

**Variances of the Sabbath:
Ezekiel's Sabbaths as a Clue for the Reexamination of
the Concept of the Sabbath**

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Abstract:

The concept of the Sabbath has generally been interpreted as the Sign of Covenant within the framework of the Priestly theology, which emanates from two basic assumptions concerning the ideas of *time* and *rest*. This paper will critically discuss how these various interpretations have gone far beyond their original biblical sources.

First, using the originality of “My Sabbaths” in the book of Ezekiel as a clue, the background of the Deuteronomic concept of *divine rage* is discussed as Yahweh’s distinctive sign against other gods. Next, the paper examines how the establishment of the Sabbath as a cultic day formed the identity of the nation, despite the concept not yet being defined as the seventh day of rest. The paper concludes with the suggestion that the concept of the Sabbath is multifaceted and merits further inquiry.

Keywords:

Ezekiel, My Sabbaths, Covenantal Sign, New Moon and Sabbath, ritual innovation

1. The Sabbath under Discussion

After the crucifixion, the Sabbath drew on (Lk. 23:54).¹ It is difficult for us, who are only familiar with the seventh day of rest, to understand what this Sabbath meant. Augustine struggled with the concept and limitations of time, and concluded:

“The seventh day is our Sabbath, which shall be brought to a close, not by an evening, but by the Lord’s day, as an eighth and eternal day, consecrated by the resurrection of Christ and prefiguring the eternal repose not only of the spirit, but also of the body.”²

This prefiguring interpretation, which harmonizes the Sabbath with the resurrection, laid the foundation for a new Biblical Christology of a “new testament” that renewed the “old testament.” Tracing back to Christian history, it is admitted that prioritizing Sunday worship was essential to establishing the dogma, which emphasizes the significance of the resurrection over the Sabbath.³ After the Reformation, this perspective persisted until modern times.⁴ However, does the Christian faith have the theological superiority of overcoming death, because it skipped the seventh day? Our inability to confront the inevitability of death crushes human words. From this reality developed various forms of belief for the salvation of lost souls, but due to this human way of thinking, critical studies have some difficulty in defining redactions in the Bible. The Sabbath is one such challenging issue.

This paper will re-examine the methodologies, which are based on fixed theologies of the Sabbath. Before proceeding, we must first question the scholarly attempts that arise from two basic assumptions concerning the idea of time and rest in the Hebrew Bible. More recently, Julius Wellhausen, who points out that the original Sabbath has no meaning of rest, defined the Sabbath as the sign of the covenant within the theological framework of the Priestly document (hereinafter called P).⁵ His influential theory is based on the three-fold development through the historicization of agricultural festivals into P feasts. The problem is the course of these developmental festal cycles which are reckoned by the seven-day week towards “Pentecost” and this line of thought has been followed by many scholars. This method of reckoning,⁶ however, was not included in Deuteronomy and the process of festal transmission did not depend on a consistent line, but was affected by political and coincidental factors during the course of inscribing the ritual stipulations. That is why I will focus on the problem of intertwined multiple layers through the Biblical redactional process; the various usages and changing factors of the term Sabbath, which has a significant tradition

from an ancient institution, evolving to make the nation survive.

Regarding Sabbath study, it cannot be separated from ideological themes, such as the creation theology of the seventh day, resulting in speculation which has gone far beyond biblical sources. Following previous studies by Niels-Erik A. Andreasen, Gnana Robinson, and others,⁷ two points about understanding the Sabbath arose. Firstly, the Sabbath has been maintained as the seventh day observance to start with.⁸ Secondly, the exilic experience led to a major reformation of the Sabbath as a confessional act.⁹ These in turn complicate the issue even further.

Concerning the first point, the antiquity of the Sabbath observance, which is identical to the seventh-day institution, has led to a mistaken sense of every seventh day's priority. The six examples of the seventh-day Sabbath (*šabbāt*) are considered as additional redactions in later periods (Ex. 16:26; 31:15; 35:2; Lev. 23:3 and Decalogue – Ex. 20:10; Dt. 5:14), so none of these texts can testify to the seven-day week system.¹⁰ Also, the seventh-day institution with the verb *šābat* (Ex. 23:12; 34:21) is generally interpreted as sabbatical, but this demands further inquiry to better understand the later concept actually incorporated into the heptad Sabbath.

The second point is represented by Hans-Joachim Kraus' expression: "With the loss of the holy place the 'holy time' became more important."¹¹ In this case, too much value is given to estimations of how the exile brought a 'decisive change' in the understanding of the Sabbath; this is an oversimplification. It is true that in the exile, after the cessation of the service of the altar, not only the Sabbath but also ritual stipulations attained greater significance. But what kind of Sabbath was it that took on heightened importance for the prophets who proclaimed Yahweh's redemptive acts indispensable to Israel's survival? From this perspective, I elucidate the different circumstances under which the term Sabbath is used.

2. Ezekiel's¹² "My Sabbaths"

2-1. Revulsion toward Egypt and Yahweh's Divine Name

The notion of the nation based on the land, which is of vital significance for life, incorporated both language and culture, and most dispossessed nations disappeared from the historical stage. Even so, Ezekiel asserts Yahweh's salvific command for the survival and restoration of the Israelite nation. First, to fix the national existence in the present, he begins his rational attack with accusations of past monarchies' sins. Furthermore, his formula expresses God's choice of Israel and their subsequent covenantal marriage, similar to

Hosea's marriage (Ezek. chaps. 16, 23). Jerusalem, whose father is the Amorite, was condemned for adultery (*zânâh*) with the Egyptians and the Assyrians (16:3, 45). On the contrary, a vine¹³ broke the covenant (*b'rit*) with the king of Babylon and was bitterly accused (17:15). This narrative is couched in a riddle and epigram (*māšāl*)¹⁴ with a pro-Babylonian slant. Contrasting the inward sins with those of diplomatic relations, Ezekiel's actual aim is nothing less than an accusation of Israel's infidelity against Yahweh, by quoting a sarcastic proverb. The sentence on the sinful soul, which is a very existential warning, is handed down, not to the father, but to the son, who must bear responsibility (18:2-4). In harsh circumstances such as the Babylonian exile, the conditions of people's lives differed, but expelled from their place of ritual, the shared sense of spiritual and religious loss was common. Thus, they lost the sign through which they could feel the presence of God. Consequently, the captivating charm of the alien gods filled this void. In chapter 20, judgment toward this profanation of Israel is recapitulated using blatant, not metaphorical, admonishment.

The word of Yahweh is addressed to the elders of Israel. Even though Yahweh broke the oath that he would give them a land flowing with milk and honey, he ensured that the people of Israel survived (vv. 6-11). Such paradoxical phrases penetrate Ezekiel. Above all, it is puzzling why Yahweh led the Fathers out of the land of Egypt (*'eretš mišrāyim*) (vv. 6, 9, 10) and brought (*bw'*, Hiphil)¹⁵ them into the wilderness (*midbâr*). Ezekiel's answer was given in the word of idolatry (*gillûlîm*)¹⁶ that occurs frequently (vv. 7, 8, 16, 18, 24, 31, 39). This definitely shows God's condemnation against Israel's dependence on Egypt, which is clear not only from the term by special reference to abominations (v. 4 *tô 'ēbôt*, vv. 7, 8 *šiqqûšîm*), but also from the context that the admonition is against the false worship of the gods of Egypt (vv. 7, 8 *gillûl mišrāyim*). The threat to Yahweh worship was the synthesis of gods such as Yahu which was a considerably paganized cult of Yahweh practiced in Elephantine.¹⁷ Ezekiel's revolutive statements toward Egypt must have been uttered from the perspective of Yahwism, as a warning against internal and external conditions. That is why he traces the history of infidelity back to the appearance of God as Yahweh to the Israelites in Egypt. For him, this is the true beginning of Israel's struggle.¹⁸ Therefore his endeavors to acknowledge the name of Yahweh are considered by some as one spark for the later Yahweh movement.¹⁹

