogue(s): Creation and Liberation as a Paradigm for Community," *RB* 117 (2010): 491-509; Ekkehardt Mueller, "The Sabbath Commandment in Deuteronomy 5:12-15," *JATS* 14 (2002): 141-149; Werner H. Schmidt, *Die Zehn Gebote im Rahmen Alttestamentlicher Ethik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993).

The Sabbath in Exodus 20:8-11

Cassuto notes that with the Decalogue the Pentateuch arrives at its “central and most exalted theme.”² The preceding narratives about Israel’s freedom march prepared for this section, and the subsequent literary units supplement it.³ The book of Exodus shows that the theme of the Decalogue reaches back into Israel’s past, grounding it in the covenant relationship of God with Israel’s ancestors. At the same time, the Decalogue aims at the future by providing a system of principles with lasting impact in the history of Israel and of humanity as a whole.

Interest in the text of the Decalogue continues to generate extensive scholarly research. Nevertheless, so far critics have not settled their issues about *Sitz im Leben*, sources, and redactions of this text. For example, early critics, such as Wellhausen, Gunkel, and Mowinckel, ascribed the Decalogue in Exod 20 to the Elohist source and dated it to the eighth century B.C. More recent critics suggest an exilic or postexilic *Sitz im Leben*, but still hold to the hypothesis of early critics that the canonical form of the Decalogue is based on a short “Ur-Decalogue.”⁴ For critical scholars, the final form of

² Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 235.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Regarding older and more recent trends in the study of the Decalogue, see Durham, *Exodus*, 288-289; Eckart Otto, “Alte und neue Perspektiven in der Dekalogforschung,” in *Kontinuum und Proprium. Studien zur Sozial- und Rechtsgeschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 285–92; William H. Propp, *Exodus 19-40* (AB 2A; New York: Doubleday, 2006), 146. Representative for an exilic or postexilic *Sitz im Leben* see Hossfeld, *Der Dekalog*; idem, “Der Dekalog als Grundgesetz—eine Problemanzeige,” in *Liebe und Gebot. Studien zum Deuteronomium* (ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 46–59.

the Decalogue is the product of a long evolutionary development, which does not reflect historical reality of the covenant made at Mount Sinai, as the canonical text claims.

The studies mentioned above have in turn deeply affected understanding of the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20:8-11.⁵ Noth put forth the hypothesis that the Sabbath commandment developed in three stages.⁶ The simple command was: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” (v. 8), to which the explanation was added: “Six days you shall labor and do all your work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of YHWH your God, in it you shall not do any work, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maid servant, and your cattle, and the sojourner who is within your gates” (vv. 9, 10). Finally, the reason for the Sabbath command was given: “For in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (v. 11).⁷

Schwartz’s recent study of the Sabbath in the Torah sources holds that the Decalogue contains the Elohist’s version of the Sabbath commandment, which consisted of Exod 20:8-10. A compiler who then put together the four sources of the Torah (J, E, P, D) inserted v. 11.⁸ Schwartz argues that the Sabbath existed as a day of refraining from work in Israelite society, even though nobody knew its origin or purpose and everybody experienced it differently. This individual experience led to formulation of independent and quite different texts about the Sabbath in the four sources J, E, P, and D. The

⁵ Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” 28.

⁶ Noth, *Exodus*, 164-165.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Decalogue version reflects the Elohist's distinctive experience of the Sabbath as an institution that needed to be regulated by laws in order to be a day of social and humanitarian rest for all sectors of the workforce, including aliens and animals.⁹

Schwartz and other critics who hold that the reference to the creation Sabbath in Exod 20:11 is not part of the original Sabbath commandment, but an insertion made by a late compiler, overlook the fact that the previous verses contain at least two references to the creation Sabbath: First, the phrase *ששת ימים*, “six days” (v. 9), suggests a link to the six days of creation. This link is reinforced by its connection to *יוום השביעי*, “the seventh day” (v. 10), which seems to be a quotation from Gen 2:2-3.¹⁰ Second, there is the phrase *כל-מלאכתך*, “all your work,” during the six days (v. 9) and the command not to do *כל-מלאכה*, “all/any work,” on the seventh day (v. 10). These phrases reveal close linguistic and thematic connections to Gen 2:2, 3. Their juxtaposition to the explicit quotation of the creation Sabbath in Exod 20:11 suggests that the entire Sabbath commandment in vv. 8-11 is connected to the account of the creation Sabbath.

The following analysis of the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20:8-11 shows literary characteristics and structural arrangements that indicate the central and essential position of this pericope in the Decalogue and in the literary arrangement of the covenant theme in the book of Exodus. Further investigation of references to the creation Sabbath in Exod 20:8-11 reinforce understanding of their close relationship to Gen 2:1-3. Finally,

⁸ Schwartz, “The Sabbath in the Torah Sources,” 7-9.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Klingbeil, “The Sabbath Law in the Decalogue(s),” 502.

theological implications will draw on the conclusions derived from textual and structural analysis.

Literary Analysis

Literary Context

Two characteristics distinguish the Sabbath commandment from all other commandments in Exod 20:

1. The Sabbath commandment is the longest commandment in the Decalogue, with 55 words in the Masoretic Text. It is preceded by three commandments that focus on God and followed by six commandments that focus on humanity. The Sabbath commandment shows unique characteristics by its double focus, first on humanity (vv. 8-10) and then on God (v. 11).¹¹ This double focus creates an alternating thematic movement in the Decalogue, in which the Sabbath commandment occupies a strategic position:

Focus of the first three commandments:	God (vv. 3-7)
Focus of the Sabbath commandment:	Humanity (vv. 8-10) God (v. 11)
Focus of the last six commandments:	Humanity (vv. 12-17)

2. Unlike eight of the commandments, which start with the negative particle **לֹא**, “not,” followed by imperfect verbs denoting various prohibitions (vv. 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 14,

¹¹ Doukhan, “Loving the Sabbath as a Christian,” in *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi, Daniel J. Harrington, and William H. Shea; New York: Crossroads, 1991), 159.

15, 16, 17), and unlike the following commandment requiring respect for parents,¹² which starts with an imperative form, כָּבֵד, “honor” (v. 12), the Sabbath commandment uses the atypical infinitive absolute form זָכוֹר, “remember.”¹³ Even though rare, this form is not unknown elsewhere in biblical Hebrew and denotes a positive and emphatic command form more strongly than the imperative.¹⁴ In the context of the Sabbath commandment, the infinitive absolute זָכוֹר may function as the positive command form with an intensifying promissory nuance.

Choice of the verb זָכַר in relation to the Sabbath has provoked scholarly discussion because “remember” presupposes at least intellectual knowledge of something familiar, in order to call for its recollection.¹⁵ So the word indicates already existing

¹² For the close relationship between the adjacent positive commandments to keep the Sabbath and respect one’s parents, cf. Lev 19:3 where the injunction to honor one’s parents is placed next to the commandment to keep the Sabbath.

¹³ The Samaritan Pentateuch uses the verb שָׁמַר, “keep” (cf. Deut 5:12), instead of זָכוֹר, “remember,” likely in an attempt to harmonize Exod 20:8 with Deut 5:12.

¹⁴ The infinitive absolute form of the Hebrew root זָכַר, “remember,” functioning as an emphatic imperative also occurs in Exod 13:3; Deut 7:18; 24:9; 25:17; Josh 1:13. Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (trans. T. J. Conant; New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1851), 245-246. Waltke and O’Connor point out that the usage of absolute infinitives as command forms is extremely old and can be detected in other Semitic languages. Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 593-594. Cf. Reuven Yaron, “Stylistic Conceits II: The Absolute Infinitive in Biblical Law,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. David P. Wright, David N. Freedman, and Avi Hurwitz; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 449-60.

¹⁵ Gen 8:1; 9:15, 16; 40:14, 23; 42:9; etc. See H. Eising, “זָכַר *zakhar*,” *TDOT* 4:64-82.

knowledge of the Sabbath.¹⁶ Considering the literary context of the Sabbath commandment in the book of Exodus, one could think that it refers to and emphasizes first of all Israel's experience in the wilderness of Sin, where Sabbath observance had been established in relation to the gift of the manna (Exod 16). It is true that shortly after this experience the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai and received the Decalogue, including the command to remember the Sabbath (Exod 19:1-2; 20:1-17). However, while the Sabbath commandment and Exod 16 share some common language (e.g., the noun שבת, "cease," in Exod 16:23, 25, 26, 29; 20:8, 10, 11 and the verb נָוַח, "rest," in vv. 23, 33, 32, 33; 20:11), the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20:8-11 also alludes to and quotes Gen 2:1-3, the Sabbath of creation, as the reason and justification for human Sabbath observance.

As already pointed out above, the connection between the Sabbath commandment and the Sabbath of creation is very strong, in addition to the compact cluster of words in Exod 20:11 that quote Gen 2:2-3. Throughout Exod 20:8-11, there occur phrases such as ששת ימים (v. 9), יום השביעי (v. 10), and כל-מלאכתך (v. 9), which link the Sabbath commandment to the creation Sabbath. Furthermore, the verb קִדַּשׁ, "sanctify, make holy," which occurs twice in the Sabbath commandment in direct relation to the Sabbath (שבת) as the seventh day (יום השביעי; Exod 20:8, 10), demonstrates a direct reference to Gen 2:1-3 that is unquestionably intended to bring the Sabbath of creation to mind.

¹⁶ See the discussion and references about the existence of the Sabbath before the giving of the Decalogue on Mt. Sinai in Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch," 30.

Table 10 lists expressions that are common to Exod 20:8-11 and Gen 2:1-3 and the number of occurrences of these expressions in the respective texts.

Table 10. Common expressions between Exodus 20:8-11 and Genesis 2:1-3

Common Expressions	Occurrences in Gen 2:1-3	Occurrences in Exod 20:8-11
שבת	3x	3x
יום השביעי	3x	3x
עשה	3x	3x
כל-מלאכה	2x	2x
ברך	1x	1x
השמים ו(את-)הארץ	1x	1x
קדש	1x	2x
אלהים	3x	1x

The table demonstrates that eight expressions occur both in Exod 20:8-11 and Gen 2:1-3, and six of these occur even the same number of times in the two texts. In addition, it is interesting to note that the root שבת, which identifies these as Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch, occurs in the account of the creation Sabbath three times in verb form and in the Sabbath commandment also three times, but in noun form. It appears that this use of the same root makes these texts complementary, signifying that the seventh day of creation marked by God's ceasing (שבת) from work (vv. 1-3) is the seventh-day Sabbath (שבת) that calls human beings to remember this day (Exod 20:8-11).

There are also differences between the Sabbath commandment and the text of the creation Sabbath that occur in Exod 20:11, precisely where the text links the Sabbath commandment most directly to the creation Sabbath. First, the enumeration of God’s works in the Sabbath commandment includes **אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם**, “the sea, and all that is in them,” a detail that is not mentioned in Gen 2:1, perhaps because the author’s understanding of the expression **וְכָל־צְבָאָם**, “and all their host”¹⁷ (Gen 2:1), included creation of the sea. The reference to the sea could also serve as a reminder of God’s power over the sea, which he had used to save the Israelites from the Egyptian army (cf. Exod 14:16-30).¹⁸

A second divergence is the choice of the verb **נָוַח**, “rest,” for God’s behavior on the seventh day instead of the verb **שָׁבַת**, “cease,” which is used twice in Gen 2:2, 3.

While the verb **שָׁבַת**¹⁹ is linked to absence of activity in moments or periods of time that

¹⁷ The expression **וְכָל־צְבָאָם** in Gen 2:1 is ambiguous and defined by scholars as either the beings that surround God, or the stars of heaven, or the totality of what is included in the individual works of the creation account. See Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT* 2:995.

¹⁸ The word “sea” occurs 39 times in the book of Exodus. The majority, 30 times, is found in the exodus narratives in Exod 10-15. The book of Genesis uses this word only 13 times, Leviticus 2 times, Numbers 19 times, and Deuteronomy 14 times.

¹⁹ The root **שָׁבַת** occurs 66 times in the Pentateuch. Of these occurrences the following texts use **שָׁבַת** in direct relation to the seven weekdays and the Sabbath: Gen 2:2, 3; Exod 12:15; 16:23, 25, 26, 29, 30; 20:8, 10, 11; 23:12; 31:13, 14, 15, 16, 17; 34:21; 35:2, 3; Lev 2:13; 16:31; 19:3, 30; 23:3, 11, 15, 16, 32, 38; 24:8; 26:2, 6, 34, 35, 43; Num 15:32; 28:10; Deut 5:12, 14, 15. In the following texts the word **שָׁבַת** occurs in relation to the sabbatical year: Lev 25:2, 4, 6, 8. In Gen 8:22 the word **שָׁבַת** is used in relation to the seasons of the year. In Exod 21:19 **שָׁבַת** speaks of a person’s loss of time related to work.

are considered significant such as the seventh-day Sabbath, the feasts, and the sabbatical year, the verb נָוַח²⁰ denotes rest in the sense of tranquility and being settled in a particular space. The meaning of נָוַח in the sense of rest and tranquility allows for three observations about this verb in the Pentateuch:

1. The verb נָוַח occurs 8 times in the *qal* form and 25 times in the *hip 'il* form. The *qal* form is used with the following subjects: God (Exod 20:11), the Spirit of God (Num 11:25, 26), human beings (Deut 5:14), the ark (Gen 8:4), the locusts (Exod 10:14), and animals such as the ox and the donkey (Exod 23:12). The references just mentioned show different nuances of the verb נָוַח: God “rested” on the seventh day; the Spirit of God “rested” upon the prophets; the ark “settled down” on the mountains of Ararat; the locusts “settled” in the territory of Egypt; and the ox, the donkey, the male servant, the female servant, and the Sabbath observer are dependent upon the Sabbath observer’s ceasing (הַשְׁבֵּתָה, Exod 23:12) or not doing any work (לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל־מְלָאכָה, Deut 5:14) in order that (לְמַעַן, Exod 23:12; Deut 5:14) they may rest (נָוַח).

Deuteronomy 5:14 is the only text where the *qal* form of נָוַח includes human beings as subjects of this verb. In this case the Sabbath observer makes the Sabbath available as an opportunity of rest for other human beings as well as for himself. Moreover, this text shows that even though human beings may be the subjects or focus of the verb נָוַח, they have little active involvement in causing their own ability to rest.

²⁰ H. D. Preuss, “נָוַח *nuah*; מְנוּחָה *menuha*,” *TDOT* 9:297.

Rather, human beings are dependent in their resting upon the Sabbath observer not doing any work (לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל־מְלָאכָה) on Sabbath.

2. The 25 references using the *hip'il* form also show different nuances of the verb נָוַח: In several texts, the *hip'il* form is used for God causing human beings to rest or granting rest to Israel in the Promised Land.²¹ Already the first occurrence of the verb נָוַח in the canonical text of the Pentateuch shows that God is the causative force, for he took the man and “caused him to rest” (נָוַחְהוּ, *hip'il*) in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:15). Later God promised Israel: “My face will go [with you] and I will cause you to rest” (הִנָּוַחְתִּי, *hip'il*) (Exod 33:14; literal translation). The *hip'il* form also occurs in situations where human beings use force to “put” or “place” others in confinement or in isolated areas.²² Other texts use the *hip'il* form when human beings are called to “set aside” the manna for the Sabbath or items related to the sanctuary.²³

3. All 33 occurrences show that the verb נָוַח is never used in an imperative form to order human beings to rest, e.g., on the seventh day. Even the commandment in Deut 5:14 shows that the Sabbath observer makes the Sabbath available only by not doing any work in it “so that/in order that” (לְמַעַן) others may rest as well as he himself.

The conclusion that can be drawn from usage of the verb נָוַח in the Pentateuch in relation to the Sabbath is: The verb נָוַח, “rest,” requires the verb שָׁבַת, “cease” (Exod

²¹ Gen 2:15; Exod 33:14; Deut 3:20; 12:10; 25:19.

²² Gen 19:16; 42:33; Lev 24:12; Num 15:34.

23:12), or the phrase **לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה**, “you shall not do” (Deut 5:14), to identify the Sabbath as opportunity for rest for animals and humans. In other words, even though the ox, the donkey, and human beings are subjects of the verb **נָחַ** in a grammatical sense, they do not act as self-determined and independent subjects, but are dependent in their Sabbath resting upon others who cease from work.

Furthermore, human beings are dependent upon the source of rest, God, and need to rely on him who grants rest to them. Sabbath rest (**נִחָה**) is surely not an imposed or demanded regulation for humans. The clause that God rested on the seventh day in Exod 20:11 presents God as the subject of the verb and shows that his resting on Sabbath is more than an example for human beings to follow. It is God’s essential gift to humanity. As God’s gift, Sabbath rest becomes something more for human beings than a pause between workdays, more than a relaxation from work, more than a cessation of movement and action, more than a repose of sleep that is refreshing to the body and the mind. God’s gift of Sabbath rest transcends human needs and brings about the awareness of a realm of divine peace.²⁴

The narrative of Exod 16 seems to support the ‘gift’ characteristic of the verb **נָחַ** in relation to the Sabbath. In this narrative the verb **נָחַ** is used four times in the *hip’il* form in relation to the manna for the Sabbath and for the future generations (vv. 23, 24, 33, 34). The people are commanded to “cause to rest” or “set aside” (**הִנִּיחָהוּ**, *hip’il* impv.)

²³ Gen 39:16; Exod 16:23, 24, 33, 34; Lev 7:15; 16:23; Num 17:19, 22; 19:9; Deut 14:28; 26:4, 10.

²⁴ See here Heschel’s insightful classic work, *The Sabbath*.

part of the double portion of the manna of the sixth day for the seventh day, for “tomorrow is a Sabbath observance a holy Sabbath to the Lord” (Exod 16:23). That means the people caused the manna to rest overnight, that is, during the time of the dark part of the seventh day. The result of this “resting” is what the narrative describes as the miraculous gift of fresh bread on Sabbath morning, contrary to the spoiled leftovers of the weekdays.²⁵ However, at this point the narrative shifts in its report and meaning to a different level and shows that the Lord does not call the manna his primary gift. Rather, the Sabbath is his initial gift to the people (v. 29). In this way the people of Israel learned that it was not their act of setting aside that kept the manna fresh, but it is YHWH, who granted the Sabbath in order to provide fresh food.²⁶

Thus the verb נָוַח in the Sabbath commandment points to the Sabbath as God’s gift of rest to human beings and does not command human beings to rest. Rather, human beings are called to “labor” (עָבַד) and “do” (עָשָׂה) all their work during the six weekdays, but on the seventh day they are called “not to do” (לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה) so that they may “rest” (נָוַח). The implication of the Sabbath commandment seems to be that the day of the Sabbath as a work-free day is a gift of the Creator God, who rests so that human beings enjoy Sabbath rest as a divine gift of blessing and sanctification.

²⁵ Compare the fact that dough for bread needs to be set aside after kneading it and requires several hours of rest. During this time of rest in a place with the right temperature, a chemical process takes place that allows the dough to rise before it is placed in the oven for baking.

²⁶ See chapter 3 on the Sabbath in Exod 16.

The Verb זָכַר “Remember”

The verb that introduces the Sabbath commandment and brings attention to the distinctive character of the Sabbath in Exod 20:8-11 is the verb זָכַר, “remember.” This root occurs eight times in the book of Exodus and is always used in the context of the exodus event and God’s covenant with Israel’s ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: God “remembered” his covenant and liberated Israel from Egypt (Exod 2:24; 6:4-5).

Furthermore, the root זָכַר is particularly linked to the name of God, who immediately after his identification as the great אֶהְיֶה, “I AM” (Exod 3:14), is recognized as “YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exod 3:15). It is this cluster of names as a whole that is then called זָכָרִי, “my memorial” name for the children of Israel, based on the covenant with the ancestors (Exod 3:15).²⁷

An examination of the eight occurrences of the root זָכַר in the book of Exodus shows that they are arranged according to a chiastic structure highlighting the only commandments in the Hebrew Bible that prescribe the observance of specific days by using exactly the same grammatical form, the *qal* infinitive absolute זָכֹרֶ. These two days are the day of the exodus (Exod 13:3) and the day of the Sabbath (Exod 20:8).²⁸ The

²⁷ Cassuto notes the significance of Exod 3:15 in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Prophets and in the book of Psalms, where the name of God is frequently called a remembrance that will endure forever (Isa 26:8; Hos 12:5; Pss 102:12; 135:13). Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 30-40.

²⁸ Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* (Hoboken: KTAV, 1992), 582; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 112. Even though Jacob and Propp noticed the infinitive absolute forms in the two texts, Exod 13:3 and 20:8, they have not explored their impact

following outline shows the chiastic arrangement that the word “remember” builds in the book of Exodus in the contexts of the covenant theme and the name of God, focusing on the commandments to remember the day of the exodus and the day of the Sabbath:

- A Covenant: “God remembered (יִזְכֹּר) his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (2:24)
- B Name of God: “This is my name forever, and this is my memorial (יִזְכֹּרִי) name to all generations” (3:15)
- C Name of God and Covenant: “I did not make myself known *by* my name, YHWH. I have remembered (אִזְכֹּר) my covenant” (6:2-5)
- X Exodus: “Remember (זָכוֹר, *qal* inf abs) this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery” (13:3)
- X’ Sabbath: “Remember (זָכוֹר, *qal* inf abs) the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (20:8)
- C’ Name of God and Covenant: “In every place where I cause my name to be remembered (אִזְכִּיר), I will come to you and bless you” (20:24)
- B’ Name of other gods: “Do not mention/remember (תִּזְכִּיר) the name of other gods” (23:13)
- A’ Covenant: “Remember (זָכַר) Abraham, Isaac, and Israel whom you swore by yourself.” (32:13)

This chiastic arrangement shows the close relationship between the day of the exodus and the Sabbath in the context of the covenant, which is the overall theme of the book of Exodus and embraces both the people’s liberation from slavery and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. God’s own solemn promise had guaranteed the covenant with his own memorial name. The divine pledge to the ancestors then leads up to Israel’s liberation from slavery. The center of the chiasm shows that liberation from slavery and the Sabbath commandment balance each other. Thus the central concept of the chiasm suggests equal significance of both the exodus and the Sabbath: The exodus (X) alludes

and meaning, but focused instead on diachronic issues of the words “remember” in Exod 20:8 and “observe” in Deut 5:12. Other biblical scholars and interpreters do not deal at all with the literary structure that the Hebrew root זָכַר displays in the book of Exodus.

to the Sabbath (X'), which implies knowledge about the Sabbath before the exodus or supports Philo's interpretation of the rediscovery of the Sabbath in the wilderness,²⁹ and the gift of the Sabbath is based upon the principle of liberation and freedom. The Sabbath commandment in Deut 5:12-15 will refer to the exodus deliverance as the motivation for Sabbath keeping. The following section will demonstrate this relationship by means of similarities and differences that exist between the two days prescribed by the same command form זָכוֹר.

The similarities between the two commandments referring to the day of the exodus and the day of the Sabbath are striking:

1. Placed within the chiasmic structure of the covenant theme, only these two commandments of the entire Pentateuch, even of the entire Hebrew Bible, call for the remembrance of two significant days: the yearly day of the Passover and the weekly day of the Sabbath, and both employ the *qal* infinitive absolute form זָכוֹר.

2. Both commandments are based on the seven-day cycle: the Passover and Unleavened Bread festival³⁰ is to be observed for seven days, and on the seventh day the people are to abstain from work and celebrate a feast (Exod 13:6). Likewise, the Sabbath

²⁹ Philo in dealing with Exod 16 describes how the Sabbath was rediscovered by Moses and the Israelites. *V. Mos.* I 205-207; II 263-266; *Qu. Ex.* II 46. Cf. Jutta Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria* (Text and Studies in Ancient Judaism 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 64.

³⁰ For a discussion regarding the question whether Passover and Unleavened Bread are two independent festivals see Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 428-461, with further references.

is based upon the seven-day cycle of the creation week as revealed to the people of Israel in the manna and Sabbath experience recorded in Exod 16.³¹

3. The commandment to remember the day of the exodus is based upon God's remembrance of the covenant and his act of liberation of the people of Israel from Egypt. Similar retrospective aspects apply to the Sabbath commandment given at Mount Sinai. The commandment shows that the Sabbath is based upon a freely granted relationship established by God for the benefit of his creation that has existed since primordial times (Gen 2:1-3).³² Buber expressed this aspect with the words, "it is not introduced for the first time on Sinai, it is already there."³³

4. To remember the day of the exodus is not only a mental preservation of the exodus event but also the commemoration of this event and teaching by act to impress upon the children and future generations the same experience that the people of the actual exodus event had (Exod 12:24-27; 13:14-16; cf. Deut 11:1-7).³⁴ Active commemoration included eating the Passover lamb on the evening of the first day (Exod 12:27), eating unleavened bread for seven days (Exod 13:6), and celebrating a feast on the seventh day (Exod 3:6). Teaching the exodus event included dialogue and active verbal interaction between family members. Thus, to remember the exodus event motivated the Passover rituals. Similar prospective aspects apply to the Sabbath commandment. To remember the Sabbath implies alteration of activity based upon memory (Exod 20:8-11; Gen 2:1-3). To

³¹ See chapter 3 on the Sabbath in Exod 16.

³² See chapter 2 on the Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3.

³³ Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant*, 80.

remember the Sabbath as God's day of rest during the creation week will prompt one to abstain from work on the seventh day.³⁵ To remember the Sabbath implies to celebrate a *שבתון שבת*, "Sabbath feast" (Exod 16:23), a day on which no member of the household is to work and no one is to go hungry. To remember the Sabbath includes all members of the household, even the stranger and the animals, and suggests relationships and familial involvement.

5. The day of the exodus included native Israelites as well as aliens. Exodus 12:38 tells of a mixed multitude of people who left the land of Egypt in the night of the Passover together with the people of Israel, including large herds of flocks and cattle. Here the text shows that God's act of deliverance from slavery had its effect on all human beings that chose to leave Egypt, including their animals. Similarly, Sabbath observance includes Israelites as well as non-Israelites and has great impact on the Sabbath-keeper's animals. All profit from the gift of Sabbath rest.

However, there also exist significant differences between the commandments of the two days:

1. A first differentiation consists of the infinitive construct *לִקְדָּשׁוּ*, "to keep it holy, to sanctify it," that is linked to the infinitive absolute *זָכַר* only with regard to the Sabbath, but not to the infinitive absolute with regard to the day of the exodus. To remember the Sabbath in connection with holiness suggests that the purpose of remembering is directed toward the definite action of separating the Sabbath from the rest

³⁴ Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 421.

³⁵ Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 175.

of the days.³⁶ Indeed, the theme of holiness functions so prominently in the Sabbath commandment that Exod 20:8-11 is framed by the verb קדש in an *inclusio* consisting of similar phraseology at the beginning and at the end of the commandment:³⁷

Exod 20:8	“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” זכור את־יום השבת לקדשו
Exod 20:11	“Therefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day and kept it holy” על־כן ברך יהוה את־יום השבת ויקדשהו

2. The significant link between Sabbath and holiness shows that unlike the Passover, where the people are reminded of their actual experience of servitude and of the bitterness of their life in Egypt, the Sabbath aims back at creation times, a dimension of life that the Israelite never experienced in the reality of his life. Sabbath holiness has its beginnings long before oppression and death, even before freedom from oppression. Even more, Sabbath holiness reaches beyond human existence in the sense that it originated in God.

3. The Sabbath commandment prohibits כל־מלאכה, “all work,” and is in this regard different from the Passover commandment that declared: “no work at all shall be done, except what must be eaten by every person” (Exod 12:16). The Sabbath refers back to creation times when God declared all of what he had done during the creation week as “very good” (Gen 1:31) and defined all his work as מלאכה, from which he ceased on the seventh day (Gen 2:2, 3). The Sabbath commandment suggests a telling parallelism between כל־מלאכתך, “all your work,” during the six weekdays (Exod 20:9) and

³⁶ Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” 30.

³⁷ Mueller, “The Sabbath Commandment in Deuteronomy 5:12-15,” 144.

כל-מלאכתו, “all his work,” during the six days of the creation week (Gen 2:2, 3). In this way the Sabbath commandment reveals that “all your work” performed during the six weekdays may reflect the creativity, skillfulness, and satisfaction of “all his [the Creator’s] work” and that cessation from all work on the seventh day completes and makes whole the work of the six weekdays.

4. Unlike Passover, the Sabbath and Sabbath holiness reveal the essential relationship between God and humanity, a relationship implied by the theological term *imago Dei* as it relates to the creation account of Gen 1. The Sabbath commandment requires Sabbath holiness of the human being (Exod 20:8), but then presents this command in direct response to God’s Sabbath sanctification in creation times (Exod 20:11). While the account of the creation Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3 did not explicitly include the human being as a participant, it is through compliance with the Sabbath commandment of the Decalogue that the human being fully becomes identifiable as the image of God.

Literary Structure

The following chiasmic structure of Exod 20:8-11³⁸ reveals the careful construction of this unit by paralleling human activity with divine activity regarding both work during the weekdays and refraining from work and rest on the Sabbath:

- A “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- B Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of YHWH your God; you shall not do any work,
- X you or your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.

³⁸ Doukhan, “Loving the Sabbath as a Christian,” 159.

B' For in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all
that is in them, and rested on the seventh day;
A' therefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

5. The Sabbath commandment includes “your sojourner who stays in your gates” (Exod 20:10). This makes it differ from the Passover festival, which is to be observed by native Israelites only and aliens who were circumcised in order to be considered as natives (Exod 12:48). The Sabbath commandment does not require of the alien to be circumcised in order to participate in Sabbath observance and enjoy the Sabbath as a work-free day. By linking the Sabbath of the Decalogue to the creation Sabbath, the universal aspects become even more evident. In this regard Levenson notes: “It is humanity in general and not any people in particular that is created. Israel is not primordial. It emerges in history, twenty generations after the creation of human species in the image of God (or the gods, 1:26–27). . . . It is neither descended from the gods nor divine itself. All people are created equally in the divine image.”³⁹

The chiasmic structure of the commandment highlights this universal nature of the Sabbath by placing a list of seven beneficiaries at the center of the Sabbath commandment, by implication covering every category of humans and animals.⁴⁰ Finally, the relational aspect of Sabbath holiness contributes to the universal nature of the Sabbath. Sabbath holiness calls for separation from “all your work” in order to draw attention to the concept of wholeness that speaks of “your son or your daughter, your

³⁹ Jon D. Levenson, “The Universal Horizon of Biblical Particularism,” in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed. Mark G. Brett; Boston: Brill, 1996), 147.

⁴⁰ Doukhan, “Loving the Sabbath as a Christian,” 159.

male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you” (Exod 20:10).⁴¹

Theological Implications

Sabbath Remembrance

The literary arrangement of the root **זכר** demonstrates that the covenant theme underscores and highlights the two commandments that refer to the day of the exodus and the day of the Sabbath. The exodus constitutes the one historical event that brings Israel’s history together or unites specific past events that are marked by the making of the covenant, God’s covenant name, and his covenant promises. The Sabbath constitutes the commemoration of creation as the one event that expects multiple or infinite prospective events marked by the covenant relationship of the Creator God with human beings.

By closely reading the three references in Exod 2:24; 3:15; 6:2-5 that lead toward the commandment to remember the day of the exodus, it is this specific event in Israel’s history that is to be remembered. However, in the three texts that follow the Sabbath commandment, Exod 20:24; 23:13; 32:13, remembering the Sabbath incorporates a broadening in perspective toward the future, including every place on the earth where God will come and bless his people (Exod 20:24), the names of other gods that should not even be mentioned (Exod 23:13), and the critical situations when God will be

⁴¹ For the reason why the wife is not included in that list, see the considerations on family creation order and the expression, “and they will be one flesh” (Gen 2:24), as well as the principle of embeddedness in Israelite society by Gerald A. Klingbeil, “‘Not so Happily Ever After’ . . . : Cross-Cultural Marriages in the Time of Ezra-Nehemiah,” *Maarav* 14 (2007): 74; cf. K. C. Hanson, “Sin, Purification, and Group Process,” in *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim* (ed. Henry T. C. Sun et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 171.

reminded of his covenant to fulfill his promise in the limitless future (Exod 32:13).⁴²

Thus in the first three texts the root זָכַר aims toward the exodus as a single event;

however, in the three texts that follow the Sabbath commandment, the root זָכַר broadens

in scope on the basis of the Sabbath as a commemoration of creation and implies

countless events, places, and times.

