

By the Seventh Day God Had Finished His Work

2: 1-3

DIG: When did God rest? What are we supposed to learn from that? What does Sabbath rest mean? What is the point of blessing the Sabbath? How do we know this is a book we can trust?

REFLECT: Do I fail to take time off for rest, spiritual rejuvenation, and worship? Is my day of worship just like any other day of the week?

By the seventh day creation was complete, and thus, was a day of rest. This passage is a summary of that completed work and, therefore, is different in structure than the previous six days of creation; **God finished His work** in 1:1 to 2a, **He rested** from His work in 1:2b, and **the LORD blessed** the day in 1:3. There are three divisions in this section because the number 3 and the number 7 are very prominent. In the Hebrew there are 35 words (5X7) within these three verses. Each one contains 7 words. Of the 35 words, the exact middle expression is: **the seventh day**. The three middle phrases (2a, 2b, 3a) have 7 words each and the words **seventh** and **work** are within each phrase. If you are thinking, so what's the big deal? I suggest that you go ahead and try it. Pick a topic, limit yourself to 35 words, 3 sentences of seven words each, etc. Then see if any of it makes any sense. The amazing thing is that **Elohim** has put his mathematical fingerprints on every verse, every chapter and every one of the 66 books of the Bible. This is a book you can trust and believe in.

First **God finished His work**. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed (*kalah*) in all their vast array (2:1). **By the seventh day God had finished (*kalah*) the work He had been doing**. Four times it is emphasized that **Elohim** had finished His work, and three times it is emphasized that this included *all His work*.³⁷ There were no loose ends to tie up. There were no problems to fix. The verb **completed** or **finished (*kalah*)** means *to bring to completion*. The point here is that the universe is no longer in a process of being created. What this section allows for is not more time for additional creation, but time for procreation. The Hebrew has two words for **work**. One emphasizes labor that is raw and unskilled. But the second, and the one used here, means *work that is performed by a craftsman or an artisan*. Thus, **the Master Craftsman completed His work** in such a manner that everything was perfect and unblemished.

God did not rest until **He** had finished the work **He** had been doing. In a similar way, **Jesus** did **His Father's** work faithfully and urged others to do the same while there was still time (**John 9:4**). And even as **He** was being crucified for your sins and mine, only when **He** was absolutely certain that **His work** of redemption, of paying the price for our sins, was completed did **He** say these words in the hearing of all who were at the foot of **His** cross: **Paid in full (John 19:30)**.³⁸ Then, once again, **the Son of God** rested on the Sabbath Day, in Joseph's tomb, until the dawning of the first day of the new week.

Secondly, **God rested** from **His** work. So on the seventh day he rested from all **His** work (2:2). The verb **rested** (*shabath*) simply means *a cessation of work*. Do not think that **ADONAI** was tired or weary. **Isaiah 40:28** says: **ADONAI is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary. He didn't need to rest up. Indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep (Psalm 121:4)**. There is nothing in this passage commanding the observance of this day. The Covenant of Adam did not instruct him to keep **the seventh day** as a day of rest either. The point of this verse is that **God** ceased from **His** creative activity. Nevertheless, **the seventh day** did establish a permanent pattern for the rhythm of all human life. **Elohim** created us in **His** image, and **He** programmed us so that we function best when we follow the pattern of work and rest that parallels the creation week. The ideal ratio is to work six days and **rest on the seventh**. People and animals quickly show signs of fatigue when they miss that one day of rest per week.

As **God** rested from all **His** work, so also believers can share in the rest that **Yeshua** provides, for anyone who enters **Elohim's** rest also rests from their own work, just as **the LORD** did from **His** (**Hebrews 4:4**). Biblical teaching concerning the Sabbath day ultimately comes from this passage. It is very apparent that the term *Sabbath* day is absent from this paragraph. The Hebrew word underlying the verb **rested** is the verbal form of the Hebrew noun *shabath*, or the English noun *Sabbath*. The proper name *Sabbath* will not be used until the **Exodus** because only then is the command to keep **the Sabbath day** actually given (see my commentary on **Exodus Dn - Remember the Sabbath by Keeping It Holy**). After reminding the Israelites that **Elohim** set the pattern for working six days and resting on the seventh, **He** made the connection between **the seventh day** and **the Sabbath** clear by slightly paraphrasing **Genesis 2:3**. **God the Holy Spirit** inspired Moses to write: **Therefore, ADONAI blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Exodus 20:11)**. This account of creation, seen through the eyes of the new nation of **Isra'el** in **Moses' day**, would have had great significance. Out of the formlessness and emptiness of **Egypt**, **God** brought out **His** people, teaching them the truth, commissioning them to be **His** representatives, and promising them rest. This should also encourage us today.

Thirdly, God **blessed** the day. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done (2:3). **The rabbis teach that the Sabbath parallels the world to come, a time of complete goodness and peace for those who are worthy of it.** The verb **blessed** (*barak*) means *to be set apart*. In other words, **He set it apart** as a memorial. **The seventh day** is a reminder that **ADONAI** is **Elohim**, our **Creator**. It is a memorial to a completed creation.

To reject the six days of creation is to rob the blessing from **the seventh day**. It also robs **God** of **His** glory. If everything evolved from nothing, or if creation was spread over billions of years, then there was no **seventh day**. The glory of **ADONAI's original** creative work is diminished by any theory that stretches creation out over long ages of time, because the evolutionary process would mean that **God** spent ages tinkering with creation before **He** got it right. In other words, evolution at any stage of the creative process overturns the biblical assertion that everything **Elohim** created was **very good**. Instead, it suggests that **He** created things in an unfinished state and then brought them to completion through natural processes. That is not what the Bible teaches.

You simply will not find evolution anywhere in **Genesis**. It just isn't there (see <http://creation/how-old-is-the-earth>). The whole biblical account, from **the first day** through **the seventh day**, underscores the truth of an immediate, direct creation, fully accomplished and completed to perfection in just one week. Any other interpretation simply doesn't do justice to the plain language of Scripture.³⁹

So in the first seven days of creation, **Elohim** was preparing a home for the man **He** would make in **His** image. Now in the next chapter, **God** is getting ready to place this man into the Garden that **He** has prepared for him.