

# **A Beginner's Guide to the Sabbath**

**Bible Sabbath Association**



# **A Beginner's Guide to the Sabbath**

**By Kelly McDonald, Jr.**

Written/authored by: Kelly McDonald, Jr.  
Copyright by author.

All Rights Reserved. No part of this work may be edited. It may be freely shared as part of research projects or for educational purposes as long as all quotes are properly cited.

This work is promoted through the Bible Sabbath Association (BSA).

[www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org)

[www.sabbathsentinel.org](http://www.sabbathsentinel.org)

First Edition Published March 2016

Second edition April 2021

Third edition March 2022

Special thanks to Jill and Steve Pettis for proofreading the first edition of this booklet.

Special thanks to contributions from Bill and Lanice Shults.

All language references, unless otherwise noted, come from Strong, James. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books and Every Occurrence of Each Word in the Regular Order Together With a Comparative Concordance of the Authorized and Revised Versions Including the American Variations; Also brief dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words of the original with Reference to the English Words.* New York: Eaton and Mains, 1890.

All Scripture notations, unless otherwise noted, come from the King James Version, American Standard Version, and the New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	6
What is the Sabbath? .....	7
How Do We Keep the Sabbath? .....	14
How Do We Get Off Work on the Sabbath? .....	19
10 Biblical Reasons to Keep the Sabbath.....	21
Deeper Spiritual Reasons for the Sabbath.....	23
Conclusion.....	26
Appendix A: Short List of Languages Around the World that Have Saturday Named After the Sabbath.	27
Chart Showing Sabbath in NT Churches .....	28
Chart Showing All Bible References to Sabbath .....	29
More Materials From the BSA on this Subject .....	30
What is the BSA? .....	31

## Introduction

I grew up in a traditional Protestant home. I learned some things about the Bible and God that will always be with me. However, in 2007 I realized that I overlooked something very important. I overlooked the fourth commandment, which tells us to keep the Sabbath day holy.

I immediately looked more into this subject. Throughout the Bible, I noticed dozens of references to the Sabbath. Over and over again I read verses where God discussed this day, Jesus observed the day, and even the Apostles kept it. In 2007, I decided that I would keep it as well. I never looked back.

While I had much to learn at first, I can honestly say that from 2007 until now, every Sabbath has been refreshing and joyful for me. I look forward to this day all week long. As Friday at sunset draws closer, joy and anticipation arises within me.

There have been so many benefits to obeying this blessing from God. I have gained a greater understanding of God's grace in the process of keeping it. Just as we do not earn our salvation, so we do not work on the Sabbath. I realize that there is a blessing in God's rest that cannot be received by work. I have learned to see the Sabbath as an opportunity to connect with God in a very special way that is not available at any other time during the week. This makes it more exciting!

As you read this book, consider the awesome opportunity set before you. God gives us instruction for our good. We have permission from God every seventh day to let go of things in this world. From my first Sabbath to the present, I have never been disappointed.

We just have to trust him with it.

Enjoy!

# Chapter 1

## What is the Sabbath?

Before we can really discuss the meaning of the Sabbath day, it is important to understand how God designed time. Let's start with how God views a day. In Western culture, we are used to thinking that midnight ends one day and starts a new one. Did you know that this concept did not come from the Bible? The day is the first unit of time mentioned in Genesis, the first book of the Bible.

**Genesis 1:5:** "...And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

This means that a Biblical day starts with evening and ends with the day portion. Sunset ends one day and begins another day. This pattern is reinforced throughout the Bible. I have included some examples below:

**Exodus 22:26** – "If thou at all take thy neighbor's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him before the sun goeth down" (ASV).

**Deut. 23:11** – "But it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall wash himself with water: and when the **sun is down**, he shall come into the camp again" (KJV).

**Deut. 24:14-15** - "Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. **Pay them their wages each day before sunset**, because they are poor and are counting on it" (NIV).

**2 Samuel 3:35** - "And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, **till the sun be down.**" (KJV)

**Ephesians 4:26** - "'Be ye angry, and sin not': let not the sun go

down upon your wrath...” (ASV)

We can see from these examples that a day in the Bible begins and ends at sunset. Night time is the beginning portion of a day and daylight time is the concluding portion. This helps us define a Biblical day. Perhaps God did this to show us that He brings our lives out of darkness and into His marvelous light?

Now that we have established the Biblical day, we can now discuss which day of the week is the Sabbath and what this special day really means. We will start with the beginning of the Bible.

In Genesis chapters 1 and 2, we learn about the creation of the heavens and the earth. In six days, God formed the face of the earth and fashioned it with animals and other living creatures. He created during these six days. On the seventh day, He rested.

“1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 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. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:1-3, KJV).

There are other important truths about the Sabbath we learn from these verses. First, we learn that the seventh day of the week was blessed by God. It is also the first thing that God made holy. This is the only day of the week in which time itself is blessed and holy. By this act, God changed every seventh day from that time until now. Said another way: just as God’s work of creation has continued from that time until now, so also the seventh day has continued from that time until now.