The covenant theme builds a frame around the two days that are to be remembered: the day of the exodus on the yearly Passover festival and the day of the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week. However, while the commandment to remember the exodus focuses on the events that the people of Israel experienced during the night of their liberation and on the memories of bitter slavery in Egypt, the commandment to remember the Sabbath exceeds the dimension of present life pointing beyond and outside of Israel's actual experience by referring to the time of creation and primordial life. In this way the Sabbath commandment shows that the Sabbath is not limited to the people of Israel by the covenant made on Mount Sinai. Rather, the Sabbath commandment presents the Sabbath as a paradigm for the universal nature of God's covenant with all creation. The heart of the Sabbath commandment underscores this concept by including all

⁴² Interestingly, in the incident with the golden calf the broadened perspective of the covenant theme seems to be suggested by a slight change of the names of Israel's ancestors: Namely, Moses implores God by calling the names "Abraham, Isaac, and Israel" (Exod 32:13) instead of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Exod 2:24; 6:3). This modification occurs only here in the text of the Pentateuch and seems to point to the future of the people of Israel when such critical situations will occur over and over again and God will be reminded of his covenant promises. The Hebrew Bible uses the expression "Abraham, Isaac, and Israel" in similar difficult situations where the future of the people of Israel is at stake. See 1 Kgs 18:36; 1 Chr 29:18; and 2 Chr 30:6.

members of the household, even the slaves, the animals, and the stranger, placing them under the influence of Sabbath rest and Sabbath holiness granted by the Creator God.

Exodus:	Historical event for Israel	→	Passover
Creation:	Historical event with universal dimensions	→	Sabbath

However, the question that then arises is: What is Israel's role in the covenant made on Mount Sinai in relation to the Sabbath? The developing structural arrangement of the book of Exodus suggests that Israel receives both the exodus and the Sabbath as gifts granted freely by the Creator God on the basis of God's never-failing and never-ending covenant and carries forward these events, as well as their meaning, by active remembering. In this way the exodus and the Sabbath are paradigms for the continuous and future-oriented nature of God's covenant, which includes all creation.

By placing the commandments about the day of the exodus and about the Sabbath at the center of the chiasmic structure by the use of the same verbal form, זָכוֹר, the literary arrangement suggests that the theological meanings of these two days are linked together in a specific way. The commandment to remember the day of the exodus is followed by the commandment to remember the day of the Sabbath. In essence, the exodus calls for the Sabbath and the Sabbath necessitates the exodus in the sense of a shared concept of liberation from slavery to work. One without the other is simply incomplete.

The chiasmic structure above graphically demonstrates the message of the book of Exodus regarding the consecutive sequence of these two days: First there is the day of the exodus and then the day of the Sabbath. First the people needed to be liberated from slavery before they received the commandment to keep the Sabbath. This observation seems important for it shows that God issues laws such as the Decalogue only to liberated people, people who are delivered by him and entered into a personal covenant

relationship with him. The Sabbath commandment is given to and observed by freed people, not slaves.

Sabbath and Relationship

The center of the Sabbath commandment highlights the members of a complete Israelite household.⁴³ Seven constituents are listed: You, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your animals, and your stranger (Exod 20:10). Interestingly, the Sabbath commandment shows that keeping the seventh day as the “Sabbath of YHWH your God” (Exod 20:10) will not disconnect or detach human beings from one another, it will not dissolve or end familial and emotional relationships, it will not place human beings in isolation or disinterest, but will bring human beings closer to each other. By placing the list of all household members in the center of the chiasmic structure, the commandment reveals that the main focus of the Sabbath is on creating relationships, on family involvement, on communication, and on close friendship between human beings. Sabbath holiness, the distinct characteristic that sets this day apart from other days, sets the Sabbath apart for the purpose of relationships.

The main focus of the Sabbath commandment supports equality of status or position among human beings by including all levels of society, “you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you” (Exod 20:10). The Sabbath promotes the same privileges, the same opportunities, the same rights, the same treatment, and the same value for human beings.

⁴³ See n. 42 on p. 162 regarding the absence of the wife in Exod 20:8-11.

The Sabbath treats all creation impartially. Sabbath rest is granted to all of humanity and to animals.

The Sabbath in Deuteronomy 5:12-15

The introduction to the Decalogue in Deut 5 tells about the exodus event and the experience of the people at the foot of Mt. Sinai when they heard the words of the law (Deut 5:1–5). Klingbeil has noted that the references to the giving of the law are recorded by suffix conjugations (כרתה, “he cut/he made,” in v. 3; יראתם, “you were afraid,” and לא-עלייתם, “you did not go up,” in v. 5), showing that Deut 5:1-5 views the covenant at Mt. Sinai as past event.⁴⁴ Only after this background information is given, the Decalogue is recounted (Deut 5:6-21) as a covenant law for the current living generation of Israel.

Biblical scholars have recognized the sermonic and hortatory character of Deut 5:1-33⁴⁵ and speak of the oral nature of this text, which interacts with other legal texts in order to talk in relevant terms to the living generation of Israel in the plains of Moab. This oral character of the Decalogue in Deut 5:6-21 may be the reason for changed formulations and additions such as “observe,” “as the Lord your God has commanded you,” “your ox,” “your donkey,” and “all your livestock” in Deut 5:12-14 and may be

⁴⁴ Klingbeil, “The Sabbath Law in the Decalogue(s),” 497.

⁴⁵ Ibid.; J. W. Marshall, “Decalogue,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (ed. David W. Baker and T. Desmond Alexander; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 172; Stephen K. Sherwood, *Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (Berit Olam. Studies in Narrative & Poetry; Colleagueville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 202.

understood as a form of contextualization, rather than contradictions between the two Sabbath commandments in Exod 20:8-11 and Deut 5:12-15.⁴⁶

However, the greatest difference between Exod 20:8-11 and Deut 5:12-15, which has puzzled biblical scholars, concerns the part that is regarded as the motivation clause for Sabbath observance. The Sabbath commandment in Deut 5:12-15 replaces the focus on creation and God's rest on the seventh day (Exod 20:11) with Israel's deliverance from Egypt (Deut 5:15). Here, too, some speak about the changed historical situation of Israel that is about to enter the Promised Land and needs to hear the law in applicable words.⁴⁷

Already in the introduction to the Decalogue in Deuteronomy, Moses focused on the applicability of the covenant and the covenant law for the new generation: "not with our fathers, . . . but with us, with all those alive here today" (Deut 5:3). In addition, the deliverance motivation suggests that Israel is urged to observe the Sabbath because of its liberation from Egypt, which implies to let others rest on this day. However, the deliverance motivation for the Sabbath also features prominently in the Sabbath

⁴⁶ Levenson applied the term "legal innovation" for terminological changes such as the ones in Deut 5:6-26. See Bernard M. Levinson, "'Du sollst nichts hinzufügen und nichts wegnehmen' (Dtn 13,1): Rechtsreform und Hermeneutik in der Hebräischen Bibel," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 103 (2006): 157-183; idem, "You Must Not Add Anything to What I Command You: Paradoxes of Canon and Authorship in Ancient Israel," *Numen* 53 (2003): 1-53; idem, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); cf. Gerald A. Klingbeil, "Looking over the Shoulders of Ancient Translators: Contextualization and Ancient Translation Techniques," in *Misión y contextualización. Llevar el mensaje bíblico a un mundo multicultural* (ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil, Serie monográfica de estudios bíblicos y teológicos de la Universidad Adventista del Plata 2; Libertador San Martín: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2005), 3-21.

commandment of the Covenant Code (Exod 23:12), a text that seems to be rooted in creation and contains the motif of God's compassionate interest in the liberation of the oppressed.⁴⁸ Therefore, the deliverance motivation clause in Deut 5:14 is not contradictory with the creation motive clause in Exod 20:11, but seems to apply creation themes such as rest, freedom, and equality into the actual life situation of the new generation of Israel.⁴⁹

While taking into account the differences between Exod 20:8-11 and Deut 5:12-15 the following analysis attempts to demonstrate the crucial place of the Sabbath commandment in Deut 5:12-15 for the current generation of Israel, to show the intricate structural characteristics of this passage, and to point out the contextual meaning of the Sabbath in the book of Deuteronomy.

Literary Analysis

Literary Context

The Sabbath commandment in Deuteronomy contains intricate parallelisms that show the correspondence between the Sabbath and the exodus. Similar to the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20, the commandment in Deut 5 is the longest commandment among the others. However, unlike the version in Exod 20 with 55 total Hebrew words,

⁴⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 68-69.

⁴⁸ See my analysis of Exod 23:12 later in this chapter.

⁴⁹ Weinfeld draws the attention to what he labels the humanistic tendency in the book of Deuteronomy that may be recognized in texts such as Deut 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22. See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 309;

the commandment in Deut 5 consists of 64 total words. Similar to the version in Exod 20 the Sabbath commandment in Deut 5 concentrates in its first part on humanity (Deut 5:12-14) and in the second part on God, who liberated Israel from slavery (Deut 5:15).

Humanity: “Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as YHWH your God
vv. 12-14 commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the
seventh day is a Sabbath of YHWH your God; *in it* you shall not do
any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your
female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your
sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female
servant may rest as well as you.

God: You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt,
v. 15 and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and
by an outstretched arm; therefore YHWH your God commanded you to
celebrate the Sabbath day.”

This Sabbath commandment is marked by the twofold occurrence of the phrase *את־יום השבת*, “the Sabbath day,” in the beginning and at the end and thus encloses the commandment (Deut 5:12, 15). The text states that the Sabbath is given as an explicit command to the individual person. The personal meaning of the Sabbath is expressed four times by the second-person-singular suffix in *יהוה אלהיך*, “YHWH your God.” The following paralleling structure shows the importance of the Sabbath as a commandment of the personal God of each individual Israelite:

- A “Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy as YHWH your God commanded you”
שְׁמֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Deut 5:12)
- B “The seventh day is a Sabbath to YHWH your God”
וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Deut 5:14)
- B’ “YHWH your God brought you out of there”
וַיֹּצֵאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמִּצְרָיִם (Deut 5:15)
- A’ “YHWH your God commanded you to make/celebrate the Sabbath day”
צִוָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת (Deut 5:15)

idem, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 282-297.

The quantity of 308 occurrences of the phrase יהוה אלהים, “YHWH God,” in the book of Deuteronomy testifies to its importance.⁵⁰ Moreover, it is interesting to note that in the account of the Decalogue in Deut 5:6-21 the personal note is brought into view by יהוה אלהיך that occurs in this passage nine times: three times in the commandments that precede the Sabbath commandment (vv. 6, 9, 11) and two times in the commandment that follows the Sabbath commandment (v. 16). The cluster of four occurrences of the phrase יהוה אלהיך in the Sabbath commandment demonstrates the importance that the author places upon this commandment and shows its central position and personal meaning in the Decalogue.

The two lines at the center of the paralleling structure, B and B', draw the attention to the heart of the Sabbath commandment: The Sabbath is given by “YHWH your God” who delivered each person of the Israelite people individually out of slavery. This individual meaning is emphasized by the second-person-singular suffix in the word יצאת, “he brought you out,” in addition to the personal meaning of יהוה אלהיך (v. 15). In this way the commandment expresses the idea that the Sabbath functions as a personal sign of personal deliverance from Egypt.

Included in the dynamic character of the Sabbath commandment that is supported by the chiasmic correspondence of the Sabbath and the exodus event may also be an allusion to the people’s oppression as slaves in Egypt that is recorded in Exod 5:1-9. There the narrative tells that the people were not allowed to cease (שבת; Exod 5:5) from

⁵⁰ The phrase יהוה אלהים occurs in Genesis once, in Exodus 27 times, in Leviticus 26 times, and in Numbers six times.

their hard labor but were afflicted with even more hard work (Exod 5:1-9) before God liberated them “by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm” (Deut 5:15; cf. Exod 6:1, 6; 13:9).

Further insight into the text of Deut 5:12-15 may be gained by its chiasmic arrangement. The following chiasmic structure displays the same characteristics as the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20:8-11 with regard to its center focusing on the members of the Israelite household:

- A “Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as YHWH your God commanded you.
- B Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of YHWH your God;
- X *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.
- B’ You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and YHWH your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm;
- A’ therefore YHWH your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.”

A comparison of Deut 5:12-15 with Exod 20:8-11 shows that the center of the chiasm is even more specific in Deut 5:14 than in Exod 20:10 by mentioning the detail about *וְשׂוֹרֵךְ וְחִמְרֵךְ*, “your ox and your donkey.” This detailed reference alludes to or may be even a verbatim quotation of Exod 23:12, where “the ox and the donkey may rest” because of the householder’s Sabbath observance. Also, Sabbath “rest” (*נוֹחַ*) is made more specific in Deut 5:14 by mentioning the male servant and the female servant twice and the second time as equal beneficiaries of Sabbath rest with the householder himself. Here, the significance of the matter of justice within the Israelite household

comes into view and shows the equal concern of this Sabbath commandment for each human being, regardless of his/her status in society.

The emphasis that the Sabbath commandment in Deut 5:12-15 places upon social justice and equality may be seen in the following structure that the text suggests by using the root עבד, “work, serve,” four times in a chiasmic way:

- A you shall serve (תעבד) (v. 13)
 B your male servant (עבדך) shall not do any work (v. 14)
 B' your male servant (עבדך) shall rest (v. 14)
A' you were a servant (עבד) (v. 15)

This arrangement demonstrates the interest of the Sabbath commandment in the root עבד, which occurs once in a verbal form as part of the clause, “six days you shall labor (עבד),” which corresponds to the reference about the Israelite as a slave in Egypt (A / A'). The center of the structure contains the expression “your male servant” two times calling the male servant not to do any work on Sabbath, which corresponds to his resting on Sabbath (B / B'). This paralleling arrangement built upon the root עבד shows that the state of slavery in Egypt parallels the six days of weekly labor, which suggests that the Sabbath is interpreted by the Sabbath commandment as a sign of deliverance. In other words, the Sabbath corresponds to the exodus.⁵¹ Furthermore, the principle of *imago Dei* that featured so prominently in Exod 20:8-11 may be recognized in the deliverance theme that runs through the text of Deut 5:12-15, calling the Israelite to free the servant from labor on Sabbath, just as God freed Israel from slavery.⁵²

⁵¹ Doukhan, “Loving the Sabbath as a Christian,” 161.

⁵² Ibid.

The Verb שָׁמַר “Keep”

The verb that introduces the Sabbath commandment in Deut 5:12-15 is the verb שָׁמַר, “watch, guard, observe, fulfill, keep, keep watch, spy out.”⁵³ Its form is infinitive absolute, שָׁמֹר, similar to the infinitive absolute זָכֹר in Exod 20:8. Scholars argue that there is no significant difference between these two verbs, since they express similar ideas with regard to the Sabbath.⁵⁴

However, Weinfeld states that “remember” connotes commemoration of the Sabbath as a day of celebration and historical remembrance and “observe” is used for the fulfilling of obligations regarding the Sabbath in the context of fulfilling the law.⁵⁵ He argues further that the author of the Decalogue in Deut 5 was cognizant of the formulation “remember” in Exod 20:8 and changed it on purpose because of the different motivation for the Sabbath. However, he then used the verb זָכַר in order to promote the historical remembrance of the exodus: “You shall remember (זָכַר) that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and YHWH your God brought you out of there” (Deut 5:15).⁵⁶ This use of the verb זָכַר in relation to the new motivation of deliverance looks according to

⁵³ Garcia Lopez, “שָׁמַר, *samar*,” *TDOT* 15:64-82.

⁵⁴ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 302.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 303.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Weinfeld “like a twist of the original”⁵⁷ Sabbath commandment that called for the remembrance of the creation Sabbath.

Tigay remarks that the different motivation clauses are not mutually exclusive, but serve different functions: Exodus explains the origin of the Sabbath, while Deuteronomy explains its aim and offers a motive for observing it.⁵⁸

Klingbeil reasons that there seems to be “a sequence of remembering”⁵⁹ with regard to the Sabbath: Exod 20:8–11 calls one to remember the Sabbath because it is based on creation. This remembering is then shifted in Deut 5:15 “to the more recent divine act of liberation from oppression as experienced during the exodus.”⁶⁰ Here, Klingbeil notes that the biblical concept promotes remembering as an act on the level of an active response.

There are four infinitive absolute forms of שָׁמַר in the book of Deuteronomy. The first occurs in the Sabbath commandment in Deut 5:12. Then follow two such forms complemented or intensified by the same verbal root in the imperfect in Deut 6:16 and 11:22: שָׁמַר תִּשְׁמְרוּן, “observe diligently,” which refer to the commandments given by YHWH. The fourth infinitive absolute occurs in the Passover commandment in Deut

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 69. Tigay speculates that Deuteronomy’s less anthropomorphic view of God is a reason for intentionally avoiding the origin of the Sabbath because of the reference in Gen 2:1-3 and Exod 20:11 about God’s resting.

⁵⁹ Klingbeil, “The Sabbath Law in the Decalogue(s),” 506.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

16:1. The structural ordering of these four infinitive absolute forms yields the following chiastic arrangement:

- A Sabbath: שְׁמֹר אֶת־יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת (Deut 5:12)
 B Commandments: שְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת־מִצְוֹת (Deut 6:17)
 B' Commandments: שְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה (Deut 11:22)
 A' Passover: שְׁמֹר . . . פֶּסַח (Deut 16:1)

The literary arrangement of שְׁמֹר in the book of Deuteronomy corresponds to the arrangement of זְכוֹר in the book of Exodus by paralleling the Sabbath with the day of the exodus (Exod 13:3; 20:8). While the infinitive absolute זְכוֹר characterized the Sabbath and the day of the exodus in terms of the covenant, the covenant name, and the covenant promises given by God to Israel's ancestors, the infinitive absolute שְׁמֹר seems to identify and regulate the Sabbath and the Passover festival in terms of the law of the covenant. According to the context of the two infinitive absolute forms שְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּן (Deut 6:17 and 11:22), the law of the covenant is placed into the hearts of the living generation of Israel, which is urged to observe this law out of love and total devotion to God (Deut 6:5, 6; 11:13).

The Verb קִדְּשׁ “Sanctify”

The Sabbath commandment in Deut 5:12-15 displays a parallelism between the two infinitive construct verbs, לְקַדְּשׁוּ, “to keep it holy,” and לַעֲשׂוֹת, “to make, to celebrate.”⁶¹

Deut 5:12 “Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy (לְקַדְּשׁוּ) as YHWH your God commanded you.”

⁶¹ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 309.

Deut 5:15 “You shall remember. . . . Therefore YHWH your God commanded you to make/celebrate (לַעֲשׂוֹת) the Sabbath day.”

The parallelism between these two lines is expressed by two identical clauses, “the Sabbath day” and “YHWH your God commanded you.” The analogy between these two forms concerns Sabbath observance that aims toward Sabbath holiness by remembering (זָכַר) the Creator God⁶² who acted “by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm” (Deut 5:15) when he brought Israel out of Egypt. “Therefore,” the commandment continues, “you are to make/celebrate the Sabbath.”

The parallelism between the two verbs קָדַשׁ and עָשָׂה alludes to their close relationship in another Sabbath text: In Exod 31:12-17 the text also uses the infinitive construct לַעֲשׂוֹת and states that the sons of Israel are to make or celebrate the Sabbath as a day that is “holy to the Lord” and “holy to you” in order to know that the Lord makes them holy. Here, the text suggests even that “making” the Sabbath takes on existential meaning for human beings in their covenantal relationship with God. For whoever profanes the Sabbath will be put to death and cut off from among his people.

The analogy that exists between the verbs קָדַשׁ and עָשָׂה has implications for the distinguishing nature of the Sabbath and the Passover in the book of Deuteronomy. The Sabbath is to be observed by humans in order to be kept holy and the Passover is to be observed and made/celebrated:

Sabbath: Observe (שָׁמַר) to keep it holy (לְקַדְּשׁוֹ) (Deut 5:12)

Passover: Observe (שָׁמַר) and make (וַעֲשִׂיתָ) (Deut 16:1)

⁶² Cf. Exod 20:8-11.

The two verbs **לְקַדְּשׁוּ** and **וַעֲשִׂיתָ** distinguish the two commandments in their relationship to each other. In the case of the Sabbath the infinitive absolute **שָׁמַר** is followed by the infinitive construct **לְקַדְּשׁוּ**, which suggests the purpose of observing the Sabbath. In the case of the Passover the infinitive absolute **שָׁמַר** is closely connected to the verb **עֲשִׂיתָ** by a *waw* conjunctive, which suggests the careful performance⁶³ of the Passover, especially the performance of the Passover rituals that Deut 16:1-8 prescribes.

While both commandments require a certain activity of human beings that is expressed by the verb **עָשָׂה**, the distinguishing element lies primarily in the occurrence and meaning of the verb **קָדַשׁ**. Only the Sabbath is to be kept holy but not the Passover festival, because only the Sabbath is the day “of YHWH your God” (Deut 5:14; cf. Exod 20:10).

Theological Implications

The Sabbath commandment in Deut 5:12-15 addresses the individual Israelite as a human being delivered from slavery in Egypt and calls each individual to remember his personal deliverance and therefore (**עַל־כֵּן**) observe the Sabbath to keep it holy. The individual Israelite delivered from slavery experienced a new beginning marked by the gift of freedom and Sabbath rest. He/she is in a way a new creation similar to the first created human being described in Gen 1:26-29. The Sabbath commandment implicitly addresses him/her as a human being in relation to the Creator with the appeal of the law

⁶³ Koehler and Baumgartner point out that the verb **שָׁמַר** connected to the verb **עָשָׂה** means “to do something carefully.” See *HALOT* 2:1583.

that has its place in the heart and calls for the love of the Lord “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut 6:5). It is this same law of the heart that reminds of and asks obedience to all of God’s commands, including Sabbath observance aiming for Sabbath holiness. In following the law out of love for the Creator the new created human being will receive the gift of Sabbath rest and Sabbath holiness and imitate the Creator’s Sabbath observance, which testifies to the holiness of this day and to the sanctifying power of the God of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath in Exodus 23:12

The Sabbath commandment (Exod 23:12) of the Covenant Code (Exod 20:22-23:33) is situated between texts dealing with the sabbatical year (Exod 23:10-11) and the three yearly festivals: Passover/Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Tabernacles (Exod 23:14-17). Until recently, this commandment has been described as humanitarian and recognized only in connection with the sabbatical year.⁶⁴ However, as Cassuto noted, Exod 23:12 contains elements of biblical poetry⁶⁵ that may be recognized in verbal elements such as *שָׁבַת*, “cease/rest,” *נוּחַ*, “rest,” *נִפְשׁ*, “breathe,” *מוֹעֵשָׂה*, “work,” *בֶּן־אִמְתֶּךָ*, “son of your female slave,” and *הַגֵּר*, “the stranger,” which call for a closer look at this text and for a contextual analysis in order to understand the meaning of the Sabbath in the Covenant Code. Some of these words seem to refer to Israel’s liberation history from slavery and others suggest links to the patriarchal history of Abraham and

⁶⁴ H. Ross Cole, “The Sabbath and the Alien,” *AUSS* 38 (2000): 225; Patrick D. Miller, “The Human Sabbath: A Study in Deuteronomical Theology,” *PSB* 6 (1985): 81-97.

Hagar recorded in Gen 21.⁶⁶ The purpose of this study is to investigate these verbal elements, indicate the links they create in the pentateuchal text, and point out the meaning of the intertextual connections as they relate to the Sabbath.

Literary Analysis

The Hebrew text of Exod 23:12 reads as follows:

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשָּׁבֵת
לְמַעַן יָנוּחַ שׁוֹרְךָ וַחֲמֹרְךָ וַיִּנְפֹּשׂ בֶּן־אִמְתְּךָ וְהַגֵּר

The translation of Exod 23:12 reads: “Six days you shall do your work but on the seventh day you shall cease so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.”

Exodus 23:12 contains the following terms that identify and distinguish this Sabbath commandment from other Sabbath commandments of the Pentateuch, such as the Decalogue versions (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15) and Sabbath laws related to the sanctuary (Exod 31:12-17; 35:2-3; Lev 23:30): Three verbs denote the importance of the Sabbath: שָׁבַת, “cease/rest,” נָוַח, “rest,” and נִפְּשׂ, “breathe,” as opposed to the single verb, עָשָׂה, “do, make,” that refers to the work of the six weekdays. While the verb שָׁבַת is used twice in the account of the creation Sabbath (Gen 2:2-3) to indicate God’s ceasing/resting from work, it is not employed in the following Sabbath texts of the Pentateuch, except in

⁶⁵ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 301.

⁶⁶ Bruce Rosenstock, “Inner-Biblical Exegesis in the Book of the Covenant: The Case of the Sabbath Commandment,” *Conservative Judaism* 44 (1992): 37-49.

Exod 23:12 and 34:21⁶⁷ to prevent humans from work on the seventh day. All other Sabbath texts of the Pentateuch employ the noun form שַׁבָּת, “Sabbath,” or הַשַּׁבָּת, “the Sabbath,” to define the seventh day as the Sabbath and then use the expression לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה, “you shall not do,”⁶⁸ to prohibit work on Sabbath.⁶⁹ The particular usage of the verb שָׁבַת in Exod 23:12 and 34:21 binds these texts in a verbatim way to the account of the creation Sabbath and shows that the Israelite is called to imitate the Creator God in ceasing from the work of the weekdays on the seventh day.

The Verb נִפַּשׁ “Be Refreshed”

The verb that specifically links the Sabbath commandment to the context of the Covenant Code is the verb נִפַּשׁ, “be refreshed.”⁷⁰ This verb introduces the final clause of the commandment and designates in the *nip’al* form the refreshment, which comes from catching one’s breath during rest.⁷¹ In Exod 23:12, נִפַּשׁ provides an important key to understanding the Sabbath from the perspective of the underlying motif of the God who listens to the cry of the afflicted and will take action against the oppressor, a motif that

⁶⁷ In Exod 34:21 the verb שָׁבַת occurs twice.

⁶⁸ Exod 20:10; 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:14.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Koehler and Baumgartner, “נִפַּשׁ,” *HALOT* 1:711-713.

⁷¹ Daniel C. Fredericks, “*nps*,” *NIDOTTE* 3:133. The Akkadian *napasu* has a similar meaning, “to blow, breathe freely, become wide.” See Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT* 1:711.

recurs several times in the Covenant Code.⁷² In this regard the verb relates to the cognate noun נִפְשׁ, “living being, life,” found only three verses earlier: “you shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the life (נִפְשׁ) of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exod 23:9).

The resonance between the verb and the noun of the root נִפְשׁ highlights the experience of both the Israelite householder and the stranger: The stranger as a living being is exhausted, and it is the responsibility of the Israelite householder as one who knows about such weariness and depletion to provide the Sabbath day as a distinct time for refreshment and recreation. The concern of the Covenant Code for the oppressed is taken as the human analogue of God’s compassionate listening to the cry of the suffering people. The laws preceding the Sabbath commandment (Exod 22:21–27; 23:6–11) speak about the protection of those whose social and legal status made them likely victims of injustice: the poor, the widow, the orphan, the resident alien, and the slave.

The cry and compassion motif is fundamental to the entire book of Exodus. It even appears as a trigger for the exodus event: “YHWH said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry” (Exod 3:7). The emphasis that the Covenant Code places upon the phrase “to hear the outcry” (Exod 22:23, 27) as related to the “life” (נִפְשׁ) of the stranger (גֵר) (Exod 23:9) suggests that the intention of this law section is to bring attention to the Sabbath commandment, which includes concern for the stranger, who is going to be refreshed (נִפְשׁ) on the Sabbath. In this way, the book of Exodus shows that the Sabbath commandment of the Covenant

⁷² Exod 22:23, 27; 23:7.

Code fits well into the context of the preceding social legislation⁷³ and into the narrative context of the entire book of Exodus.

Besides Exod 23:12 the verb נִפְּשׁ is used only in Exod 31:17 and in 2 Sam 16:14.

In Exod 31:17, the verb נִפְּשׁ refers to God being refreshed after his work of creation. In 2 Sam 16:14, the verb describes King David and his people recovering from exhaustion, hunger, and thirst, including emotional stress during their flight from Absalom.

Commentators hold that the anthropomorphic language used in the two Sabbath texts, Exod 23:12 and 31:17, suggests that God's refreshment on the seventh day of the creation week serves as an example for the refreshment of human beings on Sabbath.⁷⁴

The Noun מַעֲשֵׂה “Work”

Exodus 23:12 is the only Sabbath text using the noun מַעֲשֵׂה, “work,” instead of מְלָאכָה, “work,” when speaking of the work of the six weekdays. All other Sabbath texts refer to work in terms of מְלָאכָה.⁷⁵ The fact that Exod 23:12 changes the pentateuchal wording and structure of Sabbath texts by replacing מְלָאכָה with מַעֲשֵׂה should be examined.

⁷³ Paul Hanson, “The Theological Significance of Contradiction within the Book of the Covenant,” in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology* (ed. George W. Coats and Burke O. Long; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 110-131; Felix Mathys, “Sabbatruhe und Sabbatfest: Überlegungen zur Entwicklung und Bedeutung des Sabbat im AT,” *TZ* 28 (1972): 246; Eduard Nielsen, *The Ten Commandments in New Perspective* (London: SCM, 1967), 113-114.

⁷⁴ Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 245, 404; Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 309.

⁷⁵ Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11; 31:12-17; 35:2; Lev 23:3; Deut 5:12-15.

It is striking that even throughout the creation account in Gen 1 the verb עשה is used to describe God's actions during the creation week, but the account of the seventh day (Gen 2:1-3) does not employ the cognate noun מעשה for the work of God. Rather, three times it uses the word מלאכה in the text of the creation Sabbath (Gen 2:2, 3).⁷⁶ The first time the noun מעשה is then recorded in the canonical text of the Pentateuch is in the words of Lamech at the birth of his son Noah, who would comfort human beings from their work (Gen 5:29).⁷⁷ After this text, the noun מעשה occurs seven times⁷⁸ always carrying a negative connotation especially in the narratives of the Joseph cycle and reaching its low point right before the exodus from Egypt when Pharaoh and the taskmasters press the Israelites to get back to their work (Exod 5:4, 13).⁷⁹ Then a sudden change occurs when the word מעשה is linked to the statutes and laws of God (Exod 18:20).⁸⁰ From here on the negative connotation that accompanied the word מעשה ceases and the numerous pentateuchal texts that follow use this word in close connection to the

⁷⁶ See the analysis of the word מלאכה in my chapter on the Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3.

⁷⁷ Gen 5:29: "Now he called his name Noah, saying, 'This [one] will comfort us from our work (מעשה) and from the toil of our hands [arising] from the ground which the Lord has cursed.'" This text may include a thematic connection to the Sabbath by the noun מעשה and the name of Noah (נח), which may be derived from the verb נוח, "rest."

⁷⁸ Gen 20:9; 40:17; 44:15; 46:33; 47:3; Exod 5:4, 13.

⁷⁹ Exod 5:4, 13: "Moses and Aaron, why do you draw the people away from their work (מעשה)? Get back to your labors! . . . Complete your work (מעשה), your daily amount, just as when you had straw."

⁸⁰ Exod 18:20: "Then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work (מעשה) they are to do."

Sabbath, the festivals, the building of the sanctuary, and the work that is blessed by God. Only when speaking of work related to idol worship is the negative aspect of **מעשה** retained (Deut 4:28; 27:15; 31:29).

So far the biblical text conveyed the idea that **מעשה** is toilsome work, hard work, even enslaving work, but as soon as God gave his laws and statutes, **מעשה** received a positive connotation. Following this positive reference, **מעשה** occurs in the Sabbath commandment of the Covenant Code (Exod 23:12), in the record of the three pilgrimage festivals (Exod 23:16; cf. Deut 16:16), and in a number of texts referring to the skillful construction of the sanctuary (Exod 26–39). The contextual change that the noun **מעשה** undergoes suggests that the Torah (Exod 18:20) given by God concerns and affects the meaning and perspective of **מעשה** as it speaks of the work of the six weekdays. This positive meaning of **מעשה** then aims toward Sabbath rest (Exod 23:12) and fruitful work, which is celebrated regularly at the festivals of the Israelite calendar in close connection to the sanctuary service (Exod 23:16).

In addition to the links so far examined between the Sabbath commandment of the Covenant Code and its context with regard to the motif of the God who hears the cry of oppressed people, Exod 23:12 establishes an even more specific connection with the narrative of Israel's oppression in Egypt recorded in Exod 5:1-23. This link includes the association of the verb **שבת** and the noun **מעשה** (v. 5), the two verbal elements that proved to be of great significance for the Sabbath commandment of the Covenant Code.

The בן־אמֶתֶךָ “Son of Your Maidservant”

In both Decalogue formulations, the servants in the Israelite household called to rest on the seventh day are the עֶבֶד, “male servant,” and the אִמָּה, “female servant” (Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14). The Sabbath commandment of the Covenant Code introduces a new element by the use of the phrase בן־אִמָּתֶךָ, “son of your female servant.”⁸¹

Besides Exod 23:12, the only other usages of the expression בן־אִמָּתֶךָ in the Pentateuch occur in the narrative of Hagar’s and Ishmael’s expulsion from the household of Abraham and Sarah, in which Ishmael is twice called the “son of the female servant” (Gen 21:10, 13). The link between Exod 23:12 and Gen 21 is supported by the following additional observations:

1. An antecedent to the Covenant Code motif of God who hears the cry of the afflicted and oppressed (Exod 22:21-23, 27) appears in the Hagar narrative in the phrase “God has heard the voice of the lad” (Gen 21:17). These words even recall Hagar’s first encounter with the angel of the Lord in Gen 16:11, where the text reads, “YHWH has given heed to your affliction.”