Throughout Ezekiel, the prophet utilizes many variations of divine self-affirmation in describing God's name to the people.²⁰ The gist of chapter 20 is the revelation of the divine name; "I am Yahweh your God (*'ānî YHWH 'ēlôhēkem*) (vv. 5, 7, 19, 20)." In particular, the full formula "so that you may know that I am Yahweh your God (*ld't kî 'ānî YHWH 'ēlôhēkem*)," is a unique phrase, found only in v. 20. Walther Zimmerli regards the beginning

of this formula as P and suggests that the law and the self-revelation of Yahweh are united in Exodus 6 and Ezekiel 20.²¹ Also, according to Joseph Blenkinsopp, Ezekiel, through using the law, regards the Sabbath as tangible proof of the life-enhancing relationship, which is also consistent with the priestly tradition that concludes the law with the command to observe the Sabbath.²²

However, their exegeses imagine the prophet as an interpreter of the law, failing to notice that the foundation of proclaiming the name of Yahweh is a Deuteronomic notion.²³ John Van Seters²⁴ maintains that Ezekiel has a Deuteronomic background (Dt. 9:26-29) indicating a rebellious nation. He also holds that Ezek. 20:8, 9, 13, 14, and 21 can be regarded as the early stage of the story that Yahweh delivered Israel from Egypt. His theory is effective for verifying Ezekiel's originality of "my Sabbaths," as well as the circumstances of how Yahweh's name was revealed in the Deuteronomic context as the deliverer from Egypt. Nevertheless, I hesitate to accept his method, placing the emphasis on the Yahwist's coherence, and therefore further investigate other facets.

For Ezekiel, a son of the priest Buzi, denying the divine name, as well as forfeiting the place of the presence of God, was unacceptable. He was urged to reiterate God's suspension of judgment "for the sake of my name (*lema'an šemi*)," in spite of the people's repeated defiance (20:9, 14, 22, 44). His torment over this caused him to become unsure of how best to worship Yahweh. Moreover, he was pained, because Yahweh's concession was in vain. Here, "a quite paradoxical mixture of close attachment and a succession of divine failures and acts of chastisement"²⁵ (Gerhard von Rad) is evident. Even so, with the necessity of securing the hearts of the diaspora foremost in his mind, Ezekiel could not restrain himself from vehemently asserting that the endless relationship with God and his people was doomed by Divine Providence.

2-2. "My Sabbaths" as Yahweh's Distinctive Sign versus Other Gods

We must first note that the term "seventh day (*yôm haššēbī'î*)" is never mentioned in Ezekiel nor in any of the other books of the prophets. Only Ezekiel uses the period of "seven days (*šib'at yāmîm*)" (discussed below). Therefore, we must ascertain the contextual characteristics of "my Sabbaths (*šabbētōtay*)" as presented in ten passages (20:12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 24; 22: 8, 26; 23:38; 44:24).

All Ezekiel expresses is emphasized with "my rage (*ḥamâti, 'aphi, za'ami*)."²⁶ He also adds emphasis with "my statutes (*ḥuqqōtay*),"²⁷ "my judgments (*mišpātay*) (20:11, 13, 16, 19, 21, 24)," "my holy things (*qadāšay*) (22:8),"²⁸ "my instruction (*tôrātî*)," "my holy things (*qadāšay*) (22:26)," "my sanctuary (*miqdāšî*) (23:38)," and in the latter part with "my

instructions (*tôrōtay*),²⁹ “my statutes (*huqqōtay*),” and “my appointed feasts (*mō’aday*) (44:24).” All of the above expressions, with the pronominal suffix, “my, *yōd*” referring back to a deity, retain a strong emphasis on what belongs to Yahweh.

The question now arises of whether a non-Yahweh Sabbath existed. This inquiry demands reviewing Hosea’s words that expressed Yahweh’s fury using a collocation of the Sabbath verb and noun, which is a terrifying example of God’s play on words. “Her Sabbath (*šābbattah*)” which is juxtaposed to her new moon was condemned to “abolish (*šābat*, Hiphil),” because she forgot Yahweh (Hos. 2:13).³⁰ The “She (her)” is Jerusalem whose lover is Baal. If the Sabbath is hers, it would also have belonged to the Baals (Hos. 2:15).³¹ Under such circumstances, we can perceive that Ezekiel’s remarks intensify Yahweh’s fury – more than Hosea’s do – from his characteristic usage and frequent use of the verb *šābat*.

The verb *šābat* is used in three forms in the Hebrew Bible, but Ezekiel only uses two, the passive and the causative.³² The Niphal (passive) verb form is used three times in Ezekiel, out of 4 times in the Bible; the utterances stating that “your idols (6:6),” “the yokes of Egypt (30:18),” and “her arrogant strength (33:28)” are broken or destroyed. On the other hand, the Hiphil (causative) form, which means “cause to cease (destroy),” occurs ten times in Ezekiel out of a total of 40 times; the objects of which are “the pomp of the strong (7:24),” “this proverb (12:23),” “playing the harlot (16:41),” “your lewdness and your harlotry (23:27),” “lewdness (23:48),” “the sound of your songs (26:13),” “a multitude of Egypt (30:10),” “the idols (30:13),” “feeding the sheep (34:10),” and “wild beasts (34:25).”

All these words are pronounced by the actor, Yahweh, who condemns Israel’s overconfidence or foreign power. Above all the threat of divine rage is obvious, determined to seal Israel’s heart to alien gods. It is a strict denunciation against idolatry, a warning that Yahweh is the only God. By the same token, Jeremiah also accepted the duration of exile as the time of divine rage that would cause Israel to be desolate for seventy years (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10). Moreover, the Chroniclers interpreted this seventy years of Jeremiah’s prophecy as a time of divine fury, which asserted the time of Yahweh’s Sabbath (2 Ch. 36:21).³³ The historical and symbolic meaning of the Sabbath, which converged on the exilic duration was understood as a Sabbath for the land. We must again ascertain this meaning. Its importance can hardly be exaggerated within the context of this paper. The seventy years is just symbolic, but the devastation was a reality because God had forsaken Israel. Even so, Israel did not realize this; they were oblivious of this desperate condition manifested by God’s silence. The severance of the relationship with God is the most horrifying description of despair, and Israel was not yet fully aware of the terrible consequences of defiance against God.

2-3. “My Sabbaths” and the Sign of the Covenant

Suddenly “my Sabbaths” occurs without the concept of rest: “I established my Sabbaths (*'et-šabbētōtay nāthati*) for them as a sign (*'oth*) between Me and them, that they might know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies them (*'ānī YHWH mēqaddišam*) (20:12).”

As to this significant proclamation, Walther Eichrodt very appropriately points out the untidy characteristics of Ezekiel’s Sabbaths. Ezekiel passes over the Sabbath, although he enumerates the commandments as confession to Yahweh in an unclean land (18:6ff.) and the sins of Jerusalem (24:6ff.) and of those who remained in the land after the deportation (33:25). This examination leads Eichrodt to conclude that “My Sabbaths” in chapter 20, which is a thought so alien to Ezekiel, was introduced by P, who copied the phraseology of Ex. 31,³⁴ and asserts that especially verse 12 has to be excluded as a priestly elaboration. Criticizing this assertion, Moshe Greenberg³⁵ refutes that the emphasis laid on the Sabbath in this oracle as not inordinate, because the Sabbath as a touchstone of Loyalty to Yahweh in Ezekiel’s typical fashion, reflects the crises and issues of his time. In addition, he maintains that each seventh-day Sabbath from the Dynastic era took on a higher significance.

