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THE REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LAND SABBATH & THE JUBILEE YEAR

In God's Church most of us have heard about "the Land Sabbath Year" and about "the Jubilee Year". But do you really understand **what** these two years actually mean and represent? Do you have any idea **how** those two years should be implemented? Should we in the Church of God in fact be observing these years today and how? Or are they not for us today? Do you know **why** the Jubilee Year follows right on the heels of the Land Sabbath Year, instead of having any kind of gap between the 7th Land Sabbath Year and the Jubilee Year? Why is it this way?

Let's face it: over the years most of us haven't really talked very much about these two years in the Church of God, have we? And most of us don't know very much about these two years. We basically think that these years are something for **farmers** to worry about.

Let's examine what God was actually telling us when He instituted the Land Sabbaths and the Jubilee Years. Let's see if we can come to a better understanding of the real significance for these two years. The weekly Sabbath is the foundation for the Land Sabbath and the Jubilee. Therefore we need to be sure that we start out with **a correct understanding of the weekly Sabbath**. So we will also take a close look at the weekly Sabbath. This examination will expose that our accepted views on these matters are in fact based on **a slew of mistranslations**.

THERE ARE NO HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

Shortly we will examine the biblical instructions for the observance of these years. But for now we should note that there is no evidence whatsoever that Israel ever observed either a Land Sabbath Year or a Jubilee Year. **There is nothing anywhere in the Old Testament** to indicate that these years were ever kept by any of the people of Israel, let alone kept correctly as intended by God. There is not one shred of real evidence for their observance. Not even any of the righteous kings like David and Hezekiah and Josiah attempted to observe either of these two years.

The only things we find in the Old Testament are **some very vague statements** from which some people have inferred that the Land Sabbath Years or the Jubilee Years were kept, supposedly at least occasionally. But **such inferences are not justified**. Here are some of the verses which some people claim indicate that the Land Sabbath or the Jubilee Year was occasionally kept.

ISAIAH 61:1-2

The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, **to proclaim liberty to the captives**, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; **To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD**, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn...

These verses are a prophecy. They predict something that Jesus Christ will do in the future. They do NOT refer to anything that happened during OT times.

JEREMIAH 34:8-9

This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made **a covenant** with all the people which *were* at Jerusalem, **to proclaim liberty unto them**; That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, *being* an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, *to wit*, of a Jew his brother.

The king made a covenant with the people at a time of great duress. This was shortly before the start of the Babylonian captivity. There is no indication at all that the timing for this covenant had anything to do with either the Land Sabbath Year or with the Jubilee Year. The nation faced the prospect of national captivity and this was an economic decision on the part of the king. As it turned out, the princes very quickly reneged on this agreement, as shown in the next few verses (see Jeremiah 34:11). And it would not have been an observance of the Land Sabbath Year or the Jubilee.

2 CHRONICLES 36:21

To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: ***for* as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath**, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

This is not an example of the Land Sabbath either. The Land Sabbath is the seventh year in a very specific cycle. The desolation of the land spoken about in this verse consisted of an unbroken sequence of many years. You cannot have ten or more consecutive years where all of those years are supposedly Land Sabbath Years. Between two Land Sabbath Years there must be six other years that are NOT Land Sabbath Years, and that is not the case for the situation under discussion in this verse. So this is NOT speaking about the Land Sabbath law.

NEHEMIAH 5:1-19

There was a severe famine, and some of the wealthy Jews took advantage of their poorer countrymen. So the poor people had borrowed money to pay their taxes (Nehemiah 5:4), and others had mortgaged their lands to buy food (Nehemiah 5:3), and others had brought their own sons and daughters into bondage just to have money for some food (Nehemiah 5:5). The rich were taking advantage of the poor. So **Nehemiah was livid with anger** against those greedy rich people (Nehemiah 5:6) and he rebuked them severely and publicly (Nehemiah 5:7-8). The result was that Nehemiah forced the rich people to restore all the things they had taken from the poor people (Nehemiah 5:11-12), to the point of making the rich people swear an oath in this regard.

The point is: this occasion had nothing to do with either a Land Sabbath Year or a Jubilee Year. It was simply another dire crisis brought on to some degree by the greed of the rich people at that time, and Nehemiah as Governor imposed **an immediate resolution** to the situation. He didn't wait for any "year of release". Nehemiah's motivation in this instance was to combat the incredible greed of the rich people and to deal with a crisis, and the situation required his immediate intervention.

EZEKIEL 46:16-17

Thus saith the Lord GOD; If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it *shall be* their possession by inheritance. But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to **the year of liberty**; after it shall return to the prince: but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them.

Ezekiel 46 was written after Judah had gone into captivity. This section is prophetic and not historic. It is not talking about what anyone had done in the past, before both Israel and Judah went into their respective captivities, but about something that applies to the future. However these verses may be applied, they do not record "a year of liberty" for any time in the past; they only focus on the future.

The above five Scriptures are examples of passages that some people appeal to for their assertions that Land Sabbaths or Jubilee Years were supposedly sometimes observed in the Old Testament. There may be some other references that are in a similar vein, **allusions** to certain actions which some people then extrapolate into supposed proof for Land Sabbath Years or for Jubilee Years.

For example, **references** to the Land Sabbath and the Jubilee **in the Talmud** and **in the Seder Olam** are based totally on trying to reason out Sabbatical Years and Jubilee Years, without any real proof. In addition to providing no concrete scriptural proof at all, these Talmudic references invariably employ reasoning that is grossly flawed.

REFERENCES TO THE JUBILEE IN THE TALMUD

In searching through the Talmud I found 514 references to "Jubilee" scattered through the mishnah and gemara and footnotes of the Talmud. As it turns out, none of them provide any definitive proof for the Jubilee ever having been observed. They all are nothing more than unfounded assertions and bold opinions, based on reasoning that can immediately be seen to be flawed. Mostly, some or other teacher simply asserts that a certain year was a Jubilee, and as proof for his assertion he then presents some ridiculous reasoning.

Here are a couple of examples from the Talmud. The quotations are unedited except that I have bolded certain words for easier recognition. (The numbers in the text refer to footnotes.)

"**Our Rabbis taught: It is a Jubilee**2 A Jubilee'3 **even though they did not observe the release of fields**, **even though they did not observe the blowing of the trumpet**.4 I might say [that it is still a Jubilee] **even though they did not observe the dismissal of slaves**. Therefore it says, it is'.5 So R. Judah. R. Jose said: **It is a Jubilee**', A Jubilee'3 even though they did not release fields, even though they did not dismiss slaves. I might think [that it is still a Jubilee] even if they did not blow the trumpet. It therefore says, it is'. Now6 since one text brings some cases under the rule and another text excludes others from it, **why should I expound: A Jubilee',7 even though they did not dismiss, but it is not a Jubilee unless they blew the trumpet'?** Because it is possible that **there should be no [opportunity for]8 dismissing slaves**, but it is not possible that there should be no [opportunity for] blowing the trumpet.9 **Another explanation** is that the performance of the latter depends on the Beth din, but the performance of the former does not depend on the Beth din.10 What need is there for the alternative explanation? Because **you might argue** that it is impossible that there should not be someone in some part of the world who has not a slave to dismiss. Therefore I say that the one depends on the Beth din but the other does not depend on the Beth din." (Mas. Rosh HaShana 9b, my emphasis)

Notice that this Talmudic quotation acknowledges that back in the Old Testament the people of Israel:

- did NOT give the fields back;

- did NOT blow the trumpet for the Jubilee;

- did NOT release the slaves.

Then they come up with some ridiculous arguments that those years were nevertheless Jubilee Years. The idea that there was "no opportunity" for dismissing slaves is very contrived. However we look at this, the point is that all they did is try to reason out when Jubilee Years SUPPOSEDLY took place. But they didn’t have any proof that such Jubilee Years were in fact ever observed. The only proof they present in this quotation is that the Jubilee Years were NOT observed (no giving back, no blowing and no releasing

of slaves).

None of the other 500+ quotations present anything that could be called "better support" for Jubilee Years supposedly having been observed. All claims in the Talmud for Jubilee observances are fabricated. Here is another quotation.

"**As a punishment for** incest,23 idolatry, and **non-observance of the years of release and jubilee**24 **exile comes to the world, they [the Jews] are exiled**, and others come and dwell in their place, for it is said, for all these abominations have the men of the land done, etc.;25 and it is written, and the land is defiled,- therefore do I visit the in iniquity thereof upon it;26 and it is written, that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it.27" (Mas. Shabbath 33a, my emphasis)

Right here the Talmud says that exile is a punishment for non-observance of the Land Sabbath Years and the Jubilee Years. And in the next statement it says that the Jews are exiled! So the Talmud itself leads to the logical conclusion that the Jews didn't observe these years.

So while the Jubilee is frequently mentioned in the Talmud, none of those Talmudic statements provide any real proof that the Jubilee was ever observed. All they do is assert observance based on some very contrived reasoning.

So much for the Talmud supposedly presenting evidence for these years. Now let's briefly consider the supposed evidence for Jubilee Years in the Seder Olam Rabbah.

REFERENCES TO JUBILEE YEARS IN THE SEDER OLAM

Here is a quotation from the Wikipedia article entitled "Jubilee".

"The **Seder Olam Rabbah** recognized the importance of the Jubilee and Sabbatical cycles as a long-term calendrical system, and **attempted** at various places to fit the Sabbatical and Jubilee years into its chronological scheme. As mentioned above, the Seder Olam put forth the idea that **the counting for these cycles was deferred until 14 years after entry into the land**." (Wikipedia, article "Jubilee")

The Seder Olam, on which Hillel II based the starting date for the Jewish Calendar, made up its own system of supposed Land Sabbath Years and Jubilee Years. What the Seder Olam author did is **manipulate dates** in order to make them fit in with his own ideas as to how chronology should have taken place. This means that any and all years that the Seder Olam claims were Land Sabbath Years or Jubilee Years are false! For a start he "postponed" the starting year for these cycles by 14 years. That's really cool! But it isn't really the way God works, postponing some instruction from God to a more "convenient" year 14 years later.

God said: "when you be come into the land which I give you, THEN shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Eternal" (Leviticus 25:2). The Seder Olam reasons: since they didn't immediately inherit the land, therefore we will start the counting 14 years later. But the point is this: they HAD COME INTO THE LAND, and they started EATING the produce of the land RIGHT AWAY, the day after the Passover. And they ATE the produce of the land throughout the years they spent conquering the land. And they were not told to wait for 14 years before initiating the sabbatical cycles.

Now just think this one point through very carefully.

All Jewish claims for Land Sabbath Years and for Jubilee Years are based on the flawed chronology that

was presented by the Seder Olam. Into that flawed Seder Olam chronology the author had built the system of Land Sabbaths and Jubilees that are accepted by Jewish scholars. But this freely acknowledged postponement of 14 years, even apart from the fact that the chronology is flawed (!), makes clear that the Jewish records cannot possibly be the correct years that God would have approved. The Seder Olam record proves that **all Jewish records regarding Jubilee years are wrong**!

Here is a quotation from the book by **Rodger C. Young** entitled "Three Verifications of Thiele's Date for the Beginning of the Divided Kingdom," Andrews University Seminary Studies 45 (2007), as quoted in the Wikipedia article on "Jubilee (biblical)".

"**The reason for the fourteen-year delay** in Seder ‘Olam 11 is that Rabbi Yose (primary author of the Seder ‘Olam) had the 'idee fixe' that the **total time that Israel spent in its land must come out to an exact number of Jubilee cycles**. If that had been the case, then we should have expected that 587 BC, when the exile began, would have been at the end of a Jubilee period. **However, Rabbi Yose cited Ezek 40:1 as designating the time of the seventeenth Jubilee**, and since he knew this was fourteen years after the city fell, **he presumed that counting had been delayed for fourteen years** so that he could account for the fourteen years between the fall of the city and the observance of the seventeenth Jubilee. He also mentioned the previous Jubilee, in the time of Josiah. As much as he would have liked to put these last two Jubilees fourteen years earlier in order to be consistent with his 'idee fixe', Rabbi Yose could not do it because he knew **these were historical dates**, not dates that came from his own calculation." (my emphasis)

What we should be able to see is this: Jewish experts have looked at certain events in the history of the Jewish people, and then they extrapolated back to make those events fit in with **where THEY wanted the Jubilee cycles to occur**. That’s what the originator of the Seder Olam, who happened to have been an ardent supporter of the Bar Kokba revolt in the 130's A.D., did with all Jewish history back to Adam. And assigning Jubilee cycles to key events within that flawed chronology which he developed was just a part of the whole package.

So references to Jubilee Years in the Seder Olam are just as notoriously worthless as are such references in the Talmud. The Jewish people do not have any REAL evidence that Land Sabbath Years or Jubilee Years were ever kept!

GOD WOULD PRESENT CLEAR DOCUMENTATION OF OBSERVANCE

My point is this: God gave the laws regarding the Land Sabbath and the Jubilee Year, even as God gave the law regarding the weekly Sabbath. If any of these situations, and others like them, were supposed to be examples of the observance of the Land Sabbath Year or the Jubilee, then God would surely not expect us to guess or to extrapolate that conclusion. **God would surely tell us plainly** that the people were observing the Land Sabbath Year or the Jubilee, even as God tells us plainly that King Hezekiah kept the Passover (2 Chronicles 30:18), and that King Josiah kept the Passover (2 Chronicles 35:1).

God does not expect us to "reason out" any supposed Land Sabbath or Jubilee observance for some or other Old Testament situation. Had the people really kept these years, that would have been an even greater noteworthy event than noting which kings observed the Passover, and it would surely have been recorded in plain language. But that is not the case! So it is clear to me that the Land Sabbath Year and therefore automatically also the Jubilee Year have thus far never been kept by Israel, not even once.

Any claims by anyone that certain biblical events supposedly occurred in Jubilee Years or in Sabbatical

Years are nothing more than **pure speculations** without any kind of real biblical proof.

Now when we look at Leviticus chapter 25, we'll see that the observance of these years is not just a matter of picking some arbitrary starting date and then counting to the 7th year for the Land Sabbath. It is not the case that "one year out of seven" will do. No, the starting year was determined by God. And there is **only one possible correct cycle** for these years. Any and every other cycle is wrong.

The weekly Sabbath is not merely one day out of every seven days, but rather it is the seventh day in a cycle that was established by God Himself, and no other cycle is possible. IF we could pick our own starting day as Day #1 for the weekly cycle, THEN we could pick a Tuesday (or a Wednesday or a Friday, etc.) so that six days after that Tuesday (or Wednesday or Friday, etc.) would be our weekly Sabbath day. But that's not acceptable to God! The only starting day for a week that is acceptable to God is Sunday.

We cannot start the week with any day other than a Sunday. This means that Saturday is the only possible day of the week for the weekly Sabbath. And so if we were to decide to keep every Sunday or Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday or Thursday or Friday as **our** Sabbath day, that would be totally worthless before God. God has simply not given us the right to decide which day we will use as Day #1 (and therefore as a count-down to Day #7) for our week. This you already know very well.

But exactly the same point applies to determining **the starting year** for counting towards the Land Sabbath Year, and then counting towards the Jubilee Year.

God has not given anybody the right to decide which year will be Year #1 in the cycle towards determining the Seventh Year for the Land Sabbath cycle. Now we can either keep the correct years for the Land Sabbaths and for the Jubilee Years, **or we can't keep them at all**!

Keeping **the Land Sabbaths** in the wrong years, and therefore also keeping the Jubilee Years in the wrong years, is no better than trying to keep the weekly Sabbaths on Sundays or on Thursdays. It has **no value at all**, in exactly the same way that when we kept Pentecost on Mondays such Pentecost-keeping was of no value before God. We do not have the right to determine for ourselves which years should be the Land Sabbaths. That decision belongs totally to God! And good intentions don't make something that is wrong right. Ditto for the Jubilee Years.

[**COMMENT:** I realize that some readers will strongly disagree with the above statements. They feel that even though we (i.e. some farmers in the Church) may have kept the wrong years for the Land Sabbaths, even as we kept the wrong day for Pentecost when we kept it on Mondays, yet because we were sincere in our keeping of those Land Sabbaths and those Monday-Pentecosts therefore those observances had at least some value before God. After all, many farmers made **considerable sacrifices** in observing the Land Sabbaths in their own personal cycles, and surely those sacrifices must mean something?

It is one thing to realize that when we act in integrity and then ignorantly do something wrong, then such wrong actions are readily forgiven when we acknowledge them to God. But it is another thing altogether to then still want some credit for having done the wrong thing, simply because we did it ignorantly and not intentionally. There is no credit for doing anything wrong, no matter how good our attitude may have been.

The Apostle Paul told the Athenians that they were very religious (i.e. that they meant well), and that he, Paul, was preaching to them the God whom they ignorantly worshiped (Acts 17:22-23). But instead of giving them credit for their good intentions Paul told them that "**the times of this ignorance God winked at**" (Acts 17:30), i.e. God was willing to forgive their wrong and ignorant conduct. Winking at

ignorance is not the same as giving credit for ignorant conduct.

The people who feel that we should get some credit for having ignorantly kept Pentecost on Mondays, and that farmers who ignorantly kept the Land Sabbath in their own personal cycles should also get some credit for their good intentions, need to present some scriptural proof or support for those positions. And unless such scriptural support is presented I will continue to state that keeping the Land Sabbath in an incorrect cycle has no value at all, and that "the times of our ignorance God winked at". Show me the Scriptures to change my mind.]

A correct understanding of what God actually wants to accomplish with the Land Sabbath Years will further clarify this last point. People who decide to "just pick one year and then go with that cycle" lack understanding of the purpose for the Land Sabbath. The Land Sabbath is not an end in itself; it is only the means towards an end, an end that has been ordained by God.

Such people are simply following the way that seems right to them (see Proverbs 14:12 in this regard). That is especially likely to be the case for people who have a good farming background ... that they are likely to read their own agricultural understanding into God's instructions for these years. So let's be careful to not jump the gun on these questions because these laws were NOT given for farmers only! They were given **for every single person in the entire nation**.

Now the knowledge of which day is the Seventh Day has been preserved, and therefore we are able to keep the weekly Sabbath on the correct day. But the knowledge of the correct cycle for the Land Sabbath Years **has not been preserved**. This fact all by itself should make quite clear, beyond any doubts whatsoever, that the people of God in this present age are simply not capable of observing either the Land Sabbath or the Jubilee Year. **Without divine revelation** nobody today can observe the Land Sabbath or the Jubilee Year. It is extremely presumptuous for any church, without any direct revelation from God, to unilaterally designate certain years as "Land Sabbath Years" or as "Jubilee Years".

So the Land Sabbath, and therefore also the Jubilee, is NOT something for the people of God today!

Now let's look at another matter.

GOD USES DIFFERENT PERIODS OF TIME TO REPRESENT 1000 YEARS

In very general terms, God's present plan for mankind involves a period of 7100 years, which plan God put into effect after the flood. This plan provides for 6000 years for man to rule this planet his way, followed by a 1000-year period we refer to as the millennium when Jesus Christ will rule with those in the first resurrection, followed by a 100-year period for all those who will be in the second resurrection. So God has used a number of different ways to represent 1000 years. Thus for example:

1) Sometimes God uses **1 DAY** to represent **1000 years**. See 2 Peter 3:8.

At other times God uses 1 DAY to represent 1 year. See Ezekiel 4:4-6.

2) Sometimes God uses **1 WEEK** to represent **1000 years**. The 7 weeks numbering for Pentecost (see Deuteronomy 16:9-10) are to cover the whole 7000 years of God's plan. At other times God uses 1 WEEK to represent 7 years, as in Daniel 9:24.

3) Sometimes God uses **1 MONTH** to represent **1000 years**. Thus the annual Holy Day plan is

completed in the 7th month, to indicate that God's plan covers 7000 years. And the Day of Trumpets is on the 1st Day of the 7th Month to indicate that Christ's return will be at the start of the 7th 1000-year period.

4) Sometimes God uses **1 YEAR** to represent **1000 years**. This is what we'll see when we examine the Land Sabbath Year.

5) Sometimes God uses **7 YEARS** to represent **1000 years**. This is what we'll see when we examine the Jubilee Year.

Depending on the context, **a 1000-year period** may be represented by: **1 day** or **1 week** or **1 month** or **1 year** or **7 years**. The context is always the key! This approach gives God **much more flexibility** to build information into various time periods when compared to rigidly having each period (day, month, year, etc.) always represent the same length of time in the actual fulfillment of God's plan.

It is always the context which reveals what a specific period of time is to represent in actual fulfillment within God's plan. This approach (of having different options for representing a 1000-year period of time in actual fulfillment) also ensures that those people who are not supposed to understand the truth in this present age (see Isaiah 6:8-9; Isaiah 29:10-12; Matthew 13:13-15) will not understand. It takes the guidance of God's Spirit to help us human beings to understand the revealed truth of God.

In this article we'll see how God has used both one year and also seven years to represent 1000 years of actual fulfillment. But now let's look at something else. If you can grasp the following point, then you are well on the way to understanding the real significance for the Land Sabbath Year. And this revolves around a correct understanding of the weekly Sabbath.

CONSIDER THESE TWO SITUATIONS

For almost 20 years I have tried to explain to God's people, mostly with very little success, that the word "Sabbath" refers to a cessation of activities. Mostly people respond with: "okay, so the word Sabbath means cessation of activities, so what?"

So I'll try one more time.

Consider **SITUATION #1**:

You are speaking to a young child and you say: **"Okay, stop now. I want you to come and rest."**

What are you actually doing in this situation? You are getting a child to stop some or other activity, and your purpose is to get the child to rest, meaning that you want the child to stop **all activities** for the purpose of being refreshed and restoring strength and energy. However, in this whole episode there is no hint of any kind that you are displeased with the activities in which the child was engaged. Approval or disapproval of those activities doesn't enter this picture.

Now consider **SITUATION #2**:

You are speaking to a young child and you say: **"I want you to stop doing that! Do you understand me?"**

So what are you doing in this situation? Here the child is engaged in an activity of which you disapprove,

right? And your instructions here have nothing to do with resting. The result of "stop doing THAT" may sometimes well be that the child ends up doing nothing and just resting; but that is clearly not the motivation for your statement. The "resting" in this case would only be a somewhat unintended consequence of your instruction, and in many cases there may be no resting at all involved in this situation.

Can you see the big difference between these two statements?

The first statement is emotionally-neutral regarding the child's activities. The nature of the child's activities has nothing at all to do with the instruction you have given. Your motivation is to get the child to stop all activities for the purpose of resting and being refreshed.

By contrast, the second statement is emotionally highly charged! Your personal opposition to the child's activities is **your primary motivation** for the instruction you have given. You're not concerned about getting the child to rest or to do nothing at all. You may well be very agreeable to the child immediately engaging in any number of other activities. But it is the present activities to which you are strongly opposed, and which you want to see stopped immediately.

Can you see the completely different motivations underlying these two statements?

So let me spill the beans right now and give you the answer, and later we'll fill in all the details that lead to this answer. Are you ready?

SATAN HAS DECEIVED THE WHOLE WORLD INTO BELIEVING THAT THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT AND THE LAND SABBATH YEAR ARE BASICALLY AN EXPRESSION OF "OKAY, STOP NOW; I WANT YOU TO COME AND REST"!

BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT GOD'S SABBATH COMMANDMENT AND ALSO THE LAND SABBATH ARE BASICALLY AN EXPRESSION OF "I WANT YOU TO STOP DOING THAT! DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?"