⁸¹ The Samaritan Pentateuch replaced the anomalous reading “son of your female servant” in Exod 23:12 with “your male servant and your female servant.” Calum Carmichael attempts to identify the meaning of בן־אִמָּתֶךָ in light of comparative ancient Near Eastern studies. He assumes that the female servant’s son must be “the perpetual slave issuing from the union of a slave and the wife given him by his master,” even though the children born in slavery are defined by the biblical text as sons and daughters of the male servant and not of the female servant (Exod 21:4). According to Carmichael’s approach, the expected reading in Exod 23:12 would be “the son of the male servant.” *The Laws of Deuteronomy*, 87.

2. Only in Gen 21 is Hagar called אַמָּה, “female servant,” but in other narratives that tell her story (Gen 16 and 25), she is the שִׁפְחָה, “female servant,” of Sarah.⁸²

3. Only in Gen 21 is Ishmael not referred to by name. Throughout this narrative he is called “the lad,” “her [Hagar’s] son,” or “son of the female slave” (Gen 21:9-20). Yet, the text offers a clear reference to the significance of his name in the words of the angel, “for God has heard the voice of the lad” (Gen 21:17), with “Ishmael” bearing the meaning “God hears.” It seems that by omitting the actual name but emphasizing its meaning, the narrative stresses the motif of God compassionately hearing the cry of one who is about to die.

Outside the Pentateuch, the Hebrew Bible uses the phrase בֶּן־אִמָּתוֹ, “son of his maidservant,” in the book of Judges with regard to Abimelech, the son of a female slave (Judg 9:18). The expression recurs in the book of Psalms (Ps 86:16). In Ps 116, the Psalmist seems to allude to both Gen 21 and Exod 23:12, calling himself “son of your female servant” (Ps 116:16) who cries out in distress and danger of life (116:8) and YHWH inclined his ear (116:2) and “loosed my bonds” (116:16). The Psalm culminates in the words, “Return to your rest, O my soul (נַפְשִׁי) for YHWH has dealt bountifully with you” (116:7). All significant characteristics of the Sabbath commandment in Exod 23:12 and its context are included in Ps 116: the theological motif of God’s compassionate listening to the cry of the one who is about to die, as well as the terminology of the Sabbath commandment—“rest,” “soul,” and “son of your female servant.”

⁸² For a discussion of the semantics of the two Hebrew terms אַמָּה and שִׁפְחָה, see Alfred Jepsen, “Amah and Shiphchah,” *VT* 8 (1958): 293-297.

The Expression הגר “The Alien”

By including the resident alien in the scope of Sabbath rest, Exod 23:12 accords with the Sabbath commandments in Exod 20:10 and Deut 5:14.⁸³ Both Decalogue formulations mention the alien as a partaker of Sabbath rest. However, Exod 23:12 employs the term גר, “resident alien,” in an unusual way by using the definite article, thus reading הגר, “the resident alien,” in contrast to גרך, “your resident alien,” as the Decalogue formulations do (Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14). Moreover, the previous three nouns, שורך, “your ox,” חמורך, “your donkey,” and בן-אמתך, “the son of your female servant,”

⁸³ Early Jewish and rabbinic writings identified the גר in the Sabbath commandments (Exod 20:12; 23:12; Deut 5:14) in terms of conversion as the גר צדק, the circumcised “righteous alien,” rather than the uncircumcised “sojourning alien.” See *Mekilta Exodus 20:10; Pesiqta Rabbati 23:4*. Cf. Robert M. Johnston, “Patriarchs, Rabbis, and Sabbath,” *AUSS* 12 (1974): 98-101. According to Rashi, the text speaks of the resident alien who has accepted the seven Noachide laws in order to be permitted to dwell among the Israelites and is obligated to observe the Sabbath because profanation of the Sabbath is tantamount to committing idolatry. See Rashi, *Yeb.* 48b. Nachmanides goes even further by linking the Sabbath commandment in Exod 23:12 to creation: “They [the son of the female slave and the stranger] must all bear witness to creation.” See Michael Carasik, *Exodus: The Commentator’s Bible* (The JPS Miqra’ot Gedolot; trans. Michael Carasik; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2005), 199. However, modern Jewish scholars speak of the Sabbath commandment in universal dimensions, thus implying that the Sabbath is not a unique privilege for the Israelites and their households, including the resident alien, but an unrestricted obligation for all mankind. See Leo Baeck, “Mystery and Commandment,” in *Judaism and Christianity* (Essays by Leo Baeck; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1958); idem, *This People Israel: The Meaning of Jewish Existence* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1964), 138; Cohen, *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen*, 87, 116, 117, 225; Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*. Heschel’s title already implies the universality of the Sabbath commandment. Cole investigates the term גר in Exod 23:12 and Deut 5:14 and concludes that the universal dimension of the Sabbath commandment is shown by the fact that the contexts of both texts speak of circumcised and uncircumcised aliens alike. See Cole, “The Sabbath and the Alien,” 223-229.

end with the pronominal suffix, but **הגֵּר** brings the sequence to an unexpected end with a noun in the absolute state.

In the context surrounding Exod 23:12, the term **גֵּר** reinforces the significance of the Sabbath for the resident alien: “You shall not wrong a stranger (**גֵּר**) or oppress him, for you were strangers (**גֵּרִים**) in the land of Egypt” (Exod 22:20; [ET 20:21]) and “You shall not oppress a stranger (**גֵּר**), since you yourselves know the feelings (**נַפְשׁוֹ**) of the stranger (**הַגֵּר**), for you also were strangers (**גֵּרִים**) in the land of Egypt” (Exod 23:9). These references seem to prepare the reader for hearing in **הַגֵּר**, “the stranger” (Exod 23:12), a paronomasia on **הַגֵּר**, “Hagar,” alluded to by the expression **בֶּן־אֲמִתָּךְ**. Had the Sabbath commandment of the Covenant Code ended with the second-person suffix attached to **גֵּר**, namely with **גֵּרְךָ**, as in the Sabbath commandments in Exod 20:10 and Deut 5:14, the sound-allusion to Hagar would not be obvious to the reader.⁸⁴

There is an even more subtle relationship between Exod 23:12 and the Hagar story: In the Hagar narratives of Genesis (Gen 16:1-16; 21:1-34), the Egyptian female servant is never called a resident alien (**גֵּר**). Rather, Abraham, the forefather of Israel, sojourns (**גֹּרֵר**) in the land and calls himself “a stranger (**גֵּר**) and a sojourner.”⁸⁵ By alluding to the patriarchal narrative in this way, the Sabbath commandment of the Covenant Code implicitly reminds the Israelites that there is no real difference between them and other resident aliens. Israelites are like their ancestor Abraham, the resident

⁸⁴ Rosenstock, “Inner-Biblical Exegesis in the Book of the Covenant,” 45.

alien who sojourned in the Promised Land. So Israelites can empathize with other resident aliens, for they “know the life of a resident alien” (Exod 23:9).

Theological Implications

The Sabbath commandment in the Covenant Code is unique among the Sabbath commandments by the use of sound-allusion and rhetorical devices such as the expression **בֶּן-אִמָּתֶךָ**, “son of the female slave,” and **הַגֵּר**, “the stranger,” compare “Hagar.” These expressions establish links to the theological motif of the God who hears the cry of afflicted and oppressed people. In this way the Sabbath is directly attached to Israel’s time of oppression in Egypt and to the actual life of female slaves of which Hagar is singled out as the paramount example in patriarchal times. Thus the Sabbath commandment in Exod 23:12 shows that God is concerned mostly about the ones who are in need of the beneficial effect of Sabbath rest. In this way, the Hebrew Bible creates unity between the Sabbath commandment and various narrative texts (Gen 21; Exod 3; Exod 5), genealogy records (Gen 5), and poetry (Pss 86 and 116).

Sabbath and the Oppressed

The Sabbath commandment implies that the role of a human being is not fulfilled by worshiping God or by relating only to one’s own family members. The Sabbath calls for the care of hardworking animals and for the marginalized and outcast in order to experience a time to “breathe,” a time to live. The verb **נָפַשׁ** is used to describe the condition of the one who may be most likely to be the rejected, namely the “son of your

⁸⁵ Gen 12:10; 20:1; 21:23, 34; 23:4; 26:3.

female servant.” He is “to be refreshed, to breathe” on the Sabbath day. By applying this rare verbal form to himself in Exod 31:17, God expresses self-identification with the marginalized and the most burdened members of society. This use of highly anthropomorphic language for God has practical applications for Israel, in that God identifies with the marginalized and underlines the powerful ethical implications of Sabbath theology.

The allusion of the Sabbath commandment in the Covenant Code to the narrative of Hagar and Ishmael links these parts of the Pentateuch and reveals ethical implications that are common to both texts. Also, the link between these texts supports the universal dimension of the Sabbath and opens up its particular significance to people who are usually excluded from family and society. Yet, the responsibility of Sabbath observance is connected with the ceasing and resting of the head of the household. When he allows the servant and the stranger to breathe, to rest, to live, he himself recognizes humanity’s status of equality before God: “I [Abraham] am a stranger and a sojourner among you” (Gen 23:4).

Sabbath and Work

The positive dimension of the Sabbath commandment in the Covenant Code is suggested by the unusual use of the noun **מַעֲשֵׂה**. Already connected to creation by the verb **עָשָׂה**, the Sabbath commandment employs the noun **מַעֲשֵׂה** as a reminder of the positive change that this word implies, beginning with the hope for comfort (**נַחֵם**) from toilsome work (**מַעֲשֵׂה**) in Noah’s (**נֹחַ**) time (Gen 5:29). The positive perspective of weekly work then comes about by teaching and declaring the laws of the Torah (Exod

18:20), which promotes Sabbath observance as rest (נוח) and refreshment (נפש) (Exod 23:12). Perceived in this way, just as God declared his creation as very good at the end of the six days of the first week leading up to the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day, the Sabbath commandment points to the work of the six days of the week as “the fruit of your hands” (Exod 23:16) or good and fruitful work, which leads to rest and celebration on the Sabbath.

In his well-known book on the Sabbath, Abraham Heschel mentions Philo’s understanding of the Sabbath, which speaks of human relaxation from continuous and unending toil in order to send human beings out renewed to resume their old activities. Heschel points out that this understanding is not in the spirit of the Bible, but in the spirit of Aristotle, where relaxation is for the sake of activity, for the sake of the work days. The biblical meaning is the reverse: labor is the means to an end, and the Sabbath’s first intent is not for the purpose of recovering from weekday work. Rather the weekdays are for the sake of Sabbath, and the Sabbath is for the sake of life.⁸⁶

The explicit linkage of the Sabbath to work as seen in the intertextual linkage of Exod 23:12 with Exod 5:4, 5 shows that the Sabbath commandment addresses Israel as liberated people. They knew about slavery and hard work, oppression, being forced under labor, and therefore they knew “the feelings of the stranger” (Exod 23:9). Therefore, they are directly addressed as liberated people, who are now identified as such by their Sabbath observance in a life of freedom, in order to provide freedom for others.

⁸⁶ Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 14.

The Sabbath in Exodus 34:21

The laws that occur in Exod 34:11-26 parallel parts of the laws of the Covenant Code in Exod 20:22-23:33 and seem to be deliberately placed here in response to the golden calf incident to reinforce the renewed covenant promise of YHWH to bring Israel into the promised land (Exod 32-33). Commentators and biblical scholars do not agree on the reasons for the selection and arrangement of the laws in Exod 34:11-26 and have regarded these texts either as a separate cultic Decalogue⁸⁷ or as a law text related specifically to the land of Canaan.⁸⁸ Included among these laws is the Sabbath commandment in Exod 34:21.

The following literary analysis investigates verbal elements showing similarities between Exod 34:21 and the Sabbath commandments in Exod 23:12 and Exod 20:8-11. It attempts to point out the differences between these texts, including the special meaning for the Sabbath in Exod 34, in the context of the renewed covenant after the incident with the golden calf.

Literary Analysis

The Sabbath commandment in Exod 34:21 reads:

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשָּׁבֵת
בַּחֲרִישׁ וּבַקְצִיר תִּשָּׁבֵת

⁸⁷ Sailhamer lists ten commandments in Exod 34:18-26 and speaks of these as an expansion of the epilogue to the Covenant Code (Exod 23:13-19). Sailhammer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 316.

⁸⁸ See the form-critical discussions of Exod 34:11-26 in Durham, *Exodus*, 458-460; Erhard Blum, "Das Sog. 'Privilegrecht' in Exodus 34, 11-26," in *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (ed. Marc Vervenne; Leuven: University Press, 1996), 347-366. See the source critical analysis in Durham, *Exodus*, 460-463, and the tradition-historical investigation in Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*, 89-92.

The English translation reads: “Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall cease. In plowing time and in harvest you shall cease.” The twofold use of the verb **שָׁבַת** marks Exod 34:21 as a Sabbath law and links it specifically to the Sabbath of creation, where this verb occurs twice (Gen 2:2, 3). This link seems to have great impact for the meaning of this Sabbath commandment in the sense of a re-creation and reaction to idolatry (Exod 20:4-6) after the incident with the golden calf and the future course of Israel’s covenant relationship with YHWH.

The verbal similarities and contextual parallels between Exod 34:21 and 23:12 are striking.

1. Both commandments contain the verb **שָׁבַת**. In Exod 34:21 this verb occurs twice. In fact, both commandments include the phrase **וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשְׁבַּת**, “but on the seventh day you shall cease.” These verbal elements link Exod 34:21 to the Sabbath of creation (Gen 2:1-3).

2. Both commandments appear in legal texts that include the following: the observance of the Passover (Exod 34:18; cf. 23:15); the calendar of the three yearly feasts—festival of unleavened bread, festival of weeks, and festival of booths (Exod 34:22-23; cf. 23:14-17); the requirement to offer the first fruits to the Lord (Exod 34:26a; cf. 23:19a); and the law against cooking a kid in its mother’s milk (Exod 34:26b; cf. 23:19b).

However, there are also significant differences between Exod 34:21 and 23:12:

1. The commandment in Exod 34:21 aligns with the Decalogue texts in Exod 20:9 and Deut 5:13 in using the phrase **ששת ימים תעבד**, “six days you shall labor,” instead of **ששת ימים תעשה**, “six days you shall do” (Exod 23:12; cf. 35:2; Lev 23:3).

2. In Exod 34:12 there occurs a statement that is not found elsewhere in the Sabbath texts of the Hebrew Bible, namely that the rhythm of seventh-day rest is not to be interrupted even during the busiest work seasons of the year of plowing and harvesting (**בחריש ובקציר תשבת**).⁸⁹

3. Exodus 34:21 does not provide a motivation for observing the Sabbath as other Sabbath commandments do (cf. Exod 20:8-11; Exod 23:12; Deut 5:12-15).

In the introduction to the law section in Exod 34:11-26, the text reports that God re-affirmed the covenant with Israel, in spite of the people’s stiff-necked attitude on the basis of his compassion, grace, loving kindness, and readiness to forgive sin (Exod 34:6-10). Then follow the laws of the covenant, which include the Sabbath commandment, which show that these laws project into the future, for the Lord will lead the people to the promised land according to these laws.

However, it is specifically the Sabbath commandment, among the other laws, that places the renewed covenant with Israel in the context of the universal covenantal relationship between God and human beings that has existed since creation. Immediately before the series of laws in Exod 34:11-26 begins, the text records the miraculous work that God is going to perform on behalf of Israel, a work that has not been “created” (**ברא**) in all the earth (Exod 34:10). The language that is used here clearly reflects creation

language, especially by the use of the verb **ברא**, which occurs only here in the book of Exodus. Furthermore, the verb **ברא** is used in close relation to the verb **עשה**, which suggests a direct allusion to the Gen 1 creation account.

The Sabbath commandment in Exod 34:21 points to another event that evokes creation themes: the restoration of all creation after the flood (Gen 8:1-22). There, God made a covenant with human beings under similar conditions as he did with Israel after the sin with the golden calf. The text reports that in spite of the evil intent of the human heart, God made a covenant solely based on his grace and promised that he would never again destroy the earth through a flood and that creation would thrive because the seasons of the year, seedtime and harvest,⁹⁰ would not cease (Gen 8:21, 22). It is the unusual expression of the Sabbath commandment in Exod 34:21, “in plowing time and in harvest you shall cease,” that links this text with the language used in Gen 8:22 and its context of covenant making with Noah, when God promised that there would be seedtime and harvest, but that these seasons would “not cease” (**לֹא יִשְׁבְּחוּ**). While Gen 8:22 uses the verb **שָׁבַח** in a statement of negation directly related to the seasons of the year, Exod 34:21 uses the verb **שָׁבַח** positively to reinforce Sabbath cessation as independent from the seasons of the year. The Sabbath commandment of the renewed covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai shows that this covenant relates directly to the covenant with all creation,

⁸⁹ Durham, *Exodus*, 461. Cf. Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, and Nachmanides.

⁹⁰ For the significance of seedtime and harvest see “The Gezer Calendar (2.85)” in Hallo and Younger, eds., *The Context of Scripture*, 2:222.

thereby implying that Sabbath observance has its origin at creation and thus is also part of the covenant with Noah that concerns all creation.

Theological Implications

While the Sabbath commandment in Exod 23:21 projects into the future agricultural environment of the Promised Land and implies that Israel will plow and harvest crops, it explicitly alludes to the seasons of the year that were implemented by the Creator God after the flood in relation to his covenant with Noah (Gen 8:22). In this way the Sabbath commandment that is given in the context of the renewed covenant with Israel after the destruction and death of many people because of their sin with the golden calf (Exod 32-34) alludes to the covenant after the destruction of the earth and the almost complete extinction of humanity by the time of the flood and promotes the universal and time-transcending nature of the Sabbath.

The link with the covenant in Noah's time shows that after God restored his covenant with Israel, in spite of the sin with the golden calf, each individual is called to observe the Sabbath regardless of the seasons of the year and of intense agricultural activity. Such Sabbath observance may be analogous to God's promise to keep his covenant with Noah for all times, and may urge humans to reflect God's faithfulness in keeping his covenant promise and to imitate God in keeping the human part of the covenant. The seasons of the year will not cease (לֹא שָׁבַת), but humans are called to cease (שָׁבַת) regularly on the seventh day throughout God's ongoing seasons.

CHAPTER V

SABBATH AND SANCTUARY

Introduction

The following Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch link the Sabbath to the sanctuary and its services: Exod 31:12-17; 35:1-3; Lev 19:3, 30; 23:3; 24:5-9; 26:2; and Num 28:9-10. While scholars have observed a conceptual relationship between the creation Sabbath and the sanctuary in the Hebrew Bible¹ and have disclosed parallels to ancient Near

¹ See e.g., Wis. 18:24; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.123, 138-187; idem, *J.W.* 3.265; 5.146, 212-214, 217, 231; Philo, *Moses* 2.71-145; *Num. Rab.* 13.19; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 1.4. Cf. Bakon, "Creation, Tabernacle and Sabbath," 79-85; Samuel E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 67-68 and 138-41; G. K. Beale, "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation," *JETS* 48 (2005): 15-19; idem, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 17; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2004), 60-61; Joseph Blenkinsop, "The Structure of P," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 275-92; Martin Buber, "People Today and the Jewish Bible: From a Lecture Serious," in *Scripture and Translation* (ed. Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig; trans. Lawrence Rosenwald with Everett Fox; Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature; Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1994), 18-19; Carlisle, United Kingdom: Paternoster, 2004), 81-96; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 404, 476-77; Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 47; idem, "Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium," *JATS* 11 (2000): 108-111; Rachel Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (trans. David Louvish; Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004), 37, 70-71, 190-91; Eric E. Elnes, "Creation and Tabernacle: The Priestly Writer's 'Environmentalism,'" *HBT* 16 (1994): 144-55; Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Reading of Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken, 1979), 11-13; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 42; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 61-66; idem, "The Cosmology of P and Theological Anthropology in the Wisdom of Ben Sira," in *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture*, vol. 1, *Ancient Versions and Traditions* (SSEJC 9; Library of Second Temple Studies 50; London: T & T Clark, 2004), 77-79; idem, "God's Image, His Cosmic

Eastern temple-building texts,² the rationale and meaning of the biblical Sabbath-sanctuary link is still open to debate. Propp, in his commentary on the book of Exodus, asked precisely this question: “What exactly is the connection between the Sabbath and the Tabernacle?”³ He suggested the idea that if the Sabbath is a kind of sanctuary in time, as Abraham Heschel eloquently put it,⁴ “no less is the Tabernacle a Sabbath in space.”⁵ However, Propp then argues for the Sabbath and the sanctuary as symbols of the divine מנוחה, “rest,” which in his understanding is primordial inertia in a timeless realm.

Temple and the High Priest: Towards an Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation,” in *Heaven on Earth* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole; Arthur Green, “Sabbath as Temple: Some Thoughts on Space and Time in Judaism,” in *Go and Study: Essays and Studies in Honor of Alfred Jospe* (ed. Raphael Jospe and Samuel Z. Fishman; Washington, D.C.: B’nai B’rith Hillel Foundations, 1980), 294-298; C.T. R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996); Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*; Moshe Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord—The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1-2:3,” in *Melanges bibliques et orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor; AOAT; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1981), 506.

² See e.g., Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 50-60; Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*; idem, “The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle,” *JAOS* 105 (1985): 21-30; idem, “YHWH’s Exalted House—Aspects of the Design and Symbolism of Solomon’s Temple,” in *Temple and Worship in Israel* (ed. John Day; London: T & T Clark, 2005), 79-82; Bernd Janowski, *Gottes Gegenwart in Israel: Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1993), 214-223; idem, “Der Temple als Kosmos—Zur Kosmologischen Bedeutung des Temples in der Umwelt Israels,” in *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World: Studies in Honor of Jan Assmann* (ed. Sybille Meyer; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 163-186; Stefan Paas, *Creation and Judgement: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets* (OTST 47; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 88-94.

³ Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 692.

⁴ Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 29.

⁵ Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 692.

Ultimately, humanity's goal is to enter such a Sabbath-sanctuary rest that is timeless and spaceless in order to be godlike.⁶

In addition, scholars have recognized parallels between Gen 1-3 and Exod 25-40 that portray creation and the garden of Eden as a sanctuary, with the creation Sabbath playing a center role.⁷ Both creation and the instructions for the sanctuary in Exod 25-40 occur in seven stages and both end with the expression: "finished the work" (Gen 2:2; Exod 40:33).⁸ Davidson has pointed out numerous evidences of intertextual links supporting the idea that the pre-Fall garden of Eden is presented as the original sanctuary on earth in parallel to the wilderness sanctuary and the Solomonic temple.⁹ Recently, Walton has proposed that Sabbath rest in creation is intimately related to the "cosmic temple," which he identifies with the created world in Gen 1.¹⁰ The sanctuary in Exod 25-

⁶ Ibid., 694.

⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Eric Bolger, "The Compositional Role of the Eden Narrative in the Pentateuch" (Ph.D. diss.; Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1993); William J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning* (Homebush, New South Wales: Lancer Books, 1985), 35-76; Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 12-13; Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Winston Press, 1985), 142-145; Daniel C. Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath: The Sabbath Frame in Exodus 31:12-17; 35:1-3 in Exegetical and Theological Perspective* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009); Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1986): 19-25.

⁸ Doukhan observes that the same parallelism exists in the text regarding the construction of Solomon's Temple: the construction takes place in seven stages and ends with the same expression: "finished the work" (1 Kgs 7:40). Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 129.

⁹ Davidson, "Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium," 108-111. Cf. idem, *Flame of Yahweh*, 47, 57.

¹⁰ John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2009), 72-92.

40 and Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 8) are understood as a model of the cosmos or the cosmic temple.¹¹ The seven days of creation are seen as the period of inauguration of the cosmic temple,¹² and the Sabbath functions as the climactic day when God enters the temple, takes up his residence, and exercises his divine authority over the cosmos.¹³

The scholarly propositions show that the relationship between the Sabbath as holy time and the sanctuary as holy space is indeed complex. The reason for this complexity is not just because of the distinct nature of the two entities—non-physical versus physical—but also because of the interrelated meaning that the pentateuchal text ascribes to both institutions. Both the Sabbath and the sanctuary are exclusively under YHWH's authority and connected in some way, as shown by the words: “You shall keep my Sabbaths (שבתתי) and revere my sanctuary (מקדשי); I am YHWH” (Lev 19:30; 26:2). Considering this textual linkage between the Sabbath and the sanctuary, an investigation of the Sabbath texts mentioned above is appropriate and will be undertaken within the literary context of the final form of the Pentateuch.

This chapter will first pursue a close reading of the Sabbath text in Exod 31:12-17 within the context of the sanctuary pericope (chs. 25-40) in order to develop the basic meaning of the relationship between the Sabbath and the sanctuary. Other more specific texts will be studied as well, such as the prohibition of kindling a fire in people's dwellings on Sabbath (35:1-3), the changing of the bread of the presence in the sanctuary on Sabbath (24:5-9), and the offering of the Sabbath sacrifices (Num 28:9-10). These

¹¹ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 127.

¹² Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*, 92.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 146.

texts seem to offer particular contributions that enrich the meaning of the Sabbath-sanctuary link.

The Sabbath in Exodus 31:12-17

The commandment to keep “my Sabbaths” in Exod 31:12-17 occurs in the concluding seventh speech of YHWH of the sanctuary building instructions. A remarkable note follows the commandment in the narrative line of v. 18,¹⁴ conveying the idea that this Sabbath commandment implies the Sabbath commandment in the Decalogue (20:8-11).

Several significant themes appear in Exod 31:12-17 that set this Sabbath text apart from other Sabbath texts by presenting unique aspects of the Sabbath in the context of the sanctuary: (1) The Sabbath concludes the instructions given to Moses for the building of the sanctuary; (2) the Sabbath is called a sign of the Sabbath observer’s sanctification by YHWH (31:13); (3) the Sabbath marks the enduring covenant relationship between YHWH and the Sabbath observer (vv. 13, 16, 17); and (4) the one who infringes the Sabbath is placed under the penalty of death and will be cut off from the community of the people of Israel (vv. 14, 15).

With regard to the Sabbath-sanctuary link in the Bible, scholars have pointed out the fact that there are similar concepts in ancient Near Eastern temple-building mythologies, which enhance our overall understanding of temple-building in ancient times. One element that is common to the biblical and extrabiblical concepts of temple building seems to be the theme of rest. However, while the Near Eastern gods rest in their

¹⁴ Critics conclude that Exod 31:18 is one of the few verses that does not belong to P but is an editorial seam or redactional note. See the discussion in Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 366-367.

new-built temples,¹⁵ the biblical God rests on the seventh day of the creation week (Exod 20:11; cf. 31:17).

According to Near Eastern mythologies, humans are to build temples as relaxation and resting places for the gods, but the wilderness sanctuary has a two-fold purpose: to be a divine dwelling place, and a meeting place between YHWH and humans (Exod 25:22; 29:42-46; 30:6, 36). The Sabbath as the concluding element of YHWH's sanctuary building instructions in Exod 31:12-17 may be viewed in this context as a resting and meeting time. The relational aspect of divine-human meeting included in the biblical Sabbath-sanctuary texts is completely absent in ancient Near Eastern temple-building texts.¹⁶

¹⁵ Hallo and Younger, eds., *COS*, 2:417-433. Gudea, the ruler of Lagash (2100 B.C.E.), builds a temple as resting place for his god Ningirsu. Janowski, "Der Temple als Kosmos," 163-186. In Egyptian inscriptions as well, temple building is connected to the creation of the world and Egypt itself represents the dwelling place of the gods on earth. See also Pritchard, ed., *ANET*, 61. The Mesopotamian creation epic *Enuma Elish* deals in seven tablets with chaos and cosmic order of the universe, which precedes the building of Babylon and the temple Esagila. In *Enuma Elish* I, Ea, the father of Marduk, "rested" in his sanctuary after his victory over the god Apsu. In *Enuma Elish* VI, the poem reaches its high point in the building of the temple so that Marduk, together with other gods, could rest in it: "Now, O lord, thou who hast caused our deliverance, What shall be our homage to thee? Let us build a shrine whose name shall be called 'Lo, a chamber for our nightly rest'; let us repose in it! Let us build a throne, a recess for his abode! On the day that we arrive we shall repose in it. When Marduk heard this, Brightly glowed his features, like the day: Like that of lofty Babylon, whose building you have requested, Let its brickwork be fashioned. You shall name it 'The Sanctuary.'"

¹⁶ The biblical God expresses the reason to build an earthly sanctuary with the words "to dwell among you" and "to meet there with you" (Exod 25:8; 29:42, 43). For the ancient Near Eastern gods the reason to build a temple is that they could rest in it and enjoy their well-being. See Helmer Ringgren, *Die Religionen des Alten Orients* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 143. In addition to its purpose as cultic place, the temple functioned as dwelling place for the deity. It was only at the great festivals that the people had access, and the image of the deity appeared before them. The role of the temple was to assure the well-being of the god and to perform rituals on behalf of the king and the people.

Critics who identify diachronic layers of P in Exod 31:12-17 consider the following factors in the text as reasons for redactional composition: (1) A range of repetitions and expressions pointing to the Sabbath;¹⁷ (2) seemingly different reasons for the commandment to keep the Sabbath;¹⁸ (3) alteration of second and third persons in the text;¹⁹ and (4) the reference to the creation Sabbath (v. 17).²⁰ Others, however, point out that Exod 31:12-17 is a well-structured and coherent text with repetitions of words, a variety of expressions, and combinations of ideas that create the meaning of the text.²¹

¹⁷ The command “you shall observe the Sabbath” occurs three times (vv. 13, 14, and 16). The sentence “everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death” occurs twice (vv. 14 and 15). The phrase “between me and you” (v. 13) recurs in the phrase “between me and the sons of Israel” (v. 17). The expression, “observe . . . by doing” (v. 16), is more typical in the book of Deuteronomy than in P.

¹⁸ The reasons are: “it is a sign between me and you to know that I, the Lord, am your Sanctifier” (v. 13); “it is holy to you” (v. 14); “holy to the Lord” (v. 15); “for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day he ceased, and was refreshed” (v. 17).

¹⁹ Second person references are: “you shall observe the Sabbath” (vv. 13 and 14); “throughout your generations” (v. 13); “your Sanctifier” (v. 13); “holy to you” (v. 14). Third person references are: “the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath” (v. 16); cf. “throughout their generations” (v. 16); “it is a sign between me and the sons of Israel” (v. 17).

²⁰ Durham, *Exodus*, 212-214; Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible*, 858-859; Martin Noth, *Das zweite Buch Mose: Exodus* (Göttingen: ATD, 1978), 198; Gerhard von Rad, *Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch* (Stuttgart: BWANT, 1934), 62; Robinson, *The Origin and Development of the Old Testament Sabbath*, 231-233; Klaus Grünwaldt, *Exil und Identität. Beschneidung, Passa und Sabbat in der Priesterschrift* (Bonner Biblische Beiträge, 85; Frankfurt am Main: Hain, 1992), 171-172.

²¹ Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*, 69-71; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 405; S. van den Eynde, “Keeping God’s Sabbath: ’ot and berit (Exod 31,12-17),” in *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (ed. Marc Vervenne; Leuven: University Press, 1996), 501, 505; W. Groß, “‘Rezeption’ in Ex 31, 12-17 und Lev 26, 39-45. Sprachliche Form und Theologisch-Konzeptionelle Leistung,” in *Rezeption und Auslegung im Alten Testament und in Seinem Umfeld* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &

Literary Analysis

Understood as a literary unity, Exod 31:12-17 contains the seventh speech of YHWH in a sequence of instructions for the building of the wilderness sanctuary. As pointed out by Weinfeld²² and further developed by Kearney,²³ the seventh speech links the speeches of YHWH (Exod 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1) to the creation story in Gen 1:1-2:3. Its final words relate directly to the seven days of creation.²⁴ Milgrom, apparently incorporating Heschel's portrayal of the Sabbath as a sanctuary in time, recognized the Sabbath in Exod 31:12-17 as the climax of creation, the divine temple in time that God built by himself.²⁵

Literary Context

A careful analysis of the sanctuary pericope in Exod 25-40 discloses the interconnectedness between the Sabbath and the sanctuary in the form of a chiasmic structure on a macro-level. The building instructions for the sanctuary and the report of its construction are divided into two main sections in the book of Exodus. The building instructions are found in Exod 25:1-31:17 and consist of seven speeches of YHWH with

Ruprecht, 1997), 45-56; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 491-494; J.T.A.G.M. Van Ruiten, "The Relationship Between Exod 31,12-17 and Jubilees 2, 1.17-33," in *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (ed. Marc Vervenne; Leuven: University Press, 1996), 567-575.

²² Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord," 501-512.

²³ Kearney, "Creation and Liturgy," 375-386.

²⁴ "For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, but on the seventh day he ceased, and was refreshed" (Exod 31:17; cf. Gen 2:2).

