

**SABBATH** (שַׁבָּת, *shabbath*). A day of complete rest from secular work following six days of labor. Established and modeled by God.

## Introduction

The concept of the Sabbath was modified over time. In the Old Testament, Sabbath began as a holy day for God, which included cessation from secular work. During the Intertestamental period, the Sabbath gained a legalistic tone, and came to include detailed aspects of observance. During the New Testament era, Jesus addressed and clarified the meaning of the Sabbath.

## Old Testament

The word “Sabbath” (שַׁבָּת, *shabbath*), which means “cease,” “rest,” “complete rest,” or “desist,” is found in every section of the biblical texts. Forms of the word שַׁבָּת (*shabbath*) occur 104 times in the Old Testament. Roughly 40 percent of the occurrences are in the Pentateuch, another 40 percent occur in the Prophetic Books, and the remaining 20 percent occur in the Wisdom literature and historical books. Wisdom literature contains only two references to Sabbath (Psa 92:1; Lam 2:6). The texts associated with the priesthood contain the most references to the Sabbath. The noun שַׁבָּת (*shabbath*) is thought to be derived from the verb שָׁבַת (*shavath*), meaning “to rest.”

## References in the Pentateuch

While the word Sabbath does not occur in Genesis, the concept is shown in the creation account of Gen 1:1–2:4a, where God creates the world and all living things in six days and rests (שַׁבָּת, *shavath*) on the seventh. Exodus 20:11 clarifies that the seventh day is meant to be the Sabbath day. The Decalogue characterizes the Sabbath as a day that:

- is holy and blessed
- should be remembered and kept holy
- belongs to the Lord
- requires abstinence from work for all people (Jews and Gentiles alike) and animals

The text implies that God rested on the seventh day of creation, and therefore humankind should follow His example (*imitatio Dei*) and rest on the seventh day (see also Deut 5:12–15).

Exodus 16 includes a discussion of the Sabbath day in the narrative of the Israelites wandering in the Sinai desert. Moses instructs the people to collect two days worth of manna on the sixth day, reserving half for the seventh day, which is a day of rest and a holy day to the Lord. When some of the people do not listen and attempt to collect manna on the seventh day, God asks Moses (regarding the people): “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions?” This passage demonstrates that:

- the Sabbath day is a commandment of the Lord ([Exod 20](#))
- the people need to rely upon the word of [God](#), not their own understanding

Although this passage is the first in the biblical text to mention the [Sabbath](#), Childs and Buber note that the text assumes the audience knew the concept, and the lesson concerns something that was already in existence.

Other references in Exodus clarify that:

- The Sabbath should continue even during the harvest and planting seasons ([Exod 34:21](#)).
- The [Sabbath](#) is a sign between the Lord and humankind that [God](#) is the source of sanctification ([Exod 31:13](#)).
- The penalty for working on the Sabbath is death ([Exod 31:14–15](#); [35:2](#)).
- The [Sabbath](#) is a perpetual covenant ([Exod 31:13, 16](#)).

[Leviticus](#) mentions the [Sabbath](#) 24 times (the most frequent of any biblical book). These references stress:

- rest on the [Sabbath](#) day ([Lev 16:31](#); [23:2, 32](#))
- humility toward [God](#) ([Lev 16:31, 32](#))
- the permanence of the Sabbath, which endures upon everyone for all generations ([Lev 16:31](#); [19:3](#); [23:2](#); [24:8](#))
- that [Sabbath](#) is a holy convocation ([Lev 23:2](#))
- the Sabbath must be kept from

evening to evening ([Lev 23:32](#))

- the [Sabbath](#) endures upon land as well as people ([Lev 25:2–6](#); [26:34](#))

The references to the [Sabbath](#) day in the [Pentateuch](#) emphasize similar features, including the importance of rest, humility towards God, the holiness of the day, care for the needy, permanence of the statute, and consequences for disobedience. Further references in the [Pentateuch](#) tie the observance of the Sabbath to [creation](#) (the day [God](#) rested) and the [exodus](#) (the redemption of Israel from [slavery](#) in [Egypt](#)). In addition, the [Sabbath](#) is a sign of the everlasting covenant between [God](#) and Israel.