On the other hand, as already mentioned, von Rad, who admits the originality of Ezekiel’s way of confronting Israel with the redemptive history, in order to show the enormity of her sin exegeses Ezek. 20 as a paradoxical saving history,³⁶ but he too presupposes the Sabbath observance is based on the P theology. Zimmerli³⁷ also poses the issue that the accusing traditio-historical theology in Ezek. 20 must be oriented antithetically to the main outline of the credo-formulations of Yahweh’s saving actions and retells a history of Israel’s disobedience, deserving of judgment. He understands the Sabbath to be an ancient Israelite institution of inactivity at intervals of seven days with the meaning of a confessional sign of the Yahweh covenant, and that it points in the direction of the Sinai lawgiving. This evaluation of the Sabbath in Ezekiel is followed by Blenkinsopp, who elucidates the process of the Sabbath institution through P’s conceptualization of the covenant.³⁸

However, can Ezekiel’s “my Sabbaths” be interpreted as “the sign of covenant (*haberit 'oth*)” within the framework of the P theology? The term, *b^erît* is employed as a key word, “an everlasting covenant (*b^erît 'olam*),” which applies to two visible signs; a rainbow (Gen. 9:16), and a circumcision (Gen. 17:7, 13, 19), leading to my Sabbaths (Ex. 31:16). However Ezekiel’s “an everlasting covenant (Ezek. 16:60; 37:26)” has nothing to do with any Sabbath.³⁹ First of all, the phrase, “the sign of the covenant,” itself, is not attested to the Sabbath, but to a rainbow (Gen. 9:12, 13, 17) and a circumcision (Gen. 17:11). The problem is the interpretation of this terminology, which is not referred to in the passages relating to the Sabbath in Ezekiel. Hence, I disagree with those scholars who categorize Ezekiel’s

Sabbath with the rainbow and the circumcision according to P's covenant theology.

Ezekiel, in fact, employs the term *b^erit*⁴⁰ in his marriage metaphor which is associated with covenantal thought that indicates the denunciation against breaking the covenant (16:59; 17:15, 16, 18, 19; 44:7). Moreover, his concept of the covenant is expressed in “the bond of the covenant (*mâsôreth haberit*) (20:37),”⁴¹ which represents a strict relationship leading to the “covenant formula,”⁴² that is, “You shall be my people, and I will be your God.” Such a reciprocal relationship is true to the covenant between Yahweh and Israel (16:8, 59, 60, 61, 62) and even that between Zedekiah and Babylon's king, which has the connotation of a vassal treaty (17:13, 14, 15, 16, 18) and can be interpreted as Ezekiel's irony.⁴³ Rather, it should be noted that the term relating to Ezekiel's “my Sabbaths” is not “covenant” but “sign.”

Considering the historical development of the term for sign *'oth*,⁴⁴ is it logical to believe that Ezekiel transferred the secular sign, which means guaranteeing an oath or an agreement, to the theological realm as a designation for one between Yahweh and his people? This concept of a sign was most likely adjusted to P's covenant theology, an everlasting covenant of the rainbow, the circumcision, and the Sabbath. Consequently Ezekiel's “my Sabbaths” was probably transformed, adding to P's Sabbath context with the intention of eliminating alien gods. This is validated in the following examination.

2-4. Profound Differences in the Concepts of the Sabbath

Ezekiel employs “my Sabbaths” to emphasize the holy name Yahweh in a context of reproach. In short, he used “my Sabbaths” as a means of negating the alien gods. On the other hand, “my Sabbaths” in Ex. 31:13 is designated in the strict Priestly formulation (Ex. 31:12-17) that made the Sabbath, itself, an end; hence, theologically speaking, it can be described as ‘a declaration of purposiveness’ or becoming its own end. That is, obviously to absolutize the Sabbath. The following examples strike at the crux of this purposiveness. Firstly, the strictest observance is presented with punishment of the offender by death (*môt yûmat*) (vv. 14, 15). This is another facet of violence which is not implied in the covenant sign (rainbow, circumcision). The point is that the Israelites, themselves, should be sacred and be responsible for the penal provisions, which are not referred to thus far in the Scriptures. The death penalty takes the formula of cutting off (*kârêt*, Niphal) the offender's soul (*nepheš*) from his people (v. 14). A further rationale for this is revealed with the statement; “on the seventh day He ceased (*šābat*, Qal) and reposed (*nāphaš*, Niphal)” (v. 17).⁴⁵ The word has the double meaning of soul and repose. Thus, anyone who profanes the Sabbath will have their soul (*nepheš*) cut off, as in verse 14, because Yahweh reposed

(*nāphaš*, Niphal) in verse 17. Therefore, the association between Creation and the Sabbath declares an eternal covenant (v. 16), as the human soul exists within and is directly linked to God's repose forever (*le'olam*)⁴⁶.

Further evidence is the significant phrase, “*šabbāt šabbātôn* (v. 15),” which is proclaimed as the sacred seventh day. Within the traditions surrounding the tabernacle in the wilderness, this Sabbath injunction is stipulated to authorize the various enactments of building the tabernacle as ordered by Yahweh, as also found in Ex. 35:2, 3. Both stipulations, which are embedded in the conclusion of one set of priestly instructions and at the beginning of the next set, are considered one of the late redactions in the later period.⁴⁷ Moreover, the term *šabbātôn*⁴⁸ seems to describe the concept of “the seventh” which really characterizes Yahweh's Sabbath and this definition is witness to the strict, clear legislation of the Sabbath. The above characteristics can be regarded as the final phase in the conceptualization of the seventh-day Sabbath in which the divinity of the Sabbath itself rationalizes Creation. Subsequently, it can be judged improbable to interpret Ezekiel within the framework of the P theology. There can be no question of literary dependence, let alone copying, from one body of literature to the other. One possibility is the view that Ezekiel's “my Sabbaths” is to make the Sabbath more rigid within the context of the Priestly law.

Here, it is necessary to discuss the similarity of Ezek. 23:38 and the Holiness Code (referred to below as H)⁴⁹ as found in Lev. 19:30; 26:2, where both terms “my Sabbaths” and “my sanctuary (*miqdāšî*)” appear. Jacob Milgrom⁵⁰ interprets these passages to indicate that Ezekiel used a literary technique to turn this verse into a weapon for his indictment against Israel. If true, we need to consider the possibility that Ezekiel shared the traditions responsible for the legal pronouncements in H. Closer comparison has shown that the similarities in these passages, especially in their use of verbs, are eclipsed by their differences.⁵¹ H uses *šamar* (keep) and *yārē'* (reverence), while Ezekiel uses *hll* (profane) and *ṭāmē'* (defile). Moreover, in H the verses in question are phrased as laws concerning the Sabbath and sanctuary,⁵² whereas Ezekiel's verse contains accusations directed against disrespect towards the Sabbath and sanctuary, as explicitly interpreted by Milgrom. At this point an elucidation of the verb's feature may be of help; that is, the significance of the verb *hll* (Piel), which Ezekiel intends in “my Sabbaths” (20:13, 16, 21, 24; 22:8; 23:38). As pointed out by Zimmerli, “the concept of holiness is important for Ezekiel in a different way than for H.”⁵³ In that case, also in reference to the use of “my Sabbaths,” does Ezekiel imply a connotation different from the distinction of holiness? Considering the fact that he uses the verb *hll* as the object of “my holy name” (20:39; 36:20, 21, 22; 39:7),⁵⁴ he must imply the same intention in “my Sabbaths,” using the exact same verb *hll* with the divine name. It is

also a different sense from that which emphasizes the distinction between the holy and the common terms – not under the positive circumstance demanding holiness, but the negative one profaning the divine name.

