**The Sabbath**

**What is it?**

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Traditional Christian terms and names are intentionally used throughout this lesson book to reach a larger scope of readers and help those who may be beginners in this knowledge learn with ease.

# **The Origin of The Sabbath**

Never has the world seen so much confusion and controversy over a day of the week than that of the Sabbath day. Should we be surprised?

Revelation 12:9  And the great dragon… the old serpent called Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world…

Daniel 7:25  And he shall speak words against the Most High… and plot to change times and laws…

These two Scriptures tell us (1) Satan deceives the whole world and (2) Satan will change times and laws.

The Sabbath day is considered an “Appointed Time” of rest. God gives us specific laws regarding it.

Let’s begin our journey to understand the origin of the Sabbath day and its significance.

Genesis chapters 1-2 contain the creation story. Let’s read it now. Notice what is said at the completion of each day. We will discuss that later in this lesson.

Genesis 1:1-2  In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and empty. And darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:3-5  And God said, Let there be light. And there was light. And God saw the light that it was good. And God divided between the light and the darkness. And God called the light, Day. And He called the darkness, Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Genesis 1:6-8  And God said, Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse, and divided the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. And God called the expanse, Heavens. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Genesis 1:9-13  And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land, Earth. And He called the gathering together of the waters, Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth tender sprouts (the herb seeding seed and the fruit tree producing fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself) upon the earth; and it was so. And the earth brought forth tender sprouts, the herb yielding seed after its kind, and the tree producing fruit after its kind, whose seed was in itself. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

Genesis 1:14-19  And God said, Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to divide between the day and the night. And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. And let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth. And it was so. And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day and the smaller light to rule the night, and the stars also. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night; and to divide between the light and the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Genesis 1:20-23  And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarmers having a living soul; and let birds fly over the earth on the face of the expanse of the heavens. And God created great sea-animals, and every living soul that creeps with which the waters swarmed after their kind; and every winged fowl after its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas and let the fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Genesis 1:24-31  And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creepers, and its beasts of the earth after its kind; and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after its kind, and cattle after their kind, and all creepers upon the earth after their kind. And God saw that it was good. And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creepers creeping on the earth. And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female. And God blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it. And have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the heavens, and all animals that move upon the earth. And God said, Behold! I have given you every herb seeding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree seeding seed; to you it shall be for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the heavens, and to every creeper on the earth which has in it a living soul every green plant is for food; and it was so. And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Genesis 2:1-3  And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He had rested from all His work which God created to make.

This is the account of God’s creation of the earth and everything in it.  On the sixth day He made man, and on the seventh day it says He stopped His work and rested.

We see in Genesis 2:1-3 listed above, this day was different from the other days of creation week, because God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

The word “sanctify” means to set something apart as holy - for special use. God specifically set apart the seventh day, making it holy. He finished His work on the previous six days and then stopped for the seventh day.  It is His “Day of Rest” and He commanded us to observe this day as well.

The two occurrences of the word “rested”, in this same verse, come from the Hebrew word “Shabbat”, often pronounced as “Sabbath” in English. It means to cease or rest. This is how Sabbath gets its meaning as “a day of rest.” God “Sabbathed” on the seventh day and commands we do the same.

You may have heard it said the Sabbath is for the Jews.  According to this next verse, whose sabbath is it?

Exodus 20:8-10  Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah your God. You shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger within your gates. (This is the 4th of the Ten Commandments)

It says “the Sabbath of Jehovah your God”. It was never a Jewish Sabbath. It is the Sabbath God told us to honor on this seventh day. Jehovah is the name of God, whereas “the Lord” is a title the translators of the KJV chose to use. The original Hebrew script uses His name.

Now, read this next verse.

1 John 5:3  For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome.

According to John, how do we show our love for God?

Does John say these commandments, which include the Sabbath rest, are a burden?

John himself, tells us they are not a burden. Many people are quick to say they place a heavy burden on people, without realizing one has far more laws applicable to their city or nation, then God has. Do you consider the laws of your nation a heavy burden to be done away with? Laws such as not stealing, killing, or those related to how to drive a car?

How serious is keeping the Sabbath of Jehovah, our God and for what length of time does this apply? Let’s look at this next verse for the answer?

Exodus 31:13-14  Speak also to the sons of Israel, saying, Truly you shall keep My sabbaths. For it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, to know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death. For whoever does any work in it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

As you can see, it is very serious. “Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death.”

We are also told this very important aspect of the Sabbath: “it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations.” The seventh day Sabbath (Saturday) is the sign or mark that identifies you as belonging to our God and not a different god. Some religions honor a Friday Sabbath and others a Sunday Sabbath. The question is: What day does God tell you to honor and obey? What day did He set aside as holy and sanctify?