By working six days and resting on the seventh, God also established the seven-day weekly cycle as an example for mankind. This cycle later spread throughout the whole world.

Noah understood the original creation week. “10 And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 11 And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. 12 And he stayed yet other

seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more” (Gen. 8:10-12, KJV).

Later in Genesis, we learn something very important about Abraham. The Bible tells us that Abraham “...obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:5, KJV). The Sabbath is listed as a commandment in Exodus 16:28, Exodus 20:8-11, and other places. By inference, we learn that Abraham kept the commandments of God; this means he kept the Sabbath as well! He did so without having a Bible. He trusted God; God led him into obedience as a result.

The grandson of Abraham, Jacob, moved to Egypt along with his sons and their families. After some time of living there, they were enslaved. While in Egypt, they lost knowledge and practice of the Sabbath. The Egyptians had a ten-day work week (Fagan, p 476). God delivered His people from that land after about 400 years of being there (to learn about this, read Exodus chapters 1-14). After this miraculous escape, one of God’s first actions was to reveal to them the true Sabbath and the original seven-day week.

In Exodus chapter 16, the Bible records the miraculous giving of the manna from Heaven. God sent manna from Heaven to provide for His people. He sent one portion every day for five days and on the sixth day He sent twice as much. On the seventh day, He did not send any. Many people have heard the story of the manna in the desert. Very few know that the entire lesson of the manna was to show them the true Sabbath day! God said in Exodus 16:29: “Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days.” By this act, God also restored to them His seven-day cycle.

From the time that the manna was given in Exodus 16, the Israelite and Jewish people have preserved the knowledge of this day and by extension the original seven-day week. Archaeological and historical finds confirm this fact. To learn more about this evidence, read our free book *How Do We Know God Exists?* From [www.sabbath.blog](http://www.sabbath.blog) on the **Free Resources** page.

In the Bible and the Jewish culture, the Sabbath is the only day of the week that is named. The other days of the week are named “first day”, “second day”, “third day”, etc. Because the Sabbath is

holy, it is the only day of the week that God named. This is one reason why it has been easy for the Jewish people to keep track of the Sabbath over the centuries. Their example helps us know when it is today.

But there is plenty of other historical evidence we can use to determine which day of the week the Sabbath falls upon. In the first few centuries AD, several Roman historians noted which day of the week that the Jewish people rested. We have some of them listed below:

Frontinus, who lived from 30-103 AD, wrote: “The deified Vespasian Augustus attacked the Jews on the day of Saturn, a day on which it is sinful for them to do any business, and so defeated them” (*Strategems*, book 2).

The Roman Historian Cassius Dio lived from about 155-235 AD. He stated that the Jewish people rested on the day that the Romans called the day of Saturn. “As it was, they made an excavation of what are called the days of Saturn and by doing no work at all on those days afforded the Romans an opportunity in this interval to batter down the wall...They build to him a temple that was extremely large and beautiful, except in so far as it was open and roofless, and likewise dedicated to him the day called the day of Saturn, on which, among many other most peculiar observances, they undertake no serious occupation” (Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 37.16.2; 37.17.3).

At least fourteen other writers from the same period attest that the Jewish people honored the Sabbath; most of them identify it as the day upon which the Jewish people rested (to learn more about this, download our free booklet *Prevalence of the Sabbath in the Early Roman Empire* on our **Free Resources** page from [www.sabbath.blog](http://www.sabbath.blog)).

Frontinus, Cassius Dio, and others link it to the day of Saturn. Saturn is the name the Romans gave to the day of the week we presently call Saturday. The Sabbath was so widespread in the first century Mediterranean world that the Romans developed a word in their language (Latin) for the day (*Sabbata* or *Sabbatis* are the most common forms).

The Hebrew word for Sabbath is *Shabbat*. In many current and ancient languages, the word for Saturday is a variation of the phonetic sounds relating to *Shabbat* or *sabbat*. See **Appendix A** in the back of this booklet for a short list of these languages. Let's take one example.

In Spanish, *sabado* is the word for Saturday. It phonetically sounds like the Hebrew word *shabbat* or *sabbat*. The foundations for the Spanish language were formed starting in 711 AD when the Moors conquered Spain. From then to now, the name for Saturday has been unchanged in this language.

In modern Greece, they call Friday *Paraskevi* or Preparation day. It comes from the ancient Jewish and Christian custom of preparing on Friday to keep the Sabbath. Saturday is named *Savatoh*—which still mimics the sounds for Sabbath.

When we consider the evidence from the Bible and history, it is very clear what day of the week that the Sabbath falls upon: Friday sunset through Saturday sunset. This set apart day is mentioned over 140 Bible verses (see **Chart #2** in the back of this booklet to see all Bible references to the Sabbath). God made provision for us through the Bible, history, language, and the example of the Jewish people. He made sure that we would know when the Sabbath is today.

