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FURTHER UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT

We in the churches of God are all Sabbath-keepers. Many of us having been keeping the Sabbath for ten, twenty, thirty or more years. After that many years it seems we should know all there is to know about this one commandment, right? We all know that the Sabbath starts at sunset on a Friday evening and ends at sunset on the Saturday evening.

How does God want us to keep His Sabbath days holy? What conduct does God expect from us? And WHY has God not spelled out the instructions pertaining to the Sabbath in more detail? Why do we ourselves have to make so many decisions about which activities are acceptable for the Sabbath and which activities are not acceptable?

Let's take another look at what the Bible tells us about the Sabbath.

The Hebrew word for "Sabbath" is "shabbath", a noun. This word is never used in Genesis, its first occurrence in the Bible being in Exodus 16:23. This Hebrew noun is formed from the primitive root verb "shabath". And the first occurrence in the Bible of this verb "shabath" is in Genesis 2:2-3, where it is used twice, and it is twice translated as "rested".

BUT THAT IS NOT REALLY A CORRECT TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH OF THIS HEBREW VERB "SHABATH"!

HOW MEANINGS OF WORDS ARE ESTABLISHED

When you want to know the meaning of a word, you might look the word up in a dictionary. But what about the people who wrote the dictionary ... how do they know what the meaning of a word is?

Well, the way they establish the meaning of any word is by looking at **THE USAGE OF THAT WORD!** They can clearly establish the meaning of a word by looking at **HOW** the word is used and in which **CONTEXTS** the word is typically used. This is also how scholars of ancient languages establish the meanings of words in those languages, they carefully examine the various contexts in which any given word may appear.

Let's apply this to the biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek. Specifically, let's look at some biblical Hebrew.

To correctly understand the meaning of any Hebrew word that is used in the Old Testament we can either look the word up in a reputable dictionary or lexicon (e.g. Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, etc.), or we can very carefully examine **HOW THIS PARTICULAR WORD IS USED THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT.**

Since the second process is the one that is used by the authors of the dictionaries as well, it follows that, if anything, the second approach is going to give us a more reliable picture than the first approach. Also, when the dictionary gives us several different meanings for the one Hebrew word, **THEN** this process of carefully examining the different contexts in which that word is used will be extremely helpful in narrowing down the correct meaning. This approach will often show us **WHY** the dictionary has assigned different meanings to the one Hebrew word. So let's use this approach with our study into the Sabbath

commandment.

A point to bear in mind: when a word in Hebrew is not derived from any other word in the language, then it is known as "a primitive root word". Many different words can be formed from one root word, but the root word itself is never derived from another word.

Next, let's understand how the meaning of many nouns is established. I'll use a simple example which I have used in the past.

In the English language we have the verb "TO HIKE" and we have the noun "HIKER". This noun "hiker" is clearly formed from the verb "to hike". For some foreigner who is starting to learn English to understand the noun "Hiker" the person must FIRST understand the verb "TO HIKE". Unless a foreigner first very clearly understands what the verb "to hike" means, that person cannot understand what the noun "hiker" means. Understanding the verb "to hike" is really a prerequisite for understanding the noun "hiker". The meaning of the noun "hiker" is totally dependent on the meaning of the verb "to hike". Does this make sense?

It's the same with biblical Hebrew!

Since the noun "shabbath" is formed from the verb "shabath", it follows that in order for us to understand the noun "shabbath" correctly, we must FIRST very clearly understand what the verb "shabath" means, since the meaning of the noun "shabbath" is very obviously linked to and dependent on the verb "shabath".

THE MEANING OF THE VERB "TO REST"

You have a pretty clear understanding of what I mean if I were to say: "I want you to REST all of tomorrow". Or if you ask a colleague at work on a Monday morning: "What did you do yesterday?" and he were to reply: "I spent the whole day RESTING" ... you would have a reasonably good idea of how he spent that day.

Webster's Dictionary gives, amongst others, the following definitions for the verb "to rest":

- a bodily state characterized by minimal functional and metabolic activities;
- freedom from activity;
- motionlessness;
- peace of mind or spirit;
- free from disturbance; etc..

Now we have already seen that the Hebrew verb "shabath" is translated as "RESTED" in Genesis 2:2-3. However, there are at least 11 different primitive root verbs used in the Old Testament which are at one time or another also translated into English as "REST". Since none of these 11 words are related to any other word (though there are additional words that are formed from these 11 words), it should be VERY OBVIOUS INDEED that they simply cannot all mean exactly the same thing! Since none of these 11 verbs are related to each other, they simply MUST in some way have meanings that differ from the other words, even if translators do at times translate all of them as "rest".

THIS IS WHERE AN EXAMINATION OF "USAGE" ENTERS THE PICTURE!

While some of these 11 different words can very quickly be eliminated from our investigation, there are five different Hebrew words that we should look at very closely. When we do that, THEN the meaning of the Hebrew verb "shabath" becomes very clear.

5 HEBREW VERBS TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH AS "REST"

SHABATH: This verb means TO STOP DOING SOMETHING; stop sinning, stop mirth, stop oppression, stop having leaven in your home, etc. The consequence of stopping these things is sometimes, though not always, "rest". The main focus of the word is: "to stop doing something that had been going on until then". Of the 71 times this verb is used in the Old Testament, in the KJV it is translated 47 times as "CEASE", 11 times as "REST" and 13 times by various other words. This all by itself already hints at "rest" not being the main meaning of this word.

NUWACH: This verb focuses on RESTING; resting from labour, resting from sorrow, not expending any energy, etc.. The focus is on being refreshed as a result. Of the 64 times this verb is used in the Old Testament, in the KJV it is translated 55 times as "REST", 1 time as "EASE", and 8 times by various other words. [This is also the root word from which the name "Noah" is formed.]

SHAQAT: This verb also refers to RESTING, but the focus is on an atmosphere of calm, peace and tranquillity. Of the 41 times this verb is used in the Old Testament, in the KJV it is translated 16 times as "REST", 16 times as "QUIET", 4 times as "QUIETNESS", 2 times as "STILL", and once each as "APPEASES", "IDLENESS" and "SETTLED".

SHA'AN: This verb is similar to "shaqat" and also refers to RESTING in peace and quiet, with a focus on being freed from troubles and stresses. Of the 5 times this verb is used in the Old Testament, in the KJV it is translated 2 times as "AT EASE", 2 times as "QUIET" and 1 time as "REST".

CHADAL: This verb is somewhat similar in meaning to "shabath" in that it refers to stopping doing something; but the focus of this word is specifically on STOP CAUSING TROUBLE, stop breaking God's laws, leave off doing what is wrong, etc.. Of the 56 times this verb is used in the Old Testament, in the KJV it is translated 20 times as "CEASE", 16 times as "FORBEAR", 5 times as "LEAVE", 5 times as "LEFT OFF", 1 time as "REST", and by various other words for the remaining occurrences.

As we can see, the first four of these five verbs express conditions we would associate with keeping the Sabbath. We tend to think ESPECIALLY of "resting from labour" ("nuwach") and of "an atmosphere of calm and peace" ("shaqat") and of "being freed from the troubles and stresses of our normal lives" ("sha'an") when we think of the Sabbath Day.

Yet God chose to use the verb "SHABATH" to form the noun "shabbath", which identifies the weekly "SABBATH" for us. God chose to focus the name of this day on "STOP DOING THINGS YOU DO ON THE OTHER DAYS" rather than focussing on what we mean by "rest". The focus of the word "Sabbath" is thus not really "total and absolute rest"; such a focus would have been achieved by a noun formed from either "nuwach" or from "shaqat". Yet "resting" is certainly intended to be a major part of the Sabbath. This is very clear from the way God worded the actual commandment in Exodus 20. In Exodus 20:11 God Himself said: "... and RESTED the seventh day ...", and here God used the Hebrew word "NUWACH"!

Later we will look at the commandment more closely. But resting is certainly intended to be a major part of the Sabbath.

Now let's examine THE CONTEXT in which these five verbs are used. Specifically, here are some passages where two or even three of the above five words are used in the same context. This can help

to illustrate differences in the focus and the meanings of these different words.

There the wicked CEASE ["chadal"] from troubling; and there the weary be AT REST ["nuwach"]. [There] the prisoners REST ["sha'an"] together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. (Job 3:17-18)

COMMENT: These two verses show quite clearly that "REST FROM WORK" (which is something the "weary" desire) is best described by "nuwach", and "PEACE AND FREEDOM FROM STRESS" (which is what "prisoners" desire) is best described by "sha'an". When you want to talk about what we in English mean by "resting" then the Hebrew verb "shabath" isn't even used!

And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD SHALL GIVE THEE REST ("nuwach") from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How HATH the oppressor CEASED ("shabath")! the golden city CEASED ("shabath")! (Isaiah 14:3-4)

COMMENT: Again, when God wants to focus on "resting from labour and from sorrow", then He uses the verb "nuwach". And at the same time God uses the verb "shabath" to refer to "the oppressor" and "the golden city" STOPPING SOME ACTIVITY, which isn't necessarily the same focus as "resting".

And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I WILL CAUSE THEE TO CEASE ("shabath") from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more. So WILL I MAKE my fury toward thee TO REST ("nuwach"), and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I WILL BE QUIET ("shaqat"), and will be no more angry. (Ezekiel 16:41-42)

COMMENT: Again God uses the verb "shabath" to express that He will STOP JERUSALEM FROM PLAYING THE HARLOT, which is not really a focus on "resting". After He has executed His judgments against Jerusalem, THEN God will let his fury rest ("nuwach") and He will again be "quiet and calm" ("shaqat").

