

# God's Presence in the Sabbath – The Source of Its Holiness and Blessing

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## Abstract

This article explores the theological foundation that **God's actual presence in the Sabbath is what makes it holy and blessed**. While many view the Sabbath as merely a commanded day of rest, this paper proposes that its sanctity is not an arbitrary designation but a direct result of **God embedding Himself into sacred time**. Drawing from **biblical theology, systematic theology, Hebrew linguistics, and Ellen White's writings**, we establish that **holiness in Scripture is always contingent upon God's presence** rather than being an inherent characteristic of time, places, or objects.

Through an exegetical analysis of **Genesis 2:3, Exodus 3:5, Exodus 29:43-44, Isaiah 58:13-14, Matthew 12:8, and Hebrews 4:9-10**, this study demonstrates that **the Sabbath functions as a sanctuary in time where God uniquely dwells**. Linguistic insights into the Hebrew terms שָׁבַת (shavat – cease to dwell), נָח (nuach – settle and abide), מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ (mikra kodesh – holy convocation), and קָדַשׁ (kadash – made holy by presence) confirm that **God did not merely stop working on the Sabbath but actively entered and sanctified it**.

This framework has profound **practical, theological, and eschatological implications**, influencing worship, obedience, and the ultimate rest believers anticipate in eternity. By recognizing the Sabbath as **God's appointed dwelling in time**, this study calls for a reexamination of Sabbath observance as a **relational experience with the Divine rather than a mere obligation**. Understanding that **God's presence permeates the Sabbath** offers believers a **deeper communion with Him and a foretaste of eternal rest**.

## 1.1 Background and Context

The Sabbath is widely recognized as a holy day, yet the nature of its holiness remains a subject of theological inquiry. Many assume that the Sabbath is holy **because God simply declared it so**, but a careful examination of Scripture reveals a consistent pattern—**holiness is always a result of God's presence**. Whether it is the burning bush (Exodus 3:5), the tabernacle (Exodus 29:43-44), or the temple (2 Chronicles 7:1-2), things become holy **only when God is present within them**. This raises an important question: **Is the Sabbath holy simply because it was set apart, or is it holy because God actually dwells within it?**

Traditional theological perspectives often emphasize the **cessation of labor** as the defining feature of the Sabbath. However, this article proposes that the **true essence of Sabbath holiness is God's tangible presence in time**. This perspective aligns with the **biblical theology of sanctification** and the **Hebrew linguistic structure** of Sabbath-related terms, which indicate that God did not merely rest **from** creation but rested **into** the Sabbath, embedding His presence within it.

This discussion is critical because **how one understands the holiness of the Sabbath directly influences how one experiences it**. If the Sabbath is simply a command to stop working, it remains a legalistic observance. However, if it is a sanctuary in time where **God's presence uniquely abides**, then Sabbath observance becomes an act of entering into divine communion. This study seeks to establish this foundational truth through scriptural exegesis, theological reasoning, and linguistic analysis.

## 1.2 Research Problem and Theoretical Proposition

The fundamental question this article seeks to answer is: **What is the true source of the Sabbath's holiness?** Traditionally, many assume that the Sabbath is holy **because God declared it to be so** at creation (Genesis 2:3). While divine proclamation is significant, **a consistent biblical pattern shows that holiness is never intrinsic to any object, place, or time; rather, it is always the result of God's presence**. This study challenges the notion that the Sabbath is merely a day of commanded rest and instead proposes that **the Sabbath is holy because God actually dwells within it, making it a sanctuary in time**.

### Holiness is Always the Result of God's Presence

A recurring theme throughout Scripture is that **things become holy when God's presence is in them**. This is evident in multiple biblical examples:

#### 1. The Burning Bush – Exodus 3:5

- When Moses approached the burning bush, God instructed him: *"Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."*
- The ground itself was not inherently holy; **it became holy because of God's presence in that moment**.