Romans 2:13  For it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

I hope you have seen the Sabbath is not a Jewish day. It is God’s day of rest as He commanded to all of us who want to follow after Him. You likely recognize the Ten commandments already, but not the definition that goes with them. You see this in the 4th Commandment regarding the Sabbath. Let’s read it again.

Exodus 20:8-10  Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah your God. You shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger within your gates. (This is the 4th of the Ten Commandments)

The purpose of all of God’s Law, including the Sabbath, is to be a benefit to mankind; a blessing for all who choose to obey and use it as He intended.

# **What Does it Mean to Rest?**

You have now learned four important aspects about the Sabbath:

1. It is God’s Sabbath and not a Jewish Sabbath.
2. John told you to show your love of God by keeping His commandments and they are not a burden.
3. It is a day of rest for everyone in your household, including servants, strangers, visitors, and animals.
4. The 7th day Sabbath (Saturday) is a sign between God and you.

The Sabbath is God’s gift to mankind by the One who designed and created us. It is a time for physical, emotional, and spiritual renewal. God knew that we would need this time to nurture and strengthen a right relationship with Him.

Part of the Sabbath command reads, “Six days you shall labor and do all your work...”. Let’s read that verse again:

Exodus 20:8-10  Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah your God. You shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger within your gates. (This is the 4th of the Ten Commandments).

God tells us we should take care of our ordinary work and concerns on the other six days, which leaves our time and our minds free to properly worship and obey Him on the Sabbath. When we are free to focus our minds and thoughts on God’s way and purpose, the Sabbath truly becomes the blessing and delight God intends it to be.

Isaiah 58:13-14  If you turn your foot because of the Sabbath, from doing what you please on My holy days, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of Jehovah, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in Jehovah; and I will cause you to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed yourself with the inheritance of Jacob your father. For the mouth of Jehovah has spoken.

Do you think eating out at a restaurant is acceptable on the Sabbath? Remember, those who cook and serve are servants to you.

Would it be acceptable to go fishing, shopping, or to a movie on the Sabbath? Is this honoring God or pleasing yourself?

This next passage talks about preparing and cooking our meals. What does Scripture tell us about preparing our meals for this Sabbath day?

Exodus 16:22-30  And it happened, on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

And he said to them, This is that which Jehovah has said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath to Jehovah. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil. And that which remains over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

And they laid it up until the morning, as Moses said. And it did not stink, neither was there any worm in it.

And Moses said, Eat that today. For today is a sabbath to Jehovah. Today you shall not find it in the field.

Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

And it happened some of the people went out on the seventh day in order to gather. And they did not find any.

And Jehovah said to Moses, How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My Laws?

See, because Jehovah has given you the sabbath, therefore He gives you the bread of two days on the sixth day. Each one stay in his place. Let not any one go out of his place on the seventh day.

So the people rested on the seventh day.

God tells us to prepare our meals for the Sabbath day on the 6th day. We gather our produce from the garden, pick our fruit, go shopping to purchase needed items, and cook our food so it is ready to eat before Sabbath arrives.

What does Scripture tell us about buying and selling on the Sabbath?

Nehemiah 10:31  And if the people of the land should bring goods or any food on the Sabbath day to sell it, that we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath or on the holy day, and that we would leave the seventh year, and the interest of every debt.

Nehemiah 13:15-22  In those days I saw in Judah some treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading asses and also wine, grapes, and figs, and all kinds of burdens which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I testified against them in the day in which they sold food.

And men of Tyre lived in it, who brought fish and all kinds of goods, and sold on the Sabbath to the sons of Judah and in Jerusalem.

And I contended with the nobles of Judah and said to them, What evil thing is this that you do, and defile the Sabbath day?

Did not your fathers do this, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet you bring more wrath upon Israel by defiling the Sabbath.

And it happened when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and commanded that they should not be opened until after the Sabbath. And I set some of my servants at the gates, so that there should be no burden brought in on the Sabbath day.

And the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods stayed the night outside Jerusalem once or twice.

And I testified against them, and said to them, Why do you stay around the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time on they did not come on the Sabbath.

And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy.

As you can see, we are not to buy or sell on the Sabbath. It is not a day to be involved in financial transactions, shopping, or business.

Deuteronomy 4:39-40  Therefore, know this day and consider within your heart, that Jehovah is God in Heaven above and on the earth beneath. There is no other. Therefore, you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you this day, so that it may go well with you and with your sons after you, and so that you may make your days longer upon the earth which Jehovah your God gives you forever.

