

Sabbath

Sabbath (Hebrew *Shabbat*, derived from the verb *shavat*, “to rest, cease”), a holy day of rest observed by the Jews and some Christian denominations on the seventh day of the week (see Saturday) and by most Christians on Sunday. The origin of the Sabbath is uncertain, but it is apparently connected with the Babylonian *shapattu*, the 15th day of the month, on which the full moon occurs, and the Babylonian cycle of “evil days” every seventh day.

The Bible describes the Sabbath as a reminder of God's rest after the Creation (see Exodus 20:11) and of the liberation from Egypt (see Deuteronomy 5:15). The prohibition of work (see Deuteronomy 5:12-14) is never fully explained in the Bible. Among the specific kinds of work prohibited are the kindling of fire (see Exodus 35:3), ploughing and harvesting (see Exodus. 34:21), and cooking (see Exodus. 16:23). The rabbis of post-biblical times derived from Scripture 39 categories of prohibited activity. These main categories and their derivative prohibitions form the basis of modern Orthodox and Conservative Jewish observance of the Sabbath. The Reform and Reconstructionist movements view the laws as advisory rather than binding.

Saturday

Saturday, seventh day of the week, named in honour of the Roman god Saturn; In Latin, Saturday was called *dies Saturni*; it was called *Sater-daeg* by the Anglo-Saxons. It is the holy day of the Israelites of the Old Testament and in Hebrew is called Sabbath, the only day of the week with a name, the rest being numbered. The word *sabbath* derives from the Hebrew word meaning “to rest or cease”; the Jews were enjoined from working on the seventh day. It begins at sunset Friday and lasts until sunset Saturday. In the early days of Christianity, the holy day gradually shifted to Sunday, which, as the first day, was deemed more appropriate since it was the day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the day on which creation began. In Sweden, however, Saturday is *Lördag*, or Lord's Day; and in Denmark and Norway it is *Lørdag*. In Spanish it is *el sábado* and in Italian *sabato*, both derived from sabbath. Several Christian sects, notably the Seventh - day Adventist church, have reverted to Old Testament practice and observe Saturday as their day of worship.

Sunday

Sunday, first day of the week; Its English name and its German name (*Sonntag*) are derived from the Latin *dies solis*, “sun's day,” the name of a pagan Roman holiday. In the New Testament (see Revelation 1:10) it is called the Lord's Day (*Dominica* in the Latin version), from which the name of Sunday is derived in Romance languages (French *Dimanche*; Italian *Domenica*; Spanish *Domingo*; Roman *Duminica*). In the early days of Christianity, Sunday began to replace the Sabbath and to be observed to honor the resurrection of Christ. Sunday was instituted as a day of rest, consecrated especially to the service of God, by the Roman emperor Constantine the Great. Since the 4th century, ecclesiastical and civil legislation has frequently regulated work on Sunday and service attendance. In the United States, laws limiting business activity and amusements on Sundays have become known as blue laws.

Strict Observance of the Sabbath

Sabbatarianism, belief in the strict observance of the Sabbath (seventh day of the week), in accordance with the Fourth Commandment of the Bible; the text of the commandment in the Book of Exodus begins, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God...”

The Sabbath was originally thought of as extending from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday. But for most Christians it came to refer to Sunday. Various restrictions have been placed on activities on Sunday, starting in AD 321 with the Roman emperor Constantine. Strict observance of the Sabbath as a holy day was promoted by some Protestant groups in England and Scotland during the 1600s. This practice came with them to the British colonies in America.

Prayer Recited on Sabbath

Kiddush (Hebrew, “sanctification”), in Judaism, a prayer recited on the Sabbath, festivals, and the New Year (Rosh Hashanah), acknowledging the sanctity of the holy day and concluding with the formula, “Praised be Thou, O Lord, who sanctifies the Sabbath,” or “who sanctifies Israel and the festivals.” Before a festive meal on the eve of the Sabbath or holiday, the *Kiddush* is recited over a cup of wine by the head of the household. It includes the customary blessing over the wine and is accompanied by biblical verses. The wine benediction and biblical verses are also recited before the large first meal on the morning of the Sabbath or festival. No food can be eaten before the *Kiddush* is recited. It is also traditional to recite the *Kiddush* in the synagogue at the conclusion of the evening and morning

services. This custom originally was instituted for the benefit of travellers who might be lodging and eating at the synagogue over the Sabbath or festival.

