

# The Sabbath and Israel

A 4-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®  
Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

## About This Series

This four-lesson series examines the seventh-day (weekly) Sabbath and its role in God's program with the nation of Israel. Designed to complement related Enjoy the Bible Ministries® series — including The Short History of Israel, Survey of Israel's Calendar, and Israel's Sabbaths — this study provides a strategic grasp of why the Sabbath is highly significant in Israel's prophetic program and why it is not applicable in this present dispensation of grace. Beginning with foundational definitions and distinctions, the series moves through the Sabbath's covenantal significance, its connection to God's original design and purpose for the earth, and its ultimate fulfillment through the nation Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord of the Sabbath.



## Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
Lesson 1	Defining the sabbath as rest; the plurality of sabbaths in Israel's program; Israel's need to be taught the seventh-day sabbath's significance
Lesson 2	The sabbath as covenant and sign in Israel's program; its absence of significance in the dispensation of grace (Colossians 2:16–17)
Lesson 3	God's original design and purpose for the earth; the first sabbath; Satan's usurpation and the delayed "second sabbath after the first"
Lesson 4	Israel's role in God's redemptive plan; the Abrahamic covenant; the Feast of Tabernacles; Christ as Lord of the Sabbath

## Lesson Summaries

L1

### Foundations of the Sabbath *What Is the Sabbath — and What Kind?*

- The series focuses specifically on the seventh-day (weekly) sabbath in Israel's program — not all sabbaths in scripture
  - Over 135 occurrences of "sabbath" in scripture; this study provides a strategic grasp of its doctrinal significance

#### What Is a Sabbath?

- The sabbath means REST — ceasing from all work on the seventh day (Exodus 16:23; 20:8–11; 31:15)
  - God rested on the original seventh day following six days of creation (Genesis 2:1–3)
  - Israel was to labor six days and rest on the seventh, mirroring God’s creation pattern

#### More Than One Kind of Sabbath

- There is more than one kind of sabbath in Israel’s program: the seventh-day sabbath is distinct from what God calls “My sabbaths” (Exodus 31:12–13)
  - “My sabbaths” = the package of sabbaths associated with the feast days (Day of Atonement, Feast of Trumpets, Feast of Tabernacles, land sabbath) — signs of God’s Jehovahhness and grace for Israel’s sanctification
  - The seventh-day sabbath stands apart as the most fundamental and has its own distinct sign significance

#### Israel Had to Be Taught the Sabbath

- From the original seventh day through all generations until Mount Sinai, no one observed the sabbath — God had not yet made it known (Nehemiah 9:14)
  - God “made known unto them” his holy sabbath at Sinai — it was not a pre-existing obligation for anyone before Israel
- The seventh-day sabbath is highly significant in God’s program with Israel; it is NOT significant or obligatory in this dispensation of grace

### Highly Significant — But Not For Us *The Sabbath as Covenant and Sign in Israel’s Program*

- The seventh-day sabbath is described as holy unto Israel AND holy unto the Lord — a perpetual covenant and sign (Exodus 31:14–17)
  - Violating it carried the death penalty, underscoring its critical weight in Israel’s covenantal relationship with God
  - “It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever” (Exodus 31:17)

#### The Dispensation of Grace: A Different Program

- The Mystery of Christ — God’s secret purpose revealed to Paul — is an entirely different program from God’s prophetic program with Israel
  - Members of the body of Christ are not “spiritual Israelites”; our role pertains to the heavenly places, not the earth’s kingdom program
- Paul warns the body of Christ against being judged in sabbath days — these are “a shadow of things to come” in Israel’s program, not applicable to us (Colossians 2:16–17)

#### God’s Design and Purpose for the Earth

- The sabbath is integrally connected to God’s original design for the earth as the place of his habitation
  - God stretches out the heavens as a tent to dwell in (Isaiah 40:22; Psalm 104:2–3)
  - He created the earth “not in vain” — he formed it to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18)
  - The culmination: the New Jerusalem comes down from God, and the tabernacle of God is with men (Revelation 21:1–3)
- Israel’s sabbath observance keeps before them the reality that God’s original purpose for the earth is tied to his program with them

L2

## L3

### **God's Design for the Earth** *The First Sabbath and the Usurper*

- Every time Israel kept the weekly sabbath, they were commemorating the original seventh day — God's declaration that everything was prepared for his residence to come down (Genesis 2:1–3)

### **God's Holy Habitation on Earth**

- God's original design for the earth was to have it as his holy habitation: a specific land, mountain of inheritance, and sanctuary (Exodus 15:13, 17)
  - Parallel to the original creation: just as there is a whole earth and then a specific piece for God's dwelling, so there is the land of Canaan and within it the mountain and sanctuary
- God blessed and sanctified the original seventh day, declaring it set apart in anticipation of the "second sabbath after the first" — the day when his residence would come down

### **Satan's Usurpation**

- Satan's action in Genesis 3 — getting Adam and Eve to sin — made him the usurped possessor of the earth (Job 1:7; Isaiah 14:13–14)
  - Satan flaunts before God that he is possessor of the earth; the "second sabbath after the first" has been delayed as a result
  - "Most High" means "possessor of heaven and earth" (Genesis 14:18–22) — Satan sought to usurp both realms
- God created the nation Israel as the nation of his own creation to be the means of dealing with Satan's usurpation and accomplishing his original design for the earth
  - God's program with Israel is the offensive move against Satan's hold on the earth, culminating in the kingdom