Satan has deceived humanity into assuming that God's instructions are an expression of "Situation #1" above, when in actual fact God's instructions are an expression of "Situation #2" above! We should thus understand that God's instructions are not at all "emotionally-neutral". Not at all! They are in fact emotionally highly charged, to the point where **our knowingly "doing THAT" on the Sabbath makes God very angry**!

It is not any "resting" (for us on the weekly Sabbath and for the land during the Land Sabbath Year) that God is concerned with! What God is concerned with is that we stop doing some very specific activities! So with the above statements what is still missing is a precise definition of what is meant by the word "that"! And later we will define precisely what "that" refers to.

But for now we need to understand that regarding the Sabbath God is not primarily telling us "I want you to get some rest"! No, with the Sabbath command God is primarily telling us with some very strong feelings "I want you to **STOP** doing **THAT**"! In simple terms, **the Sabbath is a "STOP THAT" commandment**!

The Sabbath command is not a command against all activities; it is a command against some **very specific activities** which are defined by the word "that" in the above statement. It is Satan who has thoroughly deceived humanity (those who accept the Sabbath commandment) into believing that God's idea of Sabbath observance is: quietness and peace and tranquility with an absolute minimum of physical movements and physical activities. And these things may indeed commonly be a part of

Sabbath observance, but they are **not the main focus** or main concern.

God's main focus for the Sabbath is that **we stop doing certain things**, and then quietness and peace are a consequence of stopping those "certain things". Satan has gotten us to focus on some of **the consequences** that are commonly though not always achieved, rather than focusing on **the primary intent** for the command.

So let's take another look at the establishment of the Sabbath. There is something about the Sabbath that you very possibly have never considered.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WEEKLY SABBATH

The Sabbath commandment did NOT apply to anyone before the flood! Did you know that? Here are the facts. Here is the relevant Scripture.

And on the seventh day God **ended his work** which he had made; and **he rested** 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 rested** from all his work which God created and made. (Genesis 2:2-3)

Let's examine the following expressions in these verses:

1) **God ended His work:** The Hebrew word here translated as "work" is "melakah", and this word means "**business**" or "**occupation**" or plain "**work**". The Hebrew word translated as "ended" is the verb "kalah" and it means "to make a full end" or "to finish". So the expression "God ended His work" means "**God FINISHED DOING what He had been doing during the previous six days**".

2) **God rested:** The Hebrew verb here translated "rested" is "shabath". This Hebrew verb **does NOT mean "rest"**! Old Testament Hebrew has other words that mean "rest". This word "shabath" really means "to stop doing something" or "to cease" or "to desist". This word refers to stopping some specific activity or activities which have been engaged in up to that point in time. It does not imply stopping or not starting certain other possible activities, not at all, which is something that "resting" would imply (i.e. in not engaging in any other activities either).

It is extremely misleading to translate "shabath" as "rest", because such a mistranslation imposes unintended and unjustified conditions on the verb "shabath". Such a mistranslation is a total setup to then mistranslate the Hebrew noun "shabbath" as "rest day". But the concept of "rest" has nothing at all to do with the Hebrew verb "shabath". So this expression "God rested" should correctly be translated as "God stopped doing what He had been doing on the previous days".

While the meanings of the two Hebrew verbs "kalah" and "shabath" overlap to some degree, the distinction between them is as follows: The verb "**kalah**" refers to stopping in the sense of having completed something, or having finished something. The verb "**shabath**" refers to stopping in the sense of ceasing or desisting, without reference to whether or not the activity had been finished or completed. These two verbs have a different focus. However, neither one of them implies the concept of "resting".

Now when both of these verbs are used together, as they are in Genesis 2:2, then the activity which has "ceased" has also been "finished and completed". But when the verb "shabath" is used without the verb "kalah" also applying, THEN the activity that has "ceased" may or may not have been completed. The only thing that is clear from the verb "shabath" is that for the time being the activity has ceased!

By referring to this seventh day as "shabbath" in Hebrew, it only emphasizes that it is a day of cessation of certain activities; it does not imply that those activities have been finished or completed. This leaves open the option that **those activities** which have ceased **may in fact be resumed** after the Sabbath has ended. And that is precisely what happens every week: after the Sabbath has ended we go back to doing those things which we had ceased doing when the Sabbath started.

3) **God blessed the 7th day:** The Hebrew verb translated as "blessed" is "barak" and this Hebrew word means "to say good things" or "to praise" or "to salute" or "to congratulate". In other words, the expression "God blessed this day" means that "God made it special", that **it is a good day**!

4) **God sanctified it:** This means that God set this day apart from the other six days in the week for a godly use. It goes a step further than just blessing this day. Now the reason WHY God set this day apart from the other six days of the week is given in the next statement.

5) **BECAUSE God had rested from all His work:** The verb "had rested" is the same Hebrew verb "shabath", and the expression "His work" is the same Hebrew noun "melakah". We have already defined both these words. So the actual reason WHY God blessed and sanctified the Sabbath day is **BECAUSE** on that day God had **STOPPED** doing His business or occupation (God is the Creator by profession). But resting is not at all implied in the Hebrew text of this expression. This statement does not tell us that God "rested"! That is a diabolical mistranslation.

Listen! God does not get tired, as stated in Isaiah 40:28, which reads: "the Creator of the ends of the earth faints not neither is weary". So when God stopped His work of creating here in Genesis 2, it had nothing to do with "rest" as we human beings understand the concept of "rest". God didn't need or seek time to recuperate. "Rest" is a mistranslation of the Hebrew verb "shabath".

Now if we incorporate all these correct meanings into these two verses, then an appropriate translation/paraphrase would be:

"And on the seventh day God **completed all the work** He had been doing, and on the seventh day **He ceased from all the work** He had made. And God **blessed** the seventh day and **set it apart for a godly use BECAUSE** on that day **God had stopped doing all the work** of creating and making that He had done during the preceding six days." (Genesis 2:2-3, paraphrase)

So note!

Nowhere in these two verses does it state or imply that God "rested"! To infer resting into these two verses is **a diabolical mistranslation**!

An important question that has seldom been asked is: **WHY does "stopping working" make a day eligible for a godly use?** WHAT exactly is it about "stopping all work" that would motivate God to sanctify such a day?

There must be something about "not working" that is highly significant. So what is it? We know that God the Father "works hitherto" (John 5:17), and that type of working by God isn't singled out for any special attention. So what was different about God's working in Genesis 1 that made the cessation of that phase of working eligible for being sanctified by God?

For a long time we have known WHAT God did in Genesis 2:2-3, but we have seldom asked: **WHY did God do that**? WHY did God's cessation of work at that time make that day of cessation from work eligible for sanctification? God never sanctifies anything on impulse or because of a whim. So why did God sanctify the Sabbath?

We'll look at the answers to these questions in a moment.

But first let's notice that what Genesis 2:2-3 tells us is that **originally**, before Adam and Eve sinned, **"resting" was not really a part of God's intentions for the Sabbath**! CAN YOU GRASP THIS?

God did not tell Adam and Eve, and later Abel or Enoch or Noah, anything at all about "resting on the Sabbath days". The reason God didn't tell them anything about resting on the Sabbath is because even after Adam and Eve sinned, God did not yet make any changes in the requirements He had for human beings to live in integrity before God. **Before Adam sinned resting was not a part of God's intentions for the Sabbath**, and resting continued to not be a part of the Sabbath even after Adam had sinned.

God kept one plan for mankind in force right up to the time of the flood. And because Shem lived for about 500 years after the flood, and Shem lived under the pre-flood dispensation, therefore God didn't bring Sabbath observance into existence immediately after the flood either.

The truth is that God for the very first time ever required human beings to observe the weekly Sabbath at the time when God brought Israel out of Egypt in the days of Moses. **Before that time God had not required any human beings to "keep the Sabbath holy".** God had not required Abraham or Isaac or Jacob to keep the Sabbath in any particular way. At their time Sabbath-keeping had not been a requirement or an issue.

So note the following point:

God SANCTIFIED the Sabbath back in Genesis 2:3. BUT God did NOT command human beings to "KEEP" the Sabbath until the days of Moses! Observance of the Sabbath was not a part of sanctifying the Sabbath. Sanctification came first, and the requirement of observance by human beings came only more than 2500 years later.

Next, for a certain period of time to be holy (i.e. to be sanctified) it does not necessarily require human beings "to rest". During the Old Testament **a priest** at the Temple might have to work very hard on the Sabbath in preparing an animal for sacrifice. Thus that priest would assuredly not be resting on the Sabbath. Similarly, for a minister in the Church to give a sermon for 60 - 90 minutes in length can also be a high mental energy activity, which is likewise not really the same as resting. And if the Apostle Paul sometimes preached for 3 or 4 hours on the Sabbath, that also was a high mental energy activity.

Furthermore, in the days of Joshua God instructed the men of war to **walk around the city of Jericho** for **seven days**. This means that one of those seven days was a Sabbath. All the soldiers carried their full armor with them on these trips around Jericho. Seven priests blew continuously on their trumpets while Israel marched around Jericho. Blowing a trumpet for that length of time is **hard work**. On top of that a number of other priests carried the Ark around Jericho on all of these trips. That likewise is hard work. Joshua chapter 6 shows that God required all the men of war and many priests to expend a considerable amount of energy on those trips around Jericho.

Now consider the following very likely scenario.

1) Because Israel ate the old corn of the land on the day after the Passover (Joshua 5:11), and they could only eat it after the wavesheaf had been brought on a Sunday morning during the Days of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:14), therefore the Passover that year was a Saturday, observed Friday evening.

2) So Israel ate of the old corn on the 15th day, a Sunday morning. At that same time Joshua was

standing near Jericho (Joshua 5:13) and Jesus Christ appeared to him (Joshua 5:13-14). Jesus Christ then told Joshua that He had given Jericho into Joshua's hands (Joshua 6:2), and Jesus Christ then instructed Joshua to have all the soldiers march around Jericho every day for seven days (Joshua 6:3-4).

3) This was still on the First Day of Unleavened Bread, a Sunday. The Days of Unleavened Bread run for seven days, and God instructed Israel to march around Jericho for seven days. It is inconceivable that these two cycles of seven days each did not run concurrently. Not running concurrently would clearly detract from the significance of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

4) So Joshua conveyed Jesus Christ's instructions to the priests and to the soldiers, and that Sunday afternoon the Israelite army marched around Jericho for the first time.

5) With the First Day of U.B. being a Sunday, it means that the Seventh Day of U.B. was a Saturday. So here is what God instructed Israel to do on that Seventh Day of U.B. Saturday:

6) On that weekly Sabbath, which happened to also be a Holy Day, the entire army of Israel marched in full battle gear (i.e. with all their weapons in hand) around Jericho SEVEN TIMES! And the priests carried the Ark of God, a heavy object, around the whole city of Jericho SEVEN TIMES. And then the Israelite soldiers fought a battle and killed all the people of Jericho. And **THAT IS HOW GOD INSTRUCTED THEM TO KEEP THAT PARTICULAR SABBATH**!

7) So on a weekly Sabbath Day God instructed the Israelites to march a long distance, to continuously blow on trumpets (the priests), to carry a heavy object for that long distance (the priests carrying the Ark), and then to fight a battle for several hours and to kill the enemy. All these things were not only sanctioned by God for the Sabbath; they were commanded by God!

(Later when we discuss the Jubilee we will come back to Joshua chapter 6, because that chapter also has a Jubilee connection.)

So here is the point we should learn from this scenario.

If God approves of **SOME people** expending **a lot of energy on the Sabbath**, then the expenditure of energy per se is clearly NOT a criterion for Sabbath observance. God does NOT say "I want you to stop ALL activities on the Sabbath". No, what God says is: "I want you to stop **THAT group of activities**. Do you understand Me?" How much physical energy we expend on the Sabbath has nothing to do with whether or not we are keeping the Sabbath correctly. On that Sabbath in Joshua 6 **nobody in Israel actually "rested"**.

Consider the following point very carefully!

God will NEVER instruct any human beings to transgress the clear intent of His laws! **God NEVER says:**

"Look, **normally you shouldn't really do this on the Sabbath**. But since I am the One who instituted the Sabbath, since I am the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28), therefore I can also tell you to ignore some of the things that you should really not do on the Sabbath. So for MY purposes I want you to go ahead and do these particular activities. But other people should never do this on the Sabbath. Do you understand Me?"

If it is acceptable for a priest to work very hard in slaughtering an animal for a sacrifice; and if it is acceptable for all the soldiers in full battle gear to walk around a whole town; and if it is acceptable for the priests to carry the Ark around the outside of that city, and if it is acceptable for the soldiers to fight a

battle and to kill the enemy on the Sabbath, THEN ALL OF THESE THINGS CANNOT BE IN CONFLICT WITH GOD'S INTENTIONS FOR THE SABBATH!

When God has very clearly sanctioned a range of activities that could certainly be described as "hard work", then "resting" cannot possibly be God's main concern for the Sabbath. **God does not provide exemptions from His laws to anybody**, not to priests and not to kings and not to soldiers and not to ministers and not to anybody!

To make this quite clear:

God does not provide exemptions from His laws to anybody for any reason! And IF God really intended the focus for the Sabbath to be on restricting the expenditure of energy to an absolute minimum, as assumed by Judaism, then God would NEVER instruct anybody to go against that intent for any reason whatsoever. The fact that God has instructed SOME people to sometimes engage in high energy activities on the Sabbath, be it the expenditure of physical energy or of mental energy, should tell us that the level of energy expenditure is not the real concern for the Sabbath.

If God really never compromises His own laws (and He assuredly doesn't!), then this MUST mean that **we have all along had a somewhat cockeyed understanding of what the Sabbath is all about**. We have relied far too much on Jewish understanding to tell us what Sabbath observance should look like. The Jewish understanding regarding HOW the Sabbath should be observed is just one more "tradition of the elders", which traditions, according to Jesus Christ "transgress the commandment of God" (Matthew 15:3). Those "traditions of the elders" include the meaning the Jews have attached to the word "shabath" and the Jewish understanding regarding how the Sabbath should be kept.

So Sabbath keeping is not about stopping ALL activities. We still have to define what is meant by "that" in our earlier discussions regarding "stop doing THAT", and we'll do so in due time.

Next, **WHY** would God possibly have instructed Adam and Eve **before they sinned** to keep the Sabbath holy **by resting**? WHY? WHAT could Adam and Eve possibly have done or not done on the Sabbath days? They didn't have a Bible to read; they didn't have hymns to sing; they didn't have services to attend; they didn't have any household chores that had to be done in advance; they didn't have regular work that they had to stop doing; they didn't have domestic animals to care for; etc. So exactly HOW would Adam and Eve have been expected to keep the Sabbath, had Sabbath observance been in force?

God's instruction to replenish the earth and to subdue it (Genesis 1:28), and God's instruction to Adam "to dress and to keep" the garden God had planted (Genesis 2:14) wasn't exactly a full-time job working from 8 - 5 for six days a week. Their existence (before they sinned) was **much more like sitting under a vine and under a fig tree**, rather than "working" for their needs. The fruits were freely available on the trees, and Adam didn't have a single gardening tool at his disposal. God's instructions regarding Adam working were very general, and hardly tied to any kind of working schedule for six days a week.

And God did **NOT** tell Adam "six days shall you labor and do all your work"! This instruction was NOT given when God established that first Sabbath day.

For that matter, "work" only really entered the picture AFTER Adam had sinned. Working for their food was **a penalty** God imposed on Adam. That was when God cursed the ground (Genesis 3:17), and when obstinate weeds came into existence (Genesis 3:18), and when God told Adam that from then onwards the production of food would require hard, sweaty work from Adam (Genesis 3:19). Implied in this verse is that if Adam had NOT sinned, then such hard, sweaty work would not have been a part of Adam's required existence. And then theoretical Sabbath keeping would also have looked rather

different.

The Sabbath was sanctified after Adam's creation, but before Adam sinned. And before Adam sinned he didn't really have to work for his food. The point is that the instruction "**on the Sabbath I want you to stop working**" **would not have had very much meaning for Adam before he sinned**. Before Adam sinned it is hard to imagine how "keeping a Sabbath day" would have looked different to Adam from the other six days of the week.

So yes, God had sanctified the Sabbath at creation, and God Himself had stopped doing **certain activities** on that Sabbath; but God did not instruct human beings at the very start of man's existence on earth to "observe" the weekly Sabbath in any particular way. That instruction was only given much later in the days of Moses.

WHY DOES CESSATION FROM WORK MAKE THE SEVENTH DAY ELIGIBLE FOR SANCTIFICATION?

We have already seen that Jesus Christ told us that God the Father "works hitherto" (John 5:17). Apparently God has no intention to ever stop working? Thus it seems that the type of work that Jesus Christ was referring to in John 5:17 is not the same as the type of work that was performed during the first six days in Genesis 1. For that matter, while Jesus Christ established and Himself kept the Sabbath in Genesis 2, **God the Father has never kept the Sabbath at any time**. The Sabbath was not established for God the Father to abide by; the Sabbath was established for mankind (Mark 2:27), not for God. And when physical human life ceases to exist, then the weekly Sabbath will also cease to exist.

So what about the work God (i.e. Jesus Christ) did in Genesis 1? How does it differ from God's working at other times? Is there perhaps some other factor involved? One point that immediately stands out is this: The first six days in Genesis 1:3-31 were a particular type of creation. Before Genesis 1:3 Satan had rebelled against God, and in the process this whole universe had been thrown into a state of chaos and confusion and destruction. Satan's rebellion had enormously destructive consequences.

So God's creative activities in those six days were first and foremost a matter of DAMAGE CONTROL! God did NOT necessarily repair this whole universe, but **God did repair the damage Satan's rebellion had brought upon this planet Earth**. Now at that time God obviously went further than just repairing the damage, and this going further culminated in the creation of Adam and Eve.

AND THEN GOD STOPPED THAT TYPE OF WORKING!

And then God blessed and sanctified the day that followed those six days of working. This was still before Adam sinned.

The noteworthy point about that first Sabbath is that **God had stopped a very specific set of activities**. That specific set of activities involved dealing with and resolving the problems caused by Satan's disobedience!

Now consider the following point:

IF Satan had not rebelled against God, THEN God would NOT have taken six days to deal with the consequences of Satan's rebellion to this planet Earth. And then God would NOT have had any reason to stop a specific set of activities **on the 7th day**. **God's activities on the first four days would NOT**

have been needed if Satan had not rebelled and in the process devastated this planet.

Without arguing about God's activities on Day #5 and Day #6, it should be clear that the Earth Satan had ruled over had been covered with some form of vegetation. So everything during at least the first four days was **God's response** to dealing with the consequences of Satan's rebellion.

So consider this:

If Satan had not rebelled, I personally suspect that there never would have been a seventh day Sabbath!

The establishment of the seven-day week, ending with a seventh-day Sabbath, is a part of God's response to Satan's rebellion! For reasons of His own God elected to take six full days to deal with the damage Satan had caused and also to take things to the next phase by creating Adam and Eve. But if Satan had remained faithful, like the archangel Michael and all the other holy angels of God, then there would have been no need for any of God's activities on the first four days.

Can you understand this?

I suspect that there is some kind of inverse relationship between Satan's rebellion and God's establishment of the seven-day week.

So exactly what type of activities did God stop doing on the seventh day?

God took six days to deal with the consequences of Satan's sins. The Sabbath was a day of cessation of **activities most of which should never have been needed**, had Satan not sinned in the first place. If Satan had not sinned, then there would not have been a seven-day re-creation week! And neither would there have been a need to set apart one day (i.e. the Sabbath) from all other days (i.e. the other six days of the week). **There would have been no reason to distinguish in importance one day from another.**

If Satan had not sinned, then God's ORIGINAL plan would simply have proceeded to the next phase (whatever that might have been?), without any seven-day week ever being established. In other words, when the time came for God to create man in His own image and likeness, then that would not necessarily have been any particular "6th day"! And then, had they not sinned, Satan and the demons would very likely have become the guardian angels for human beings.

We need to understand just how much of what God does is **a response** to what has gone before! Here are some examples:

1) The creation of weeds was **God's response** to Adam's sin.

2) The flood was **God's response** to human sins.

3) The division into languages was **God's response** to human sins.

4) Israel's 40 years of wandering were **God's response** to Israel's sins.

5) God not driving out all the Canaanite tribes was **God's response** to sins.

6) Various servitudes and captivities for Israel were **God's response** to sins.

7) Dividing Israel into two kingdoms was **God's response** to Solomon's sins.

8) Giving Israel some statutes and some judgments whereby they should NOT have lived (Ezekiel 20:25) was **God's response** to sins.

9) The prophesied horrific end-time events will be **God's response** to human sins.

10) The creation of sicknesses and diseases is **God's response** to human sins.

AND THE CREATION OF **THE SEVEN-DAY WEEK**, CULMINATING IN THE SABBATH DAY, WAS **GOD'S RESPONSE TO SATAN'S SINS**!

We need to understand God "stopping certain activities" on the Sabbath in the proper context of God stopping **activities that were a response to sins** that had been committed by Satan. God stopped doing things, most of which should never have been needed to be done in the first place! Can you understand this perspective?

So let's ask once again: WHY does cessation from those specific activities in Genesis 1 make that seventh day eligible for sanctification?

In God's presence all time is holy. Put another way, in God's presence every day is holy. In God's presence there is no distinction in holiness between one day and another; they are all holy because of God's presence. It is impossible for there to be a day in the presence of God (i.e. God the Father; we're not talking about Jesus Christ during His human ministry) that is not holy.

So God took six days to deal with the damage Satan's rebellion had caused, and once that damage had been resolved, THEN time was once again holy, **as it had been all along before Satan rebelled**. Time being holy is the norm in the presence of God, not the exception! But time being holy in the presence of God does NOT mean that God and those in His presence (i.e. the HOLY angels at this point in time) are all "resting", not at all. The concept of resting per se has nothing at all to do with holiness.

Genesis 1 should make quite clear to us that the establishment of the weekly cycle was a part of God's response to Satan's rebellion. God chose to deal with that rebellion and its consequences over a period of 6000 years, after which 6000 years the original condition of holiness for everything in God's creation will begin to be re-established, because Jesus Christ will reign in person. And the re-establishment of holiness will then be completed when God creates the new heaven and the new earth.

So ORIGINALLY, after Satan had sinned but before Adam and Eve sinned, **God intended that seventh-day Sabbath to represent ALL FUTURE ETERNITY BEYOND THOSE 6000 YEARS**! You see, **there was nothing to follow that sixth day**, except for **all future eternity, represented by the Sabbath**.

Can you now see why God originally didn't attach any particular "keeping" to the Sabbath for Adam and Eve and their descendants? How would they have "kept" something that represented all future eternity ... by sitting around and doing nothing and just "resting" on that day, i.e. the popular idea of "heaven"?

Note! **God's original intention for the Sabbath was changed in the new plan** of God that went into force after the flood! More on this later when we get to the discussion of the Land Sabbath and the Jubilee.

Now in practice in our physical circumstances with physical lives: for us a new week starts every time that the present week comes to an end (i.e. at sunset at the end of the Sabbath). So this cycle repeats

itself endlessly throughout our physical lives.

But in God's existence, and in God's original intentions, when the Sabbath is reached, then that was to be the end! For God originally there was not going to be any "next week", as far as symbolism is concerned. Once God had ceased from the activities of dealing with the consequences of sins, then THAT PROCESS WAS NOT TO BE REPEATED AGAIN!

