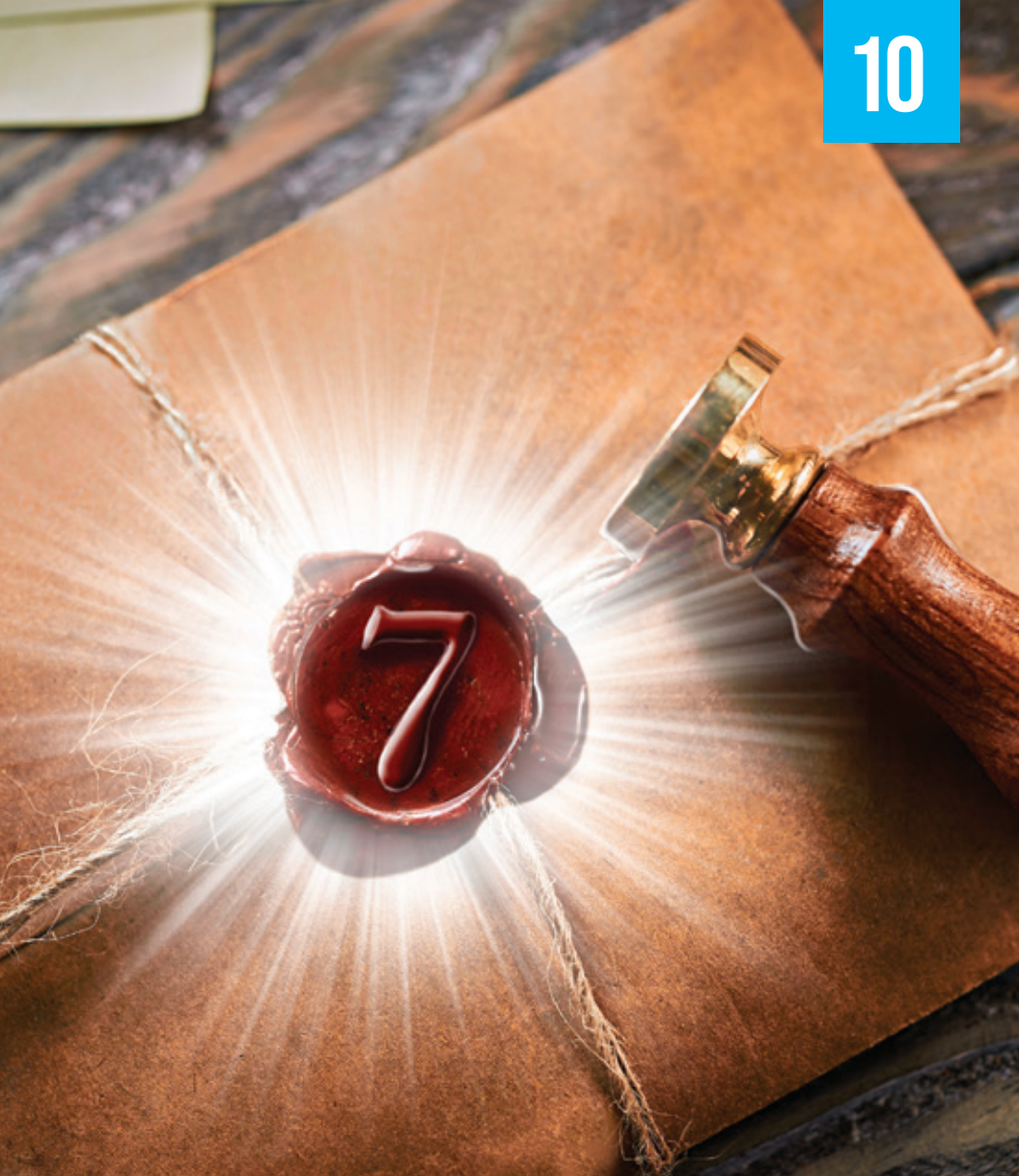


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 **3ABN** BIBLE STUDY GUIDES  
*Looking Higher*

