




PROPHECY ODYSSEY

7

The Mystery of the Last Day

AN AMAZING FACT:



Randy Gardner once held the record for the longest amount of time a human has gone without sleep. In a controlled experiment between December 1963 and January 1964, 17-year-old Gardner stayed awake for 11 days and 24 minutes. After several days, Gardner displayed increasing cognitive dysfunction and problems with concentration, moodiness, memory, paranoia, and hallucinations. Gardner's record has since been broken multiple times, the last by Robert McDonald at 18 days and 21 hours. Then, in 1997, Guinness World Records refused to accept new attempts for health and safety reasons. For decades after the experiment, Gardner struggled with severe insomnia.

Today, we know that long-term sleep deprivation is extremely detrimental to health and has been linked to an increased risk of hypertension, diabetes, obesity, depression, heart attack, and stroke. Moreover, missing a weekly day of rest has been linked to elevated stress levels, which is connected to six of the leading causes of death, including heart disease, cancer, accidents, cirrhosis, and suicide.¹

You might be surprised to learn that Bible prophecy tells us that the devil plans to rob God's people of rest in the last days. Like the ancient pharaoh who refused to let the children



of Israel rest, the devil wants to keep God's people so busy that they do not have time to think of eternal realities (Exodus 5:5–11). Indeed, those who worship the beast of Revelation have "no rest" (Revelation 14:11). Speaking of His return, Jesus warned, "Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with ... cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly (Luke 21:34).

Over the next few lessons, we will discover how a day of rest and worship is connected to the final events of Bible prophecy ...



When you see a blank, use your Bible to look up the missing word and fill it in.



Did God make the Sabbath only for Israelites?

MARK 2:27 He said to them, "The Sabbath was _____ for _____, and not man for the Sabbath."

EXODUS 23:12 Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be _____.

NOTE: When Jesus says that the Sabbath was made for man, the Greek word translated as "man" (*anthropos*) means all mankind—all people, for all time, in every place. Some argue that the Sabbath is a religious law intended only for the Jews. However, we can see here that the Sabbath is also a practical law made for all humanity and even for the animal kingdom. It was not only for the Jews, but also for the "strangers" within their gates. The Sabbath is for spiritual renewal, social relationships, and physical rest.



When did God establish the Sabbath?

GENESIS 2:1–3 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the _____ day God ended His work which

He had done, and He _____ on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God _____ the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

NOTE: The Sabbath was established at the conclusion of the Creation week. Three times in Genesis chapter 2, God tells us that He made the Sabbath on “the seventh day” of the first week. He also “sanctified” it, which means “to set aside for a holy use.”

God made the Sabbath a full 24-hour period of time because time is what it takes to develop a true love relationship with Jesus. The devil, like the Pharaoh of Egypt, wants to keep you so busy working and preoccupied with your daily agenda that you don’t think about God. Knowing how overly busy people would be, especially in the last days, God set aside 24 special hours weekly for His people to get acquainted with Him. He has made that weekly appointment with you. Don’t fail to meet Him!



.....
How has God demonstrated the importance of His holy Sabbath?

EXODUS 20:8-11 Remember the Sabbath day, to _____ it holy.

... The LORD _____ the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

NOTE: Exodus 20:8-11 is the fourth commandment of God’s law. By making the Sabbath one of His Ten Commandments, He demonstrated its extreme importance. Verse 10 calls it “the sabbath of the LORD your God.” Only the fourth commandment begins with the word “remember,” indicating God knew that people would be prone to forget it. Breaking God’s Ten Commandments is sin (1 John 3:4). But Jesus died to save His people “from their sins”—that is, from their law-breaking (Matthew 1:21).



.....
Of what two precious things does God say the Sabbath is a sign?

EXODUS 31:17 It [the Sabbath] is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the _____ the heavens and the earth.

EZEKIEL 20:12

Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who _____ them.

NOTE: God says that the Sabbath is a sign, or mark, of His power as Creator and Redeemer. In Revelation 14:6–14, God gives three important messages that are to be proclaimed “to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.” The first message is found in verse 7: “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” This appeal for a return to true worship is drawn right from the fourth commandment: “For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11).



Which day did Jesus keep holy?

LUKE 4:16

He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up.

And as _____ was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

NOTE: Jesus is our example (1 Peter 2:21) in everything, including Sabbath-keeping, which was His custom. A “custom” is a regular habit. Christians are to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6).



What was the practice of Paul and the apostles regarding the Sabbath?

ACTS 17:2

Paul, as his _____ was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures.

ACTS 18:4

He reasoned in the synagogue _____, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

ACTS 13:42

When the Jews went out of the synagogue, the _____ begged that these words might be preached to them the next _____.

NOTE: It was also Paul's custom to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. On one occasion, the disciples met on the Sabbath with a group of Gentile women by a river because the city had no synagogue (Acts 16:13).



.....
Did Jesus intend for His people to keep the Sabbath after He died for their sins?

MATTHEW 24:20

And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the _____.

NOTE: Here, Jesus is predicting the fall of Jerusalem, which He knew would take place in AD 70—about 40 years later. He told His people to pray that they would not have to flee from the invading army on the Sabbath day. Thus, Jesus was expecting His people to be keeping the Sabbath holy long after His death.



.....
Does the Bible teach that God's end-time people would also keep His seventh-day Sabbath holy?

REVELATION 12:17

The dragon [devil] was enraged with the woman [church], and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring [children], who _____ the _____ of God.

REVELATION 14:12

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who _____ the _____ of God.

REVELATION 22:14

Blessed are those who _____ His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may _____ through the gates into the city.