Throughout the Bible, God reminds us that He set apart the Sabbath and rested on it. He did so as an example for us. When the Ten Commandments were given to the Israelites, God reminded them of this fact.

“8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8-11, KJV).

The fourth commandment starts with “remember” to remind us

that God had previously given the Sabbath first in Genesis 2 and it was observed later in history. It is the only commandment which is worded in this manner. The word remember is also important because we as humans tend to get busy and forget; we don't always remember the important things in life. Throughout the other six days of the week, we must continue to remember the Sabbath. We do not want to become so busy that we overlook it.

By observing the Sabbath, we have an opportunity to remember God's incredible work of Creation every week and rest our bodies from our own work. We have work to do on the other six days and it's important for us to take care of those things. As God said "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all **thy** work..." We have six days to take care of our work and labors. But we are commanded to remember the seventh day and to rest upon it to honor Him.

There are people who think that the Sabbath is only a Jewish institution or that it was only given to them. This is not an accurate depiction of the Biblical Sabbath. Consider the following:

- 1) God gave the Sabbath in the beginning (Gen. 2:1-3).
- 2) God was the first one to rest upon it when Adam and Eve were the only humans and they were not Jewish.
- 3) Noah followed the seven-day cycle, yet he was not Jewish (Gen. 8:10-12).
- 4) The Sabbath is labeled as belonging to God and the terms "His Sabbath" and "My Sabbath" are used by Him to describe it (see Ex. 16:23, 29, 20:10, Lev. 19:3, 19:30, 23:2-3, 26:2, Deut. 5:14, Isaiah 56:4, 58:13, Ezekiel 22:26, 23:38, 44:24).
- 5) We are asked to imitate God in our behavior (I Peter 1:15-16, Lev. 19:3, 30).
- 6) God gives special promises to all humans who keep the Sabbath (Isaiah 56:1-7, 58:13-14).
- 7) Jesus said the Sabbath was given for all mankind (Mark 2:27-28).

The Sabbath was set apart by God in the beginning for our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual benefit. While man has tried to influence people's attitudes about this day, it has never been changed or altered from that time until now. It will eternally continue into the last phase of God's plan, which is the New Heavens and New Earth. At that time, all humanity will worship Him on

the seventh day.

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 66:22-23, KJV).

### **Bibliography**

Cassius Dio. *Roman History*, 37.16.2; 37.17.3. Translation by Earnest Cary. *Dio's Roman History*. vol. 3. Harvard University Press: 1959. pp 125-129

Fagan, Brian M. ed. *The Oxford Companion to Archaeology*. Vol. 1. Oxford University Press. New York, 1996. Page 202. p 476.

Frontinus. *Strategems*, 2.1.1. Translation by Charles E Bennett. *The Strategems and the Aqueducts of Rome*. New York: 1925. pp 98-99.

## Chapter 2

### How Do We Keep the Sabbath?

8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exodus 20:8-11, NIV).

When one studies the Sabbath, many ask the question: “What should we do or not do on the Sabbath?” It is always important to start with the text itself.

In Exodus 20:8-11, God mentions that we should do our work and our labor for six days. Work refers to our normal job. Labor refers to strenuous activities. Keep in mind that these are not restrictive rules. These are rules that guide us towards the proper way to rest and keep us from being enslaved by our own work and the work of others. Thus, we should look at the Sabbath as a day of freedom! We have freedom from our weekly job and weekly chores. We also have freedom from the anxieties/burdens of life. Our actions on the Sabbath should reflect this.

This chapter is not an all-inclusive list of “do’s” and “don’ts” for the Sabbath; it is a guide to help you with practical application of the day. We can plainly see from the Bible verses above that we should not work on the Sabbath (we discuss this more in the next chapter). This part of the commandment is easy to identify.

The Bible also mentions getting our “labors” finished in six days. How do we specifically define “labor”? As mentioned above, labor refers to strenuous activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, mowing the yard, other types of yard work, washing your car, cleaning the entire house, and so forth. Said another way, it is those activities that violate the concept of rest.

Having said that, a Sabbath-days mess should certainly be cleaned up. As an example, if you a garment or item is stained and needs to be washed immediately, by all means do so. The issue of exercising on the Sabbath comes up often. Exercise and playing sports on Sabbath are clearly contrary to the “rest” aspect of the Sabbath. We must remember that resting your body is part of the Sabbath.

Children shouldn’t be made to do homework or normal chores ton the day. They should look forward to the Sabbath and enjoy it; you don’t want them burdened down on it. The Sabbath is also not a day to do everything you forgot to do during the week. If we treat it that way, it makes the Sabbath about our desires/goals and not God’s direction for our lives. We do not want to dump our leftovers on His holy day.

His ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:6-9). The Sabbath is not a time to do the shopping we missed during the week. You always want to honor God and remember how HE feels about our behavior first and foremost. It is a day to honor Him. From time to time, emergencies happen. Jesus mentioned a situation where an ox fell into a ditch on the Sabbath (Luke 14:5). Obviously this requires that we help the ox. Situations where someone’s life is on the line require immediate action. Another example might be a busted pipe. It will have to be taken care of immediately. If something can be safely “patched up” and then fully resolved after Sabbath, then by all means do so. If you shove an ox in the ditch and create your own problem, it’s not an ox in the ditch. These situations are exceptions, not the rule.

Always remember that God asks us to refrain from work and labor not as an end, but as a means to an end. The physical rest on the Sabbath is a means to a greater end – to help us make that intimate connection to the God of the Universe. We want to reap the benefits of those spiritual benefits because they will transform our lives.

In Genesis and Exodus, notice that God calls the Sabbath holy time. Also, we refrain from common activities on the seventh day to focus on holy work – the gospel of the Kingdom of God. This includes praying, reading the word, fellowshiping with believ-

ers, teaching, praying for other people, family time, and carrying out our Kingdom assignments. We can listen to sermons and teachings. We can listen to worship music that helps us focus on God.

In Exodus 20:8-11, God tells us that our families should also be free from burdens on this special day. This teaches us that the Sabbath is an opportunity to also spend time with our natural family. We also have spiritual family in Christ that we can spend time with (Matthew 12:46-50).

We live in a world foretold by the prophet Daniel where “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4, KJV). During the other six days of the week, families are often divided by activities. Parents are going to work and children are going to school. Later in the day, there are various afterschool activities or visiting with other family and friends. We are truly darting “to and fro” as the Bible foretold.

Friday night is a great time to slow down and bring everyone together. It is a time to share our blessings and burdens. The meal on Friday night should be something we look forward to. Wouldn't it be nice to spend more time with your family? We can focus on God as a whole.

Some Sabbath keepers and Messianic groups practice a short service called an Erev Shabbat ceremony. Erev Shabbat literally means “the evening of the Sabbath.” In this service, you spend time blessing your children and spouse. While it is not a commanded part of the Sabbath, it is a powerful way to bring the family together to focus on the Lord (for online readers, [click here to see a an Erev Shabbat service](#)). You can always develop your own service. Be creative and find ways to make this time special for your family. One way we can do this is to celebrate the day!

In Exodus 31:16, the Lord said, “The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant.” The Hebrew word translated as celebrate is *shamar*, and it means to guard, protect, or celebrate. One of the ways we can guard our minds from wandering away from God on the Sabbath is to celebrate Him! The devil will send all sorts of things your way to distract you from the Sabbath—*anxious thoughts*

about situations in your life, calls from your job, and attitudes from ourselves or other people. When we celebrate, we are so focused on God that those things can be drowned out! Other things become less important. Let's enter the gates of Sabbath with thanksgiving and praise!

### **More Information on Family Time and Children's Activities (insight from Bill and Lanice Shults)**

I am often asked about children and the Sabbath. Children have a lot of energy. One really important key to resolving this question is to make sure your children get plenty of physical activity during the week. In general, most children in America do not get enough physical activity. They are boxed indoors at school, after school, or daycare programs. Children need to run off that excess energy. Make sure on Friday before sunset that you take them outside and run them around. Have them ride bicycles or something really physical. Make it fun and exciting; make it a competition! If there's a competition, be sure to keep score with who wins. Be creative in this area. There are ways to lessen that energy before sunset on Friday.

The main reason God set apart the Sabbath is to honor and spend time with Him. A sub-reason for the Sabbath is to spend quality time with the family. So, we learn to spend time with the family to the extent we bond with them. We also want to focus attention on honoring God. During the week, you might have to put on that Christian video to keep your children distracted. On the Sabbath, change it up and do some interactive things with them. Picture books are great, as children love pictures and illustrations. You can always take a family walk with them. Play "gettings" with the children where you tickle them. Another fun thing kids like to do is arts and crafts. You could gather materials and build Noah's Ark. Make puppets with them and do a puppet show based on Bible stories. Make them tell the story. You can make finger puppets (even with popsicle sticks).

This will help them to learn about the Bible and make it fun all at the same time. Of course, you can pray with your children and read the Bible with them. As the old saying goes, "the family that prays together stays together." Explain stories in the Bible in a way they can understand. You can always come up with Bible lessons for children to teach them before or after church on Sab-

bath. Have Sabbath school at home before church. The BSA website has some great resources for children on our main website: [www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org).

This will teach them to look forward to the Sabbath as a time when they get interactive, quality time with their family. It will leave a life-long imprint on their lives. No matter where they go or what they do in life, they will know what their parents are doing from Friday sunset through Saturday sunset. This will instill in them the greater lesson about spending interactive time with the Heavenly Father and the Family of God.