²⁵ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27* (AB 3B; New York: The Anchor Bible Doubleday, 2001), 2285. Cf. Gerald J. Janzen, *Exodus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 224. According to Janzen, the Sabbath is the climax of Exod 25-31 and signifies that the sanctuary is a microcosm of the whole creation. As the six days of creation reach their climax in the seventh day, the new world architecturally represented by the sanctuary has its climax in the Sabbath.

the Sabbath commandment in the seventh speech (Exod 31:12-17). The construction report is in Exod 35:1-40:38 and begins with the Sabbath commandment in Exod 35:1-3. Thus, Propp is right in recognizing that the two Sabbath commandments (Exod 31:12-17 and 35:1-3) constitute the hinge of the whole sanctuary pericope in the book of Exodus.²⁶ The chiasmic arrangement of these sections underscores their interrelatedness.

- A Sanctuary Building Instructions (25:1-31:11)
- B Sabbath Commandment (31:12-17)
- B' Sabbath Commandment (35:1-3)
- A' Sanctuary Building Constructions (35:4-40:38)

Further observation shows that, apart from the seven speeches of YHWH, the sanctuary pericope contains a set of seven lists itemizing the components of the sanctuary.²⁷ The first list spans over five of the speeches of YHWH (Exod 25:1-30:38) disclosing the divine pattern for the sanctuary building (Exod 25:9). A second list, very concise, occurs in YHWH's sixth speech and specifically addresses the task of the craftsmen filled by the Spirit of God with wisdom and understanding (Exod 31:1-11).

²⁶ Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 692.

²⁷ Commentators do not recognize an ordered structure of seven lists in the sanctuary pericope. They are rather puzzled over the redundancy and of what appears to them an inconsistent ordering of the sanctuary components, e.g., they raise the question why in Exod 25-31 the golden altar is not treated alongside the table and the lamp as in Exod 35-40 but is placed almost at the end of the sanctuary instructions. Cf. Propp's lengthy discussion in his commentary *Exodus 19-40*, 310-722; See also Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 529-530; and Yehuda T. Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (ed. John H. Welch; Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981; Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1999), 91-93. Carol Meyers argues compellingly for the literary setting of the golden altar in Exod 30:1-10 in "Realms of Sanctity: The Case of the 'Misplaced' Incense Altar in the Tabernacle Texts of Exodus," in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran* (ed. Michael V. Fox et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 33-46. According to Meyers' analysis, the golden altar does not appear alongside the table and the lampstand due to its significance for the yearly blood ritual on *Yom Kippur*, when the golden altar is in contact with what Meyers calls "the more holy zone of the tent." Cf. idem, *Exodus*, 250.

The remaining five lists occur in the section on the sanctuary building constructions (Exod 35:4-40:33). Each list concludes with specific Sabbath language and allusions to the creation Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3. Then follows the culminating part of the sanctuary pericope when YHWH fills the sanctuary with his glory (Exod 40:34-38). The chiasm shows the seven lists categorized under the sanctuary building instructions and the construction report:

A	Sanctuary Building Instructions (25:1-31:11)	
	<i>List 1</i> (25:1-30:38):	Speech 1-5 of YHWH
	<i>List 2</i> (30:1-11):	Speech 6 of YHWH
B	Sabbath (31:12-17):	Speech 7 of YHWH
A'	Sanctuary Building Constructions (35:1-40:38)	
B'	Sabbath (35:1-3)	
	<i>List 3</i> (35:4-36:7):	Moses instructs the people
	<i>List 4</i> (36:8-39:32):	The people build the sanctuary
	<i>List 5</i> (39:33-43):	The people present the sanctuary before Moses
	<i>List 6</i> (40:1-16):	YHWH instructs Moses to erect the sanctuary
	<i>List 7</i> (40:17-33):	Moses erects the sanctuary
B''	Sabbath-sanctuary:	Glory of YHWH (40:34-38)

Table 11 provides a more detailed summary of the seven lists of the sanctuary pericope and shows the Sabbath-sanctuary interconnectedness by the placement of the Sabbath commandments and by the use of Sabbath-related language in the conclusions of Lists 3-7. Between Exod 25-31 and 35-40 occurs the narrative about the incident with the golden calf (chs. 32-34).

While the biblical writer repeated the sanctuary components over and over again, lingering over details and filling seven lists that vary in length, it is specifically List 1 that places some of the sanctuary components in a different order when compared to the other six lists. The different ordering, however, may be explained by the extraordinary content,

purpose, and theological nature of the building instructions that Moses received in the vision on top of Mount Sinai (Exod 24:15-18).²⁸

Table 11. Sabbath-sanctuary link in Exodus 25-40

Sanctuary Building Lists (Exod 25:1-40:38)	Sabbath Commandments and Sabbath Language
List 1 (Exod 25:1-30:38) Model for the sanctuary	
List 2 (Exod 31:1-11) Listing of the sanctuary items	
Sabbath Commandment (Exod 31:12-17)	
Narrative Section	
Golden Calf Crisis (Exod 32:1-34:35)	
Sabbath Commandment (Exod 35:1-3)	
List 3 (Exod 35:4-36:7) Moses' instructions to the people	Sabbath Language: "The material was sufficient . . . for all the work (כל־המלאכה) to do (לעשות)" (Exod 36:7; cf. Gen 2:2-3)
List 4 (Exod 36:8-39:32) Building of the sanctuary	Sabbath Language: "Thus all the work was completed (ותכל) . . . and the sons of Israel did (ויעשו) according to all that YHWH had commanded Moses; so they did (כן עשו)" (Exod 39:32; cf. Gen 2:1)
List 5 (Exod 39:33-43) Presentation of the sanctuary	Sabbath Language: "Moses saw (וירא) all the work (כל־המלאכה) and behold (וזהנה), they had done it (עשו). . . . So Moses blessed (ויברך) them" (Exod 39:43; cf. Gen 2:3)
List 6 (Exod 40:1-16) YHWH's instructions to Moses	Sabbath Language: "Moses did (ויעש) as YHWH had commanded him" (Exod 40:16; cf. Gen 2:2-3; Deut 5:12, 15)
List 7 (Exod 40:17-33) Erection of the sanctuary	Sabbath Language: "Moses completed (ויכל) the work (את־המלאכה)" (Exod 40:33; cf. Gen 2:1)
Sabbath-Sanctuary in place (Exod 40:34-38)	

The text shows that YHWH revealed to Moses both the purpose of the earthly sanctuary ("that I may dwell among them"; 25:8) and the divine pattern and model for the building and its services ("according to all that I am going to show you, the pattern of the

²⁸ Durham, *Exodus*, 353.

tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct”; 25:9). The rationale for the building of the sanctuary, namely, to be a dwelling and a meeting place, is important in the text of Exod 25-31, for on this basis we will identify the basic link between the Sabbath and the sanctuary.

The crucial importance of the rationale of the sanctuary as a divine dwelling place for YHWH and a meeting place between YHWH and humans is emphasized several times in the sanctuary pericope: Exod 25:8; 22; 29:43-46; 30:6, 36; 40:35. The verb **שָׁכַן**, “dwell,” occurs only four times (25:8; 29:45, 46; 40:35), but the designation of the sanctuary as a **מִשְׁכַּן**, “dwelling place,” occurs 58 times. The verb **יָעַד**, “appoint, meet,” is mentioned five times (25:22; 29:42, 43; 30:6, 36), but the name **אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד**, “tent of meeting,” occurs 34 times. These frequent occurrences of the two words show that the building of the sanctuary is basically an expression of YHWH’s urgent desire to meet with humans and speak to them from his own dwelling place. The five occurrences of the verb **יָעַד** show that YHWH directly appoints his meetings with human beings.

A closer look into the text, however, shows that two different meetings will occur between YHWH and humans. One meeting will take place between YHWH and Moses in front of the ark of the testimony: “There I will meet with you (**לָךְ**); and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you (**אִוְרֹתַי**) in commandment for the sons of Israel” (25:22). Note the second person masculine singular suffix **ךְ**, “you,” which refers to a meeting between YHWH and Moses as an individual person. Another meeting will take place between YHWH and the people of Israel in front of the bronze altar: “There I will meet with you (**לְכֶם**), to speak to you (**לָךְ**). I will meet there with the Israelites” (29:42-43). Note the second person masculine plural suffix **כֶּם**, “you,” which refers to a

meeting between YHWH and the people. After the meeting with the people the text uses the second person masculine singular suffix ך, specifying that during that meeting YHWH will speak to Moses as an individual (ךָ).

The use of different suffix forms in these texts clearly differentiates between two meeting appointments inside the sanctuary complex: The meeting in front of the ark will take place between YHWH and Moses while Moses receives YHWH's commandments for Israel.²⁹ The meeting before the bronze altar will take place between YHWH and the whole congregation of Israel while Moses will function as a mediator between YHWH and the people.³⁰

In addition and most interestingly, the individual meeting between YHWH and Moses in front of the ark is mentioned a second time in Exod 30:6 in close relation to the yearly function of the golden altar: "You shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you (ךָ)" (note the second person masculine singular suffix; cf. v. 36). The linguistic parallels between Exod 25:22 and 30:6 are striking and suggest that the reference to the individual meeting in the beginning and at the end of the first speech of YHWH needs to be seen in terms of a parallel structuring of this section in the sanctuary pericope.

In support of a parallel structuring of the individual meeting is the placement of the congregational meeting in the text. The reference about the congregational meeting occurs in between the two references to the individual meeting, which produces an arch

²⁹ I designate this meeting as the *individual meeting*.

³⁰ I designate this meeting as the *congregational meeting*.

structure in the first speech of YHWH. The structurally linked individual meeting frames and, therefore, highlights the congregational meeting. The arch structure also suggests that the individual meeting, when Moses will receive the commandments for the congregation of Israel, has the purpose of leading up to the congregational meeting, when Moses will deliver the commandments of YHWH to the people.

- A Individual meeting in front of the ark of the testimony:
 וְנִוְעַדְתִּי לָךְ (“There I will meet with you [sg.]”; 25:22)
- X Congregational meeting in front of the bronze altar:
 אֶעֱד לָכֶם (“I will meet with you [pl.] there”; 29:42-43)
- A' Individual meeting in front of the ark of the testimony:
 אַעֲוֹד לָךְ (“Where I will meet with you [sg.]”; 30:6)

In light of the arch structure and following the observations about the two different meetings, we can explore the relationship between the Sabbath and the sanctuary. There are at least three aspects that shed light upon the Sabbath-sanctuary link within Exod 25-31. These aspects have to do with the meetings that take place inside the sanctuary complex in close relation to the Sabbath commandment of the seventh speech. First, textual evidence will be provided to support the meeting event; second, structural perspectives will be considered; and, third, the conceptual context of the Sabbath-sanctuary link will be taken into account. These insights need to be understood as a network of elements and levels of meaning within the complexity of the Sabbath-sanctuary system outlined in Exod 25-31.

1. Textual evidence indicates the actual event of meeting. While showing Moses the ark of the testimony (25:10-22), YHWH announces that they will meet here, in this same place, and YHWH will speak to Moses about all the commandments for the people of Israel. The strong emphasis that YHWH places upon the location from which he will speak to Moses suggests the importance of the place and of the speech that YHWH will

address to Moses. One might assume that the place is of greatest importance and the speech of highest significance, intensity, and passion. The text reads as follows: “There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I give to you in command for the sons of Israel” (25:22).

However, while glancing over the sanctuary pericope in the book of Exodus, it seems that the specific meeting and the significant speech between YHWH and Moses do not take place, because, in the end when YHWH’s glory finally arrives and fills the sanctuary, Moses must watch and listen from the outside (40:34, 35; Lev 1:1). The careful reader of the sanctuary pericope, however, remains perplexed and wonders about the significance that the author placed upon the announcement of the individual meeting in Exod 25:22.

Later, however, the Pentateuch indeed makes reference to an individual meeting between YHWH and Moses in front of the ark in Num 7:89. The meeting that this text mentions contains all the characteristics described and announced previously in Exod 25:22. The text reads: “Now when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so he spoke to him” (Num 7:89). From the texts regarding the meeting and due to the significance that Exod 25-31 places upon the concept of the sanctuary as a meeting place, the following questions arise: (1) Does the text in Exod 25-40 include further indicators for an individual meeting between YHWH and Moses? (2) If yes, what are these indicators? (3) What could have been the content of the meeting between YHWH and Moses, which Moses was then responsible for delivering to the congregation of Israel?

By means of a close reading of Exod 25:1-31:17, I come to the conclusion that the individual meeting is indicated in the course of the text of Exod 25-31 and the speech of YHWH to Moses is the Sabbath commandment in Exod 31:12-17. Moses then was to deliver this commandment to the congregation of Israel. The following indicators in the text of Exod 25-31 provide evidence for the individual meeting and the speech of the Sabbath commandment:

One indicator for the individual meeting is found in the seventh speech of YHWH where Moses receives the task to speak to the people of Israel. This task is strongly emphasized by a disjunctive clause followed by an imperative verb, וַיֹּאמֶר דַּבֵּר, “You, you shall speak” (31:13). YHWH issues a direct command to Moses to speak to the people of Israel.

A look at all seven speeches of YHWH actually reveals that it is only in the first and seventh speech where Moses has the task to speak to the people of Israel (25:1; 31:13). In the other speeches Moses has a different task, namely to perform things such as take a census of the people (speech 2; 30:12); make a laver (speech 3; 30:18); collect spices for the anointing oil (speech 4; 30:23); and collect spices for the incense (speech 5; 30:34). In speech 6 Moses is practically inactive because YHWH reports his own deeds of appointing the craftsmen and filling them with the Spirit of God (31:2, 3, 6). These observations lead to the conclusion that the first speech and the seventh speech correspond to each other in the specific way that Moses received the task to speak to the people of Israel about the construction of the sanctuary (25:1) and, in the context of a meeting with YHWH, about the Sabbath commandment (25:22; 31:12-13).

Another indicator for an individual meeting between YHWH and Moses is the twofold meeting announcement in the first speech (25:22; 30:6) that equals the

remarkable twofold speaking-request in the seventh speech: “YHWH spoke to Moses, saying: ‘But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying: Indeed, my Sabbaths you shall keep’” (31:12, 13). Thus, what is announced in the first speech is implemented in the seventh speech. One might even say that the individual meeting announced in the first speech takes place in the seventh speech when YHWH actually declares the Sabbath commandment for the congregation.

Furthermore, it appears that this very meeting and YHWH’s speech about the Sabbath commandment is the reason for Moses to assemble the congregation and to deliver the Sabbath commandment to them before the construction of the sanctuary: “Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and said to them: ‘These are the things that YHWH has commanded to do: For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day it shall be holiness to you, a Sabbath of Sabbaths to YHWH; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death’” (35:1-3).

An additional indicator for the individual meeting is found in the seventh speech of YHWH by the unusual use of the adverbial particle אַךְ, “indeed, surely,” introducing the Sabbath commandment: אַךְ אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ: “Indeed, my Sabbaths you shall keep” (31:13). The rabbis already wondered about the use of the particle and came to the conclusion that it conveys a limitation to the work of the sanctuary by excluding the Sabbath as a day of rest.³¹ While this is certainly true because of the prohibition of any work on the Sabbath day, the particle אַךְ may also disclose the nuance of a restrictive or demonstrative adverb that highlights the Sabbath as an unexpected and unforeseen

³¹ See *Sipra Qedoshim 7:7. The Babylonian Talmud*, Shabbat 49b; Rabbi Abraham Ben Isaiah and Rabbi Benjamin Sharfman, *The Pentateuch and Rashi’s Commentary: Exodus* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: S.S. & R. Publishing Company, 1949), 396.

conclusion to the sanctuary instructions.³² YHWH's utterance of the Sabbath commandment is certainly exceptional at the end of the sanctuary pericope. The surprise caused by the use of the particle וְאֵלֶּיךָ suggests that the Sabbath command intentionally relates to the building of the sanctuary.

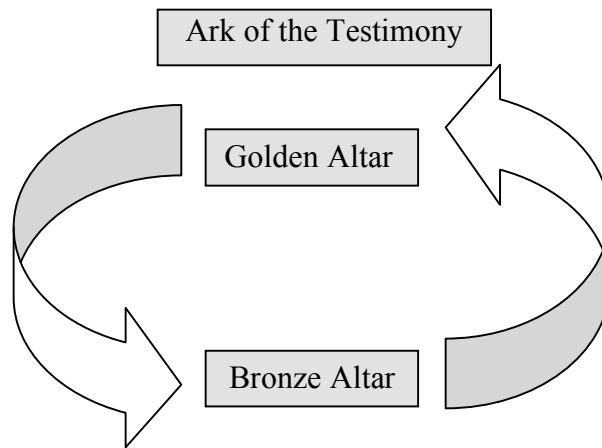
2. Structural perspectives regarding the divine-human meetings inside the sanctuary emerge from a structural analysis of the text. This aspect addresses the vision's dynamic concept and force of motion as it develops in the sanctuary instructions. Similar to the characteristics of the "ring composition" depicted by Mary Douglas in the book of Leviticus,³³ the text of the sanctuary instructions directs the reader purposefully towards the seventh speech with the Sabbath commandment. The unity of the text is indicated by the easily recognizable introductory lines to all of the seven speeches of YHWH, "YHWH spoke to Moses, saying" (25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1, 12). However, the internal characteristics that unite the text and its meaning are included in the purpose for building of the sanctuary by the words, "I will meet with you" (25:22; 29:42; 30:6, 36). The chiasmic arrangement of this line directs the reader to the meeting where the Sabbath commandment will be proclaimed (31:12-17) and then handed over to the people of Israel (35:1-3).

The ring structure begins with the description of the ark foretelling the individual meeting between YHWH and Moses (25:22). The speech progresses in its treatment of

³² Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 307, 670.

³³ Mary Douglas, "Poetic Structure in Leviticus," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. David P. Wright, David N. Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 247-55; Cf. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22* (AB 3A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1364-65.

the sanctuary components and moves toward the bronze altar in the outer court, which will be designated as the meeting place between YHWH and the people (29:42). Then, while dealing with the sacrifices of the bronze altar, the text takes a turn and directs the reader back toward the ark, where the individual meeting is noted again (30:6).



The reference to the individual meeting in front of the ark of the testimony in relation to the golden altar (Exod 30:6) must be seen as part of a carefully structured text in order to highlight the meeting aspect of the sanctuary. The deliberate structure of the text includes the placement of the golden altar (Exod 30:1-10), which is treated after the bronze altar (Exod 29:38-46), rather than in relation to the table and the lampstand, even though these are components of the holy place together with the golden altar.³⁴ The golden altar seems to be placed after the bronze altar because of its special function as a connecting element between the outer court and the most holy place, where the ark is situated. The text shows that by means of the function of the golden altar in the annual

³⁴ See p. 207, n. 27, above.

ministry of *Yom Kippur*, when the blood of the sin offering will be placed upon its horns, a meeting will take place between YHWH and the high priest in front of the ark of the testimony.

In other words, the ring structure of Exod 25-31 suggests to the reader of the text to begin the journey throughout the sanctuary together with Moses right there in front of the ark with the כַּפֹּרֶת, “mercy seat,” on top, i.e., YHWH’s special place in the sanctuary. Keeping in mind that this will be the place for the individual meeting between YHWH and Moses, we walk through the tent, pass the table and the lampstand, and approach the bronze altar in the outer court. Here, the colorful priestly ornaments and garments are displayed and the consecration of the priests is announced to take place over the course of seven days. Then, the daily offerings will be the focus of the people gathered around the bronze altar because here YHWH will meet with them to let them know his commandments through Moses.

However, this congregational meeting must wait, for there is that particular appointment between YHWH and Moses coming up. So Moses turns back, enters the tent of meeting, and takes his stand in front of the ark surrounded by the “swirling smoke of . . . incense”³⁵ ascending from the golden altar (Exod 30:10).³⁶ Inside the ark is the testimony including the Sabbath commandment, YHWH’s special call for covenant remembrance (Exod 20:8). And Moses hears the voice of YHWH calling out “from above the mercy seat, from between the cherubim” (25:22): “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: ‘Indeed, my Sabbaths you shall keep’” (31:13).

³⁵ I borrowed this expression from Gane’s introduction in *Cult and Character*, xix. On the meaning of burning incense on *Yom Kippur* see *ibid.*, 237.

³⁶ Cf. 1 Kgs 6:22, 23; Heb 9:3, 4.

3. The context of the Sabbath-sanctuary link indicates the divine-human meeting. This context refers to the question about the pattern and model for the sanctuary and its future services. The blueprint of the sanctuary includes both the outline for the building and its furniture and the prototype for the operating function of the sanctuary according to a regular annual rhythm. This regular rhythm consists of the daily, weekly, and yearly ministry in the sanctuary and needs to be seen in light of the discussion above about the purpose of the sanctuary as a divine-human meeting place.

Considering the regular ministry in the sanctuary, the arch structure shown on p. 202 indicates that the individual meeting between YHWH and Moses prefigures and anticipates YHWH's yearly meeting with the high priest in front of the ark on *Yom Kippur*. The second member of the structure (A') clearly speaks of this individual meeting in connection with the golden altar on *Yom Kippur*: "Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations" (30:10). Thus, the first member (A) needs to be understood as the first announcement of the *Yom Kippur* meeting between YHWH and the high priest. Furthermore, the chiasm shows that the individual meeting works toward the congregational meeting, where the high priest effects "atonement for . . . all the people of the assembly" (Lev 16:32) who are gathered around the bronze altar (Exod 29:42-43). In light of these observations, the chiasmic structure reveals a level of meaning that points to the yearly *Yom Kippur* meeting:

- A *Yom Kippur*: High priest in front of the ark:
 לך ונועדתי לך "There I will meet with you [sg.]" (25:22)
- X *Yom Kippur*: Congregation in front of the bronze altar:
 לכם איער לכם "I will meet with you [pl.] there" (29:42-43)
- A' *Yom Kippur*: High priest in front of the ark:
 לך איער לך "Where I will meet with you [sg.]" (30:6)

On *Yom Kippur* the high priest entered the sphere of divine presence and made atonement by prescribed ritual procedures (Lev 16:1-34).³⁷ While the account in Lev 16 concentrates on the high priest and the ritual activities that he had to perform, the texts in Exod 25:22; 29:42-46; 30:6, 10 and 31:12-17 focus on YHWH and his presence at the *Yom Kippur* meeting. According to Exod 25:22 and 30:6, YHWH is the one who initiates the *Yom Kippur* meeting and announces his speech about the commandment for Israel. According to Exod 31:12-17, YHWH actually speaks, and the command that he declares is the Sabbath commandment.

In fact, YHWH's speech about the Sabbath commandment is only appropriate to be delivered on the festival of *Yom Kippur*. The reason is that the Sabbath commandment testifies to YHWH's presence since creation, when his presence filled the seventh day of the creation week when he blessed and sanctified the seventh day of the creation week.³⁸ Thus the meaning of the Sabbath commandment refers to YHWH's presence in front of the ark of the testimony. Moreover, the Sabbath commandment reveals the presence of YHWH to the congregation waiting outside in front of the bronze altar. YHWH's covenant relationship with Israel and his act of sanctifying the people powerfully witness to the effect of Sabbath observation in close relation to the sanctuary ministry.

In conclusion, the textual, structural, and conceptual aspects indicate that the Sabbath commandment in Exod 31:12-17 expresses the goal of the sanctuary building instructions. Thus, the meaning of the Sabbath is the reason for building the sanctuary.

³⁷ See Gane, *Cult and Character*, 305-10.

³⁸ A link between creation and *Yom Kippur* is suggested by Jürgens who states that on *Yom Kippur* partial restoration of the creation order is represented. Benedikt Jürgens, *Heiligkeit und Versöhnung: Levitikus 16 in seinem literarischen Kontext* (Herders Biblische Studien 28; Freiburg: Herder, 2001), 423-29.

Without the Sabbath commandment, the individual meeting in front of the ark would not take place. Without the Sabbath commandment, not even the congregational meeting in front of the bronze altar would take place. Likewise, without the Sabbath as a *שבת שבתון* established in creation times for the sake of YHWH's presence in the world, *Yom Kippur* *שבת שבתון* regularly—i.e., annually—re-establishing YHWH's presence in the world would not make sense.

Literary Structure

The following section will investigate the structural arrangement of Exod 31:12-17 and point out its implications. This Sabbath text stresses the enormous significance of the Sabbath in the context of the instructions for building of the sanctuary. Here the word *שבת* occurs seven times, a number that signifies the unity of the text in Exod 31:12-17. Six times the noun form occurs, but at the seventh position the verb *שבת* appears and provides a direct link to the creation Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3, where only the verb form is used.

After the introductory line, “YHWH spoke to Moses, saying” (Exod 31:12) that marks Exod 31:12-17 as the seventh speech of YHWH, the text displays a chiasmic arrangement with an intricate and skillful poetic pattern. The commandment to keep the Sabbath is repeated three times (31:13, 14, 16). Each time a different aspect emerges as a reason for the command. The following chiasmic structure shows the different sections of the three commands to keep the Sabbath, including the reasons given for observing it:

- I But as for you, speak to the Israelites (*בני ישראל*), saying,
My Sabbaths (*את־שבתתי*) you shall keep (*תשמרו*)
 - A1 for it is a sign (*אות*) between me and you (*ביני וביניכם*)
 - A2 throughout your generations (*לדרתיכם*)
 - A3 to know (*לדעת*) that I am YHWH your sanctifier (v. 13)
- II You shall keep (*ושמרתם*) the Sabbath (*את־השבת*)

- B for it is holy to you (קדש הוא לכם)
 C1 whoever profanes it
 shall surely be put to death (מוות יומת)
 C2 for whoever does work in it (כל־העשה בה מלאכה)
 that person shall be cut off from among his people (v. 14)
 D Six days work shall be done
 (ששת ימים יעשה מלאכה),
 but on the seventh day (וביום השביעי)
 is the Sabbath of Sabbaths (שבת שבתון)
- B' holy to YHWH (קדש ליהוה)
 C2' whoever does work (כל־העשה מלאכה)
 on the day of the Sabbath (השבת)
 C1' shall surely be put to death (מוות יומת) (v. 15)
- III The Israelites (בני־ישראל) shall keep (ושמרו) the Sabbath (את־השבת)
 A3' to make / by making (לעשות) the Sabbath (את־השבת)
 A2' throughout their generations (לדרתם) an everlasting covenant (v. 16)
 A1' Between me and the Israelites (ביני ובין בני ישראל)
 it is a sign (אֹת) forever.
 D' For in six days (ששת ימים) YHWH
 made the heavens and the earth
 (עשה יהוה את־השמים ואת־הארץ)
 but on the seventh day (וביום השביעי)
 he ceased (שבת) and was refreshed (v. 17)

The chiasmic arrangement of the three commands to keep the Sabbath shows balance, inversion, and intensification. Not only is the central part (D) the focus, but its idea is reinforced with a motive statement at the end of the chiasm (D'), which quotes from Gen 2:1-3. The chiasm demonstrates that all three commands are based upon the order of six workdays followed by the seventh day as a שבת שבתון (Exod 31:15), established at creation when God made (עשה) and then ceased (שבת) (31:17). Thus, the focus of the seventh speech of YHWH is on the distinction between the six workdays and the Sabbath as a שבת שבתון.

Each part of the chiasm is strengthened by its parallel part. In the first command it is said that the Sabbath is a sign (אֹת) between YHWH and Israel to make known that YHWH is the one who sanctifies Sabbath observers (A1 A2 A3). The second command

stresses the holiness of the Sabbath in relation to the Sabbath observer: “it is holy to you” (B), and in relation to YHWH: “holy to YHWH” (B’). The punishment for doing work on the Sabbath is placed once in relation to the holiness of the Sabbath to the people (C1 C2), and once in relation to the holiness of the Sabbath to YHWH (C2’ C1’). The chiasm suggests that the holiness of the Sabbath “to you” is founded in the holiness of the Sabbath “to YHWH.” The third command is concerned with the Sabbath for future generations (A3’ A2’ A1’). The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship between YHWH and the Israelites, and it constitutes an eternal covenant.

The inversions observed in A1 A2 A3 // A3’ A2’ A1’ and in C1 C2 // C2’ C1’ are challenging, for they show distinct features that differ from simple chiastic inversion patterns. Note that in the central section A3 // A3’ the text does not repeat words or phrases, but alters them by the use of two different infinitive constructs, לִדְעַת, “to know,” and לַעֲשׂוֹת, “to make.” These infinitive construct forms do not correspond to each other in semantic or syntactic terms. While לִדְעַת introduces a purpose clause, “to know that I am YHWH, your sanctifier,” the infinitive construct לַעֲשׂוֹת seems to have expegetical value and in connection with the main verb שָׁמַר this infinitive form denotes that the Israelites are to “keep the Sabbath by doing the Sabbath.”³⁹

While the infinitive forms may not fully correspond to each other in syntactic terms, the chiastic structure shows that the two infinitives relate to each other in a way that adds to and intensifies the meaning of the entire Sabbath text. The first part tells of the Sabbath as a sign of the sanctifying relationship between YHWH and the Sabbath

³⁹ See the numerous uses of the verb שָׁמַר in close relation with the infinitive construct לַעֲשׂוֹת in the Pentateuch: Gen 18:19; Lev 18:30; Deut 5:1, 32; 6:3, 25; 8:1; 11:22, 32; 12:1; 13:1 [12:32], 19 [18]; 15:5; 17:10, 19; 19:9; 24:8; 26:16; 28:1, 13, 15, 58; 31:12; 32:46.

observer and the corresponding part tells of the Sabbath as a sign of the covenant relationship between YHWH and the Sabbath observer that is to be made/celebrated by the Sabbath observer.

In the case of the inversion in C1 C2 // C2' C1' the first part consists of two penalty regulations for Sabbath breaking (C1 C2) as a result of the Sabbath that is “holy to you.” The corresponding part (C2' C1') combines phrases from the two penalty regulations and constitutes the result of the Sabbath being “holy to YHWH.” Based upon the chiasmic arrangement it may be concluded that profaning the Sabbath is equal with doing work on Sabbath and to be cut off from the community of people is terminal punishment, equivalent in this sense to being put to death.⁴⁰ However, it is interesting to note that the penalty of being cut off occurs only in relation to or as a result of the Sabbath being “holy to you,” but is omitted in relation to the Sabbath being “holy to YHWH.”⁴¹

These inversions show that Exod 31:12-17 needs to be read as a whole as well as in the context of the entire section of the sanctuary building instructions in order to understand its meaning. Furthermore, the inversions signify that the chiasmic arrangement

⁴⁰ Here the text may provide a link to Num 15:30-36 on the laws of defiant sins and the narrative of the man gathering wood on Sabbath, who was stoned to death by the entire community of people. On the biblical penalty of *karet*, “cutting off,” see Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 457-60; Baruch J. Schwartz, “The Bearing of Sin in the Priestly Literature,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (ed. D. P. Wright, D. N. Freedman, and A. Hurvitz; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 13; Donald J. Wold, “The Meaning of the Biblical Penalty *Kareth*” (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1978), 251-255; cf. Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 155.

⁴¹ Milgrom holds that the severe penalty of being cut off from the community of the people may be understood as a divinely enacted punishment reserved only for religious offenses and never for offenses that were judicially sentenced. See *Leviticus 1-16*, 457-460.

has been employed not as an artificial device with precise structural rules but as an artistic feature in order to provide the key to the meaning of the text.⁴²

Theological Implications

While others have investigated various expressions of the Sabbath commandment in Exod 31:12-17 and discussed the meaning of the Sabbath in the wider context of the Hebrew Bible,⁴³ this section will investigate selected expressions of the Sabbath commandment and their theological meaning in the context of the sanctuary building instructions in Exod 25-31.

The Sabbath as a Sign of Sanctification

Hasel noted that the very nature of a sign signifies that it points to something beyond itself.⁴⁴ This concept is true with regard to the sanctity of the Sabbath. The origin of Sabbath holiness is the Creator God who sanctified this day in creation times (Gen 2:3). Holiness, as God's attribute, signifies that he is completely different, beyond all that is mundane, and totally independent.

Viewed from that perspective, Shapiro noted that God's holiness "denotes absolute selflessness" in order to "give everything of Himself."⁴⁵ The Sabbath, then, sanctified by the God who gives everything of himself, lays the foundation for the

⁴² Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," 51.

⁴³ Doukhan, "Loving the Sabbath as a Christian," 149-164; Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch," 33-37; Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology*, 133-134.

⁴⁴ Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch," 34.

⁴⁵ Shapiro, "The Meaning of Holiness in Judaism," 58.

concept of the Sabbath commandment where the Sabbath observer will be sanctified by YHWH (Exod 31:13).

A closer look into the sanctuary pericope shows that the Sabbath observer's sanctification is different from the sanctification of the priests and the sanctuary building. The sanctuary was to be consecrated by means of the anointing oil, the high priest and the priests by means of a whole process of ritual actions taking place over the course of seven days including the anointing with oil (Exod 28-29). However, after the description of the whole consecration process or in spite of it, the text notes that YHWH will meet with Israel and consecrate the sanctuary and the priests by his glory (29:44). One may understand from this that the ritual consecration process of the priests and the sanctuary is but a qualification for the meeting that will take place with YHWH and the consecration of the sanctuary by his glory.⁴⁶

The Significance of the Infinitive לדעת

The Sabbath observer's sanctification is bound up with the expression לדעת, "to know." The Sabbath is called a sign "to know (לדעת) that I am YHWH your sanctifier (מקדשכם)" (31:13). The infinitive construct of the verb ידע, "know," is placed into a purpose clause and denotes the basic concept of an intimate divine-human relationship between YHWH and the Sabbath observer.⁴⁷ The Sabbath observer knows YHWH personally and intimately as his sanctifier.

