

Why the Sabbath is the Sign that We Are God's People

Concerning the Sabbath in Ex 31:13, *surely* means *above all* of the rest of the commandments. Ex 20:1-17 — The Sabbath is the only commandment that designates¹ or points out who are and who are not God's holy people — set apart, hallowed (Ex 23:12; Lev 23:3). The Sabbath is thus the sign signifying who God's people are and who are not His people on earth.

Ex 31:13 — The English Standard Version (ESV) says, “above all,” because the Sabbath is a sign between the holy people and the holy God, while most of the rest of the commandments even the pagans, or nations, or gentiles keep under the persuasion of the natural law of conscience (Gen 3:22; Rom 2:14). But the Sabbath can only be kept by a set-apart nation (1 Pet 2:9-10; Lev 23:3; Isa 49:6) who live according to the Word of God, the whole council of those who have His *counsel* (Ex 20:1-17).

Ex 31:17 — Without being *refreshed*, without rest or “time out” from our regular work or employment, life loses its meaning, its true significance. Without the Sabbath we forget who we are and our purpose. We forget the purpose of all our work and lose our balance. The Sabbath is crucial to being who we are and representing who our God is. The Sabbath is set apart for only the holy ones who serve Him day and night (Acts 26:7; Mal 1:11). Otherwise, there are no holy ones at all. Without the Sabbath, no longer are there the holy ones set apart for Him, for the Sabbath is the only commandment which designates who the holy ones are and who their God is.

The ESV says it perfectly in Ex 31:13 — “above all” you shall observe my Shabbat, “for the Sabbath” is a sign between you and Me in every generation (in *this age*, forever, Ex 31:17) that you may know that I am Yahweh who sets you apart (for Me) or hallows you, so you will hallow Me, hallow My name (Mt 6:9).

¹ *Designates* — is a sign of; marks as significant; signals or signifies.

It says “above all,” or “surely” *because* or “*for*” the Sabbath is the only sign among the rest of the commandments which tells “who is who” on earth and in heaven above.

Ex 31:17 — The word “refreshed” means for us also to take a breathing spell ourselves from all our work, as our Father did from His, since the Sabbath is made for man (Mk 2:27). The Hebrew word *refresh* means He took of breath of fresh air, or enjoyed a breathing spell.

In Ex 31:13, *through* or *throughout* your generations means for us, as in Ex 20:5, to the third and fourth generation in the restoration of all things (Isa 49:6; Mt 21:43).

The Sabbath is a sign which stands for *your* or *our* holiness, our set-apartness. Ex 31:14 is a sign to test our loyalty to Him, that is, whether we keep it cheerfully as an enjoyment, or delightfully, as Isa 58:13 (Ex 31:17; Mt 21:43). Isa 58:12 is restoration.

Isa 58:13 — Call the Sabbath a *delight*, an *enjoyment*, in order that Yahweh may be sacredly honored. Only if you honor it (verse 14) will you find delight in Yahweh. The opposite of this is idle talk which, especially on the Sabbath, is unproductive, vain, useless, unfruitful, maybe about business as usual. The appointed Sabbath is to be observed “above all” the rest of the commandments, which we do keep also. But to observe it *cheerfully* is a test and a sign of our fidelity to Yahweh (Rev 17:14).

The Sabbath is a sanctuary not to be trodden down by irreverent feet, not to be trodden upon by feet which are not worthy to be shod with readiness of the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15), for evangelism is the only work worthy to be done on the Sabbath, for it is a good work (Eze 34:6,12; Lk 19:10; Jn 13:20).