As it pertains to the Sabbath, a great verse to build on is Isaiah 58:13-14: “13 ‘If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, 14 then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.’ For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

God gave us this day to slow down and enjoy His blessings in our lives. Some blessings are spiritual, some are material, and some are mental or emotional. A deep revelation from God is a spiritual breakthrough. A passing score on a test is material, but it also lifts mental and emotional stress off of us. The Sabbath is a time of reflection on the blessings we received from our Creator in the past week.

The Sabbath is a weekly appointment to meet with our Savior. There is a tremendous spiritual and physical refreshing available on this day. The body, mind, emotions ,and spirit need rest from the rigors of our daily lives. It’s easy to say – “I can do that any time.” As a general rule, we should always focus on God. However, throughout the week we don’t because we are distracted by **our** work, responsibilities, and other business. Instead of telling God that what He said is not valid, let’s just do what He said. The Sabbath is only 14.2% of our week – it will change your life to dedicate this time to the Lord.

## Chapter 3

### How Do We Get Off Work on the Sabbath?

The Sabbath is from Friday sunset through Saturday sunset. It is a day to gather and fellowship with like-minded believers. At the same time, it is a day to rest from work. The first and obvious question with observance of the Sabbath is how you can get off work from your employer. We live in a fallen world. The greater part of humanity does not acknowledge or observe the Sabbath. This means we have to request or make arrangements to have Sabbath off from work. There are some ways to do this.

The first and easiest way is to see if you can trade shifts with someone else. Let's say a friend or co-worker wants off on Sunday. You want off on the Sabbath, so you offer to work their Sunday shift as long as they agree to work your Saturday. This is just an example –there may be someone at work who wants another day of the week off like Monday or Tuesday. The key to this first strategy is to find someone at work and trade shifts.

Always remember, the Sabbath ends at sunset. This means you can work from Friday up until sunset and then Saturday after sunset. You may be able to re-arrange your schedule and get the Sabbath off that way. You can always try to find another position at your company that would allow you such freedom or look for a different shift within your same position.

If these strategies do not work, then you will need to talk to your supervisor. We are blessed in America in that we have laws that to some degree protect our religious beliefs. You can meet with your manager or boss and tell them that it is your religious conviction to have the Sabbath off from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. In this discussion, you can offer to make up the work on other time – say Sunday afternoon – or perhaps come in earlier or work later on a different day of the week. In the summer months, sunset is later. You can offer to work later on Friday in that season. In the winter, sunset is earlier. You can offer to come on Saturday after the sun sets.

When you talk to your employer, convey how important it is that you work for their company and that you enjoy working for them. As an example, you can say something to the effect of “This company has been really good to me over the years. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the staff here, and I would love to continue to do so. I have a religious conviction where I need to have Friday sunset to Saturday sunset off of work to observe the Sabbath. I am willing to work earlier or later on other days to make up any hours, even if it means working on Sunday. I further desire to stay apart of the team here at Company ABC.”

If for some reason you cannot get through to the employer in any of these ways, then it would be time to find a new job! An important phrase in this conversation is **religious conviction**. If Sabbath is merely a preference or is not absolutely necessary for you to be free from work, then you will have a hard time making any legal case.

This is a web link to help you understand your legal rights to have the Sabbath off from work:

<http://www.jlaw.com/LawPolicy/accommodation.html>

If you are ever discriminated against because of your religious beliefs, call the local EEOC – the equal employment opportunity center – or a local lawyer to file a law suit. There are laws that protect your religious liberties in this nation.

**Here are two more articles from the BSA on Sabbath observance available from our website [www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org) (Free Resources Page):**

**[Keeping the Sabbath and Keeping your Job by Dr. Daniel Botkin \(click here to view\)](#)**

**[Can we keep the Sabbath? - by E.J. Waggoner \(click here to view\)](#)**

## Chapter 4

### 10 Biblical Reasons to Keep the Sabbath

If you keep the Sabbath for any length of time, you will be asked the question: Why Do You Keep the Sabbath? This question is often asked because people are curious as to why we are different than most Christians. In this short chapter, we have listed 10 Biblical reasons to keep the Sabbath that will help you and others understand the importance of this day.

**Reason #1:** We are made in the image of God. In Genesis 1:27, we learn: “So God created man in his own image in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (KJV). All humans were made in the image of God. In other words, God left an imprint of Himself in us. This important truth is connected to the Sabbath. After God made mankind, He rested on the Sabbath. This makes humans inseparably connected to this special day.

“2 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. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:2-3, KJV).

God rested on the Sabbath. Since humans are made in His image, every human is made with the innate need to rest on the seventh day.

**Reason #2:** Jesus Christ kept the Sabbath. The gospel accounts of Christ’s life make it very obvious that Jesus also kept the Sabbath. In Luke 4:16 we read, “...as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” He is the example we are asked to follow (John 14:12, I Cor. 11:1, I John 2:6).