⁴⁶ Roy Gane shows that YHWH moves himself into the sanctuary independent of human rituals. See "Leviticus," *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (ed. John H. Walton; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 1:298-299.

⁴⁷ See among a wealth of references Exod 33:12, 17; Deut 13:3[4]; Ps 139:23; and Nah 1:7 that show the biblical understanding of divine-human relationship; cf. Johannes Botterweck, "יָדָע, yada," *TDOT* 5:468-470.

A broader understanding of this kind of divine-human relationship emerges when one takes into account the two other passages of the sanctuary pericope where the verb יָדַע occurs. The first occurrence refers to the community of the people gathered in front of the bronze altar with the burnt offering: “They shall know (יָדַעוּ) that I am YHWH their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am YHWH their God” (29:46). These words resound in the introductory line of the Decalogue, “I am YHWH your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt” (Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6), and suggest that the relationship between YHWH and Israel is based upon the saving act of YHWH that includes the whole community. Both the commandments of the Decalogue and the burnt offerings at the bronze altar benefit the congregation. Furthermore, the relationship between YHWH and the congregation relies on the remembrance of YHWH’s mighty acts against the Egyptians, when the people walked as a community through the sea on dry ground. Together they felt fear and cried out to YHWH (Exod 14:10), but then rejoiced as a community of people with Moses and Miriam (Exod 15). In that sense the verb יָדַע is used and emphasizes the divine-human relationship of the congregation as a whole.

The second occurrence of the verb יָדַע speaks of the craftsmen filled with the Spirit of God: “Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom YHWH has put skill and understanding to know (לָדַעַת) how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary” (Exod 36:1). Here, the concept of the divine-human relationship is connected to the personal and individual gift of the Spirit of God. YHWH identifies the craftsmen by name and as individuals, fills them with the Spirit of God, and empowers them to know how to perform the sacred work. Furthermore, the craftsmen are chosen and filled with the Spirit of God for a specific purpose, namely to perform the

work of the sanctuary. In this case the divine-human relationship reveals the divine act working from within the individual who is involved in the sanctuary construction.

Seen from the perspective of these two texts, the divine-human relationship expressed in the Sabbath commandment is twofold: (1) It refers to the relationship between YHWH and the Sabbath observer from within the community of people and is based upon the saving act of YHWH for all people; and (2) it includes the personal relationship between YHWH and the Sabbath observer from the individual perspective, even from the individual who is able to perform sacred work because he is filled with the Spirit of God.

The Significance of the Infinitive לעשות

The chiasm of Exod 31:12-17 shows that the infinitive לעשות in the third command is placed in an inverted parallelism with the infinitive לדעת in the first command (A1 A2 A3 // A3' A2' A1').

- I But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel (בני ישראל), saying,
My Sabbaths (את־שבתתי) you shall keep (תשמרו)
A1 for it is a sign (אֹת) between me and you (ביני וביניכם)
A2 throughout your generations (לדרתכם)
A3 to know (לדעת) that I, YHWH, am your sanctifier (v. 13)
- III The sons of Israel (בני־ישראל) shall keep (ושמרו) the Sabbath (את־השבת)
A3' to make / by making (לעשות) the Sabbath (את־השבת)
A2' throughout their generations (לדרתם) an everlasting covenant (v. 16)
A1' Between me and the sons of Israel (ביני ובין בני ישראל)
it is a sign (אֹת) forever (v. 17a)

Even though the syntactic use of the two infinitive forms differs, the infinitive לדעת denoting a purpose clause and the infinitive לעשות an epexegetical infinitive, the inverted parallelism suggests that the infinitive לעשות is the response or reaction to the infinitive לדעת. The Sabbath observer, who knows YHWH as his sanctifier, responds by

making the Sabbath. However, making the Sabbath implies that the Sabbath is not to be understood as an isolated day among the days of the week. On the contrary, the model for *making* the Sabbath results from an interesting conceptual inversion included in the text of the following verse: God “made” (עָשָׂה) the heavens and the earth during the six days, but ceased (*sabbathed*) on the seventh day. Thus, when the Sabbath observer responds to YHWH by enacting Sabbath, he follows the making model of the Creator God by working through the six weekdays toward the seventh day. According to God’s creational activity, Sabbath-making begins with the first day of the week and culminates in completion of his work, rest and refreshment from the work, and sanctification. Thus, to know YHWH as the sanctifier and the one to whom the Sabbath is holy from creation times is essential to the understanding of keeping the Sabbath by making the Sabbath.

With regard to the biblical concept of holiness, scholars have pointed out that the divine realm of holiness permeates the dimensions of the whole of reality, which include sacred space (sanctuary), sacred persons (priests and levites), and sacred time (Sabbath and feasts).⁴⁸ Desecrating these dimensions by making mundane use of them results in severe punishment. The question, then, that arises concerning the Sabbath is how the holiness of the Sabbath relates to the holiness of the physical space of the sanctuary and to the holiness of the people.

The rabbinic recognition that the Sabbath could not be violated even for the building of the sanctuary⁴⁹ suggests that the holiness of time surpasses that of physical

⁴⁸ Frank H. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Schwartz, “The Sabbath in the Torah Sources,” 10.

⁴⁹ Even though Israel is eager for the work on the sanctuary, the Sabbath should not be suspended because of it. The adverb לֹא indicates a limitation to exclude the

space.⁵⁰ Milgrom points out that the priority of the Sabbath in Lev 19:30, “You shall keep my Sabbaths and revere my sanctuary,” expresses the basic idea for this rule and is best reflected in the placement of the Sabbath commandment in Exod 35:1-3 at the head of the actual sanctuary building account. In his further explanations, Milgrom suggests that the holiness in time is complemented by the holiness of the physical space.⁵¹

Careful observation on the terminology used in relation to the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and the people shows the distinct use of the phrase קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה, “holy to YHWH,” in the context and structure of the whole book of Exodus. This phrase occurs in the book of Exodus only four times: two times directly related to the Sabbath as a Sabbath of Sabbaths (Exod 16:23; 31:15) and two times identifying the high priest as holy to YHWH by the inscription engraved in his golden crown (28:36; 39:30).

Sabbath: שַׁבְּתוֹן שַׁבְּתֵי־קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה, “Sabbath of Sabbaths holy to YHWH” (16:23)

High priest: קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה, “Holy to YHWH” (28:36)

Sabbath: שַׁבְּתֵי שַׁבְּתוֹן קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה, “Sabbath of Sabbaths holy to YHWH” (31:15)

High priest: קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה, “Holy to YHWH” (39:30)

The alternating order of the four occurrences of the phrase קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה in the book of Exodus conveys a close relationship between the Sabbath and the high priest that seems intended in the text of the book of Exodus. It may suggest that the Sabbath

Sabbath from the construction of the sanctuary. Every form of labor necessary in the building of the tabernacle was regarded as a principal category of work prohibited on Sabbath. See *Sipra Qedoshim 7:7. The Babylonian Talmud*, Shabbat 49b; Isaiah and Scharfman, *The Pentateuch and Rashi’s Commentary: Exodus*, 396.

⁵⁰ Göran Larsson, *Bound for Freedom: The Book of Exodus in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 238.

⁵¹ See Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1699. Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, 2285. With reference to Lev 26:2 Milgrom states: “In the priestly story of creation, however, the climax of creation is the sabbath, the divine Temple in time, not space, that God builds (i.e., creates) by himself, without any assistance above or below.”

functions in relation to the six workdays as the high priest does in relation to the priests: as the crown of the days.

Furthermore, the alternating order may suggest that the holiness of the Sabbath is related to the sanctuary service, especially to the ministry of the high priest, rather than to the sanctuary per se as a holy place. According to the structural arrangement outlined above, only the high priest and the Sabbath are identified as קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה. Thus, rather than paralleling the holiness of the Sabbath with the holiness of the sanctuary as an object of space, the holiness of the Sabbath parallels the holiness of the high priestly ministry inside the sanctuary. The example of the high priest, identified as holy to YHWH when he bore away the iniquity of the sanctuary (28:38), appeals to the Sabbath observer to become a living sign of holiness in his response to the saving acts of YHWH.⁵²

In conclusion, Milgrom's perspective about the complementarity of holiness in time, which relates to the Sabbath, and holiness of space, which refers to the sanctuary, needs to be modified or at least better defined. While holiness of time/the Sabbath is established by God in Creation (Gen 2:3), holiness of the sanctuary needs to be seen in direct relation to the priestly ministry in the sanctuary when the high priest bears the culpability of the people relating to the offerings that they bring into the realm of the sanctuary (Exod 28:36-38). Thus, I suggest that holiness of time and holiness of space should not be seen as complementary or as parallel concepts, but holiness of time functions as the Creator's principle for his presence in space when the high priest fulfills his ministry inside the sanctuary.

⁵² Doukhan, "Loving the Sabbath as a Christian," 157.

The Sabbath as a Sign of the Covenant

The covenant signs (אֹתֹת־בְּרִית) of the Pentateuch—the rainbow (Gen 9:12, 13, 17), circumcision (17:11), and the Sabbath (Exod 31:13, 17; cf. Ezek 20:12, 20)—are mnemonic to the extent that they recall covenants between YHWH and human beings and are related to covenant phases in different ways.⁵³ While the rainbow reminds (זָכַר; Gen 9:15) God himself of the covenant (9:11), circumcision and the Sabbath are covenant obligations, which are to be performed by the human participants.⁵⁴

In his systematic study on the word בְּרִית, “covenant,” Rendtorff has pointed out that the Sabbath as a sign of the עוֹלָם בְּרִית, “eternal covenant,” responds to the covenant that God made with Noah after the flood (Gen 9:8-17).⁵⁵ The parallel structure that exists between Gen 1-11 and Exod 19-34 confirms that creation is YHWH’s gift to humanity

⁵³ Helfmeyer, “אֹתֹת ’oth,” *TDOT* 1:181-182.

⁵⁴ Ibid. With specific regard to circumcision, while cutting of the foreskin was a fairly common practice in the ancient Near East (see Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* [Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2005], 448) probably to introduce a young son into manhood, God commanded Abraham to circumcise the male child on the eighth day of his life (17:12). This specific ordinance for an infant promotes the ideas, first, that YHWH is the divine covenant father, lord, and owner of Abraham’s descendants, and, second, that Abraham’s descendants include the acquired foreigners as YHWH’s covenant heirs within a solemn, binding, and formal bond. The circumcised Israelite appropriates the sign of circumcision as a personal sign of confession, commitment, and faithfulness to YHWH within the covenant community (see G. Mayer, “מִוֶּלֶת מִוֶּלֶת; מִוֶּלֶת מִוֶּלֶת,” *TDOT* 8:161-162).

⁵⁵ Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology*, 134. This idea is supported by Pieter De Boer, “Quelques remarques sur l’Arc dans la Nuee (Gen. 9, 8-17),” in *Questions Disputes D’Ancien Testament: Methode et Theologie* (ed. C. Brekelmans; Leuven: University Press, 1974), 105-129. See also L. Dequeker, “Noah and Israel: The Everlasting Divine Covenant with Israel,” in *Questions Disputes D’Ancien Testament: Methode et Theologie* (ed. C. Brekelmans; Leuven: University Press, 1974), 115-129. Dequeker speaks about the covenant with Noah as “the theological and situational context of the covenant that God made with Israel and her forefathers.”

and the covenant with Noah was the means by which creation is restored after the flood.⁵⁶ Similarly, the covenant with Israel is restored after the incident with the golden calf. The Sabbath, which is called an everlasting covenant, is based upon creation order and promotes the restoration of the creation order for the Sabbath observer.

In this context, the combination of the verb שָׁמַר with the infinitive לַעֲשׂוֹת (Exod 31:16) is of major significance. The Pentateuch often links these two verbs and speaks of Israel's responsibility to keep the covenant by observing it.⁵⁷ In the specific context of the Sabbath-sanctuary link this covenant terminology refers to the human task of making the Sabbath a בְּרִית עוֹלָם, "eternal covenant," as a response to YHWH, the sanctifier, who is elsewhere called שֹׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֶסֶד, "keeper of the covenant and of loving-kindness," in spite of human failure.⁵⁸ In responding to the sanctifying act of YHWH, the Sabbath observer actively engages in the divine-human relationship intended at creation.

The commandment "you shall keep the Sabbath by making the Sabbath" in Exod 31:16 is given for a specific reason. This reason refers to time, to the future generations of Israel, and speaks directly of the Sabbath as בְּרִית עוֹלָם, "an everlasting covenant" and sign between YHWH and Israel (vv. 13, 17). The fact that the climactic speech of the sanctuary building instructions identifies the Sabbath and not the sanctuary as an external, visible, and eternal sign between YHWH and his people points back to creation times and forward into the future. This invests the Sabbath with unique divine quality.

⁵⁶ Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology*, 134.

⁵⁷ Deut 5:32, "You shall observe by doing (וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹת) just as the Lord your God has commanded you." Cf. Deut 4:6; 5:1; 6:3; 7:12; 8:1; 11:22, 32; 12:1; 13:1; 15:5; 16:1, 12; 23:24; 24:8; 26:16; 28:1, 13, 15, 58; 29:8; 31:12; 32:46.

⁵⁸ See Deut 7:9; 1 Kgs 8:23; Dan 7:9; Neh 1:5; 9:32.

Besides the fact that the Sabbath is called an “everlasting covenant” and a “sign between me and you,” expressions reminiscent of God’s covenant with Noah identified by the sign of the rainbow (Gen 9:13, 17) and of the covenant with Abraham marked by the sign of circumcision (17:11, 19), Hasel notes various other forms of covenant language in Exod 31:12-17.⁵⁹ The verbs שָׁמַר, יָדַע, כָּרַת, and חָלַל, “profane,” carry significant covenant overtones in different parts of the Hebrew Bible.⁶⁰ However, within the context of the sanctuary building instructions the covenant of the Sabbath reveals YHWH’s actual presence among the congregation of Israel, and the obligation of Sabbath keeping emphasizes the Sabbath observer’s response to the divine presence in the sanctuary.

The Sabbath in Exodus 35:1-3

The Sabbath commandment in Exod 35:1-3 initiates the sanctuary building constructions recorded in Exod 35-40. This context is very much debated among commentators because of its redundant material.⁶¹ Wellhausen went so far to discard this part as “utterly meaningless in terms of content . . . [it] would not be missed, if it were absent.”⁶² Wellhausen, however, did not take into account the following possibilities and import for the content of Exod 35-40:

⁵⁹ Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” 36-37.

⁶⁰ Amos 3:1, 2; Hos 4:1, 2; 13:4, 5; Isa 1:2, 3; 56:2, 6; Jer 24:7; Ezek 20:13, 16, 21, 24; 22:8; 23:38; Neh 13:17, 18.

⁶¹ Durham, *Exodus*, 475; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 692.

⁶² Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der Historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: Reimer, 1899; orig. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1885), 142.

1. Detailed temple descriptions and list-like literature, such as the record in Exod 35-40, are not something strange or foreign to the ancient writer and his audience, but are a common literary feature in ancient literature.⁶³

2. The content of Exod 35-40 is evidence of a complete transformation and positive change of the people's minds after the incident with the golden calf. This evidence is highly emphasized in Exod 35-36, where the text reports on the people's different mind-set and generosity coming from "moved" or willing hearts (35:22) to such an extent that a command had to be issued to stop the freewill offerings (36:2-6). In the following chapters the people are described as finishing the work according to YHWH's command (39:32, 43).

3. The redundant material may be intended to sensitize the reader to the time frame and the effort that was put into the construction of the sanctuary.

4. By repeating the sanctuary components from different perspectives (people, craftsmen, Moses, YHWH), the text concludes the lists differently by employing specific Sabbath language corresponding to each of the perspectives.

5. The text conveys and builds up great anticipation for YHWH's entrance and presence in the sanctuary.

Literary Analysis

The following study recognizes the literary context for the Sabbath commandment in Exod 35:1-3 and attempts to point out the literary characteristics and theological

⁶³ See other biblical texts that include detailed listings: 1 Kgs 6-7; Ezek 40-48; Rev 21:9-22:9; 4Q554; Homer, *Iliad* 2.484-759; cf. Watts, *Reading Law*, 37-45; Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 249-259.

contributions for the Sabbath-sanctuary link in the context of the whole sanctuary pericope in Exod 25-40.

The Sabbath commandment in Exod 35:1-3 reads as follows: “Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and said to them: ‘These are the things that YHWH has commanded them to do: For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day shall be holiness to you, a Sabbath of Sabbaths to YHWH; whoever does any work in it shall be put to death. Do not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day.’”

This Sabbath commandment is composed of two parts. The first part closely resembles the Sabbath commandment in the seventh speech of YHWH, especially Exod 31:15, even though it does not call the Sabbath a sign (אֵימָתָה) as Exod 31:13, 17 does. Rather, Exod 35:2-3 briefly outlines the opposite character between the seventh day and the six weekdays. The six weekdays are characterized by the work of the people, but the seventh day is a holy day for the people and a Sabbath of Sabbaths to YHWH. Whoever infringes on the Sabbath by doing work on it shall be put to death. The second part of the Sabbath commandment introduces a completely new idea with regard to the Sabbath: “You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day” (35:3). This part of the commandment may indicate that there was a need for a new and specific prohibition regarding Sabbath observance, as the literary arrangement of the biblical text places this commandment at the front of the construction report of the sanctuary.

Literary Structure

The two parts of the Sabbath commandment are disproportionate in their quantity of words in the Hebrew text highlighting the Sabbath, which is the longer part, as holy to YHWH. The work of the six weekdays is mentioned by the use of four words, similar to

Exod 31:15 (cf. Lev 23:3). On the other hand, the Sabbath is highly stressed by the use of 18 words that are arranged in two parallel lines enclosed by an inclusio. The inclusio is built by the expression **וביום השביעי**, “but on the seventh day,” and **ביום השבת**, “on the Sabbath day”; the two parallelisms consist of three-word and four-word clauses. The structuring of the commandment consists of the following:

Weekdays:	4 words	ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה	Six days you shall do your work
Sabbath:	2 words	וביום השביעי	but on the seventh day
	inclusio		
	3 words	יהיה לכם קדש	shall be holiness to you
	parallelism		
	3 words	שבת שבתון ליהוה	a Sabbath of Sabbaths to YHWH
	parallelism		
	4 words	כל-העשה בו מלאכה יומת	whoever does work in it shall be put to death
	parallelism		
	4 words	לא-תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם	do not kindle a fire in all of your dwellings
	parallelism		
	2 words	ביום השבת	on the Sabbath day
	inclusio		

The parallelism between the clause **יהיה לכם קדש**, “it shall be holiness to you,” and **שבת שבתון ליהוה**, “a Sabbath of Sabbaths to YHWH,” points to the origin of the Sabbath, to YHWH who sanctifies this day and recognizes it as the capstone of the creation week. Therefore, the Sabbath is called a holy day to the people who observe it.

The parallelism between the clauses **כל-העשה בו מלאכה יומת**, “whoever does work in it shall be put to death,” and **לא-תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם**, “do not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings,” requires a careful analysis. The first clause speaks of the general prohibition of work and the penalty of death, similarly to Exod 31:15. The parallel clause then defines the general prohibition of work by the specific prohibition of burning a fire in the people’s dwellings.

While rabbis and commentators alike have discussed the prohibition of burning a fire on Sabbath in the people's dwelling places, including their villages and towns, the arguments differ and have not taken into account the literary context of this Sabbath commandment. For rabbinic Judaism, fires lit before the Sabbath were permitted, but new fires lit on Sabbath were prohibited.⁶⁴ For others all burning of fire was forbidden and included no cooking, no light, and no warmth.⁶⁵ Old Testament commentators, on the other hand, tend to restrict application of the commandment to prohibiting preparation of food (Exod 16:22-30).⁶⁶

While the word אֵשׁ occurs 19 times in the book of Exodus,⁶⁷ none of the occurrences connects fire with food or preparation of food. In most cases the fire is linked to divine actions with supernatural characteristics, with idol worship, and with sacrifices to YHWH and the leftovers that have to be burned. An interesting text is Exod 22:5[6], where the fire that breaks out in a field without human participation is identified as אֵשׁ, but the fire kindled by a person who is then to be made responsible for the damages is named בַּעֲרָה, not אֵשׁ. From this textual evidence it can be concluded that the book of

⁶⁴ *m. Sabb.* 2-3.

⁶⁵ Nathan Schur, *The Karaite Encyclopedia* (Beiträge zur Forschung des Alten Testaments und des Antiken Judentums 38; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1995), 248-49.

⁶⁶ Durham, *Exodus*, 475; Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers* (The Expositor's Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 488.

⁶⁷ Exod 3:2; 9:23, 24; 12:8, 9, 10; 13:21, 22; 14:24; 19:18; 22:6; 24:17; 29:14, 34; 32:20, 24; 35:3; 40:38.

Exodus links the word אֵשׁ only to the divine sphere or what humans regard as belonging to the divine.⁶⁸

Literary Context

Daniel C. Timmer in his recent study on Exod 25-40 has shown that the instructions to build the sanctuary and the record of the sanctuary construction frame the narrative of the golden calf crisis in the wilderness (Exod 32-34).⁶⁹ This narrative context seems important to the Sabbath text in Exod 35:1-3, especially to the understanding of the prohibition of fire in the people's dwellings.

By taking into account the literary context of the prohibition of burning a fire on Sabbath in the people's dwellings, the rationale for the Sabbath commandment may be perceived in the fundamental difference that exists between the sanctuary and the homes of the people. YHWH who intends to dwell in the sanctuary takes precautions to assure his presence among the people. The presence of YHWH is often associated with fire (אֵשׁ) in the book of Exodus: YHWH is present in the bush burning with fire (אֵשׁ) (Exod 3:2); YHWH traveled with the Israelites throughout their journeys in a pillar of fire (אֵשׁ) to give to them light by night (13:21); YHWH looked at the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire (אֵשׁ) (14:24); in the climactic moment when YHWH spoke to Israel on Mount Sinai "he descended upon it in fire (אֵשׁ)" (19:18); when the glory of YHWH rested on Mount Sinai "the appearance of the glory of YHWH was like a consuming fire (אֵשׁ) on the mountain top to the eyes of the sons of Israel" (24:17); finally, when the sanctuary was erected "the cloud of YHWH was on the sanctuary by day, and there was

⁶⁸ See here Exod 32:24.

⁶⁹ Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*, 18, 28-32.

fire (שֵׁן) in it by night, in the eyes of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys” (40:38).

In the midst of these texts about YHWH’s presence in the fire or in relation to fire there occur two texts that speak differently about fire. In the narrative section of the golden calf, which separates the sanctuary building instructions from the sanctuary building constructions, Moses “took the calf which they had made and burned it with fire (שֵׁן)” (Exod 32:20). Then, when Moses inquired about the incident and how the golden calf came about, Aaron responded: “I said to them [to the people], ‘Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire (שֵׁן), and out came this calf” (32:24). These texts speak of the idol in close relation to fire.

Aaron’s answer seems to convey the people’s superstition that a god emerges out of fire. The instances about YHWH’s presence in the midst of fire have taught the people just that. However, since the time when Moses entered the cloud on top of Mount Sinai 40 days earlier, YHWH seemed absent to the people. Impatiently they wished to continue their journey but they needed a god to go with them. So, why not kindle a fire and conjure the presence of a god with sounds of singing, drunkenness, and sexual activity (צִחֻק)?⁷⁰

Further evidence from the narrative context of Exod 35:1-3 helps us to understand the uniqueness of this Sabbath commandment. The first verse uses expressions that relate directly to the narrative section dealing with the golden calf incident in chs. 32-34. These links include the verb קָהַל, “assemble,” and the noun עֵדָה, “congregation, assembly (for worship).” Of interest is that the verb קָהַל is only twice used in the entire book of

⁷⁰ Koehler and Baumgartner, “צִחֻק,” *HALOT* 2:854-55.

Exodus, namely in Exod 32:1 and 35:1. The first occurrence speaks of the people who assembled and commanded Aaron to make a god for them. The second occurrence refers to Moses who assembled the congregation and delivered the Sabbath commandment.

While critics ascribe Exod 32:1 to a JE source and 35:1 to P,⁷¹ it is the final form of the book of Exodus that highlights the contrast between the two occurrences of the verb קהל. The contrastive placement of this verb is significant in the composition of the sanctuary pericope (Exod 25-40), for it shows deliberate and meaningful thought by including the narrative chapters of the golden calf incident in Exod 32-34. Three characteristics convey the contrastive usage of the verb קהל: First, the subject of the verb is different: In the one case, the people assemble without a leader (32:1); in the other, Moses assembles the people (35:1). Second, the purpose is different: In the one case the people demand a man-made god (32:1); in the other, Moses declares the Sabbath (35:2-3). Third, the language is different: In the one case the people's words show strong imperative language: קום | עשה-לנו אלהים, "Arise, make us a god" (32:1); in the other, Moses' speech contains affirmative words: "Six days work may be done" and definite statements about Sabbath holiness (35:2).

The occurrence of the verb קהל in such extremely different narrative settings creates a strong contrasting effect and indicates a complete shift from one narrative text to another: Assembling for an idol signifies Israel's complete collapse and broken relationship with God, but assembling for the reason of the Sabbath represents the moment of restoration in the life journey of the congregation in the wilderness. Further, assembling the people who will then give their gift offerings in excess and perform the

⁷¹ Heinz-Joseph Fabry, "קהל, *qhl*," *TDOT* 12:550.

sacred work for the sanctuary out of total loyalty to YHWH suggests that the speech on the Sabbath is crucial in regard to the radical change of the people's mind-set. This speech transforms the people's perception about God and about their attitude and behavior.

The noun עֵדָה shows a different nuance in Exod 35:1 where the congregation of Israel is called an עֵדָה when Moses assembles the people and calls for construction of the sanctuary by starting with the Sabbath commandment (Exod 35:1-3). While the noun עֵדָה occurs fifteen times in the book of Exodus,⁷² mainly in chs. 12 and 16, it is not used at all in the law setting of Mount Sinai. At Mount Sinai when Israel hears the Ten Commandments, the nation is not called an עֵדָה, that is, a worshipping congregation. The noun then appears in the narrative of Moses' shining face (Exod 34:29-34)⁷³ when the covenant between YHWH and Israel is reconfirmed after the golden calf incident. The narrative tells of the people who were afraid of Moses' shining face. Moses called out to them and Aaron and the rulers of the congregation (עֵדָה) returned and listened to his words (Exod 34:31). Thereafter the noun occurs four more times: First, when the congregation heard the Sabbath commandment spoken by Moses (Exod 35:1); second, when the congregation received the commands regarding the construction of the sanctuary (35:4); third, when the congregation departed to do the work (35:20); and fourth, when silver from numbering the people was measured according to the sanctuary *sheqel* (38:25).

⁷² Exod 12:3, 6, 19, 47; 16:1, 2, 9, 10, 22; 17:1; 34:31; 35:1, 4, 20; 38:25.

⁷³ On the different interpretations of Moses' shining face see Durham, *Exodus*, 466-69; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 620-23.

Note that the noun עֲרָה is derived from the verb יָעַד, “appoint, meet,” which occurred five times in the sanctuary instructions when YHWH announced and appointed the two different meetings, the individual meeting in front of the ark (Exod 25:22; 30:6, 36) and the congregational meeting in front of the bronze altar (29:42, 43). The following section on the sanctuary constructions does not contain the verb יָעַד; instead it uses the noun עֲרָה five times. The first occurrence, however, appears in the narrative of Moses’ shining face (Exod 34:31), which may suggest that this narrative plays an important introductory role for the report of the sanctuary constructions following in chs. 35-40. Table 12 shows characteristics of a strategic placement of the verb יָעַד and the noun עֲרָה within the sanctuary pericope of Exod 25-40:

Table 12. The root יָעַד in Exodus 25-40

Sanctuary instructions Exod 25-31	Sanctuary constructions Exod 35-40
Verb יָעַד “appoint, meet” occurs five times: Exod 25:22; 29:42, 43; 30:6, 36 Noun עֲרָה is absent	Verb יָעַד is absent Noun עֲרָה “congregation” occurs five times: Exod 34:31; 35:1, 4, 20; 38:25

The outline of the two words, קָהַל and עֲרָה, suggests that the meeting of the congregation reported in Exod 35:1 through ch. 40 is a result of YHWH’s announcement to meet as recorded in the sanctuary instructions in Exod 25-31. While the analysis of YHWH’s meeting announcements has shown that the purpose of the meeting is to deliver the Sabbath commandment, the first meeting of the congregation actually accomplishes that purpose: Moses delivers the Sabbath commandment to the people (Exod 35:1-3).

In conclusion, the use of the two expressions, *קהל* and *עדה*, and their particular placement in the narrative of Israel's sin with the golden calf indicate that the Sabbath text in Exod 35:1-3 does not employ these terms randomly. Rather, their distinctive use indicates that the Sabbath commandment is an integral part of the narrative context that conveys the total shift from the people's resistance toward Moses and rejection of YHWH toward the people's willingness to listen to Moses and obey YHWH's commands. The meaning of the Sabbath may even be a reason for such a radical change in the people's mind-set, attitude, and behavior.

Theological Implications

The Sabbath commandment in Exod 35:1-3 stands at the beginning of a section that gives detailed descriptions about the construction of the sanctuary. While YHWH concluded the sanctuary instructions with the Sabbath commandment in Exod 31:12-17, Moses started his address to the congregation of Israel with the Sabbath commandment in 35:1-3. As Moses' first speech, this Sabbath commandment suggests that he understood and conveyed the Sabbath as the underlying principle for the sanctuary itself and for the sanctuary construction.

While the Sabbath theme is crucial for the entire section of Exod 35-40 by the use of Sabbath language, keywords, and key phrases, the connection between the first part (Sabbath commandment; Exod 35:1-3) and the last part (glory of YHWH fills the finished sanctuary; Exod 40:33-38) is of particular interest. Ska has noted that from a stylistic point of view the last part is linked to the first part by the word *בולאכה*, which

appears in Exod 35:2 and 40:33.⁷⁴ Winkle has pointed out the link between the Sabbath and the glory of YHWH on the basis of linguistic corollaries between the glory-cloud that filled the sanctuary (40:34-38) and the glory-cloud that covered Mount Sinai six days before Moses was called to enter the cloud (Exod 24:15-16). Winkle shows also the conceptual and structural parallels that exist between God’s blessing and sanctification of the creation Sabbath (Gen 2:2-3) and the glory of YHWH in the sanctuary (Exod 40:34-38).⁷⁵

In the last section of the sanctuary construction report (Exod 39 and 40) the theme of the Sabbath becomes crucial. Keywords and key phrases occur in sets of sevens and indicate the importance of the Sabbath motif by what may be identified as Sabbath language.⁷⁶ One example for the importance of Sabbath motif is the chiasmic arrangement of the line “as YHWH commanded Moses” as shown by Propp.⁷⁷ Two sets of sevens of this line occur in Exod 39 and 40. Then the lines become more precise: “as YHWH commanded Moses so they did” (Exod 39:32) and “as YHWH commanded Moses so he did” (Exod 40:16). The climax of the chiasm is reached with, “as YHWH commanded Moses so Israel’s sons did all the work” (Exod 39:42).

- A 7x: כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה
 “as YHWH commanded Moses” (Exod 39:1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31)
 B כִּכְלֹ אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כֵּן עָשׂוּ
 “as YHWH commanded Moses so they did” (Exod 39:32)

⁷⁴ Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to the Reading of the Pentateuch* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 31-32.

⁷⁵ Ross Winkle, “Creation and Tabernacle, Sabbath and Glory” (Unpublished paper presented at the Society of Biblical Literature; Boston, 2008), 12-16.

⁷⁶ See table 11 on p. 208 with the examples for Sabbath language.

⁷⁷ Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 718.

- X ככל אשר צוה יהוה את־משה כן עשו בני ישראל את כל־העבודה
 “as YHWH commanded Moses so Israel’s sons did all the work”
 (Exod 39:42)
- B’ ככל אשר צוה יהוה את־משה כן עשה
 “as YHWH commanded Moses so he did” (Exod 40:16)
- A’ 7x: כאשר צוה יהוה את־משה
 “as YHWH commanded Moses” (Exod 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30)

Sabbath language permeates the entire section of Exod 35-40. The literature that has pointed out the linguistic and structural parallelism between the creation Sabbath and the sanctuary is extensive.⁷⁸ Winkle has pointed out that the most striking parallelism is included in what is termed as “solemn conclusion formulae” and occurs only in two places in the Pentateuch: in the account of the creation Sabbath Gen 2:1-2 (“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their host. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done”) and at the end of Lists 6 and 7 of the sanctuary items in Exod 39:32 (“Thus all the work of the Sanctuary was finished”) and 40:33 (“So Moses finished the work”).⁷⁹ The placement of these conclusion formulae at the end of the creation account and at the end of the sanctuary account is indeed intriguing in the composition of the Pentateuch and according to Levenson “too striking, for coincidence.”⁸⁰

There exist other linguistic parallels between the creation Sabbath and the sanctuary: At the end of his creational acts, God examined (ראה) the work (מלאכה) that he had made (עשה) and completed (כלה), and behold (הנה), it was very good; then God blessed (ברך) and consecrated (קדש) the seventh day (Gen 1:31-2:3). Similarly, at the

⁷⁸ See n. 1 on p. 198 and n. 7 on p. 200.

