

In the Beginning

Robert B. Coote & David Robert Ord, *In the Beginning* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991),

The Hebrew verb translated “rest” is *shabat*, from which the word *shabat*, “Sabbath,” was thought to derive. The verb *shabat* means to cease or desist. To cease work is to rest. Robert B. Coote & David Robert Ord, *In the Beginning* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 78.

Coote explains the social context of Old Testament times as follows:

“Peasants living on the margin of subsistence in a land where drought is common – on average every two or three years – found it easy to fall into debt. If they had to eat their seed due to a low harvest, it meant borrowing to buy seed to plant the next fall. Taxes, rents, fees, charges, interest, and fines were excessive. For security, peasants would put up their ox or ass if they had one, their own bodies as slave labor for a given period of time, the body of a daughter in prostitution, or their land.” Custom and law in Palestine periodically prescribed ways to alleviate the hardship caused by the loss of such securities.

Robert B. Coote & David Robert Ord, *In the Beginning* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 124.