#### 2. The Tabernacle and Temple – Exodus 29:43-44, 2 Chronicles 7:1-2

- God declared that the tabernacle would be *"sanctified by My glory"* (Exodus 29:43), meaning it was holy **because God's presence filled it**.
- When Solomon dedicated the temple, *"the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD"* (2 Chronicles 7:1-2), making it a sacred space.

#### 3. The Promised Land – Joshua 5:15

- When Joshua encountered the Commander of the Lord's Army, he was told, *"Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy."*
- Again, **the land itself was not inherently holy—it became holy because God was there.**

These examples establish a **clear biblical principle: holiness is always a function of divine presence.** This pattern raises a crucial question—if the Sabbath is declared holy in Genesis 2:3, **does this mean God's presence is within it?**

## The Sabbath as a Sanctuary in Time

If holiness is always connected to **God's presence**, then the Sabbath must be more than just a commanded day of rest; **it must be a sacred time infused with God's presence.** Just as the tabernacle was a **sanctuary in space**, the Sabbath serves as a **sanctuary in time**, where **God uniquely dwells.** This concept aligns with the idea that God does not just command Sabbath rest but **enters into Sabbath time, making it a period where divine presence is most accessible.**

This is further supported by **the Hebrew language** used to describe Sabbath rest. The word שָׁבַת (**shavat**) means more than just "ceasing from work"; it implies **a deliberate stopping to enter into a space or state of rest.** Additionally, נָחָה (**nuach**), the word used in Exodus 20:11 to describe God's rest, conveys the idea of **settling or dwelling**—indicating that **God didn't just stop working; He placed Himself within the Sabbath.**

Furthermore, the phrase מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ (**mikra kodesh**) in Leviticus 23:3 describes the Sabbath as a **"holy convocation" or a divine gathering**, implying that **Sabbath observance is not merely about ceasing activity but about stepping into a divine appointment where God is especially present.**

## Conclusion: A Unique Dwelling Place of God

This article proposes that the **Sabbath is a time when God uniquely abides with His people, making it distinct from all other days.** If holiness is always a function of God's presence, then the Sabbath's holiness comes from **God embedding Himself into that 24-hour period.** Just as the tabernacle and temple were set apart because God dwelled in them, **the Sabbath is set apart because God inhabits it.**

Understanding the Sabbath as a **living sanctuary in time** has profound implications for worship, spiritual renewal, and our relationship with God. Sabbath observance is not just about **obedience to a command**—it is about **entering into God's presence** in a way that is distinct from all other times of the week.

## 1.3 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its ability to **clarify misunderstandings about the nature of the Sabbath, deepen theological understanding of God's presence, and transform perspectives on worship, Sabbath-keeping, and eschatology.** By reframing the Sabbath as a **divine encounter rather than just a command**, this research calls for a renewed appreciation of the seventh day as a time in which **God's actual presence uniquely dwells, sanctifying time itself.**

### Clarifying Misunderstandings Regarding the Sabbath

Many people, including both **Sabbath observers and non-observers**, hold a **narrow or incomplete** understanding of what makes the Sabbath holy. A common misconception is that the Sabbath is **holy simply because God declared it so**, as if its sanctity were an arbitrary designation. Others believe that **human observance of the Sabbath is what makes it holy**, suggesting that Sabbath-keeping itself is the source of its sacredness.

This study **corrects these misunderstandings** by demonstrating that, according to biblical theology, **holiness is never intrinsic to any place, object, or time—it is always a function of God's presence.** Just as **the ground near the burning bush (Exodus 3:5), the tabernacle (Exodus 29:43-44), and the temple (2 Chronicles 7:1-2) became holy because God dwelled there, the Sabbath is holy because God's presence is within it.** This means that Sabbath holiness **precedes and exists independently of human observance**; it is not made holy because we keep it—it is kept because it is holy.