For Ezekiel, the profanation of “my Sabbaths” is equivalent to denying “my name (*šemî*),” which could be considered an unforgivable sin. As already mentioned regarding Hosea’s denunciation of her Sabbath, the rituals in Israel may already have belonged to other gods. That is why the Sabbath commandments are embedded in tandem with apodictic prohibitions against alien divine idolatries (e.g., Lev. 26:1-2). Such a desperate situation can be conjectured from Ezekiel’s invectives intensified and increasingly aimed at the leaders in Jerusalem (especially chapter 22).⁵⁵ He accused their contemporary Sabbath of being a Heathenish cult using *hll*, and the same severity marked the injunction of “consecrate (*qdš*, Piel) (20:20).” The situation had so deteriorated that “my Sabbaths,” an epistemic sign of Yahweh insisted upon by Ezekiel, could not be expressed with anything but Divine fury. Ezekiel’s “my Sabbaths” did not now exist as a proclamation relating to Sabbath law, but as a prophetic pronouncement.

3. The Sabbath of Ezekiel’s Ritual Innovations

3-1. Transformation to Yahweh’s Sabbath

Leadership and ritual cult are indispensable for the restoration of the nation. At the end of the vision of the new temple of Jerusalem (chaps. 40-43), the ordinances explain that the altar (43:18-27) is the responsibility of Zadok.⁵⁶ From chapter 44, Ezekiel’s theme develops into the various ordinances of worship that explain two important points relating to the Sabbath: the articulate stipulations of the offering system, and the division of roles under the new administrative system that constitutes the discretionary powers of Zadok and the administrative position of the *nâš*.⁵⁷ Regarding the roles, the status of Levites is divided into two groups, and “the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok,” are given the privilege of coming near Yahweh, in contrast to the lower Levites’s duty of serving the people in the context of Yahweh’s “My” (44:6-16). The next passages (vv. 17-27) are the injunctions to consecrate the priesthood, where we notice the inconsistency of the verses 23-24 using the “My” of Yahweh amongst other verses (17-22; 25-27) without it. Zimmerli⁵⁸ points out that vv. 25-27 might once have followed directly after v. 22. This comment could be accepted considering the proximity in the statement’s form. However, in the light of the context that Ezekiel intends to enumerate the stipulations of priestly holiness, the present statements are coherent, showing that the placement of “my Sabbaths” is connected in a coherently

characteristic way, with the preceding and following context of consecrating stipulations. By the same token, however, we must admit this use of “my Sabbaths” is in contrast with the position taken in this paper. The intention behind verse 24’s usage that orders the sons of Zadok to hallow (*qdš*, Piel) “my Sabbaths” definitely differs from that in 20:20 demanding Israel “to consecrate (*qdš*, Piel)” it. That is, “my Sabbaths” is transformed in the context of clarifying the function of the priesthood, according to the intention of differentiating between the holy and the common (44:23); and, hence, no longer functions as a warning.⁵⁹

To elucidate this point, examples from pre-exilic records, in which the Sabbath apparently had been listed as one of the sacred assemblies or royal temple rituals, need to be reexamined⁶⁰ – in particular, cases in which the Sabbath is mentioned along with the New Moon⁶¹ (Isa. 1:13; Hos. 2:13; Am. 8:5; 2 K. 4:23; 1 Ch. 23:31; 2 Ch. 2:3, 8:13, 31:3). How can the juxtaposition of the New Moon and the Sabbath be understood, unless we admit that the Sabbath ritual had some connection with the moon, more explicitly speaking, the ritual set to the full moon?⁶² The recurring seventh day Sabbath would have come into collision with some New Moons and other feasts. Thus, for the ancient people who observed the mysterious phenomenon of the moon, the supernatural character of the moon had a great influence⁶³ on their beliefs, so it cannot be ignored. I presume Ezekiel condemned these Sabbaths as ones that forgot Yahweh and defiled the holiness of Yahweh. That is why the Pentateuch conveniently ignores the phrase of “the New Moon and the Sabbath.” Except in the fourth commandment of the later period, there is no noun Sabbath referred to in Deuteronomy, which forbids worship of the moon (Dt. 4:19; 17:3). This characteristic indicates that the Scriptures include the Pentateuch’s silence of Kingship’s Sabbath in juxtaposition with the New Moon, because it is also interpreted to deem the worship of the moon and stars as idolatry. This disparity, which is thought to be due to the diversity of inter-biblical interpretation, can be found in the Deuteronomistic passages: Dt. 4:19; 17:3; 2 K. 23:5; Jer. 7:18; 8:2; 44:17f.⁶⁴

Ezekiel did not ignore, but fiercely attacked their Sabbaths that forgot Yahweh and defiled His holiness. That is the declaration of Yahweh’s Sabbath. As a result, nevertheless, even Ezekiel could not detach the Sabbath from the full moon. All he could do was to make the very feast itself remain Yahweh’s exclusive possession. In other words, “my Sabbaths” was still a monthly lunar festival. This is affirmed in the greater prominence of lunar feasts in the latter part of Ezekiel (discussed below).⁶⁵

3-2. Sacrificial Offerings and the Symbolism of Seven

From chapter 44, apparently Ezekiel’s concern is channeled into the enumeration of the

offerings: the sin-offering (*ḥaṭṭā't*),⁶⁶ the guilt-offering (*'āshām*),⁶⁷ and his (your) peace offerings (*šēlāmîm*).⁶⁸ The usage of such sacrificial terms is highly characteristic of Ezekiel. These sacrifices⁶⁹ are motivated by the feelings of guilt and desire to expiate for sin. In the cultic procedures, the burnt offering (*'ōlâ*)⁷⁰ and the cereal offering (*minḥâh*)⁷¹ are prescribed for “the New Moon and the Sabbath (45:17; 46:4-7, 12),” which Ezekiel is the first to mention in detail outside of the law.⁷² Specifically, Ezek. 46:4-5 projects the Sabbath sacrifices of the new temple to consist of six lambs and a ram for a burnt-offering together with a cereal offering for the animals. Moreover, Ezekiel describes “the New Moon and the Sabbath (45:17; 46:1-6, 12),”⁷³ which constitutes one of his ritual innovations, along with the great festivals, and all the appointed times (*mô'ădîm*)⁷⁴ of the house of Israel.

Another characteristic of Ezekiel's sacrificial system is the symbolism of seven. By emphasis on this number, he exhibits the integer of fullness, completion, and expiation. For example, the duration of specified date is seven days (3:15; 43:25, 26; 44:26; 45:23, 25), seven months (39:12, 14), and seven years (39:9). Above all, the sin-offering is prescribed during the purgation of the altar over seven days (43:18-26), which symbolizes the duration of purgation.⁷⁵ In the cultic calendar, which Ezekiel presents, the number seven is repeated seven times for emphasis (45:21-25). For example, the burnt-offering to Yahweh for the “the Passover feast”⁷⁶ is stipulated as seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish sacrificed daily over seven days,⁷⁷ which is represented using the term *šābû'ôt* (45:21).⁷⁸ It must be noted that the Passover feast is stipulated as “seven days,” which embodies the idea of purgation through Ezekiel's priesthood.

In chapter 46, we discover how Ezekiel's Sabbath is shown in the ritual and cult, where the *nās'* had the obligation of playing the vital role of mediator between God and the people. Here it is said that the east gate⁷⁹ shut on the “six working days” and opened on “the Sabbath day (*yôm hašabbāt*)” and “the New Moon day (*yôm haḥôdeš*)” (46:1).⁸⁰ Does this ambiguity suggest that the Sabbath could take both roles of the estimated seventh-day and the full moon-Sabbath day? It may be due to the complicated ritual calendar influenced by the Babylonian one but certainly indicated the premonition of the transition to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Here, most significant for us is the fact that the Sabbath is described as a worship day when the people of the land (*'am hā'āreṣ*) were ordered to bow down (*šḥḥ, hitpael*)⁸¹ at the door of the gate before Yahweh (46:3). This demonstrates the process of how seasonal festivals evolved into historical events, like the Passover, and how the way was paved for transforming the Sabbath into Yahweh's ordained day. We can also presume that a liturgical assembly functions as both the spiritual and physical pillar of the unifying factor to maintain

the nation. This was the vision of restoration presented to the people whose dream of a Davidic monarchy was broken.