The mirth of tabrets CEASETH ("shabath"), the noise of them that rejoice ENDETH ("chadal"), the joy of the harp CEASETH ("shabath"). (Isaiah 24:8)

COMMENT: Here there is no focus at all on "resting" even though God uses the verb "shabath" twice. The focus is on SOMETHING WILL BE STOPPED! The verb "chadal" with its generally negative connotation fits right into this context.

And it came to pass, when Baasha heard [it], that HE LEFT OFF ("chadal") building of Ramah, and LET his work CEASE ("shabath"). (2 Chronicles 16:5)

COMMENT: Again, "shabath" is not used to imply any "rest". Rather, the focus is on Baasha STOPPING SOMETHING that he had been doing.

But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob SHALL return, and BE

IN REST ("shaqat") and AT EASE ("sha'an"), and none shall make [him] afraid. (Jeremiah 46:27)

COMMENT: This is the type of "rest" we tend to associate with the Sabbath; yet God here used two of the other verbs rather than "shabath".

Moab HATH BEEN AT EASE ("sha'an) from his youth, and HE HATH SETTLED ("shaqat") on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed. (Jeremiah 48:11)

COMMENT: Clearly "sha'an" is the verb that refers to "peace and freedom from stress, real rest", and "shaqat" refers to "being calmly settled", conditions we tend to associate with Sabbath-keeping. Yet the verb "shabath" is not used here.

Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day THOU SHALT REST ["shabath"]: that thine ox and thine ass MAY REST ["nuwach"], and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed. (Exodus 23:12)

COMMENT: God's focus here is that on the seventh day we are TO CEASE FROM DOING THINGS, as a result of which our animals get to REST from labour. It was not really correct for the translators to here render "shabath" as "you shall rest"; they really SHOULD HAVE translated this as "you shall CEASE", as is quite clear from the other usages we have examined.

IN SUMMARY:

- 1) To focus on what we in English understand by "REST" God uses the verbs "nuwach" and "shaqat" and "sha'an" in the Hebrew OT.
- 2) When God uses the verb "shabath" it is to focus on "STOP DOING SOMETHING".
- 3) So the primary focus of the noun "Shabbath" is "STOP DOING CERTAIN THINGS"!
- 4) It is not that the Hebrew noun "Shabbath" means "rest"; rather rest is a consequence of "stopping to do certain things". However, such "rest" is not intended to be "absolute freedom from activity, motionlessness". It is simply "rest from specific activities".
- 5) Thus activities like walking (to church services or in a garden, etc.) and eating and studying the Bible (an intellectually demanding task) and fellowshiping with brethren (this is a social activity) and dealing with emergencies (the ox in the ditch principle) and taking care of certain necessities (providing water for domestic animals on the Sabbath, Luke 13:15) and circumcising a baby boy on the Sabbath (John 7:22-23) are not what the word "Sabbath" legislates against. Had that been God's intention, then instead of forming the noun "shabath", He would have formed a noun from the verbs "nuwach" or "shaqat". And there are such nouns. For example, 1 Chronicles 22:9 states:

Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be A MAN OF REST; and I will give him REST from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and QUIETNESS unto Israel in his days. (1 Chronicles 22:9 AV)

In this verse the expression "a man of rest" is "a man of MANUWCHAH"; the expression "I will give him rest" is "I will give him NUWACH"; and the expression "peace and quietness" is "peace and SHEQET".

The word "manuwchah" is a noun formed from the verb "nuwach", and the word "sheqet" is a noun formed from the verb "shaqat". And both these words really mean what we understand by "rest". These two Hebrew words refer to "rest from labour" and "peace and tranquillity", things we very closely associate with the Sabbath day.

So the point is this:

IF GOD HAD REALLY INTENDED TO EMPHASIZE THE CONCEPT OF "REST", THEN INSTEAD OF FORMING THE NOUN "SHABBATH" FROM THE VERB "SHABATH" HE COULD HAVE USED THE NOUN "SHEQET" FROM THE VERB "SHAQAT" OR HE COULD HAVE USED THE NOUN "MANUWCHAH" FROM THE VERB "NUWACH"; AND "RESTING" WOULD HAVE BEEN THE DOMINANT, OVER-RIDING AND INESCAPABLE CONCEPT!

6) So what God is emphasizing with the word "Sabbath" is the cessation of CERTAIN ACTIVITIES, but not necessarily ALL activities! We still have to live on the Sabbath. Breathing, sleeping and eating all require some energy from us; walking and talking require some energy from us; reading and intently listening require energy from us; washing and shaving and getting dressed require energy from us. We are constantly expending energy and we are NEVER really "motionless" or "free from ALL activity".

7) THE PHARISEES misunderstood God's real intentions for the Sabbath. They tried to equate the Sabbath with the concepts embodied in the verbs "nuwach" and "shaqat". These two verbs would indeed have limited all activities, and that is precisely what the Pharisees attempted to do, to limit ALL activities on the Sabbath. So they tried to limit how far one might walk on the Sabbath (the concept of "a Sabbath day's journey"), how much weight one might be allowed to "carry" (half a dried fig), how many letters one might be allowed to write (less than two letters of the alphabet), etc.

In the Talmud in the section "SHABBATH 73a" it states:

MISHNAH. THE PRIMARY LABOURS ARE FORTY LESS ONE, [VIZ.:] SOWING,¹² PLOUGHING, REAPING, BINDING SHEAVES, THRESHING, WINNOWING, SELECTING,¹³ GRINDING, SIFTING, KNEADING, BAKING, SHEARING WOOL, BLEACHING, HACKLING, DYEING, SPINNING, STRETCHING THE THREADS,¹⁴ THE MAKING OF TWO MESHES, WEAVING TWO THREADS, DIVIDING TWO THREADS,¹⁵ TYING [KNOTTING] AND UNTYING, SEWING TWO STITCHES, TEARING IN ORDER TO SEW TWO STITCHES,¹⁶ CAPTURING A DEER, SLAUGHTERING, OR FLAYING, OR SALTING IT,¹⁷ CURING ITS HIDE, SCRAPING IT [OF ITS HAIR], CUTTING IT UP, WRITING TWO LETTERS, ERASING IN ORDER TO WRITE TWO LETTERS [OVER THE ERASURE], BUILDING, PULLING DOWN, EXTINGUISHING, KINDLING, STRIKING WITH A HAMMER,¹⁸ [AND] CARRYING OUT FROM ONE DOMAIN TO ANOTHER: THESE ARE THE FORTY PRIMARY LABOURS LESS ONE. (the Talmud's own emphasis; the numbers in the text refer to footnotes)

None of the above man-made rules really have anything at all to do with the instructions that GOD gave for the Sabbath. Yet it was these man-made rules that were behind the accusations of the Pharisees in Luke 6:1-2.

And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples PLUCKED THE EARS OF CORN, and did eat, RUBBING [THEM] IN [THEIR] HANDS. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days? (Luke 6:1-2 AV)

According to their 39 rules as stated above, these activities by the disciples went against categories 3 (reaping) and 5 and 6 (threshing and winnowing). Obviously the reasoning of the Pharisees was ABSURD! Their rules have nothing to do with God's actual intentions! But when you have people who argue about carrying more than the weight of "HALF A FIG" (i.e. one ounce or less!) on the Sabbath, then we should really EXPECT their reasoning to be absurd!

Understanding the correct meaning of the Hebrew verbs "shabath" and "nuwach" and "shaqat" and "sha'an" should help us to recognize this wrong focus by the Jews. It is one thing to rest by stopping to do certain things that God does not want us to engage in on the Sabbath. It is another thing altogether to attempt to stop ALL activities, which is emphatically NOT what God had ever intended with the Sabbath command.

Understand that when you hear about some of the orthodox Sabbath practices that are applied in Jerusalem today (e.g. on the Sabbath light switches in hotels are permanently "ON" so you can't use them, toilet paper is "pre-torn" for you so you don't have to tear it, the buttons on elevators are covered over so you can't use them, etc.) you are seeing an example of the pharisaical attempt to limit ALL activities on the Sabbath. And it all goes back to the Pharisees erroneously ascribing the meanings of the verbs "nuwach" and "shaqat" and "sha'an" to the verb "shabath".

When you clearly understand, from the examination of THE USAGES OF THESE WORDS, what the above five different verbs really mean, then you should also be able to see that in Genesis 2:2-3 almost ALL translations have MISTRANSLATED the Hebrew verb "shabath" as "rested"!

Genesis 2:2-3 really SHOULD read:

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he CEASED on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had CEASED from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2:2-3 AV)

And that is actually how it is translated in Young's 1898 Literal Translation (YLT), as quoted below:

and God completeth by the seventh day His work which He hath made, AND CEASETH by the seventh day from all His work which He hath made. And God blesseth the seventh day, and sanctifieth it, for in it HE HATH CEASED from all His work which God had prepared for making. (Genesis 2:2-3 YLT)

The English translation of the Greek Septuagint Version has also correctly translated these two verses as saying "CEASED". This is not to ascribe any form of "inspiration" to the Septuagint Version; it simply illustrates that they correctly understood the Hebrew verb "shabath" to mean "cease" rather than "rest". The translators of the KJV also understood this, but they chose to translate "shabath" as "rest" in Genesis 2:2-3 because of certain specific biases, as we will see shortly, even though they ELSEWHERE correctly translated "shabath" as "ceased".

The point to understand is that in Genesis 2:2-3 God was not speaking about what WE understand by "RESTING"! Rather, God was focussing on "STOPPING WHAT HE HAD BEEN DOING FOR THE PREVIOUS SIX DAYS"! That is why it twice uses the expression "FROM ALL HIS WORK". The focus is that God was "ceasing from work" rather than "resting from work". I do not mean to imply that God did not "rest", because later, in Exodus 20:11, God tells us very plainly that He DID "rest" (and there the verb

used is "nuwach"). But the original focus in Genesis 2 is on "stopping what God had been doing", rather than on "resting".