NOTE: These Scripture passages refer to God’s end-time church, and each passage states plainly that God’s end-time church keeps His commandments—which include the fourth commandment, the Sabbath.



Will all of the saved in heaven keep the Sabbath?

ISAIAH 66:22, 23 *“As the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, “So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, _____ shall come to worship before Me.”*

NOTE: The Bible says that all the redeemed of all ages will keep God’s Sabbath together in heaven and in the New Earth!



Can we be certain that the present seventh day of the week (Saturday) is the same Sabbath day that Jesus kept holy?

LUKE 23:54–24:1 *That day was the Preparation [Friday], and the Sabbath drew near. ... Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they _____ on the _____ according to the commandment. Now on the _____ of the week, ... they ... came to the tomb.*

NOTE: Jesus was crucified on Friday (preparation day), the day before the Sabbath (Mark 15:42). Jesus “rested” in the tomb on the Sabbath (Luke 23:56), then rose on the first day—the day after the Sabbath (Mark 16:1–6). Christians around the world still celebrate that day as Easter Sunday. The Bible shows that the Sabbath was the day *after* Friday and the day *before* Sunday. It’s easy to locate that day of the week on any calendar. (See supplements entitled “What the Dictionary Says” and “Hasn’t the Calendar Been Changed?” at the end of this lesson.)



Does God allow anyone to change His holy day?

PROVERBS 30:5, 6 *Every word of God is pure; ... Do _____ to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.*

NOTE: Just before God gave the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5:1–17, He solemnly warned that no one should “add” or “take from” them (Deuteronomy 4:2). Rather, they were to be kept precisely as He gave them. God blessed His Sabbath (Exodus 20:11), and when He blesses something, it is blessed forever (1 Chronicles 17:27). God says, “My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips” (Psalm 89:34). Misguided men admit that they attempted to change God’s holy Sabbath to Sunday, but God will not accept men’s teachings when He gave the Bible as our guide.



When does the Sabbath begin and end?

LEVITICUS 23:32 *From _____ to _____, you shall celebrate your sabbath.*

MARK 1:32 *At evening, when the _____ had _____.*

NOTE: The Sabbath hours begin at sundown Friday and close at sundown Saturday.



What day is the Lord’s Day of Revelation 1:10?

EXODUS 20:10 *But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the _____ your God.*

ISAIAH 58:13 *If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My _____ ...*

MARK 2:28 *Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the _____.*

NOTE: In both the Old and New Testaments, God calls the Sabbath the Lord's day. He also commands that people be warned against committing the sin of trampling God's Sabbath (Isaiah 58:1, 13). God declares that His holy Sabbath is for all people (Isaiah 56:2-7). The Bible never refers to Sunday as the Lord's day. Rather, Sunday is simply one of the "six working days" of the week (Ezekiel 46:1). That's all it has ever been.



What precious blessing comes through keeping the Sabbath commandment?

EXODUS 33:14 *My _____ will go with you, and I will give you rest.*

MATTHEW 11:28 *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you _____.*

HEBREWS 4:3 *For we who have believed do enter that _____.*

NOTE: Each one of the Ten Commandments has a spiritual meaning. Some legalistic Christians focus on the letter of the law and neglect the spirit of the law. Jesus wants us to honor both to maintain balance (Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28). The Bible often uses the term "rest" to refer to salvation. Hebrews 4:1, 4, 9, 10 says that those who have truly been led into the "rest" of salvation and who abide in Christ will keep the seventh-day Sabbath as a symbol of the Christian's rest.

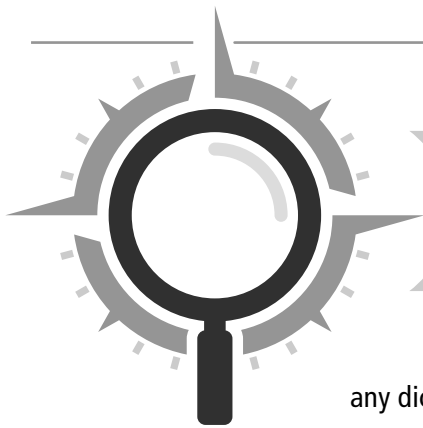
» YOUR RESPONSE

Because Jesus has given the Sabbath as a sign of His power to create and sanctify, would you like to begin receiving the blessings of this holy day by keeping it in His honor?

ANSWER: _____

Endnotes:

1. <https://www.slma.cc/the-science-of-stress>



FURTHER STUDY

What the Dictionary Says

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Look up the following entries in almost any dictionary and notice what you'll find:

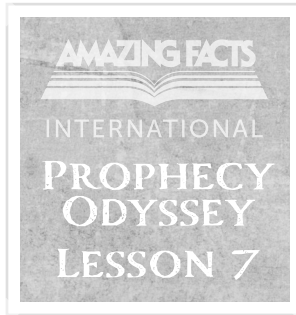
- **Saturday (noun):** The seventh and last day of the week.
- **Seventh-day (adjective):** Of the seventh day (Saturday).
- **Sunday (noun):** The first day of the week. First day (noun) Sunday.

HASN'T THE CALENDAR BEEN CHANGED?

The calendar was changed once in October 1582, but it did not alter the weekly cycle. Ten dates were omitted from the calendar following October 4, 1582. What would have been Friday, October 5, became Friday, October 15. The table below will help you to visualize the change. You will see that it did not change the order of the days of the week.

OCTOBER 1582

| Sun. | Mon. | Tue. | Wed. | Thu. | Fri. | Sat. |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |



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