4. Conclusion

From Ezekiel's "my Sabbaths," which demanded the total negation of other gods, it can at once be assumed that Yahweh's Sabbaths demonstrated various aspects against paganized worship. Nevertheless, the incomprehensible Sabbath bewilders us in the latter part of the book, in which Ezekiel reveals how to restore the nation, presenting the sacrificial offerings on the Sabbath day. Its enigmatic picture leads us to conclude the answer to the first issue; we cannot regard the exile experience as a decisive change in the understanding of the Sabbath, which was still a full-moon day. Ezekiel's hope, that the observance of Yahweh's Sabbath would be restored in the future along with the temple cult in Jerusalem, reveals that the argument that the Sabbath was a non-cultic institution has proved itself baseless.⁸² Also, there is no compelling evidence for an alleged transfer to a post-exilic weekly Sabbath. That is, the claim that the seventh-day Sabbath became a sign of confession to Yahweh in the exile has no biblical basis either.

Moreover, the Hebrew Bible lends no support to the argument that the Sabbath was raised to preeminence during the exilic period so that it could become a distinctive mark of the Jews who were in exile.⁸³ Apparently, the definition of the seventh-day Sabbath had not yet taken shape, nevertheless, the faith to Yahweh, which was maintained throughout the crisis of the exile, connected with the Sabbath. "My Sabbaths" was elevated to a confessional act for salvation (Isa. 56:4) and had the characteristic of strict observance in the course of time. So behind the Scriptural Sabbath lies the complicated background of the Deuteronomic concept and the Priestly redemptive concept of sin. The historical sequence, therefore, is not first the law then the prophets, nor the reverse. The repeated interpretations of God's word, which has evolved through an apparently contradictory process through harsh reality, have changed the original meaning and made it fixed. We must, therefore, reckon with the possibility that, the process of forming the concept is a complex interaction of various factors. Nevertheless, although the compilation of the Bible has a multi-layered complexity, Ezekiel's severe words survived the severe diaspora because his vision had hope for the future. In the course of Jewish history influenced by Hellenism, the Sabbath became intensified to confront more difficult problems, after "my Sabbaths" was revived in the book of Jubilees⁸⁴ with new intricate issues. It is inevitable that the unraveling of the intertwined concepts of the Sabbath into its separate strands be continued, in order to describe how a

conception of the various aspects of God resulted in forming the Hebrew Bible, even if accepting God's warning of "my Sabbaths" is a demanding task.

Notes

Abbreviations

A New Concordance of the Bible: Thesaurus of the Language of the Bible (=NCB), edit. Even-Shoshan, Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1983.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (=IDB), Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962-1976.

The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (=NIDB), Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006-2009.

Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (=TDOT), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-.

Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament (=TLOT), Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.

¹ E. Nestle, K. Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece: 27*, 1993. Lk. 23:54 "epiphōskō (draw on), impf." can be translated as "grows towards light (phōs)."

² Sancti Avrelii Avgvstini episcopi, *de civitate Dei*, Vol. 2. libri XXII recognoverunt Emanvel Hoffmann Vindobonae: F. Tempsky Lipsiae, (G. Freytag, 1899-1900), p. 670.

³ We have writings such as the Epistle of Barnabas and Didache. cf. James Carleton Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, (J.C.B. Mohr, 1994), p. 169.

⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1996), pp. 179-182. Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Creation*, tr. G. W. Bromiley, G. T. Thomson, H. Knight, 2nd ed. (T. & T. Clark, 1960), pp. 50-53.

⁵ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel: with a reprint of the article Israel from the Encyclopaedia Britannica*, preface by W. R. Smith (Meridian Books, 1957) (ori. 1878), pp. 99-114, 338.

⁶ Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch, and other essays*, tr. E.W. Trueman Dicken, (Oliver & Boyd, 1966) (ori. 1938), p. 43. Significantly, von Rad, maintained, "Our thesis may therefore now be stated in the following terms: the creed as we have in Dt. 26:5ff. is the cult legend of the Feast of Weeks." He utilizes this counting system of summing up fifty days which comes from Lev. 23:15-16.

⁷ Niels-Erik A. Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath*, (Society of Biblical Literature for the Form Criticism Seminar, 1972).

Gnana Robinson, *The Origin and Development of the Old Testament Sabbath*, (P. Lang, 1975) (ori. 1972).

Morgenstern, *IDB*, v.4, pp. 135-141.

Haag, *TDOT*, v. 14, pp. 381-397.

Schuele, *NIDB*, v. 5, pp. 3-10.

⁸ Andreasen, *op. cit.*, pp. 249f.

Morgenstern, *IDB*, v.5, pp. 135f.

Leiden Moshe Weinfeld, *The Place of the Law in the Religion of Ancient Israel*, (Brill, 2004), pp. 30, 57, 120.

J.J. Stamm with M.E. Andrew, *The Ten Commandments in Recent Research*, (SCM Press, 1967), pp. 90-95.

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- W. H. Schmidt, *The Faith of the Old Testament*, tr. John Sturdy (The Westminster Press, 1983), pp. 88-92.
- ⁹ Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Worship in Israel: a cultic history of the Old Testament*, tr. G. Buswell (John Knox, 1966), pp. 87-88.
Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 115f., 341.
Martin Noth, *The History of Israel*, tr. P. R. Ackroyd (Adam & Charles black, 1960), p. 297.
Noth, *Leviticus*, tr. J. E. Anderson (SCM Press, 1965), p. 140.
von Rad, *Old Testament Theology Volume One*, tr. D. M. G. Stalker (SCM Press Ltd, 1965) (ori.1957), pp. 83, 84, 135.
von Rad, *Genesis: a Commentary*, tr. John H. Marks (SCM Press, 1972), p. 62.
Ralph W. Klein, *Israel in Exile, a Theological Interpretation*, (Fortress Pr, 1979), p. 126.
S.E. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, (Doubleday, 2001), p. 1698.
Bernhard Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority*, (the Almond Press, 1983), p. 43.
Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, v. 2. tr. John Bowden (Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), pp. 409-410.
- ¹⁰ In the Hebrew bible the expression “every (each) seventh day” is not attested. The distributive is expressed by the repetition of substantives or the preposition *b, l, bēyn* may also be used. The expressions of days repeating are following; Neh. 5:18, “once in ten days (*bēyn ’āsārôt yāmīm*),” Isa. 47:13 “monthly,” Neh. 10:34, “year by year,” Esth. 3:7, “from day to day, and from month to month,” Isa. 66:23, “one new moon to another from one Sabbath to another,” 1 Ch. 9:32, “every Sabbath”; Lev. 24:8, “every Sabbath day,” and “1 Ch. 23:31; 2 Ch. 2:3; 8:13; 31:3.” However, as for the seventh day, we cannot find the term weekly which represents the recurring seventh day.
cf. J. B. Segal, *Hebrew Passover from the Earliest Times to A.D. 70*, (Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 196. “There is no analogy throughout the Bible for the use of the week unit to fix the date of religious ritual.”
- ¹¹ Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
- ¹² Despite being a complex of traditions, the book of Ezekiel passes as a unit in its present form, just like the persona of the prophet not as an author, but as the main character. In fact, the name of Ezekiel can be attested only twice (1:3; 24:24) in the book. Therefore, when I allude to “Ezekiel” in this paper, I am referring either to the book of Ezekiel (MT) or to the prophetic persona, that is, to the theological representation of the prophet.
- ¹³ The fate of the vine indicates that Egyptian conspiracies determine the conduct of Zedekiah against Babylonia (cf. 2 K. 24:10).
- ¹⁴ Ezekiel’s keyword “*māšāl*” occurs in noun form (12:22, 23; 14:8; 17:2; 18:2, 3; 20:49; 21:5; 24:3) and in verb form (12:23; 16:44; 17:2; 18:2, 3; 20:49; 21:5; 24:3). These are concentrated in the chapters up to Ezekiel chap. 24 in the Hebrew Bible. Yahweh uses this phrase to accuse Israel of sin: “put forth a riddle, and speak a parable (17:2).”
- ¹⁵ The term of “leading into (*bw’* Hiphil)” has the highest frequency in Ezekiel (57 times. compare Ex. 45, Dt. 22. *TLOT*, v.1, pp. 201-204). Especially in Ezek. chap. 20, the hiphil of *bw’* appears in analogous context when they promise or discuss the possibility of the return to the land of Israel (*TDOT*, v. 2, p. 30). I think the frequency of this verb in contradictory depiction (v10-35) alludes to the unstable situation in diaspora. On the other hand, the hiphil of *yāšā’* (bring out) is attested Ezek.