**SAVE THE DATE!**



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**W**ill he remember this year? she wonders, while writing a special message in an anniversary card. *Does she still think about that day so long ago?* he asks himself, while picking up a bouquet of red roses. The special day that marks their marriage dawns, and husband and wife can't wait to say, "How could I ever forget! I love the time we spend together, and what you mean to me." God has a special day when we remember our relationship with Him, a relationship of love. And as the day approaches, we are eager to say to each other, "How could I ever forget! I love the time we spend together, and what you mean to me." It is a 24-hour day like any other, but as a celebration of what God has done, His day is blessed by Him as a day *unlike* any other.

## 1 Does God deserve our attention?

**Revelation 4:11** "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

**Revelation 5:12** "... 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!'"

God gives us life (Job 10:12), "gives the Spirit without measure" (John 3:34, ESV), "was wounded for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5), and "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed" (Titus 2:14). God offers His grace that gives us strength to overcome sin (Hebrews 4:16). Each breath we take and every heartbeat is not our own, but His gift of love. What more could He have done for us? God deserves our greatest attention, because He "has given us eternal life" (1 John 5:11).

## 2 Does God ask for our attention?

**Isaiah 45:22** "Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other."

God never forces. He asks, because a relationship of love must have freedom to say, "No." Having made us, God knows what is best for us. "Yes, the Lord will give what is good ..." (Psalm 85:12). "... no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11). God does not leave us to figure out what we need on our own. He tells us plainly, because He wants us to make a fully informed decision to love and obey Him. We should turn our attention toward God, rather than to our own short-sighted desires.

## 3 What recurring appointment has God given us so we can stay close to Him?

**Ezekiel 20:12** "... I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me ...."

**Exodus 20:8-11** The fourth commandment of God's Law reads "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 the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 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. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

God blessed one day above all other days. It is a gift we receive, not just once a year, or even once a month; it is the seventh day of each week, Saturday, the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is never more than a week away—always a fresh memory, and continually just ahead of us. God calls the Sabbath “My holy day” (Isaiah 58:13). It was special to Jesus, who revealed Himself to be “Lord even of the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:8). God chose His Sabbath as the day to make known “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1) to John on the Island of Patmos. He wrote: “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice ...” (Revelation 1:10). The seventh-day Sabbath is holy to God, and our faith grows as we count it holy to us, as well.

## 4 Why is the Sabbath different from every other day?

**Genesis 2:1–3** “Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

Outwardly, the seventh day of the week appears identical to every other 24-hour period of darkness and light. But by His authority as our Creator, God organized the six days of Creation to culminate in the seventh day, where He set His special blessing that no man can change. He sanctified that day, making it holy. The blessing God pronounced on both animals and people in Genesis 1:22 and 28 was a continuing blessing, and His blessing on the seventh-day Sabbath continues through time, as well.

## 5 How does the Sabbath reveal God’s love for us?

**Mark 2:27** “And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

**John 15:5** “... He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

Salvation comes through Jesus alone (Acts 4:12). The Sabbath is a whole day with nothing to interfere with enjoying Jesus and His love. The first full day given to Adam and Eve was the seventh-day Sabbath with Him. God gave us His example: He put aside His labor of creating to protect time for intimate friendship. The one thing on the Sabbath schedule is to experience God’s love and to love Him in return. “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

## 6 How does the Sabbath reveal our love to God?

**John 14:15** “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

**Isaiah 58:13–14** “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord 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 the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth ...”

The Sabbath is God’s perpetual invitation to love Him. It is the Christian’s delight to be united with God, to be loyal to His Word, and to trust Him with our days and our time. Our response to His command reveals our love for Him and our faith in His ways. Just as someone must choose to say “Yes!” to a proposal for marriage, we must also say “Yes!” to our Creator and Savior. “Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation ...” (Micah 7:7).