## L4

### **Israel's Role and the Lord of the Sabbath** *The Covenant, the Calendar, and the Fulfillment*

- The Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12) — God invests in Abraham and his seed the accomplishment of his original design for the earth, going on the offensive against Satan's usurpation
  - "Israel" means "God rules" — Israel is vested with the power for God to rule once again on this earth (Genesis 32:28)
  - God's plan: through Israel, destroy Satan's usurped possession, repossess the earth, and bring his residence down

### **The Calendar Preserves the Pattern**

- Israel's weekly sabbath keeps before them their unique role — to be the means by which God's original sabbath rest for the earth is finally realized
- The Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:39) features two sabbaths — a first and an eighth-day sabbath — replicating the first/second sabbath pattern on the yearly calendar
  - The Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows Jehovah-Shama: the LORD dwelling in his habitation on earth (Zechariah 14:16–17)
  - The entire calendar ends with this double-sabbath pattern, commemorating the fulfillment of God's original purpose

### **Christ as Lord of the Sabbath**

- Luke 6:1 — "It came to pass on the second sabbath after the first" — Jesus

as the Son of Man acts as Lord of the Sabbath, declaring himself the fulfillment of God's original design (Luke 6:5)

- As the Son of Man he fulfills Genesis 3:15 and the Davidic covenant — the one who puts all of God's Jehovahhness and grace into effect
- The seventh-day sabbath in Israel's program thus encompasses the full scope of God's redemptive plan: from the original blessed seventh day, through Israel's preservation of that truth, to its ultimate fulfillment in the Kingdom

## Key Doctrinal Distinctions

### The Seventh-Day Sabbath vs. "My Sabbaths"

Israel's program featured two distinct categories of sabbath. The seventh-day (weekly) sabbath stands alone as the most fundamental — a sign pointing to God's original design and purpose for the earth. The other sabbaths, which God calls "My sabbaths," are associated with the seven major feast days on Israel's calendar. These function as signs of God's Jehovahhness and grace at work for Israel's sanctification. Though related in the overall package of Israel's calendar, the two categories serve distinct doctrinal purposes and must be kept separate in study.

### Israel's Program vs. the Dispensation of Grace

The seventh-day sabbath is highly significant and integral to Israel's prophetic program — it is a covenantal sign, holy to God and to Israel, with a death penalty for violation (Exodus 31:14–17). In the present dispensation of grace, however, Sabbath observance has no role and is doctrinally incorrect for members of the body of Christ. Paul explicitly warns against being judged in "sabbath days," identifying them as "a shadow of things to come" in Israel's unfulfilled program — not a present obligation for the church (Colossians 2:16–17). Members of the body of Christ are not spiritual Israelites; they occupy a heavenly position in Christ, distinct from Israel's earthly kingdom program.

### The First Sabbath and the Second Sabbath After the First

God blessed and sanctified the original seventh day of creation (Genesis 2:1–3) — declaring everything prepared for his residence to come down. This was the "first sabbath." The "second sabbath after the first" represents the fulfillment of that purpose: the day when God's residence finally comes down to earth and he reigns as possessor of heaven and earth. Satan's usurpation in Genesis 3 delayed this fulfillment. Israel's weekly sabbath keeping, the Feast of Tabernacles calendar pattern, and ultimately Christ's identity as Lord of the Sabbath (Luke 6:5) all point toward that coming fulfillment.

### The Sabbath as Rest and as Covenantal Sign

At its most basic level, the sabbath means rest — ceasing from all work on the seventh day, mirroring God's own rest after creation (Exodus 16:23; 20:10–11). But for Israel the seventh-day sabbath carried far greater significance: it was a covenantal sign between God and the nation, marking them as the people through whom God's original purpose for the earth would be accomplished. Every week that passed on

Israel's calendar, the sabbath reminded them of who they were in God's plan and what he designed this earth — and their nation — to ultimately become.

---

## Key Scripture References

<b>Exodus 16:23</b>	First explicit definition of the sabbath as “the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD” — in context of the manna
<b>Exodus 20:8–11</b>	The fourth commandment; the seventh day linked directly to God's creation rest as the pattern for Israel's observance
<b>Exodus 31:12–17</b>	The sabbath declared a perpetual covenant and sign between God and Israel; death penalty for violation; “My sabbaths” distinguished
<b>Nehemiah 9:14</b>	God “made known unto them” his holy sabbath at Sinai — confirming no sabbath observance existed before Israel
<b>Leviticus 23:39</b>	Feast of Tabernacles features a first and an eighth-day sabbath — replicating the first/second sabbath pattern on the calendar
<b>Genesis 2:1–3</b>	The original seventh day: God finishes his work, rests, blesses and sanctifies the day in anticipation of his residence coming down
<b>Isaiah 45:18</b>	God created the earth “not in vain” — he formed it to be inhabited; his original design and purpose for the earth affirmed
<b>Isaiah 40:22</b>	God stretches out the heavens as a tent to dwell in — his original purpose is to dwell within creation, on the earth
<b>Colossians 2:16–17</b>	Paul warns the body of Christ against being judged in sabbath days — “a shadow of things to come” in Israel's program, not for us
<b>Revelation 21:1–3</b>	The culmination of God's purpose: New Jerusalem comes down, the tabernacle of God is with men — the original design fulfilled
<b>Luke 6:1, 5</b>	“The second sabbath after the first” — Jesus declares himself Lord of the Sabbath, the fulfillment of God's original purpose

---

For further study visit [www.enjoythebible.org](http://www.enjoythebible.org)