- 28 times (cf. *TLOT*, v.2, p. 562).
- ¹⁶ The term *gillûlîm* is used in a quite derogatory way referring to heathen cult. In Ezekiel, 39 passages are found out of 48 times in the Bible. Apart from Ezekiel, it is attested in Lev. 26:30 and Deuteronomistic passages (Dt. 29:16; 1K. 15:12; 21:26; 2K. 17:12; 21:11, 21; 23:24; Jer. 50:2). The detail is Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, tr. Ro. E. Clements (Fortress Press, 1979-1983) (ori. 1969), pp. 24, 187.
- ¹⁷ Contrary to the requirement of a single place of worship, they had a temple on Elephantine in which, besides Yahu, two other deities were worshipped.
In the Shadow of Bezalel, ed. A. F. Botta (Brill, 2013), pp. 131-2.
 Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine papyri in English*, (E. J. Brill, 1996).
 Noth, *The history of Israel*, pp. 294-295.
 Helmer Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, tr. David Green (SPCK Publishing, 1966) (ori. 1963) pp. 347-348.
 Schuele, *NIDB*, v.5. p. 8.
- ¹⁸ Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel, from its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, tr. and abri. Moshe Greenberg (University of Chicago Press, 1960) (ori. 1937), p. 432. Kaufmann points out that the Torah knows nothing of Israel's addiction to the idolatry of Egypt, in contrast to Ezek. Chap. 20.
- ¹⁹ Lang, *op. cit.*, p. 43. "The Sabbath to be an institutionalization of the Yahweh-alone idea. ... Ezekiel's "my Sabbath" can be identified with the Yahweh-alone idea."
- ²⁰ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
 K. Koch, *The prophets*, v. 2 (Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 104-105.
 Ringgren, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
- ²¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 407, 410.
- ²² Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, (J. Knox Press, 1990), pp. 88-89. (Look at note 38)
- ²³ The affirmation of Yahweh's name and the salvific faith in Ezekiel are based on the Deuteronomistic theory. Moreover, the formula of "the land flowing with milk and honey" in Ezek. 20:6, 15 is attested in Deuteronomy 6 times (6:3; 11:9; 26:9, 15; 27:3; 41:20).
- ²⁴ John Van Seters, *The Life of Moses: the Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers*, (J. Knox Press, 1994), pp. 47-48. "Ezek. 20:5-6 specifically indicates that God appeared to the Israelites in Egypt as Yahweh... The Yahwist of the exile was faced with this text and therefore has God through Moses reveal anew to the Israelites the name of Yahweh." p.312. "Behind Deuteronomy one can still see an earlier stage in Ezek. 20:8-9, 13-14, 21-22, where there are repeated references to rebellion (Dt. 9:26-29; Ex. 32:11-13)."
- ²⁵ G. von Rad, *The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions: v. II*, tr. D. M. G. Stalker (SCM Press Ltd, 1965) (ori.1960), p. 226.
- ²⁶ Hebrew words which can be read as "my fury, anger, rage, or indignation" are high in frequency as follows. The term *hamâti* is used 20 times in Ezekiel out of a total of 36 times in the Bible. (5:13, 13; 6:12; 7:8; 13:13, 15; 14:19; 16:42; 20:8, 13, 21; 21:20, 22; 22:22; 24:13; 25:14; 30:15; 36:6, 18; 38:18). The term *'aphi* appears 10 times (5:13; 7:3, 8; 13:3; 20:8, 21; 22:20; 25:14; 38:18; 43:8) out of a total of 38 times. And *za'ami* appears 2 times (21:36; 22:31) out of a total of 4 times.
- ²⁷ In chapter 20, my "statutes" is "*huqqôl*"; *hāqaq*, f. pl., while "*hūqim*"; *hōq*, m. pl. indicates "the statutes of your fathers (20:18)," "the statutes that were not good laws (20:25)." It seems that

Ezekiel differentiates between their usages.

- ²⁸ I submit that Ezekiel's concept of *qdš* is inseparable from the holy name. In this paper I render *qōdāšay* into my holy things, and *miqdāšî* into my Sanctuary.
cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22, op. cit.*, p. 1700. Milgrom suggests that the variation of *qdš* would have been vocalized as a plural, *miqdāšay*, as in Lev 21:23, or *qōdāšay*, as in Ezekiel's reworking of this verse (22:8). The contrast between *šabbētōtay* and *miqdāšî* is between sacred time and sacred space.
- ²⁹ *TDOT*, v.15, p. 613. "The lexeme *tōrâ* occurs only 12 times in the plural. The pl. *tōrōî* in Lev. 26:46 and Ezek. 44:24 denotes the whole body of individual laws governing the cultic community."
- ³⁰ Hos. 2:13 reads, "I will also cause all her joy to cease, her feast, her new moon, and [her sabbath], and all her appointed feast." The rendering which has generally been her sabbaths should be "her sabbath," because of the third person singular feminine suffix of the noun.
- ³¹ "I will visit upon her the days of the Baalim (*yōmi haba'alim*)."
- ³² The verb *šābat* has no Piel and in Ezekiel there is no Qal. As for Qal, the verses regarding as relating to somewhat Sabbath (the seventh day, the seventh year, seventy years) are 13 times (Gen. 2:2, 3; Ex. 16:30; 23:12; 31:17; 34:21, 21; Lev. 23:32; 25:2; 26:34, 35, 35; 2 Ch. 36:21), and others are 14 times (Gen. 8:22; Josh. 5:12; Neh. 6:3; Isa.14:4, 4; 24:8, 8; 33:8; Jer. 31:36; Hos. 7:4; Job 32:1; Prob. 22:10; Lam. 5:14, 15). However, the above passages need further examination.
Niphal except Ezekiel is only found in Isa.17:3 and Hiphil is attested in 30 times. Among these examples which have a negative connotation, especially Dt. 32:26, whose theme in Song of Moses is similar to that in Ezekiel 20. They are represented by the subject of first person male singular (Yahweh) and perfect tense in consecutive form, or declarative perfect (Ezek. 12:23), or Jussive (Dt. 32:26), which means "to cause to cease, put an end to," or, "to exterminate, destroy." Also, it should be noted that Lev. 26:6 and Ezek. 34:25 emphasize a condition of security in the land.
- ³³ 2 Ch. 36:21 reads, "To fulfill Yahweh's word by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had made up for (*rāšâ*, Qal) its Sabbaths; for all the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years."
- ³⁴ Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: a Commentary*, (Westminster Press, 1970), pp. 263-264.
- ³⁵ Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, (Doubleday, 1983), pp. 366-367.
- ³⁶ von Rad, *II, op. cit.*, pp. 226, 398.
- ³⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I, op. cit.*, pp. 405-7, 410.
- ³⁸ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel, op. cit.*, p.89.
Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch*, (Yale University Press, 1992), p. 219.
Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*, (Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 106. "In keeping with this chronological shift, the P stand of the Sinai story focusses only on the establishment of the cult, singling out the institution of Sabbath as a sign of creation and perpetual covenant (Ex. 31:12-17)."
- ³⁹ "An everlasting covenant" appears in Ex. 31:16; Lev. 24:8, relating to "the Sabbath day," but in Ezek. 16:60; 37:26; Jer. 32:40 Is. 55:3; 61:8, 1 Ch.16:15 without relation to Sabbath.
- ⁴⁰ The term *b^erît* in Ezekiel appears 18 times; 16:8, 59, 60, 60, 61, 62; 17:13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19; 20:37; 30:5; 34:25; 37:26, 26; 44:7. The phrase, "a covenant of peace (34:25)" is followed by "cause wild beasts to cease (*šābat*, Hiphil) from the land", which suggests the relationship with Hos. 2:20.

