

# SHABBAT: A SCRIPTURAL OVERVIEW

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## The Meaning of the Word Shabbat

The word *Sabbath* is represented by several related Hebrew words. Let's look at each of these words to see how Scripture uses each one.

**Shabbat**; *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* word #7673; a primitive root word meaning *to repose, rest, desist (from exertion or labor), cease*. It is translated in the *KJV* by the following words: *cease* (47 times), *rest* (11 times), *away* (3 times), *fail* (2 times), *celebrate* (1 time), *misc.* (7 times)

**Shabbat**; *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* word #7676; from 7673 and means *intermission, i.e. (specifically) the Sabbath* and is used in reference to the weekly Sabbath, the Day of Atonement, the sabbatical year, weeks and is translated in the *KJV* as *Sabbath* (107 times). Examples of its usage:

- a) Weekly Sabbath: Ex. 16:25; 20:8, 10; 31:15; Deut. 5:10, 12, 15; Lev. 23:3
- b) Day of Atonement: Lev. 16:31; 23:32
- c) Sabbath (sabbatical) year: Lev. 25:4; 26:34, 43; 2 Ch. 36:21
- d) Weeks of Sabbaths: Lev. 23:15 (seven Sabbaths or weeks); 25:8

**Shabbatown**; *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary* word #7677; (from 7676) and means *a special holy day* and is used in reference to the weekly Sabbath, Day of Atonement, sabbatical year, Feast of Trumpets and the first and last days of the Feast of Tabernacles and is translated in the *KJV* as *rest* (8 times), *sabbath* (3 times). Examples of its usage:

- a) Weekly Sabbath: Ex. 31:15; 16:23; 35:2; Lev. 23:3;
- b) Day of Atonement: Lev. 16:31; 23:32
- c) Sabbatical year: Lev. 25:4
- d) Feast of Trumpets: Lev. 23:24
- e) First day of the Feast of Tabernacles and the eighth day (Shemini Atzeret): Lev. 23:34

## Three Types of Shabbats

In Scripture the word *Sabbath* is a generic word that refers to several different spiritual concepts involving HEARING, DOING AND OBEYING (which is what the Hebrew word *Shema* means) issues. From the brief word study above we see that there is the weekly Sabbath, the land Sabbath or sabbatical year where Israel YHWH commanded Israel to leave its agricultural land fallow every seven years, and the annual festival or Holy Days which were referred to as High (Sabbath) Day (Jn. 19:31).

## The Weekly Shabbat

Below are listed the main Scriptures referring to the weekly Sabbath:

- Gen. 2:2-3 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.
- Ex. 20:8-11 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.

- Ex. 31:14-17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.
- Lev. 19:1-3 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy. Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.
- Lev. 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.
- Neh. 10:31 And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt. (See also 13:15-22)
- Isa. 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.

### Israel Commanded to Hear, Do and Obey YHWH's Shabbat Commands

“Shema, O Israel...”: Israel’s Statement of faith and allegiance to YHWH:

Deut. 6:4-9 Hear [shema], O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

*Hear* is the Hebrew word *shema* (*Strong's* Hebrew dictionary word #8085) meaning *to hear/listen, to understand, to consent, to obey*. In short, *Shema* means to HEAR and to OBEY!

The Shema has been recited, declared and chanted by Jews and Israelites for thousands of years as a public affirmation of their faithfulness and devotion to YHWH and his commandments. The word *shema* hearkens back to Mt. Sinai where the Children of Israel promised to HEAR and to OBEY [shema] the covenant that they had just made with YHWH (Ex. 24:7) and to keep all his Torah commandments.

Ex. 24:7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient [shema].

The Shema also hearkens forward to when YHWH promised to raise up a prophet [i.e., the Messiah] like Moses to whom the people of Israel would be required to HEAR and to OBEY (shema).

Deut. 18:18-19 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken [obey/shema] unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

That same Prophet, Yeshua the Messiah, cited the first and main part of the Shema as being representative of ALL the mitzvot (commandments) of Torah, that if one will HEAR and DO, one will LIVE.