Originally in Genesis 2 God intended all dealings with the consequences of sins, that would come about during the 6000 years God was allotting to human life, to be completed by the time the seventh "1000-year day" would start. The beginning of the seventh 1000-year period would see **a permanent cessation of all activities that would or could lead to sins and destruction**, and in that way the seventh "1000-year day" was intended to be **the gateway into all future eternity** in the presence of God. God would have created the new heaven and the new Earth after those 6000 years had come to an end, at the very start of the seventh 1000-year period.

Before Adam and Eve sinned God apparently intended to give human beings a period of 6000 years, with no person ever dying, at the end of which period all those that had responded correctly to God would have been changed into spirit beings, and "the Sabbath" would have started. And that "Sabbath" would have represented all future eternity in the presence of God. Perhaps God intended for human reproduction to stop after 5000 years, so that at the end of the 6000 years every human beings would have been AT LEAST 1000 years old? Just a speculation.

[**COMMENT**: Regarding God initially intending to give Adam and Eve a 6000-year lifespan, with progressively shorter lifespans for their children: Consider that God the Father and Jesus Christ have lived for all past eternity, longer than multiple trillions of years. Consider that They were planning to give an immortal existence to those human beings who would fully accept their way of life; these human beings would then live as spirit beings for all future eternity, also longer than multiple trillions of years.

But God had never before created physical human beings, and there was no way for God to predict the results that would be achieved in working with such physical human beings imbued with a free will. There was an element of risk for God involved, that these human beings might rebel and cause problems. So from God's perspective of offering a future existence of trillions upon trillions of years to these human beings, what better way to test them than to expose them to **a long physical lifetime**?

After all, God wasn't looking for a one-time obedience stemming from an emotional response to God, a response based on impulsive feelings. No, God wanted to know: are you human beings going to obey Me for the long haul, over thousands of years, for ever? You may obey Me right now; but will you still joyfully obey Me a thousand years from now? Or will you then see things differently?

In this context I find the initial intention to test human beings over thousands of years rather likely. Subsequent very much shorter lives for human beings are based to some degree on God's experiences with mortal human beings; God had learned a great deal about human beings during those 1500+ years before the flood. So I myself believe that it is quite likely that God initially wanted to test Adam and Eve by giving them a 6000-year physical lifetime, with progressively shorter lives for their descendants. After all, God also created trees that can survive for thousands of years. So why not human beings? "As the days of a tree ..." Isaiah 65:22.]

Now when Adam and Eve sinned, then God restricted the human lifespan to a maximum of **just under** 1000 years. That seems fairly clear from the number of people who lived in excess of 900 years, including Noah.

So note the following:

When Adam and Eve sinned, God's plan for human beings continued as planned, except for the point that from then onwards all human beings would be restricted to a lifespan of just under 1000 years, **AND THEY WOULD DIE**! This is what God meant when He said to Adam: "in the day that you eat thereof (it will be decided that) you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17), i.e. your lifespan will be limited to less than 1000 years, **less than a full "day"**.

This one change replaced God's original intention to give Adam and Eve a 6000-year lifespan, with their descendants all having progressively shorter lifespans, but with no human beings ever dying before the end of that 6000-year period. And when they ate the forbidden fruit, then death entered the human existence, precisely like God had said.

Now let's take a look at the Sabbath commandment, given at the time of Moses.

THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 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: 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 20:8-11)

This commandment tells us two distinct things: **FIRST** it tells us what **WE** are to do, and **SECOND** it tells us what **GOD** had done! On that first Sabbath God did **THREE** things: God "**rested**" and God "**blessed**" and God "**hallowed**".

We are instructed to also do **THREE** things: we are to "**remember**" and we are to "**KEEP holy**" and we are to "**not do any work**".

For a start we should note that where in Genesis 2:2-3 God did NOT use any word that means "rest", here in Exodus 20:11 God DID use a Hebrew word that means "rest". The Hebrew verb translated "rested" in Exodus 20:11 is "**nuwach**" (also sometimes alternatively transliterated as "nuah").

The **Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament** (TWOT), in the section devoted to this verb "nuwach" (i.e. #1323.0 in TWOT), gives a list of Hebrew verbs that apply to the general subject of resting. Here is what TWOT says (unedited, except for bolding portions of the text):

"**Our root** (i.e. "nuwach") signifies not only **absence of movement** but **being settled in a particular place** (whether concrete or abstract) with **overtones of finality**, or (when speaking abstractly) of victory, salvation, etc. For **synonyms** cf. **shabat**, connoting **the absence** of activity (or, **of a particular activity**), **shaqat** which connotes **the absence of disturbance** from external causes, **shalam**, connoting **wholeness**, i.e. **the state of well being**, and **domi quiet**, **raga to be in repose**." (TWOT #1323)

"Basically the root **nuah** relates to **absence of spatial activity** and presence of security, as seen, e.g. in **the ark which 'rested' on Mount Ararat**, (Genesis 8:4) and **the locusts 'resting' on Egypt** (Exodus 10:14)." (TWOT #1323)

Let's summarize this scholarly information in simple terms. Here is what this quotation from TWOT tells us:

1) **SHABAT** means: the absence of a particular activity.

2) **SHAQAT** means: the absence of disturbance.

3) **SHALAM** means: wholeness, a state of well being.

4) **DOMI** means: quiet.

5) **RAGA** means: to be in repose.

6) **NUWACH** means: an absence of movement, being settled with overtones of finality.

Now **the TWOT description for "nuwach" is not fully correct**, as can be seen from this verb's use in Exodus 10:14. When the locusts "**rested** in all the coasts of Egypt" (Hebrew "nuwach"), that hardly implied an absence of movement. Those **locusts ate voraciously and devastated the entire land of Egypt**, continuing on their unimpeded march through the land. That was hardly "motionless". Similarly, when God Himself (in the person of Jesus Christ) in Exodus 20:11 said that He "rested the seventh day", this likewise most assuredly **did not mean that God was motionless for 24 hours**, not at all.

However, we can accept that in general terms "nuwach" is a reference to **being settled**, having ceased His prior activities, and in that sense "resting". So let's get back to the things mentioned in this commandment.

Note that the two lists of three points each are not identical! In plain terms: THIS COMMANDMENT DOES NOT TELL US TO DO WHAT GOD DID ON THAT DAY!

God "**rested**" and "**blessed**" and "**hallowed**". But these are NOT the three things God instructs man to do! In God's instructions for the Sabbath man is neither instructed "to rest", nor is man instructed "to bless". So let's note God's instructions very closely.

1) Man is commanded "**to remember**" the day of cessation of God's activities. This is an instruction that applies to **man's mind**, not necessarily to man's actions. Thus we should expect instructions regarding what man is to do (or not do) on the Sabbath to still follow this instruction directed at man's mind. And they do follow.

2) Man is commanded to "**keep holy**" the day of cessation of God's activities. Implied is that man himself is utterly incapable of "making" any period of time holy. The best that man can do is KEEP something holy that God Himself first made holy! **Now the way to keep a day holy is to emulate to the best of our capacity the "thing" God did on that particular day.** Now the most notable "thing" God did on that Sabbath day is: God stopped His activities of dealing with and repairing the destructive consequences of Satan's sins!

So the way for us human beings to "keep the Sabbath holy" is for us to cease all activities that lead to sins; **we must stop all activities that originate with Satan's influence over and manipulation of human societies**. In other words, we cease from all involvement in any activities that would in time require God to deal with the negative consequences of those activities.

In plain terms: It is sin that would stop the Sabbath being holy and defile it. Therefore keeping it holy requires us to not sin. That is what the instruction "to keep the Sabbath holy" means: don't commit any sins.

3) Finally, man is commanded to "**not do any work**" on the Sabbath. The Hebrew word here translated

as "work" is "melakah", the word we saw in Genesis 2:2-3. As we saw, this word refers to: our business, occupation or plain work. Now WHY does God instruct us to not work on the Sabbath? It is NOT primarily because we are supposed to rest. So what is God's main intent with this instruction?

The main intent of God's instruction that we are not to do any work on the Sabbath is this: We are not to be involved with **ANY** activities, be they work or professional or leisure activities, that would in **any** way reflect **any** of Satan's attitudes of competition, selfishness, greed, covetousness, lusting, etc., which would require God at some future point to intervene once again for the purpose of dealing with the damage caused by sins.

Note that even **man's efforts at providing for his own food and his own other needs** are a consequence of sins. Had man not sinned, then God would ALWAYS have provided for all of man's needs, the needs Jesus Christ instructed us to ask God for on a daily basis ("give us this day our daily bread", Matthew 6:11). That is why God wants us on the Sabbath to stop doing all our work aimed at providing for all our needs (i.e. earning money), because that work itself is a reminder of man's sins. And when God's "Sabbath" comes into effect (i.e. the millennium), then God will once again provide for all of man's needs, as God had done for Adam before Adam sinned.

So in plain terms:

When God blessed and sanctified the Sabbath in Genesis 2:3, it was God's intention to picture that AFTER 6000 YEARS there would never again be a time when the consequences of sins would have to be dealt with! Before Adam sinned it was God's intention that after 6000 years time would always be "blessed" and "holy" for all future eternity, without end!

That is why God "ceased" from His activities of having dealt with the consequences of Satan's sins! That is the real significance of the Sabbath Day in Genesis 2.

But that is NOT the significance God attached to the Sabbath by the time we get to Exodus chapter 20. **By Exodus 20 the Sabbath has a slightly different significance.**

Before moving on we should also note that while the commandment tells us that God "rested", **the commandment does NOT say that man is to rest**! In Exodus 20:8-11 there is no direct instruction for us to rest; the only instruction that approaches the concept of resting is that we are not to work. But not working is not necessarily the same as resting. Shortly we'll look at Isaiah 58 for more specific instructions.

THE MODIFICATION OF GOD'S PLAN

For over 1500 years God continued with His original plan for mankind, with only minor modifications. The main modifications at that time were that mankind would be limited to a lifespan short of 1000 years, and that man would have to work to provide for all of his own needs.

But by 120 years before the flood God had decided to make some major modifications. Those major modifications also affected the Sabbath. Here's how this aspect of the modifications works:

Where originally God allocated only 6000 years for human beings to qualify for the gift of eternal life in the presence of God, after which 6000 years the **endless future eternity would have started**, pictured by the seventh day Sabbath, **God modified the plan** so that there would now be 7100 years for human beings to have an opportunity for eternal life in the Family of God, instead of only 6000 years.

God revealed the details of this modified plan in the days of Moses, by way of all the observances listed in Leviticus 23. In the modified plan the Sabbath would picture a 1000-year rule by Jesus Christ, which 1000-year period God ADDED to the original period of 6000 years. God added this period to give human beings the opportunity to actually experience the existence that God had intended for all human beings, had Adam and Eve not sinned. During that 1000-year period Jesus Christ will rule over the whole Earth, **as He had intended to rule for 6000 years over the Earth if Adam had not sinned**.

So where the Sabbath in Genesis chapter 2 had represented the start of an endless future eternity in the presence of God, from the time of Moses onwards the Sabbath represents the 1000-year rule of Jesus Christ, which follows the 6000 years (in round numbers), during which 6000 years mankind is free to choose either God's way of life or the way of rebellion against God. Originally (in Genesis 2) the Sabbath represented an unlimited future period of time, characterized by all work that either leads to sins or else deals with the consequences of sins having ceased, having been forcefully and permanently terminated.

From Exodus 20 onwards the Sabbath represents a finite, limited period of time, 1000 years to be precise, during which those types of "work" will mostly have ceased, BUT NOT ABSOLUTELY SO! Even though Satan will then be bound, there will still be a rebellion against Jesus Christ at some point during the millennium (see Ezekiel 38). And then, when Satan is briefly released at the end of those 1000 years (Revelation 20:7), then there will be another major rebellion, showing that at the start of the millennium the cessation of those types of "works" had not been absolute.

Note! The symbolism for the Sabbath changed with the new plan after the flood because God made provision for rebellious actions and attitudes to still be possible **after the first 6000 years**, something that would NOT have been possible in the original plan God intended to set in motion before Adam sinned.

God's revised plan after the flood also makes provision for a 100-year period attached to the end of the millennium for those who will be in the second resurrection. During that 100-year period rebellious wrong attitudes will still be potentially possible, even though Satan will also not be around during that 100-year period. So it is not possible for "the work of dealing with the consequences of rebellion against God" (i.e. the same type of work that God did in Genesis 1) to cease absolutely before the time of the lake of fire. And **therefore** the original symbolism attached to the weekly Sabbath had to be modified.

As long as we have been in God's Church you and I have always understood that the Sabbath represents the millennium. And that is correct, and has been correct since the time after the flood. But when God established that first Sabbath in Genesis 2, the millennium was not yet a part of God's plan, and therefore the Sabbath could not have been representative of something that wasn't yet a part of God's plan.

Can you see WHY the Sabbath originally had a different symbolism? Keep in mind that at that time before the flood the Feasts and Holy Days weren't a part of God's plan either.

As an aside: when you understand that in Genesis 2 the Sabbath was the time when God stopped His work of dealing with the consequences of Satan's rebellion, then it should be quite clear why Satan cannot possibly be around during the millennial "Sabbath" to come. The millennium will be a time when God has ceased dealing with the results of Satan's activities. Ditto for the 100-year period. Satan cannot be around during either period. So the short time that Satan is loosed is wedged between the 1000-year "Sabbath" and the 100-year period for those in the second resurrection.

To get back to the Sabbath commandment:

For most people the instruction "in it you shall not do any work" is still not specific enough. People are likely to argue about what constitutes "work". The clarification that God "ceased from doing the work of dealing with the consequences of Satan's rebellion" should help somewhat in this regard. But God Himself actually clarified this commandment further at the time of the prophet Isaiah. Once we have examined those statements, then we are ready to define the word "THAT" in God's injunction "I want you to stop doing that. Do you understand Me?"

THE WORKS FROM WHICH WE ARE TO CEASE ON THE SABBATH

Let's look at 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*.

Here approximately 700 years after the time of Moses God spelled out an application of the Sabbath command in practical terms. Verse 13 spells out in simple terms how God wants us to keep the Sabbath. So let's notice some key statements.

1) We must "**turn our feet away from trampling on the Sabbath**", i.e. beware of showing disdain and contempt for the Sabbath. Now **the way** people trample all over the Sabbath is by: seeking "their own pleasure", "doing their own ways", and "speaking their own words", the things mentioned in the rest of this verse.

2) Next God says we are "**not to do our own pleasure**". This is a reference to all selfish pursuits, which certainly includes all our hobbies and sports interests and entertainment interests, the things people typically take pleasure in doing. It certainly includes our normal weekday jobs, whether we enjoy doing them or not. So with this statement God has already delineated a range of activities that are unacceptable for the Sabbath.

The question is: **WHY does God not want us to engage in OUR pleasures** on the Sabbath? The answer is that all of us are a part of this present world, of which Satan is "the god" (2 Corinthians 4:4). And whether we realize it or not, every activity in this world's ways and entertainment and leisure activities is influenced by Satan and to some or other degree under Satan's control. For example, sports activities are based on a spirit of competition, which spirit originates with Satan. All our games likewise are typically some form of competition. Our forms of entertainment (movies, TV, plays, novels, etc.) are likewise controlled by Satan. Education around the world is also heavily influenced by Satan.

We are hard pressed to find any activities in this present age (I am not talking about Bible Study and biblical research and specifically enjoined Christian conduct) that are not in some or other way influenced by Satan's philosophy. Many activities will subtly lead us into wrong ways of thinking, even if no wrong overt activities are involved, as typified in "standing on the corner, watching all the girls go by".

In simple terms: what God refers to as "our pleasures" is a reference to ALL activities that would eventually require God to once again "work" at removing the destructive ultimate consequences of those activities. All the ways of this present evil world are destined to be eradicated, because they all originate from an ungodly mindset. And even we in the Church of God mostly don't realize just how pervasive Satan's influence is in every facet of human society. So on the Sabbath we are to refrain from engaging

in all those activities.

3) We are to **call the Sabbath a delight, holy and honorable**. These statements refer to **the attitude** we are to have towards the Sabbath. This is the equivalent of the Exodus 20:8 instruction to "remember the day of cessation of activities (i.e. the Sabbath) to keep it holy". It is easy to quietly see the Sabbath as an interference with our wishes, as a day that restricts the activities we can be involved in, even if we never put these thoughts into words. Are we impatient for the Sabbath to end so that we can then do what we really want to do? If so, it means that the activities WE want to do will probably not be available during the millennium. This leads to the next point.

4) We are to use the Sabbath to **honor God**. This we do by seeking to first understand and then to implement the will of God in our lives. We respect God's wishes by forcing our own wishes into the background, as in "not my will be done but YOUR will be done" (Luke 22:42). We honor God by seeking to please God (1 John 3:22), which goes beyond the attitude of "what do I have to do to get by?".

5) We are "**not to do our own ways**". The Hebrew word "derek" (i.e. "way") refers to: a road, journey, direction, way of life, etc. We are to seek to walk God's way of life, and that means we must reject our own ways. This is similar to us not seeking our own pleasure, though here the emphasis is more on our whole way of life, of which our form of employment is a major part, our way of earning a living and coping with life in general. These are all "ways" that will be permanently eradicated when God rules.

6) We are **not to find our own pleasure**. This is the second time God has mentioned this point within this one verse; so it is clearly something very important to God! The above-mentioned points apply again. We need to always pay special attention when God says something twice.

7) We are **not to speak our own words**. Our words reflect the thoughts we are thinking. And "our own words" is a reference to speaking about things that are interesting or important to us. Our words also influence other people. So if we speak about "our interests" on the Sabbath, and all speaking is obviously directed at one or more other people, it means that we point the minds of other people to also think about the subjects that are "our interests".

All these statements in Isaiah 58:13 are God's own elaboration of the commandment in Exodus 20:8-11. Specifically, the Exodus 20:10 instruction "**in it you shall do not do any work**" is broken down in Isaiah 58:13 into the three statements: "**don't do your own ways**", "**don't find your own pleasure**", and "**don't speak your own words**".

However, notice that once again there is no direct statement regarding God wanting us to rest on the Sabbath! In neither Exodus 20 nor in Isaiah 58 does God instruct us to rest on the Sabbath. That is because God is not concerned with us resting, but rather God is concerned that we stop certain activities, broken down into three specific categories here in Isaiah 58:13.

So now let's look at our original "that" statement.

THE MEANING OF "THAT"

Earlier I said that the Sabbath commandment basically says: "**I want you to stop doing that! Do you understand me?**". So now let's define what we mean by "doing THAT".

Basically, on the Sabbath God wants us to cease from engaging in any activities that would in time require God to once again have to repair the damage those activities would cause. God wants us to

cease from all activities that are not compatible with God's original intentions for mankind, **God's intentions before Adam sinned**.

In practical terms this means:

1) We are not to do **our regular work** by which we earn our living, whether that work involves the expenditure of energy or not. These activities can also be referred to as "**the cares of this life**" (Luke 21:34).

2) We are not to engage in **our leisure or entertainment activities** or hobbies.

3) We are not to be involved in any **sporting activities**.

4) We are **not to think about** all the things included in the above three points in any concerted way, basically by exercising a measure of control over our minds.

THESE FOUR POINTS ARE WHAT IS MEANT BY "**THAT**" IN THE STATEMENT "**I WANT YOU TO STOP DOING THAT**"!

Now when we stop doing the things in **the first three points**, then a common consequence is typically a certain amount of "rest". Rest is not the instruction; rest is only a consequence of the instruction to stop doing those three things. We could refer to these first three categories of activities as "the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15), worldly activities. And there is no place for them in the world to come, when Jesus Christ will rule over human beings. And therefore there is also no place for them on the Sabbath, which represents that coming Kingdom.

And when we apply **the fourth point** (to not focus our thoughts on those things), then that produces a state of relaxation and contentment and peace and satisfaction and freedom from stress. It is this fourth point of controlling our thought processes that injects real power into the first three points. The mind must always be involved in any and all commandment-keeping activities.

Without this fourth point the first three points are ineffective, as far as God is concerned. An example of this is found in Amos 8:5, where people had the attitude that says: when will the Sabbath be over so that we can make some more money? The question could just as well be: when will the Sabbath be over so that we can carry on with our sports or hobbies or entertainment? Before God that type of Sabbath-keeping is obviously of no value, because it is nothing more than an outward action without any corresponding participation by the mind.

So the Sabbath is a "stop all those specific activities" commandment. The focus of this commandment is on **the motivation for those activities**. When the motivation is to get things for self, to advance self in any material way (e.g. earn some money), to entertain self or others, to compete with self (e.g. golf) or others (other sports like tennis, etc.), to plan out future activities for self, to take care of household chores, etc., then those activities do not belong in the Sabbath.

As an aside, we can also look at this matter another way:

The weekly Sabbath represents the millennium. Broadly speaking and excluding instructions that apply to the preparation of food on the Sabbath, the activities that will not be allowed or engaged in during the millennium are also not appropriate for the weekly Sabbath. This simple principle can help increase our understanding in both directions. Knowing which activities are unacceptable for the weekly Sabbath can give us some insight into what things will be like during the millennium. And understanding what will happen during the millennium can give us some insight into the weekly Sabbath. (This is not an absolute

standard but only a general guideline. Certain limitations that apply to the preparation of food on the Sabbath are not necessarily representative of what will happen in the millennium.)

Anyway, when we consider the above points, that still leaves a lot of scope for activities that spring from a totally different motivation. **So let's look at some activities that are not restricted by the Sabbath commandment** because they don't in any way conflict with God's intentions for the Sabbath.

1) **ANY DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS FROM GOD** are never in conflict with the Sabbath commandment. So whether God instructs the priests to kill sacrifices or to carry the Ark, or whether God instructs the soldiers to march for many miles and to then fight a battle, or whether God instructs the whole nation to march out of Egypt at the very start of a Holy Day, or whether God gives any person any other instruction to carry out, God's direct instructions are always totally acceptable activities for the Sabbath. **None of God's direct instructions to do anything** (walk, march, carry objects, kill animals in sacrifice, fight against an enemy, etc.) **are included in the meaning of "work" in the statement "in it you shall not do any work"**.

In Exodus 20:10 God did not use the word "work" as a synonym for "actions that will require the expenditure of energy"!

Rather, God used the word "work" to refer to: "any activity whose consequences would in due time require God to once again have to 'work' to remove and blot out those consequences". But whether or not such activities would require us to expend considerable effort is not a consideration in God's use of the word "work" one way or the other! It is always **the motivation** and the purpose for those activities rather than the activity itself that is the deciding factor in defining "work".

2) **Any activities that are in response to an unexpected emergency are never in conflict with the Sabbath commandment.** Here in the USA we have just experienced the monumental disaster of "Hurricane Sandy", with estimated damages to property possibly exceeding $50 Billion. Many people's homes were flooded and swept away or damaged by falling trees or burnt to the ground by raging fires. Millions of people will be without electricity for over a week, and in some areas this hurricane brought unexpected cold weather blizzards with two feet of snow. Some people were trapped by this hurricane. A large section of the Northeastern USA is (at the time of writing this) in a state of emergency as a result of this hurricane.

By the Sabbath after the storm multiple millions of people's homes were still in a state of disaster. And activities that are aimed at responding to such disasters (rescuing trapped people, removing flood debris from their homes, collecting scattered personal possessions, working to have some form of shelter from the elements, removing flood waters from people's homes, etc.) are not meant by God's instructions in Exodus 20:10. Dealing with genuine emergencies on both the individual level and the nationwide level is not in conflict with the Sabbath commandment, because God was not trying to restrict our responses to unexpected emergencies. Responses to genuine emergencies are not what God means by "work" in Exodus 20.