⁷⁹ Winkle, “Creation and Tabernacle, Sabbath and Glory,” 6.

⁸⁰ Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 85.

end of the sanctuary construction, Moses examined (ראה) all the work (מלאכה) that the people had made (עשה), and behold (הנה), they had completed it (כלה) according to the command of YHWH; then Moses blessed (ברך) the people and consecrated (קדש) the sanctuary (Exod 39:32, 43; 40:9, 33).⁸¹

Balantine notes that Exod 25-31 and 35-40 depict the building of the sanctuary as the completion of the work God began at creation and completed on the seventh day.⁸² The sanctuary then extends the sabbatical principle, especially when the book of Leviticus provides instruction regarding the festival calendar with its prominent use of the number seven. The festivals wholly “reverberate with the memory of creation’s first Sabbath.”⁸³

The link between the Sabbath and the glory of YHWH in the sanctuary that has been overlooked so far by biblical scholars is related to the specific Sabbath commandment about the prohibition of burning a fire on Sabbath in the people’s dwellings. In the section on the sanctuary construction (Exod 35-40), the word אש occurs only in the Sabbath commandment delivered to the people before they start with the construction of the sanctuary (Exod 35:3) and at the end when the sanctuary is finished and YHWH moves into the structure (40:38). In the Sabbath commandment, the prohibition of fire applies to the people’s dwellings/settlements (plural of מושב, from the verb ישב, “sit, dwell”). The fire in relation to the sanctuary tells of the journey that is still ahead. The fire will accompany the people through the wilderness and will move along

⁸¹ Winkle, “Creation and Tabernacle, Sabbath and Glory,” 7.

⁸² Samuel E. Balantine, *Leviticus* (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Louisville, Ky.: John Knox, 2002), 184.

⁸³ Ibid.

with YHWH's dwelling place, the *מִשְׁכָּן*, "tabernacle," and assure his presence in the darkness of the night.

The meaning of the commandment about the prohibition of burning a fire may be seen from the perspective of a contextual reading of the Sabbath and the sanctuary:

1. The narrative that is placed before the sanctuary construction record (Exod 32-34) tells about the people who settled down (*יָשָׁבוּ*, Exod 32:6) around the altar that Aaron had erected for the calf-god, which had "magically" emerged out of the fire (*אֵשׁ*, Exod 32:24).

2. The Sabbath theme, highly elaborated within the entire sanctuary construction record (Exod 35-40), culminates in YHWH's overwhelming presence inside the sanctuary throughout the people's journey in the wilderness (Exod 40:34-38). Thus, from the perspective of this context, the commandment about the prohibition of lighting a fire on Sabbath in the people's dwellings may call out against idol making and idol worship precisely because the Sabbath is conveyed as the day of YHWH and holy to YHWH (Exod 31:12-17) when his presence is most perceived inside the sanctuary. The commandment may be seen in relation to the commandments to not have a god beside God (Exod 20:3; cf. 32:4) and to not make and worship an idol (Exod 20:4-6; cf. 32:4-6).

The Sabbath in the Books of Leviticus and Numbers

The book of Leviticus addresses the seventh-day Sabbath on five occasions: Lev 19:3, 30; 23:3; 24:1-9; 26:2; and in the context of the sabbatical year (ch. 25), which is called *שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה*, "Sabbath to YHWH" (25:2, 4), similar to the weekly Sabbath (Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14), and *שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן*, "Sabbath of Sabbaths" (Lev 25:4) similar to the weekly Sabbath and *Yom Kippur* (Exod 31:15; 35:2; Lev 16:31; 23:3, 32). This study will

focus on the seventh-day Sabbath texts; the sabbatical year texts will be treated only from a structural perspective of the Sabbath texts in the book of Leviticus.

Literary Analysis

Literary Context

The five instances of the Sabbath texts in the book of Leviticus offer particular and unique contributions and enrich the meaning of the Sabbath-sanctuary link in the Pentateuch:

1. Leviticus 19:3 relates the command to respect one's parents with Sabbath keeping: "Every one of you shall fear/revere/respect his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths; I am YHWH your God." Gane observes that, in Lev 19, several of the commandments of the Decalogue are reiterated after the overarching command to be holy in v. 2.⁸⁴ Further, it is of interest to note that in the command to respect one's mother and father the order of the parents reverses that of the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20:12, "indicating an intertextual chiasm linking Leviticus 19 to the Decalogue."⁸⁵

2. Leviticus 19:30 repeats the commandment to keep the Sabbath by linking it with reverence towards the sanctuary: "You shall keep my Sabbaths and revere my sanctuary; I am YHWH." The chiasmic relationship between v. 3 and v. 30 is highly significant and suggests that the Sabbath underlies moral holiness in Lev 23:

A	revere (אָרָא) mother and father
B	keep (שָׁמַר) YHWH's Sabbath (v. 3)
B'	keep (שָׁמַר) YHWH's Sabbath
A'	revere (אָרָא) YHWH's sanctuary (v. 30)

⁸⁴ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 335.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Gane points out that the structural equivalence between one's parents and the sanctuary suggests a conceptual linkage between them, since they represent human and divine authority that derives from creation.⁸⁶ YHWH sanctifies his people who keep the Sabbath (Exod 31:12-17) by teaching them how to emulate him in all matters of life.⁸⁷ Such sanctification includes on the horizontal level the family relationships that become evident in one's reverence toward mother and father and on the vertical level the relationship with YHWH, which becomes manifest in reverence toward the dwelling place of YHWH, the sanctuary. This linkage centers on the commandment to keep the Sabbath, which encapsulates the core message on sanctification according to Lev 19.

3. Leviticus 23:3 introduces the annual festival calendar with the commandment to keep the Sabbath. This Sabbath commandment occupies a distinct position in this chapter. The Sabbath is framed by two introductory statements with reference to the "appointed times of YHWH" (מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה) and the "holy convocations," "assembly"⁸⁸ / "proclamations of holiness"⁸⁹ (מִזְבְּחֵי קֹדֶשׁ) for the people of Israel. The first statement in v. 2 may be understood to introduce the festivals as a whole including the Sabbath. The second introductory statement in v. 4 reiterates v. 2 and introduces the six annual festivals apart from the Sabbath. By placing the Sabbath commandment in between the two

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Koehler and Baumgartner, "מִזְבְּחֵי קֹדֶשׁ," *HALOT* 1:629.

⁸⁹ Milgrom, *Numbers*, 63-64.

introductory statements, the festival list in Lev 23 clearly distinguishes and promotes the Sabbath.⁹⁰

Another characteristic of the Sabbath commandment in Lev 23:3 is that it reiterates the Sabbath commandments in Exod 20:9, 11; 23:12; 31:15, 17; 34:21; 35:2; and Deut 5:13 by the words to work six days but on the seventh day no work shall be done. These words clearly provide a link to the creation Sabbath in Gen 2:2-3 where God ceases from the work of the six weekdays. This characteristic of the Sabbath commandment in Lev 23:3 presents the Sabbath as a creation ordinance and by that it builds a contrast to the six annual festivals that are celebrated in relation to the cultic system of the sanctuary (Exod 23:14-19; 34:18-26; Lev 23:4-44; Num 28:1-29:40).⁹¹

The question arises, why does Lev 23 include the Sabbath in the festival calendar of the cultic system of the sanctuary? Hartley provides three reasons for the inclusion of the Sabbath: (1) The people's faithful observance of the Sabbath would establish the pattern for their faithful observance of the festivals, (2) the Sabbath plays a role in determining the time for the celebration of the feasts of weeks (vv. 15-16), and (3) the laws on Sabbath observance carry over to special solemn days during the feasts.⁹² Here, the Day of Atonement is of special significance, because it is the only day of the cultic festivals that requires cessation from all work like that of the weekly Sabbath. In addition to that, the Day of Atonement is the only festival that is called שַׁבַּת שְׁבִתוֹן, "Sabbath of

⁹⁰ See Gane's structure of Lev 23 in *Leviticus, Numbers*, 387.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁹² John E. Hartley, *Leviticus* (WBC 4; Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1992), 372.

Sabbaths” or “Sabbath of solemn rest” (Lev 16:31; 23:32), like the Sabbath (Exod 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3).

Hartley further notes that the special vocabulary in the instruction on the Sabbath gives additional evidence that it has been formulated for this speech about the festivals, specifically the terms מלאכה, “work,” שבת שבתון, “a Sabbath of Sabbaths” / “a Sabbath of solemn rest,” במקרא־קדש, “holy convocations” / “proclamation of holiness,” and בכל מושבתיכם, “in all your dwellings,” because these are among the recurring terms in this speech. “This commandment on the Sabbath has been made to fit this festal calendar and is an integral part of the speech’s final formulation.”⁹³

4. Leviticus 23:15, 16 mentions the Sabbath with regard to festival calculations of the feast of weeks.

5. Leviticus 23:37, 38 refers to the weekly “Sabbaths of YHWH” by forming an inclusio of this chapter with the first reference in v. 3. The annual festivals detailed in this chapter are to be observed in addition to the weekly Sabbaths.⁹⁴

6. Leviticus 24:1-9 details the daily provisions for lighting the lampstand (Lev 24:1-4) and the weekly Sabbath provision of bread for the golden table in the outer sanctum of the Sanctuary (Lev 24:5-9) immediately following the regulations for the annual festival cycle in Lev 23.

The bread of the Presence was replaced every week, on the Sabbath (Lev 24:8-9). Being most holy, this bread could only be eaten by the priests in a holy place. The bread is first given to YHWH, and he, in turn, gives it back to the priests. It is possible that the

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ For a detailed discussion on Lev 23:37, 38 see Ross Cole’s analysis in “The Sacred Times Prescribed in the Pentateuch,” 90-96.

priests' partaking of this bread symbolized that all members of the twelve tribes are in table fellowship with YHWH.⁹⁵ It can be imagined that these rites provided Israel with powerful symbols. The continually burning lamp reminded Israel that God is the God of light. He is to be worshiped in light and not in darkness (cf. Isa 45:18-19). The table with the twelve loaves of bread on it represented the twelve tribes in fellowship with God. That is, God served as the host, having a meal prepared for the twelve tribes at his place of residence. This meal was eaten weekly by the priests as representatives of the people inside the holy chamber in the presence of God.⁹⁶ Averbeck notes that the combination of the daily lighting of the lampstand and the bread constantly on the table associated with the burning of incense impresses one with the fact that the Lord had truly taken up residence in the tabernacle. "If there is a lamp burning, incense burning and bread on the table, then someone is 'home.'"⁹⁷

Wenham regards the bread of the Presence as a covenant similar to circumcision (Gen 17:13, 19) and the Sabbath (Exod 31:16).⁹⁸ The bread of the Presence symbolized the "eternal covenant" (v. 8) between God and Israel (cf. Ps 105:10).

Milgrom suggests a more productive line of inquiry with the observation that the bread of the Presence is changed every Sabbath, corresponding to the change of the priestly courses and temple guards, which also took place on the Sabbath (2 Kgs 11:4-9;

⁹⁵ Hartley, *Leviticus*, 402.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Richard E. Averbeck, "Tabernacle," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 815.

⁹⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979), 310.

2 Chr 23:4-6).⁹⁹ The old bread loaves were eaten partly by the priests who came into the temple and started their service and partly by the priests who went out of the temple when they had finished their service.¹⁰⁰ In Milgrom's perspective, Sabbath is both a sign and a covenant and by implication the bread loaves changed every Sabbath are also a sign and a covenant. The twelve bread loaves show that they are a "pledge of the covenant between the twelve tribes and the Lord."¹⁰¹ Milgrom points out that the verbs used in Lev 24:5-9, שִׁים, "set" (v. 6), נָתַן, "place" (v. 7), and עָרַךְ, "arrange" (v. 8), are precisely those describing the making of a covenant (שִׁים and עָרַךְ in 2 Sam 23:5; נָתַן in Gen 17:2; Num 25:12). Moreover, Akkadian *riksa rakasu* literally means, "arranging a covenant."¹⁰²

Gane develops the idea of the Creator-in-residence in relation to the bread of the Presence.¹⁰³ First, Gane concludes that while the designation "bread of the Presence" emphasizes YHWH's residence in the sanctuary, it is the regular changing of the bread once a week on the Sabbath day that limits the anthropomorphism usually involved in the idea of divine residence. He shows that while the Babylonian god received daily meals in the temple accompanied by libations, the Israelite priest performed the ritual of bread-laying in the sanctuary once a week on the specific day of the Sabbath (Exod 25:30; Lev

⁹⁹ Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, 2094; cf. *m. Ta'an.* 4:2; *b. Ta'an.* 27a,b.

¹⁰⁰ *b. Suk.* 56a; *Sipra* Emor 18:8; *m. Menah.* 11:7; 11QT 8:11; cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, 2098.

¹⁰¹ Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 422; cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, 2094.

¹⁰² Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, 2094.

¹⁰³ Gane, "'Bread of the Presence' and Creator-in-Residence," 179-203.

24:8) without any libation rituals.¹⁰⁴ Second, Gane concludes that the Sabbath is a common denominator between the bread of the Presence and creation. He parallels the sanctuary, YHWH's resting-place among his people with the Sabbath, with YHWH's time of rest at the end of creation week.¹⁰⁵

7. Leviticus 26:2 uses exactly the same language as 19:30: "You shall keep My Sabbaths and revere my sanctuary; I am the Lord." By this the book of Leviticus suggests that the Sabbath-sanctuary link forms the basis for the covenant framework between Israel and YHWH in the book of Leviticus. The Sabbath-sanctuary link builds the groundwork for the holiness laws, which include a wide variety of laws on different matters of life, morality, family relationships, and cultic issues. These laws include all individuals of Israelite society, the native as well as the resident alien.

8. The book of Numbers deals with the Sabbath in relation to the sanctuary in Num 28:9-10. In addition to the morning and evening burnt offerings at the sanctuary, two lambs are to be sacrificed as burnt offerings every Sabbath day. Gane notes that it is not surprising that the Sabbath is honored in this way besides the renewal of the bread of the Presence (Lev 24:8), for the Sabbath is a commemoration of creation and deliverance from slavery. Both events are foundational for the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel (Exod 31:12-17).¹⁰⁶ This basic meaning of the Sabbath signifies the ongoing divine-human relationship.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 202.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 754.

The sacrificial calendar in Num 28-29 details the offerings that are to be performed in the sanctuary daily and on specific festival days. This calendar largely parallels Lev 23, where the festival days are listed. The literary context for Num 28-29 shows that the old generation of Israelites, who built the sanctuary in the wilderness, died and now the new generation was numbered and ready to enter the promised land (Num 26). God also appointed Joshua as the new leader of the people (Num 27:15-23). The laws on the offerings follow next, including the special offerings for the Sabbath. This context suggests that God prepares Israel for life in the promised land by maintaining the covenant relationship that God had established with the older generation at Mount Sinai. The new generation will continue in the footsteps of the parents who died in the wilderness.

Gane provides details of the offerings listed in Num 28-29 and shows that these chapters fill in specifications for additional sacrifices on some of the feast days that are not given in other parts such as in Lev 23.¹⁰⁷ The additional sacrifices on Sabbath as well as on the others days imply that “they are to be performed just after that burnt offering and its accompaniments.”¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the number seven is prominent in the listing of the offerings and suggests that the festival days of the Israelite calendar “are, in a sense, extensions of the weekly Sabbath.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 750-754.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 752.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 754.

Literary Structure

Ibn Ezra addresses the reason for the structural juxtaposition of Lev 24:1-9 to the festival laws of Leviticus. He notes that this passage probably appears here because the community of Israel has a permanent obligation to offer the festival burnt-offerings as well as to supply the oil for the lampstand and the bread for the golden table.¹¹⁰

Dorsey has shown that the Sabbath laws in the book of Leviticus build a chiasmic structure based upon the commandments clearly expressing the Sabbath-sanctuary link in Lev 19:30 and 26:2 (A / A').¹¹¹ These two laws frame the corpus of legislation concerning severe violations of moral holiness (B / B'). The laws that deal specifically with priestly holiness are supported by the Sabbath-sanctuary link in the instructions of the bread of the presence inside the Sanctuary that is changed every Sabbath (C / C'). The center of the chiasm occurs in Lev 23, suggesting that the annual festivals are founded upon the Sabbath-sanctuary link as expressed in Lev 19:30; 26:2; and 23:3:

- A Moral holiness of people in everyday life (Lev 19)
Sabbath theme: "My Sabbaths you shall keep and my sanctuary you shall revere" (19:30)
Prohibition against making idols (19:4)
Kindness to slaves, aliens, poor, disadvantaged (19:10-15, 20-22, 32-34)
Theme of crops: planting, reaping and leaving for the poor (19:9-10, 19, 23-25)
- B Serious violations of moral holiness requiring death (Lev 20)
Cursing parents, adultery, incest, etc.
Any Israelite or alien
- C Priestly holiness (Lev 21-22)
Eating of holy sacrifices
- X Sabbath + festivals: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Weeks, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles (Lev 23)

¹¹⁰ Abraham ben Me'ir Ibn Ezra, *The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch* (vol. 3; Leviticus; trans. Jay F. Shachter; Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav Publishing House, 1986), 141-42.

¹¹¹ Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 79.

- C' Priests' tending of lamps (Lev 24:1-9)
Sabbath: Eating holy bread from table
- B' Serious violations of moral holiness requiring death (Lev 24:10-23)
Blasphemy, murder
Same law for the alien and native
- A' Moral holiness of people in everyday life, during the sabbatical year and year of Jubilee (Lev 25:1-26:2)
Sabbath theme: "My Sabbaths you shall keep and my sanctuary you shall revere" (26:2)
Prohibition against making idols (26:1)
Kindness to slaves, aliens, poor, disadvantaged (25:6-55)
Theme of crops: planting, reaping and leaving for the poor (25:3-22)

Gane's outline of the book of Leviticus contains seven sections, with the last three dealing with holiness in all aspects of Israelite life. The seventh section (chs. 21-27) deals with a series of eight holy entities, with the central positions occupied by the light and the bread of the sanctuary's outer sanctum (24:1-9) and the divine name of the deity (24:10-23), whose presence resides in the inner sanctum. Gane offers the following structure of Lev 21-27:¹¹²

- A Holy Priests (21:1-24)
- B Holy Offerings (22:1-33)
 - C Holy Times (23:1-44)
 - D Holy Light and Bread (24:1-9)
 - D' Holy Divine Name (24:10-23)
 - C' Holy Land (25:1-55)
- B' Holy Covenant (26:1-46)
- A' Holy Consecrations and Redemption of Them (27:1-34)

In addition to the literary structures offered by Dorsey and Gane, I suggest that the book of Leviticus presents a perspective on the Sabbath-sanctuary link that has received little consideration by biblical scholars: Sabbath and sanctuary are connected by the subject of food. The identical wording in Lev 19:30 and 26:2 that links the Sabbath to the sanctuary (את־שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני יהוה) "You shall keep my Sabbaths

¹¹² Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 36.

and revere my sanctuary; I am YHWH”) frames a section in the book of Leviticus that to a great extent deals with matters of food. The regulations in Lev 21-22 identify holiness of the priesthood in relation to the holy food offerings of God (לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים; Lev 21:6, 8, 17, 21, 22; 22:25) at the sanctuary. The laws also regulate the food consumption of the priestly descendants and a layman’s unintentional eating of the holy food of God (Lev 21:22; 22:4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 30).

The following chapter, Lev 23, envisions the Israelites in the land of Canaan celebrating their annual festivals. The festival laws focus on the land’s food production and produce. On several occasions, the harvested crops of the land will be presented and dedicated to God at the sanctuary. Some of the festivals are specifically regulated on the basis of the land’s food produce and harvest: the festival of the elevated sheaf (23:9-14); the festival of weeks (23:15-22); and the festival of booths (23:39-43). The Passover followed by the feast of unleavened bread was concerned with particular food and food rituals (23:6; cf. Exod 12:1-27, 43-49; 13:3-7). The last festival of the annual cycle, the festival of booths, may be regarded as the festival when the people actually celebrated the blessings of the land by the enjoyment of eating together (Lev 23:39-43).

Exceptions in the annual festival cycle are the day of trumpets followed by the Day of Atonement. With regard to these festivals there is no reference to food preparation or consumption for the people; in fact, the Day of Atonement is a fast day, as indicated by the injunction to practice self-denial (Lev 16:29). Only “the food gift to YHWH” (אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה, Lev 23:25, 27) is mentioned, which is a food offering to God (21:6).

The annual festivals call for cultic celebrations, including food and food offerings at the sanctuary. They are special appointments (מוֹעֲדִים) between God and his people to remember and appreciate God's historical activities on their behalf. The fact that Lev

23:22 places the command about harvesting crops for the poor and for the resident alien in the center of Lev 23, connecting the spring festivals with the harvest festivals, accentuates the importance of food in relation to all the festivals listed in Lev 23.¹¹³ An earlier context for the link between the annual festivals and food may be found in the first creation account, where the verb נתן, “give,” is associated with both the gift of time as it occurs in times, seasons, days, and years (Gen 1:14, 17) and the gift of food for human beings and animals (vv. 29, 30).

In a parallel mode, Lev 25 prescribes laws for the sabbatical year and for the jubilee in direct relation to food and food produce of the land. Also here, at the center, connecting the sabbatical year with the jubilee, occurs a command about harvesting crops for the poor, the resident alien, including slaves, cattle, and other animals of the land (25:5-7). The importance of food cannot be overlooked in this context. The blessings of the land are guaranteed upon observance of the specific law for the sabbatical year: Sowing the fields and gathering crops during the seventh year will cease, because the sixth year will yield fruit for three years; the Israelite will eat from the crops of the sixth year until he brings in the harvest of the eighth year (25:18-22).

An important fact is that the sabbatical year of the land, also called שבת שבתון, “Sabbath of Sabbaths,” and שבת ליהוה, “Sabbath to YHWH” (25:4), as well as the jubilee, are grounded in the Israelite festival cycle of the sanctuary: On the tenth day of the seventh month, on the Day of Atonement, the seven sevens of years are counted and by the sound of a ram’s horn the fiftieth year is proclaimed as the year of liberty, the Jubilee (יובל). The law of the Day of Atonement in Lev 23:26-32 presents this festival

¹¹³ See the structure of the annual festivals by Roy Gane in his commentary, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 387.

without any relation to food. The people, resident and alien, are to do no work at all, humble themselves (including fasting), and observe this day as a “Sabbath of complete rest” or “Sabbath of Sabbaths” שַׁבְּתוֹן שַׁבָּת (Lev 23:28, 30, 31, 32). It is the festival most closely related to the weekly Sabbath, and according to Lev 25:8-12, it introduces the end of the seven sevens of sabbatical years proclaiming the jubilee. The Sabbath-sanctuary link in relation to the land’s food produce becomes very prominent. The sabbatical year and the jubilee, which go by without any food produce but with food from the past harvest, parallel the weekly Sabbath, which lacks the heavenly produce of manna, but the people will eat the preserved manna from the sixth day (Exod 16:29, 30).

The structural climax of the Sabbath-sanctuary link in the book of Leviticus occurs with the law of the bread of the Presence that is replaced in the outer sanctum by the high priest every Sabbath day (24:8).

- A “My Sabbaths you shall keep and my sanctuary you shall revere” (Lev 19:30)
- B Sabbath + festivals (Lev 23)
- X Every Sabbath: Bread placed before YHWH (Lev 24:8)
- B’ Sabbatical years + jubilee (Lev 25)
- A’ “My Sabbaths you shall keep and my sanctuary you shall revere” (Lev 26:2)

Theological Implications

The theological implications of the Sabbath-sanctuary link flow from at least two of the sanctuary regulations that are specific for this day: presenting the bread of the Presence and the additional sacrifices for the Sabbath. These two regulations show that the Pentateuch establishes the Sabbath not only as a “household observance,”¹¹⁴ but also as a special day of worship within the cultic system of the sanctuary. However, as Tsevat has observed, the cultic regulations for the Sabbath in the sanctuary are characterized by

¹¹⁴ Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee*, 115.

scantiness when compared with the festivals of the Israelite calendar that include more substantial and diverse rituals.¹¹⁵ In that sense, the Sabbath stands apart from the other festival days.

Sabbath and Food

Because the twelve loaves of bread are to be laid out each Sabbath, at first glance they appear to be a food offering prepared by the people for God's benefit. The biblical text, however, shows that God does not accept the bread for himself as various deities in Egyptian, Hittite, and Babylonian temples did.¹¹⁶ Rather, the laying of the bread gratefully acknowledges that God is Israel's gracious host who generously provides the food for the people as he did during the wilderness wanderings by the gift of the manna.

Lowery argues that the sanctuary was "furnished like a banquet hall with God seated as host, and the people, through their priestly representatives, invited as guests to dine."¹¹⁷ The Creator-host, however, does not consume any of the bread, which shows that he is not dependent upon food but he is the provider and sustainer of his people.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the banquet takes place every Sabbath, which supports the insight that there is indeed a special meeting taking place every Sabbath between God and the priests as representatives of the people.

¹¹⁵ Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath," 456.

¹¹⁶ See Gane's investigation on bread-laying in ancient Near Eastern rituals included in "Bread of the Presence," 190-192.

¹¹⁷ Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee*, 117.

¹¹⁸ Gane, "Bread of Presence," 202-203.

The challenge that this Sabbath-sanctuary regulation poses includes an ethical principal for the Sabbath-keeper of high importance. Sabbath receives the character of a hospitable institution. The Sabbath commandment of the Decalogue and others already promoted this concept by requesting the Sabbath-keeping householder to act as host, provider, caregiver, and sustainer for all members of the household, not just related members like the son and the daughter, but also the servants, animals, and aliens. Everybody is invited to rest and be refreshed. Food becomes a gift for all, because God, the real host of the feast, freely imparts it.

Sabbath and Covenant

In addition to the bread and the Sabbath as a hospitable institution, the changing of the bread inside the sanctuary is called “an everlasting covenant” (Lev 24:8). Milgrom remarks that the phrase “an everlasting covenant” with regard to the bread of the Presence parallels the Sabbath as “an everlasting covenant” (Exod 31:16), and he suggests that “Israel’s everlasting obligation to supply the grain for the bread becomes a ritual demonstration that it eternally pledges itself anew to uphold the covenant.”¹¹⁹

On the other hand, the aspect that God is the actual host on the Sabbath who meets at the banquet table with human beings and provides the food also shows that God himself keeps the covenant. Every Sabbath anew God pledges himself to uphold the covenant. This divine-human relationship, once established in creation times by the divine gift of food on the sixth day of creation (Gen 1:29),¹²⁰ finds its complementary

¹¹⁹ Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, 2100.

¹²⁰ See my chapter 2 on the gift of food as an expression of the divine-human relationship.

concept at the table of God inside the sanctuary. The relationship is renewed and maintained every Sabbath. God dines with people on the Sabbath.

CHAPTER VI

SABBATH THEOLOGY IN THE PENTATEUCH

Introduction

From the 1950s onward, much has been written on the theology of the Sabbath.¹ Jewish and Christian scholars alike have pondered the meaning and significance of the Sabbath in the biblical text. In Jewish tradition, Abraham Joshua Heschel's passionate

¹ Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*, 1972; Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1977; idem, *Rest for Modern Man: The Sabbath for Today* (Nashville: Southern, 1977); Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (vol. III-1; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958, 1961), 98-99, 213-28; ibid., vol. III-4, 47-72; James Brown, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Sabbath," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 19 (1966): 409-433; idem, "The Doctrine of the Sabbath in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 20 (1967): 1-24; Richard M. Davidson, *A Love Song for the Sabbath* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988); Samuel H. Dresner, *The Sabbath* (New York: Burning Bush Press, 1970); Eskenazi, Harrington, and Shea, *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, 1991; Heschel, *The Sabbath*; Theodore Friedman, "The Sabbath: Anticipation of Redemption," *Judaism* 16 (1967): 443-452; Kenneth J. Holland, *This Day Is Yours: Exploring the Many-faceted Wonders of God's Sabbath Day* (Nashville, Southern, 1969); Paul K. Jewett, *The Lord's Day: A Theological Guide to the Christian's Day of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971); Sakae Kubo, *God Meets Man: The Meaning of the Sabbath and the Second Coming* (Nashville: Southern, 1978); David Larson, "Celebrating the Sabbath in the Secular Seventies," *Insight* (1974): 4-8; Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee*, 2000; Herbert W. Richardson, *Toward an American Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 108-160; V. Norskov Olson, "Theological Aspects of the Seventh-day Sabbath," *Spectrum* 4 (1972): 5-18; Caleb Rosado, "God's Solutions to Man's Problems," *These Times* (1973): 7-11; Herbert R. Saunders, *The Sabbath: Symbol of Creation and Re-Creation* (Plainfield, N.J.: American Sabbath Tractate Society, 1970); Charles Scriven, "Beyond Arithmetic: A Look at the Meaning of the Sabbath," *Insight* (1971): 14-18; Kenneth A. Strand, ed., *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982); Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath"; Hans Walter Wolff, "The Day of Rest in the Old Testament," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 7 (1972): 65-76.

meditation *The Sabbath* became a classic for its distinct perspective on the dimension of time: The Sabbath is the manifestation of eternity in a world of space, eternity's "architecture of time"² and "palace in time."³ Jewish spirituality finds meaning not in memorials of space or material things, but in learning "the art of surpassing civilization,"⁴ attaining independence from it and entering into the spirit and sphere of the Sabbath, into the "sanctuary in time."⁵

Heschel emphasized the distinct characteristic of Judaism as a religion of time. Time is sanctified before everything else, including people, space, buildings, and other objects. After the creation of heaven and earth, God did not create a temple or a holy place, but he sanctified a day. To enter this sanctified time means to enter into a sphere of holiness, to share in what is eternal in time. Sanctified time, however, as Heschel points out, does not mean that it is dedicated solely to spiritual things or that the Sabbath is a commandment to the human being merely to conform to certain rules. The Sabbath is a day for the sake of the human being in his/her wholeness. The blessing of the Sabbath is perceived in its sacred beauty and grandeur, in its healing sympathy, peaceful serenity, and inspiring tranquility.⁶

Heschel's characterization of the Sabbath has fascinated Jewish and Christian scholars alike. Jacob Milgrom incorporated the notion of the Sabbath as a "sanctuary in

² Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 8.

³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27-29.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13-24.

time” in his commentary on Leviticus.⁷ Similarly to Heschel, Milgrom states that God sanctified time rather than space. “The sacred space occupied by the sanctuary and its priesthood is not sanctified by God, but by Moses” (Lev 8:10, 11, 30).⁸ However, he adds the observation that one statement attributes the act of sanctifying the sanctuary to God (Exod 29:44), which he ascribes to “H’s metaphoric, figurative notion of holiness” and explains that “even when H speaks of God continuously sanctifying Israel and the priesthood (20:8; 21:8, 15, 23; 22:9, 16, 32), the sanctification is actually done by the human recipients, through their obedience to God’s commandments. Thus the act of sanctifying Sabbath time by the God of time makes it his exclusive possession. It is ‘of YHWH.’”⁹

Similarly, M. Tsevat suggested that the central meaning of the biblical Sabbath is expressed in texts that contain the phrase “a Sabbath of YHWH.” Tsevat observed that “every seventh day the Israelite is to renounce dominion over time, thereby renounce autonomy, and recognize God’s dominion over time and thus over himself. Keeping the sabbath is acceptance of the sovereignty of God.”¹⁰

Karl Barth, the neo-orthodox Christian theologian, wrote about the Sabbath no less passionately than Heschel. Barth developed a profound theology on the creation Sabbath in his *Church Dogmatics* by searching for the meaning of the Sabbath in relation

⁷ Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, 1962.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.; cf. Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 10.

¹⁰ Tsevat, “The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath,” 455.

to God and in relation to the human being.¹¹ According to Barth, the first characteristic of the Sabbath is God's freedom to rest from his work of creation. This characteristic implies the Creator's choice to determine his work and to limit his activity by himself, which reveals his true deity in the actual event of the seventh day.¹²

The second characteristic of the Sabbath, according to Barth, is the revelation of God's love. Barth identified the human being created on the sixth day as the object of God's love and recognized God's ceasing from further activity on the seventh day as an expression of love: "He has found the object of His love and has no need of any further works."¹³ This again is a revelation of the true deity of the Creator. In this way, God attached himself to human history or, as Barth expressed it, by "resting on the seventh day, He does not separate Himself from the world but binds Himself the more closely to it."¹⁴ "He linked Himself in a temporal act with the being and purpose and course of the world, with the history of man."¹⁵

Based upon the divine principles of freedom and love in relation to the Sabbath, Barth defined the relationship between God and humans as the covenant of grace: "It was with man and his true humanity, as His direct and proper counterpart, that God now associated Himself in His true deity. Hence the history of the covenant was really

¹¹ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-1, 213-228; Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-4, 47-72.