## 7 Do we know which day is the seventh day of the week?

**Luke 23:56** “Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.”

The seventh day is a specific day chosen by God, not simply one day out of the seven. God chose the last day of the week, which most of the world calls Saturday. We can trace the uninterrupted weekly cycle back to the time of Jesus when the women “rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment,” before anointing Jesus’ body in the tomb. No calendar change has adjusted the position of the days in the weekly cycle. New labels given by man cannot displace the Sabbath of Creation. We can confidently walk with God in loving obedience each seventh-day Sabbath.

## 8 Is the Sabbath a gift to be enjoyed and loved by only one culture, or a select group of people?

**Romans 3:29** “... is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.”



“The seventh-day Sabbath is holy to God ...”



**“The Sabbath belongs to Jesus because He made it.”**

**Isaiah 56:6–7** “Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants—everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant—even them I will bring to My holy mountain ...”

Loving and obeying God is not restricted to those who can come to a holy place. God embraced every person with a holy day. Even the cattle and the strangers who are within our gates are to enjoy the blessing of the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10). The high point of every week, God’s seventh-day, was given to all humanity before sin entered the human race, and before there were cultures or nations who could claim it as theirs alone. The seven-day pattern, coming to its conclusion with each weekly Sabbath, is found in cultures throughout the world. Unlike the day, month, or year, it does not trace its origin to the movements of the Earth or heavenly bodies. The seven-day week comes only from God, our Creator, in Genesis 1 and 2.

## 9 What did the Sabbath mean to Jesus?

**Luke 4:16** “... And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.”

**Mark 2:27–28** “And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.””

**Matthew 11:29** “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

By the example of His life, Jesus taught us to love the Sabbath as He did. The Sabbath belongs to Jesus because He made it. “... All things were created through Him and for Him” (Colossians 1:16). Jesus loves the Sabbath so much that He faced the anger of His opponents in order to restore it (Luke 6:6–11; Luke 14:1–5). Looking prophetically almost 40 years beyond His death, when His followers would have to flee from the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus told them, “Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath” (Matthew 24:20). By this, Jesus lift-

ed up the eternal value of the Sabbath for those who must trust in God when facing conflict and tribulation in the future.

## 10 Besides Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, who else in the Bible loved God’s blessing of the Sabbath?

**ABRAHAM**, who lived before God spoke His Law on Mount Sinai in Exodus 20, kept God’s commandments, including the Sabbath (Genesis 26:5).

**NOAH**, who lived in the midst of a wicked generation at the time of the Flood, remained righteous before God, obeying His commands (Genesis 7:1).

**JOB**, who did not have the Scriptures, was “blameless and upright” (Job 1:1), acknowledged by God to be obedient to all He had asked (Job 1:8; 2:3).

**KING DAVID**, the premier song-writer of the Bible, loved all of God’s law, including the Sabbath (Psalm 19:7–11).

**NEHEMIAH**, who lived toward the end of the Old Testament, led people to honor the Sabbath in obedience (Nehemiah 13:15–22).

**ISRAEL’S PROPHETS** admonished God’s people of the importance of honoring the Sabbath (Jeremiah 17:19–27; Ezekiel 20:12–24; Amos 8:4–7; Isaiah 56:2–6).

**THE APOSTLES**, who after Jesus ascended into Heaven, preached what He taught and loved, obeyed the Sabbath commandment, showing that His death and resurrection did not alter God’s Law. Both Jewish and Gentile Christians who were willing to give their lives for Jesus kept the Sabbath. (See Acts 13:14–15, 42; 16:13; 17:2; and 18:4 for a few examples of honoring the Sabbath in the early Christian church.)

## 11 How does the Sabbath exalt God’s holiness and bring us into a right relationship with Him?

**Jeremiah 32:17** “Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.”

**“The Apostles ... obeyed the Sabbath commandment ...”**



By resting on the Sabbath, God's people live out a continual testimony about Him: He is our Creator, and the Lord we obey; His Law is good; and His Law can be obeyed. When we love the Sabbath, we love the God of the Sabbath and the privilege of obeying Him. Each Sabbath directs our attention to Whom it belongs: our powerful and loving Creator, and not ourselves. "My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2).