Over 20 years ago one Sabbath morning I opened the water faucet in the sink, and when I then tried to shut off the water the little washer in the tap broke, and I had an uncontrollable stream of water running into that sink. This was an emergency. I therefore immediately shut off the main water line to our house. I had on many previous occasions changed old washers in leaking taps, and I had a supply of new washers available in my garage. I then proceeded in about 10 minutes to change the broken washer in the faulty tap and then I again turned on the main water supply to our house. The whole episode took about 15 minutes of my time. For those 15 minutes I was doing the work of a plumber.

On another occasion about 15 years ago I had a puncture in a rear tire of our car while driving to church

services one Sabbath. I managed to pull over to the side, and then I took about 15 minutes to replace the flat tire with the spare tire. We still got to services well before it was time to start. This too was an emergency, and for those 15 minutes I was doing the work of a car mechanic (loosely speaking).

The point is that genuine emergencies are all "an ox fallen into a pit" situations (see Luke 14:5), and it is proper to deal with such emergencies immediately, even on the Sabbath. Now here is the point we need to understand:

It is NOT that God somehow "makes an exception" for dealing with such emergencies! **God never makes exceptions to His laws!** If God were ever to make one single exception somewhere, where would God then draw the line? Would God also make an exception if similar circumstances arose again at some future point? Or would God say: no, this time I won't make an exception? Can you see the problem if God were ever to accept one single exception to His laws?

The point is this: **the word "work" in Exodus 20:10 does not apply to any actions aimed at dealing with genuine emergencies**! Such actions are simply not included in the parameters of the word "work" **as used by God in this verse**.

Rather than imposing our own understanding on the word "work", we have a responsibility to determine what GOD was talking about when GOD used the word "work" in Exodus 20:10. And Isaiah 58:13 makes clear that GOD used the word "work" in Exodus 20:10 to refer to "doing OUR ways" and to "finding OUR pleasure" and to "speaking OUR words". But dealing with emergencies has nothing to do with finding our pleasure or speaking our words or doing our ways. So God did not intend the Sabbath commandment to apply to **necessary responses** to emergency situations.

To state this plainly: It is perfectly appropriate for us to deal with unexpected emergencies on the Sabbath. Dealing with such unexpected emergencies is not what God means by "work" in Exodus 20:10. Examples would be: dealing with a flood or a fire to save as many of our (or a neighbor's) possessions as possible, dealing with accidental injuries to minimize any potential health problems, helping people who are victims of car accidents, securing our possessions from an unexpected but imminent approaching storm (e.g. an approaching tornado) and helping our neighbors with the same task, etc. All these activities may well be strenuous and require a considerable amount of our energy, but they are NOT "work" as God has used the word "work" in the commandment, because they are NOT our ways or pleasures or words. They are unforseen emergencies, and we should deal with them in the appropriate ways.

However, if we happen to be professional firefighters or law-enforcement officers, THEN those activities are not at all emergencies for us. No, in those jobs we are professional emergency responders, and dealing with emergencies is our full-time profession. So in those jobs dealing with emergencies is nothing more than a routine for us. Thus there is a distinction between a volunteer firefighter helping to fight a fire on the Sabbath, and a professional firefighter in his job capacity fighting that same fire on the Sabbath. For the professional man fighting fires on the Sabbath is a very real part of his job, and it is assumed that there will be fires on some Sabbath days somewhere in the area served by his fire-fighting unit.

As I stated earlier, it is not the activity per se that is the deciding factor regarding what is acceptable for the Sabbath and what is not acceptable; it is the motivation for that activity that is the deciding factor. It is an honorable profession to be a professional emergency responder within one's own community; but such professionals need to treat any Sabbath emergencies in their greater communities as a normal part of their jobs, and they should cease from their normal jobs on the Sabbath. In the millennium there will not be any professional emergency responders on the human level because "before they call, God will answer" (see Isaiah 65:24) to prevent any disasters. Today professional emergency responders also

need to keep the Sabbath by not working.

3) Another activity that is perfectly acceptable for the Sabbath is **picking any food for the purpose of immediate consumption**. That is also not what God means by "work". God expected Adam and Eve to pick as many pieces of fruit off the trees as they felt inclined to eat, and this activity was not in any way restricted on the Sabbath.

It makes no difference whether you pick one peach or apple for yourself, or whether you pick 20 peaches or apples for the dozen people who are with you (e.g. Jesus Christ on the Sabbath walked through the fields with His 12 apostles). If you are walking with a dozen hungry people, then it is quite acceptable for you to pick 20-30 pieces of fruit so that each person can have perhaps two pieces for immediate consumption. And it makes no difference whether 12 people pick two pieces of fruit each, or whether you pick all 24 pieces and then hand them out.

What you should not do on the Sabbath is pick 20 pieces of fruit to put in your fridge for eating over the next few days. THAT is something you should do on days other than the Sabbath. But for any fruits or grains or vegetables or nuts that you intend to eat right away there is no restriction in how much you can pick.

It is utterly absurd to claim, as the Pharisees did, that picking some wheat out of the field for the purpose of immediate consumption somehow constitutes "work" (see Mark 2:23-24). What the disciples did was no different from what Adam and Eve would have done on that very first Sabbath back in Genesis ... pick some food for immediate consumption. The reasoning underlying the thinking of the Pharisees is completely hypocritical!

So don’t let anybody ever try to tell you that Jesus Christ somehow sanctioned the breaking of the Sabbath, because He permitted His disciples to pick some ears of wheat for the purpose of immediate consumption. Such an activity is simply not what God means by the word "work" in Exodus 20:10.

Picking fresh fruits and vegetables for immediate consumption does not go against the intent of the Sabbath law. However, if you want to gather fruits not for immediate consumption but for storing till later in the day and only eating it at that later time, THEN you should really plan ahead and gather such fruits for storing before the Sabbath starts. That is the principle of gathering manna on the Friday for use on the Sabbath. But picking some fruits for immediate consumption involves the principle of Mark 2:23.

4) **Another group of activities** that is perfectly compatible with the Sabbath involves **trying to save lives or to alleviate human suffering**. Notice what Jesus Christ said to the Pharisees who were critical when Jesus Christ healed people on the Sabbath.

And He saith unto them, **Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days**, or **to do evil**? **to save life**, or **to kill**? But they held their peace. (Mark 3:4)

The Pharisees didn’t answer this question, and neither did Jesus Christ provide an answer. So let us answer this question.

A) It is **ALWAYS**, including on the Sabbath days, **lawful to do good**!

B) It is **NEVER**, on any day of the week, **lawful to do evil**!

C) It is **ALWAYS**, including on the Sabbath days, **lawful to save life**!

D) It is **NEVER**, on any day of the week, **lawful to kill**!

[COMMENT: In asking this question Jesus Christ was not thinking of the exception situation when it is God who instructs someone to go and kill, as in the days of Joshua for example. Here Jesus Christ used the expression "to kill" as an example of evil.]

So what did Jesus Christ actually do by asking this question?

In this question Jesus Christ was contrasting the two ways of life: God's way of life represented by "doing good", and Satan's way of life represented by "doing evil". Christ presented "saving life" as an example of "doing good", and "killing" as an example of "doing evil". Two opposing ways of life.

So why did Jesus Christ link these two ways of life to Sabbath-keeping?

The point Jesus Christ was making with this statement is this:

The Sabbath is never a restriction on "doing good". In giving the Sabbath commandment it was never God's intention to in any way restrict or limit "doing good"! Can you understand this? In other words, all "doing good" is excluded from the meaning of "work" in Exodus 20:10. So when God said "in it you shall not do any work", God was not restricting people regarding "doing good".

Thus: when we are faced with perhaps doing or not doing something on the Sabbath then we have to make a judgment. Does the activity we are considering amount to "doing good" or does it not amount to "doing good"? Making such a judgment is a part of the process of developing godly character. And yes, in this regard we'll probably make a wrong decision now and then. We'll know our decision was wrong because LATER we'll come to see that it was wrong, and that is when we resolve to in future decide differently on this particular issue (whatever it might be?).

A major part of coming to make right judgments in these types of situations is to seek to understand "doing good" from God's perspective rather than from our own human perspective. Humanly we might think of many things as "doing good"; that's what Uzzah most likely thought about what he was trying to do when the oxen shook the Ark of God (see 2 Samuel 6:6). Doing good from God's point of view isn't necessarily the same as doing good from our point of view. It is a learning process for us.

Next, **the Sabbath is always a restriction on "doing evil"**, just like every other day is a restriction on doing evil. So the point in Jesus Christ's question in Mark 3:4 is that the Sabbath has no influence on the most basic premise of the two ways of life. Sabbath-keeping cannot make doing good evil, nor can it make doing evil good. Sabbath-keeping is only one small facet of God's way of life, while **doing good is really the premise for every aspect of God's way of life**. And while doing good and Sabbath-keeping are NEVER at odds, of the two doing good is without question the greater, to make a comparison a la 1 Corinthians 13:13.

By now you hopefully understand that doing good never falls under the definition of "work" in Exodus 20:10, because doing good has nothing to do with "doing our own ways" or "finding our own pleasure" or "speaking our own words" (Isaiah 58:13).

Now Jesus Christ presented this question in Mark 3:4 in the context of the Pharisees being critical of Jesus Christ for healing people on the Sabbath. Healing people is an example of "doing good". But this principle of doing good on the Sabbath has a wide range of possible applications. Thus, visiting the sick on the Sabbath is an example of doing good. Bringing food supplies to people who are in need of food is another example. Spending time encouraging those who are despondent is another example. A minister anointing the sick on the Sabbath is another example. Many, many other activities could likewise fall into this category of doing good on the Sabbath. And each situation will require us to make an individual

assessment and judgment.

So when Jesus Christ healed people, usually by speaking to them, then Jesus Christ was most assuredly not "working" as per Exodus 20:10. Anyone who claims that Jesus Christ DID work in the process of healing people displays an enormous lack of understanding of what is actually included under the term "work" in Exodus 20:10.

We don't decide what is included in the word "work" and what is not included in the word "work". This has nothing to do with the dictionary definition of "work". It is God, and God only, who determined what should be included under "work" and what should be excluded. And an understanding of the type of work God did in Genesis 1 should make it easier to understand the intended meaning of "work" when God later gave the commandment in Exodus 20.

5) Another group of activities that is perfectly compatible with Sabbath-keeping is the matter of **going to and from Sabbath services**. It doesn't make a difference whether we have to travel one mile or a hundred miles to attend services; it doesn't matter whether we ride or whether we walk ten miles; traveling to Sabbath services is not an activity that God intended to restrict with the Sabbath commandment. Traveling to services on the Sabbath is not what God means by "work" because it has nothing to do with seeking our own ways or pleasures or words.

So these are some of the activities which God did not intend to restrict with the Sabbath commandment. The primary focus of the commandment is to restrict all those activities that would ultimately require God to "work" at dealing with the consequences of those activities. But there is no restriction on "doing good in the sight of God" on the Sabbath.

We've looked at picking foods out of the garden for immediate consumption. But now let's also look at preparing foods on the Sabbath.

FOOD PREPARATION ON THE SABBATH

We are all familiar with the concept of preparing for the Sabbath. This is based on the instructions God gave for gathering enough manna on a Friday to have sufficient left over for eating on the Sabbath. As a food source, manna was versatile enough to be eaten raw, boiled or ground into a type of flour for baking (see Numbers 11:8). Here are the instructions God gave:

And he said unto them, This *is that* which the LORD hath said, To morrow *is* the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: **bake** *that* which ye will bake *to day*, and **seethe** that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over **lay up** for you to be kept until the morning. (Exodus 16:23)

[COMMENT: The expression "the rest of the holy Sabbath" is a translation of the three Hebrew words "shabbatown shabbath qodesh", where "qodesh" means "holy". Later under the heading "Leviticus Chapter 25" I will examine the expression "shabbatown shabbath" in detail. For now I will just mention that this expression does NOT refer to "rest" at all. "Rest" is a mistranslation in this context.]

From this instruction we get the principle of preparing for the Sabbath. The principle here is: prepare for the Sabbath by doing in advance those things that can be done in advance, so that necessary food preparation activities on the Sabbath itself are minimized.

Now we need to understand these instructions in Exodus 16 in the context in which they were given. At that time the people did not have:

- an electric stove for cooking

- an electric oven for baking

- a running fresh water supply in their tents

- an electric slow cooker

- an electric food blender and food mixer

- a refrigerator and freezer

- a microwave oven

- a box of matches to start a fire

- an electric kettle for boiling water

- a butcher who would sell them small pieces of meat to store in a fridge

- a greengrocer who would sell them fresh fruits and vegetables

- a dairy that would sell them fresh milk and cream and butter and cheese

- the ability to buy "convenience foods" for warming up, etc.

I know these things are obvious. But we should keep in mind that at that time in history **preparing the day's food was an all-day affair** for the women in a family.

In the wilderness Israel didn't face their normal circumstances. But their typical routines before they left Egypt and after they settled in Palestine would have been along the following lines:

The women could literally work from early morning until late afternoon to prepare the evening meal for the family. People would have to gather firewood for cooking and baking; they would have to fetch water to their homes for cooking and drinking; they would have to laboriously grind some wheat in a mortar to obtain flour for baking; if they wanted to have meat for the meal they had to slaughter a small animal (a chicken, lamb, kid of the goats, etc.) and then prepare the animal for cooking or roasting a few hours later; if they wanted some fruits or vegetables, then they had to go out and gather them from a garden or some orchard; they had no access to refrigerated foods; if they wanted milk then someone had to first milk the cow; if they wanted butter then someone had to manually churn the cream until butter was formed; etc.

The point is this: Even a simple task like boiling, baking or roasting certain food items might take 3-6 hours of work on the part of one or more people; starting with gathering the wood for a fire, and fetching the water for cooking, and grinding the grain into fine flour for baking, etc. right up to making the fire and then cooking the food on it. And throughout the cooking process the people involved had to give this activity their undivided attention, including maintaining the fire. They couldn't put things on a timer with a buzzer to remind them when the food was ready; and they couldn't set the fire to cook the food at a set temperature for a specified period of time. They had to watch things constantly.

So when God gave Israel this instruction in Exodus 16:23 to bake and to boil their foods for the Sabbath in advance, God was in effect saying: I don't want you to spend 5 hours on the Sabbath just to prepare your meals. Meal preparations were a lengthy and labor-intensive process, and if the Israelites in Old Testament times had spent their Sabbath days cooking and baking just enough for their daily needs, for

many people **that could have taken up most of the day**.

We live in completely different circumstances. We can take something out of the fridge, put it in a slow cooker or on the stove or in the oven, and then we can go away. We've set a timer to remind us 30 or 60 or 90 minutes later that the food is ready to be served. So 30 or 60 or 90 minutes later we go back to the kitchen and place the cooked or baked foods into one or more serving dishes and take these dishes to the table.

With all our modern conveniences (running water, fridges, stoves, dishwashers, blenders, etc.) we can have many food items prepared in less than 15 minutes, where the preparation of those same food items would have taken people in biblical times several hours to prepare. So for us the preparation of food is not nearly the same distraction that it would have been for people in the days of Moses.

God was not concerned about people spending a few minutes preparing something to eat on the Sabbath. The intention underlying this instruction was to prevent people from spending several hours every Sabbath just to prepare something to eat.

In our circumstances today the principle is this: IF we on the Sabbath want to eat certain foods that require a long time to prepare, THEN we need to prepare those foods in advance of the Sabbath; otherwise we should forego our desire to have those particular foods on the Sabbath, and have them on a different day instead, a day when how long it takes to prepare a food is not an issue. But in our circumstances it is very easy to prepare a great variety of foods quite easily and quickly, and all of those foods would be quite acceptable to prepare on the Sabbath. But even then it is good if we plan ahead and prepare in advance all those things that can be prepared ahead of time.

It is important that we have an attitude of respect for God's Sabbath day by opting to have foods that require very little preparing on the Sabbath itself, rather than on the Sabbath opting for foods that require a long time to prepare. **It is the lengthy preparation process that God's instruction is aimed at curtailing.**

To be clear here: It is not the activity itself (i.e. cooking, baking, boiling, blending, etc.) that is the issue. Rather, the issue is one of not requiring our attention for a lengthy period of time. The foods we have on the Sabbath can be as exotic and elaborate as you like, provided that they only require a short period to prepare on the Sabbath. We need to stay away from foods that require a lot of our time on the Sabbath to prepare. About 40 years ago I was told to apply "the K.I.S.S. Principle", which stood for "**K**eep **I**t **S**imple, **S**tupid". It is a good principle to keep in mind when we contemplate our food choices for the Sabbath. Any foods that would require a lengthy preparation on the Sabbath itself should be avoided.

Right, that should cover the matter of food preparation on the Sabbath.

With a correct understanding of the weekly Sabbath, we are now ready to look at the Land Sabbath Year.

THE LAND SABBATH

When God had brought Israel out of Egypt, God led them to Mount Sinai where God then proposed **the Old Covenant** to Israel. The discussion of the Old Covenant starts in Exodus 20:1 with God Himself speaking the ten commandments to Israel, and the Old Covenant is concluded in Exodus 24:3 when "all the people answered with one voice, and said all the words which the Eternal has said will we do".

Now within the context of this Old Covenant God presented a number of points which are later expanded. Near the start of this covenant God had already presented the Sabbath commandment within the context of the ten commandments. But the Sabbath is then repeated in an interesting way towards the end of that covenant. Here is how this is presented.

1) In Exodus 23:10-11 God presents the instructions for **the Land Sabbath**.

2) **AFTER THAT** in Exodus 23:12 God then presents **the weekly Sabbath** again.

3) **AFTER THAT** in Exodus 23:14-17 God then presents **the three annual Feasts**, which God later in Leviticus 23 presents in a framework that includes the seven annual Holy Days.

To us it might have seemed logical in Exodus 23 to mention the weekly Sabbath before the Land Sabbath. But that is not what God did. Now this sequence of Land Sabbath first and then weekly Sabbath second and then the annual Feasts third is not haphazard. Here God intentionally introduced **the Land Sabbath first**, like a premise for the weekly Sabbath and the annual Feasts. Note also that in this passage God did not use the word "Sabbath" for either the Land Sabbath or for the weekly Sabbath. Instead God simply described the effects of both of these observances, but without using the word "Sabbath".

Now let's examine these original instructions for the Land Sabbath.

And **six years** thou shalt **sow** thy land, and shalt **gather** in the fruits thereof: But **the seventh *year*** thou shalt **let it rest** and **lie still**; that **the poor** of thy people **may eat**: and what they leave **the beasts of the field shall eat**. In like manner thou shalt deal with **thy vineyard**, *and* with **thy oliveyard**. (Exodus 23:10-11)

The expression "**the fruits thereof**" refers to **the harvest**! The Hebrew word here translated as "fruits" is "tebu'ah", and it refers to the whole harvest. We'll look more closely as this Hebrew word later when we examine Leviticus 25:7.

The "**six years**" here represent the **6000 years** allotted to man to work his way. All of man's activities go back to the most basic need of having to provide food to sustain man's life, represented by "sowing and gathering". So that is what is mentioned here.

The "**seventh year**" represents **the millennium**, that 1000-year period when Jesus Christ will rule with all those in the first resurrection. The seventh year is the Land Sabbath, and the Land Sabbath is used by God to represent the 1000-year rule of Jesus Christ.

Now we come to **two** significant **mistranslations** in this verse. They involve the expression "**let it rest and lie still**".

1) The Hebrew verb translated as "**let it rest**" is "**shamat**", which is used with the qal stem in this verse. But "shamat" does NOT mean "rest", any more than "shabath" means "rest". The Hebrew root verb "shamat" means: **to release**, **to let drop**, **to throw down**, **to let loose**, **to discontinue**. With the qal stem (as used in this verse) it means: **to let drop or fall**. These things don't really mean "rest". So the Hebrew for this expression translated as "let it rest" really means: let it be released, discontinue what you have been doing, **drop all your activities**. It is just another way of saying: I want you to stop doing THAT!

2) The Hebrew verb translated as "**let it lie still**" is "**natash**", here also used with the qal stem. Now "natash" also does not mean "lie still". The Hebrew root verb "natash" means: **to leave**, **to forsake**, to

cast off, to cast away, **to reject**.

Here is a quotation from TWOT for this verb "natash".

"There are **forty occurrences of natash in the OT**. About **half of these uses carry the idea of forsake or reject**; elsewhere, **natash frequently means leave**, **let alone** or spread, extend. Only in Genesis 31:28 does it mean permit (allow)" (TWOT #1357.0)

"Often **natash is used of God forsaking or casting off his people**. (Judges 6:13; 1 Samuel 12:22; 1 Kings 8:57; 2 Kings 21:14; Psalm 94:14; Isaiah 2:6; Jeremiah 7:29; Jeremiah 12:7; Jeremiah 23:33,39) On the other hand, God, (Deuteronomy 32:15; Jeremiah 15:6) David (Psalm 27:9) or Egypt (Ezekiel 29:5) may be the object of natash. The term is also used of **forsaking the tabernacle** at Shiloh (Psalm 78:60) and of **rejecting the teaching** of one's mother. (Proverbs 1:8; Proverbs 6:20)" (TWOT #1357.0) (my emphasis)

Now in Exodus 23:11 the English translation conveys the idea of "resting and lying still", a rather peaceful picture of total inactivity coupled with a lack of any kind of productivity. But the Hebrew text shows that **God's focus in this verse is not on "rest and tranquility and recuperation"!** God's focus is really on **stopping** what has been done before, on **forsaking** what has been done before, on **rejecting what has been done before**. That is not really the same focus as resting and lying still.

Notice the next part of verse 11.

In the seventh year you are to forsake and reject what has been done during the previous six years **SO THAT "the poor of your people may eat"**! This is a reference to people who don't own land and who therefore are unable to make a living. However, it should be clear that the poor people can only eat **IF THE LAND CONTINUES TO PRODUCE FOOD**! If the land is not producing any food because it is supposedly "resting", then the poor people cannot possibly eat anything. And the poor need to be eating for one whole year, meaning that **a lot of food** needs to be available.

Can you see that?

This statement regarding empowering the poor to eat makes absolutely clear that the land cannot possibly "be resting"! Resting and producing are mutually exclusive concepts! If you rest then you don't produce; and if you produce then you are not resting.

Let's continue with verse 11.

Not only does this picture a time when there is abundant food for all the poor people for a full year, but there is even enough production of food for all the animals of the field as well. And obviously, all of the people who are not poor will also be eating of the produce of the land.

Thus **this seventh year** (which represents the millennial rule of Jesus Christ) **pictures a time of abundant crops** when not only do all people have generous food supplies available, but all of the animals are also generously provided for.

So here is the point:

Nobody has worked the land, and nobody has "gathered in"; but there is still enough food for everybody including the poorest people, as well as all the animals. So the land is certainly producing an abundance. But it is not produced man's way; it is produced without any input from man. **It is man's way of producing food that has been forsaken and rejected during the Land Sabbath**, not the land's

propensity to produce food. And in this context nothing is "gathered in" for future use.

Now notice the last part of this verse.