¹² Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-1, 215.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 216.

established in the event of the seventh day.”¹⁶ God chose the Sabbath to establish his covenant relationship with creation and humanity and by that “He has made this last day and act of the history of creation an element in His own history.”¹⁷ Barth concluded that God entered the temporal world on the seventh day of creation and will from now on act in the sphere of human and world history.

Barth then interpreted the covenant between God and humans “as a covenant of grace and redemption to be fulfilled in Christ.”¹⁸ In his treatment of the Sabbath commandments in the Pentateuch, Barth concluded that the Sabbath commandment is the fundamental command of all of God’s commandments. It combines law and gospel; it is inclusive of all human beings;¹⁹ and it reminds the Sabbath observer of God as the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. In addition, Barth recognized an eschatological aspect in the Sabbath. He observed a hidden relationship between the Sabbath and the day of YHWH as judgment day.²⁰

The significance that Barth recognized in the creation Sabbath is unsurpassed in Christian theology. God entered the history of humankind and established his covenant relationship with humanity on the Sabbath, the seventh day of creation. The Sabbath then becomes the sign of divine freedom, love, and grace for all creation. Barth calls one to

¹⁶ Ibid., 217.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 222; Hans K. LaRondelle, “Contemporary Theologies of the Sabbath” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (ed. Kenneth A. Strand; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), 280.

¹⁹ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-4, 53-55.

²⁰ Ibid., 56-58.

recognize the “significance of the holy day in salvation history and its eschatological significance” in order to “understand at once, and not without a certain awe, the radical importance, the almost monstrous range of the Sabbath commandment.”²¹

Another scholar who has greatly influenced theological thinking on the issue of the Sabbath is Ernst Jenni.²² Contrary to Barth, Jenni has argued that the biblical Sabbath is not a creation ordinance, but has its origin in the market days of the ancient Near East. It was ascribed to Moses as the exclusive sign of God’s covenant of grace with Israel. Jenni argued that God’s sanctification of the Sabbath presents the priestly writer’s theology on Israelite cult and worship. He also acknowledged an implied promise of eschatological rest on the Sabbath, which he recognized in the thematic development of Israel’s rest in the Hebrew Bible.²³ Finally, Jenni concluded that the Sabbath points to Christ and has been brought to its end in the coming of Christ.²⁴

Recently, John H. Walton has argued that in order to grasp the meaning of the Sabbath, one must depend on the concept of divine rest as conveyed in ancient Near Eastern literature.²⁵ In the literary world of the ancient Near East, the gods create humans, who then build a temple for the gods to rest, which brings order and stability to

²¹ Ibid., 57.

²² Jenni, *Die Theologische Begründung des Sabbatgebotes im Alten Testament*.

²³ Ibid., 282.

²⁴ LaRondelle, “Contemporary Theologies of the Sabbath,” 282-283.

²⁵ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 157-59; idem, *The Lost World of Genesis One*, 72-77.

the cosmos.²⁶ Seen from that perspective, Walton understands the biblical Sabbath to convey God's rest in a cosmic temple where he takes control and authority over the created world. The human being in turn is asked to rest by acknowledging that God is the one who is in control, not by imitating God in his Sabbath rest.²⁷

Walton holds that the creation account was not intended to describe "the period of time over which the material cosmos came into existence, but the period of time devoted to the inauguration of the functions of the cosmic temple."²⁸ At the same time, the first creation account served as a liturgy to reenact, perhaps annually, the inauguration of the cosmic temple.

In its most straightforward reading, the creation text of Gen 1, including the account of the creation Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3, covers one historical week. This week was composed of seven ordinary Earth days, each of which consisted of one dark-light cycle defined by one rotation of the planet on its axis.²⁹ The Sabbath serves as a memorial of this creation in six days and as a sign of a sanctifying relationship between God and human beings. The theological foundation for observing the Sabbath is then based upon the following concepts taken from Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch and Scripture in general: (1) the Sabbath is a memorial of creation (Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11); (2) the Sabbath is part of God's permanent Decalogue (Exod 20:8-11; 23:12; Deut 5:12-15); (3)

²⁶ Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*, 182; Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 158.

²⁷ Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*, 78-86, 146-47.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

²⁹ Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, *A Statement on the Biblical Doctrine of Creation*, April 30, 2010.

the Sabbath is a sign of God's covenant with humanity (Exod 31:12-17); (4) the Sabbath is a sign of sanctification for the Sabbath observer (Exod 31:12-17); and (5) the Sabbath is a symbol of redemption (Deut 5:12-15). Hasel summarizes these points as follows:

The Sabbath is grounded in Creation and linked with redemption. It is an agent of rest from work and confronts man's religious and social relationship. It is a perpetual sign and an everlasting covenant. It relates to the meaning of time. Its nature is universal and it serves all mankind. It is concerned with worship as well as with joy and satisfaction. The themes of Creation, Sabbath, redemption, and sanctification are inseparably linked together, and with the Sabbath's covenant aspect, they reach into the eschatological future.³⁰

Similarly, Doukhan speaks of the Sabbath in terms of: (1) a sign of remembrance; (2) a sign of hope; (3) a sign of the Absolute; and (4) a sign of holiness.³¹ For him, the Sabbath connects the past event of creation with the future redemption, the historical-existential with the eschatological, and, at the same time, the Sabbath gives meaning to and fills the present dimension of life with a sense of hope.³²

In the following section, I will synthesize theological reflections emerging from my analysis of the Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch in earlier chapters. I have found that the Sabbath texts convey theological concepts in relation to their literary form, context, structure, and relationship with one another.

Sabbath and Genre Classification

Genre classification of the pentateuchal Sabbath texts is a matter of qualifying the texts under literary categories, such as narrative texts and legal materials. Studies about

³⁰ Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch," 21.

³¹ Doukhan, "Loving the Sabbath as a Christian," 149-158.

³² Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story*, 233-240.

literary genre in general argue that recognizing the genre of a text creates certain expectations in the mind of the reader.³³ Thus it seems important to recognize the genre and its characteristics of the various Sabbath texts in order to better understand their significance and message. Furthermore, modern approaches to understanding literary genre explore the area of socio-contextual communication and argue that literary genres are more than text types.³⁴ Genres arise in social contexts, reflect the patterns of society, and change with time. In addition, a genre is chosen with the intent to bring about a certain action. According to rhetorician Carolyn Miller “a theoretically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or form of discourse but on the *action* it is used to accomplish.”³⁵ In the context of the present study, the question arises about the message of the various Sabbath texts in terms of the ways they impact the reader and call for response.

Amy Devitte, in her study about genres in social settings, has argued that genres are not free-standing entities, but appear as literary forms that are intimately connected and interactive between each other.³⁶ This recognition of genres in general literary studies

³³ Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, “Where Literature and Memory Meet: Towards a Systematic Approach to the Concepts of Memory Used in Literary Studies,” in *Literature, Literary History and Cultural Memory* (REAL: Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature; vol. 21; ed. Herbert Grabes; Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2005), 274; Elisabeth Wesseling, *Writing History as a Prophet: Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1991), 18.

³⁴ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (trans. Vern W. McGee; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 62-102.

³⁵ Carolyn R. Miller, “Genre as Social Action,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984): 151.

³⁶ Amy J. Devitt, *Writing Genres* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 63-64.

underscores what Robert Alter has noticed about the effect of genre and other literary devices on the understanding of the Hebrew Bible.³⁷ According to Alter, the mark of ancient Israelite writing is indeed the concept of composite literary artistry achieved through a collage of textual materials. Different genres are woven together in a way that brings about cohesiveness, continuity of themes or motifs, and a sense of completion.³⁸ With regard to the Sabbath texts written in different genres, this insight enables one to perceive links between the texts and trace unifying themes.

Doukhan observes: “The biblical writer is also capable of expressing . . . new literary forms which have never been used in the same way.”³⁹ He also points out the biblical aspect of divine revelation with regard to language and literary style. In Doukhan’s words, the creation texts (Gen 1 and 2) testify by their style and structure to the “vertical dimension of revelation.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, the literary form of the creation Sabbath is of high importance because of its stylistic connection to the creation text in Gen 2: The creation Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3 parallels the texts about the marriage unity of the first couple in Gen 2:23-24.⁴¹ Doukhan further argues that it is precisely the unique literary form and structure of the creation texts in Gen 1 and 2 that convey the principle of revelation, contrary to the argument of some scholars that a writer came up with the idea of creation out of his Sabbath experience. In Doukhan’s words, “it is not the Sabbath

³⁷ Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, eds., *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 15.

³⁸ Alter, *Genesis*, 42, 47.

³⁹ Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story*, 199.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 198-212.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 77-80.

experience which generated the creation concept, but it is the creation process which ultimately emerged in the Sabbath⁴² and “the Sabbath is not brought up as the expression of human movement towards God but on the contrary as conveying the idea of the up-down of God, which alone yielded this relationship.”⁴³

These insights are helpful in dealing with the Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch. The Sabbath is indeed displayed in different genres, similar to a collage. First, elevated prose introduces the Sabbath by the use of formulaic repetitions, tight symmetries, and distinguished language. The uniqueness of Gen 2:1-3 points to the “vertical inspiration” and creativity of the biblical writers. Then a narrative develops a complex plot involving the Sabbath, using different literary features, such as dialogue, reasoning, instructions, commands, metaphors, chiasmic structures, and other stylistic devices (Exod 16). In other passages, legal language addresses specific details regarding the Sabbath in relation to humans and creation (Exod 20:8-11; 23:12; Deut 5:12-17). Finally, specific legal instructions link the Sabbath closely to the Israelite sanctuary (Exod 31:12-17; 35:1-3; Lev 19:30; 24:5-9; Num 28:9-10).

The interrelatedness between the different Sabbath texts comes into view through the fact that the features and characteristics of the creation Sabbath are integrated in each of the subsequent Sabbath texts, which shows the significance and theological impact of the creation Sabbath for the subsequent Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch. The artistic repetitive style of the creation Sabbath reappears in the narrative texts in features such as the evening-morning motif, which seems to be placed into the story-like narrative of

⁴² Ibid., 211.

⁴³ Ibid., 204.

Exod 16 in a similar way as it is used in Gen 1. A literal translation from Exod 16:5, 6 reflects this observation: “So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel: Evening (עֶרֶב), and you will know that the Lord has brought you out from the land of Egypt; and morning (וּבֹקֶר), and you will see the glory of the YHWH” (cf. Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). Another feature is the 6 + 1 pattern in Exod 16, which directly alludes to the creation week (Exod 16:4, 5, 22, 26, 27, 29; cf. Gen 1:1-2:3). Also, the work-free aspect of the Sabbath directly relates to the seventh day, when God had finished all his work (Exod 16:23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30; cf. Gen 2:1-3). The identifying verb for the Sabbath—שָׁבַת, “cease, rest (from work)” —occurs in the story of the Sabbath and the manna linking the Sabbath in the wilderness with the seventh day of creation (Exod 16:30; cf. Gen 2:2, 3).

The link between the creation Sabbath and the legal texts is even more direct in language such as “six days” (Exod 20:9, 11; 23:12; 31:15, 17; 34:21; 35:2; Lev 23:3; cf. Gen 1:1-31), “seventh day” (Exod 20:10; 23:12; 31:15, 17; 34:21; 35:2; Lev 23:3; cf. Gen 2:2, 3), “work” (Exod 20:9; 23:12; 31:14, 15; 35:2; Lev 23:3; cf. Gen 2:1-3), “cease” (Exod 23:12; 31:17; 34:21; cf. Gen 2:2, 3), “the heavens and the earth” (Exod 20:11; cf. 31:17; cf. Gen 2:1), “holy” (Exod 20:11; 31:13, 15; cf. Gen 2:3), “bless” (Exod 20:11; cf. Gen 2:3), including the 6 + 1 pattern of the creation week, the motif of rest, and the work-free aspect of the Sabbath.

These observations show the conceptual interrelatedness between the various Sabbath texts, but more importantly, the foundational significance and theological impact of the creation Sabbath for the subsequent Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch. Thus, I will argue that the different literary styles and the interrelatedness between the texts present the following picture of the Sabbath in the Pentateuch:

1. On the creation Sabbath, God makes his grand entrance into the world. A formal style of Hebrew language is used to present God's majestic authority and dignified grandeur on the seventh day of creation. Words that are carefully chosen and counted are placed into rhythmic clauses. Other clauses that occur throughout the text of the six weekdays, and that one would expect to reappear in the text on the seventh day, are omitted. New verbs emerge, such as "complete, finish" "cease, stop, rest," and "sanctify," and these take on great significance in the rest of the Pentateuch.⁴⁴ Also, the noun "work," which appears for the first time in the canonical Hebrew Bible, identifies and summarizes all of God's activity during the creation days. Logic that is incomprehensible to the human mind is introduced to give the reason for the Sabbath, which is expressed by the phrase, "he blessed and sanctified it because he ceased in it" (Gen 2:3).⁴⁵ There is no descriptive image placed into the text of the seventh day, no attributive expression, no word spoken, no sound reverberating. The exclusive selection of words and their stylistic arrangement intensify the impression about the unique nature of the seventh day, revealing its essence: God's overwhelming presence. God entered the world on the seventh-day Sabbath.

2. The narrative of the Sabbath and the manna presents a complex sequence of events happening over the course of one week in a deserted place with a multitude of hungry and angry people versus Moses, Aaron, and God. Scholars see great problems in

⁴⁴ See my chapter 2 on Gen 2:1-3. Alter holds that the Hebrew Bible uses a style that is different from the common language spoken in everyday life, including words, syntax, and grammar. See *Genesis*, 22-23.

⁴⁵ See my analysis in chapter 2 regarding this phrase.

the way this narrative is composed.⁴⁶ Emotionally laden dialogues occur between Moses, Aaron, the people, and the elders of the people. Dramatic scenes, such as the appearance of the glory of YHWH, the description of the manna, and the people's different reactions overtake one's imagination.⁴⁷ To the modern critical reader the plot of the narrative does not move along smoothly. Some details are emphasized; others seem to be missing. The way in which the text is arranged makes it difficult to retrace a train of thought and thus gives the impression of a text of little literary value. The text appears like a puzzle assembled from pieces that do not fit together.⁴⁸

In addition to that, the Sabbath is placed into such an ordinary context—food—that it almost seems profane. One wonders how the sacredness of the Sabbath, so highly emphasized elsewhere (Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15; cf. Isa 58:13, 14), is made compatible with an ordinary matter such as food and eating. While in the preceding story (Exod 15:22-27) and in the one following (Exod 17:1-7) YHWH responds to the immediate need of the people in the wilderness, to the need of water, directly with water, in ch. 16 the people's need for food is closely linked to the Sabbath, a link that at first sight appears unusual. However, the audience of the text is expected to recognize the significance of this link and to act on its meaning by following the rhythmic sequence of time similarly to the wilderness generation.

⁴⁶ Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*, 67; Frankel, *The Murmuring Stories of the Priestly School*, 63-117; Geller, "Manna and Sabbath," 5-16; Maiberger, *Das Manna*; Noth, *Exodus*, 131; Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 589-90; Schmidt, "Die Priesterschrift in Exodus 16," 483-498.

⁴⁷ See the literary and structural analysis of Exod 16 in chapter 4 of this study.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

The complex arrangement of the narrative depicted by the emotionally charged introduction, the dramatic appearance of YHWH, then the manna miracle followed by the description of different sequences lead to a backward / forward outlook in the narrative: a reference back to the creation Sabbath (Exod 16:30; Gen 2:2, 3) and a leap forward into the most holy place of the sanctuary where the manna will serve as a witness for the future generations (Exod 16:33-35). These links assume that the audience of the text will have no difficulty bridging between the creation Sabbath, the Sabbath of Israel's journey in the wilderness, and the Sabbath in the sanctuary.

All these features, as awkward as they may seem, seem to convey the actual meaning of the narrative: The God who once came into a perfect world on the Sabbath, now, on the Sabbath, enters the world of distressed people in a wilderness. Indeed, only by reading Exod 16 as a unit may one recognize that the narrative depicts the complexity and complications of Israel's life in the wilderness by its intricate arrangement. Then, within the complexities of the text, one recognizes the Sabbath as the stable moment in the story. This suggests that it is by the rhythm of the Sabbath that life will be secured even in an unstable and chaotic world.

3. The legal texts place the Sabbath into the center of the covenantal context between God and Israel. The Sabbath commandment occurs at the heart of the Decalogue in both the Exodus text and in the Deuteronomy version. Formal language is used to clearly communicate God's will. The Sabbath commandment explicitly states (1) the authority of the lawgiver: God, the Creator of heaven and earth; (2) the reason and motivation for Sabbath-keeping: God rested on the seventh day (Exod 20:11) and God brought Israel out of slavery (Deut 5:15); (3) the goal for Sabbath-keeping: "to keep it holy" (Exod 20:8; Deut 5:12); (4) the benefactor: the Israelite householder as Sabbath-

keeper; and (5) the beneficiaries of Sabbath rest: “you and your son and your daughter, your male and your female servant, your cattle and your sojourner who stays in your gates” (Exod 20:10). Legal language is used to express the covenant relationship between God and Israel and the non-discriminating, non-selective, and equalizing aspects of the Sabbath. When the Sabbath becomes a legal institution, it benefits each individual of society, even foreigners and animals.

In apodictic and casuistic laws addressing various aspects of life (Exod 21-23), Sabbath legislation is linked to the motif of God hearing the cry of the oppressed and acting as their redeemer. God is heavily involved in the lives of widows, orphans, and strangers, and on the Sabbath he comes closest to the least appreciated members of society, such as the child of the slave woman. Moreover, he takes care of hard working animals (Exod 23:12). Here in the Pentateuch, legal language, rather than poetry or narrative, conveys the intimacy of the covenantal relationship between God and humans.

4. The Sabbath texts related to the sanctuary occur in legal portions of the Pentateuch. The most elaborate of these Sabbath texts is the seventh speech of YHWH’s sanctuary building instructions (Exod 31:12-17).⁴⁹ While the preceding six speeches contain information about how to do, make, assemble, use, and operate the sanctuary building and its services, the seventh speech is marked by a formative concept of Sabbath observance. As effective instruction, the Sabbath commandment in Exod 31:12-17 reflects reasoning, passion, effect, substance, motivation, caring, and mentoring. This passage communicates basic information about Sabbath-keeping, but overtones of potential character transformation engage the Sabbath observer in the covenantal

⁴⁹ Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy,” 375-386; Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 501-12; cf. see chapter 5 of this study.

meaning of the holy day. The position of this text as the seventh speech of YHWH, its chiasmic structure,⁵⁰ and links to the creation Sabbath and to the Sabbath commandment of the Decalogue highlight this text and emphasize its richness among the instructional material in the book of Exodus.

The instructions to build the sanctuary and the record of the sanctuary construction frame the narrative of the golden calf crisis in the wilderness (Exod 32-34). As shown in the exegetical analysis, there are linguistic elements and concepts occurring in the golden calf narrative that have an effect on the understanding of the sanctuary instructions and construction report. The narrative especially affects understanding of the Sabbath texts in Exod 31:12-17 and 35:1-3, which directly frame the golden calf narrative.⁵¹ This collaboration between law and narrative brings about a rich depth of meaning.

The style of the Sabbath texts in relation to the sanctuary in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers promotes deep interaction between God and humans. Large and intricate parallelisms skillfully link the different texts and make it possible to draw an analogy between the Sabbath and the sanctuary. This analogy correlates understandings of God as both transcendent and one who dwells in a man-made structure. The Sabbath texts, in relation to the sanctuary, bring the human being into the immediate presence of God by transformative communication. Time and place, both sanctified, are placed into close relationship to each other, with God and humans playing center roles.

⁵⁰ See the literary structure in chapter 5 of this study.

⁵¹ Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*, 18, 28-32.

To conclude, in the present study, different Sabbath texts have been analyzed in terms of their styles and literary contexts. Each text relates in some way to the others, especially when they deal with the theme of creation. I have discovered that in the final canonical form of the Hebrew Bible, the creation Sabbath is the foundation for all subsequent Sabbath texts in the sense that the creation Sabbath encapsulates the essential concepts that are developed in subsequent Sabbath texts in the Pentateuch. The Sabbath needs to be understood on the basis of the creation Sabbath, rather than as a conceptual projection back to creation.

Theological Perspectives on the Sabbath

Contemporary studies try to make sense of the Sabbath as a day of rest for the overworked, stressed-out, and consumption-oriented human being, for the marginalized and oppressed, and for the suffering environment.⁵² While the Sabbath surely has something to say about these issues, the search for its meaning needs to address deeper questions and longings that were recognized in biblical times.

So far, theological studies have systematized and categorized implications of the Sabbath under themes such as creation, redemption, rest, freedom, sanctification, and

⁵² Lynne M. Baab, *Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005); Mark Buchanan, *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2006); Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989); Kerri W. Kent, *Rest: Living in Sabbath Simplicity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2008); Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee*; Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal and Delight in Our Busy Lives* (New York: Bantam Books, 2000); Judith Shulevitz, *The Sabbath World* (New York: Random House, 2010); Norman Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos, 2006).

some have even included the eschatological concept of the Sabbath.⁵³ The present chapter, in its quest for the essential theological meaning of the Sabbath in the Pentateuch as a whole, will draw out theological perspectives of the various Sabbath texts analyzed in the previous chapters in terms of their literary features and contexts. Here I will attempt to gain insight into aspects of the theocentric perspective of the Sabbath, especially by considering interactive links between the texts. As interpreters and theologians such as Heschel, Barth, and Doukhan have observed, to name only a few, the Sabbath breaks open the constraints of the text and surpasses the character of an ordinary day⁵⁴ because it records God's own story within human history.

Sabbath in a Perfect World

When God came into a perfect world, he revealed his divine being by ceasing from work and sanctifying the seventh day (Gen 2:1-3). This observation is based upon the text of the creation Sabbath, which has been studied within the context of Gen 1:1-2:3.⁵⁵ Based upon literary analysis, the theological implications drawn from the text of the creation Sabbath include such aspects as cessation from work, holiness, divine

⁵³ Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*; Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*; idem, *Rest for Modern Man: The Sabbath for Today*; Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-1, 98-99, 213-28; III-4, 47-72; Dresner, *The Sabbath*; Eskenazi, Harrington, and Shea, eds., *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions*; Friedman, "The Sabbath: Anticipation of Redemption"; Holland, *This Day Is Yours: Exploring the Many-faceted Wonders of God's Sabbath Day*; Jewett, *The Lord's Day: A Theological Guide to the Christian's Day of Worship*; Kubo, *God Meets Man*; Strand, *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*; Davidson, *A Love Song for the Sabbath*; Saunders, *The Sabbath: Symbol of Creation and Re-Creation*.

⁵⁴ Heschel, *The Sabbath*; Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-1, 213-28, and III-4, 47-72; Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story*; idem, "Loving the Sabbath as a Christian."

⁵⁵ See chapter 2.

presence, relationship, and revelation.⁵⁶ The *sui generis* style and language of the text, which has been dealt with both in chapter 2 as well as earlier in this chapter, contributes to the exceptional theological import of the creation Sabbath in the Hebrew Bible.

Creation Revealed

The theological significance of the Sabbath starts out with the words that summarize the creation of the world and introduce the seventh day of the creation week: “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed” (Gen 2:1; cf. Exod 20:11; 31:17). This statement displays two basic principles of the Gen 1 creation account: the principle of wholeness and the principle of separation. These principles saturate the entire creation text by the use of stylistic and structural features such as *merismus*, parallelism, and chiasmic arrangements. Separation and wholeness are expressed by contrasting acts and motifs such as separation between light and darkness, separation between the waters above and the waters below, separation between land and water, distinction between male and female, etc. (Gen 1:3-31). These acts of separation then find their resolution in the creation Sabbath as the day that is set apart from all other days because all contrasts and all of God’s dividing activities have ceased. In other words, wholeness is achieved by contrast, and the Sabbath is the most perceptible witness to this principle. The two paralleling statements in the first creation account—“in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1) and “the heavens and the earth were completed” (Gen 2:1)—testify to the achievement of wholeness on the seventh day of the creation week (Gen 2:1) while framing God’s acts of separation throughout the days of the week.

⁵⁶ See the theological implications drawn out in chapter 2.

Another aspect of the theology of wholeness derived from the creation account implies the consideration of two worlds: the created world, which was completed on the seventh day, and the divine realm of the Creator God, whose presence resides in the seventh day by divine blessing and holiness. While wholeness implies a holistic view of the created world including nature and humanity, it views this world from the perspective of the divine. Moreover, wholeness implies that the created world and the divine world are linked together by God's initiative, which is based upon his revelation or disclosure of his divine being to the earthly realm. As I have pointed out earlier,⁵⁷ the biblical creation account presents creation as the great book of God's revelation. The Creator God who offered life as a free gift intends a relationship with the living being and with all his creation based upon divine revelation. God's word, which brings about the works of creation throughout the creation week (Gen 1:1-31), testifies to the principle of revelation by word, which then sets the ground for the divine-human relationship expressed by the words "See, *I have given you*" (my emphasis; Gen 1:29).

Martin Buber, who discussed the significance of combined words or "primary words"⁵⁸ such as *I-Thou*, the words that God used in his first address to the human couple, notes that these words "do not signify things, but they intimate relations."⁵⁹ In other words, God's first address to the human couple establishes the divine-human relationship and by that links the world of the human being to his divine world. Buber

⁵⁷ See chapter 2.

⁵⁸ Buber, *I and Thou*, 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

also explains that “the primary word *I–Thou* can only be spoken with the whole being”⁶⁰ where “the existence of *I* and the speaking of *I* are one and the same thing.”⁶¹ Divine revelation then implies God’s whole being, which is placed into the *I* of his first word to the human couple.

An interesting aspect of God’s revelation, however, occurs in the event of the seventh day when, according to the text (Gen 2:1-3), God’s acts cease and his voice remains silent. While God’s words spoken during the weekdays disclosed characteristics of his being as the Creator God and brought forth works of creation, these works involved the potential of turning one’s attention away from God and to the created world. On the Sabbath, however, words cease, works are complete, and God is manifested solely by his presence expressed by blessing and holiness. Thus, divine blessing and sanctification of the seventh day are the most powerful elements chosen by God to convey and reveal his presence.

Divine revelation is a matter of God’s free will, with the intention to disclose his divine being on the Sabbath. This aspect might be explained similarly to Barth’s statement about God’s choice to determine his work, the completion of his work, and then cease from his work, acts that testify to his supreme and divine being.⁶² Similarly, revelation needs to be seen as a matter of God’s choice and freely offered gift, or even his determination to disclose his divine being to the human being and to the created world.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 4, 11.

⁶² Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-1, 215.

The human being, however, in order to grasp the sacred event of God's disclosure in the event of the Sabbath, might first need to take a look at the Creator's works. For his creational acts and works reveal his divine passion for life on earth, which then will set the stage for Sabbath blessing and sanctification. This look might entail a rather personal approach to the creation text. An academic discourse seems inadequate to reflect what the mind's eye might capture in the moment of divine revelation about the Creator's passion for life on earth. It is this "vertical dimension of revelation"⁶³ that breaks open the text and captures the human mind.

Divine revelation with regard to God's passion for life envisions the moment when God broke out into passionate excitement: הִנֵּה־טוֹב מְאֹד "Look, how delightful!" (Gen 1:31). These words refer to all works of creation, all acts of separation, all objects set into place, and all beings brought into life. Nevertheless, the grand image at the end of the sixth day depicts God and the human couple as his image and likeness. Then, when the text focuses on God again, it uses such decisive words as, "God completed all his work" and "he ceased from all his work" (Gen 2:2). God *sabbathed*. God the Creator of life, surrounded by a world bursting with life, ceased. God was in the world on the seventh day—holiness in time—in the moment of fullness of life on earth.

Sacred Cessation

Barth was right: It was Sabbath when God came into the world.⁶⁴ It was Sabbath when God became the God of the history of the world, a perfect world beyond imagination for the contemporary mind. Yet, the biblical text, concise as it reads, creates

⁶³ Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story*, 199.

⁶⁴ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-1, 217.

just enough imagination for the heart's yearning for such a world. When God ceased, the history of the perfect world started to unfold.

Sabbath as sacred cessation is based upon the distinct combination of the verbs “cease” (שָׁבַת) and “sanctify, make holy” (קָדַשׁ) in a causal clause, which marks the text of the creation Sabbath in Gen 2:3, “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he ceased.”⁶⁵ As the only causal clause of the creation account, this expression provides the reason for the sanctification of the seventh day: God’s ceasing from work. The argument of the causal clause reflects the Sabbath’s exclusive character as a day completely belonging to God. As I have pointed out in chapter 2 of this study, nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible is there an explicit cause provided for God’s declarative act of sanctification of the Sabbath or of other things and people. In numerous texts of the Hebrew Bible holiness is presented as an attribute of God and his character.⁶⁶ To be holy is required of the human being who lives in a relationship with God,⁶⁷ and places and objects are made holy in connection with him at the sanctuary.⁶⁸ In these cases, holiness is recognized as an implication or consequence of God’s presence, but in no case is there a specific act of God, such as his ceasing from work, which functions as the cause for sanctification, except for the sanctification of the seventh-day Sabbath.

⁶⁵ See chapter 2 on the relationship between the two verbs.

⁶⁶ Exod 15:11; Lev 21:8.

⁶⁷ Exod 19:10, 14, 22; 22:31; 28:36; 29:44; see especially Lev 11:44.

⁶⁸ Exod 28:2; 29:29, 37; 30:27, 35, 37; 31:10; 40:10; Lev 21:22; Num 5:9; 1 Kgs 8:4.

While God's presence may be the conceptual framework for holiness in the earthly realm of space,⁶⁹ it is God's cessation from work that marks and designates the seventh day and brings about holiness in time. The seventh day is exclusively God's day. By that fact, then, his presence takes up the time of the day and imbues it with qualities belonging only to God. Thus ceasing, blessing, and holiness, the qualities that set this day apart, speak of God's full presence on the Sabbath within a perfect world.⁷⁰ Originating in God's act of ceasing from all work of creation, I suggest that Sabbath holiness becomes the platform for holiness in space, such as when God's presence filled the sanctuary (Exod 40:34-38). In Shapiro's words, "Holiness . . . makes its entrance into the world through the Sabbath."⁷¹

The Sabbath as a sacred cessation at creation when God entered the history of the perfect world has no equivalent in the subsequent Sabbath texts. The expression, "he sanctified it because in it he ceased," is unique to the creation Sabbath. In Exod 20:11 the text uses a different expression: God "rested" (נוח) instead of "ceased" (שבת). While God's ceasing from work at creation signifies his divine quality of holiness in the event of the Sabbath, God's resting on the Sabbath may suggest different aspects: (1) God's repose or settling down at the end of the creation week, without any indication that he was weary from work; (2) a human-oriented perspective, where Sabbath rest is seen as God's gift of rest and tranquility to the human being; and (3) God's Sabbath rest may stand as a divine principle and model for human beings to follow.

⁶⁹ God identified the place of the burning bush as "holy ground" (Exod 3:5), and also the sanctuary was a holy place because of God's visible presence (Exod 40:34-38).

⁷⁰ Canale, *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology*, 253-254.

⁷¹ Shapiro, "The Meaning of Holiness in Judaism," 51.

Another reading occurs in Exod 31:17, where the text preserves the expression God “ceased” (שָׁבַת) but then adds the phrase “and was refreshed” (וַיִּנְפֹּשׂ). Here, God being refreshed is a result of his ceasing from work. While the verb “to be refreshed” signifies relief from fatigue elsewhere in the Bible (Exod 23:13; 2 Sam 16:14), in Exod 31:17 it anthropomorphically describes God as receiving some kind of refreshing benefit from his ceasing and serves as an example to human beings.⁷²

Thus the precedence of the creation Sabbath over the Sabbath in the subsequent texts is conveyed by the unique concept of God sanctifying the Sabbath “because he ceased in it” (Gen 2:3). The intentional act of ceasing from work and sanctifying the Sabbath belongs solely to the divine realm and is only evident in the Sabbath of the perfect world. It seems that from the realm of this perfect world the Sabbath then projects its holiness into subsequent Sabbath history, regardless of subsequent conditions. Sabbath holiness, once established, remains even when the world changes into an imperfect and corrupt world.⁷³

The human being of the imperfect and corrupt world who stands within the context of a covenantal relationship with God is called to remember and observe the Sabbath to keep it holy (Exod 20:8; Deut 5:12). Doukhan holds that the Sabbath, besides being made holy by God, “also draws its *raison d’être* and its holiness from within the believer”⁷⁴ and implies the participation of the human being in Sabbath-keeping and

⁷² Sarna, *Exodus*, 201; cf. Roy Gane, “Sabbath and the New Covenant,” *JATS* (1999): 313. See analysis of Exod 23:12 in chapter 4 on this matter.