**Mark 12:29-31** And Yeshua answered him, **The first of all the commandments is, Hear [shema], O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these...[Mt. 22:40] On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets...[Luke 10:28] [T]his do, and thou shalt live.**

*Live* here is the Greek word *zao* (*Strong's* word #2198) and is used numerous times in the Apostolic Writings to refer not only to physical, but to spiritual and to eternal life.

A parallel passage in the Gospels which relates to this is Yeshua's encounter with the rich, young ruler in Mt. 19:16-19: **And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life [*zoe*, *Strong's*'s #2222]? And he said unto him...if thou wilt enter into life [*zoe*], keep the commandments [Torah mitzvot]. He saith unto him, Which? Yeshua said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

Other examples of how the word *shema* is used in Scripture:

- Gen. 3:17 And unto Adam [YHWH] said, Because thou hast hearkened [ or obeyed/shema] unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life...
- Gen. 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou [Abraham] hast obeyed [shema] my [YHWH's] voice.
- Gen. 28:7 And that Jacob obeyed [shema] his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram.

### **The Shabbat and Annual Feast Days/Holy Days are all HOLY CONVOCATIONS:**

Lev. 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

What is "an holy convocation?" *Convocation* is the Hebrew word *miqra* (*Strong's* Hebrew dictionary word #4744) meaning (*a sacred*) *assembly, reading, calling (together), a rehearsal*. It is translated in the *KJV* by the following words: *convocation* (19 times), *assemblies* (2 times), *calling* (1 time), *reading* (1 time). Examples of how *miqra* is used in Scripture:

- a) An assembly called together, a sacred convocation called together:

**Ex. 12:16 and Lev. 23:7-8** The first and last days of the Days of Unleavened Bread/Hag Ha Matzot are holy convocations (*miqra*) and a Sabbath.

**Lev. 23:3** On the weekly Sabbath an holy convocation (*miqra*) is to occur.

**Lev. 23:21** On the Pentecost/Feast of Weeks/Feast of First Fruits/Shavuot is to be an holy convocation (*miqra*).

**Lev. 23:24** On the Feast of Trumpets/Yom Teruah is to be an holy convocation (*miqra*).

**Lev. 23:24** On the Day of Atonement/Yom Kippur is to be an holy convocation (*miqra*).

**Lev. 23:35** On the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles/Succot is to be an holy convocation (*miqra*).

**Lev. 23:36** On the eighth day after the conclusion of Succot (called Shemini Atzeret) is an holy convocation.

b) A recitation or reading:

**Neh. 8:8** The reading (miqra) of the Torah on Succot.

c) Assemblies

**Isa. 1:13** YHWH was against Israel's paganized Holy Day assemblies (miqra).

d) A calling of the camp of Israel:

**Num. 10:2** The silver trumpets used in the calling (miqra) or mustering of the people of Israel.

### **The Shabbat and Annual Feast Days or Holy Days Are All FEASTS**

**Lev. 23:2** Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts [mo'edim] of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts [mo'edim].

What does the word *holy* mean as used in the term *holy convocation* in Lev. 23:2? The word *holy* is the Hebrew word *qodesh* (*Strong's #6944*) meaning *apartness, setapartness, holiness, sacredness*, and can refer to Elohim himself, or to places or things he makes holy or set apart for a holy or sacred use or purpose. It is translated in the *KJV* by the following words: *holy, sanctuary, holy/hallowed, consecrated, dedicated*.

What is a "feast"? *Feast* (commonly called *feast day(s)*) is the Hebrew word *mo'ed* or *mo'edim* (plural) which is *Strong's* Hebrew dictionary word #4150 meaning *an appointment, i.e., a fixed time or season; specifically a festival; an assembly convened for a definite purpose, the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting*. *Miqra* is translated in the *KJV* in the following ways: *congregation* (150 times); *feast(s)* (23 times); *season* (13 times); *appointed* (12 times); *time* (12 times); *assembly* (4 times); *solemnity* (4 times); *solemn* (2 times); *days* (1 time), *sign* (1 time); *synagogues* (1 time). Examples of how *moed* is used:

It is used numerous times for the various Holy Day festivals YHWH commanded his people to keep. Scripture refers to them as:

- **Lev. 23:2, 4, 37, 44** Called *feasts of YHWH*.
- **Lev. 23:2** He refers to them as *my feasts*.
- **Num 15:3** These Holy Days are called *solemn* (i.e. *regularly appointed*) *feasts*.
- **Num. 29:39** The Holy Days are called *set feasts* or *appointed festivals* (*Stone Edition Tenach*).
- **2 Chr. 2:4** The Holy Days are called *solemn feasts of YHWH*.

### **Biblical Principles/Mitzvot Regarding the Weekly Sabbath**

1. The Sabbath as a time of rest from work was instituted by YHWH. Gen. 2:2-3; Heb. 4:4
2. The Sabbath to be kept holy. Exod. 20:8; 31:14;35:2; Deut. 5:12; Isa. 56:2; Jer.17:22; Ezek. 20:16,20
3. Six days of the week are to be used for labor, and the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest in which you shall do no work. Exod. 16:22-30; 20:9-11; 23:12;31:15; 34:21; 35:2; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:13-14; Neh. 13:15-22; Jer. 17:22; Luke 23:56
4. Sabbaths commanded to be kept. Exod. 31:14; Lev. 19:3,30; 26:2; Deut. 5:15
5. No selling or marketing is to transpire on the Sabbath. Neh. 10:31; 13:15-22
7. No housework to be done on the Sabbath. Exod. 35:3
8. No burdens to be carried during the Sabbath. Neh. 13:19; Jer. 17:22,27
9. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Mark 2:27

10. Yeshua is Lord of the Sabbath. Matt. 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5
11. Provide for food needed on the Sabbath in advance so it need not be gathered or bought or cooked on the Sabbath. Exod. 16:5, 22-30
12. We are not seek our own pleasure on the Sabbath. Isa. 58:13
13. Divine worship to be celebrated on the Sabbath (a time for holy convocation). Lev. 23:3; Ezek. 46:3; Acts. 16:13; 18:4
14. The Scriptures to be read to the people on the Sabbath day. Acts 13:14-15,27,44; 15:21; 17:2
15. Works connected with religious service are lawful on the Sabbath. Num. 28:9; Matt. 12:5; John 7:23
16. Good deeds and works of mercy are lawful on the Sabbath. Matt. 12:11-12; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-10; 13:10-13; 14:1-4; John 5:8-16; 9:14
17. Acts needed to sustain life may be performed on the Sabbath. Matt. 12:1-5; Mark. 2:23-26; Luke 6:1-4
18. Acts of necessity may be performed on the Sabbath. Luke 13:15; 14:5; John 7:22-23
19. You honor YHWH in observing the Sabbath. Isa. 58:13-14

Please note: most of these regulations/principles apply to the annual Holy Day festivals, as well.

### What Kind of *Work* Is Forbidden On the Shabbats of YHWH Elohim?

Ex. 20:9-10 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work [melawkaw]: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work [melawkaw], 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.

The word *labour* (*Strong's* #5647) in verse 9 is the Hebrew word *aw-vad* and means *to work, to serve, to labour, to do work, to work for another, to serve another by labour* and is translated in the *KJV* using the following words: *serve* (227 times), *till* (9 times), *servant* (5 times), *work* (5 times), *labour* (2 times).

The word *work* in verses 9 and 10 is the Hebrew word *melawkaw* (*Strong's* Hebrew dictionary #4399) and means *occupation, work, business, workmanship, service* and is translated in the *KJV* using the following words: *work* (129 times), *business* (12 times), *workmen* + #6213 (7 times), *workmanship* (5 times), *goods* (2 times).

The command not to work on the weekly Shabbat is repeated again in Lev. 23:3: **Six days shall work [melawkaw] be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work [melawkaw] therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.**

The Holy Day festivals or annual Shabbats, as we have seen, are also days where YHWH commands his people to rest and to participate in a *holy convocation* or *solemn assembly*. While on the weekly Shabbat ALL WORK IS TO CEASE, on the Holy Days only *SERVILE WORK* is prohibited (except on the Day of Atonement when ALL WORK is to cease, as on the weekly Shabbat; see Lev. 23:28, 30, 31).

