

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, along with everything in them. On the seventh day God was finished with his work, which he had made, so he rested on the seventh day from all his work, which he had made. God blessed the seventh day and separated it as holy; because on that day God rested from all his work which he had created, so that it itself could produce. Gen 2:1-3 CJB*

I came across an idea for one of the reasons for the Sabbath that I had not considered before; {and no I am not going to try to settle the Saturday/Sunday debate.}

We have all heard that the Sabbath is for rest. Rest in early Hebrew tradition was like the rest of a king after he conquers a region or people. After the war is completed he settles down for a rest (nûah), to enjoy his newly acquired wealth. This promise is recorded in Joshua 1:13; when Joshua began the conquering of Canaan; ... *'The LORD your God will give you rest by giving you this land'*. It occurs again for King David in 2 Samuel 7:1; *After the king had been living in his palace awhile and Adonai had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies....*

So when Moses wrote Genesis 1 (somewhere after 1450 BCE), he was writing from a perspective that was thousands of years after the Creation story. But rest is rest, and to rest on the Sabbath had been restated in the 10 commandments.

*"Remember the day, Shabbat (Sabbath), to set it apart for God. You have six days to labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Shabbat for Adonai your God. On it, you are not to do any kind of work — not you, your son or your daughter, not your male or female slave, not your livestock, and not the foreigner staying with you inside the gates to your property. For in six days, Adonai made heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. This is why Adonai blessed the day, Shabbat, and separated it for himself.*

Just think what this meant to the Israelites there at Mt Sinai. They had been slaves for generations – slaves work 7 days a week. Their only worth was what they could produce. If they couldn't produce they were worthless and cast aside. I have heard that the slaves in the U.S. during the times of slavery had a saying – "they worked from 'kin to kan't' meaning from when they kin (can) see in the morning to when the kan't (can't) see at night – a long hard day. That is the life of a slave. There was no rest for them.

God was saying right from the beginning of human existence that your worth is not in what you can produce but in the fact that you are His children – not His slaves. This generally was not the case with the pagan gods. Humans were there to serve these pagan gods, not the other way around.

Surely God knew that there is work to be done, but there is also a time of rest – a time to be in relationship with Him and enjoy the life He has given us. As our suzerain He is here to protect us from our enemies – and ourselves.

I once worked with a guy that worked at the company I worked for. He would put in 8 hours and then go work on another job for I don't know how many hours. He did this seven days a week. He was always working. He had no time for his family, no time to rest and be with them; and was always thinking about the money he could make. When we would talk about his constant working, he would say that when he made 'his millions' he would retire. Sadly, I don't know if he ever lived long enough to enjoy his life.

Those who study rest have found that there are good reasons for daily rest as well as weekly rest.

**Physically** resting will reduce stress, heart disease, inflammations; and add years to your life and well as doing better when you do work.

**Emotionally** rest improves our mental energy and improves our focus and creativity. It can also improve our memory.

Finding time to chill and unwind will help us enjoy both work and play.

So there are good reasons why God wants us to enjoy the Sabbath. Scientists know it now, but God knew it from the beginning. Time off from work to rejuvenate our minds and bodies – and to have uninterrupted time with Him and His creation.

An old saying seems to have a great deal of wisdom in it. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy".

Respect the wisdom of God and take time away from work every week. When we care for our physical, mental and emotional health, we are being good stewards of the life God gave us.