- ⁴¹ Weinfeld, *TDOT*, v. 2, p. 245. Weinfeld explained the idea of binding on the etymology of *b'rit*, using this passage.
- ⁴² Koch, K. *op. cit.*, p. 110. cf. Ezek. 11:20; 14:11; 37:23, 27, employ the pronoun, 3. m. pl. (they, their, them.) for the Israelite.
- ⁴³ Ezekiel does not utter a single word against the Babylonians, but it is unlikely that he accepted Babylonian Gods. That is why he employs a metaphorical expression using the term *b'rit*.
- ⁴⁴ Helfmeyer, *TDOT*, v. 1, 183, 187-8. Helfmeyer points out logically and appropriately that since *'oth* in the secular realm means a sign guaranteeing an oath or an agreement (Josh. 2:13, 18), it seems logical to believe that P and Ezekiel begin with this use of the word, and transfer it to the theological realm as a designation for covenant signs. He also asserts that the similarity between Ezek. 20:12 and Ex. 31:13 argues less for a later priestly redaction of this prophetic text than for the “roots of Ezekiel in the priestly legal tradition” with the suggestion that the expression “that you may know that I, Yahweh, sanctify you” (v. 13) is based on Ezek. 20:12. As also recapitulated, “the Sabbath was a ‘sign of confession of the Yahweh’s covenant’ more than a ‘sign securing Yahweh’s relationship to his people’.” I agree with his view, because in light of the profession of Yahweh as the Israelite God, conceptualization of the Sabbath followed the way of representing the “sign” implied in the covenant, and thus it had been elevated to confessional status.
- ⁴⁵ Noth, *Exodus*, tr. J.S. Bowden (S.C.M. Press, 1966), p. 241. “In vv. 15-17, we certainly have a second addition, as is evident from the carelessness of the phrasing alone. In vv. 15 and 17b Yahweh is named in the third person without any reference to the context, but between v. 17a has him speaking again in the first person.”
- ⁴⁶ Ex. 31:17 reads, “It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever (*le'olam*); for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased (*šabat*) and reposed (*wayyinnāpaš*).”
- ⁴⁷ David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 300. I agree with Carr’s view that P instructions for construction of the tabernacle are concluded with a late addition in the style of the Holiness materials (Ex. 31:12-17) that turn the Sabbath into “a sign”..... relating to the Sinaitic covenant much like the previous P covenantal signs of the rainbow and circumcision.
- ⁴⁸ The term *šabbâtôn* is only defined in the Priestly text and the Holiness Code; (1) the tenth day (Lev. 16:31, 23:32), the first day (Lev. 23:24), and the 15th day (Lev. 23:39, 39) of the seventh month, (2) the Seventh Year (Lev. 25:4, 5), and (3) the seventh day (Ex. 16:23, 31:15, 35:2; Lev. 23:3). In contrast to the term *šabbât*, the above examples of the definition “the seventh” indicate that the term *šabbâtôn* was coined by editors of the Holiness school. The form of abstract noun becomes *šabbâtôn* in Hebrew, with three vowels (using the particularizing suffix *-on*) giving the form a characteristic aspect different from the previous *šabbât*.
cf. Paul Joüon, *Orthography and Phonetics; Morphology*, trans. and revised by T. Muraoka (Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), p. 262. John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, 3rd ed. (Eisenbrauns, 2011) p. 198.
- ⁴⁹ This paper cannot discuss the relationship with P and Holiness Code, but I submit that the new terminology of *šabbâtôn* is reflected by H’s redactional influence over the Sabbath stipulations.
- ⁵⁰ Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22, op. cit.*, p. 1698. Milgrom also explicates that the structural marker in Leviticus 19, is the repetition of the formulaic phrase “I am Yahweh your God,” which is also

- Ezekiel's key phrase. For significant structural feature, the placement of "my Sabbath" as an inclusio merits careful attention.
- ⁵¹ Andreasen, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-5.
Dommershausen, *TDOT*, v. 4, p. 410.
- ⁵² This is attested according to the following evidence; *šmr* refers to "My Sabbath" observance also in Lev. 19:3; Ex. 31:13; Isa. 56:4. On the other hand, *yr'* in Leviticus occurs 8 times; the objects of "his mother and his father (19:3)," "My Sanctuary (19:30; 26:2)," and "your God (19:14, 32; 25:17, 36, 43)."
- ⁵³ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.
- ⁵⁴ The expression "profane my holy name" occurs in Lev. 20:3; 22:2, 32; Am. 2:7 except Ezekiel. Ezek. 36:23 also denounces the desecration of God's name by *hll*; I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in the midst of them. cf. Milgrom, *Jacob Cult and Conscience*, (Brill, 1976), pp. 86-87. Milgrom explains that the notion of trespass is expressed in H by *hll*. The term *hll šm*, the desecration of the name (of God), occurs 6 times in H, 9 times in Ezekiel. (The total for this phrase seems different.)
- ⁵⁵ Chapter 22 enumerates the leaders in Jerusalem such as, the *nās'm* of Israel (v. 6), her prophets (v. 25), her priests (v. 26), and her rulers (v. 27).
- ⁵⁶ The seed of Zadok in Ezek. 43:19 and the sons of Zadok in 40:46; 44:15 are responsible for the special duty of consecrating the Sabbath. On the other hand, in 44:10-14 the Levites who shall bear their iniquity are employed in the temple services.
- ⁵⁷ The term *nāšit'* occurs 36 times in Ezekiel (over 120 times in total) and from chapter 44, its title was given to the leader of the community of Ezekiel's plan (Ezek. 44:3, 3; 45:7, 16, 17, 22; 46:2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18; 48:21, 21, 22, 22 and 45:9 pl.).
- ⁵⁸ W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II*, tr. Ro. E. Clements (Fortress Press, 1979-1983), (ori. 1969), p. 461.
- ⁵⁹ Especially, the categories of the holy and the profane/the unclean presented in Ezek. 44:23 show the priesthood's ritual boundaries, as identified in Lev. 10:10.
cf. In Ezek. 22:26, the priests are condemned for the neglect of the responsibility to distinguish between these.
- ⁶⁰ 2 K.11:5-9; 16:18 also contains descriptions of royal temple rituals as a duty on the Sabbath as do the post-exilic texts (2 Ch. 23:4, 8), but these are not along with the New Moon.
- ⁶¹ The examples of the juxtaposition of the New Moon and the Sabbath occur 13 times, including the post-exilic records; Ezek. 45:17; 46:1, 3; Isa. 66:23; Neh.10:34.
- ⁶² Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-114.
Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, tr. and ed. Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale (Free Press, 1952), p. 150.
Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-24, 64-76.
Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, (Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 151.
James Theophile, *The Sabbath in the Old Testament*, (Journal of Biblical Literature, 1914), p. 205.
Alberty, *op. cit.* p. 409.
Schuele, *NIDB*, v. 5, pp. 3-10.
- ⁶³ *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 113-114.
T. H. Gaster, *IDB*, v. 3, pp. 436-437.
Mclaughlin, *NIDB*, v. 4, pp. 138-140.