**Reason #3:** Jesus said that He was Lord of the Sabbath. This is the only day of the week that He declared Himself Lord over. In Mark 2:28, He said: “Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the

Sabbath” (KJV).

**Reason #4:** The human body was designed for rest. Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man. Mark 2:27: “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” God rested on the seventh day and was refreshed (Ex. 31:17). Since we are made in His image and are infinitely more fragile than Him, it shows just that much more that we were designed for the Sabbath rest. It contributes to our physical, mental, and emotional health (Ex. 20:8-11, Ex. 23:12; 34:21).

**Reason #5:** The earliest disciples kept the Sabbath even after the resurrection. In the back of this booklet, we have two charts that show Christians keeping the Sabbath years after the resurrection.

**Reason #6:** Paul said to let no one judge us for keeping the Sabbath (Colossians 2:16-17).

**Reason #7:** The writer of Hebrews said that the Sabbath rest remained. “9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.” (Hebrews 4:9-10, NIV).

**Reason #8:** Most Christians continued to observe the Sabbath for hundreds of years after Christ. We have a free booklet available on our website titled *A Brief History of the Sabbath in Early Christianity* (**Free Resources** page) We also have an article with quotes from the early church to prove it ([CLICK HERE to read one](#)). These resources totally refute the idea that the early church instantly ‘flipped’ to Sunday.

**Reason #9:** The Sabbath has prophetic implications. When speaking about the days before His return (Matthew 24:1-3), Jesus said, “But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day” (Matthew 24:20, KJV). This shows that Jesus intended for the Sabbath to be observed even when He returns.

**Reason #10:** In Isaiah 56:1-7 and 58:13-14 God promised special blessings to all humans who keep the Sabbath whether they were Jew or Gentile. It is connected to being bound to Him.

## Chapter 5

### Deeper Spiritual Reasons for the Sabbath

In the last chapter, we learned some very important reasons to keep the Sabbath. However, there are also deeper spiritual reasons for the Sabbath. As David wrote: “Deep calleth unto deep...” (Psalms 42:7, KJV). When we reach out to God from deep within, He will hear and answer us. The Sabbath is an opportunity for us to put aside the things which distract us and consume our time so we can reach out to Him.

In Genesis 2:2-3, we learn: “And on the seventh day God finished 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 hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made” (ASV).

The word translated as hallowed also means “to be made holy.” God is the one who made the Sabbath holy because He rested on that day; the other six days He worked to fashion the earth. What makes something holy?

In Exodus 3:5-6, Moses was on the mountain. The Lord spoke to him out of the burning bush and told him to take his shoes off because the ground was holy. Why was the ground holy? Because God was there. His presence made it holy. In Exodus 29:43, God said, “And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory” (KJV). The Spirit of God and the Glory of God consecrate things to make them holy.

When God rested on the Sabbath, He set aside the entire 24-hour space of time as holy unto Him. It will always be holy, no matter what people think, say, or do. This means that His transformative power is present to touch, heal, and minister to us. A 24-hour outpouring of Holy Spirit power is available each Sabbath. This also means that the gifts of the Spirit are in the greatest degree of operation during this time.

In Ezekiel chapters 40-46, God revealed a magnificent Temple to

Ezekiel. It has never been built, but it will be one day in the future. The layout of this large structure provides an amazing revelation when it comes to the Sabbath. In Ezekiel 46:1-10, we learn that the Temple gates will be closed for six days and be open on the seventh day. In Hebrews 8:5, we learn that the earthly Temple is representative of the heavenly Temple. For the Temple in Ezekiel's vision to have open gates every seventh day would correspond to the gates of Heaven being open during the Sabbath!

The gates of heaven are open when the sun sets on Friday! Let's apply this concept to another verse: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise His name" (Psalm 100:4, KJV). We should enter the gates of Sabbath with praise and thanksgiving for God's rich provision in our lives. Seek Him for the things you may need. Do you need strength to go through a hard season? Are there Bible verses that you do not understand? Do you or someone you know need healing? Do you need a breakthrough in your personal life? Do you need a revelation from God? Jesus did many of His miracles on the Sabbath! While we can pray at any time, the Sabbath is a special time to reach out to God. He is waiting on us to enter into the gates of the Sabbath every week.

In Ezekiel 46:8-10, we learn that the Prince is allowed to exit the same gate through which He entered. Everyone else has to go out a different gate than the one they entered. This reveals a deeper spiritual truth; we should not leave the Sabbath the same way that we came in.

There is a transformative glory poured out on this day that does not allow us to leave the same way we came in. When we really focus on honoring God with our Sabbath observance, then we will be changed over time. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "And we all, who with unveiled faces reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (NIV).