On that first Sabbath God had ceased doing His creative work and He also "rested", possibly even in the presence of Adam and Eve, to set them an example? The "resting" God did in their presence would no doubt also have involved TEACHING AND INSTRUCTING THEM in how God wanted them to conduct their lives, what He expected from them, answering their questions, etc.. The focus in Genesis 2 is on God "stopping certain specific activities", and later, in Exodus 20:11, God brings into the picture the ADDED FOCUS of God having "rested".

God does not "get tired" and God does not "rest" the way we human beings think of "rest". "Rest" is something that applies specifically to the physical realm, but it does not really apply to God. As Isaiah 40:28 tells us:

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, [that] the everlasting God, the LORD, THE CREATOR of the ends of the earth, FAINTETH NOT, NEITHER IS WEARY? [there is] no searching of his understanding. (Isaiah 40:28 AV)

This brings us to a question:

If the meaning of the Hebrew verb "shabath" is really so clear from many other passages, WHY is this verb almost universally translated as "REST" in Genesis 2:2-3? Is there a reason for this mistranslation?

Yes, there is! This is where our "detective work" continues.

UNDERSTAND WHERE BIBLE TRANSLATORS ARE "COMING FROM"

Around 250 AD the Catholic scholar Origen produced "the Greek language Septuagint Version", (LXX) as we know it today, of the Old Testament. It was based on the Alexandrian minority text base. This LXX became a part of the foundation for all other translations that followed.

Another 150 years later, around 400 AD, the Catholic scholar Jerome compiled "the Latin language Vulgate Version" of the whole Bible. Jerome relied heavily on Origen's LXX translation in putting the Vulgate translation together.

FOR OVER 1000 YEARS THE VULGATE REIGNED SUPREME!

It was the only version of the Bible that was available anywhere in Europe. When John Wycliffe made his English language translation of the Bible in about 1380 AD, he did so using the Latin Vulgate as his source document. The profound effect of the Latin Vulgate Version of the Bible on the thinking of all educated men during those more than 1000 years can hardly be overstated. The accuracy of the text of the Vulgate was simply not questioned by anyone! Yet it contains very many flaws when compared to the Old Testament Hebrew text and to the New Testament Greek text of the Antiochian majority text base.

All of the early translators of the Bible either used the Latin Vulgate directly as their source document, or else they relied very heavily on the Vulgate translation even when they did use other source manuscripts. The first Bible ever printed (the Johan Gutenberg Bible) was a Latin Vulgate version. Martin Luther relied very heavily on the Vulgate for his German translation of the Bible. The translators of the KJV, while using the Hebrew text for the Old Testament and Erasmus' Greek text for the New Testament for their translation, also used the Greek LXX and the Latin Vulgate in numerous places. Even in the

"PREFACE TO THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION" it is stated:

"The Septuagint (Greek) Version of the Old Testament and the Latin Vulgate also were consulted."

The point is simply this:

By the time of the reformation (around 1500 AD) Latin was the language of the Catholic Church and of educated men. All of the translators of the Bible were far more conversant with Latin than they were with Greek or with Hebrew. The Latin Vulgate version was the Bible they all knew well. They were comfortable with the text of the Vulgate. It was only natural for them to heavily rely on this Latin text in preparing their translations into the vernacular languages (English, German, etc.).

We need to be aware of these things because in many instances errors in translation can be traced back either to the Latin Vulgate version, or even directly to the Greek LXX version of the Old Testament.

Now we are ready to examine the mistranslation of "shabath" as "rested" in Genesis 2:2-3.

THE HISTORICAL TRAIL OF "GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY"

We saw that almost all English language translations render "shabath" in Genesis 2:2-3 as "God RESTED on the seventh day". This is in spite of the same translations elsewhere freely translating "shabath" as "CEASED". Their past training had biased them in favour of the verb "rested" for Genesis 2:2-3. For the Hebrew verb "shabath" the English word "rested" is NOT really "a translation"; "rested" is really an INTERPRETATION (and a biased one at that) of the Hebrew verb "shabath".

So let's now look at the Latin Vulgate text for these verses:

conplevitque Deus die septimo opus suum quod fecerat ET REQUIEVIT DIE SEPTIMO ab universo opere quod patrarat et benedixit diei septimo et sanctificavit illum quia IN IPSO CESSAVERAT AB OMNI OPERE SUO quod creavit Deus ut faceret (Genesis 2:2-3 VULGATE)

There are two expressions in these verses we should notice.

The expression "et requievit die septimo" in verse 2 means "and RESTED on the seventh day", "requiesco" being the Latin verb "to rest".

The expression "in ipso cessaverat ab omni opere suo" in verse 3 means "in it HE HAD CEASED from all his work", "cesso" being the Latin verb for "to stop, to cease".

So while Jerome rendered the Hebrew verb "shabath" in Genesis 2:2 as "God RESTED", he rendered the same verb "shabath" as "God CEASED" in the next verse. Within the space of two verses Jerome translated the one Hebrew verb (shabath) by two different Latin verbs (requievit and cessaverat).

THIS USE OF "REQUIEVIT" BY JEROME IS THE SOURCE OF ALL TRANSLATIONS SAYING THAT GOD "RESTED" ON THE SEVENTH DAY!

But we saw that the English language translation of the LXX also correctly translates Genesis 2:2-3 as "God CEASED ...". So let's now look at the LXX for these verses. This is what Jerome would also have

looked at when he made his Vulgate translation.

kai sunetelesen ho theos en te hemera te ekte ta erga autou ha epoiesen kai KATEPAUSEN te hemera te ebdome apo panton ton ergon autou on epoiesen. kai eulogesen ho theos ten hemeran ten ebdomen kai egiasen auten hoti en aute KATEPAUSEN apo panton ton ergon autou on erxato ho theos poiesai. (Genesis 2:2-3 LXX transliterated)

You don't have to know any Greek to understand this. The Greek verb for "stop" and "cease" is "pauo". Biblical Greek employs 18 prepositions to modify the meanings of words. These prepositions are added as prefixes to words. So the basic verb "pauo" has been used to form two other verbs by using the prefixes "ana" meaning "up", and its opposite "kata" meaning "down".

This gives us the Greek verbs "ANAPAUO" and "KATAPAUO", and the nouns "ANAPAUSIS" and "KATAPAUSIS". Now since the prefixes "ana" and "kata" are OPPOSITES, it should be clear that "anapauo" and "katapauo" don't really mean the same thing, even if some dictionaries may assign the same meanings to these two words.

"Katapausis" is the Greek word for "cessation" or "ending". "Anapausis" is the Greek word for "rest" or "repose". The positive meaning of "rest" with its implication of peace and tranquillity is conveyed by the addition of the prefix "ana". The word "cessation" is more likely, though by no means always, to carry a negative meaning, and it is conveyed by the addition of the prefix "kata". Bear in mind that the basic verb "pauo" inherently means "cease" ... it is only by the uplifting effect of the prefix "ana" that this is elevated to the state of "rest".

In the above transliterated LXX text we twice have the Greek word "KATEPAUSEN", a form of the verb "katapauo". So the LXX translation quite clearly states twice in Genesis 2:2-3 that God "CEASED FROM HIS WORK". The LXX does NOT say that "God rested from His work".

There is a clear reason why Origen's LXX had to use the verb "katapausen" rather than the verb "anapausen" for Genesis 2:2-3. And the reason is that this verse happens to be quoted in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote in Hebrews 4:4:

For he spake in a certain place of the seventh [day] on this wise, AND GOD DID REST the seventh day from all his works. (Hebrews 4:4 AV)

The Greek text here reads: "... kai KATEPAUSEN ho theos ..."!

It is because Paul wrote in Hebrews 4:4 (correctly translated) "... AND GOD DID CEASE THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORK" that the Greek LXX Old Testament had to also translate the Hebrew verb "shabath" in Genesis 2:2-3 as "katapausen" rather than as "anepausen". When Paul had already translated the verb "shabath" as "katapausen" into Greek, it really left Origen no option but to do likewise.

[Comment: It should be clear that the New Testament English translations of Hebrews 4:4 which state "... and God did REST ..." are also mistranslations! Instead of actually TRANSLATING the Greek verb Paul used in Hebrews 4:4, they have simply COPIED their own mistranslations of Genesis 2:2, thereby reading the meaning of "rest" into the Greek verb "katapauo". Having already mistranslated Genesis 2:2, it should be obvious that there was no way for them to then correctly translate Hebrews 4:4. It is interesting that even Young in his YLT mistranslates Hebrews 4:4 as "... and God did REST in the seventh day ...", even after correctly translating Genesis 2:2-3. It just shows how strong a hold ideas that

we have accepted since childhood can have. Furthermore, no doubt ALL TRANSLATORS have been heavily influenced by the Jewish error of ascribing the meaning of "rest" to the verb "shabath" ... ascribing the meanings of the verbs "nuwach" and "shaqat" and "sha'an" to the verb "shabath". You would expect the Jews to at least have the meanings of the words in their own language correct ... but unfortunately that isn't always the case. Also, the Jewish scholars of 1900 years ago, the "tannaim", deliberately changed the meaning of many Hebrew words, to fit in with their own unbiblical traditions.]

Paul's quotation of Genesis 2:2 makes quite clear that it is wrong to translate "shabath" as "rest". Paul's rendering of "shabath" as "KATEpausen" in Hebrews 4:4 makes quite clear that the meaning is "cease" and not "rest".