The prohibition against *SERVILE* [avowdah] *WORK* [melawkaw] is found in Lev. 23:7 (Days of Unleavened Bread), 21 (Pentecost), 25 (Feast of Trumpets), 35 (Feast of Tabernacles), 36 (Shemini Atzeret). The word *servile work* (*KJV* and *Soncino Edition Tanach*) is translated as *laborious work* in the *Stone Edition Tanach* (OT) and *ordinary work* in the *Complete Jewish Bible*. The word *servile* is the Hebrew word *abowdaw* (*Strong's* Hebrew #5656) and means *labor, service, labor of a slave or servant, work* and is translated in the *KJV* by the following words: *service, servile, work, bondage, act, serve, tillage, labour*. The point of this word study is this: ALL WORK is prohibited on the weekly Shabbat and on the Day of Atonement, and only employment or hard, laborious work is prohibited on the other annual Shabbats/High Shabbats/Holy Day festivals. In other words, it is our understanding that the preparation of food, for example, is permitted on the high Holy Days (other than the Day of Atonement, of course, where food and drink are not to be eaten, much less prepared). What Is the Bottom Line Heart and Spirit Issue Here?

Scripture tells us in 1 John 5:1-3: **Whosoever believes that Yeshua is the Messiah is born of Elohim and every one that loves him that begat [that's you and me] loves him that is begotten of him. By this we know**

**that we love the children [mishpoat] of Elohim, when we love Elohim and keep his mitzvot. For this is the love of Elohim, that we keep his mitzvot/commandments: and his mitzvot are not greivous/burdensome.**

YHWH's word says in 1 John 5:17; **All unrighteousness is sin...**and Psalms 119:172 says that **all [YHWH's] mitzvot/commandments are righteousness.**

You and I are called to be **living stones, built up as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Elohim through Yeshua the Messiah** and that we **are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a pecuaiar people; that we should show forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness [i.e., disobedience to the light of Yah's mitzvot, i.e. Torahlessness] into his marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).** Remember, the light of his divine precepts or instructions (i.e., Torah) is his word that will be **a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet (Ps. 119:105).**

Following (hearing, doing and obeying) his precepts, instuctions—TORAH—is **not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through [obedience] you shall prolong your days in the land, where you go over Jordan to possess it (Deut. 32:47).** Do you think that because you didn't live 3500 years ago and were part of Ancient Israel, and because you live in America and not in the land on the other side of the Jordan River that these words don't apply to you? Do you think that Yah is a respecter of persons and that his promises of blessing are for ancient Israel only and and not for you even though you obey his mitzvot? As a loving Heavenly Father do you not think that he doesn't want to bless those who obey him...for **his word is pure (Ps. 119:140)...and great shalom (abundant well being and peace in all areas of life) have they which love his Torah (Ps. 119:165). His commandments/mitzvot are above [in value] gold; yea, above fine gold (Ps. 119:127).** Keeping Yah's mitzvot **makes one wiser than one's enemies...and gives one more understanding than all of one's teachers (Ps. 119:99).**

When one gets into one's heart the blessedness of obeying YHWH and keeping his mitzvot as a way of life then a whole windfall of blessings begin to come one's way: joy and delight (Ps. 119:24, 35, 92, 143), hope (119:49), a thankful heart (119:62), you will have more true friends (119:74), your heart will be sound (119:80), you will be wise and understanding above the "learned" people around you (119:98-99), you will grow in love an awe of the Word of YHWH (119:161), you will have great shalom (119:165).

These are just a few of the benefits. The list goes on and on with the end result leading to the most intimate relationship imaginable in an anointed, perpetual Holy of Holies experience with your Heavenly Father here now and in Olam Haba (the age to come)! Be blessed as you explore the Ancient Paths of life and truth in Torah through faith in Yeshua the Living Torah/Word.