

PAR-SHA 7

EXPOSITION [2:1-3]

[CHAPTER 2] 1. THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH AND ALL (IN) THEIR ARMY [STOOD] READY

וַיִּכְלֶה VA-Y'KHOO-LOO (AND WERE READY): "Completed" is הִשְׁלִים HISH-LIM (cf. GENESIS 33:18; KINGS I 7:51; NEHEMIAH 6:15), or גָּמַר GA-MAHR (FINISHED - cf. PSALMS 12:1 [2 in the Hebrew], 77:8 [9 in the Hebrew], 138:8); the root "Taph-Mem-Mem" bespeaks a whole collection (cf. LEVITICUS 23:15; DEUTERONOMY 31:24; JOSHUA 4:10). VA-Y'KHOO-LOO seems based on כָּלָא KA-LA ("Kaph-Lamed-Aleph" - "restrain/withhold"), limited to incarceration, ruin or end of an activity [cf. GENESIS 21:15; EXODUS 36:6; KINGS II 25:27] or כָּלָה KA-LAH ("Kaph-Lamed-Heh" - "conclude"), extinction, destruction, end of a period (cf. GENESIS 41:53; JEREMIAH 8:20), task culmination (cf. EXODUS 39:32; SAMUEL I 18:1; EZRA 1:1) or resource exhaustion [cf. GENESIS 21:15; JOB 7:9; LAMENTATIONS 3:32]). Neither entails the remainder of anything intact except VA-Y'KHOO-LOO here and כָּלָה הַבַּיִת KA-LAH HA-BA-YITH (KINGS I 6:38), wrongly translated "the house was finished" [Solomon's Temple], for the verb is active, not passive. Some may insist it is passive because the active form is the "Pee-eh!" (e. g. כָּאַשֶׁר כָּלָה KA-ASHER KEE-LAH ["when He finished" - GENESIS 18:33]. This fails to distinguish between that intense form, denoting abrupt termination of activity, and the "qal" form in KINGS I, which connotes gradual cessation. The verb is also the last in a series that refers to Solomon (the unstated subject, common in biblical style). If passive, the prefixes in the next phrase would be "Beth", not "Lamed". It is "... he completed the preparations (for the purposes) intended for the House"; the verb is active - which makes VA-Y'KHOO-LOO here the only passive one in Scripture, an untenable conclusion. Rather, it is based on כֹּל KOL (ALL/EVERY - root "Koph-Lamed") and always contextually qualified (cf. GENESIS 46:1; EXODUS 12:29). Abraham was blessed with KOL (GENESIS 24:1), everything he desired; Jacob told Esau that he had KOL (GENESIS 33:11), all he needed. Within the multitude in the heavens and earth, E-LO-HIM found all the things necessary, and ready, for what was to follow - which is why this declaration opens the PAR-SHA (obviating a curiosity overlooked by the savants, for it should begin verse 1:31).

צְבָאָם TZ-BHA-AM (THEIR ARMY): "Hosts/array" is faulty. "Array" is מַעְרָכָה MA-A-RA-KHA, an assemblage for deployment or selections (cf. EXODUS 39:37; SAMUEL I 17:2; CHRONICLES I 12:39). Neither "array" nor TZ'BHA-AM is a universal set. "Hosts" is better but inaccurate - that is צְבָאָתָם TZIBH-OH-THAM (cf. EXODUS 6:26, 12:51; NUMBERS 1:3). TZ'BHA-AM, the plural possessive of צְבָאָה TZA-BHA (ARMY - cf. NUMBERS 31:21; DEUTERONOMY 24:5; ISAIAH 34:2), is singular but refers to a group - one with two "owners", heaven and earth.

2. E-LO-HIM FINISHED IN THE SEVENTH DAY HIS PLAN WHICH HE MADE AND CEASED IN THE SEVENTH DAY FROM HIS ENTIRE PLAN WHICH HE (HAD) MADE

וַיִּכְלֶה VA-Y'KHAL E-LO-HIM BA-YOHM HA-SH'BHEE-EE M'LAKH-TOH A-SHER A-SAH (IN THE SEVENTH DAY E-LO-HIM FINISHED THE PLAN HE MADE): M'LAKH-TOH as "His work" (or the less accurate "the work He had been doing") was presumed completed by the onset of the seventh day. That required only U-BHA-YOHM HA-SH'BHEE-EE KEE-LAH E-LO-HIM M'LAKH-TOH VA-YISH-BOHTH ME-MEH-NAH ["In the seventh day E-LO-HIM completed His work and desisted from it"] for the *entire verse* (cf. GENESIS 18:33; LEVITICUS 16:20; RUTH 3:18 - JOSHUA 5:12; HOSEA 7:4; PROVERBS 22:10). VA-Y'KHAL is not based on the same root as VA-Y'KHOO-LOO (v. 1); it is third person active and references a specific completed act (cf. EXODUS 40:33; DEUTERONOMY 32:45; KINGS I 7:1). But if all was finished by the end of the sixth day (1:31, 2:1), what work was necessary? Many tortuous explanations have been offered [a Greek translation among the Qumran scrolls even changed the text to "sixth"!] but all skirt Scripture's explicit assignment of the completion of this "work" to the seventh day.