⁷³ Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*, 118-123.

⁷⁴ Doukhan, “Loving the Sabbath as a Christian,” 156.

Sabbath holiness.⁷⁵ The human being, in keeping the Sabbath holy and “making” (Exod 31:16) the Sabbath a day of holy celebration, carries out an *imitatio Dei*,⁷⁶ a living response to God’s sanctification of the Sabbath in creation times.

Holiness Available

Sabbath holiness is about its availability in the historical reality of the world. Doukhan ponders the question about reality with specific regard to the creation account, including the Sabbath.⁷⁷ He recognizes the genealogical nature of the creation narrative and the parallel structure between the Gen 1 and Gen 2 creation accounts, which support the idea that the author intended them to be understood historically. According to Doukhan, “the biblical author has conceived, written and intended the creation pericope according to the same pattern of reality he meets in his real life. . . . It is an event which belongs to real history.”⁷⁸ In this same line of thought is the observation that the reality of the biblical writer’s seven-day weekly cycle is historically linked to the reality of the contemporary reader’s seven-day weekly cycle. No other convincing explanation for the origin of the week has been found. In addition, as Walton has pointed out, in the world of the ancient writer, the divine world, including divine activity and intervention, is as real as any historical event in the earthly realm.⁷⁹ In other words, a world without the

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), 23; cf. Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” 24; Doukhan, “Loving the Sabbath as a Christian,” 157.

⁷⁷ Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story*, 213-220, 227-233.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 217, 218.

⁷⁹ Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 220-21.

supernatural does not exist. A world is real in its connection between the earthly and the divine.⁸⁰ Thus the question about Sabbath holiness in the historical reality of the world needs to be addressed from God's perspective. As a day created and instituted by divine will and determination, this day signifies God's sanctifying act for the sake of open access between him and the world he had created. On the Sabbath, God makes himself available and accessible to humanity and to all creation.

The moment that depicts God as ceasing from all work is the moment when he exists in the world with his full divine presence and with the utmost devotion for his creation (Gen 2:2, 3). He fills the time, the day, the moment with his divine presence. No space is allowed to separate; no voice interrupts, not even his voice; nothing alters, adds to, or complements. The reason: God's ceasing from all work is intentional and determined and becomes meaningful when he sanctifies the seventh day in addition to blessing it. It is the moment when holiness permeates time and enters the world in order to expose divine life and meet with created life. The sacredness of this moment will forever remain as an indelible mark engraved into creation as a monument of time.

Again, Barth was right when he concluded that in the moment when God ceased, he had found the object of his love.⁸¹ God established his love-relationship with humanity on the Sabbath and commenced his history in direct relation to the history of the world. God purposefully placed himself face to face with human life and made himself accessible to it, which indicates his intimate interest in his creatures. Although the fall

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-1, 215.

into sin disrupted access between God and human beings, the attitude he demonstrated at creation suggests that he would likely wish to restore uninhibited access.

Sabbath in a Corrupt World

By reading further into the pentateuchal Sabbath texts one becomes aware of their absence for more than 60 chapters, except for several allusions (Gen 6-8; Gen 26:5; Exod 5:5) that seem to contain some insight into Sabbath awareness or Sabbath-keeping related to the patriarchal period.⁸²

Perishable Food

When the Sabbath reappears in Exod 16, which describes the people of Israel as suffering from lack of food in the wilderness, the impression that this chapter conveys is first about a completely different world from the one described in Gen 1. It is a desolate world, barren and chaotic. Also, the people who are part of this desolate world are different from the first humans created by God. The Israelites are saved from bondage, but they carry a depressing history with them while they walk toward the promised land, a past that will haunt them for the rest of their lives in the wilderness. To accept God's gifts, food that is perishable during the weekdays and the Sabbath with imperishable food, as part of the free life seems difficult for them, and so the story in Exod 16 tells of the people's distress, confusion, unrest, and chaotic state. Resolution comes only after several rounds of divine intervention.⁸³

⁸² Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant*, 80; Childs, *The Books of Exodus*, 290; Hasel, "The Sabbath in the Pentateuch," 26-27; Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 173; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 180-181; idem, "The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," 345; idem, *Story as Torah: Reading the Old Testament Ethically*, 27.

⁸³ See the literary analysis of Exod 16 in chapter 3.

The link between the Sabbath and food in Exod 16 alludes to the first incidence of food in the biblical text, when God offered the gift of food to the human couple in the context of the first divine-human relationship (Gen 1:29). In God's perfect world the gift of food is immediately followed by the gift of the Sabbath, which signifies that these two gifts belong together, and together they convey God's relational bond with humanity established in creation.

Only recently have biblical scholars begun to recognize the importance of food in the Hebrew Bible, even though there are hardly any pages left that make no mention of food or matters related to food.⁸⁴ Recently Nathan MacDonald, in his *Not Bread Alone*, examines food and food symbolism in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Israel.⁸⁵ The study shows that food plays a prominent role in the biblical text and invokes important social and religious symbols. MacDonald deals with the significance of the link between food and memory and points out that the Israelite festivals are particularly celebrated and

⁸⁴ Juliana Claassens, *The God Who Provides: Biblical Images of Divine Nourishment* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004); Athalya Brenner and Jan W. van Henten, eds., *Food and Drink in the Biblical Worlds*, Semeia 86 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001); idem, "Food and Drink in the Bible," in *Unless Someone Guide Me . . . : Festschrift for Karel A. Deurloo* (ed. J. W. Dyk et al.; Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese van Bijbel en zijn Tradities Supplement Series 2; Maastricht: Uitgeverij Shaker Publishing, 2001), 347-54; Rolf P. Knierim, "Food, Land and Justice," in *The Task of Old Testament Theology: Substance, Methods and Cases* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 225-43; Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); idem, *Not Bread Alone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Judith E. McKinlay, *Gendering Wisdom the Host: Biblical Invitations to Eat and Drink*, JSOTSup 216 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Eleonore Schmitt, *Das Essen in der Bibel: Literaturethnologische Aspekte des Alltäglichen*, Studien zur Kulturanthropologie 2 (Münster: Lit, 1994); Diane M. Sharon, *Patterns of Destiny: Narrative Structures of Foundation and Doom in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002).

⁸⁵ MacDonald, *Not Bread Alone*.

memorialized in close relation to food. Further, MacDonald identifies food in the book of Deuteronomy as “the vehicle through which Deuteronomy envisages Israel expressing her remembrance of YHWH.”⁸⁶ In addition, the reason for the connection between feast days and food is that the memory of past events, celebrated during the feast days with specific meals, is to influence daily life in the Israelite community and create trust in and dependence upon God. Another interesting aspect of food investigated by MacDonald is “the table as the locus for judgment and vindication.”⁸⁷

MacDonald’s analysis is important to the present study insofar as it offers insights into (1) the numerous occurrences of texts dealing with food and food-related matters in general; (2) the aspect of food as a device for memorializing past events in relation to Israel’s feast days; and (3) the connection between food and judgment. With regard to the Sabbath, MacDonald briefly mentions the Sabbath commandment in Deut 5:15. He points out that the Sabbath commandment makes no mention of any special meal, but recalls the experience of Egyptian slavery and redemption in order to motivate actions in favor of the poor and vulnerable in Israel.⁸⁸ However, MacDonald’s investigation on food as it relates to judgment does not deal with the gathering of the manna, which is identified as a “test” on the basis of God’s instruction (תוֹרָה; Exod 16:4) in relation to the Sabbath.

No major study has been published on the connection between the Sabbath and food in the Hebrew Bible, even though the biblical text clearly indicates the relationship.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 75.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 166-195.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 92.

As I have pointed out earlier, the first creation account links the sixth and seventh days on the basis of food as God's gift to humans and as the means for establishing the relationship between them.⁸⁹ In the provision of food, God addresses the human couple directly and the first *I-Thou* relationship is initiated. Immediately after this encounter and commencement of the divine-human relationship, the Sabbath follows as a day sanctified by God. Sanctification of the Sabbath is about relational life; it is about God's presence and existence in direct relation to the created world.⁹⁰ So it is not surprising that Israel's call to holiness, which is also signified by Sabbath observance (Exod 31:13), is central to the dietary laws in the book of Leviticus.⁹¹

In Exod 16, Sabbath and food are closely linked by the divine gift of the manna. Theological investigations differ greatly on this intricate and complex relationship. In his literary-theological reading of Exod 16, Stephen Geller dissects this chapter and speaks of two different traditions, first, the priestly tradition and, second, what he calls a

⁸⁹ In addition, the anthropologist Mary Douglas has extensively dealt with the matter of food in ancient cultures and in the biblical text and has concluded that food implies a system of social communication. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966); idem, *Implicit Meanings* (London: Routledge, 1975); idem, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁹⁰ See the theological implications in chapter 2.

⁹¹ Jacob Milgrom, "The Biblical Diet Laws as an Ethical System," *Interpretation* 17 (1963): 288-301; idem, *Leviticus 1-16*; cf. Jiri Moskala, "The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: Their Nature, Theology and Rationale: An Intertextual Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series, vol. 4; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 2000). In the biblical text, that system of communication extends into a communal bond or a covenant relationship, for a meal often establishes or strengthens communal bonds (e.g., Gen 31:44-46).

covenantal tradition.⁹² According to Geller, the two traditions display two different theologies: To the covenantal tradition the Sabbath is incidental; its connection to the manna is seen as a test of faith for Israel's wilderness generation. For the priestly tradition the Sabbath is central, and in relation to the manna it introduces important cultic ideas such as holiness and separation and the call to imitate God in his resting.⁹³

Baruch Schwartz, on the other hand, holds that the Sabbath theme in Exod 16 belongs exclusively to J, the non-priestly narrative.⁹⁴ In J's perspective, according to Schwartz, the reason for the Sabbath is Israel's trust in YHWH, which represents the essence of Israel's relationship with God. The manna story is chosen by J as the setting for introducing the significance of the Sabbath, as Israel's mark of complete dependence upon God.

Imperishable Food

While the diachronic readings of Geller and Schwartz dissect the narrative in Exod 16 into different sources, the analysis and close reading pursued within this study suggests an integrative approach to the themes of the manna and the Sabbath. In its story-like form the text tells of the difference between the manna provided for the six weekdays and the manna given for the seventh day. During the weekdays, the manna could not be kept overnight because of its perishable nature. On the Sabbath, however, the manna kept overnight according to God's instruction remained fresh. On Sabbath, no toxic smell filled the tents. Death and decay, so easily growing overnight during the weeknights,

⁹² Geller, "Manna and Sabbath."

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Schwartz, "The Sabbath in the Torah Sources," 3-7.

surrendered to the Creator God during Sabbath night. So the Sabbath miracle in Exod 16 tells of the Creator God, who, over the course of 40 years, brought life into each jar filled with manna in each individual tent. This narrative reveals God's commitment to the divine-human relationship and his determination to sustain the lives of his people in a fallen world.

Sabbath in the Home

Thus far the relationship aspect of the Sabbath has been shown to be prominent in the text of the creation Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3) and in the narrative text of the Sabbath and the manna (Exod 16). This section considers the relationship aspect when the Sabbath becomes the subject matter of legal regulations in the Pentateuch. The Sabbath commandment establishes both the vertical relationship between the Sabbath observer and God the Creator (Exod 20:10, 11) and redeemer (Deut 5:12, 15) and the horizontal relationship between the Sabbath observer and his entire household (Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14).

Covenant Enacted

With respect to the legal emphasis within the covenant at Sinai, Christianity in general has perceived the Decalogue and the laws of the Pentateuch "to function as a principle of salvation by works."⁹⁵ However, as Robertson notes, this aspect fails to recognize that "Israel assembled at Sinai only because God had redeemed them from Egypt."⁹⁶ The covenantal relationship between God and Israel formed the basis for their

⁹⁵ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillisburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), 174.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

redemption and for the revelation of the law. The law, including the Sabbath commandment, was conveyed as God's gift for life within the covenantal relationship and not as a requirement to be fulfilled in order to enter the relationship.

There is more to the Decalogue and the covenant when it is read in the narrative context of Exod 19. Sarna points out that it is precisely this context that sets the Decalogue apart from other ancient Near Eastern treaty patterns and imparts meaning and special significance to the covenant.⁹⁷ Israel's God is portrayed as an eagle carrying its young on its back to the destination identified by the emphatic statement, "I brought you to me" (Exod 19:4). This expression demonstrates that the essence of the covenant is captured in the unique relationship between God and Israel and not in legal obligations and responsibilities. The imagery of God as the eagle is expanded in Deut 32:11. Here, God is not only depicted as the rescuer who saved the Israelites, but also as the God who protected them during the time of their oppression. The eagle imagery depicts God's deep emotional involvement with Israel's situation.

Abraham J. Heschel describes the covenantal relationship between God and Israel in terms of the divine pathos.⁹⁸ He observes that God's involvement in human history is never impersonal. God is not a spectator watching the events of history from afar, "he is personally and emotionally involved in the life of man."⁹⁹ Heschel further holds that while the covenant may be understood as a juridical commitment between the parties, it is God's emotional engagement and his constant concern and involvement that maintains

⁹⁷ Sarna, *Exodus*, 102.

⁹⁸ Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 2001), 285-298.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

the covenant. This engagement, then, is the divine pathos, not passion, arbitrary attitude, or unreasoned emotion. It is a divine act “rooted in decision” and “the real basis of the relation between God and man, of the correlation of Creator and creation, of the dialogue between the Holy One of Israel and His people.”¹⁰⁰

Within the same context of the covenant enacted at Mount Sinai (Exod 19-24; 31:18), Exod 31:12-17 identifies the Sabbath as a sign of the everlasting covenant. This passage includes links to the reestablished covenant after the golden calf crisis, when God’s covenantal love endured in spite of one of the most disloyal acts of the Israelites in the wilderness (Exod 32-34).

Identity Defined

The covenantal context of the Sabbath laws focuses on matters of identity and relationship. God is identified as the one who liberated the Israelites from Egypt’s oppression and as the personal God of the Sabbath observer (Exod 20:2, 9). The Sabbath observer receives identity on the basis of his relationship with God and his household, and in direct relation to his work.¹⁰¹

The Sabbath laws identify and reveal the Creator God as a personal and relational being. He entered the world at creation, initiated human history in the sacredness of the Sabbath, liberated the Israelites from bondage, and established them as a holy nation. He takes part in the lives of people living in a desolate world and offers himself as the supreme example for weekday work and Sabbath life. He is concerned with each member of the household, regardless of social status, including the animals.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 298.

¹⁰¹ See chapter 4 on the analysis of Exod 20:8-11.

The Sabbath laws address the identity of the Sabbath observer. “You shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you” (Exod 20:9, 10). The former Israelite slave had turned into an individual with identity. The Sabbath commandment addresses the individual person at the foot of Mount Sinai from two perspectives:

1. The *you* in the Decalogue is part of the multitude set free from slavery. The *you* belongs to the kingly priesthood and the holy nation (Exod 19:5, 6).

2. The *you* exists as an individual person in relation to the *I* of God, “*I* am YHWH *your* God” (Exod 20:2) and in relation to others, his sons and daughters, male and female servants, cattle, and the foreigner who is living under his care. He is put in charge of a household; he is identified as a reliable and trustworthy person; he is a servant leader of people and nature.

Barth expressed this idea with the words, “This commandment is total. It discovers and claims man in his depths and from his utmost bounds.”¹⁰² In other words, the Sabbath places an end to God’s search for lost humanity. The Sabbath identifies the human being as a redeemed being, set free from the bonds of any kind of slavery. The Sabbath reminds the human being of his/her resemblance with the Creator God. The Sabbath places the human being into relational bonds with the same privileges, rights, status, and opportunities as others. In its very essence the Sabbath responds to the *imago Dei*’s “cry within us to be who we are: children made in the image of the Most High.”¹⁰³

¹⁰² Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III-4, 57.

¹⁰³ Jill Carattini, “A Slice of Infinity,” May 26, 2010. Online: <http://www.rzim.org/resources/read/asliceofinfinity/todaysslice.aspx?aid=10591>.

The Sabbath laws address the Sabbath observer in relation to weekday work and rest from work: “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of YHWH your God; in it you shall not do any work . . . for in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exod 20:9, 10, 11). The Sabbath observer’s work is to resemble the Creator’s work in the sense that it is purposeful, meaningful, and gratifying. In a world where work is mainly understood as “man’s cruel struggle for existence,”¹⁰⁴ the Sabbath is often understood as a day off from tensions and stress or as a day to gather strength for the weekdays to come. But the Sabbath is more. The Sabbath testifies that the weekdays are created for the purpose of coming to their conclusion in the day of the Sabbath. Work finds purpose and meaning in Sabbath cessation.

Sabbath in the Sanctuary

Sabbath laws linked to the sanctuary call for observance of the holy day of rest within the context of the sanctifying act of YHWH in the life of the Sabbath observer. This act suggests a transformation from within, a transformation of the heart that occurs within the sphere of a personal encounter with God.

The text about the building of the sanctuary in the wilderness is divided into two sections, YHWH’s instructions to build the sanctuary (Exod 25-31) and the construction reports of the sanctuary (Exod 35-40). In between these two sections occurs the record about the golden calf crisis (Exod 32-34). Timmer in his recent study on the sanctuary and the Sabbath remarks that the transition from the sanctuary building instructions to the

¹⁰⁴ Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 29.

golden calf incident could hardly be more abrupt.¹⁰⁵ However, what deserves one’s full attention in reading these chapters is the fact that Israel’s most rebellious moment in the wilderness is framed by God’s most sacred moment in time, the “Sabbath of Sabbaths holy to YHWH” (Exod 31:12-17; 35:1-3). The significance of the Sabbath in this context concerning God’s desire to dwell in the midst of human depravity is incomparable in the Hebrew Bible.

Appointed Meeting

The link between the Sabbath and the sanctuary concerns the rationale for the sanctuary: “Let them construct a sanctuary for me that I may dwell among them” (Exod 25:8). This rationale is further developed within Exod 25-31 and is made prominent by a literary arch structure and by language about YHWH’s appointed meetings inside the sanctuary (Exod 25:22; 29:42, 43; 30:6).¹⁰⁶

- A Individual meeting in front of the ark of the testimony:
לך ונועדתי לך (“There I will meet you [sg.];” 25:22)
- X Congregational meeting in front of the bronze altar:
איעד לכם (“I will meet you [pl.] there;” 29:42, 43)
- A’ Individual meeting in front of the ark of the testimony:
לך איעוד (“Where I will meet you [sg.];” 30:6)

This arch structure points out the meetings that would take place at the sanctuary. The individual meeting between YHWH and the high priest is indicated by the singular form of the personal pronoun “you,” and reference to the congregational meeting has the plural form of the personal pronoun “you.” The analysis of the arch structure and of the language used in the seven speeches of YHWH has suggested two conclusions: First,

¹⁰⁵ Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*, 18.

¹⁰⁶ See the analysis of Exod 25-31 in chapter 5.

during the individual meeting with the high priest, YHWH would deliver his commandment, which is identified with the seventh speech of YHWH on the Sabbath (Exod 31:12-17). The high priest's task is to deliver this commandment to the congregation (Exod 25:22). Second, the event when both meetings take place is *Yom Kippur* (Exod 30:6-10), the festival that is closely related to the weekly Sabbath by the requirement of total cessation from work (Exod 16:31; 23:32; cf. 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3; 25:4) and by the designation "Sabbath of Sabbaths" (Lev 16:31; cf. Exod 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3; 25:4). This festival day is the only one among the annual festivals when the high priest enters into the most holy place to meet YHWH in front of the ark of the testimony, and it calls the congregation to focus on YHWH by their self-denial.¹⁰⁷

These findings testify to the vital importance of the Sabbath within the sanctuary context and suggest that these institutions are not simply parallel to each other. The Sabbath implies more than the notion of a "sanctuary in time"¹⁰⁸ because it serves as both an archetype for the wilderness sanctuary and its services and as an expression of the essence of the sanctuary's rationale, which is YHWH's appointed meeting with the human being inside the sanctuary complex (Exod 25:22; 29:42, 43).

Personality Restored

Holiness is the very essence of both the Sabbath (Gen 2:3) and the sanctuary (Exod 29:44), not merely in terms of an abstract idea of a day or an edifice in space, but in the sense of a restored creation. Holiness of the Sabbath and of the sanctuary originates in the Creator God, who sanctified both the Sabbath (Gen 2:3) and the sanctuary (Exod

¹⁰⁷ Gane, *Cult and Character*, 305-10.

¹⁰⁸ Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 27-29; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, 1962.

29:44; 40:34), with the purpose to enter and live within a personal relationship with human beings. Holiness within the divine-human relationship may be described as God's "absolute selflessness" in order to "give everything of Himself."¹⁰⁹ It speaks of God who ceased all his work in order to dedicate all of himself to the world that he had created, to be present, dwell, and live in the world, and to make himself available and accessible.

The human being, then, is called to observe the Sabbath and to revere the sanctuary (Lev 19:30; 26:2). The human being is addressed as *you* within the relationship of the *I* of YHWH: "You shall surely observe *my* Sabbaths; for this is a sign between *me and you* throughout *your* generations, that *you* may know that *I* am YHWH who sanctifies *you*" (Exod 31:13; my emphasis).¹¹⁰ The Sabbath observer's sanctification is bound up with the word "to know." To know YHWH denotes the basic concept of an intimate divine-human relationship between YHWH and the Sabbath observer.¹¹¹ This relationship, based upon the saving act of YHWH (Exod 20:2), relies on the Sabbath observer's remembrance (Deut 5:15), and calls for a response on the part of the human being in direct relation to the Sabbath (Exod 31:16): The Sabbath observer, who *knows* YHWH as his/her sanctifier, responds by *making* the Sabbath an everlasting covenantal bond.

But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, my Sabbaths you shall keep
A1 for it is a sign between me and you

¹⁰⁹ Shapiro, "The Meaning of Holiness in Judaism," 58.

¹¹⁰ Milgrom has summarized the holiness concept: "Holiness means not only 'separation from' but 'separation to'. It is a positive concept, an inspiration and a goal associated with God's nature and his desire for man." *Leviticus 1-16*, 731.

¹¹¹ See, among a wealth of references, Exod 33:12, 17; Deut 13:3[4]; Ps 139:23; Nah 1:7, which show the biblical understanding of divine-human relationship; cf. Botterweck, "יָדָא, yada," *TDOT* 5:468-470.

- A2 throughout your generations
- A3 to know (לִדְעָה) that I, YHWH, am your sanctifier (v. 13)

The sons of Israel shall keep the Sabbath

- A3' to make / by making (לַעֲשׂוֹת) the Sabbath
- A2' throughout their generations an everlasting covenant (v. 16)
- A1' Between me and the sons of Israel it is a sign forever (v. 17a)

Holiness of the Sabbath is expressed in the phrase קָדֵשׁ לַיהוָה, “holy to YHWH” (Exod 31:15; cf. 16:23). This phrase occurs in the book of Exodus in an alternating order with the holiness of the high priest (28:36; 39:30). This link may suggest that the Sabbath functions in relation to the six workdays as the high priest does in relation to the priests: as the crown of the days. Thus, rather than simply paralleling the holiness of the Sabbath with the holiness of the sanctuary as an edifice in space, the text parallels Sabbath holiness with the holiness of the high priestly ministry inside the sanctuary. The high priestly ministry, which includes bearing the iniquity of the sanctuary (28:38), appeals to the Sabbath observer to be a living sign of holiness in his response to the saving acts of YHWH.¹¹²

The basic concept of Sabbath holiness in the context of the sanctuary can be recognized in what theology has identified as the restoration of the *imago Dei*,¹¹³ the

¹¹² Doukhan, “Loving the Sabbath as a Christian,” 157.

¹¹³ For a survey of views on the subject of *imago Dei*, see Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996); Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II-1, 187-88; James R. Beck and Bruce Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology: A Biblical Anthropology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005), 143; G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 67-118; Emil Brunner, *Dogmatic II: The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 1952), 55-61; Clines, “The Image of God in Man,” 53-103; Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 17-18, 35-43; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 517-78; Feinberg, “The Image of God,” 235-45; John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God: A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2002), 396-97; Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*; Jonsson, *The Image of God: Genesis 126-28 in a Century of Old Testament Research*; J. Richard Middleton, “The Liberating Image? Interpreting the

recreation of the image of the Creator in the human being. Sarna recognizes in the phrase **בצלמנו כדמותנו** “in our image, according to our likeness” (Gen 1:26), the “incomparable nature of human beings and their special relationship to God.”¹¹⁴ In his understanding, the human being is the symbol of God’s presence on earth, with the responsibility and authority to have dominion over creation. “While he is not divine, his very existence bears witness to the activity of God in the life of the world. This awareness inevitably entails an awesome responsibility and imposes a code of living that conforms with the consciousness of that fact.”¹¹⁵

In the course of the history of Christian theology, the idea of the *imago Dei* has been understood from at least three different perspectives:

1. The substantive view understands the image of God as consisting of moral and natural qualities residing in the different areas of the human being: physical, mental, and spiritual.¹¹⁶

2. The functional view defines the image of God according to the way the human being functions as an image bearer. In other words, the human being is, according to the creation text (Gen 1:26-28), God’s vice-regent or representative on earth, having dominion over the created world.¹¹⁷

Imago Dei in Context,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 24, no. 1 (1994): 8-25; Westermann, *Genesis*, 1203-14.

¹¹⁴ Sarna, *Genesis*, 12.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 552.

¹¹⁷ Middleton, “The Liberating Image? Interpreting the Imago Dei in Context,” 12.

3. The relational view regards the human being as created “to relate with God and with other humans in community.”¹¹⁸ These interdependent perspectives may be combined and placed into a holistic concept.¹¹⁹ In that sense the image of God may include a resemblance of all human faculties to those of the Creator as well as the representative aspect of the human being living in a close relationship with God.

¹¹⁸ Beck and Demarest, *The Human Person in Theology and Psychology*, 187-88.

¹¹⁹ Frame, *The Doctrine of God: A Theology of Lordship*, 396-97.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From numerous details, the present study has established the theocentric character of the seventh-day Sabbath in the Pentateuch. By the use of the literary styles of narrative texts and legal material, the Pentateuch develops the Sabbath theme with a wide range of theological implications. From the outset, this theme can be identified with God's presence in the world: The creation narrative in its *sui generis* form tells of God initiating his history with humanity and revealing his divine being in the sanctification of the seventh day. Other narrative texts then tell of God's presence sustaining life in a desolate world. In the Sabbath laws, God's presence becomes evident in the Sabbath as God's gift of rest and covenantal bond with the congregation of Israel and in the personal lives of the Sabbath observer. Within the context of the sanctuary, the Sabbath reveals God's presence as overwhelming but also personal. The human being stands in the presence of the Creator God and becomes the person made in God's image that he or she was meant to be.

The present study has analyzed the pentateuchal Sabbath texts in their own right, allowing them to communicate within exegetical, structural, and generic frameworks in order to convey their theological self-understanding. This approach contrasts with that of reading critical assumptions or ancient Near Eastern mythology into the Sabbath pericopes.

Significant theological elements of the Sabbath's theocentric character emerging from the literary contexts and genres of the pentateuchal texts may be summarized as follows:

1. To portray the majestic entrance of God into the new, perfect, and beautiful Planet Earth, the writer of the creation account in Gen 1:1-2:3 utilizes stylistic balance and coherent symmetry. Although the divine introduction of the Sabbath in Gen 2:1-3 omits the usual reference to "evening and morning" that appears with each of the preceding weekdays, the Sabbath is clearly identified as the seventh day of the creation week. Without adding divine action or approval, this Sabbath text expresses completion of all creation activity. Divine cessation from all work becomes God's signature of the seventh day and the prerequisite for blessing and holiness. The Creator's sanctifying affirmation of the cyclical Sabbath stands out as a remarkable sign of God's constant presence in the world. From now on, divine life will overflow into the world's days, weeks, and times and will assure the gift of life, embedded in the context of the divine-human relationship for all future to come.

2. Recounting divine engagement with a disordered and desolate world, Exod 16 tells of Israel's struggle for existence in a seemingly disordered and unbalanced narrative (Exod 16). When God intervenes in the wilderness, jars are filled with food to sustain life on the Sabbath, even though open country remains empty (Exod 16:31, 35; Ps 78:24, 25). In addition, the miracle of the Sabbath manna testifies to the Creator God, who stops decay of this food only on Sabbath. While the manna ("what is it?"), the sweet-tasting "bread," remains a mystery and a miracle throughout the 40 years of the people's wanderings, the Sabbath establishes the rhythm of their lives and becomes a testing marker in God's formula $6 + 1 = \text{life}$ (Exod 16:26, 29, 30). Thus to a people struggling

for existence in a chaotic and barren world, God offers the rhythmic order of time identified by the Sabbath as the means for the divine gift of life.

3. For divine holiness to be present in Israelite homes and become part of familial bonds and work-related connections, the Pentateuch promotes a body of Sabbath laws within the formal stipulations of the divine-human covenant relationship (Exod 20:8-11; 23:12; Deut 5:12-15). The Sabbath becomes a sign/marker of this covenant with the nation of Israel, which is based on the patriarchal covenant. The covenant, then, builds the foundation for Sabbath laws in the Pentateuch. Rather than regulating the course of the seventh day or prescribing formal procedures or rites regarding its observance, the Sabbath laws simply call for rest to promote the well-being of the Sabbath observer within the relational bonds of the household, which include all members, regardless of their status in society, and even animals. In addition, the Sabbath laws establish the link to the creation Sabbath and promote its universal and inclusive nature on the basis of the creation times.

The Sabbath laws in Exod 20:8-11; 23:12; Deut 5:12-15 imply that when God's people follow his instructions to allow everyone to rest on the Sabbath, this egalitarian Sabbath rest preserves identity and relationships, and the Sabbath observer's work emulates the Creator's work. The Sabbath attests the sacredness of human beings, without a trace of favoritism, equally touching the lives of the Sabbath observer and his dependents, regardless of their gender, rank, and position. The Sabbath becomes God's personal pledge of identity to the Sabbath observer, who is identified in direct relation to "YHWH your God" (Exod 20:2, 10; Deut 5:6, 12, 14, 15). The Sabbath is God's guarantee of particular concern for the most oppressed and exploited in society (Exod

23:12), and his declaration of active involvement in human and animal rights (Exod 23:12; 31:17).

The fact that the Sabbath laws employ anthropomorphic and anthropopathic terms when referring to God's experience, such as "he rested on the seventh day" (Exod 20:10) and "he was refreshed" (Exod 31:17), conveys personal relationship and deep affinity that connects God as the Creator and Redeemer with all humanity and all creation. This implies an ecological dimension: As a sign that celebrates God's work of creation, it promotes covenantal responsibility toward the environment. It calls for a holistic world that recognizes the Creator's concern for its well-being, including justice and peace for all creatures. Opposing exploitation, the Sabbath calls for compassion and responsibility toward others, especially the disadvantaged.

4. Although God's earthly dwelling was constructed in an infertile and desolate place, the biblical text describes it with language that evokes the perfectly created world. Studies on Exod 25-40 have demonstrated the link between the creation Sabbath and the building of the sanctuary. This link shows that the creation Sabbath inspires, motivates, and sets the framework for YHWH's house in the wilderness so that life will be ensured in a desolate world marked by death. The contextual arrangement of the text portions on the building of the sanctuary implies that the Sabbath deeply affects the Israelites' attitude toward the construction of the sanctuary (Exod 35:20-29).

The magnificent design of the sanctuary is fit for YHWH, who fills its precincts with his glory (Exod 40:34-38). His rationale for the building of the sanctuary is to meet with human beings and communicate his will to them (Exod 25:22). From the details of the text in Exod 25-31, this study has demonstrated that the Sabbath in Exod 31:12-17 is the subject matter between YHWH and the human being. The relational aspect of the

Sabbath within this context emerges from two aspects of the Sabbath: (1) a sign of sanctification provided by YHWH (“I am YHWH your sanctifier” [v. 13]), and (2) a sign of the everlasting covenant (“it [the Sabbath as an everlasting covenant] is a sign between me and you” [v. 16]). The Sabbath observer becomes aware of the meaning of the Sabbath inside YHWH’s sacred dwelling: divine presence in the world, empathy with mortal human beings, and the transformation of sanctification.

The main theological aspect of the Sabbath in the Pentateuch may be summarized as follows: The Sabbath encapsulates and reveals God’s presence in the world, regardless of its nature and condition. The Sabbath was introduced by divine cessation from work in order for holiness to enter the world for the benefit of all humanity. Holiness is the essence of the divine-human relationship, which enables human beings to fully become what they were created to be: the image of the Creator. In its rhythmic recurrence, the Sabbath signifies the Creator’s constant presence in the world and his care for it. Since the Fall into sin, the Sabbath liberates people from oppressive regimes of man-made gods; it places them in proper relationships with each other; it relieves their attitude toward work in a society exhausted and stressed by hard labor; and it testifies to the sacred design in time and space whereby they can recognize and emulate the Maker of all. Thus the Sabbath is an important part of God’s program for restoring *imago Dei* in fallen human beings.

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