#### *References in the Historical Books*

The historical books of Kings, Chronicles, and [Nehemiah](#) mention the [Sabbath](#). References to the [Sabbath](#) in the historical books assume knowledge of the [Pentateuch](#) and emphasize the prohibition against working or performing commerce on the [Sabbath](#). The priest and the king now play a role in the [Sabbath](#) observance, with the king providing sacrifices for the burnt offering, the priest performing sacrifices in the temple including a meal, and the duration of the observance is clarified from evening to evening.

- [Second Kings 4:23](#) specifies that travel to visit a “man of God” was not restricted on the new moon or the [Sabbath](#).
- [Second Kings 11:4–12](#) ([2 Chr 23:4–11](#))

demonstrates that national defense and the defense of the king are allowable on the [Sabbath](#).

- [Second Kings 16:17–18](#) associates the [Sabbath](#) with a “covered way” or “canopy.” In this passage, the canopy which was built for the [Sabbath](#) is removed during the reign of [Ahaz](#) (⚡ circa 735–715 BC).

First and [Second Chronicles](#) provide details on the practices involved in the [Sabbath](#) observations. Passages such as [1 Chr 23:31](#); [2 Chr 2:4](#); [8:13](#); [31:3](#) indicate that the celebration of the Sabbath day includes a [burnt offering](#), a portion of which is contributed by the king ([2 Chr 31:3](#)). These passages also associate the celebration of the [Sabbath](#) with the tent of meeting, temple of the Lord, a meal with bread, the burning of incense, covenant, redemption, and the land.

- [First Chronicles 9:32](#) identifies rows of bread as part of a [Sabbath](#) meal.
- [Second Chronicles 2:4](#) and [31:3](#) specify that the burnt offerings are given both morning and evening and are a lasting obligation upon Israel.
- [Second Chronicles 36:21](#) describes the abandonment of the [land of Judah](#) during the Babylonian exile as a Sabbath rest for the land.

The events described in [Nehemiah](#) likely occur in ⚡ the fifth century BC after some [Israelites](#) have returned to [Judah](#) from exile in [Babylon](#). Apparently, many peo-

ple had abandoned the celebration of the Sabbath and many of God’s ordinances. The passages in [Nehemiah](#) stress the importance of the [Sabbath](#) celebration ([9:14](#)). [Nehemiah 10:31](#) reiterates a prohibition against commerce on the [Sabbath](#) as well as the sabbatical rest for the land and the remission of debts every seven years. [Nehemiah 13:15–22](#) specifies the prohibition against commerce includes:

- treading [wine](#)
- loading
- transporting
- selling grain, grapes, or figs
- buying goods from foreigners.

These acts are said to “profane the [Sabbath](#)” and were part of the reason for God’s prior judgment upon [Judah](#).

#### *References in the Wisdom Literature*

The [Sabbath](#) is mentioned twice in [Wisdom texts](#). [Psalm 92:1](#) identifies itself as “a song for the [Sabbath](#).” The song is joyous, giving thanks to the Lord and declaring His lovingkindness in the morning and His faithfulness in the afternoon. The association of the song with the [Sabbath](#) highlights the intent of the day is much more than a legalistic restriction of activity; it is a joyous occasion reflecting on the many blessings the Lord has given. In contrast, [Lam 2:6](#) highlights the judgment of the Lord that separated the people of Judah and Israel from celebrating the [Sabbath](#). The passage shows that the inability to celebrate the [Sabbath](#), and its

restrictions, is painful for the people.

### *References in the Prophets*

The prophetic texts provide a primarily negative view of the Sabbath observance in the later years of the divided monarchy. They utilize the Sabbath as an example for how the Israelites “ritualized” the ceremonies God commanded, losing the inner meaning of the event. God expresses that observing the Sabbath (among other festivals, rituals, and offerings) is detestable when conducted for the wrong reasons (Isa 1:13; Ezek 22:8, 26, 23:38).

- Ezekiel 20:12–24 details that profaning (perhaps meaning secularizing) the Sabbath occurred as early as the period of the exodus, and is not unique to the time of the prophets. Profaning the Sabbath brings about God’s wrath.
- Jeremiah 17:21 echoes this negative tone, warning that ignoring the Sabbath will lead to the destruction of Jerusalem.
- Hosea 2:11 specifies that one consequence of Israel’s disobedience will be the discontinuation of Israel’s celebrations.
- Amos 8:5 details that the Israelites were eager for the Sabbath to end so they might engage in commerce.

The prophetic texts also contain positive references to the Sabbath.