A lot of this is likely new to you. Are you surprised or shocked by it? You are on the path of learning.

As you find yourself in the early learning stages of the Sabbath, you may find it helpful to make a list of those things you want to complete by the 6th day. You can also plan how you would like to spend your Sabbath day of rest with God.

# **What Day is God’s Sabbath?**

I’m sure you are both surprised and shocked by what you’ve learned thus far. This can be a major transition for you so don’t worry about doing everything perfect right away. You’re on a learning path. God will bless you as you start to keep the Sabbath the way He intended.

Now, let’s look at two more things that are going to turn your Sabbath upside down.

When is the Sabbath?

Let’s begin by reviewing the creation story from the beginning of this lesson. You were asked to keep track of what was said at the completion of each day of creation. Genesis 1:19 listed below, is an example.

Genesis 1:19  And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

What does it say? How is a day defined?

Is it midnight to midnight? Is it sunrise to sunrise?

Evening and morning is the phrase used each time. From God’s perspective and not man-made calendars and clocks for keeping time, a day begins at evening, therefore sunset. Sunset (evening) begins our “reckoning of time”. Sunset “begins our day”. Then comes morning, afternoon, and sunset, which will complete “this day”. Sunset will complete one day and initiate the next day. “Sunset to Sunset” is one day on the calendar. Not midnight to midnight. Not sunrise to sunrise. But, sunset to sunset.

Seems backwards doesn’t it? In reality, it is the rest of the world that is backward to God’s way of keeping time. We’re so use to thinking of a day as daylight followed by darkness, but God’s reckoning of a day is darkness followed by daylight.

There are at least two prominent examples of this in Scripture. The first is the picture of creation where the world was in darkness before He brought light into the world. The second is the final picture of the darkness of tribulation followed by eternal life and light of His return. We see here, both the physical and spiritual connection of darkness and light carried over into his definition of a day to us.

What day of the week is the 7th day Sabbath?

What day of the week has always been known as the 1st day of the week?

The church says Sunday is “the Lord’s Day”. Is this true?

Let’s review this.

Sunday has always been known as the 1st day of the week with Saturday being the 7th day.

The Sabbath is and always has been the Sabbath of God; the 7th day; Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.

Roman Emperor Constantine in 321 AD changed the Sabbath to Sunday to blend with Roman sun worship. He then changed the terminology to “The Lord’s Day”, implying Jesus arose on this day. The day the sun god is worshipped.

Let’s take a quick look at the crucifixion timeline.

Jesus was not crucified on Good Friday, but rather on a Wednesday prior to sunset. He arose at the end of the Saturday Sabbath. Not only can we prove this, but now Jesus’ one reference to this is being in the grave 3 days and 3 nights. This aligns with our understanding. Does it align with “Good” Friday to Sunday sunrise? No. This is another teaching due to complexity, but I bring this up so you can better understand why Jesus is called “Master of the Sabbath”.

The English word “Lord” means “Master”.

Mark\_2:28  Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the sabbath.

According to 1 Chronicles 17:27, when God blesses something, is it blessed forever or only until man changes it?

1 Chronicles 17:27  And now let it please You to bless the house of Your servant so that it may be before You forever. For You have blessed, O Jehovah, and it is blessed forever.

It is blessed forever.

How long is His Word settled?

Psalms 119:89  …Forever, O Jehovah, Your Word is settled in the heavens.

It is settled forever.

Does Jesus change?

Hebrews 13:8  Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.

No, He does not change.

Jesus says He always does what pleases the Father.

John 8:29  And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things which please Him.

Do times change?

Does His Word change as societal customs change?

Should we adapt His Word to today to keep it relevant as many suggest?

In other words, does any man have authority to modify, add, or subtract from His Word?

Matthew 5:17-20  Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy but to fulfill.

For truly I say to you, Till the heaven and the earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any way pass from the Law until all is fulfilled.

Therefore whoever shall relax one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.

For I say to you that unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

As you can see, man does not have the authority to change God’s word. Jesus Himself says He did not come to destroy The Law. The definition of the Sabbath is from this Law, called Torah, in Hebrew.

He says “Till the heaven and the earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any way pass from the Law until all is fulfilled.”

This means not one letter or even a punctuation mark can be removed or added, untill all is fulfilled.

When is that?

If all was fulfilled already, there could be no second coming, resurrection of the dead, etc. After these events are complete and He comes to dwell with us for all eternity, then all will be fulfilled.

He also says this:

Therefore whoever shall relax one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.

Do you want to be among the least or the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?

This concludes Part 1 of this series.