"In like manner shall you deal with your vineyard and your olive yard" means that this instruction is intended to **cover every possible way of earning a living**! There were no other possible occupations in Israel at the time of the exodus. So by including the production of grapes and olives, this was a way of saying: during the Land Sabbath **nobody in the whole nation is to work towards earning a living**! The Land Sabbath command is directed at every single person in the whole nation, not just at farmers! God's laws apply to all, not just to one segment of society.

To state this in simple terms:

The real intent of the Land Sabbath is that no human being works towards providing a living; **no human beings work man's way of get**! So not only do farmers not plough and plant and gather in crops, but **architects** and **builders** and **computer people** and **plumbers** and **carpenters** and **stone masons** and **office workers** and **clothing manufacturers** and **coal miners**, etc. don't work towards earning a living either! That was God's intent for the nation of Israel, and that will be God's intent for all human beings during the millennium, that nobody works for the purpose of earning a living.

It is not as if farmers take a year off from working their fields, but all of the non-farming occupations continue to work man's way of earning a living. No, the Land Sabbath law was intended to apply to everybody in the nation, irrespective of what their professions might have been. And IF the whole nation had indeed practiced this law, THEN God would also have provided extremely generous bumper harvests for Israel to provide for those years, like God provided in Egypt during the seven years of plenty in the time of Joseph.

Can you understand why no Church of God group today is able to practice the real intent of the Land Sabbath law? Approximately 3500 years down the road from Moses we have gotten our human societies into such a mess that it is literally impossible for any nation or any church group today to practice this particular law. And **expecting farmers to apply this law**, while the rest of us go to the office or the factory or the building site, and continue to draw our regular pay checks, **is hypocrisy**!

So note! Unless EVERYBODY in a group, **including the ministers**, stops receiving their regular income, and thus stops earning a living, it is pointless to somehow expect a very small segment of that group (i.e. the farmers and ranchers) to practice this law. You who receive a regular pay check don't impose a burden on others (i.e. farmers) that you yourself are not willing to carry! Don't expect others (i.e. farmers) "to have faith" when you yourself don't have it!

The Land Sabbath law was not given for the benefit of the land! This law was given for the benefit of human beings, ALL human beings!

Paul wrote: "it is written in the law of Moses, you shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn. Does God care for oxen? Or says He it altogether for our sakes? FOR OUR SAKES NO DOUBT THIS IS WRITTEN" (1 Corinthians 9:9-10).

The same principle applies to the Land Sabbath. To paraphrase 1 Corinthians 9:9-10, we might say: "it is written in the law of Moses, you shall observe **the Land Sabbath**. Does God care for the land? Or says He it altogether for our sakes? **FOR OUR SAKES NO DOUBT THIS IS WRITTEN**".

So we need to see this law as an instruction for every member of society! And that's what it will be in the millennium!

Before we continue it might be worthwhile to consider the following point:

Satan has enormously deceived us regarding God's Sabbath laws (i.e. the weekly Sabbath and the Land Sabbath). Satan has achieved this deception by means of a number of **complementary mistranslations**. They all work together to give us a distorted picture about the Sabbath. It is no coincidence that the following words have all been mistranslated:

1) The Hebrew verb **SHABATH** is mistranslated as "rested".

2) The Hebrew verb **SHAMAT** is mistranslated as "let it rest".

3) The Hebrew verb **NATASH** is mistranslated as "let it lie still".

None of these three verbs really mean "to rest" or "to lie still". But together these three mistranslated verbs create a completely wrong focus for the Sabbath. At no stage has God ever instructed us "to rest" on the Sabbath, though that is the distorted picture that these mistranslations create. Rather, resting is something we should be able to do without having to be commanded to do so, and we should rest whenever there is a need for us to rest, irrespective of which day of the week that happens to be. And that is what we typically do: we spontaneously rest after great and extended physical exertion. But "resting" on the Sabbath is not commanded by God!

Let's continue in Exodus 23.

Having covered the Land Sabbath in verses 10-11, Exodus 23:12 now introduces the WEEKLY Sabbath. Notice the focus with which God repeats the Sabbath command here towards the end of the Old Covenant:

Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day **thou shalt rest** (Hebrew **shabath**): that thine ox and thine ass **may rest** (Hebrew **nuwach**), and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, **may be refreshed** (Hebrew **naphash**). (Exodus 23:12)

There are three key verbs in the Hebrew text of this verse.

1) **We** are NOT told "to rest". No, we are told to "**stop doing that**" ("shabath").

2) We are told to let **our domestic animals** be settled, and in that sense, to **let them rest** from the physical labor we impose on them.

3) The Hebrew verb "naphash" is the source word for the noun "nephesh", which is commonly translated as "soul" . The verb "naphash" literally means "to take a breath", which is a way of saying "to refresh oneself".

The Sabbath commandment is intended to enable **our employees** (i.e. the son of the handmaid and the stranger) **to take a breath**, i.e. to be refreshed.

So note!

We who are directly addressed by God in this commandment are neither told to rest, nor are we told to be refreshed! The only instruction that is directed at us regarding OUR situation is that God tells us to "STOP THAT", in reference to all our work activities (coupled with Isaiah 58:13).

But **we are also told to take care of others**: we are to see to it that our domestic animals have a rest

from their physical labors in our service, and likewise we are to see to it that all those who work for us have the opportunity to be refreshed. **But we ourselves are not told to rest** or to be refreshed.

Can you see this focus with which God presents the Sabbath here? The correct focus is that WE are to stop all our human endeavors of dealing with life's demands and challenges. And in that regard we are to make sure that our employees and our domestic animals are released from any work requirements. So the focus is for us to be concerned for others and NOT FOR SELF! There is no hint in this Sabbath commandment that we are to pamper self and to take it easy! No, we need to make sure that OTHERS can take it easy (i.e. our employees and our domestic animals). God doesn't tell US to be refreshed; He only tells us to make sure that those under our care are refreshed.

THIS IS THE CORRECT FOCUS FOR THE SABBATH COMMANDMENT; IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF OUTGOING CONCERN FOR OTHERS!

The chances are that you have never before considered the Sabbath from this perspective, because this perspective is hidden by the mistranslations we have discussed. Mistranslating "shabath" as "rest" creates a misleading picture for the Sabbath. In its most basic form the Sabbath commandment says:

"**Stop doing that**, and **show some concern for others**, and don't focus on yourself! And if you do that, **then** in the process **you too** will get some rest and be refreshed. But **don't view the Sabbath selfishly**."

The Sabbath is a "give command" and not a "get command". We need to see this Sabbath law as a part of God's give-way of life, teaching us to give to others and to take care of the needs of others.

Now let's continue.

WHY THE SABBATH COMMAND FOLLOWS THE LAND SABBATH LAW

In the previous verse regarding the Land Sabbath we are instructed **to release** the land from all our activities, and **to forsake** our ways of working the land. Now, in verse 13, we are told **to stop** all our ways and all our pleasures and all our words (as per Isaiah 58:13), and to let all our animals rest and to enable all employees to be refreshed, by not having to work for us on the Sabbath.

God here reiterated the Sabbath commandment to show that **the things that apply to the weekly Sabbath will also apply to the Land Sabbath**. The weekly Sabbath is not for farmers only, but for everybody. The same is true for the Land Sabbath Year; it is for everybody to observe.

People will work during the Land Sabbath, even as the priests worked on the weekly Sabbath days. But the focus of such work during the Land Sabbath will not be to earn a living. It will not be work for the benefit of self, even as the priest's Sabbath work was not for the benefit of the priest himself. As mentioned earlier, **it is always lawful to do good on the Sabbath**; and that will also apply to all activities during the Land Sabbath (i.e. during the millennium).

During the Land Sabbath people will work God's way. And God's way of working is always, without fail, for the benefit of others. Nobody will worry about tomorrow. Nobody will hoard for the future or "for a rainy day". Everybody will literally live by the principle of "give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).

Now let's look at a millennial scene in the Book of Amos.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that **the plowman shall overtake the reaper**, and **the treader of grapes him that soweth seed**; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. (Amos 9:13)

This picture presents crops far, far in excess of any human effort put forth to produce those crops. It is a picture to make the point of **endless crops**, without this picture necessarily having to be taken literally. Likewise, the treader of grapes does not really "overtake" the man who is sowing the seeds.

The purpose of this verse is to give us the picture of **an endless harvest**! Can you see that? The picture is one of the present harvest not running out before the next harvest is ready. The picture is also clearly one of people only harvesting enough for immediate consumption, and not one of people harvesting everything for storage in barns and in silos. THAT IS WHY the old harvest is still in the fields when the new harvest starts to come in. This picture is for the millennium.

IT IS A PICTURE OF AN UNINTERRUPTED ABUNDANCE OF FOOD SUPPLIES!

Furthermore, the ploughman and the reaper and the treader in Amos 9:13 will all be working for the benefit of everybody, without any concern for "getting for self". These people will work with **a different attitude** and **a different motivation** from the attitude that exists in our present evil world. Therefore none of their activities fall into the "stop doing that, do you understand Me?" category! None of their activities during the millennium go against the intent of the Sabbath commandment. It really is lawful to do good on the Sabbath, and that is what all their activities will be ... doing good.

On the Sabbath in the days of Joshua carrying the Ark of God, marching in battle gear and fighting a battle did NOT constitute "work" in the sense of Exodus 20:10 because those activities were all explicitly commanded by God. Likewise, during the millennium I suspect that any ploughing and planting activities will be explicitly commanded by Jesus Christ to a humanity that is seeking to please God in every possible way. And any activities directly commanded by God do not violate the intent of the Sabbath commandment.

Therefore such activities are certainly appropriate during the millennium. It is always "appropriate" to obey God’s instructions. And to me the statement "the ploughman shall overtake the reaper" implies a clear instruction from God. So any ploughing and reaping that is performed at God’s instructions does not clash with "the Sabbath intent" for the millennium. Ditto for any other agricultural activities.

Thus I believe that those activities fit perfectly into the millennium, represented by the Land Sabbath, a time when there will be plenty of food for all.

Isaiah 55 speaks about that same time period. Notice:

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the **waters**, and he that hath **no money**; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, **buy wine and milk without money and without price**. Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is* not **bread**? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and **let your soul delight itself** in fatness. (Isaiah 55:1-2)

This passage uses terms that we can understand; we know about money and buying and selling. But it is in fact presenting a picture when money and buying and selling will no longer exist! At that time nobody will buy or sell anything. The picture here is one of having access to everything we could possibly need, without having to buy anything from anybody, just as it was when God created Adam and Eve.

When God created mankind it was never God’s intention that human beings would ever invent trading, the concept of "if I give this to you, what will you give to me in return?" Trading is based on the premise

of acquiring things for self; trading is based on the premise that all human beings are expected to provide for their own needs. **Trading leaves God completely out of the picture.** In the presence of God there is no room for any trading or bartering. And God, in the person of Jesus Christ, is going to be present during the millennium. So in the millennium there is no room for buying and selling.

In the same way that God guaranteed to provide for all of the needs of all animals (see Matthew 6:26 and Luke 12:24), so likewise it was God's intention before Adam sinned to always provide for all the needs of all human beings.

That's what faith in God is all about, implicitly trusting God to provide for all our needs. When we have "vouchers" in our hands (i.e. money) to exchange for the things we need or want, then we don't really look to God to provide "our daily bread"; in actual practice we depend on the money or the credit cards in our possession for these needs.

The truth is that **when God is ruling** then money and faith in God are going to be mutually exclusive. **In this present age** it is virtually impossible for us to free ourselves from the curse of money; we are forced to use it and to rely on it to a certain extent. That is, when I go to a supermarket and place items into my shopping cart, I do so because I rely on the shopkeeper accepting the money I have, in exchange for the goods I want to take home with me.

All of us are forced to rely on other people accepting the money we will offer in exchange for the goods we want to buy. So in this present world we cannot really avoid reliance on money, a confidence that our money will be accepted for the things we want. This point (trading, the use of money) also happens to be the most powerful evidence that Satan is indeed the god of this present age (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan is the real author of money, because he invented trading.

But when God is ruling (i.e. during the millennium), then the curse of money will be abolished. There is no room, none whatsoever, for any kind of bartering or buying and selling in the presence of God.

WHY EVERYBODY HAS TO STOP WORKING DURING THE LAND SABBATH

Buying, selling, trading, bartering are all based on the concept that we want to acquire things for self, and we are prepared to give something else in return for what we want to get. And if the pricing structure is acceptable to us, then we believe that we have a system that is fair. If the things we want to get are priced higher than what we believe they are worth, then we feel that the seller is greedy.

Now during the Land Sabbath (i.e. during the Millennium) people will not stop working. But they will stop working for self benefits! Instead they will work for the sheer joy of working, to benefit others, much **like God's attitude towards work**. All their needs and wants will be taken care of whether they work much or little. The incentive "if you work more then you will have more" will no longer exist.

The sole purpose for work in this present world is **to get something for self**. Work in our world is an expression of the get-way of life, and it is in this sense that God has told us not to do any work on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10). God wants us to stop all activities that are an expression of the get-way of life. But activities that are an expression of God's give-way of life are not restricted by the Sabbath command.

In Ezekiel 28 God shows us the circumstances extant when this get-way of life was invented. That is the chapter that speaks about Satan before the creation of Adam. Notice:

By thy great wisdom *and* **by thy traffick** (Hebrew "rekulla") hast thou **increased thy riches**, and thine heart is lifted up **because of thy riches**: (Ezekiel 28:5)

By the multitude of thy merchandise (Hebrew "rekulla") they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. (Ezekiel 28:16)

Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, **by the iniquity of thy traffick** (Hebrew "rekulla"); therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. (Ezekiel 28:18 AV)

The Hebrew noun "rekulla" in the above three verses is twice translated as "traffick" and once as "merchandise". This noun is derived from the Hebrew verb "**rakal**", which literally means "to go about", and by extension it means "**to trade**", because traders used to "go about" looking for products they could buy in one area and then sell at a profit in another area. So in all three of the above verses the noun "**rekulla**" should be consistently translated as "**merchandise**", which is an expression of the practice of trading.

Here in Ezekiel 28 God tells us the following things about Satan:

1) **Satan invented** the concept of **trading** for the explicit purpose of increasing his own riches. Trading is based on selfishness, on wanting to get something from other people (verse 5). Trading is ALWAYS based on a concern for self!

2) **A consequence** of trading is that it engenders **pride** in those who accumulate wealth. Wealth makes people feel more important, and it creates **a false sense of security** in those who have the wealth. So trading was a direct cause for Satan's "heart being lifted up" (verse 5). And therefore it is not surprising that the acquisition of wealth is a very, very, very common source of pride in human beings.

3) Trading is **the original cause for violence**. Ezekiel 28:16 tells us that trading led to violence even before God created Adam. The reason trading causes violence is because trading is based on selfishness, wanting to get things for self. Trading inherently says: how much can I get from you for what I will give to you? It has a focus on self, and violence is an expression of striving for self interests (verse 16). When you eliminate the practice of trading, then you are removing the most influential cause of violence.

4) **The concept of trading is iniquity**, lawlessness! By calling trading "iniquity" God shows that the concept of trading inherently violates God's way of life (verse 18).

So Satan invented the concept of trading, the idea of buying and selling, even before God created Adam, and it produced violence. Once Adam and Eve had sinned, then humanity also accepted this concept. And to us trading (i.e. buying and selling) seems like a perfectly natural and logical way to conduct our human affairs, to buy and sell and trade in order to motivate others to give us the things we need or want to have.

Now a very important aspect of trading is to incite in other people a desire to have what we want to sell to them. A seller must incite a certain amount of **coveting** in other people, **to motivate them to buy his stuff**. Without such coveting the system of trading collapses. It makes no difference whether you have apples or potatoes or wheat or gold jewelry or luxury cars or high quality clothing available: **if nobody on earth will give you anything at all for your goods** (whether you have potatoes or flawless diamonds to sell) **then the trading way of life collapses**.

For trading to work, there must always be somebody who actually wants what we have for sale, and so the most successful sellers seek to create covetousness in the minds of potential buyers. But there is no place for covetousness in God's way of life.

Seen from God's way of life perspective, the whole idea of **trading is rotten to the core**! It has ONLY evil consequences, and it is a faith-killer. Those who trade don't need God to get what they want; they get it by trading.

So when God commands us that we must cease from "that type of work" on the Sabbath, it means that "that type of work" will also not be around during the millennium. That is what I mean when I say that everybody has to stop working during the Land Sabbath.

Trading is the antithesis of God's way of life. As far as goods and possessions are concerned, the purpose of life is not to acquire anything at all. That's what Jesus Christ meant when He said: "a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses" (Luke 12:15). It is Satan who wants us to focus on possessions.

TRADING DESTROYS THE EARTH

We understand that God initially set aside 6000 years (in round numbers) for man to go his own way. And man's way has been one of getting things for self, trading, bartering, always in some way or other focusing on self.

We also understand that we human beings have destroyed this planet. The Earth has been poisoned and polluted. Now the cause for the destruction of this Earth is not the poisons we have put into our soils and rivers and oceans; the cause is not the pollution we have released into our atmosphere.

THE REAL CAUSE for the destruction of this planet is OUR WHOLE WAY OF LIFE BASED ON TRADING!

The pollution of the air and the soil and the water is not the cause of our problems. These things are only **the symptoms** of our way of life. It is the way of life itself that is the problem, not just the symptoms. Satan's selfish way of life, typified by his invention of trading, caused the destruction of the universe, including this planet Earth. God repaired this Earth back in Genesis 1. And because humanity has embraced that same way of life that Satan introduced, therefore this Earth is once again almost on the brink of "utter destruction".

To state this in plain terms:

It is our human striving for "progress" that has produced dynamite and atomic bombs and horrific means of biological warfare and chemical warfare and toxic industrial wastes. It is **our desire to provide for the future** that leads to the destruction of the Earth. It is our desire to have more that pollutes the Earth. It is our desire to control and to manipulate the environment that has produced a vast array of toxins which have polluted every living creature on Earth. It is our desire to constantly grow our economies by churning out **an endless stream of junk** for us to sell in other nations that further pollutes this planet. It is our whole way of life which necessitates that we plan ahead for tomorrow's needs that is destroying this planet.

It is our total way of life to which God through the Land Sabbath law says: I WANT YOU TO STOP DOING THAT, DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?

Now it may not be easy for some of us to understand that our way of life of planning ahead for future needs is the problem. After all, doesn't God expect us to plan ahead for tomorrow's needs? Didn't Paul tell us that we must provide for our own families (see 1 Timothy 5:8)? So how could it be wrong for us human beings to plan ahead for our future needs?

Being forced to plan ahead for our future needs is a penalty God imposed on mankind for Adam's sin. So yes, in this present age we do have to plan ahead for future needs. BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO! Man being forced to plan ahead for future needs is one more thing that God "accommodated" in His plan for human beings, in this case as a penalty.

If Adam and Eve had not sinned, then barns and cold storage depots to store food supplies for future needs would never have come into existence, because God would always have provided "our daily bread" for all people. Human beings would no more have stored away food supplies for future use than a horse or an antelope stores away food supplies for future use.

Now this may seem like a very radical idea, but Jesus Christ meant every word when He instructed us to pray "give us THIS DAY our DAILY bread". In our circumstances today this is largely a symbolical request, because we in actual fact rely on our money to get us the food we need. When we want "our daily bread" we go to a shop or a supermarket to get that "daily bread" in exchange for some of our money. The whole system within which we live our lives gives us no other options but to rely on trading our money for the food items we want.

We live in a world where we are locked into a certain system.

When Adam and Eve sinned, then God punished them by forcing them to work to provide for their own needs. So today: 1) We work in order to obtain money. 2) Then we use that money to obtain by trading the things we need for our daily lives.

THIS SYSTEM IS SATAN'S VERSION OF PROVIDING "OUR DAILY BREAD"! This whole system is based on the system Satan had invented in Ezekiel 28:16. It is nothing more than Satan's counterfeit for God's original intention to freely provide for all of the needs of all of His creatures, human beings and animals alike. And this whole present system will have to be emphatically rejected and exterminated in the millennium. We need to understand that our present system is really Satan's system for dealing with our needs.

To correctly understand these things requires **a huge mental shift** on our part. All we have ever known all our lives is **Satan's way of providing for our daily needs**. All we have ever known is that "if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). The idea that God will actually literally provide people's food ON A DAILY BASIS, as God did for Israel for 40 years in the wilderness, is extremely foreign to our thinking. It is perfectly natural for us to plan ahead for tomorrow's needs, and it is our planning ahead that takes care of those needs, rather than any actions on the part of God.

But during the millennium God will lift all the curses that God has placed on mankind since Adam and Eve sinned, and Jesus Christ will then implement the system that God had originally, before Adam sinned, intended to implement for the benefit of mankind. And one of the curses that God will remove is the necessity for man to work for his daily needs. And then Matthew 6:34 will be true worldwide.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

When Jesus Christ will be ruling, then the morrow will indeed "take thought for the things of itself"! For about 6000 years man has destroyed this Earth by his way of "taking thoughts for the morrow", that way

of life that tries to plan ahead for the future. When Jesus Christ said "take NO thought for the morrow", He really meant: DON'T DO THAT!

We have always read this instruction from our perspective of living by Satan's way of providing for "our daily bread", and so we have justified ourselves by saying: what Christ meant was "take no ANXIOUS thought", but we tend to think that it is perfectly right and proper to do SOME planning ahead for future needs.

Our bias due to living our entire lives from Satan's perspective of providing for "our daily bread" has prevented us from accepting that Jesus Christ really did mean what He said! But the point is: when the morrow really does take thought for the things of itself (during the millennium), THEN people likewise do NOT have to be concerned about their needs for tomorrow.

Jesus Christ meant exactly what He said in Matthew 6:34. In fact, **Matthew 6:34 is what the Land Sabbath is supposed to teach us**! That is what the Land Sabbath is all about.

Now let's go to the main discussion of the Land Sabbath.

LEVITICUS CHAPTER 25

Notice verses 2-3.

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, **then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD**. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; (Leviticus 25:2-3)

The "six years" here refer to 6000 years in fulfillment. So the six years cover the time from Adam's creation to the second coming of Jesus Christ. Now let's look at verse 4.

But in **the seventh year** shall be **a sabbath of rest** unto **the land**, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. (Leviticus 25:4)

The "seventh year" refers to the seventh 1000-year period, i.e. the millennial rule of Jesus Christ. The Land Sabbath refers to the millennium.

The expression "**a sabbath of rest**" is a translation of the Hebrew words "**shabbath shabbatown**". The word "shabbatown" is formed from the word "shabbath". In Hebrew the "own"-ending is typically used to create an abstract noun. So here is what these two Hebrew nouns in this expression mean:

SHABBATH = a Sabbath;

SHABBATOWN = the observance of a Sabbath.

We have already seen that the Hebrew word "shabbath" does not mean "rest day"! "Shabbath" really means: the day of cessation of specific activities. Thus the Hebrew expression "**shabbath shabbatown**" means: **the observance of the cessation of specific activities for a period of time**. It may seem to be somewhat cumbersome to translate two Hebrew words by an expression of 13 English words, but those 13 English words express the correct intended meaning of this two word Hebrew expression.

As far as "shabbath shabbatown" is concerned:

There are seven verses in the Old Testament where the words "shabbath" and "shabbatown" are used together: in six places the expression is "shabbath shabbatown" (Exodus 31:15; Exodus 35:2; Leviticus 16:31; Leviticus 23:3; Leviticus 23:32; Leviticus 25:4), and in one place the expression is "shabbatown shabbath" (Exodus 16:23). In all seven places our English translations have mistranslated "shabbatown" as "rest". The correct translation in all seven places should convey the meaning "the observance of the cessation of specific activities for a period of time", where each context defines the length of the period of time involved. None of those verses speak about "rest".