Also overlooked is that the "work" was אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה A-SHER A-SAH (WHICH HE MADE), narrowing the singular noun to either the expanse (v. 7), the luminaries (v. 16), the animals (v. 25) or the A-DAM (v. 26) [M'LAKH-TOH is not a class noun for creation; that renders A-SHER A-SAH redundant] but the missing ETH direct object indicator rules these out (see

v. 25: VA-YA-AHSS E-LO-HIM). To define M'LAKH-TOH, we cite another of its occurrences as a third person singular possessive with OH-SEH (MAKE), when Joseph came home מְלֹאכְתּוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת LA-A-SOHTH M'LAKH-TOH (TO DO HIS WORK - GENESIS 39:11). As the estate overseer, he was not about to do any labor or supervise others - the plot hinged on his being alone, vulnerable to the seductive overtures of the mistress. His M'LA-KHA was *planning* the household schedule. {*The Aramaic translator Onkelos renders it "to review his accounts", ingenious but there are better ways to say that [cf. ECCLESIASTES 7:27; CHRONICLES I 27:24; CHRONICLES II 26:11]*}. M'LAKH-TOH was not divine manipulation of things material but of an abstract paradigm - a plan for creation, not of creation - A-SHER A-SAH (WHICH HE MADE), a phrase in the completed past referring to something formulated earlier but perfected on the seventh day.

The first six were each proclaimed "days" at the ends of their PAR-SHAs. The "Seventh Day" is identified as such three times within its PAR-SHA, the coda "And it was... and it was... seventh day" omitted. This "day" was ushered in at once.

וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה VA-YISH-BOHTH BA-YOHM HA-SH'BHEE-EE MEE-KOL M'LAKHTOH A-SHER A-SAH (AND IN THE SEVENTH DAY CEASED FROM THE ENTIRE PLAN HE MADE): This could be וַיִּשְׁבֹּת מִמְנָה VA-YISH-BOHTH MEE-MEH-NAH (AND ABSTAINED FROM IT - cf. JEREMIAH 36:29; ECCLESIASTES 7:26; PROVERBS 22:6). The repetitiveness emphasizes that He finished an intellectual construct, *then* abruptly halted his engagement with the physical realm - MEE-KOL M'LAKH-TOH (FROM HIS ENTIRE PLAN) A-SHER A-SAH, the repeated phrase referring to what He *had been doing*, now stopped. This cessation became permanent, with repercussions spelled out in the next, and final, verse of the creation epic.

3. E-LO-HIM BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND SANCTIFIED IT FOR IN IT HE CEASED FROM ALL HIS WORKINGS WHICH E-LO-HIM CREATED TO DO.

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי VA-Y'BHA-REKH E-LO-HIM ETH YOHM HA-SH'BHEE-EE (E-LO-HIM BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY): How this blessing became manifest is the subject of much exegesis, all incorrectly attributing it to the Sabbath. YOHM HA-SH'BHEE-EE is the seventh day in a sequence, not every seventh day (cf. LEVITICUS 23:39; NUMBERS 29:32; ESTHER 1:10). The weekly Sabbath is יוֹם הַשְּׁבֹתָת YOHM HA-SHA-BAHTH (cf. EXODUS 20:8; NUMBERS 9:28, PSALMS 92:1 - EXODUS 16:29, 20:10 explain its relation to the "Seventh Day"). YOHM HA-SH'BHEE-EE here succeeds the sextet; a blessing was conferred on it, not its content, for it completed His plan, an abstract construct which entailed no time passage or physical changes, followed by His detachment from all things material, a scenario affording scant arena for a blessing. That we are told nothing about it indicates that its import was apparent. *Any cessation of activities can be a Sabbath (cf. LEVITICUS 23:24, 25:4 - suspension of agricultural work). Unlike the weekly YOHM HA-SHA-BATH (THE SABBATH DAY - cf. NUMBERS 28:9; EZEKIEL 10:32; NEHEMIAH 10:32), others are simply "Sabbath". The Day of Atonement, originally set by the court for any day in the week, is שַׁבַּתְיָא SHA-BA-T'KHEM (YOUR [pl.] SABBATH - LEVITICUS 23:32). The first day of Passover, which has most of the restrictions of the weekly Sabbath, is not YOHM HA-SHA-BATH but simply הַשְּׁבֹתָת HA-SHA-BATH (THE SABBATH - LEVITICUS 23:11, 15, 16), as this passage was correctly read by the Talmudic Sages in their dispute with sectarians. In NEHEMIAH 13:19, the first two Sabbath references are to both the weekly Sabbath and major festivals; the third "Day of the Sabbath" is the weekly Sabbath, the only one on which the "carrying" Nehemiah halted was forbidden.*

וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ VA-YI-QA-DESH OH-THOH (AND SANCTIFIED IT): קָדוֹשׁ QA-DOSH (HOLY) does not have the connotation of the English "sanctified", for "holiness" is not an intrinsic attribute or condition of a person or object. QA-DOSH is "set apart/designated" (cf. EXODUS 13:2; LEVITICUS 8:10; JOEL 1:14). Since the seventh day was substantially different, it is hard to see what holiness it needed.

