

PREPARATING God's chosen people for the revelation of Messiah

There is little Biblical or archaeological evidence that the Jews kept the Torah prior to the second temple period after the nation returned from Babylon. [1] Full freedom from foreign rule was established under the Hasmonean leadership in Judea and lasted less than 100 years. Around 135 BCE several social, political, and religious groups developed along with separative sects, like the Essenes. Some of these were:

Sadducees: Consisting mostly of the wealthy, aristocratic, and hereditary priestly class tied to the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Sadducees encouraged acceptance of Greco-Roman culture. Keep in mind that King Herod the Great replaced Levitical hereditary priests with aristocrats willing to cooperate with Rome.

Pharisees: Working class, educational commoners, Pharisees were scribes, legal scholars, and teachers who did not inherit their positions by bloodline. They were largely self-supporting and held regular jobs, working as artisans, merchants, or farmers. This allowed them to connect deeply with the everyday struggles of ordinary citizens. They leaned toward separatism from the Sadducees and the prevailing culture. They encouraged the study of scripture and prayer in local synagogues, making worship possible outside of the physical Temple in Jerusalem. They taught the resurrection of the dead, divine providence, and final judgment—beliefs that set them apart from rival groups like the Sadducees. The Pharisees were instrumental in the introduction of the Torah and prophets to the community. They helped set the stage for Jesus to teach in the synagogues. Pharisees were determined to follow every letter of the law in order to remain in God's favor.

Synagogues: Communal gathering places used for a variety of needs; as schools (Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.43), for communal meals (Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.214-216), as hostels, as courts, as a place to collect and distribute charity, and for political meetings (Josephus,

Life 276-289). Reading and interpreting the Torah and Prophets is well attested in first-century synagogues, and although scholars disagree about the extent of communal prayers, literary sources suggest that Jews prayed in at least some synagogues at this time (Josephus, *Life* 280-295).

Although scholars used to assume that the Pharisees (the likely precursors to the rabbis) were in charge of synagogues, most first-century sources include elders and priests as leaders of synagogues. (Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.12-3, Theodotus Inscription).

Sanhedrin: The supreme Jewish council, religious court, and legislative body in Jerusalem under Roman rule. The council had 71 members, including elders, scribes, and members of high-priestly families. It included members from major religious and political groups like the Pharisees and Sadducees. A fair historical reconstruction would assume that in the first century the Great Sanhedrin consisted of aristocrats drawn from Pharisees, Sadducees, and priests with the High Priest possessing a powerful influence over the body.

Jewish Revival began in the mid second century BCE. Intensive training in the Hebrew scriptures and desire of men and women to follow Torah as God's authority and a resurgency to keep all the festivals and traditions.

[1] Adler, Yonatan (2022). When Did Jews Start Observing Torah? TheTorah.com. <https://thetorah.com/article/when-did-jews-start-observing-torah>

Rosenbloom, Joseph R. 2002, <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/pharisees>

Levine, Lee I. *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005

Runesson, Anders, Donald D. Binder, and Birger Olsson. *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 C.E.: A Source Book*. Leiden: Brill, 2008

Schmidt, T C, 'The Great Sanhedrin and Its Records of the Trial of Jesus', *Josephus and Jesus: New Evidence for the One Called Christ* (Oxford, 2025)

Shabbat (Sabbath)

Shabbat (or Sabbath) falls every seventh day of the week, from Friday just before sunset until dark on Saturday night. It is a day of rest, marking the time when God stopped creating after the six days of creation. Shabbat recognizes God as Creator of the Universe and as Redeemer of Israel from Egypt.

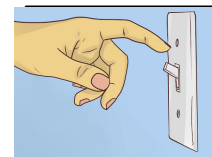
Jewish law prohibits doing any "deliberate activity" or "skill and craftsmanship". Unless an urgent human or medical need is life-threatening, there are 39 categories of prohibitions:^[1]

plowing earth	spinning	cutting hide to shape
sowing	weaving	writing two or more letters
reaping	making two loops	erasing two or more letters
binding sheaves	weaving two threads	building
threshing	separating two threads	demolishing
winnowing	tying	extinguishing a fire
selecting	untying	kindling a fire
grinding	sewing stitches	putting the finishing touch on an object
sifting	tearing	transporting an object (between private and public domains, or over 4 cubits within public domain)
kneading	trapping	
baking	slaughtering	
shearing wool	flaying	
washing wool	tanning	
beating wool	scraping hide	
dyeing wool	marking hide	

"Categories Of Activity" For example, while "winnowing" usually refers exclusively to the separation of chaff from grain, and "selecting" refers exclusively to the separation of debris from grain, they refer in the Talmudic sense to any separation of intermixed materials which renders edible that which was inedible. Thus, filtering undrinkable water to make it drinkable falls under this category, as does picking small bones from fish (gefилte fish is one solution to this problem).^[2]

SABBATH PROHIBITIONS By the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards^[3]

(and ways to work around them)

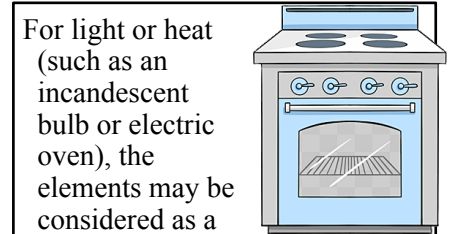


Completing an electrical circuit constitutes "building"

Turning off the circuit constitutes "demolishing"

Tiny sparks are created in a switch when the circuit is closed, constitutes "lighting a fire."

Turning lights off constitutes "extinguishing a fire"



For light or heat (such as an incandescent bulb or electric oven), the elements may be considered as a type of fire that falls under both "lighting fire," and "cooking/baking"

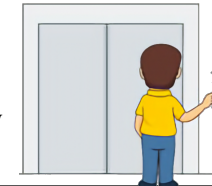
Preset timers are acceptable



Avoid carrying keys by attaching them into a tie bar, part of a belt buckle, or a brooch,

because an article of clothing, or jewelry may be worn rather than "carried."

In Sabbath mode, a *Sabbath elevator* will stop auto-matically at every floor, for people to step on and off without anyone having to "press any buttons."



Some Orthodox hire a "Shabbos Goy" (a Gentile) to perform prohibited tasks on Shabbat



The Shabbos App is an Android app claimed by its creators to enable Jewish Sabbath-observers, to use a smartphone to text on the Sabbath. It has met with resistance from some authorities.

[1] Kovel, Avraham. "Shabbat: A Taste of Life's Purpose, Aish HaTorah

[2] Mishnah Tractate Shabbat 7:2

[3] www.rabbinicalassembly.org/resources/committee-jewish-law-and-standards