- ⁶⁴ Dt. 4:19; 17:3; 2 K. 23:5; Jer. 8:2 moon, *yârêach*; Jer. 7:18; 44:17f. the queen of heaven, *meleket hshâmayim*. Jeremiah strictly rebukes moon worship, especially in the danger of worshiping the queen of heaven.
- ⁶⁵ The cults based on the lunar calendar (Nu. 28:11-15, 1 S. 20:5, 18, 24, 27) come to special prominence from the Persian period (Isa 56:2-6; Ezra 3: 5-6; Neh. 13:15-22). Lev. 23 contains the first cultic calendar dated exactly according to month and day. It seems much more reasonable to put the fixed point from which the festivals begin at the day of the new moon or the full moon.
- ⁶⁶ In Ezekiel, *ḥaṭṭā't* is concentrated in 14 passages (40:39; 42:13; 43:19, 21, 22, 25; 44:27, 29; 45:17, 19, 22, 23, 25; 46:20). Although the idea of sacrificial offering itself is probably considerably older, Ezekiel seems to mention the sin and guilt offerings explicitly outside of the laws. (The purification offering is the better rendering than the sin offering according to Milgrom.)
- ⁶⁷ In Ezekiel, *'āshām* occurs in 4 passages (40:39; 42:13; 44:29; 46:20) and is mentioned together with *ḥaṭṭā'â*.
cf. W. O. E. Oesterley, *Sacrifices in Ancient Israel: Their Origin, Purposes and Development*, (Macmillan, 193-?), p. 76. "The *'āshām* was early origin, though at first it was probably not of the developed nature found in Ezekiel and P, but corresponded rather to what we find in 1 Sam. 6:3, 4, 8, 17; 2 K. 12:17; Isa. 53:10."
- ⁶⁸ In Ezekiel, *šēlāmîm* occurs in 6 passages (43:27; 45:15, 17; 46:2, 12, 12) without the term *zebah* in Ezekiel.
cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II*, op. cit., p. 479. "Leviticus 3 contains the ritual, *zebah šēlāmîm* ("final offering"), and shows that in the later period *zebah* and *šēlāmîm* have entered into close association, as do other passages in P."
- ⁶⁹ No other prophet mentions the detailed inventory items for sacrificial offerings. Outside of the laws, Ezekiel mentions them explicitly.
cf. Ringgren, *op. cit.*, p. 167. "It remains a surprising fact, however, that there is very little evidence from the early period for one whole class of sacrifice, namely, the so-called sin and guilt offerings."
- ⁷⁰ In Ezekiel the burnt offering *'ōlâ* occurs 19 times (40:38, 39, 42, 42; 43:18, 24, 27; 44:11; 45:15, 17, 17, 23, 25; 46:2, 4, 12, 12, 13, 15).
- ⁷¹ In Ezekiel the cereal offering *minḥâh* occurs 15 times (42:13; 44:29; 45:15, 17, 17, 24, 25; 46:5, 5, 7, 11, 14, 14, 15, 20).
- ⁷² The stipulations for the Sabbath sacrifice regarding quantity do not appear in the Bible aside from the above verses and Num. 28:9-10. As for the offering of the Sabbaths, Neh. 10:34 has no detail.
- ⁷³ The Sabbath occurs in plural (45:17; 46:3) and singular (46:1, 4, 12), along with the New Moon. From the chapter 44, cultic responsibility is entrusted to the *nâs'*. The previous verbs which target the Sabbath as an object do not occur any longer.
- ⁷⁴ Kedar-Kopfstein, *TDOT*, v. 4, p. 206. "A *mô'éd* can be used collectively for *ḥag*, new moon, and Sabbath (Ezek. 45:17)."
- ⁷⁵ Ezekiel's fastidiousness with "seven" is also found in "seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel (8:11)," "seven kinds of weapons (39:9-10)," "seven steps (40:22, 26)." On the other hand, the frequency of the number seven is shown in H's festal calendar in Lev. chap. 23. Also, the duration of purgation is attested in Lev. chap. 13, 15, the vocabulary and concepts of which have affinities with Ezekiel. Another example in the Bible is the duration of mourning, or fasting etc. (1 Sam. 32:12, 13; 31:13), and the purgation (Nu. 19: 12, 14, 16, 19), but in no book of the prophet

except Ezekiel.

- ⁷⁶ The Hebrew words *pāsaḥ* and *ḥag* are here in reverse ordinal order. The only example of *ḥag pāsaḥ* used in the correct order is found in Ex. 34:25.
- ⁷⁷ In the Passover in Nu. 28:16-24, the burnt offering is two young bullocks, one ram, and seven he-lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish (Nu. 28:16). As for Passover's sin-offering to make atonement, it is only one he-goat (Nu. 28:22) or, a he-goat daily (Ezek. 45:22-23).
- ⁷⁸ *šābūa'* and its cognate form occur in the Hebrew Bible about 21 times. I believe this word is never used in connection with an astronomical calendar reckoning in the sense of periodical "week," although it is conventionally translated as "week." Therefore, Dan. 10:2-3, "Daniel mourns for three weeks," is presumed to mean 21 days or symbolic meaning. BHS shows another reading in Ezek. 45:21.
- ⁷⁹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel II, op. cit.*, pp. 353f.
Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel, op. cit.*, p. 201. "Because of its importance as the point of entry for the return of the divine presence, the eastern gate is described in considerable detail."
- ⁸⁰ There is no passage besides Ezek. 46:1, 6 where the Sabbath and the New Moon concurrently appears with the day, *yôm*. The pre-exilic Sabbath, which implied "full moon" or "moon goddess," was a feminine noun and transformed into a masculine one by the influence *yôm* which comes to be added to it (cf. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 217).
- ⁸¹ Ezek. chap. 46 employs a hitpael form of *šḥḥ* (vow down), in vv. 2, 3, 9 (cf. 8:16). Like Ezekiel, Trio-Isaiah uses this term as well, in 66:23 in relating to the Sabbath worship. LXX: *proskuneō* (worship).
- ⁸² The other exilic references of the Sabbath (Lam. 1:7; 2:6) speak of Sabbath in association with the temple. While they attest the fact that the observance of Sabbath came to an end with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, they do not indicate that Sabbath acquired at this period any special qualification which was not part of it earlier.
- ⁸³ Both Robinson and Andreasen agree in this respect. Robinson points out that further, apart from the redactional texts (Jer. chap. 17), Sabbath receives no special emphasis. He comments that it is attested in the total absence in Deutero-Isaiah (Is. 40-55), which is the profound theological work of the exilic period, and no special interest on seventh-day-Sabbath of the historical works, which obviously received its final redaction after the exile, makes it difficult to believe that Sabbath came into prominence during the exilic period. (Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 299.) Andreasen, who maintains the antiquity of the seventh-day Sabbath, admits that there is no good evidence that the exile was a particularly creative period for the Hebrew Bible Sabbath tradition, nor can it be affirmed that the Sabbath institution came to play a new and important role at this time. (Andreasen, *op. cit.*, p. 269.)
- ⁸⁴ *The Book of Jubilees, or, The Little Genesis*, tr. from the Ethiopic text by R. H. Charles Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (Macmillan, 1917), p. 37. Chap. I:10 "because they have forsaken My ordinances and My commandments, and the festivals of My covenant, and My Sabbaths, and My holy place which I have hallowed for Myself in their midst."