## 12 God rested on the Sabbath. So how should we rest on the Sabbath?

**Deuteronomy 5:13–14** "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work . . ."  
**Matthew 11:28** "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The rest Jesus invites you to enjoy is not sleep; it is special friendship with Him. Sabbath rest is intentionally stopping your common labor to give your attention and time to God. By uniting with God, we unite with what He does in activities such as visiting the sick, caring for the needy, sharing the good news of Jesus, strengthening loving family ties, and learning about Him by reading His Word and through nature. This kind of rest restores us to be what God planned from the start. It lifts us above the cares of this world to spend eternity with Him in Heaven, where there is loving obedience, joyful service, and steadfast loyalty to our Creator.

**Leviticus 23:3** "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings."

"Holy convocation" refers to God's people gathering together to worship and encourage each other. "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24–25). "In all your dwellings" means that, if possible, families are to enjoy the blessing of Sabbath together. "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous . . ." (Psalm 118:15).

## 13 How can we prepare in advance to enjoy the blessing of the Sabbath?

**Exodus 16:23** "Then he said to them, 'This is what the Lord has said: "Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will

"Through God's holy day, He wants to sanctify us..."



bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'"

When God provided manna for Israel in the wilderness, He instructed them to gather and prepare a double portion on the sixth day so no common work would trivialize His holy day. This was called "the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath" (Mark 15:42). We prepare our homes, hearts, and minds by completing the next day's chores in advance. Our choice to put aside the concerns of the six days of labor helps us to long for God and turn our thoughts fully to Him. "My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Psalm 84:2). As we plan for the next Sabbath, its blessings overflow onto the six days of labor.

## 14 When do the Sabbath hours begin and end?

**Leviticus 23:32** "...from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

The days God established do not begin at midnight, but in the evening when the sun goes down (Genesis 1:5; Nehemiah 13:19; Mark 1:32).

## 15 What does God do in us through the Sabbath to prepare us for heaven?

**Exodus 31:13** "... Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you."

Through God's holy day, He wants to sanctify us, making us holy, too. Each Sabbath, God gives a predictable opportunity to trust Him. It doesn't take us by surprise. We plan to put God first. When we put aside all that pertains to meeting our needs with our own strength (business, personal pleasure, and common labor), we place our trust in God, instead of in ourselves. We release our grip on earthly things and practice clinging to Jesus, one moment at a time. When earthly support

crumbles away, we will have learned to turn to Him as naturally as a flower turns to the sun. Sanctification is God's character taken as our own, resulting in obedience from love. It is by God's power, alone. Each Sabbath, we let go of our own strength, and trust in God's power.

## 16 What changes has God made to the Sabbath?

**Psalms 19:7** "The law of the Lord is perfect ..."

**Malachi 3:6** "For I am the Lord, I do not change ..."

The Sabbath is part of God's Ten Commandment Law, written with His own finger on tablets of stone (Exodus 31:18). From the account of God's Creation in Genesis to the final page of God's Word, He neither removed the blessing He gave to the Sabbath, nor altered its holiness. The Word of God has neither set it aside, nor replaced it with a substitute.

## 17 How does Satan treat God's Sabbath?

**2 Thessalonians 2:3-4** "... the man of sin ... who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

God's Word predicted a turning away from His blessings, His glory, and His Law. God creates, while the enemy can only counterfeit what God has blessed. When God gives a blessing, the enemy attempts to replace it with a curse. When God says, "Remember the Sabbath day," the enemy tries to make us forget. When God calls the Sabbath "a delight," the enemy calls it a burden. When God blessed the seventh day to rest from labor and honor Him as our Creator, the enemy makes God's holy day a common day of labor and appoints a day with no sacredness in its place—the first day, Sunday. "... My people have forgotten Me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32). "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

## 18 What blessings are yet to come through the Sabbath?

**Revelation 14:6-7** "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, '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.'"