- Isaiah 56:1–4 illustrates that a person (applying to Israelites and non-Israelites) who preserves justice and does righteousness is blessed and will not profane the Sabbath.
- Isaiah 58:13 and 66:23 emphasize that Sabbath observance includes a voluntary abstinence from personal pleasures in order to follow God’s will.
- Ezekiel 20:12, 20 stresses that the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between God and Israel.

As with the historical books, the prophetic texts highlight abstinence from work on the Sabbath and a call to keep the day holy (Jer 17:21–27). They also provide additional details on Sabbath observance during this period:

- Ezekiel 44:24 assigns the priests as responsible for keeping the Sabbath holy.
- Ezekiel 45:17 indicates that the prince is responsible for providing the burnt offerings, drink offerings, and grain offerings associated with the Sabbath.
- Ezekiel 46:1–12 clarifies that the gate to the temple will remain open on the Sabbath and closed the other days. The prince will bring the burnt offering (comprised of six unblemished lambs and one unblemished ram) to the threshold of the gate, giving his burnt offering and peace offering to the priests. The prince and the people will then worship at the opening of



the gate.

### Intertestamental Period

Intertestamental writings detailed [Sabbath](#) restrictions and recorded military losses resulting from [Sabbath](#) observance. The Damascus Document, dating to [1st](#) the first century BC, outlines several limits to activity on the [Sabbath](#) including:

- walking farther than 1000 cubits
- drinking outside the camp
- drawing water into any vessel
- wearing perfume
- opening a sealed vessel
- assisting an animal to give birth or helping an animal out of a pit
- having sexual relations

The [book of Jubilees](#) ([1st](#) second century BC) adds further prohibitions:

- plowing a field
- starting a fire
- riding an animal
- riding in a boat
- killing anything
- making war

[Jubilees 2:30](#) alters the extent of [Sabbath](#) requirement, limiting its observance to just the [Israelites](#) instead of all people in the [promised land](#). Fragment 5 of the work of [Aristobulus](#) associates the [Sabbath](#) with a sevenfold structure in the cosmos and to wisdom.

The prohibition against making war on the [Sabbath](#) led to several military

losses:

- Josephus records that Ptolemy I Soter ([1st](#) 323–283/2 BC) captured Jerusalem when the [Israelites](#) refused to fight on the [Sabbath](#) ([Antiquities 12.1.1](#)).
- [Second Maccabees 5:25–6](#) states that Apollonius waited until the [Sabbath](#) day to assault the city of [Jerusalem](#) because the people would not fight on the [Sabbath](#) ([1st](#) 168 BC).

However, [1 Macc 2:38](#) reverses this practice, as Mattathias declares that the [Israelites](#) need to defend themselves on the [Sabbath](#). By the end of the Roman period, the [Jews](#) not only defended themselves on the [Sabbath](#) but engaged in offensive attacks.

### New Testament

Each section of the New Testament text mentions the [Sabbath](#). In the [Gospels](#), [Jesus](#) teaches regarding [Sabbath](#) observance. The authors of Acts and the letters further clarify the meaning behind [Sabbath](#) observance.

#### Gospels

As [Jesus](#) begins His ministry, He enters the [synagogue](#) on the [Sabbath](#) and begins to teach with authority ([Mark 1:21](#); [6:2](#); [Luke 4:16](#), [31](#); [13:10](#)). [Luke 4:16](#) adds that it was [Jesus](#)' normal custom to go to the synagogue on the [Sabbath](#), showing that [Jesus](#) followed the customs outlined in the historical books and the prophets (compare [Mark 3:1](#); [Luke 4:44](#); [13:10](#)).

[John 7:22–23](#) records that [circumcisions](#) were performed on the Sabbath day.

[Matthew 12:1–12](#); [Mark 2:23–3:6](#); [Luke 6:1–9](#) record [Jesus](#) and His [disciples](#) traveling, eating, and [Jesus](#) performing healing [miracles](#) on the [Sabbath](#). In addition, [Luke 13:14](#); [14:1–6](#); [John 5:1–18](#); [7:22–23](#); [9:1–41](#) record healings conducted on the Sabbath day. The [Pharisees](#) observe the acts and confront [Jesus](#) about breaking [Sabbath](#) law (*halakhah*). [Jesus](#) responds that [David](#) was allowed to break the [Sabbath](#) when he ate bread in the House of [God](#), and that the priests break the [Sabbath](#) rules every [Sabbath](#) by conducting the burnt and peace offerings. He also argues that anyone would save their animal if the animal was in danger. [Jesus](#) responds that because a person is of much greater value than an animal it is acceptable to do good deeds (i.e. healing) on the [Sabbath](#).