Okay, so we have established that back in Genesis 2:2-3 the Bible does NOT say "... and God RESTED on the seventh day from all His work" (though it does refer to God "resting" later in Exodus 20:11). The Bible really says in Genesis 2:2-3 "and God CEASED on the seventh day from all His work". And the Apostle Paul confirmed this meaning when he quoted this verse in Hebrews 4:4. But is that really a big deal, whether Genesis 2:2-3 says that "God RESTED" or whether it says that "God CEASED" from His work?

Yes, it certainly is an important fact to understand.

Here is why.

MAKING THE SABBATH A BURDEN

Changing the meaning of the verb "shabath" to basically take on the meanings of the verbs "nuwach" and "shaqat" and "sha'an" enabled the Pharisees to turn the Sabbath into a burden! This might not be apparent at first sight, because surely those words all mean things that are very desirable ... rest, peace, calm and tranquillity. And yes, these words DO mean all these desirable things. But they also all go further than the verb "shabath".

Consider the following.

It was always God's intention that the Sabbath would be "A DELIGHT" for us human beings. And a part of that "delight" would be our opportunity to "rest" as well as "ceasing from our work activities". "Ceasing from certain activities" applies to THE WHOLE SABBATH DAY! "Resting" is one of the consequences of ceasing from those activities, but resting is not intended for the "whole" Sabbath. When you travel to church services, you are not "resting"; when you diligently pay attention to the sermon, you are also not "resting"; when you spend time in prayer and in Bible study you are again not "resting"; when you FALL ASLEEP during the sermon you would indeed be "resting", but almost all of us would deem such "rest" during a sermon as highly undesirable.

Notice Isaiah 58:13:

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, [from] doing thy pleasure on my holy day; AND CALL THE SABBATH A DELIGHT, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking [thine own] words: (Isaiah 58:13 AV)

It is not a matter of God FORCING us to say that the Sabbath is a pleasant delight for us; it is a decision that God wants us ourselves to reach with our own free minds, BECAUSE THAT IS THE WAY THE SABBATH REALLY IS FOR US!

It is, however, a fact that the more restrictive something is, the less pleasant it is going to be for us. It is one thing to totally cease from certain categories of activities on the Sabbath, thereby making more time available for other "activities".

BUT IT IS SOMETHING ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT TO ATTEMPT TO DRASTICALLY LIMIT ALL ACTIVITIES.

There is no way that the latter situation would ever be perceived by us as "a pleasant delight"! We might "endure it", we might "tough it out", but we would never call something like that "a delight".

But the insistence by the Pharisees that "shabath" means "to REST" and that therefore the Sabbath day is to be "a REST day" is the justification for attempting to enforce "a total REST".

Now it is easy to SAY the right things. It is easy to wax eloquent about how good it is to have the Sabbath to get away from the pressures and stresses of our regular lives. But the bottom line still is that many times we can't really wait for the sun to go down on a Saturday evening, so we can do something we really WANT to do. And I am not saying that most of us don't genuinely appreciate the rest and retreat which the Sabbath day provides for us. But obviously, on those occasions where we can hardly wait for the sun to go down at the end of the Sabbath, on those occasions we hardly perceive the Sabbath as a delight, or we wouldn't want to get it over with in such a hurry.

Jesus Christ plainly said that the Pharisees turned God's way of life into A BURDEN for ordinary people, while devising ways in which they could get around the restrictions they officially pronounced for other people to abide by. Notice:

And he said, Woe unto you also, [ye] lawyers! for YE LADE MEN WITH BURDENS grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. (Luke 11:46 AV)

For THEY BIND HEAVY BURDENS and grievous to be borne, and lay [them] on men's shoulders; but they [themselves] will not move them with one of their fingers. (Matthew 23:4 AV)

The extreme restrictions the Pharisees invented for Sabbath observance made the Sabbath a burden rather than a joy. Thus:

- If your grown children lived more than "a Sabbath day's journey" (about half a mile) away from you (e.g. perhaps a mile down the road), then you couldn't get together with them on the Sabbath, a burden that took away from enjoying the Sabbath as a family.

- When you had to constantly worry about not carrying more than the weight of "half a dried fig" on the Sabbath, then that was a burden which also took away from enjoying the Sabbath.

- When you could not even write down a single word without supposedly breaking the Sabbath, then that too was a burden which detracted from enjoying the Sabbath. It means that you could never take notes during a sermon!

- When you, while walking through some fields, could not even eat a handful of the ripe produce in the fields (be it a few ears of grain or be it taking three tomatoes off the vine or plucking a couple of apples for yourself and your children to eat), then that was a burden which again detracted from enjoying the Sabbath.

- When, in the event that your home was burning down on the Sabbath, you could not even carry out

your belongings to save them from being burned up, then that was a severe burden.

Here is a section of the Talmud that explains some of these Jewish Sabbath restrictions:

It was taught: Two letters in ink, two letters on a pen, or two letters in an inkstand [involve culpability].¹ Raba asked: What [if one carries out sufficient for] one letter [in the form of] dry ink, one letter on the pen, and one letter in an inkstand?² The question stands over.

Raba said: If one carries out [ink sufficient for writing] two letters, and writes them whilst walking, he is culpable: the writing is tantamount to depositing.³ Raba also said: If one carries out [ink sufficient for writing] one letter [only] and writes it down, and then again carries out [sufficient for] one letter, and writes it down,⁴ he is not culpable. What is the reason? By the time he carries out the second, the standard of the first is defective.⁵ (Talmud - Mas. Shabbath 80a)

Surely this quotation makes clear just how much of a BURDEN the Pharisees made the Sabbath, when people constantly had to worry about complying with endless picky restrictions? There is no room for "enjoyment" when the Sabbath (supposedly) imposes all these picky restrictions.

Here is another quotation from the Talmud.

Raba also said: If one carries out half a dried fig and deposits it,⁶ and then carries out another half of a dried fig and deposits it,⁷ the first is regarded as though caught by a dog or burnt, and he is not culpable. But why so: surely it is lying there! — He means this: But if one anticipates and takes up the first before the depositing of the second, the first is regarded as though caught up by a dog or burnt,⁸ and he is not culpable. Raba also said: If one carries out half of a dried fig and deposits it and then carries out another half of a dried fig over the same route as the first,⁹ he is liable. But why: surely it does not rest [in the street]? E.g., if he carries it within three [handbreadths].¹⁰ But Raba said: [An article brought] within three [handbreadths] must, according to the Rabbis, be deposited upon something of small size [at least]?¹¹ — There is no difficulty. The latter reference is to throwing;¹² the former is to carrying.¹³ (same section as above)

How can the Sabbath possibly be "enjoyable" when one has to worry about these sorts of restrictions? Or how about the following quotation?

MISHNAH. THE CARRYINGS OUT¹ OF THE SABBATH² ARE TWO WHICH ARE FOUR WITHIN, AND TWO WHICH ARE FOUR WITHOUT.³ HOW SO? THE POOR MAN STANDS WITHOUT AND THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE WITHIN: [i] IF THE POOR MAN STRETCHES HIS HAND WITHIN AND PLACES [AN ARTICLE] INTO THE HAND OF THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE, OR [ii] IF HE TAKES [AN ARTICLE] FROM IT AND CARRIES IT OUT, THE POOR MAN IS LIABLE,⁴ AND THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE IS EXEMPT.⁵ [AGAIN] [i] IF THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE STRETCHES HIS HAND WITHOUT AND PLACES [AN OBJECT] IN THE POOR MAN'S HAND, OR [ii] TAKES [AN OBJECT] THEREFROM AND CARRIES IT IN, THE MASTER IS LIABLE, WHILE THE POOR MAN IS EXEMPT.⁶ [iii] IF THE POOR MAN STRETCHES HIS HAND WITHIN AND THE MASTER TAKES [AN OBJECT] FROM IT, OR PLACES [AN OBJECT] THEREIN AND HE CARRIES IT OUT, BOTH ARE EXEMPT; [iv] IF THE MASTER STRETCHES HIS HAND WITHOUT AND THE POOR MAN TAKES [AN OBJECT] FROM IT, OR PLACES [AN ARTICLE] THEREIN AND HE CARRIES IT INSIDE, BOTH ARE EXEMPT.⁷ (the Talmud's own emphasis; Talmud - Mas. Shabbath 2a, C H A P T E R I)

Do these kinds of restrictions make the Sabbath a joy or a burden? When you have to worry about someone passing you some object before you walk out of the house on the Sabbath, does that make the Sabbath a joy or a burden? Surely we can see that this is nothing but endless bickering and arguing.

I could probably pull 30 pages of such restrictive regulations about the Sabbath out of the Talmud, if I had to. But surely we can see that the Pharisees made the Sabbath a burden TO THE EXTREME! And they did this because they applied a wrong meaning to the verb "shabath", a meaning that really belongs to other verbs like "nuwach" and "shaqat", by claiming that the Sabbath requires "TOTAL REST" rather than cessation of specific activities.

So the mistranslation of Genesis 2:2-3 that God "RESTED" from all His works can have serious consequences. By God only using the verb "rested" (i.e. "nuwach") in Exodus 20:11 (an event more than 2000 years after the events in Genesis 2) it places the "resting" into a far more balanced perspective.

Now we in God's Church have always understood, almost intuitively, that all these pharisaical Sabbath-restrictions are a lot of nonsense, and so we have never taken those restrictions seriously, let alone looked upon them as binding. Yet those wrong restrictions are based on mistranslating "shabath" in Genesis 2:2-3 as "RESTED", making resting the primary focus of the Sabbath when it really should be a secondary focus; the primary focus of "STOP WORKING" still leaves scope for numerous enjoyable "ACTIVITIES" like walking through a pleasant park, plucking ripe fruit off a tree for immediate consumption, going to church services at a considerable distance from our homes, engaging in serious Bible study, taking careful notes in a church service, etc..