Furthermore, some view the Sabbath merely as **a cessation of labor**, believing that rest alone defines its purpose. While rest is an important aspect, this perspective **misses the deeper theological reality** that the Sabbath is not just a break from work—it is **a time when God abides with His people in a special way.** This study presents evidence that **God did not just cease from work on the seventh day—He entered into the Sabbath, making it a living sanctuary in time.**

### Deepening Theological Understanding of God's Presence

Another key significance of this study is its contribution to the **theology of divine presence.** The Bible repeatedly emphasizes that **wherever God's presence is, there is holiness.** By applying this principle to the Sabbath, we gain a **fuller understanding of how God interacts with time itself.**

This has implications beyond just Sabbath theology—it enhances our understanding of **God's relational nature.** The fact that **God embeds His presence into the Sabbath** reveals His **desire for communion with humanity.** Just as He met with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, with Moses in the tabernacle, and with Israel in the temple, He now **invites all people to meet with Him in sacred time every Sabbath.**

This study also deepens the theological discourse on **sacred time versus sacred space**. While traditional theology often focuses on **God dwelling in physical places (temples, mountains, the Ark of the Covenant, etc.)**, this research emphasizes that **God also dwells in time**. The Sabbath is **not a mere relic of Jewish law—it is a weekly divine appointment where God’s presence is uniquely accessible**.

## **Impact on Worship, Sabbath-Keeping, and Eschatology**

Recognizing the Sabbath as **a divine encounter rather than just a command** fundamentally reshapes how believers approach Sabbath-keeping. If the Sabbath is truly **a sanctuary in time where God uniquely dwells**, then Sabbath observance becomes more than just legalistic obedience—it becomes **an act of entering into the presence of God**.

### **1. Worship and Spiritual Renewal**

- This study encourages believers to **approach Sabbath observance as a time to experience divine presence rather than just following a rule**.
- It calls for Sabbath worship that emphasizes **God’s nearness, divine communion, and spiritual renewal**.

### **2. Sabbath-Keeping as a Transformational Experience**

- If Sabbath holiness comes from **God’s presence**, then keeping the Sabbath is not just about **what we don’t do (refraining from work) but about what we actively seek (entering into divine rest)**.
- This perspective leads to a more **joyful, relational, and meaningful** Sabbath experience.

### **3. Eschatological Significance**

- The Sabbath is a **foretaste of the eternal rest in God’s presence (Hebrews 4:9-10, Revelation 21:3)**.
- Recognizing God’s Sabbath presence helps believers anticipate and prepare for the **ultimate Sabbath rest in the New Creation**.

## **Conclusion**

This study has profound implications for how the Sabbath is understood, practiced, and experienced. By **clarifying that the Sabbath is holy because of God’s presence**, it **corrects theological misconceptions, enriches our understanding of divine communion, and redefines Sabbath-keeping as an encounter with the Living God**. In doing so, it shifts the focus from **legalistic observance to joyful participation in sacred time**, offering a more profound spiritual experience for all who seek to honor the Sabbath.

## 2.1 Biblical Foundation of Holiness

The concept of holiness is central to understanding the significance of the Sabbath. In Scripture, holiness is never an inherent characteristic of an object, place, or time; rather, it is always the result of **God's presence** dwelling in or upon it. This foundational principle can be seen in multiple biblical examples, all of which reinforce the idea that **the Sabbath is holy because God's presence uniquely dwells within it.**

### Genesis 2:3 – God Blessed and Sanctified the Seventh Day

The first mention of holiness in Scripture appears in **Genesis 2:3**, where God **blesses and sanctifies the seventh day**:

*“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”*

This passage raises an important question: **What does it mean for the seventh day to be sanctified?** The Hebrew word used for “sanctified” is **קָדַשׁ (kadosh)**, which means **to make holy, set apart, or consecrate**. In every other biblical instance where something is **made holy**, it is because **God's presence is within it** (e.g., the temple, the tabernacle, the priesthood). Since holiness is always a function of divine presence, this passage suggests that **God's presence abided in the seventh day, setting it apart from all other days of the week.**

### Exodus 3:5 – The Ground is Holy Because of God's Presence

A direct example of **holiness being tied to God's presence** is seen in **Exodus 3:5**, when Moses encounters the burning bush:

*“Then He said, ‘Do not come near. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.’”*