Let's continue with Leviticus 25.

So the seventh year in this verse is not speaking about "a year OF REST" at all! It is speaking about "**a year of CESSATION OF VERY SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**"! But that does not mean that the land therefore "rests". The next part of this verse spells out which activities are to cease during that seventh year.

In this seventh year we are **not** to **sow seeds** in the fields, and we are **not** to **prune** the **vineyards**. These two activities represent human efforts at inducing and stimulating the production of crops. So what must cease is **all human efforts at trying to produce food** for our needs. During that year we are not to control and to direct the production of food.

But that is not the same as the land "resting".

Leviticus 25:5 talks about "that which **grows of its own accord**". Now if things are growing on the land, then the land is not resting. As long as the land produces anything it is not resting. Resting implies that all production has stopped. But that is clearly not the case in this seventh year.

The Hebrew expression "shabbath shabbatown" means: the observance of a period of time that has put an end to the activities that preceded it. In this context the cessation refers to man's actions, and not to either God's actions or even the land's actions (i.e. production of food). **The cessation refers exclusively to man's activities being stopped.**

Now let's look at something that creates an ambiguous picture.

DIFFERENT HEBREW WORDS FOR "LAND"

There are a number of different Hebrew words in the Old Testament which all apply to the concept of "land". These words have different usages and not all of them would be used in an agricultural context. Without going into too many details, here are some of the words involved.

1) The Hebrew word "**erets**" (e.g. Genesis 1:1) refers to the Earth, the land in the greater context. (Also sometimes rendered "eretz".)

2) The Hebrew word "**adamah**" (e.g. Genesis 2:5) refers to red, arable soil, the land used for growing foods.

3) The Hebrew word "**chelqah**" (e.g. Genesis 33:19) refers to a portion, as of a field used for growing crops.

4) The Hebrew word "**sadeh**" (e.g. Genesis 2:5) refers to a field for growing produce.

5) The Hebrew word "**karmel**" (e.g. Isaiah 10:18) refers to a fruitful field.

6) The Hebrew word "**yabbashah**" (e.g. Genesis 1:9) refers to dry land or dry ground.

7) The Hebrew word "**aphar**" (e.g. Genesis 2:7) refers to dust, as in "God formed Adam of the APHAR of ADAMAH", of the dust of the ground.

8) The Hebrew word "**charabah**" (e.g. Genesis 7:22) refers to the land mass, the dry land.

Now most of these words can appear in our English translations as "land", but they clearly have distinct individual meanings. They certainly don't all mean the same thing. So here are two points we should consider:

1) When God wants to refer to the land that will be utilized for growing crops and fruits, then God uses words like: "**adamah**" (ground) and "**sadeh**" (field) and "**karmel**" (fertile field). These are all Hebrew words that apply to land that will be ploughed and sowed with seeds. They apply in an agricultural context.

2) When God wants to refer to this whole planet Earth or to the territory of a specific nation, then God uses the word "**erets**", as in Genesis 1:1. Today the modern nation of Israel is known as "Eretz Israel", "Land of Israel".

The point is, in Old Testament Hebrew the word "erets" is not used for farmers or for cattle. **"Erets" does not refer to arable land!** This Hebrew word does not refer to farming at all! It refers to the whole planet in general, or to a national territory.

I have listed the eight different Hebrew words above to illustrate that in reference to "land" the Hebrew language certainly has different words to convey different meanings. Some words apply in an agricultural context while other words don't apply to agriculture.

With this background let's once again look at Leviticus 25.

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into **the land** ("erets") which I give you, then shall **the land** ("erets") keep a sabbath unto the LORD. (Leviticus 25:2)

Six years thou shalt sow **thy field** ("sadeh"), and six years thou shalt prune **thy vineyard**, and gather in the fruit thereof; (Leviticus 25:3)

But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest **unto the land** ("erets"), a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow **thy field** ("sadeh"), nor prune **thy vineyard**. (Leviticus 25:4)

In verse 2 "the land" refers to **the national territory** that God would give to Israel; it does not refer to farming land. So God instructed that the whole national territory, only a part of which was agricultural land, was to observe a period of cessation of specific activities.

Verse 3 shows that **within that national territory** people would have "fields" and "vineyards", i.e. only a portion of "the land" would consist of "fields" and "vineyards". But within "the land" there would also be some areas that would not consist of "fields" or "vineyards". The word "land" refers to far more than just "fields plus vineyards".

So verse 4 shows that when man ceases his activities of trying to get his "fields" and his "vineyards" to produce crops for man, THEN **the whole country** ("erets") will in effect experience "a period of cessation of specific work activities", and that period of cessation will be "for the LORD", i.e. it will direct the focus towards God. So the observation of the cessation of very specific activities will direct people's

focus towards God. People then look to God to provide for them.

Now let's look at verse 5.

That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: *for* it is a year of rest ("shabbatown") unto the land ("erets"). (Leviticus 25:5)

The expression "**a year of rest**" is really "a year of **the observance** of a period of stopping specific activities". The noun "shabbatown" focuses the attention on **THE OBSERVANCE** of this period of time. "Rest" is obviously again a mistranslation.

And this observance is for the whole country ("erets"), not just for the farming lands. This instruction points to the millennium, when the whole planet will see a cessation of specific activities for human beings worldwide.

However, notice that **the land does produce crops**. It is just that we are not to reap or gather those crops (i.e. for the purpose of storing for future use). This instruction has nothing at all to do with some "benefit for the land". As already stated earlier, it is for human benefit that God has given this instruction, not for some benefit for the land.

And since the land is certainly producing to some degree, therefore **the land is not really "resting"**. But the land is spared any **human** activities to promote food production. Whatever is produced will be produced without any human efforts to achieve such production. This instruction is aimed at preventing us from seeking to provide for ourselves. It prevents us from storing up food for future needs; i.e. no hoarding for tomorrow. This instruction in fact achieves circumstances very similar to Israel in the wilderness being dependent on manna, where the people were not permitted to store up manna for future needs.

Let's look at the next verses.

And the sabbath of the land (Hebrew "shabbath" of "erets") shall be **meat for you**; for thee, and for **thy servant**, and for **thy maid**, and for **thy hired servant**, and for **thy stranger** that sojourneth with thee, And for **thy cattle**, and for **the beast** that *are* in thy land, **shall all the increase thereof be meat**. (Leviticus 25:6-7)

So the **cessation of those human activities that are aimed at food production** in the whole country will amount to providing FOOD FOR EVERYBODY: for those who own land and for those who don't own land and for all employees and all foreigners and all our domestic animals and all wild animals. **THAT IS A LOT OF FOOD!** It is ample food for every living creature in the country!

Notice the word "**increase**" in verse 7 above. The Hebrew word translated as "increase" is "**tebu'ah**" (or "**tebu'a**"). Here is what TWOT says about this Hebrew word:

"**tebu'a**. Produce, **yield**. (ASV often 'increase'; RSV uses 'increase' only once and prefers '**produce** ,' '**harvest**,' 'yield' or 'gain.' Both occasionally use 'fruit.')" (TWOT #212.c)

"**Used forty-two times** with highest frequency in Lev, Deut and Prov, tebu'a refers to **the yield of the ground**, **crops both in the form of grain and fruit**. Poetic and prophetic literature extends this meaning to refer to 'result.' The yield (tebu'a) of wisdom is better than choice silver. (Proverbs 8:19) The gain (tebu'a) of the wicked is sin and trouble. (Proverbs 10:16; Proverbs 15:6) Jeremiah identifies Israel as **the first fruit of YHWH's harvest**. (tebu'a, Jeremiah 2:3)" (TWOT #212.c)

There are two Hebrew words of interest in a discussion of this subject.

1) The word "**tebu'ah**" refers to **THE PRODUCTION** of crops.

2) The word "**qatsiyr**" (also "qasir") refers to **THE REAPING** of crops.

The word "qatsiyr", which is **not used** in this passage, refers to what we in English mean by "harvest", and so the word "harvest" in our English translations of the Old Testament is always a translation of the Hebrew word "qatsiyr". However, what we should note is this:

It is "tebu'ah" that makes "qatsiyr" possible; i.e. it is the production of crops that makes the reaping of crops possible. **"Tebu'ah" is the foundation for "qatsiyr".** Both words refer to the same amount of produce!

So while technically "tebu'ah" is not the Hebrew word for "harvest", in actual practical terms "**tebu'ah**" refers to: **THE HARVEST IN THE FIELDS BEFORE IT IS REAPED**. Put another way, "tebu'ah" refers to **AN UNREAPED HARVEST**.

So now do you understand what God is really telling us in Leviticus 25:6-7?

God is telling us that during that Land Sabbath **there will be a huge harvest, produced without any human effort or input**. But that huge harvest WILL NOT BE REAPED! Instead, it will stay in the fields and only be gathered in small amounts on a daily basis **for daily consumption**, as also all the animals will eat of it on a daily basis. Nothing is stored in barns or in people's houses! It is only gathered or picked on a daily basis for immediate consumption.

THAT IS HOW GOD PROVIDES FOR ALL THE ANIMALS! AND THAT IS HOW GOD WILL PROVIDE FOR ALL HUMAN BEINGS DURING THE MILLENNIUM, DURING THAT "LAND SABBATH".

Because those huge crops in the fields will not be harvested into barns and silos, because people will only gather small amounts on a daily basis for daily consumption, therefore God did NOT inspire the use of the word for "harvest" (i.e. "qatsiyr") in Leviticus 25:7, and instead God only used the word for "produce" (i.e. "tebu'ah").

During the Land Sabbath (i.e. during the millennium) people will gather their food much the same way that Israel gathered manna for 40 years in the wilderness. People will only gather enough for daily consumption. In this regard the main difference between people during the millennium and the people of Israel in the wilderness will be that where Israel was limited to one source for food (i.e. manna), the people in the millennium will have a vast choice of fruits and vegetables and grains and nuts and berries, etc. from which to select their daily food preferences (in addition to clean meat and dairy products I would assume?).

The Land Sabbath is to teach human beings to **look to God on a daily basis** for all our needs. Jesus Christ never intended that "give us this day our daily bread" would be some symbolical request. This request foreshadowed the relationship God intends to have with all mortal human beings, that all people look to God every single day to provide all their needs.

So don't be fooled by the preconceived idea that during the Land Sabbath the land somehow "rests" from producing food for man. The truth is that during the Land Sabbath the production of food will be far, far greater than in any other year! That is what the millennium will be like. Rather than referring to some kind of "rest", the Land Sabbath law basically says:

CUT THAT OUT! STOP ALL YOUR HUMAN EFFORTS AT PROVIDING FOR YOUR OWN NEEDS! THEN **GOD WILL PRODUCE** A REAL ABUNDANCE FOR ALL, AS HAD BEEN THE CASE BACK IN THE GARDEN IN EDEN, BEFORE ADAM SINNED!

Leviticus 25:7 concluded the discussion of the Land Sabbath. It is to be a cessation of self-centered human activities, not just for agricultural land, but for the whole country; and during the millennium for the whole Earth. This cessation of self-centered human activities was to apply not only to agricultural activities, but to ALL activities (in the "our ways, pleasures and words" categories) in the whole country ("erets"), including all endeavors to earn an income in any way.

The key we should keep in mind is that God gave this Land Sabbath instruction for the benefit of human beings; God did not give this instruction for the benefit of the planet Earth, or the land. **This instruction was to teach people to live by faith in God.**

Now am I saying that the agricultural lands today will not profit from sometimes being left fallow? Not at all! But such benefits for the land are not tied to any seven year cycles. The land will benefit from sometimes being left uncultivated, be that once every 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 years. The land today will also benefit from judicious crop rotation. So the soil's fertility can be positively influenced by sometimes letting the land lie idle, and a seven year cycle is certainly suitable in this regard.

But the point is that this Land Sabbath law was not given out of concern for the benefit of the soil. It was given to represent something that would benefit human beings. In actual practice, when we really understand these things correctly, the soil will produce far more during a Land Sabbath Year than during a non-Land Sabbath Year, but that production will be without any kind of human input. So in seeking an agricultural explanation for this law we have totally missed the real intent, that it was to apply to every single person in the country.

Now let's look at something the Apostle Paul wrote.

HEBREWS 4:9 EXAMINED

Let's start off by looking at two Greek words. The Greek language didn't have a word for "Sabbath"; i.e. it didn't have a word to refer to a period of cessation from specific activities. So the Hebrew words involved were taken up into the New Testament Greek language with Greek word-endings.

Now don't assume that "Sabbath" in the New Testament somehow has a different meaning from "Sabbath" in the Old Testament. The word "Sabbath" does NOT mean "rest" in the New Testament, even as it doesn't have that meaning in the Old Testament.

We have already looked at the two Hebrew words "shabbath" and "shabbatown". So here are the NT Greek equivalents for these two Hebrew words.

1) Hebrew "shabbath" = Greek "sabbaton".

2) Hebrew "shabbatown" = Greek "sabbatismos".

So the Greek word "sabbatismos" is an abstract noun which refers to "**the observance of a period of cessation from specific activities**", the identical meaning to the Hebrew word "shabbatown".

Here is Hebrews 4:9.

There remaineth (Greek "apoleipetai") therefore **a rest** (Greek "**sabbatismos**") to the people of God. (Hebrews 4:9)

The Greek verb "**apoleipo**" literally means "to leave behind". In the previous verse Paul spoke about Joshua leading Israel across the Jordan into the Promised Land (Hebrews 4:8). So when Israel entered the Promised Land, then "**something was left behind**" as far as God's intentions for Israel were concerned. What was "left behind" at that time, according to Paul, was "**a sabbatismos for the people of God**".

First of all, this tells me that **the Apostle Paul himself believed that** after crossing the Jordan **Israel never**, at any time, **observed the Land Sabbath**. That concept was "left behind" in the wilderness without ever being put into practice by Israel. Unless this 7-year cycle had been put into practice right away after crossing the Jordan, the correct starting year for this cycle would have been lost. And that is precisely what happened; it was lost.

Next, the Greek word "sabbatismos" does NOT mean "rest"! It refers to observing a period of cessation of specific activities, to be precise, man's activities at trying to cope with life's demands and challenges. That is what "the observance of a Sabbath" (i.e. sabbatismos) means.

Now here in Hebrews Paul is presenting Israel's crossing of the Jordan as a type of God's people entering into the millennium. Paul reasons as follows: since Israel in the days of Joshua never did observe this Land Sabbath law, therefore it remains for this law to be observed in the future, by God's people in the millennium. We need to recognize that in this verse **Paul was referring to the Land Sabbath**!

Now look at the next verse.

For he that is entered into his rest (Greek "katapausis"), he also **hath ceased from his own works**, as God *did* from his. (Hebrews 4:10)

In my April 2009 article entitled "WHAT IS 'THE REST' OF HEBREWS CHAPTER 4?" I have explained the Greek word "katapausis" at length. The article is available on my website. I demonstrated that the Greek verb "katapauo" means: TO STOP AND MAKE AN END IN AN INTENSIVE WAY. The point is that the Greek noun "katapausis" does NOT mean "rest"! It also is a word that in an emphatic way means "stop doing something".

To make this quite clear:

Paul's choice of words here makes clear that Paul himself in no way thought of the Sabbath as "a REST day"! In none of his writings does Paul imply that the Sabbath is "a day of rest"! That false impression of rest is due entirely to mistranslations of key words.

Hebrews 4:10 is speaking about entering into God's period of cessation from specific activities. Next, notice that even the KJV here talks about "**CEASING** from one's **OWN** works"! The last part "as God did from His" shows that in this context Paul isn't talking about "resting" at all! Paul is talking about "God CEASING from a specific type of working", that type of work being the task of repairing the damage caused by Satan's sins.

Paul is talking about God **CEASING** a specific set of activities. And Paul is talking about the need for us to likewise **CEASE** from doing **OUR** works, i.e. **OUR** ways and **OUR** pleasures and **OUR** words. The concept of "resting" doesn't enter the picture here in Hebrews 4 or anywhere else in Paul's references to the Sabbath.

Keep in mind that all of the translators didn't remotely understand the real meaning of the things they were trying to translate for us. And they came to their translations with the preconceived idea that the Sabbath is a period for "resting". So it is no wonder that none of them convey the correct meaning for the whole context here or in other places where it speaks about a Sabbath. But at least in Hebrews 4:10 they did get it right in referring to "**ceasing**" from specific activities.

THE LAND SABBATH SUMMARIZED

While God gave this Land Sabbath law to the people of Israel, for them to apply on a national scale, it really is intended to represent how God will deal with all of mankind during the millennium. So the year of the Land Sabbath represents the seventh 1000-year period in human history.

It was not to be a Sabbath for just agricultural land, but a Sabbath (period of cessation) for the whole country, by nobody anywhere working for a living. That's what it will be like worldwide during the millennium when Jesus Christ rules over this Earth. God gave the Land Sabbath law not for the benefit of the land, but for the benefit of human beings, by all people everywhere being provided for by the Creator God. The land will in fact bear more abundantly during the millennium than at any time during the 6000 years that preceded the millennium. And had Israel ever observed this law, then the land of Israel would have brought forth more abundantly during the Land Sabbath Years than during any of the other six years in each cycle.

The key to understanding this law correctly is to realize that the Sabbath has nothing at all to do with "resting" or "inactivity". The Sabbath is a period of time of cessation of a very specific set of activities, without limiting participation in other activities. On the Sabbath all of man's ways are to cease, because during the millennium all of man's ways will cease. Now at the time of Moses God added the concept of resting for others, but not necessarily for us! We are to let those under our authority, both man and beast, get some rest from serving us. But we ourselves are never at any time instructed to rest on the Sabbath. We may rest, certainly, but rest is not commanded for us by God. The Sabbath commandment is an expression of concern for other people, rather than for self.

The mistranslation of the verb "shabath" as "rest" resulted in turning the Sabbath into a day of total inactivity, as far as Judaism is concerned. This has taken the focus away from God's intention that only certain activities (i.e. our ways and pleasures and words) are to be stopped, without enjoining on anyone total inactivity as far as other activities are concerned.

The Land Sabbath is not a rest at all! It is a reference to all human endeavors coming to an end. It means that man's present lifestyle will come to an end, and it will be replaced by an approach based on a totally different motivation, one of serving others without any motivation to benefit for oneself from such activities. During the millennium the Earth will never stop producing an abundance of food for all creatures, but that production will not be the result of human work.

The Land Sabbath represents the whole millennium for the whole Earth. It was to give Israel an idea of what things will be like during the millennium. The whole focus of this law is on ceasing man's present lifestyle and replacing it with God's lifestyle, one where God provides for every need for every one of His creatures. During the millennium God will provide for all on the physical level in the same way that in the new heaven and new earth God will provide for all spirit beings on the spirit level; in that setting such provision is represented by "the tree of life" in Revelation 22:2. All of life ultimately always gets back to what Abraham already understood, that "**God will provide**" (Genesis 22:8). And when God really provides, then man does not have to work to provide for himself.

So now let's look at the Jubilee Year.

THE JUBILEE YEAR

In the Old Testament the Land Sabbath and the Jubilee are discussed in the same context. In fact, a discussion of the Jubilee follows right on the heels of the discussion about the Land Sabbath. This should tell us that the event pictured by the Jubilee must also follow the event pictured by the Land Sabbath.

As already mentioned earlier, we in the Church of God are not able to observe the Jubilee Years today because, amongst other factors, we don't know the correct cycle for the Land Sabbath Years. And Hebrews 4:8-9 seems to strongly imply that the Apostle Paul himself also believed that the Land Sabbath Years had never been observed after Israel crossed the Jordan in the days of Joshua.

This is not a cycle that we can somehow "reason out" because we believe that certain things **should have** taken place in Jubilee Years. The truth is that there have NEVER been any Jubilee Years observed by the people of Israel. However, not being able to observe these years should not prevent us from understanding what the Jubilee represents.

Here is the correct overall picture. After that we can look at some of the details.

1) For the Land Sabbath law God has used **1 year** to represent 1000 years in actual fulfillment. The Land Sabbath represents the millennium.

2) At the end of the millennium Satan is briefly loosed, and then permanently bound and banished (Revelation 20:7-10). **The Day of Atonement** represents the **permanent** binding of Satan.

3) For the Jubilee law God has used **7 years** to represent 1000 years in actual fulfillment. So the 49 years take us to the end of the 7000-year period, **to the end of the millennium**, when Satan will first be loosed and then **bound for good**.

4) On the Day of Atonement **in the 49th year the trumpet of shouting for joy is sounded**, at the time when Satan is bound for good. It is the permanent binding of Satan that announces the still future coming Jubilee (i.e. in the 50th year).

5) That trumpet of shouting for joy is sounded more than 5 months before the 50th year starts. So **there is a short period of time** between the announcement of the Jubilee and the actual start of the Jubilee. **That** short period of time represents **the 100 years** set aside for those in the second resurrection.

6) Note! The millennium is 1000 years long. And the period for those in the second resurrection is 100 years long. Now the very brief period of time that Satan is loosed out of his prison (Revelation 20:7) until he is again bound, and this time bound for good, may consist of a few weeks or perhaps even a month or two? That brief period of time is **wedged between the millennium and the 100-year period**, without being a part of either period. To be clear: Satan is only released **AFTER** 1000 years have expired, and Satan is bound again **BEFORE** the second resurrection takes place, before the 100-year period begins. (Sorry if this messes up your charts.)

7) The approach of the Jubilee is announced on the Day of Atonement in the 49th year (i.e. when Satan is bound for good in Revelation 20:10). The rest of the 49th year represents the time allocated to the 2nd resurrection (i.e. the 100-year period). When the 50th year starts, then the Jubilee begins. **The Jubilee**

represents ALL FUTURE ETERNITY IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE NEW HEAVEN & NEW EARTH!

As far as God's plan of salvation is concerned, nothing is scheduled to follow the Jubilee (i.e. in its actual fulfillment).

So note! Where originally in Genesis 2 the Sabbath represented all future eternity in the presence of God, that symbolism was modified after the flood. After the flood the Sabbath represents the Millennium (with the 100-year period attached to it), and **the Jubilee takes on the Sabbath's original symbolism**, by representing all future eternity in the presence of God.

8) This process is also represented by the way God introduced the people of Israel into the Promised Land. For seven days (i.e. all Seven Days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread) Israel marched around Jericho. The seventh day represents the seventh 1000-year period (i.e. the millennium) in God's plan. On that seventh day Israel marched SEVEN TIMES around Jericho, somewhat like the counting towards the Jubilee, which also went in cycles of seven.

9) When the walls of Jericho fell down, that was a type of "the first heaven and the first earth passing away" after 7000 years (in round numbers) in a universe-wide lake of fire (Revelation 21:1). The conquest of Jericho represents the introduction of the Jubilee, i.e. the introduction of future eternity in the presence of God.

Now let's look at the Scriptures in Leviticus 25 that refer to the Jubilee.

And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee **forty and nine years**. (Leviticus 25:8)

This is speaking about seven cycles of seven years each, ending with **the seventh Land Sabbath Year**. This means that the 49 years basically end at **the end of the millennium**. In the next verse it takes us to the Day of Atonement in the 49th year, which means that **the millennium is here pictured as ending on the Day of Atonement in the 49th year**.

