Cooking on the Sabbath

Many have pondered the question as to whether or not we can cook food on the Sabbath. Today, I’d like to examine some evidence that may shed light on this topic. Be it known that my desire is for the truth alone and not to bolster any fleshly desire. (Sirach 4:28) While studying for our Jubilees livestream on 8-23-19, I came across this verse:

Jubilees 2:29

“Declare and say to the children of Israel the law of this day both that they should keep Sabbath thereon, and that they should not forsake it in the error of their hearts; (and) that it is not lawful to do any work thereon which is unseemly, to do thereon their own pleasure, and that they should not prepare thereon anything to be eaten or drunk, and (that it is not lawful) to draw water, or bring in or take out thereon through their gates any burden, which they had not prepared for themselves on the sixth day in their dwellings.”

Reading this re-ignited my desire to search this out. On the surface, reading this verse seems compelling that we are not to cook on the Sabbath, but I wanted to keep looking. It wasn’t until a few days later, someone had shared this verse from Jubilees 50, that seemed to unlock what was really being said above:

Jubilees 50:9

“Ye shall do no work whatever on the Sabbath day **save what ye have prepared for yourselves on the sixth day, so as to eat, and drink, and rest**, and keep Sabbath from all work on that day, and to bless the Lord your God, who has given you a day of festival and a holy day: and a day of the holy kingdom for all Israel is this day among their days for ever.”

“Save that what you have prepared”. It clearly says you shall do no work save (except) what you have prepared on the sixth day. Bringing the verse from Jubilees 2 back into the frame puts the whole thing in perspective. We are to prepare on the 6th day what we are to cook on Sabbath. We are pretty far removed from an agricultural society; they used to have to go hunt, or slaughter, or gather or even go to the marketplace like we do. In modern day context, we are to go gather from the store what we need and even prepare it to an extent on the 6th day. For example, we can chop up all the vegetables we are going to put into a stew or crockpot on Sabbath morning for a meal in the evening on the 6th day. There’s much to discuss in this arena, but for another time. Point being, we can’t just ignore the fact that the passage above states, no work save (except) what was prepared on the 6th day. If this was implying all the cooking was done on the 6th day, then there is no point saying “save” or “except”, it would just be period. Taking food out of the fridge or putting food in your mouth isn’t work – that’s not the context. This is clearly saying work cannot be done, except for meals. Let’s look at a similar verse in the 66-book cannon:

Exodus 12:16

“And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, **save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you”**

There it is again. We must be able to reason with one another. This verse clearly says “save” or “except” that which every man must eat. Again, if all the cooking was done on the 6th day, then there is absolutely no reason for the latter part of this verse, it would just be no work, period. Let’s take a look at the manna:

Exodus 16

“**14**And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.

**15**And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.

**16**This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents.

**17**And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.

**18**And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

**19**And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

**20**Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them”

We see that the context here is manna and the command was to not leave any of it until the morning. Of course, they didn’t listen and, in the morning, the **manna** bred worms and stank. Let’s look at the rest of this passage now:

Exodus 16

**21**And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

The manna that was still lying on the ground (not gathered) melted when the sun came up.

Exodus 16

**22**And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

**23**And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

In verse 22 we see the “preparation”, they gathered it up; twice as much on the 6th day because they wouldn’t be able to gather it on Shabbat. Now verse 23, the most important one; Moses said to bake what you will bake today and seethe what you will today and the manna that remains, lay up for the morning. Considering all the above verses were in the context of manna, this is how I draw a conclusion of “that which remaineth” means. After all, we all know cooked food doesn’t spoil overnight, but we do know (because of the verses prior) that manna spoils overnight. Therefore, my conclusion is manna, especially considering it could have been written: cook all of it today and save a portion tomorrow for Sabbath – but it doesn’t say that.

Here's a verse in the same book of Exodus that uses the term 'all of it':

Exodus 37:22 <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/exodus/37-22.htm>
"Their knops and their bran­ches were of the same: **all *of* it** was one beaten *w*ork of pure gold."

Moshe knew how to and when to use any variant of the Hebrew word 'Kol' (All) and it was not chosen for this passage.

Let’s back up a bit and take an overall look at the Sabbath. What is it? A Feast day:

Leviticus 23:1-3

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the **feasts of the Lord**, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, **even these are my feasts**.