So ... how should we then keep the Sabbath?

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

REMEMBER the sabbath day, to keep it holy. (Exodus 20:8)

God instructs us "TO BRING TO MIND" the day of "stopping certain activities". This is an obvious reference back to Genesis 2:2-3, where God had stopped from doing His work of re-creation. So first and foremost the commandment focusses our attention back to what GOD had done in Genesis 2:2-3. And, as we have seen, there God had "STOPPED WORKING". At that point, in Genesis 2, God had not yet mentioned anything about "resting".

God had intentionally set this seventh day apart from the other six days of the week by not doing the things He had been doing on the six preceding days. For those six days God had been involved in the work of re-creating life on this earth, to make this earth suitable for human habitation.

The commandment continues:

Six days SHALT THOU LABOUR, and DO all thy work: (Exodus 20:9)

This verse sums up ALL THE ACTIVITIES with which we may typically be involved in the course of our everyday lives. The emphasis in this verse is on doing things, on being active. The expression "all your work" refers to "all our business" and shows that the focus of all the activities being spoken about here is our work and our typical responsibilities and duties, and our preferred activities (including sports, hobbies, academic pursuits, entertainment, etc.).

The next verse introduces a contrast:

But the seventh day [is] the sabbath of the LORD thy God: [in it] THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that [is] within thy gates: (Exodus 20:10)

This defines the Sabbath day to be the SEVENTH day of the week. This verse also tells us WHAT we are to "stop doing"! This verse shows that God equates the word "Sabbath" with: DON'T DO ANY "WORK"!

The word "work" (Hebrew "malakah") means our "work" in a more general sense, including basically all our activities and endeavours. That is also conveyed by the added word "any" (Hebrew "kol") in the expression "you shall not do ANY work"; and this instruction applies to everyone we are responsible for.

However, God did NOT choose to here define exactly what constitutes "work". The Hebrew word for "work" ("malakah") comes from the same root as the Hebrew word for "angel" and "messenger" (i.e. "malak"), showing that angels and messengers are "workers" as far as God is concerned. Messengers don't necessarily expend a great deal of energy, though they sometimes could be doing that as well. So "work" also includes activities that require hardly any expenditure of energy at all. For some people "work" might be "sitting on a chair all day and talking to a few people", while other people might perform very heavy physical labour. Both are "work".

But here is the point we need to understand!

God intentionally did not spell out in any detail exactly what constitutes "WORK", as He has used the word "work" here. Where the Jewish teachings about the Sabbath focussed on avoiding 39 specific "labours" (i.e. the Talmud teaches that ..."the primary labours are forty less one"), GOD Himself did not spell out any kind of list of "labours to avoid" at all! God simply stated the principle in Exodus 20:10.

Why did God do it this way? It would have been far, far easier for us human beings if God had spelled out in a list, perhaps somewhat similar to the way the Pharisees did, but in a more balanced way, the things we are to avoid doing on the Sabbath and the activities in which we may in good conscience engage on the Sabbath. But God didn't give us any kind of "lists". Why didn't He?

Let's understand this clearly.

The Sabbath is a "test" command in more ways than one. First of all, once we become aware of God's instruction for us to observe His Sabbath days, it tests us as to whether or not we will OBEY God in this regard. So in the first instance the Sabbath is a test of obedience to God.

But it goes much further than that.

By only giving us the instructions for observing the seventh day in the form of a principle, God ALSO tests our hearts and our attitudes! God in effect says: "I have told you clearly WHICH day of the week you are to observe, and I have told you IN PRINCIPLE the things I want you to 'cease doing'. Now I want to see how YOU will apply the principle I have given you because THAT will show Me 'the thoughts and intentions of YOUR heart'."

The statement "don't do any work" is a far, far more effective test of our integrity and character than saying "here are 39 (or 50 or 200?) activities that you are to avoid on the Sabbath". The formation of right character can only take place when we use OUR MINDS! Rote compliance with avoiding a list of 39 (or 50 or 200?) activities does not really involve us using our minds and making decisions, and such rote

compliance will not result in godly character being formed in us; otherwise the Pharisees should also have had godly character. But when we are given the instruction "don't do any work", THEN we have to use our minds in applying that statement to EVERY situation and activity that may arise on the Sabbath; and HOW we apply our minds and the decisions we reach and implement will reveal our integrity and our character to God. And THAT is what God wants to learn about us, what sort of character do we REALLY have?

And towards THAT end the Sabbath commandment is a far greater tool than any of the other nine commandments. The other nine commandments provide far more readily discernible limits (e.g. don't kill or steal or lie or commit adultery, etc.) and also the average human mind will generally acknowledge the validity of these commandments (e.g. Paul said: "the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law", Romans 2:14) far more readily than it will acknowledge the Sabbath commandment (e.g. it will argue: what difference does it make which day we keep as long as it is one day in seven?).

So the Sabbath is most assuredly not an end in itself! And there will be no Sabbath-keeping once there are no more physical human beings around. The Sabbath was made FOR MORTAL MAN, see Mark 2:27. But the Sabbath is a very powerful tool in testing our conversion and our commitment to God in TWO ways:

- 1) It tests whether or not we are willing to obey God.
- 2) It tests our attitude and our desire to think like God, by how we interpret and then apply the statement of principle that God has given us in "don't do any work". It tests our desire for wanting to PLEASE GOD (see 1 John 3:22), or alternatively a desire to interpret this principle in OUR favour to enable us to get away with doing many of the things we would really like to do.

We need to recognize that of all the people in this world who "keep" a Saturday-Sabbath VERY MANY never progress beyond the first of these two points! There is no desire to SEEK OUT the mind of God and to come to a constantly clearer and fuller understanding and application of this principle in Exodus 20:10. The mind-set of such people is really not very much different from very many people in this world who keep Sunday as their day, except for keeping a different day.

Now please understand this!

What God is REALLY looking for in you and in me is how we apply the second of the above two points!

People who only get as far as applying the first of the above two points are NOT necessarily on the road to salvation! The Pharisees got as far as the first point, and Jesus Christ called them "the children of gehenna" in Matthew 23:15. They were certainly not on the road to salvation, even though they kept the Sabbath as far as the first of the above two points is concerned. And likewise, many Sabbath-keepers in this world today are as yet NOT on the road to salvation, even though they are applying the first point.

Applying only the first of the above two points may in fact not really be "OBEDIENCE" to God! It is only when we apply the second of the above two points that we are REALLY OBEYING GOD!

Let me try to make this really plain:

It is quite possible for people in this world to meet the first of the above two points (i.e. to keep a Saturday-Sabbath) and STILL have a mind that is carnal and hostile to God! Romans 8:7 ALSO applies to many Sabbath-keepers who never progress beyond the first of these two points. This was certainly

true for the Pharisees. Simply keeping the Sabbath is no proof of whole-hearted submission to God at all, if that Sabbath-keeping never progresses beyond the first of the above two points. It is exactly the same as many people who never kill or commit adultery still having minds that are carnal and hostile to God.

Put another way: there are Sabbath-keepers and there are Sabbath-keepers; one group has willingly and eagerly submitted their minds to God and is constantly seeking to understand God's mind and God's intentions more fully (i.e. seeking to grow in grace and in knowledge, 2 Peter 3:18), while the other group is still totally carnal and unconverted.

We need to understand that there are some Sabbath-keepers who have NOT submitted their lives to God! And such people are NOT on the road to salvation. God is not looking for people who keep a particular day; God is really looking for people who have submitted their minds unconditionally to His will, who have the faith that His will is the best course of action in every possible circumstance, and their observance of the Sabbath and their desire to keep the Sabbath as God would like us to keep it is only one of many outward manifestations that they have submitted their lives to God.

For example:

Earlier I mentioned that the expression "in it you shall not do any work" INCLUDES "our preferred activities including sports, hobbies, academic pursuits and entertainment". This is an example of how I have used MY MIND to reach this conclusion. And that conclusion is not negotiable; I have used my mind to determine that God does not really want me to be involved in sports or hobbies or academic pursuits or entertainment on His Sabbath days. Now some people may disagree with my conclusions here, and therefore they may at times engage in things like sports or hobbies or academic pursuits or entertainment on the Sabbath days, while they reason: "the Bible says we are not to work and these things I am doing are not really 'work'; so I don't see why I can't do them".

If they use their minds to reason in that manner, then that is their problem and not mine. And God in heaven will see who is using his mind to seek God's mind and God's will, and who is using his mind to justify selfish conduct. And the way in which God has stated this commandment to us results unavoidably in EXPOSING THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTS OF OUR HEARTS to God.

We need to also recognize one other thing:

BECAUSE Sabbath-keeping requires us to use our minds to make decisions based on the principle God has given us, THEREFORE it is inevitable that sooner or later all of us will make some mistakes! None of us are always going to make the right decisions in this regard. That's part of the learning process. And God knew that all of us would make some wrong decisions about "Sabbath activities". And it is very easy to know when we have made a wrong decision, isn't it?

After we have decided to do something on a Sabbath day (whatever it may be), when we IN RETROSPECT decide that in future we are NOT going to do that thing again on a Sabbath day, because of the lesson we learned from the way things turned out, THEN we are acknowledging that what we did or the way we did something was not really the best thing for the Sabbath, AND WE HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING AND WE WILL HAVE GROWN IN UNDERSTANDING!