Then shalt thou cause **the trumpet of the jubile** to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month, **in the day of atonement** shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. (Leviticus 25:9)

This verse mentions "the trumpet of the Jubilee" in our English translations. However, in the Hebrew text there is **no word for "Jubilee"** in this verse. The Hebrew word for "Jubilee" is used in the next verse, but it is not used in verse 9. And there is a very clear reason why it should not be used in verse 9.

So in Leviticus 25:9 we are dealing with another mistranslation. The Hebrew word mistranslated as "Jubilee" in this verse is "teruwah" (also "teru'ah" and "teru'a"). The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon (BDB) lists the following four meanings for "teru'ah":

1) alarm of war, a battle-cry;

2) a blast (for starting a march);

3) **shout of joy** (with religious impulse);

4) **shout of joy** (in general).

Now in Leviticus 25:9 it is assuredly NOT "an alarm for war", and it is equally assuredly NOT "a blast to

start the army marching"! In Leviticus 25:9 the Hebrew word "teruwah" is very obviously used to refer to "a shout of joy"!

So this verse should correctly be translated as follows:

Then shalt thou cause **the trumpet of the shout of joy** to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. (Leviticus 25:9)

So let's note!

On the Day of Atonement in the 49th year it is **NOT "the trumpet of the Jubilee"** that is sounded! This trumpet here is sounded almost half a year before the Jubilee actually starts. And for that reason all by itself this trumpet cannot possibly be called "the trumpet OF THE JUBILEE", because it is still more than five full months before the Jubilee will start. And the word "Jubilee" is not used in this verse.

The purpose for sounding this trumpet of joy should be clear:

That Day of Atonement represents the permanent and final binding of Satan, when Satan is permanently banished into "the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 1:13). That occasion will be cause for **an enormous amount of joy and celebration** amongst all people still alive at that point (this will be just after a huge multitude, "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea", Revelation 20:8, has been killed by fire from heaven), because that final permanent removal of Satan clears the way for God's plan of salvation for mankind to **finally be completed**. All that remains is to resurrect those in the second resurrection, and to work with them for a period of 100 years. That is reason for great joy.

While those people in that second resurrection will have the freedom to freely embrace God's way of life or to reject it, that will all happen **without any kind of drama**. Satan is permanently removed, and any of the people in the second resurrection who choose to still reject God's way of life will not be able to have a negative impact on others around them or on the environment in which they will live.

They will be free to reject God's way of life **WITH THEIR MINDS**, but no outward actions of rebellion or disobedience will be tolerated! If they attempt to transgress God's way of life in any outward action, they will hear a voice that will in no uncertain terms say: **THIS IS THE WAY, WALK YOU IN IT!** (Isaiah 30:21).

So people can, if they choose to do so, stubbornly refuse to submit their minds to God during that 100-year period, but they will NOT be permitted to say or do anything that would negatively affect even one other person. It will be the home-stretch for God's plan of salvation and the finish line is clearly in sight. So yes, those who mentally still resist God will be "tolerated" for 100 years, in the hope that they will still come to a real repentance, a real change of heart; but they will be powerless to adversely influence anyone else. And the shout of joy at seeing Satan permanently removed at the time **just before** the second resurrection will be real and heartfelt by all those still alive at that time.

That 100-year period is represented by the short period from the Day of Atonement in the 49th year to the very end of that 49th year. Symbolically, **on the very last day of that 49th year** the third resurrection takes place and the universe-wide lake of fire is initiated by God. And this entire present universe is then burned up.

THEN THE STAGE IS SET FOR THE 50TH YEAR TO START!

And ye shall **hallow the fiftieth year**, and **proclaim liberty** throughout *all* the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be **a jubile unto you**; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and

ye shall return every man unto his family. (Leviticus 25:10)

Liberty is NOT proclaimed on the Day of Atonement in the 49th year! Liberty is only proclaimed when the 50th year starts! **This 50th year represents all future eternity** in the new heaven and the new Earth. What Paul said to the Romans ties in at this point.

Because **the creation itself** also **shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption** into **the glorious liberty** of the children of God. (Romans 8:21)

(In my March 2012 article entitled "FUTURE ETERNITY IN THE NEW HEAVEN & THE NEW EARTH" I explained in detail that the correct translation of Romans 8:21 should read "the creation itself" rather than "the creature itself".)

The liberty proclaimed in the Jubilee Year is the same as "the glorious liberty" that Paul speaks about in Romans 8. And the present creation is not released from the bondage of corruption until it is replaced by the new heaven and the new Earth. So when we view the description of the Jubilee in Leviticus 25:10 together with Paul's comments in Romans 8:21, then it really leaves no other option but that the Jubilee Year really MUST represent future eternity in the new heaven and the new Earth.

Now let's consider the next verse.

A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather *the grapes* in it of thy vine undressed. (Leviticus 25:11)

This raises the question: what does the word "Jubilee" actually mean?

The Hebrew word translated as "Jubilee" is "**yobel**". Now this word "yobel" is formed from the root word "yabal", and "**yabal**" is in fact the root word for a whole group of words. When we examine all of the words that are formed from this root word "yabal", then what the word "yobel" means becomes quite clear.

The following grammatical information is based on both the TWOT and BDB reference works. Here is what we have:

1) The root word "**yabal**" is a verb which means: **to cause to transport an object from one place to another**. This root word is used in two applications:

A) When the object of this verb is **inanimate**, then it means "**to bring**".

B) When the object of this verb refers to **people**, then it means "**to lead**".

Examples of where this root verb "yabal" means "to lead" include the following Scriptures:

Jeremiah 31:9 = in the millennium God **will lead** (yabal) Israel ...

Isaiah 55:12 = Israel will be **led forth** (yabal) with peace ...

Psalm 60:9 = who will **bring me** (yabal) in the strong city ...

Isaiah 53:7 = the Messiah is **brought** (yabal) as a lamb to the slaughter ...

So let's note the following: whether the object of the verb "yabal" is a person or whether the object is

inanimate, in both cases this verb means "**to transport something or someone from one place to another**".

In English we associate the word "Jubilee" with such words as: jubilant, rejoicing, sing, good cheer, etc., all of which are words with positive emotional overtones. We should, however, note that the Hebrew word "yabal" is emotionally neutral, that it has neither positive nor negative emotional overtones.

From this one Hebrew root word we have a number of other biblical Hebrew words, all of which illustrate the inherent meaning of the word "yabal". Thus:

1) The words **YABAL** & **YUBAL** & **UBAL** all refer to **rivers** or streams.

Isaiah 30:25 = streams (yabal) of waters ...

Jeremiah 17:8 = by the river (yubal) ...

Daniel 8:2 = I was by the river (ubal) ...

2) The words **BUL** & **YEBUL** both refer to **produce**, with YEBUL referring to produce of the soil, and BUL referring to the produce of trees.

Isaiah 44:19 = the stock (bul) of a tree ...

Job 40:20 = the mountains bring him forth food (bul) ...

Deuteronomy 11:17 = that the land yield not her fruit (yebul) ...

Psalm 67:6 = the earth yield her increase (yebul) ...

3) The word **TEBEL** refers to **the world**.

2 Samuel 22:16 = the foundations of the world (tebel) ...

Job 18:18 = chased out of the world (tebel) ...

Psalm 90:2 = You have formed the earth and the world (tebel) ...

4) The word **YOBEL** is the word for **Jubilee**. This is our word in Leviticus 25.

So to understand the intended meaning of the word "yobel" we should keep the meaning of the root word "yabal" in mind. The root word "yabal" means: to cause to transport someone or something from one place to another place. Thus:

1) **A RIVER** (yabal & yubal & ubal) transports water from one place to another.

2) **PRODUCE** of the soil and of trees (yebul & bul) is brought forth from the soil by the plant.

3) **THE WORLD** (tebel) brings forth both growth and people.

4) **THE JUBILEE** refers to a time when **something will be brought forth** and when **people will be led forth** from one place to another.

Can you see that all the words that are formed from the root word "yabal" in some way retain this quality of something being brought forth? All of these words that refer to rivers and produce and the world are emotionally neutral; they don't convey any feelings one way or the other. So likewise, the word "yobel" by itself does not convey any emotions or feelings.

The positive feelings and emotions that go along with "yobel" (the Jubilee) are based on "the shout of joy" that was trumpeted on the preceding Day of Atonement. And it is because of this association with the "shout of joy" that we need to attach very powerful positive emotions to the Jubilee, not because the word "yobel" itself somehow conveys such emotions.

So in plain terms:

The Jubilee refers to a time when all of mankind "will be led forth" by God from a physical existence into a permanent spirit existence; and that leading forth will be the cause for immense joy and jubilation. It is also the time when the whole creation "is brought forth" from a state of corruption into a state of incorruption. It is the leading forth that comes first, and the jubilation follows that leading forth.

Now let's look at the details in Leviticus 25, and we'll go back to verse 10.

And ye **shall hallow** the fiftieth year, and proclaim **liberty** throughout *all* the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be **a jubile unto you**; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and **ye shall return** every man unto his family. (Leviticus 25:10)

There are several things that we should take note of in this verse.

1) "You shall hallow it" means that **the Jubilee Year is holy**! This means that no human being anywhere is to do any work that qualifies for our ways, pleasures or words, as per Isaiah 58:13. The fact that the Jubilee was to continue for a whole year tells us that it must represent a future time when all human work has permanently ceased, something that again points to future eternity in the new heaven and the new Earth.

2) We are to proclaim **liberty** to ALL people. This means that the Jubilee represents a time when nobody can be employed by anyone else, because **employees are never free in the absolute sense**; employees are always obligated to their employers. Whenever we are obligated to somebody, then we are not really free. So

this verse tells us that the real intent of the Jubilee cannot possibly apply to anything in this present age. That absolute freedom will only be attained by all people in the new heaven and the new Earth.

3) "It shall be a Jubilee unto you" means that **it will be "a leading forth for you"**. It represents the time when God will lead humanity from a physical existence in this present world into a spirit existence in the new universe.

4) "**And you shall return**" to your original places refers to returning to the original intention that God had originally planned for mankind, which original intention was that human beings would become the sons and daughters of God. So where people in the physical application return to the areas God had originally provided for them to possess, in the spiritual application this refers to **joining the Family of God** in the new universe.

In viewing Leviticus 25:10 don't think of the word "Jubilee" as some specially coined name for an occasion. Rather, think of what the word "Jubilee" means, because it is the meaning of this word that

God had in mind when He referred to this year as "the Jubilee".

Next, Leviticus 25:11 then tells us that in that 50th year people are not to sow or reap or gather in any food supplies. It doesn't say or imply "don't eat"! So people do eat, but they will not provide for themselves in any way. The Jubilee represents a time in the future when people will not store up any food supplies, a time when God provides for every possible need that anybody could possibly have. That is a reference to **the time of the New Jerusalem**, where "the water of life" and "the tree of life" (Revelation 22:1-2) will provide everything that anybody might need.

Now notice the next verse.

For it *is* the jubile; **it shall be holy** unto you: **ye shall eat the increase** thereof out of the field. (Leviticus 25:12)

The fact that it is "**holy**" once again means that **nobody** in the country **will work for a living**. If architects and plumbers and mechanics, etc. were permitted to work at their jobs during a Jubilee Year, then that Jubilee Year could not possibly be "holy"! To make this very plain:

WHENEVER A PERIOD OF TIME IS "HOLY" THIS MEANS THAT NO HUMAN BEING CAN POSSIBLY **WORK FOR A LIVING** DURING THAT HOLY TIME! WORKING TO EARN A LIVING AND BEING HOLY ARE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE CONDITIONS!

The "work" that is absolutely not possible during holy time is defined by Isaiah 58:13 (i.e. **our** ways, pleasures and words). That is why I have used the expression "work for a living" in the above statement. Any activities that could also be called "work", but which activities clearly fall outside of the statements in Isaiah 58:13, are not affected by holy time (e.g. "doing good"), and so those are the activities (or we could call them "work") that people will be engaged in for all future eternity, as well as during the millennium.

To get back to Leviticus 25:12, the specific instruction in this verse was given not to point to some future fulfillment, but to show people how to cope with a Jubilee Year, **IF Israel had ever observed this law**. However, there is one other point we should keep in mind.

People can't really keep the Jubilee Year if they have NOT also kept the previous seven Land Sabbath Years! We can't skip observance of the Land Sabbath Years, and then somehow jump right into the observance of a Jubilee Year. The observance of a Jubilee Year is predicated upon the prior observance of seven Land Sabbath Years. We can't have the one without the other; that is what Leviticus 25:8 means.

In other words: the only people that will be around "in the Jubilee" (i.e. in future eternity) will be those that were also around during the millennium (including the 100-year period appended to it). And obviously, all those in the first resurrection "will be around" during the millennium, right? So all those who end up "in the Jubilee" (future eternity) will have also had a part in the Land Sabbath (i.e. the millennium). As I said, you can't have one without the other.

Anyway, IF the people of Israel in the Old Testament had observed the Land Sabbath Years and then the Jubilee Years, THEN God would have provided bumper crops in advance of those years, as we'll see in verses 21-22.

Let's continue.

In the year of this jubile **ye shall return every man unto his possession**. (Leviticus 25:13)

Keep in mind that "Jubilee" means "leading forth". So here God tells us: in the year of this leading forth you shall return every man to his possession, in reference to the land they had inherited. Implied is that due to problems and difficulties some people may have lost that original inheritance. So the Jubilee represents a time when mankind returns to the original intentions that God had established for human beings, a return to the "pre-sin" situation for all people. God's original intention was to build the Family of God, and the attainment of that original intention is pictured by the Jubilee.

And **if thou sell ought** unto thy neighbour, **or buyest *ought*** of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another: (Leviticus 25:14)

These instructions were given to deal with Israel's circumstances in that time period, IF they had ever practiced this law, which they did not. The point is that originally it was not God's intention that any human being would ever be a slave or a servant or an employee for any other human being, any more than God intended for one dolphin to work for another dolphin, or for one horse to work for another horse.

True freedom is only possible when there is no pressure or compunction or economic necessity for any person to seek employment with any other person. Thus true freedom isn't really possible in this present dispensation. True freedom isn't really possible when Satan is around and free to influence people.

True freedom is only possible when our continued existence is not dependent on having to work for our food and our other needs, when those needs will be freely provided for by the Almighty Creator God. At that time buying and selling and changes in ownership of ancestral lands will no longer take place.

But for this present dispensation God "accommodated" these things in His dealings with mankind; and so these things (buying, selling, trading, working for others to earn a living, etc.) are an integral part of our daily lives, for the vast majority of all people around the world. And we look upon that way of living as perfectly normal.

And so the intention for this instruction was to curb man's selfish activities to some degree, by taking everything "back to square one" every fifty years. It was aimed at dealing with the present reality.

Next, verses 15-16 were intended to provide a method for reaching "fair resolutions" to these kinds of situations. There is no equivalent for these instructions here in God's ultimate fulfillment of the Jubilee.

Now let's see verse 17.

Ye shall **not** therefore **oppress one another**; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I *am* the LORD your God. (Leviticus 25:17)

God here states a principle, which is: **never take advantage of other people**! When other people really need to have our goods or services, it is commonplace that people will take advantage of this situation by demanding higher fees or prices. Taking advantage of such situations is a major cause for oppression, because it impoverishes those who are at the mercy of the sellers or the providers of essential services. God's opposition to such practices is very emphatic, as was also Nehemiah's opposition to such practices, as we saw earlier in Nehemiah 5.

Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. (Leviticus 25:18)

Obedience to God's laws brings blessings and avoids problems. In this context God is speaking specifically about laws that avoid economic exploitation of the weak and the poor, i.e. God is referring

specifically to implementing the Land Sabbath and the Jubilee, which would have neutralized many attempts at exploitation of the poor.

And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. (Leviticus 25:19)

If the people of Israel had obeyed these Land Sabbath and Jubilee laws, then God would also have provided for all their needs during those years.

Here is another perspective on these laws.

When Adam sinned then one of the penalties God imposed was that man would from then onwards have to work to provide for his own needs. That happened before the flood, before God modified His plan to now run for 7100 years instead of only 6000 years. But God didn't modify the length of time for which man would be required to provide for his own needs. At the time of Adam that penalty was to run until the end of 6000 years, at which point God intended for all future eternity to start.

When God modified that plan after the flood, then the added 1100 years were not to be subject to any of the original (as well as any and all subsequent) penalties that God had imposed starting with the time when Adam had sinned. So in the revised plan those penalties would still only run for the 6000 years.

Now by giving Israel the Land Sabbath law and the Jubilee law, God was prepared to OCCASIONALLY lift that specific penalty (of man having to work to provide for all his own needs) for the nation of Israel. In other words, during Land Sabbath Years and during Jubilee Years God was prepared to provide for the nation of Israel in the way God had provided for Adam before Adam sinned ... food supplies freely available without any human input in their production process. The Land Sabbath Years and the Jubilee Years were to be brief periods of respite from the responsibility to always provide for one's own needs.

Receiving such bountiful blessings every seven years should have been a motivation and an incentive for Israel to stay faithful to God, and at the same time these abundant blessings should have been powerful examples to the nations around Israel, motivating them to seek contact with the God of Israel. But it never got off the ground, because Israel never put these laws into practice. The same had happened with Adam and Eve ... the ideals God had planned for humanity never got off the ground because Adam and Eve rejected God's ways within days of having been created by God.

And because these laws were NEVER put into practice, the correct understanding was lost. Instead of realizing that the land would produce mind-boggling amounts of food during these years, people instead focused on the land "resting" while perhaps producing minimal quantities, just enough for people to somehow get by. The concept of "rest" for the land grossly distorted the correct picture.

Getting back to Leviticus 25, in the next few verses God goes **back to discussing the Land Sabbath years**.

And if ye shall say, What shall we eat **the seventh year**? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in **the sixth year**, and it shall bring forth fruit **for three years**. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and **eat *yet* of old fruit until the ninth year**; until her fruits come in ye shall eat *of* the old *store*. (Leviticus 25:20-22)

In the millennium, for which the Land Sabbath Year is a type, there will be no "gathering in" of crops. God will provide every single year throughout the millennium. This symbolism is expressed in the prohibition of gathering-in any produce during the Land Sabbath Year. However, IF Israel in Old Testament times had ever actually observed this law, which they did not, THEN God would have provided for their needs during the Sabbatical Year in a different way from how God will provide during

the millennium.

During the millennium **there may be a climate change** to facilitate crops always being available for gathering for daily consumption. I suspect that such a climate change would in some way affect all inhabited areas on Earth.

But if Israel in the Old Testament had faithfully kept the Land Sabbath, these verses show that God planned to provide for Israel's Land Sabbath observances by giving them bumper crops in the years that would precede the Sabbatical Years, as had happened in Egypt during the seven years of plenty preceding the seven years of famine.

So Leviticus 25:20-22 shows how God would have taken care of Israel if they had observed these Land Sabbaths. These verses point to what God WOULD HAVE done if Israel as a nation had obeyed this law. Now the actual instructions for the Land Sabbath Year itself show what God WILL DO in the time that is represented by the Land Sabbath Year (i.e. the millennium). And those actual instructions imply that no food supplies will be gathered in for "tomorrow", very much like the way God provided the manna in an uninterrupted way for 40 years in the wilderness.

So these verses here do not have a future application.

The same also applies to Leviticus 25:23-27; these verses also represent the application of this law in Old Testament times, IF Israel had in fact tried to live by this law.

Now let's notice verse 28, which addresses the Jubilee.

But if he be not able to restore *it* to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it **until the year of jubile**: and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession. (Leviticus 25:28)

Recall that the Hebrew word for "Jubilee" means "to bring forth". And so in the Jubilee the land was to be "brought forth" to the families of the original owners. So note! Verse 28 describes WHY this year is called "the Jubilee Year"; the reason for this name is because it was to indicate a bringing forth (i.e. a giving back) of properties to their original owners.

The remainder of this chapter deals with how Israel in Old Testament times was to implement this law in their national circumstances. Fairness in such dealings was to be achieved by letting all potential buyers know up front that eventually all the lands they might buy from someone else would return to the original owners. This knowledge would obviously impact on the sale price.

However, all these instructions do not apply to the yet future events which were represented by the Land Sabbath Years and the subsequent Jubilee Year. In the yet future fulfillment of the Land Sabbath law there will be no buying and selling. During the millennium no land (or anything else for that matter) will ever be sold to someone else. And so all these instructions in the last part of this chapter do not have an end-time application.

Let's notice the last verse of this chapter.

For unto me **the children of Israel** *are* servants; they ***are*** **my servants** whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God. (Leviticus 25:55)

The point is that God owns Israel, and for that reason nobody could ever own an Israelite slave past the year of the Jubilee. The Jubilee is the year of God leading slaves to freedom; ultimately it is the time

when God will free human beings from mortality into the glorious liberty of life in the Family of God.

The Hebrew word for "Jubilee" (yobel) is also used a number of times in Leviticus 27. In Leviticus 27:17-24 we find a number of references to people dedicating some or all of their land to God. They would then redeem the land with money, and the amount of money paid depended on the number of years left to the next Jubilee Year. These instructions were also intended for Old Testament Israel IF they had applied these laws (i.e. the Land Sabbath and the Jubilee). These verses don't have an application in the end-time fulfillment.

Now let's take another look at Joshua chapter 6.

THE FALL OF JERICHO

In Joshua chapter 6, which deals with Israel marching around Jericho, we have **five references** to the Jubilee. However, those five references are **hidden by a mistranslation**. The mistranslation is due primarily to the fact that all the translators, including Hebrew experts, were clueless as to the real meaning and significance of these verses.

Here are the five verses in question.

And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven **trumpets** (Hebrew **SHOFAR**) of **rams' horns** (Hebrew **YOBEL**): and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with **the trumpets** (Hebrew **SHOFAR**). (Joshua 6:4)

And it shall come to pass, that **when they make a long *blast*** (Hebrew **MASHAK**) with **the ram's** (Hebrew **YOBEL**) **horn** (Hebrew **QEREN**), *and* when ye hear the sound of **the trumpet** (Hebrew **SHOFAR**), all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. (Joshua 6:5)

And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven **trumpets** (Hebrew **SHOFAR**) of **rams' horns** (Hebrew **YOBEL**) before the ark of the LORD. (Joshua 6:6)

And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven **trumpets** (Hebrew **SHOFAR**) of **rams' horns** (Hebrew **YOBEL**) passed on before the LORD, and blew with **the trumpets** (Hebrew **SHOFAR**): and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. (Joshua 6:8)

And seven priests bearing seven **trumpets** (Hebrew **SHOFAR**) of **rams' horns** (Hebrew **YOBEL**) before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with **the trumpets** (Hebrew **SHOFAR**): and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going on, and blowing with **the trumpets** (Hebrew **SHOFAR**). (Joshua 6:13)

In our context here we are interested in three Hebrew words. Those three words are:

- **QEREN** = the general word for the horn of an animal, used like a trumpet

- **SHOFAR** = refers specifically to a ram's horn, also used like a trumpet

- **YOBEL** = means "to bring or lead forth someone or something"

[COMMENT: We also need to examine the Hebrew word "**mashak**" in **Joshua 6:5**. This affects the words "a long blast". But we will leave that for the moment. We'll examine "mashak" shortly under the heading "When The Trumpet Sounds Long", because this word "mashak" ties in with Exodus 19:13.]

In these five verses the word "shofar" is used nine times, the word "yobel" is used five times, and the word "qeren" is used once. Here are the relevant expressions with these words in the above five verses:

Verse 4 = seven **SHOFARIM of YOBEL** ...