In [Mark 2:27](#), [Jesus](#) utters the phrase “The [Sabbath](#) was made for man and not man for the [Sabbath](#).” The phrase brings two primary points into focus:

1. The [Sabbath](#) regulations, as interpreted by the [Pharisees](#), had lost the intent of the [Sabbath](#) prescribed in the [Old Testament](#). Therefore, the rules they observed were human made, not [God](#) made, and able to be broken.
2. The [Sabbath](#) proclaimed at creation was intended to serve mankind as a holy day, giving blessing, and observing [God](#)’s rest/restoration.

Nothing of [Jesus](#)’ or His disciples’ actions were contrary to the purpose and intent of the [Sabbath](#) observance. As such, [Jesus](#) was not rewriting the law, but fulfilling and clarifying the original law as described in the [Pentateuch](#), Historical Books, and the Prophets.

In [Matt 28:1](#); [Mark 16:1](#); [Luke 23:56](#), [Mary Magdalene](#) and [Mary](#) ([Jesus](#)’ mother) discover the risen [Jesus](#) at sunrise just as the [Sabbath](#) is ending. In addition, [John 19:31](#) describes the need to remove [Jesus](#)’ body from the cross before the beginning of the [Sabbath](#) observance, which also impacted the preparation of spices and perfumes for the body.

#### *Acts and Epistles*

The book of Acts preserves nine occurrences of the word [Sabbath](#). The text mentions the [Sabbath](#) as a day for religious gathering/teaching and associates it with the formation of churches in Antioch ([Acts 13:13–52](#)); [Philippi](#) ([Acts 16:11–15](#)); [Thessalonica](#) ([Acts 17:1–9](#)); and [Corinth](#) ([Acts 18:1–4](#)).

The Letters contain two occurrences of the term “[Sabbath](#).” In [Col 2:16](#), Paul argues that people should not be judged based upon their observance of various ritual acts, including eating and observance of festivals and the [Sabbath](#). He labels these as “shadows” which were fulfilled by Christ. The meaning of the passage is debated; however, the text discusses misperception that performance of ritual was a pathway to salvation

(Judaizing) and asceticism. This context demonstrates that Paul is not abolishing the Sabbath concept, but instating a lack of condemnation for failing to observe an ascetical form of self-denial. He is also arguing against the idea that Sabbath observance plays a role in salvation (through works).

Hebrews 4:9 refers to a Sabbath-rest that remains in effect. The author of Hebrews anticipates an eschatological fulfillment for the people of God in the period inaugurated with the appearance of Jesus (Heb 4:3–13). The eschatological context points to a present and future reality. Hebrews 4:3 indicates that presently, people who believe are able to enter into Sabbath rest. Additionally, Heb 4:11 points to a future rest for those who are obedient. The passage emphasizes the Old Testament principles that God's Sabbath is based on abstinence from work (Heb 4:10), rest (Heb 4:3), tied to creations (Heb 4:4), and a call for obedience (Heb 4:6).

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**SABBATH, CRITICAL ISSUES** Survey of interpretive issues related to the biblical presentation of the Sabbath including its origin, rationale, practices, and the penalties for non-observance.

### Origins of the Sabbath

While the first command to Sabbath observance appears in [Exod 20:8](#) at Sinai,

the earlier instructions God gives Moses regarding bread from heaven seem to announce a day of rest every seventh day ([Exod 16:4–5](#)). The origins of the Israelite Sabbath are difficult to determine from the biblical texts. There is uncertainty over the relative dating of texts regarding the Sabbath, and its biblical presentations vary with regard to:

- rationale for the practice
- enforcement of the practice (no penalty, [Exod 16](#); civil penalty, [Neh 13:15–22](#); death penalty, [Exod 35:2](#); [Num 15:32–36](#))
- the date at which the practice was implemented

### Dating Sources

The exact dates of the biblical texts concerning Sabbath origins are unclear. Many scholars seek to assign the texts of the Pentateuch to different sources, including:

- The Yahwistic source (J, ninth century BC, “J”)
- The Elohist source (E, eighth century BC, “E”)
- The Deuteronomistic source (D, late seventh century BC, “D”)
- The Priestly source (postexilic, “P”)

