

# THE LAST DAY OF PROPHECY

DISCOVER THE REST OF THE STORY

## THE SABBATH AND YOUR HEALTH

If you've ever felt exhausted from a stressful week of work or rundown with conflict in your home, you're not alone. One in five Americans experiences extreme stress in their lives, and 44 percent report feeling more stressed than they did five years ago.

The toll of a sin-filled world—with its relentless work and worry—is staggering! Three out of four visits to the doctor are for stress-related ailments, and some researchers believe that stress is the basic cause of 60 percent of all human illness. "Stress can kill you," they say—it increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. So what's the best antidote?

The word "Sabbath" in its original language (Hebrew) literally means "rest." When God created the Sabbath, it wasn't an effort to make our lives miserable. Quite the contrary, the Sabbath day is intended to rejuvenate our minds, bodies, and spiritual lives through worship and rest!

### SABBATH AND PHYSICAL REST

Sometimes we think of the Sabbath only in a religious context and forget the simple fact that God also wants us to be physically refreshed as we cease working on the seventh day. Our bodies are intimately connected to our minds. Stopping our weekly work routine helps us recover and relieves us from the mental stress of living in a relentlessly busy world. (Resting from our regular labor does not mean we should be completely inactive during the Sabbath. On the contrary, a pleasant hike in nature can be restorative.)

However, studies show that people who keep the Sabbath experience dramatic decreases in the rates of coronary artery disease. For example, according to research by National Geographic, regular Sabbath-keepers outlive their American counterparts by up to 10 years. Among the clear reasons is their practice of keeping every Saturday as a Sabbath rest—they respect God's commandment as written and reap the benefits.

### SABBATH AND MENTAL REST

By helping us to free our minds from the normal cares of life, the Sabbath provides relief from the constant stresses and anxieties that drain our mental powers and cause our brains to function less efficiently.

Interestingly, France once attempted to change this seven-day weekly cycle to what they thought was a more "logical" decimal-based system, known as the Republican Calendar. New months were invented, and a 10-day week was instituted. However, this attempt at "reason" actually caused extreme stress and chaos and was quickly abandoned! Apparently our brains, too, have a built-in clock needing downtime every seven days.

After a long workweek, we can all use a little physical "re-creation." But when we put the demands of the world first all the time, we often put aside rest and forget that God told us to remember to keep the seventh day holy! You might think you have so much to do that you can't keep the Sabbath without your world falling apart, but trusting God and doing what He commands will always result in a blessing for you.

The Bible is full of examples of those who remembered God's fourth commandment, reaping the benefits of both physical and mental rest: Moses, King David, the apostles, and Jesus Christ—to name just a few!

The Sabbath is a time to break away from our occupations, our worries, and our regular activities. By spending time with family and friends, worshipping together, getting out in nature, sharing our faith, and seeking God—our spirits are revived, our minds renewed, our bodies rested and refreshed. We become infused with hope and energy. Starting out your workweek after that kind of re-creation, you will feel like a new person!

### AN ACT OF FAITH

Taking a Sabbath rest is also an act of faith; it's a reminder that no matter what we do, God is in control. When we cease from pursuing our material goals for one day each week, we're saying, "God, I trust You to maintain control of my life and to provide for my needs seven days a week, even if I only work for six of them. Regardless of how much money I could earn working on the Sabbath, or how much remains on my to-do list from last week, today I'm going to rest my mind and body and simply enjoy being in Your presence in a special way."

The Sabbath is your Sabbath. God made it for you, and if you love Him you will keep it because it is one of His commandments. Love without obedience is no love at all (**1 JOHN 2:4**). God asks you to love and obey Him today by enjoying the blessings of the Sabbath!

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

### Q. How can we experience the most benefit from keeping the Sabbath holy?

#### 1. GO TO CHURCH.

One of the greatest features of the Sabbath is that it's called a "holy convocation," a time to come together in worship with friends, family, and even strangers (**LEVITICUS 23:3**).

#### 2. STUDY THE WORD.

On Sabbath, Jesus went to church and read the Scriptures (**LUKE 4:16**). Sabbath, therefore, is a perfect time to dig in and study the Scriptures at home, at church, or under a tree.

#### 3. PRAY.

While prayer should be an important part of our daily lives, the Sabbath provides time when we can focus on talking with Jesus and deepen our relationship with Him (**ACTS 16:13**).

#### 4. BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP.

The Sabbath was set aside for us to grow in our appreciation and love toward the Lord. You cannot know someone well unless you spend time with that person. The Sabbath provides uninterrupted quality time with God (**ISAIAH 66:23**).

#### 5. REST.

The Israelites' exodus from slavery and entrance into the Promised Land revolved around resting. The devil still does not want God's people to rest. Just as the captive Israelites in Egypt needed God's rest, so we also need to rest in God's deliverance (**DEUTERONOMY 5:14**).

#### 6. RESTORE.

Sabbath is also a day for restoration. As we go out into God's creation, we experience "re-creation." Our bodies are restored by rest. Similarly, when we visit the sick or hurting on the Sabbath, it restores their spirits.

#### 7. DO GOOD.

It's possible to become so focused on what not to do on Sabbath that we neglect the good things we can do. Jesus said, "Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (**MATTHEW 12:11, 12**). When people suffer on the Sabbath and we're able to help them, we should!