כִּי בָּן שָׁבַת מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ KEE BHOH SHA-BHATH MI-KOL M'LAKH-TOH (FOR IN IT HE CEASED FROM ALL HIS WORKINGS): This phrase and the next are not a summarizing coda; KEE (BECAUSE) alters the complexion. The blessing was necessitated by His deliberate disengagement from all things corporeal, a condition that became permanent and as consequential as any of His creation modes. This aspect of the Seventh Day defines it as the

emergences of the first six defined them - but it never ends! His Seventh Day is perpetual, as His universe constantly expands. This was its blessing, the potential to prolong time without constraint.

אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת A-SHER BA-RA E-LO-HIM LA-A-SOHTH (WHICH E-LO-HIM CREATED TO DO): Creation was for “making”, not His - those to whom it was entrusted. The Seventh Day was sanctified by being allocated to A - DAM and blessed to stretch on, affording man the time needed to achieve His mandate. *There is no Sabbath in this PAR-SHA. שָׁבַת SHA-BHATH (HE CEASED) is not a nominal designation; the ancients understood the connection and its centrality in their lives, something later readers, especially non-Jews, could not appreciate, even those who preserved residual Sabbath customs (see 1:31 – YOHM HA-SHEE-SHEE). וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי VA-YA-NACH BA-YOHM HA-SH'BHEE-EE (EXODUS 20:11) is taken to allude to his “resting” on the seventh day. The radical root of VA-YA-NACH, "Nun-Cheth", means “rest” as in Old English, not “relaxation/recuperation” but “to set down/leave off” (cf. GENESIS 2:15, 42:33; EXODUS 17:11; LEVITICUS 7:15), which is transitive, not the reflexive “rested”. This passage is actually “He relinquished (control over the temporal) on the Seventh Day”, then וַיְבָרֵךְ יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ AL KEIN BEI-RAKH Y-H-W-H ETH YOHM HA-SHA-BATH VA-Y'QA-D'SHEI-HOO (THEREFORE Y-H-W-H BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND SANCTIFIED IT). AL KEIN indicates the preceding is the reason for what is about to be stated. If His cessation of activity is what confers the Sabbath designation on this day, it had to be temporary - but He did not resume. And if the Sabbath was indeed a day without such activity, a blessing is more suited for the other days. The verse comes into focus once we realize the “seventh day” in the first half of it is not the Sabbath of the second half. It is the one of Creation, that open-ended period in which man functions. The Sabbath is a weekly commemoration of that Divine act, an observance that imitates Him - as He ceased to “create”, so we surrender control over aspects of the material world. The blessing He accords man's Sabbath is not the original one bestowed on His seventh day but its projection - as His is extended, so our Sabbath is amplified; as His seventh day is holy by being set apart for us, so the Sabbath is set apart from the mundane for intellectual and spiritual growth. Some traditionalists insist only a literal interpretation of the Seventh Day as the last of a sequence of consecutive, 24-hour days could lend meaning to Sabbath observance; to the contrary, our infusing holiness into a recurring time period is far more meaningful. {Many claim the 7-day cycle is inherent in nature; this is nonsense. Among ancient documents, only Scripture even has the concept of a “week”, a cycle later disseminated by Christians and Muslims.} This correspondence underscores the formality of Sabbath observance prescribed in the Old Testament. While the Sabbath has taken on additional features, including many with psychological and social benefit, the central, indispensable manner of its observance is the deliberate refraining from certain physical manipulations. Only trespasses of these strictures are Sabbath violations; in traditional Jewish circles, an observant Jew is one who is שׁוֹמֵר שַׁבָּת “Shomer Shabbos” (a “Sabbath keeper”). Nothing else - not dietary laws, prayer services, festival practices or other rituals [or social and moral “issues”] - qualifies the faithful. Periodic abstention from daily routine elevated to a formal ritual etiquette was a biblical innovation. No other culture had anything like it. The Egyptians instituted one day of rest out of ten for the hardy souls that built the first pyramids but this was restricted to those prized laborers while they were so engaged. The biblical Sabbath is not a day of rest but a behavioral declaration. Any creed that substitutes another devotional formula or day of the week for ritualistic recognition completely subverts the Sabbath concept and its underlying motivation.*

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

The biosphere's components were ready for deployment. On the seventh day, E-LO-HIM completed His abstract design but ceased direct control over physical elements and forces. He blessed the seventh day, conferring on that epoch a perpetual flow of time, while sanctifying it by setting it aside for man to assume control and pursue activities to fulfill the divine objective.