Scholars argue these sources reflect different settings, outlooks, and goals, and so articulate noticeably different theologies of the Sabbath. The presentation of the Sabbath in the earliest texts seems to

focus on the provision of food and is not integrated in any legal code (e.g., [Exodus 16](#), J supplemented by P). Humanitarian concerns such as rest for servants and animals ([Exod 23:12](#), probably from the E source) and for oneself ([Deut 5:12–15](#), from the D source) predominate in the later E and D sources. While these texts require the Israelites to abstain from work, they present a humanitarian orientation of the Sabbath. The later P sources present the Sabbath as primarily a theological concept tied to Israel's [covenant relationship](#) to Yahweh ([Exod 31:12–17](#)). These texts fortify the Sabbath's legal standing by calling for the death penalty for violators ([Exod 35:1–3](#)). In Wellhausen's classical reconstruction of the sources, this latest form of the Sabbath appeared more ascetic than restful and restorative (Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 114–15; a more recent reconstruction appears in Grund, *Entstehung*).

Views regarding these sources vary widely. It is unclear whether the P source was reworked (see the varying views of Knohl, "Priestly Torah;" Milgrom, *Leviticus* 17–22; and Olyan, "Exodus 31:12–17"), and it is becoming common to blur the boundaries between some of the sources (see Dozeman, *Exodus*, who simply distinguishes between P and non-P material).

#### *Sabbath Origins in the Biblical Texts*

God's consecration of the seventh day in [Genesis 2:1–3](#) is often cited as the origin

for the human observance of Sabbath. In this account, the seventh day is blessed and sanctified, and set apart as the final item in a seven-item series (Matthews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 176). [Exodus 20:11](#) takes this account as the foundation for the Israelites' Sabbath observance. However, [Genesis 2:1–3](#) is probably better seen as referring to divine rest than to a human Sabbath (VanGemenen, *Progress of Redemption*, 46, 48; Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*, 70–71).

[Exodus 16](#) seems to institute a regular seventh-day Sabbath that promotes trust that God will provide for His people. While this account only explicitly prohibits the gathering of [manna](#) on the Sabbath, it is likely the precedent on which [Exodus 20](#) is based, with its prohibition of any kind of work ([Exod 20:10](#); Fabry, Milgrom, and Wright, "[מלאכה](#), *ml'kh*,"). [Exod 35:2](#) makes Sabbath violation a capital offense.

#### *Possible Sabbath Origins outside Israel*

Some scholars have looked outside of Israel for the origin of the Sabbath, suggesting that, over time, the Israelites adapted a regular (although not necessarily weekly) day of rest from one of the surrounding cultures:

- Batto suggests that Israel took the motif of divine rest after combat that was widespread in the ancient Near East and applied it first to Yahweh, then to Israel's religious calendar

(Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 78–81).

- Jenni suggested that what was originally a market day became a weekly day of rest (Jenni, *Sabbatgebotes*).
- Robinson, in light of the significant contact between Israel and [Babylonian culture](#), argues that the Sabbath was first tied to the [full moon](#) (Robinson, *Origin*, 73) and later became weekly (*Origin*, 270, 313).

None of these options has gained widespread support, either because they lack evidence, or are contradictory. For example, [Babylonian](#) and other Mesopotamian cultures organized their days of work and rest by the lunar month, not the seven-day week (Hallo, “New Moons and Sabbaths,” 12).

### Terms for “Sabbath”

The [Bible](#) uses a variety of terms to refer to the Sabbath itself, sometimes within the same passage. [Exodus 16](#) uses “Sabbath,” “Sabbath observance,” and “holy (Sabbath)” (see also [Exod 31:12–17](#)). Other texts—particularly those closely associated with P and similar sources—consistently pair the terms “Sabbath” and “Sabbath observance” to designate either a seventh-day Sabbath or some other celebration (for the former, see [Exod 35:2](#); [Lev 16:29–31](#); [23:3](#), [32](#); for the [Sabbath of the land](#), see [Lev 25:4](#)). The [New Testament](#) consistently uses the term [σάββατον](#) (*sabbaton*).

### Other Theological Connections

The Sabbath is closely connected to several other religious and theological concepts in the Bible.