Consider the following situation:

You go to your minister and say: "My brother or uncle or niece or close friend is getting married on the Sabbath and the wedding arrangements and the plans for the reception are as follows (or there is a funeral for ...) ... so can I attend or not? What should I do?" Your minister then responds with a "yea" or a

"nay", and you abide by what he told you. What has happened in this instance? The very fact that you went to your minister with this question in most cases shows that you yourself had at least SOME RESERVATIONS about attending this activity, yet you avoided making that decision yourself. Instead you looked to someone else to make that decision for you. (A variation of this scenario is that you slant the information you give your minister in such a way that his approval is almost assured, and in this way you are able to suppress your own reservations by reasoning: "Well, the minister said it is okay".) So you yourself developed no character at all in the whole process, because you did not use your own mind to reach a conclusion and then to act on it. And because you didn't build any character and you didn't use the opportunity to form your own convictions, therefore the chances are that next time you will again look to your minister to make a decision for you. And you will not have "grown" in the process.

[Comment: In all fairness, here a lot of the blame in this matter lies with us, the ministry, because we taught people to look to us for almost every decision in their lives. It is no wonder people were afraid to make any decisions on their own. That was a terrible mistake we made, because the people who came to us for making the decisions in their lives were deprived of, collectively, countless opportunities to develop some godly character by using their own minds to "rightly divide the word of truth"; see 2 Timothy 2:15. Perhaps this lack in not having made their own decisions for so long is at the root of so many people in recent years making many really BAD decisions regarding the Sabbath specifically, and regarding obedience to God in general?]

Now perhaps your minister in the above scenario was wise and he turned your question right back to you by saying: "Well, what do YOU think you should do?" And if you tried to avoid committing yourself by saying something like: "Oh, I just want to obey God", perhaps he finally said: "Well, do you yourself have ANY opinion at all, because if you yourself really have no opinion of any kind at all, THEN you should probably NOT get involved in the activity! You see, you should NEVER engage in any activity on the Sabbath which you yourself don't fully believe is appropriate for the Sabbath ... that's the principle of Romans 14:23. It is NOT a matter that any activity that is not directly legislated against is okay; it should really be the opposite, that only those activities we feel TOTALLY COMFORTABLE WITH DOING on the Sabbath are okay. Unless we ourselves are 100% comfortable with doing something on the Sabbath, we should NEVER get involved with it, except for perhaps 'ox in the ditch' situations."

When we have to use our own minds to correctly apply the principle of Exodus 20:10, then there is no easy way out, there is no "written in stone" list of things we may or may not do on the Sabbath (apart from the obvious things like not working at our jobs, etc.). What God really expects from us is that WE OURSELVES make such lists FOR OURSELVES (mentally, without necessarily ever writing them down), based on how we understand the mind of God, and based on things we have learned from some wrong decisions we have made in the past. Earlier I mentioned the example where I myself understand quite clearly that things like sports and hobbies and entertainment, etc. are ALSO things we need to "cease from doing" on the Sabbath. That forms a part of my interpretation and application of God's commandment in Exodus 20:10. I expect that many of you probably agree with me on these particular points?

Now in addition to the commandment in Exodus 20, God has also given us additional guidance by recording examples of Sabbath-keeping and by additional statements about Sabbath-keeping. Putting all of these things found throughout the Bible together gives us considerable guidance in establishing God's purposes and intentions for Sabbath-keeping. We'll look at some of those things shortly.

Let's continue with the commandment in Exodus 20.

For [in] six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them [is], and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:11

AV)

Note carefully:

In Exodus 20:9-10 God instructed us in WHAT we are to do (we are not to do any "work" on the Sabbath, such "work" is to be restricted to the other six days). And now in verse 11 God tells us THE REASON for this instruction. Verse 11 is not a direct instruction to us from God; that instruction for us is contained in Exodus 20:9-10. Here in verse 11 we now see the reason for WHY God instructs us "not to do any work".

God is by profession THE CREATOR. Creating is the "work" God does. And that is what God had done for the first six days of that particular week, He had created things!

And then God introduces a totally new concept! God then says that He "RESTED" on the Sabbath, and the Hebrew verb here used is "nuwach" which clearly means "TO REST". Nowhere in the Bible before this verse is this verb "to rest" ever applied to God or to the Sabbath day. It is a new concept that is introduced, even though almost all translators have INCORRECTLY inferred this concept of "resting" back into Genesis 2:2-3. Simply because God NOW, in Exodus 20:11, tells us that He "rested" on the Sabbath, this does NOT justify reading the meaning of the Hebrew verb "nuwach" into the Hebrew verb "shabath" that is used in Genesis 2:2-3.

So here in Exodus 20:11 God introduces the concept that A PART OF WHAT WE SHOULD DO ON THE SABBATH IS "TO REST". But "resting" is by no means the only thing we are to do on the Sabbath. But it should certainly be "a part" of our Sabbath days.

God also placed a special blessing on the Sabbath day and He "hallowed it", meaning that God SET IT APART FROM THE OTHER DAYS OF THE WEEK. God set it apart for a specific use so that it would fulfill a specific purpose. That "use" certainly includes "resting" but it also goes above and beyond mere "resting".

Let's now look at other Scriptures that shed more light on what God expects from us for the Sabbath days.

THE SABBATH IN THE BIBLE

Let's notice the time when Israel left Egypt:

And in the first day [there shall be] an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save [that] which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe [the feast of] unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. (Exodus 12:16-17 AV)

The point to notice here is this: The 15th day of the 1st month was to be a Holy Day, an annual Sabbath. They were not to do any "work" on that day. Yet God instructed them to WALK MANY MILES on that very day. The long walk which Israel started on that annual Sabbath day was hardly something that could be called "RESTING". It was in fact the opposite of "resting".

Now notice what happened at Jericho:

And ye shall compass the city, all [ye] men of war, [and] go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. (Joshua 6:3-4 AV)

For seven consecutive days all the soldiers were to march around the entire town of Jericho, and on the 7th day they were to do this seven times. It doesn't make a difference here which of those seven days was a weekly Sabbath and whether or not the 7th day was an annual Holy Day (the 7th Day of Unleavened Bread). The point is that once again God instructed Israel (in this case the soldiers and the priests) to WALK SEVERAL MILES on a Sabbath day. And some of the priests had to CARRY THE ARK for several miles on that Sabbath. Again, this is the opposite of "resting".

Notice what Jesus Christ did:

At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. (Matthew 12:1 AV)

The corn (i.e. wheat) fields were outside of the city of Jerusalem. The fact that Jesus Christ was walking through some wheat fields shows that He and His disciples must have walked a considerable distance, certainly more than "the Sabbath day's journey" which the Pharisees had devised. Very likely Jesus Christ and His disciples had spent the night at some place outside of Jerusalem and on their way to the Temple on that Sabbath morning they walked through the wheat fields, and not having eaten any breakfast yet, the disciples were hungry. Again, the "walking" did not in any way conflict with what GOD intended for the Sabbath, otherwise Jesus Christ would assuredly not have been walking at some distance outside of the city of Jerusalem on the Sabbath.

Notice what Nehemiah did:

And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: AND [SOME] OF MY SERVANTS SET I AT THE GATES, [that] there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. (Nehemiah 13:19 AV)

Here Nehemiah placed some of his soldiers at the city gates for the duration of the whole Sabbath. While the physical presence of these soldiers was enough to ensure that no merchants entered the city on the Sabbath, these soldiers were nevertheless obviously ready for action, had any merchant attempted to go against Nehemiah's instructions. And Nehemiah intended for them to be "ready for action" if need be. There is no indication that God viewed the placing of these guards as in any way violating the Sabbath. After all, the very purpose for which Nehemiah placed these guards there was to ensure that the whole city could have peace and rest from the merchants for the whole Sabbath day. It is not unlike God commanding all the soldiers to march around the city of Jericho on a weekly Sabbath as well as on the six other days of the week.

God required the priests to bring sacrifices every day of the year. Notice:

Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, AND THE DAILY BURNT OFFERING, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. (Numbers 29:6 AV)

A "burnt offering" involved a considerable amount of hard work from the officiating priest. And these offerings were to be brought "daily", including on the Sabbath. God required this work to be done on the Sabbath and yet the priests were "blameless" in this matter.

When Jesus Christ healed sick people on the Sabbath days, He did so by speaking (e.g. rise up and walk, be you made whole, etc.). And on one occasion He spat on the ground and made a very small quantity of mud which He then rubbed onto the eyes of a blind man and then He spoke to the blind man (John 9:6-7). None of these healings had anything to do with "the work" that GOD was speaking about in Exodus 20:10, when God had said: "in it you shall not do any work". Those healings were no more "work" in the eyes of God than it is "work" when you write down some notes during a church service.

Let's now look at the well-known statement in Isaiah 58:13-14.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, [from] doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking [thine own] words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it]. (Isaiah 58:13-14 AV)

This is probably the clearest exposition in the Bible of the principles that apply to the Sabbath. So let's notice the following things:

- 1) Wrong conduct is a way of trampling on God's Sabbath with our feet.
- 2) God wants us, voluntarily, to see the Sabbath as "A DELIGHT" and as honourable.
- 3) We are not to do OUR OWN ways. In the Hebrew this refers to us not going on our own roads, in our own direction, seeking the things on which we prefer to spend our time.
- 4) We are not to find OUR OWN pleasure, meaning the things about which WE get excited. For most of us this would include sports and hobbies and entertainment.
- 5) We are not to speak OUR OWN words. This refers to not speaking about our own business affairs and things pertaining to our own occupation and our own interests.
- 6) We are to delight ourselves in God, focussing our minds on God's instructions and intentions, and on God's Word.
- 7) If we follow these instructions in our Sabbath-observance, then God in turn will bless us and take care of us.