And He Said to Them

And he said unto them, the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

King James Bible

Mark, 2:27-28

QUESTION: WHY ARE THERE THREE DIFFERENT SABBATHS IN THE THREE MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS?

ANSWER

It is commonly said that the Jewish Sabbath falls on the seventh day of the week (Saturday), the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week (Sunday), and the Muslim Sabbath on Friday. This is, however, a misconception.

The root of the question is the biblical institution of resting from all labor on the seventh day of the week in commemoration of the divine rest on the seventh day of creation. This Sabbath (from Hebrew *shabbat*, meaning “ceasing”) became in later Judaism a day devoted not only to very strict restrictions on creative work, but also to study of the Torah and extended feasting and public worship. Contemporary forms of Judaism still honour the seventh day, from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday, as a special time.

From the first Christian century onward, as Christianity developed its consciousness as a biblically based religion distinct from Judaism, the question was asked: Are Christians bound by the commandment to observe the Jewish Sabbath? Most forms of Christianity have answered in the negative. Early on, the first day of the week became a preferred time for public Christian religious celebration. Since Christ was believed to have risen from death on a Sunday, this day became known as the Lord’s Day. It gradually attracted to itself much of the reverence that the Sabbath enjoyed in Judaism.

Days of the Week

The names of the days are based on the seven heavenly bodies used in traditional astrology (the sun, the moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn). These were believed at the time (from 1100 to 1500) to revolve around the earth and influence its events. The seven-day week became part of the Roman calendar in AD 321.

English	Latin	Saxon	German	French	Italian	Spanish
Sunday	Dies Solis	Sunnandaeg - Sun's Day	Sonntag	dimanche	domenica	domingo
Monday	Dies Lunae	Monandaeg - Moon's Day	Montag	lundi	lunedì	lunes
Tuesday	Dies Martis	Tiwesdaeg - Tiw's Day ¹	Dienstag	mardi	martedì	martes
Wednesday	Dies Mercurii	Wodnesdaeg - Woden's Day ²	Mittwoch	mercredi	mercoledì	miércoles
Thursday	Dies Jovis	Thunresdaeg - Thor's Day ³	Donnerstag	jeudi	giovedì	jueves
Friday	Dies Veneris	Frigedaeg - Frigg's Day ⁴	Freitag	vendredi	venerdì	viernes
Saturday	Dies Saturni	Sater-daeg - Saturn's Day	Samstag	samedi	sabato	Sábado

- 1) Tiw: Anglo-Saxon name for Norse Tyr, son of Odin and god of war, closest to Mars (Greek Ares), son of Roman god Jupiter (Greek Zeus).
- 2) Woden: Anglo-Saxon name for Odin, Norse dispenser of victory, closest to Mercury (Greek Hermes), Roman messenger of victory.
- 3) Thor: Norse god of thunder, eldest son of Odin, closest to Roman Jupiter (Greek Zeus).
- 4) Frigg (or Freyja): wife of Odin, the Norse goddess of love, equivalent to Venus (Greek Aphrodite).

JESUS RESTS IN THE TOMB TO OBSERVE THE SABBATH

On the approach of Passover, Jesus travelled toward Jerusalem for the last time. (John mentions numerous trips to Jerusalem and more than one Passover, whereas the synoptists roughly divide the public ministry into a Galilean section and a Judean section and record one Passover, which came after Jesus left Galilee for Judea and Jerusalem.) On the **Sunday** before the Passover, Jesus entered Jerusalem, where he was met by crowds of people who acclaimed him enthusiastically. There (on **Monday** and **Tuesday**, according to the synoptists), he drove from the Temple the traders and moneychangers who, by long-established custom, had been allowed to transact business in the outer court (Mark 11:15-19), and he disputed with the chief priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees questions about his authority, tribute to Caesar, and the resurrection. On **Tuesday**, Jesus also revealed to his disciples the signs that would usher in his Parousia, or second coming.

The Last Supper

The New Testament Gospel of Mark tells the story of the life and mission of Jesus Christ, with particular attention focused on the opposition Jesus faced and his eventual death and resurrection. The following excerpt from the King James Version of the Bible begins with the festival of unleavened bread, part of the Jewish celebration of Passover commemorating the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt. At this gathering, Jesus shares with his 12 disciples a meal of bread and wine to symbolize his union with his followers. In a ritualized form, this meal has become one of the sacraments or holy rites of the Christian church, known as the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper.