As we approach Jesus' soon return, we are privileged to join in proclaiming the everlasting gospel wherever we are in the world. The good news of Jesus leads us to "worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." Those words draw our attention to the

Sabbath commandment at the heart of God's Law, "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them ..." (Exodus 20:11). Before Jesus returns, the joy that comes from God's Sabbath will be seen in all its beauty through the lives and words of His people. Every person will receive His invitation and will choose whether to love a counterfeit, or the Creator, who offers salvation from sin.

**Isaiah 66:22-23** "For 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, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord."

After Jesus returns, God will create "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1) and nothing will interfere with the blessing of the Sabbath. Week by week, we will return to the presence of Jesus for all eternity, because we love to be with Him.

## 19 Who receives God's reward when Jesus returns?

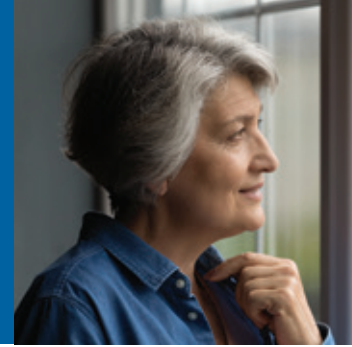
**Revelation 14:12** "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

The saints of God "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). By God's grace, we celebrate one Sabbath after another here on Earth until we celebrate the Sabbath together with Jesus in Heaven. Though we will experience testing in the decision to obey the commands of God, His promise is, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

"Every person will receive His invitation ..."



# WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE TODAY?



## 1. The Sabbath is one seventh of our days, but it represents our life.

How can you trust God with all your days?

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**2. What could you do with the 24 hours of the Sabbath** to fulfill its purpose, to draw close to God in friendship, and to allow Him to sanctify you, recreating your character in His image?

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**3. Do you love God and desire to be with Him forever?** Do you accept His authority as your Creator, and will you accept His invitation to celebrate the Sabbath each week?

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**4. Accepting the seventh-day Sabbath may involve a sacrifice in some areas of life.** Praise God that He promises to help us as we trust Him.

How does Jesus' sacrifice give you encouragement to step out in faith?

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**5. Who do you know that needs to hear what you have learned?** When four starving men found a treasure of food and wealth, instead of keeping it to themselves, they said, "This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. ... Come, let us go and tell ..." (2 Kings 7:9).

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Additional Notes:

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# WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS FOR ME IN THE SABBATH?



**1. God wants to spend time with you.** "... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

**2. God does not want you to bear the burdens of toil without rest. He invites you to give your burdens to Him each Sabbath day.** "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).

**3. The Sabbath is a day blessed by God for doing good.** "Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?'—that they might accuse Him. Then He said to them, 'What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.' Then He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other" (Matthew 12:9-13).

**4. We don't need to seek man's opinion about the Sabbath, because God's holy day is clear in His Word.** "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place ..." (2 Peter 1:19).

## LESSON SUMMARY

**1. Saturday, the seventh day of each week,** is the Sabbath and is blessed by God as a memorial of His work of Creation.

**2. We are told to "remember the Sabbath day"** in God's Ten Commandment Law.

**3. The Sabbath is a gift to humanity** that reveals God's love for us—and our love for Him.

**4. God sanctifies us through the Sabbath** as we let go of self-sufficiency and draw close to Him.

**5. God's Sabbath existed in Eden,** continued through the Bible, and was loved and kept by Jesus and all of His apostles. God has not changed His gift.

**6. The enemy of God has substituted a counterfeit day of worship** for God's holy day so he can turn hearts and minds away from worshiping the Creator.

**7. Each weekly Sabbath on Earth** prepares us to worship God each Sabbath in Heaven.

Additional Notes:

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# CAN MAN CHANGE WHAT GOD HAS CLAIMED AS HIS?

If you've ever wondered about the validity of the Lord's Day, this booklet is for you!

Learn more about the gift of the Sabbath by scanning the QR code or visiting the link below.



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