In these two verses God has expounded and expanded on the instruction of Exodus 20:10, that we are not to do any work. Isaiah 58:13-14 makes quite clear that God's INTENT with the Sabbath commandment is that we exercise some control over OUR MINDS, as well as over our actions and conduct. The expression "ANY WORK" has been expanded to include: OUR ways and OUR pleasures and OUR words. And that is WHY people who only go as far as the first of the two points I mentioned earlier (i.e. they only go as far as keeping the right day) are still not really obeying God. They may be obeying the letter of the law, but they still fall short of obeying GOD'S INTENT for this law.

It is only when we consciously and earnestly apply our minds to examining our own "ways and pleasures

and words" that we are really obeying the Sabbath command. Only then are we applying the second of the two points I mentioned earlier. It is with our minds that we need to examine our conduct on the Sabbath; and when we do that, we'll every now and then find that something didn't work out the way we thought it would work out, and therefore we resolve to in future handle that type of situation in a different way.

And Sabbath-keeping will become a growth process, a growth in discernment and understanding and a growth in character.

So in practical terms, what should our Sabbath-keeping look like?

PRACTICAL SABBATH-KEEPING

Here is a summary of the main points about the Sabbath:

- 1) The first and foremost point is that we STOP DOING the things we do on the other six days, both professionally and in our leisure pursuits (unless you are a full-time minister and your "leisure pursuits" revolve around a study of the Word of God).
- 2) We should plan to have SOME TIME available for "resting". That need not be (in fact, should not be) the full 24 hours of the Sabbath, but there should be time for SOME rest.
- 3) We should also set aside SOME extra time for personal prayer and Bible study.
- 4) If we are in a position to meet with brethren for church services, then that should ALWAYS be a fixed part of our Sabbath observance. Towards this end the Apostle Paul wrote that we are "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25). Obviously, if we live far from any location where a group of God's people meets, or if we are temporarily travelling in an area where there are no congregations of God's people, then that is a limiting factor in this regard.
- 5) We also need to EXERCISE SOME CONTROL OVER OUR MINDS, examining what constitutes "OUR OWN ways and pleasures and words". This is really tantamount to building a measure of restraint regarding the things we might "naturally" be inclined to do, if it were our own free time. We might not have thought of it this way, but Sabbath-keeping requires us to apply 2 Corinthians 10:5 very specifically:

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and BRINGING INTO CAPTIVITY EVERY THOUGHT to the obedience of Christ; (2 Corinthians 10:5 AV)

Sabbath-keeping, as the teaching and training tool that God intended it to be, requires us to examine our own thoughts and words and deeds, and to bring into captivity those that are not appropriate for the Sabbath.

- 6) And we should specifically focus on trying to understand God and His mind and His ways more fully. As we read in the Book of Jeremiah:

But let him that glorieth GLORY IN THIS, THAT HE UNDERSTANDETH AND KNOWETH ME, that I [am] the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these [things] I delight, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:24 AV)

The Sabbath is a great tool for coming to understand God more fully. We can learn a great deal about God by comparing His ways with our ways, His thoughts with our thoughts, His pleasures with our pleasures.

7) When we understand that God designed the Sabbath to be a delight for us, we should immediately recognize that there is an enormous difference between "thoughts and words and deeds" that are not appropriate for the Sabbath on the one hand, and "picky human rules designed to limit or contain our actions (while totally ignoring our thoughts!)" on the other hand. There is not even the slightest similarity between the pharisaical rules about the Sabbath and God's instructions and intentions for the Sabbath. In fact, the pharisaical Sabbath rules **TOTALLY RUIN AND DESTROY** what God intended the Sabbath to be!

It is not the action, but the reason and the motivation for the action that is really important before God! Thus: the Sabbath is not the time for you to go and slaughter your cow, but a levitical priest at the Temple in Old Testament times could certainly have done that; the Sabbath is not the time for you to move all your excess clothing and furniture into your garage, **BUT** if your house was on fire, then you could most certainly move as many of your belongings as possible out of your house to a safe area; the Sabbath is not the time to work on your car, **BUT** if on the way to church services you have a flat tyre, then it is perfectly acceptable for you to immediately change the flat tyre; the Sabbath is not the time to work on the plumbing of your house, **BUT** if a washer in one of the taps in your house suddenly bursts on a Saturday morning (as has happened to me one time), then it is perfectly acceptable to take the 5 minutes or so to replace the faulty washer; the Sabbath is not the time to do your weekly grocery shopping, **BUT** if on the way to services you run out of petrol (i.e. gas), then by all means purchase some petrol so you can get to services and not spend the rest of the Sabbath stranded on some highway; etc..

And in the process of making such decisions we'll probably make some that we later regret. If we learn from that experience and avoid making the same mistake again, then we are growing.

8) Regarding food for the Sabbath: If there are some things we can prepare before the Sabbath, then we should certainly do that. The motivation is to as far as possible minimize the efforts in food preparation that will be required on the Sabbath. It is not that there is no food preparation of any kind on the Sabbath; it is that we have as far as possible minimized such activity. So as far as food items that require an elaborate preparation are concerned: we either prepare such elaborate items before the Sabbath or we restrict ourselves to items that are simpler to prepare and we forego having such elaborate items on the Sabbath. How we plan ahead for the Sabbath reveals our attitude towards the Sabbath and its observance.

9) Regarding shopping for food on the Sabbath: If we respect the Sabbath enough to think ahead for all our possible needs, then we should never be caught without any food item in the house that we feel we absolutely need. In most cases if we find we lack some item, we should just plan the rest of our meals without that item being needed. I believe it is a lack of respect for God if we run to the shops for every little item (e.g. milk or sugar or coffee or eggs or bread, etc.) that we suddenly find we are short of. I also don't believe it is appropriate to shop for a newspaper or magazine on the Sabbath, with the reasoning: "well, we are told to keep up with what's happening in the world" ... when 95% of that newspaper or magazine is advertising and entertainment and gossip and business matters and sensationalism. Such mickey-mouse items (sugar, coffee, bread, milk, cream, a newspaper, etc.) are far from being something we really "need" on the Sabbath, and we are not about to suffer in any way because we didn't get that item. On the other hand, if you find you absolutely need something for an infant or for a sick member of the family, even if this need arose through a lack of planning ahead, then go ahead and get this item ... **BUT LEARN THE LESSON!** In future be prepared. **THINK** on a Friday about what items you might absolutely **NEED** to have in the house on the following day, and then get them on the Friday.

10) Regarding eating-out on the Sabbath: People are often divided into two camps on this question: those who are against any eating out on the Sabbath and those who approve of eating out.

We ourselves have never eaten out on a Friday evening (apart from when we are travelling and away from our own home) except for one or two occasions when a visiting senior minister invited us out because he didn't want us to always go to the extra work of entertaining him. For our personal circumstances I have never seen a need or a reason to go out on a Friday evening.

Likewise, apart from when we are travelling, we have also never gone out for breakfast or for lunch on a Saturday, except perhaps once or twice with the same visiting senior minister. Again, for our personal circumstances I have never seen a need or a reason for eating out on a Saturday morning or lunch time.

Does this mean that I believe that it is wrong to eat out on the Sabbath?

Not at all!

Can people overdo the matter of going out to eat on the Sabbath? Probably. Is the Sabbath eating-out a major form of entertainment for some people? Probably. Is eating out on the Sabbath for other people simply something that is "convenient"? Probably. Can eating out sometimes actually detract from proper Sabbath observance? Probably.

But here is the point to consider:

People in God's Church find themselves in a vast range of different circumstances. What is right and acceptable for one family may not be suitable at all for another family. Differences in circumstances can be enormous.

One family may consist of only two adults, while another family may have 8 children under the age of 20 years. One family may be financially very well off and able to afford frequent eating out, while another family is heavily in debt and barely able to make ends meet. One family may live in close proximity to a very pleasant eating-out location, in the country and away from traffic with plenty of privacy for each table and very discreet background music, while another family has the option of either eating out at some loud, cheap, smoke-filled, crammed place with the constant din of city traffic drowning out most conversations or no place at all. In one family the wife may be at home and able to spend most of Friday preparing food for two days, while in another family the wife gets home from her regular job perhaps 30 minutes before sundown. In one family the older children can be an enormous help in preparing meals and taking care of duties around the house, while in another family the wife is almost constantly tied down looking after three small children aged 5 years and younger (perhaps one still in diapers). In one family the wife may be extremely competent and efficient in her house-keeping and her preparation of delicious and nutritious meals, while in another family the wife is a highly skilled professional executive but with neither the skills nor the interest in things like cooking and home management. In one family the wife uses the Friday to thoroughly clean the whole house and to prepare excellent meals for two days, but she is absolutely worn out and washed out by the time Friday evening sunset arrives, while in another family the wife is highly efficient and with minimal time and effort is able to put together several excellent meals (her finances may also allow her to buy some of the more expensive foods that require less work before they can be served). In some families the husband and the children may all pitch in with the work of preparing the food for the Sabbath, while in another family the husband may expect the wife to do everything because he feels that that is HER job.