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”

The Sabbath is a Feast Day unto him. Why is it called such?

Jubilees 2:21 (22 in Cepher)

“And thus He created therein a sign in accordance with which they should keep Sabbath with us on the seventh day, **to eat and to drink, and to bless Him who has created all things** as He has blessed and sanctified unto Himself a peculiar people above all peoples, and that they should keep Sabbath together with us”

Does it seem right to eat, drink and bless him with cold, leftover food? Wouldn’t the best be proper for such a high and Set-Apart day? After all, isn’t the Sabbath a foreshadow of the Millennial Reign, to which we will certainly have the best of the best?

Jubilees 50:10-11

“For great is the honour which the Lord has given to Israel that they should eat and drink and be satisfied on this festival day, and rest thereon from all labour which belongs to the labour of the children of men save burning frankincense and bringing oblations and sacrifices before the Lord for days and for Sabbaths.

This work alone shall be done on the Sabbath-days in the sanctuary of the Lord your God; that they may atone for Israel with sacrifice continually from day to day for a memorial well-pleasing before the Lord, and that He may receive them always from day to day according as thou hast been commanded.”

Remember, in a verse preceding this, we saw the “save/except” which one is to eat. In the second part of verse 10 and through 11, we see that it is acceptable to burn frankincense and to bring sacrifices (which requires fire) on Shabbat. Which brings me to the discussion about “kindling a fire”. I will say, the verse in Exodus 35 about no fire, is the hardest point to understand, but let’s look at it anyways:

Exodus 35:2-3

**“**Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.

Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day”

What is the context here? Work. We have already used more than 2 witnesses to prove that cooking is not considered “work”, that is, unless you are a cook by profession to earn wages. Kindling a fire in today’s world is much different than of old time, as many professions back then made use of a fire, but in our time, it’s mainly used for heating a home or cooking of course. If we are to take this verse and apply it to a context outside of work, we are forced with the decision to inform believers that live in extremely cold climates to not warm their homes anymore (which would be a burden), or even drive a car, as it produces a fire to ignite the oxygen and gasoline. This path leads us on the very same path as modern Judaism; they are not even allowed to flip a light switch. What about all the believers prior to electricity? Are we to believe that they were not allowed to study the word by candlelight? Or were they sitting in darkness inside their dwellings? Nonsense, and this is exactly the type of teachings Yahusha came to abolish – the traditions of men. Again, the context is, will the fire be used for occupational work? Lastly, a few other notes about the fire, Exodus 35:2-3 is a stand-alone witness; I’m not saying the information is false, it’s true to the extent of no fire for work purposes, but we don’t see a second witness to this verse in the context of which modern day teachings position it, whereas we have used multiple verses to back our point of view – that cooking on the Sabbath is lawful (which requires a fire).

Touching on one more point, let’s look at the account of the Pharisees accusing Yahusha of breaking the Sabbath:

Luke 6:1-2

“And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, **rubbing them in their hands**.

And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?”

We know that he didn’t break the law for gathering food from someone’s field (When you come into your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor’s standing grain – Deut 23:25). So what rule did he break? This is just speculating, but did they accuse him of preparing food because he took the grain and rubbed it in their hands prior to eating? Sounds silly, but the rules of the Pharisees still ring true today; again, if we are to interpret the Exodus verse 35:2-3, this will take us on a course of putting heavy burdens on believers – no driving, no lights, no internet, cellphones, no cooking and no heating the home, which could be dangerous for certain brothers and sisters who live in freezing climates.

It is my conclusion that it is lawful to cook on the Sabbath day – after all:

Mark 2:27

**“**And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath”

Mark 7:13

“And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition”

Because:

Jubilees 2:21 (22 in Cepher)

“And thus He created therein a sign in accordance with which they should keep Sabbath with us on the seventh day, **to eat and to drink, and to bless Him who has created all things** as He has blessed and sanctified unto Himself a peculiar people above all peoples, and that they should keep Sabbath together with us”

After diving into this study, it is my recommendation to do away with the traditions of men, which is to free our brothers and sisters who are caught in this deception that we are not allowed to cook on Sabbath – although at the same time, it certainly isn’t a sin to cook on Friday and heat up leftovers on Sabbath, so there is no need to condemn anyone who chooses not to. So, I ask, why are we following the traditions of Jews and repeating this doctrine?

With love,

Adam Fink