



Jewish Studies Initiative
of North Texas

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Through the Gospels
Bible Study at Northway Christian Church
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The Book of John Chapter 5
The Jewish Perspective
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Background of the Jewish Sabbath prohibitions against creative labor

Exodus chapter 20, verses 8 - 11

Exodus chapter 24, verses 12 - 18 - Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive the law

Exodus chapters 25 - 31 - 95% of what Moses is taught by God concerns the construction of the Tabernacle. 5% - the last 6 verses - concerns the commandment to keep the Sabbath. Conclusion: the construction of the Tabernacle is constrained by the laws of Sabbath observance; the construction is to cease and desist every Sabbath. From here it can be extrapolated that whatever labors are involved in building the Tabernacle, those are the labors that are forbidden on the Sabbath.

Exodus chapter 34, verses 29 - 33 - Moses comes down from Mount Sinai in order to instruct the people concerning what he had learned while up there.

Exodus chapters 35 - 36, verses 7 - Moses instructs the people on the building of the Tabernacle, prefacing his words - in the first three verses of chapter 35 - with the commandment to observe the Sabbath. This is completely consistent with the above statement conclusion that the construction of the Tabernacle is to be put aside on the Sabbath.

Commentary of Rashi on the Torah, Exodus chapter 31, verse 13

Even though you must be absolutely dedicated to the construction of the Tabernacle with alacrity, the Sabbath must not be pushed aside on account of it.

Commentary of Rashi on the Torah, Exodus, chapter 35, verse 2

Before presenting them with the command to build the Tabernacle he warned them to observe the Sabbath, to teach that the former does not push aside the Sabbath.

The Specific Prohibitions

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, page 73a

MISHNAH. THE PRIMARY LABOURS ARE FORTY LESS ONE, [VIZ.:] SOWING, PLOUGHING, REAPING, BINDING SHEAVES, THRESHING, WINNOWERING, SELECTING, GRINDING, SIFTING, KNEADING, BAKING, SHEARING WOOL, BLEACHING, HACKLING, DYEING, SPINNING, STRETCHING THE THREADS,¹⁴ THE MAKING OF TWO MESHES, WEAVING TWO THREADS, DIVIDING TWO THREADS, TYING [KNOTTING] AND UNTYING, SEWING TWO STITCHES, TEARING IN ORDER TO SEW TWO STITCHES, CAPTURING A DEER, SLAUGHTERING, OR FLAYING, OR SALTING IT, CURING ITS HIDE, SCRAPING IT [OF ITS HAIR], CUTTING IT UP, WRITING TWO LETTERS, ERASING IN ORDER TO WRITE TWO LETTERS [OVER THE ERASURE], BUILDING, PULLING DOWN, EXTINGUISHING, KINDLING, STRIKING WITH A HAMMER, [AND] CARRYING OUT FROM ONE DOMAIN TO ANOTHER: THESE ARE THE FORTY PRIMARY LABOURS LESS ONE.

Carrying

Jeremiah chapter 17, verses 21 - 27

Talmud of the Land of Israel, Tractate Shavuot chapter 1, law 1

What is the source that teaching that carrying is one of the labors (forbidden on shabat)? Rebbi Helkia in the name of Rebbi Aha (said): We learn it all from this verse - "You shall not carry out burdens from your homes on the day of Shabat, and you shall not do any labor"

Healing

Babylonian Talmud, Tractat Shabat page 101a

Our Rabbis taught: One may oil and massage the bowels on the Sabbath, and one may recite a incantation for snakes and serpents on the Sabbath, and an article may be placed over the eye on the Sabbath. Raban Simeon ben Gamliel said: ...