#### *Creation*

While the first creation narrative ([Gen 1:1–2:3](#)) is probably better seen as referring to divine rest than to a human Sabbath, divine rest is the pattern for the human Sabbath in [Exodus 20](#). Moreover, [creation](#) often appears in contexts where the Sabbath is present, as in the motive clause that concludes the command for Israel to keep Sabbath ([Exod 31:12–17](#)). The New Testament occasionally makes a similar connection, as when [Mark 2:27](#) proposes a link between the origins of the Sabbath and the creation of humanity (C. S. Mann, *Mark*; W. Stott, “Sabbath”).

#### *Sacred Time*

The Old Testament uses Sabbath language for observances other than the weekly Sabbath, including:

- The [Day of Atonement](#) ([Lev 16:31](#); [23:32](#))
- The Festival of Trumpets ([Lev 23:24](#))
- The Festival of Booths ([Lev 23:39](#))
- The [sabbatical year](#) ([Lev 25:4](#), [5](#))

Each of these involve a “Sabbath observance” that invites people to reflect on the concept’s adaptation to other settings (Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*, 35). A. Heschel presents the Sabbath as a point where the human spirit has



communion with the divine (Heschel, *The Sabbath*).

#### *Divine Presence*

Both the Old and New Testaments connect the weekly Sabbath or rest with God's presence. For example:

- The literary context of the references to the Sabbath in [Exod 31:12–17](#); [35:1–3](#) is the tabernacle itself
- In [Isaiah 65–66](#), God's ultimate resting place overlaps with the site of Israel's renewed worship
- [Hebrews 3–4](#) connects the enjoyment of Sabbath rest by the faithful with God's own rest (Bakon, "Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath;" Laansma, "I Will Give You Rest"; Naudé, "[קִדְּשׁ](#), tsdq").

The Book of [Jubilees](#) similarly expresses the belief that the proper celebration of the Sabbath brings people into God's very presence. Rabbinic conceptions of the Sabbath combine sacred space (in the Israelite household) and the sacred time of the Sabbath that was first seen in the sanctification of creation at the conclusion of the first creation narrative (Neusner, *Rabbinic Theology*, 345–56).

#### *Covenant Sign*

Due to assertions that the Sabbath in the context of the Sinai covenant is a "sign" ([Exod 31:13](#)) and a "covenant" ([Exod 31:16](#)) for Israel, Sabbath can be compared to other covenant

signs in the Bible—especially [circumcision](#) in the covenant with Abraham ([Gen 17:9–14](#)) and the [rainbow](#) (in the covenant with Noah and all creation, [Gen 9](#)). The context of [Exod 31:12–17](#) stresses Yahweh's identity and role as the one who sanctifies Israel ([Exod 31:13](#)). The weekly celebration of the Sabbath was a constant reminder of Israel's status and of the call for the Israelites to pursue obedience to the Sinai covenant signified by the Sabbath (Fox, "Sign of the Covenant;" Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*).

#### **Continuity and Discontinuity**

The proper observance of the Sabbath has been disputed throughout history, as attested by the Sabbath debates throughout the Gospels (Chilton and Neusner, *Judaism in the New Testament*, 135–44). Today, a variety of views regarding Sabbath can be found in both [Judaism](#) and [Christianity](#).

#### *Jewish Practices*

All forms of Judaism celebrate the Sabbath in recognition of God's [transcendence](#) and of the call for Israel to imitate their God (De Lange, *Introduction*, 96; Novak, "Sabbath Day," 76). Jewish practice often includes viewing the Sabbath as a metaphorical bride or queen whose arrival and departure are observed in various ways.

Early Rabbinic literature developed 39 forms of prohibited work, but its main poles are home and synagogue, and it is

animated by an ethos of blessing (Pearl, “Sabbath,” 595). In kabbalistic thought (a form of Jewish mystic spirituality that appeared around the twelfth century), the Sabbath was associated with God’s *shekhinah*, the point of contact between the divine and earthly spheres (Werblowsky and Wigoder, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, 629).

### Christian Practices

Christian understandings of the Sabbath range widely. Many Protestant denominations celebrate the *Lord’s Day* on Sunday as distinct from the Sabbath in most ways (see Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day*). Other Protestant denominations—particularly those influenced by early British and Scottish theology—celebrate the Lord’s Day on Sunday on the basis of the *Decalogue* (see Pipa, *Lord’s Day*). Seventh Day Adventists practice seventh-day observance of the Lord’s Day as the Christian Sabbath (du Preez, *Judging the Sabbath*).

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