Verse 4 = the priests shall blow with the **SHOFARIM**

Verse 5 = *a long blast* with the **YOBEL of QEREN** ...

Verse 5 = when you hear the sound of the **SHOFAR** ...

Verse 6 = the seven **SHOFARIM of YOBEL** ...

Verse 8 = seven priests bearing the seven **SHOFARIM of YOBEL** ...

Verse 8 = ... and blew with the **SHOFARIM** ...

Verse 13 = bearing the seven **SHOFARIM of YOBEL** before the Ark ...

Verse 13 = ... and blew with the **SHOFARIM** ...

Verse 13 = the priests going on and blowing with the **SHOFARIM**.

So here is what our translators have done (We will examine "a long blast" in verse 5 later.):

1) In verses 4, 6, 8 and 13 they translated the Hebrew "**shofarim of yobel**" as **"trumpets of ram's horns"**.

2) In verse 5 they translated the Hebrew "**yobel of qeren**" as **"the ram's horn"**.

With these translations the translators assigned the meaning of "**ram's horn**" to the Hebrew word "**yobel**", and the meaning of "**trumpet**" to the Hebrew word "**shofar**".

But in verse 5 the expression "**the ram's horn**" is a translation of the two word "**yobel**" and "**qeren**".

So here is the point we should note!

TRANSLATING "YOBEL" AS "RAM'S HORN" IS A MISTRANSLATION!

The Hebrew words "shofar" and "yobel" are NOT synonyms! They are NOT interchangeable, and they don't mean the same thing! It is "shofar" that means "ram's horn"; and therefore "yobel" must mean something else! And it does! Simply because two words are **associated** in some way, that does not mean that they must therefore also be interchangeable in meaning.

None of the translators understood correctly the text they were attempting to translate into English. It is acceptable to translate "**shofar**" as "**trumpet**", and it is also acceptable to translate "**qeren**" as "**horn**". But in this context "**yobel**" should be translated either as "**leading forth**" or as "**Jubilee**", and not as "ram's horn". So here is **a correct translation** of all these verses.

And seven priests shall bear before the ark **seven trumpets of leading forth**: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with **the trumpets**. (Joshua 6:4)

And it shall come to pass, that when they make *a long blast* with **the horn of leading forth**, and when ye hear the sound of **the trumpet**, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. (Joshua 6:5)

And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear **seven trumpets of leading forth** before the ark of the LORD. (Joshua 6:6)

And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the **seven trumpets of leading forth** passed on before the LORD, and blew with **the trumpets**: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. (Joshua 6:8)

And seven priests bearing **seven trumpets of leading forth** before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with **the trumpets**: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with **the trumpets**. (Joshua 6:13)

However, it is also perfectly correct to translate "yobel" in these verses as "Jubilee". In that case these 5 verses look as follows:

And seven priests shall bear before the ark **seven trumpets of Jubilee**: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. (Joshua 6:4)

And it shall come to pass, that when they make *a long blast* with **the horn of Jubilee**, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. (Joshua 6:5)

And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear **seven trumpets of Jubilee** before the ark of the LORD. (Joshua 6:6)

And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the **seven trumpets of Jubilee** passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. (Joshua 6:8)

And seven priests bearing **seven trumpets of Jubilee** before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. (Joshua 6:13)

Joshua 6:13 is the very last time that the word "**yobel**", the word for "Jubilee", is ever used in the Bible! After this event the word for "Jubilee" is **never used again** in the Bible! Never again is there a direct reference to a Jubilee. Throughout the time that the nations of Israel lived in the land, the word "yobel" is not used a single time.

However, there is one other passage in the Bible that also speaks about "seven trumpets". The only two passages in the whole Bible that refer to "seven trumpets" are Joshua chapter 6 and Revelation chapter 8. So let’s compare those passages.

JOSHUA 6 AND REVELATION 8

In Joshua 6 we have four references to "**seven trumpets of Jubilee**", or, as it can also be stated, "**seven trumpets of leading forth**" (verses 4, 6, 8 and 13). Those seven trumpets are all pictured as being "**before the Ark of God**". Now the Ark of God was a representation of the Seat of God, and so the Ark represents **the presence of God**.

In Revelation 8:2 we read:

And I saw the seven angels which **stood before God**; and to them were given **seven trumpets**. (Revelation 8:2)

So there are some clear parallels in these two passages. In both cases there are seven trumpets and in both cases the bearers of those trumpets are standing before God. We know that in the account in Joshua 6 **the walls fell down** (Joshua 6:20) at the last blowing of those seven trumpets.

In the account in Revelation at the blowing of the last trumpet the kingdoms of this world in a manner of speaking "fall down" and become the Kingdom which **Jesus Christ will rule for ever** (Revelation 11:15).

The seven trumpets in Revelation usher in the return of Jesus Christ, when the millennium will start. That reign will be "forever and ever"; the Greek text here literally means "unto the ages of the ages". This expression covers not only the millennium, but also future eternity beyond the millennium. It is somewhat like the seventh Land Sabbath Year ushering in a period which then leads right into the Jubilee Year, with God ruling during both periods.

In **Revelation 8** the focus is on events leading up to the **second coming** of Christ, who will then usher in the millennium. That is the event pictured by the Land Sabbath Year.

In **Joshua 6** it seems to me the focus is primarily on **future eternity** in the new heaven and new Earth. I believe the "**falling down**" of the walls of Jericho in a way represents the "falling down" of this whole present physical creation in the coming **lake of fire**. And when, after the walls had fallen down, "the people went up **into the city** every man straight before him" (Joshua 6:20 again), I believe this is intended to picture "the nations of them which are saved" coming **into the New Jerusalem** (see Revelation 21:24).

A significant feature of the event in Joshua 6 was that **the priests carried the Ark of God** around Jericho seven times. Now the Ark of God represented the Seat of God, the place from where God rules. By walking around Jericho with the Ark, that would represent that what would happen within that enclosed space would be under the rule of God. Now carrying the Ark around Jericho **SEVEN TIMES** on that 7th Day of Unleavened Bread represents, I believe, **THE START OF GOD'S PERMANENT RULE**, in other words, the start of future eternity in the new heaven.

And even as conditions during the Land Sabbath Years and the Jubilee Years shared certain similarities, so the events in Joshua 6 may well share certain similarities with both, the start of the millennium, and also the start of future eternity after the lake of fire, somewhat like a first and a second fulfillment for certain prophecies. That is also like the prediction regarding the coming of Elijah in Malachi 4:5-6, which has two rather distinct applications: first to John the Baptist, and then to the Elijah to come (Matthew 17:11).

Likewise, I believe the events in Joshua 6 have two applications: to the start of the millennium, and also to the start of future eternity. But it seems to me that the events in Joshua chapter 6 point to future eternity in the new heaven and the new Earth even more so than they point to the start of the millennium. And after Joshua 6:13 the word for "Jubilee" is never again used in the Bible. When we understand what

the Land Sabbath and the Jubilee represent, then it shouldn’t surprise us that Israel never kept either of these two years.

The history of Old Testament Israel is one of time and time again descending into idolatry. The Apostle Paul pointed out that Israel’s condition amounted to becoming "branches that were broken off" (see Romans 11:17-20). Israel went into idolatry and never observed these two specific laws.

The Jews today base all their religious observances on their calendar. But their calendar is something God hates (see Isaiah 1:14), which means that their observances of Tabernacles, etc. are not acceptable to God. And if God already back in the days of Isaiah (around 750 B.C.) said that He hated their religious observances (same verse), then what were the chances of them observing the Land Sabbath Years and the Jubilee Years correctly?

So I believe that the Jubilee law was given by God to point towards future eternity in the presence of God in the new heaven and the new Earth.

Now let’s look at the Scripture some people have used to claim that "yobel" supposedly also means "ram’s horn".

EXODUS CHAPTER 19

This chapter is the build-up towards God (i.e. Jesus Christ) speaking the ten commandments from Mount Sinai. God called Moses up to the mountain and Moses then presented the words of God to the people. The people then responded with "all that the Eternal has spoken we will do" (Exodus 19:8). Then God once again gave certain instructions to Moses.

In Exodus 19:9 Moses "told the words of the people unto the Eternal". God then instructed Moses to tell the people to be ready on the third day (Exodus 19:11). Now let’s note the following.

1) In Exodus 19:12-13 God is still speaking to Moses on the mountain. These verses speak about things that had NOT YET taken place; they speak about what would shortly happen.

2) In the next verse, Exodus 19:14, "Moses went down from the mount unto the people".

3) In the next verse, Exodus 19:15, Moses then gives some specific instructions to the people.

4) In the next verse, Exodus 19:16, we then come to that "third day", and the things God had predicted then actually take place.

So here is the point:

Exodus 19:13 speaks about things **BEFORE THEY HAPPEN**, while Exodus 19:16 speaks about things **WHILE THEY WERE HAPPENING**. Verse 13 is a prediction and verse 16 is a fulfillment. Can we see that?

Now both of these verses in our English text contain the word "**trumpet**". But the Hebrew word translated as "trumpet" in verse 13 is not the same as the Hebrew word translated "trumpet" in verse 16. **Two different Hebrew words** are used in these two verses.

To be quite clear here:

IN VERSE 13 NOTHING ACTUALLY HAPPENS! VERSE 13 ONLY SPEAKS ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN LATER!

It is only from verse 16 onwards that things actually happen! But verse 13 is nothing more than a description of what would happen and **how the people were to respond** to what would happen. So let's now look at these verses.

There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the **trumpet** (Hebrew "**yobel**") **soundeth long** (Hebrew "**mashak**"), they shall come up to the mount. (Exodus 19:13)

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the **trumpet** (Hebrew "**shofar**") **exceeding** (Hebrew "**me'od**") **loud** (Hebrew "**chazaq**"); so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled. (Exodus 19:16)

Here we are dealing once again with **a mistranslation**!

The translators did not understand the instruction God gave Moses in verse 13! That is the problem! What the translators did is look at what happened in verse 16 (i.e. the shofar sounded exceedingly loud!), and then **they misapplied what happened in verse 16 to their translations of verse 13**. But they didn't actually translate verse 13 correctly.

Let's look at the details.

1) In verse 16 the expression translated as "the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud" does not contain any verbs. **The translations for this verse are basically correct.** Thus: "**shofar**" refers to a ram's horn trumpet; the adverb "**me'od**" means "very, greatly, much, exceedingly", etc., and so it is here appropriately rendered as "exceeding"; and the adjective "**chazaq**" or "**hazaq**" means "strong", and in our context here "loud" is appropriate. Literally the Hebrew expression means "**the voice of the shofar very strong**". "The voice" refers to the sound the shofar makes, and so our English translation "the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud" is a fair rendering of the intended meaning of the Hebrew expression involved in verse 16.

2) Now in verse 16 there were **FOUR THINGS** that occurred, namely:

- thunders

- lightning

- a very thick cloud upon the mount

- a very loud sound of the shofar.

QUESTION: Did God intend any one of these four things to be more important than the other three, or did God intend all four of them to present one unified picture? Specifically, was the sound of the shofar more important or was the lightning more important? The sound of thunder can be deafening, so was the thunder more important or was the shofar sound more important? Do you get the idea?

God was providing a setting where **all four of these things worked together to achieve one purpose**, without setting one of these things above the other three in importance. One unified picture, with no component being given preeminence above any of the other three components.

This the translators did not understand!

To the translators "the voice of the trumpet" was the only important thing, and the other three things were to them only secondary trappings, like window-dressing. And so the translators ASSUMED that God's statement in verse 13 was a reference to the sound of the shofar.

But in verse 13 God was not talking about "the trumpet sound", not at all! So let's now look at the mistranslated second half of verse 13. Here it is:

"when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount".

This statement consists of two parts:

1) God states something that would happen.

2) Then the people were to respond by doing something.

As the text stands in English these two parts say the following:

1) the trumpet will sound long.

2) Then the people are to come up to the foot of the mount.

The mistranslation here is the first statement. **The Hebrew text does NOT say "when the trumpet sounds long"**. The Hebrew text actually says something different, something that none of the translations I have checked have translated correctly.

"WHEN THE TRUMPET SOUNDS LONG"

For a start, in the Hebrew text this expression does **NOT** contain the word for "**trumpet**" or the word for "ram's horn". This statement is not speaking any kind of trumpet at all!

Next, in the Hebrew text this expression does **NOT** talk about "**sounding long**"! This statement does not refer to making any sounds, long or short!

So this whole expression is a mistranslation.

This expression in verse 13 consists of just two Hebrew words, one word translated as "the trumpet" and one word translated as "sounds long". The dictionary form of the word mistranslated as "the trumpet" is "**yobel**", and the word mistranslated as "sounds long" is the verb "**mashak**".

We have already established the correct meaning for the word "yobel". So now let's examine this Hebrew word "mashak".

"**Mashak**" is a primitive root verb which the **BDB Lexicon** defines as: **to draw, drag, seize**. With the qal stem (used here) BDB lists the following as the first meaning:

1a) **to draw** and lift out, drag along, **lead along**, drag or lead off

TWOT provides the following information for "mashak":

"The following meanings are attached to the verb mashak in the Qal:

(1) To draw in the sense of '**to raise**' Genesis 37:28, '**They drew**, and lifted up **Joseph from the pit**.' Jeremiah 38:13, 'So, **they hauled up Jeremiah** with ropes,'

(2) To draw in the sense of '**to extend**,' Psalm 36:10; Psalm 85:5 have already been noted. Cf. also Psalm 109:12 and Jeremiah 31:3, 'For you have I **prolonged** kindness.'

(3) To draw in the sense of '**to draw in, associate with**'; Psalm 28:3, **'Do not rank me with the wicked**'; Hosea 7:5, 'He stretched out his hand (mashak yado) with scorners' possibly means, 'He associated with scoffers.'" (TWOT #1257.0)

GESENIUS in his Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament defines "mashak" as follows: when applied to persons, it means "to draw someone anywhere".

I have now quoted three highly qualified reference works: BDB, TWOT and GESENIUS regarding the meaning of "mashak". It should be clear that this Hebrew verb does not have anything at all to do with "making any sound", neither long sounds nor short sounds nor loud sounds nor soft sounds nor any sounds!

It is because the misguided translators believed that "yobel" somehow means "ram's horn", that therefore, and only therefore (!), the translators had to conjure up this "long-sounding" meaning for this Hebrew verb "mashak". But that meaning is as fake as a three-cornered nickel!

"**Yobel**" means: **to lead forth**; and "**mashak**" means: **to draw someone somewhere**. It really is that simple!

So let's look at the last part of Exodus 19:13 again.

Where our English text reads:

"When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mount."

The correct translation should read:

"**When the leading forth (yobel) draws them (mashak), they shall come up to the mount.**" (Exodus 19:13, last part)

In other words: the verb "mashak" has an effect on the noun "yobel". This tells us that the people will be "drawn" towards God by "the leading forth". The events that make up "the leading forth" are not defined in this verse. After all, this is only a prediction of what was still to happen later.

This also applies to Joshua 6:5. So let's look again at that verse. Where our English text reads "**when they make a long blast with the ram's horn**", the Hebrew text has the three words "**MASHAK QEREN YOBEL**". We have already seen that "qeren yobel" really means "the horn of leading forth" or "the horn of the Jubilee". Thus the three words "mashak qeren yobel" mean "**drawing them with the horn of leading forth**", or "**drawing them with the horn of the Jubilee**".

So in both Exodus 19:13 and Joshua 6:5 the word "mashak" does not mean anything like "making a sound". In both places this word "mashak" refers to drawing the people towards something.

All that remains here is to establish exactly what it is that produces "the leading forth" in both Exodus

19:13 and Joshua 6:5.

First, **regarding Exodus 19:13**, all translators and commentators have assumed that this must be a reference to "the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud" in verse 16. But that is not correct!

The truth is that GOD INTENDED **THE WHOLE PACKAGE** TO BE INSTRUMENTAL IN "LEADING THEM FORTH"! In other words, God intended that the four factors working together would produce the leading forth. Those four factors working together were: **the thunder + lightning + thick cloud + loud trumpet**. All four of these things very obviously exerted a very powerful influence over the Israelites at that point in time. They were just as scared out of their wits by the thunder and the lightning, as they were by the trumpet sound.

Can you understand this?

So in verse 13 God predicted that the Israelites would be "led forth" by "being drawn" by all four of these powerful manifestations of the awesome might and majesty of the Great Creator God. In verse 13 God did NOT spell out the factors that would produce this leading forth. Verse 13 simply states what would happen, that the people would be led out by being drawn.

It is verse 16 that then spells out the details that produced the leading forth. And verse 17 then shows the last part of God's initial statement being fulfilled. Verse 13 says "... they shall come up to (the foot of) the mount", and verse 17 says "and Moses brought forth the people to ... the nether part of the mount", perfectly fulfilling God's statement in verse 13.

This is the correct explanation for Exodus 19:13. Now we should understand that it is because of the word "yobel" being used in Exodus 19:13, and only because of that usage, that scholars claim that "yobel" supposedly also means "ram's horn". That whole idea is absurd! Look, when "shofar" means "ram's horn" why on Earth would "yobel" somehow also mean "ram's horn"? What do the words "yobel" and "shofar" have in common? Nothing!!

Scholars have elevated "the exceeding loud trumpet" above the thunder and lightning and thick cloud, and in that way simply asserted a new meaning for "yobel". The fact that "yobel" and "shofar" are totally different words doesn't seem to bother those scholars.

Next, **regarding Joshua 6:5**, the cause of drawing the people is mentioned in the next part of this verse. It is the sounding of the shofar. Let's look at this verse again, so we can see this clearly.

And it shall come to pass, that **when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn**, *and* **when ye hear the sound of the trumpet**, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. (Joshua 6:5)

The expression "when they make a long blast with the ram's horn" should be correctly translated as "**and they will be drawn forth with the horn of the Jubilee**". The expression "when you hear the sound of the trumpet" is basically correct, though it could also be translated as "when you hear the sound of the shofar", or as "**when you hear the sound of the ram's horn**".

This may seem to be somewhat confusing, which is exactly what mistranslations usually achieve ... they confuse people. But the point is that in the Hebrew text the word for "ram's horn" is NOT used in the first expression, but only in the second expression. **The translators translated the Hebrew words for "horn of the Jubilee" as "ram's horn", and then they translated the Hebrew word for "ram's horn" as plain "horn".**

They switched the meanings of words in order to justify the words "they make a long blast". In plain language Joshua 6:5 says:

When you hear the sound of the shofar then the people will be drawn into the destroyed city by the horn of the Jubilee; i.e. **the horn of leading forth would in effect draw the people into the city**.

At any rate, "yobel" most certainly does not mean "ram's horn", even if any number of scholarly reference works make such a claim. The whole idea that "yobel" means "ram's horn" is utterly absurd!

We have seen WHAT Exodus 19:13 really means, and now we should ask: **WHY did God use the word "yobel" in this build-up to the giving of the ten commandments?**

Consider the following point:

The Jubilee represents the time when God will lead humanity into future eternity in the Kingdom of God. At that point God the Father comes to the new Earth, and all the human beings, who have been changed into spirit beings just prior to that event, will for the very first time ever come into the very presence of God the Father. (This does not apply to those who will be in the first resurrection, and who therefore also attended "the marriage supper" in the presence of God the Father.)

In Exodus 19 the whole nation of Israel was preparing to come into the very presence of Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament. In a way, that event in Exodus 19 and 20, where God spoke the ten commandments to the entire nation of Israel, was a type of what will happen when God the Father comes to the new Earth with the New Jerusalem. At that point God the Father will undoubtedly address His entire Family. In the last part of Exodus 19 the nation of Israel was being "led forth" to meet with God, even as at that future time all humanity will be "led forth" from a physical mortal existence into an immortal spirit existence in the presence of God.

So in Exodus 19:13 God used the word "yobel" to describe His intentions for the nation of Israel about a year before God gave Israel the Jubilee law in Leviticus 25. And then by the time of Joshua 6:13, at the time when the walls of Jericho fell down, God used the word "yobel" for the very last time in the Bible. This word is only used between Exodus 19:13 and Joshua 6:13. So the word "yobel" is never used throughout Israel's entire history in the land that God had given them, not even once. Once Israel had inherited the land, never once did they observe either the Land Sabbath or the Jubilee.

All attempts to find Jubilee Years and Sabbatical Years in Israel's history are nothing more than attempts to reverse-engineer those years into the historical accounts, asserting those years for key strategical events in Israel's history. Such claims may well appeal to some people's biases, but the bottom line is that there is no proof for these years ever having been observed.

And that brings us to the end of our discussion of the Jubilee. Are there still some questions for which I don't have an adequate answer? Yes. After all, at this stage I too can only "see through a glass darkly" (1 Corinthians 13:12). But hopefully the general overall picture is becoming clearer, even if some questions do remain.

Here are some of the major points we have covered in this article.

SUMMARY

1) This whole subject is shrouded in deception which is largely based on **mistranslations** for a number

of key Hebrew words. The most significant mistranslations in our context are:

- The verb "shabath" is mistranslated as "rested".

- The verb "shamat" is mistranslated as "let it (the land) rest".

- The verb "natash" is mistranslated as "let it (the land) lie still".

- The noun "yobel" is mistranslated as "ram's horn" and as "trumpet".

- The verb "mashak" is mistranslated as "sounds long".

- The noun "teruwah" is mistranslated as "Jubilee" in Leviticus 25:9.

With all these mistranslations we have been severely deceived!

2) The Sabbath commandment tells us to stop doing certain very specific things, rather than telling us to stop all activities. The focus of the Sabbath law is not really on "resting". This principle also applies to the Land Sabbath, that the Land Sabbath is not really about the land "resting".

3) Resting is not really a primary requirement for Sabbath observance, and it was assuredly not a part of God's original intentions for the Sabbath.

4) God's instruction "in it you shall not do any work" really means: we are not to do OUR ways or find OUR pleasure or speak OUR words. Activities that fall outside of these specific parameters are not intended to be restricted.

5) We need to understand that God NEVER gives exemptions from the requirements of His laws to anybody; not to priests or kings, and not to ministers or lay people. When we can clearly establish that God required some people to engage in certain activities on a Sabbath, then it must mean that those specific activities in those specific contexts cannot possibly be included in the meaning of "work" as God used that word in Exodus 20:10.

6) We should recognize that God's creation of the Sabbath day was a part of God's response to Satan's sins.

7) We also need to recognize that it is ALWAYS lawful "to do good". We considered various examples in this regard.

8) The Sabbath command in Exodus 20 tells us three things that God did, and also three things that God requires of us. "Resting" is not one of those three requirements for us.

9) We considered a number of examples of activities that are not at all restricted by the Sabbath commandment.

10) Specifically, what the Sabbath commandment abolishes is the way of life that is based on trying to provide for the future, the way of life that is based on trading. Without any form of trading our entire present world would collapse.

11) The **Land Sabbath** law points to **the millennium** when Jesus Christ will rule. The intent of this law was that all people in the country would cease working for a living for that year. God would provide sufficient for all people in the nation in the previous year, and this was to represent how Jesus Christ will

provide for all people during the millennium.

12) The **Jubilee** points to **all future eternity** in the new heaven and the new Earth. Back in Genesis 2 the Sabbath pointed to future eternity. But in the modified plan after the flood, when God expanded the time for human beings on this Earth from 6000 years to 7100 years, the Sabbath came to symbolize the millennium, and the representation of future eternity was then attached to the Jubilee.

Well, that about covers this subject.

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