Another great reason to honor the Sabbath is to spend time with fellow believers. In Leviticus chapter 23, the Sabbath is called a "holy convocation". This simply means a public gathering or rehearsal. We have an online fellowship finder to help find a group near you (for online viewers, [CLICK here to view our fellow-](#)

[ship finder](#)). If you do not have a Sabbath-keeping church near you, then you can read the Bible, play worship music and watch or listen to a sermon at home. Maybe even try to call a like minded believer on the Sabbath and talk to each other for encouragement. Pray and ask the Lord to have one started near you. We have so much technology available to us today that previous generations did not have available. Utilize as much as you can to build your faith on the Sabbath (but don't allow it to distract you).

The Sabbath is also a celebration of salvation. Just as we do not work on the Sabbath, we do not work to earn our salvation. Our works transition on the Sabbath from common to holy. In the same way, salvation marks the start of holy works that edify God (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Lastly, we will consider the number seven, which can also mean "to covenant with" in Hebrew. When Abraham was trying to make a covenant with Abimelech in Genesis 21, he brought Abimelech seven ewe lambs. They then named the well Beersheba, which means well of the seven or well of the oath. The Sabbath is on the seventh day of the week; it is a celebration of our covenant with God through Jesus Christ! Jesus even called himself the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:27-28)! He is Lord of this day. When we break from doing things our way on his day, then we are affirming our covenant with the God and Christ.

## Conclusion

The Sabbath is a tremendous opportunity to rest the body, refresh the spirit, and connect with our family and fellow believers. After 15 years of Sabbath observance, I can tell you that the Sabbath gets better and better over time. Once I understood the goal of the Sabbath was to honor God above all else, my plans and goals became secondary to that purpose. It has never once been a burden—I understand that I am free every seventh day from the burdens and toils of work and this human life.

**A major key to observing the Sabbath is to focus our weekly activities and planning with the definite goal of entering this rest no matter what comes up.** The writer of Hebrews tells us that, “9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. 11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest...” (Hebrews 4:9-11, NIV).

In the New Testament, we have clear proof that the Sabbath remains. We rest on the seventh day. Let us make every effort during the week to get our labors out of the way so that we can honor His rest and receive its deep, rich, and eternal blessings.

## Appendix A

### Short List of Languages Around the World that Have Saturday Named After the Sabbath

The Hebrew word for Sabbath is *Shabbat*. One of the proofs that the Sabbath is from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset is that many different languages call Saturday some version of Sabbath, sabado, saptu, etc... Let's take a look at a short list:

**Indonesian** – *Sabtu*

**Tagalog (Philippines)** – *Sabado*

**Latin** – *Sabbatum* (ancient Latin also used *Sabbata* and *sabbatis*)

**Italian** – *Sabato*

**Spanish** – *Sabado*

**Portuguese** – *Sabado*

**Greek** – *Savatoh*

**Koine Greek** - *Sabbata* and *Sabbaton* (*koine* Greek was spoken from about 300 BC to 300 AD)

**Russian** – *Subota*

**Polish** – *Sobota*

**Arabic** – *Al Sabt*

**Somali (East Africa)** – *Sabti*

**Mandingo also called Mandinka (West Africa)** – *Sibiti*

**Ormo or Galla (East Africa)** – *Sanbata tenna*

**Kisii, also called Gusii or Ekegusii (Africa)** – *Esabato*

In modern Greece, Friday is still called *paraskevi* or Preparation day. It comes from the ancient Jewish and Christian custom of preparing on Friday to keep the Sabbath. One reason why this happened is because the Sabbath begins Friday at sunset. In fact, this is when all Biblical days begin.

We can see that on different continents and different countries, one thing remains constant: the Sabbath is preserved by language.

## Chart #1: Sabbath References in Specific Cities

New Testament Church	Sabbath References*
Galatians	<b>Sabbath:</b> Acts 13:13-52 (with Jews and Gentiles)
<b>Philippians**</b>	<b>Sabbath:</b> Acts 16:11-15 (only Gentiles)
Colossians	<b>Sabbath:</b> Colossians 2:16-17
Thessalonians	<b>Sabbath:</b> Acts 17:1-4 (with Jews and Greeks)
Corinthians	<b>Sabbath:</b> Acts 18:1-4 (with Jews and Greeks for 1 ½ years)
All Gentiles	<b>Sabbath:</b> Acts 15:19-21
All Hebrews	<b>Sabbath:</b> Hebrews 3:1-19, 4:1-12

\*This chart contains direct Sabbath references. From the examples on the chart, we know it was Paul's custom to attend synagogue on Sabbath. Thus, we can add the following indirect references to Sabbath activity: **Cyprus: Acts 13:5; Iconium: Acts 14:1-7; Ephesians: Acts 19:1-2.**

\*\*Philippi was a city without a Jewish Synagogue. This shows us that Paul kept the Sabbath with Gentiles even when Jewish people were not present.