On **Wednesday**, while Jesus was in Bethany, a woman anointed his head with a costly ointment. Jesus interpreted this act as a symbolic preparation for his burial (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9). Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, the priests and scribes, concerned that Jesus' activities would turn the Romans against them and the Jewish people (John 11:48), conspired with Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, to arrest and kill Jesus by stealth, "for they feared the people" (Luke 22:2). John 11:47-53 places the conspiracy before Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. On **Thursday**, Jesus ate the Passover supper with his disciples and during the meal referred to his imminent betrayal and death as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. In blessing the unleavened bread and wine during the Passover services, he called the bread his body and the wine his "blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27), and he bid the disciples partake of each. This ritual, the Eucharist, has been repeated by Christians ever since and has become the central act of worship in the Christian church.

After the meal Jesus and his disciples went to the Mount of Olives, where, according to Matthew (26:30-32) and Mark (14:26-28), Jesus predicted his resurrection. Knowing then that the hour of his death was near, Jesus retired to the Garden of Gethsemane, where, "being in agony" (Luke 22:44), he meditated and prayed. A crowd sent by the religious authorities, and led by Judas Iscariot, arrested him in Gethsemane.

Trial and Crucifixion

According to John (18:13-24), Jesus was brought after his arrest to Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas, for a preliminary examination. The synoptists make no mention of this incident: They report only that Jesus was taken to a meeting of the supreme council of the Jews, the Sanhedrin. At the council meeting, Caiaphas asked Jesus to declare whether he was "the Christ, the Son of God" (Matthew 26:63). Upon his affirmation (Mark 14:62), the council condemned Jesus to death for blasphemy. Only the Roman procurator, however, was empowered to impose capital punishment, and so, on **Friday** morning, Jesus was taken before the procurator, Pontius Pilate, for sentencing. Before pronouncing judgment, Pilate asked him if he was the king of the Jews, and Jesus replied, "You have said so" (Mark 15:2). Thereafter, Pilate tried several expedients to save Jesus before ultimately leaving the decision to the crowd that gathered. When the crowd insisted on his death, Pilate ordered him executed (Matthew 27:24). (Pilate's role in the death of Jesus

continues to be debated by historians. The early church tended to place a majority of the blame on the Jews and to deal less harshly with Pilate). But Acts 4:27 does not exempt him from his complacency.

Jesus was taken to Golgotha and executed by crucifixion, the Roman punishment for political offenders and criminals. Two robbers were crucified also, one on each side of him. On the cross, above Jesus' head, "they put the charge against him, which read "This is Jesus the King of the Jews"" (Matthew 27:37); Late in the day, his body was taken down, and because of the approach of the **Sabbath**, when burial was not permitted, it was hastily laid in a nearby tomb by Joseph of Arimathea. (John 19:39-42 relates that Joseph was assisted by Nicodemus.)

The Resurrection

Early on the following **Sunday**, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James" (Mark 16:1), going to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body for burial, found the tomb empty. (Matthew 28:2 reports that an angel appeared after an earthquake and rolled back the stone.) Inside the tomb, "a young man" (Mark 16:5) clothed in white announced to them that Jesus had risen. (This news is announced by the angel in Matthew 28:5-6 and by two men "in dazzling apparel" in Luke 24:4. According to John 21:11-18, Mary Magdalene saw two angels and then the risen Christ.); Later on the same day, according to Luke, John, and Mark, Jesus appeared to the women and to other of the disciples at various locations in and around Jerusalem. Most of the disciples did not doubt that they had again seen and heard the master they had known and followed during the time of his ministry in Galilee and Judea. A few disciples, however, doubted it at first (Matthew 28:17). Thomas, who had not been present at these first appearances, also doubted that Jesus had risen (John 20:24-29). As recorded in the New Testament, the Resurrection became one of the most compelling doctrines of Christianity, because, according to this doctrine, by rising from the dead, Jesus gave humanity hope of a life after death.

All the Gospels add that, for a brief time after his resurrection, Jesus further instructed his disciples in matters pertaining to the kingdom of God. He also commissioned them to "Go ... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Finally, according to Luke (24:50-51), at Bethany Jesus was seen to ascend into the heavens by his disciples. Acts 1:2-12 reports that the ascension occurred 40 days after Jesus' resurrection; the doctrines that Jesus expounded and those concerning him were subsequently developed into the principal tenets of Christian theology.