Some families may feel that eating-out is supposed to be a regular part of their Sabbath routine, feeling that something is missing when they for some reason didn't get to eat out on a Sabbath, while in other families eating-out on the Sabbath may be like the occasional antidote or the pressure-release valve for

when they are under exceptionally great stresses (e.g. the husband coming home and saying: "Let's go out for dinner ... I have just been fired.") and when there simply hasn't been any time to prepare anything. In one family the wife may be very competent but she gets into an emotional state by all the work she has to do on a Friday, while in another family the wife stays calm and unemotional even under the greatest demands on her time. Some families may not have any access to refrigeration or electric cooking facilities or a dishwasher while living in more or less tropical circumstances, while other families have every kitchen gadget imaginable. Let's view this in a worldwide context because God's people today are scattered around the world. Some people live in residential hotels and they may sometimes want to invite brethren to join them, even if they can't afford to pay for the meals of these friends. Is it okay to eat a meal in a restaurant if you don't at that time have to pay for the meal (e.g. if you have a free meal voucher or you pay monthly in advance) but it is not okay if after the meal (or before the meal) you actually have to pay some money for the meal? Is it okay to eat out when you are away from home? Would the good Samaritan in Jesus Christ's parable ALSO have paid for the Saturday meals at the inn that the wounded man would have eaten in the process of his recuperation (see Luke 10:35), or is it just that as a Samaritan he wasn't concerned about the Sabbath?

Circumstances can be vastly different in different families, all of whom desire to keep God's Sabbaths. I don't think that it would be correct to make some carte blanche rule on this question that must be followed by all people in all their varied circumstances, especially since there is no such clear-cut rule in the Bible.

Another point we should consider is that IN BIBLICAL TIMES, without refrigeration and without electric cooking facilities and without running water in the houses and without electric dishwashers and blenders and grinders and juicers and stoves controlled with time-switches, etc., the preparation and the preservation of meals till the next day required FAR MORE WORK THAN TODAY! What about carrying wood to the house for a fire to cook the meal over? What about bringing 5 gallons of water to the house from a well perhaps 100 yards away? What about having to turn your wheat or barley into flour for baking ... without the aid of any electrical appliances? What about starting a fire without matches? When you compare a person today taking something out of the fridge and either placing it directly on the table or else turning a switch on an electric stove or oven to heat up the item of food with a person in biblical times preparing the same food item for eating, then today we expend FAR LESS "WORK" in putting that same item on the table. When you compare someone today taking a package of frozen spinach or peas out of the deep freeze and placing it in boiling water on the electric stove with someone in biblical times wanting to serve spinach or peas ... and having to first make a fire so the spinach or peas could be cooked ... then by comparison the person today preparing these vegetables could hardly be said to be "working"! In biblical times people actually had to WORK to prepare even the simplest of meals, which someone today can pull out of a fridge or deep freeze and, if so desired, heat up on an electric stove. Yes, there are still many things that can require a lot of work in their preparation, but there are also a vast number of foods available to us today which require only very minimal attention from us (out of the fridge and onto the table, or out of the deep freeze and into the oven, or out of the deep freeze and into the toaster, etc.) and virtually no "work" at all.

This is also something we should consider when we talk about food for the Sabbath.

Eating-out or not eating-out on the Sabbath, be it frequently or be it occasionally, is one of those decisions that God expects us ourselves to make. How we examine this question for ourselves in OUR circumstances shows God something about our minds and our character. And our MOTIVATIONS are probably the most important aspect in the whole question. It is not for nothing that God is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of our hearts" (Hebrews 4:12). And yes, I personally can see some situations where eating-out can indeed make a positive contribution to the Sabbath, even if that may not apply to my personal circumstances. And I can also think of other situations where the frequent eating-out is not really wise. And yes, we may at times make a decision which we later regret, and we hopefully learn

something from the event. And it is vitally important in this matter that we don't defile our own consciences, or even the conscience of a brother.

Thus:

IF we personally have the conviction that eating-out on the Sabbath is wrong, then we shouldn't do it! What other people do is between them and God, and not really our business. And if we are with brethren who feel that it is wrong to eat-out on the Sabbath, then we ALSO should not eat-out when they are in our company; that is the principle of 1. Corinthians 10:28-33.

So much for the question of eating out on the Sabbath.

Now let's examine what Paul wrote in Hebrews chapter 4.

HEBREWS CHAPTER 4

Let's briefly recall something I mentioned earlier:

1) The Greek verb "pauo" means: to cease, to leave off, to stop, etc.. It is the root from which our English verb "to pause" has been formed.

2) The Greek prepositions "ana" and "kata" are OPPOSITES, with "ana" meaning "UP" and "kata" meaning "DOWN". It follows that when these prepositions are used to form nouns, the noun with the prefix "ana" must have a different meaning from the noun with the prefix "kata".

3) When these prefixes are used with the verb "pauo" to form nouns, then these nouns have the following meanings, as defined in "The Oxford Dictionary Of Modern Greek":

- ANAPAUSIS = rest, repose, comfort

- KATAPAUSIS = cessation, ending

4) Because of their prejudices, as explained earlier, Bible translators, and therefore also subsequently the authors of Biblical Greek Dictionaries, have treated these two nouns as if their meanings are identical, as if they are interchangeable. But that is simply not correct. Recall that Jerome in his Latin Vulgate translation assigned two different meanings to the one Hebrew verb "shabath" within the space of two verses. There was no justification of any kind for Jerome to do this, yet almost all subsequent translators and also authors of Biblical Greek Dictionaries, have perpetuated Jerome's error. So they treat the Greek nouns "anapausis" and "katapausis" as if they are identical.

5) But they are NOT identical. "Katapausis" refers to something coming to an end, but it does NOT necessarily imply that therefore "REST" must follow. "Anapausis", on the other hand, refers to an uplifting result that follows something coming to an end, namely "REST".

Even without any knowledge of the Greek language, with just our knowledge of how these prefixes "ana" and "kata" are used even in the English language, if we can just divorce ourselves from our own preconceived ideas, we should be able to see that these two Greek words "anapausis" and "katapausis" surely must have SOME differences in meaning, and that the word with the prefix "ana" must have the more positive meaning than the word with the prefix "kata".

6) The Greek noun "ANAPAUSIS" is used 5 times in the New Testament and it clearly and unmistakably refers to "REST"! Here are these 5 verses with the translation of "anapausis" rendered in

capital letters:

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find REST unto your souls. (Matthew 11:29 AV)

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking REST, and findeth none. (Matthew 12:43 AV)

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking REST; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. (Luke 11:24 AV)

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about [him]; and [they were] full of eyes within: and they REST not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. (Revelation 4:8 AV)

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no REST day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. (Revelation 14:11 AV)

Now let's look at Hebrews chapter 4.

In the English language KJV the word "rest" appears 9 times in this chapter. In six instances it is the Greek noun "KATAPAUISIS", in two instances it is the Greek verb "KATAPAUO" and in one case it is the Greek noun "sabbatismos", the Greek word for "Sabbath". Those 9 places are: verses 1, 3, 5, 10 and 11 (katapausis), verses 4 and 8 (katapauo) and verse 9 (sabbatismos).

Notice that neither the noun "anapausis" nor the verb "anapauo" is ever used in this chapter. Rather, the Apostle Paul, in quoting Genesis 2:2 here in Hebrews 4:4, CORRECTLY translated the Hebrew verb "shabath" with the Greek verb "KATApauo".

Paul's point in this chapter is that the weekly Sabbath in a way pictures the coming millennial rule of Jesus Christ. So consider the following:

THE MILLENNIUM WILL BE "A CESSATION", BUT IT WILL NOT REALLY BE "A REST"!

Even as God "CEASED" doing His work on that original Sabbath, so likewise when we enter into the millennium we will "CEASE" from doing "OUR" work! But we will most assuredly not spend the millennium "RESTING", as pictured by our resting on the weekly Sabbath.

The millennium is going to be A PERIOD OF STAGGERING AND MIND-BOGGLING ACTIVITY! What do you mean ... "rest"?

The surface of this earth is going to be refashioned by God at the start of the millennium. And then there are going to be incredible bumper crops like this earth has never seen before. And people will work flat-out (obviously not on the Sabbaths though!) just to try to keep up with the speed and the volume with which the earth will yield her fruit. What do you mean ... "rest"?

People will be busy building cities of unheard-of beauty and splendour. For every year of the entire 1000 years of the millennium people will have to build perhaps around 10000 new cities, just to prepare for the resurrection to physical life of perhaps 50 BILLION people at the end of that 1000 years. What do you

mean ... "rest"?

Jesus Christ said: "My Father works hitherto and I work" (John 5:17), and Jesus Christ will preside over the greatest period of building and construction and production that this earth has ever seen. What do you mean ... "rest"?

The millennium will be "a cessation", yes, but NOT "a rest".

Man will totally CEASE from his ways, the ways that will have been used for 6000 years. Man will STOP rejecting God's ways. The way of man (i.e. man's way of doing things and of organizing his societies, etc.) will have come to an end. But that "end" is only going to be "THE BEGINNING" of God's ways being enacted on a worldwide scale.

You know the old saying that "a change is as good as a rest". The millennium will usher in "a change" but not "a rest". Yes, people will "rest" every Sabbath. But it is God's nature to work, to produce and to accomplish, and people will be joyfully and eagerly productive. And, yes, there will also be times "to rest". The most miserable people on earth today are those who have NOTHING to do, nothing to fill their time, nothing to challenge or to stimulate them, no goals, nothing to accomplish. You can only sit under a vine or a fig tree (Micah 4:4) for so long before you are terribly bored and longing for something to do. Micah 4:4 presents a picture of tranquillity and peace, but not of laziness or a lack of exciting challenges. People are going to ENJOY working, even without being paid for their work. The "joy" or "delight" people in the millennium will experience will come from the exciting activities they will be able to participate in (using the 1000 years to prepare for a physical resurrection of perhaps 50 billion people) and not from the fact that they can "rest".

To characterize the entire period of Christ's millennial rule as "a rest" creates an incorrect picture. And that is partly due to the Greek noun "sabbatismos" in Hebrews 4:9 having been mistranslated as "rest", and partly due to the meaning of "rest" having been erroneously attached to the Hebrew verb "shabath" in the first place.

SHABBATH SHALOM!

Frank W. Nelte