**Chart #2: Sabbath References in Bible**

<b>Section of the Bible</b>	<b>Bible References to the Sabbath</b>
<b>Old Testament</b>	<p>Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 16:23-30, Exodus 20:8-11, Ex. 23:12, Ex 31:12-17, Ex. 34:21, Ex 35:1-3, Lev. 19:3, 30, Lev 23:3, 11, 15-16, 38, Lev 24:4-8, Lev.26:2, Num. 15:32, Num. 28:9-10, Deut. 5:12-15, 2 Kings 4:23, 2 Kings 11:5-9, 2 Kings 16:18, 1 Chron. 9:32, 23:4,8,31, 2 Chron. 2:4, 2 Chron. 8:13, 2 Chron. 23:4, 2 Chron. 23:8, 2 Chron. 31:3, Neh. 9:14, Neh. 10:31-33, Neh. 13:15-22, Psalm 92:1, Isaiah 56:2-6, Isaiah 58:13-14, Isaiah 66:23, Jer. 17:19-27, Lam. 1:7, 2:6, Ez. 20:12-24, Ez. 22:8, Ez. 22:26, Ez. 23:38, Ez. 44:24, Ez. 45:17, Ez. 46:1-4,12, Amos 8:5</p>
<b>New Testament</b>	<p>Matt. 12:1-12, Matt. 24:20, Matthew 28:1, Mark 1:21,32, Mark 2:23-28, Mark 3:1-4, Mark 6:2, Mark 16:1, Luke 4:16,31, Luke 4:40, Luke 6:1-9, Luke 13:10-16, Luke 14:1-5, Luke 23:54-56, John 5:9-10,16-18, John 7:22-23, John 9:14-16, John 19:31, Acts 1:12, Acts 13:14,27,42,44, Acts 15:21, Acts 16:13, Acts 17:2, Acts 18:4, Colossians 2:16, Hebrews 4:1-11</p>

## **More Materials Available Through the BSA**

Do you want to go deeper in understanding the Sabbath and other Biblical truths. We have FREE materials we have on our websites [www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org) and [www.sabbathsentinel.org](http://www.sabbathsentinel.org). Go to the **Free Resources** page on each site to download our materials. We have many more items beyond the ones listed below, but here is a sample:

### **A Beginner's Guide to Understanding the Bible**

This booklet will help you understand the Bible on a very basic level. It will give you practical tips to help you understand God's word. These simple tips will transform your view of the Bible and your walk with God.

### **Defending the Ten Commandments**

There is a general hostility towards the commandments of God (see Matthew 24:12). Many people believe that the Law of God is done away with, including the Sabbath. People try to use verses from Jesus and the Apostles Paul to try and explain them away. This booklet will explain these verses and other questions people have about God's Law. This resource will teach you to defend your faith. It is also a way to reach out to other believers and help them understand the truth of God's Word.

### **A Brief History of the Sabbath in Early Christianity**

Did you know that most Christians 400 years after Jesus still honored the Sabbath? In this informative short book, you will learn the seven major historical factors that affected the Sabbath in the early Church.

### **How Do We Know Jesus Really Lived?**

Imagine for a moment that you did not have a Bible to learn about Jesus. How would you know that He ever lived on earth? Would it be possible to prove His existence? In modern times, there has been skepticism about the historical validity of Jesus' existence and the New Testament account. In this book, we will address the historical, archaeological, and textual evidence to see if Jesus and His earliest followers ever existed.

## What Is the Bible Sabbath Association?

The Bible Sabbath Association, also called the BSA, is a group of believers from all Sabbath keeping backgrounds who have a common belief in three things:

- 1) Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation.
- 2) The Ten Commandments are God's guiding principles for the Christian Life.
- 3) The Sabbath is from Friday Sunset to Saturday Sunset.

Founded in 1943, the purpose of the BSA is not to bring all churches under an umbrella. Instead, we serve as a support group to all Sabbath keeping groups.

We have a wide variety of materials to help you defend and affirm your belief in the Sabbath. Additionally, we provide materials to help churches reach their communities.

Our main purpose is to promote fellowship and cooperation between Sabbath-keepers of various groups; to promote Sabbath observance on a nondenominational basis; to restore respect and honor for the Ten Commandments as a whole, with special emphasis on the Fourth, which has been forgotten by most of the world; to encourage the repeal of laws which enforce the keeping of Sunday (or any day) by any unit of man's government; and to defeat the adoption of any calendar which would disrupt the seven-day weekly cycle.

Residents of the United States can deduct the offerings from their income, for tax purposes.

Our main website is: [www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org)

Our blog/magazine website is: [www.sabbath.blog](http://www.sabbath.blog)

The Sabbath is a weekly celebration from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. This delight was given to mankind to help us spend more time with God and our family. In this booklet, you will learn answers to basic questions such as “What is the Sabbath?”; “When is the Sabbath?”; and “How Do We Keep the Sabbath?” You will also learn important reasons to keep this holy day so that you can be in tune with God’s Sacred Rhythm.

**Bible Sabbath Association**  
**[www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org)**  
**[www.sabbath.blog](http://www.sabbath.blog)**