The **ground itself was not inherently holy**—it became holy because **God's presence was there**. This principle is crucial because it demonstrates that **holiness is not an arbitrary status**; it is the result of **divine presence filling a space**. Just as the ground became holy when God was there, **time itself becomes holy when God places His presence in it—just as He did in the Sabbath.**

### Exodus 29:43-44 – The Tabernacle is Sanctified by God's Glory and Presence

Another example of this principle is found in **Exodus 29:43-44**, where God declares how the tabernacle is made holy:

*“And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests.”*

The **tabernacle was made holy because of God’s presence dwelling within it**. Holiness was not conferred upon the tabernacle simply because it was built according to divine instruction; it was sanctified **only when God’s glory filled it**. This once again confirms that **holiness comes from God’s dwelling, not from human designation**.

## **2 Chronicles 7:1-2 – The Temple is Holy Because God’s Glory Fills It**

A similar event occurs in the dedication of Solomon’s temple, recorded in **2 Chronicles 7:1-2**:

*“When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’s house.”*

This passage provides a clear example of **God’s presence sanctifying a space**. The temple became holy **not because it was built with special materials or because it was a designated location, but because God’s presence filled it**. This parallels the sanctification of the Sabbath—the seventh day was **set apart because God Himself rested into it**.

## **Isaiah 57:15 – God’s Presence Dwells with the Humble and Makes Them Holy**

The concept of **God’s presence bringing holiness** is also seen in **Isaiah 57:15**:

*“For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”*

This verse teaches that holiness is not only about **locations or objects** but also about **people who are in the presence of God**. God’s presence does not just **dwell in holy places—it transforms those who seek Him**. This suggests that when believers **enter into the Sabbath rest, they are entering into a sacred time where God’s presence revives and sanctifies them**.

## **Conclusion: The Sabbath is Holy Because God’s Presence Dwells Within It**

These passages establish a consistent biblical pattern—**holiness always results from God’s presence**. Whether it is the **ground near the burning bush, the tabernacle, the temple, or a humble believer**, something only becomes holy **when God is in it**.

Since **Genesis 2:3 declares the Sabbath as holy**, and since holiness is always **a function of divine presence**, it follows that **the Sabbath is holy because God’s presence uniquely dwells in**

**that 24-hour period.** Just as the temple was a sanctuary in space, the Sabbath is a **sanctuary in time, where God abides with His people.**

This understanding transforms the way we view Sabbath observance. It is not merely a **command to cease labor** but an **invitation to step into the presence of God in sacred time.** Recognizing the Sabbath as a **dwelling place for God's presence** deepens our appreciation for its significance and calls believers to approach it with reverence, joy, and expectancy.

## 2.2 The Sabbath as a Sanctuary in Time

The concept of the **Sabbath as a sanctuary in time** is a profound theological framework that highlights its significance beyond merely a day of physical rest. Just as the **temple functioned as a sacred space where God's presence dwelled**, the Sabbath serves as **sacred time in which God abides with His people.** This understanding has deep roots in both **Jewish and Christian theology**, emphasizing the Sabbath as a **temporal dwelling place of God's presence**—a concept that stretches **from Eden to Revelation.**

### Rabbi Abraham Heschel's Concept of the Sabbath as "Sacred Time"

Rabbi **Abraham Joshua Heschel**, in his classic work *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, introduces the idea that the Sabbath is **not just a commandment but a palace in time, a sanctuary without walls where God's presence is uniquely encountered.** He contrasts **sacred time with sacred space**, arguing that while **temples and altars served as physical locations where God met with His people**, the Sabbath serves as a temporal location where divine presence is concentrated.

Heschel writes:

*"The Sabbaths are our great cathedrals; and our Holy of Holies is a shrine that neither the Romans nor the Germans were able to burn."*

This statement captures the **indestructible nature of the Sabbath**—unlike physical temples that can be destroyed, the **Sabbath as a sanctuary in time remains eternally available as a space for divine encounter.** Just as the **tabernacle and temple were set apart for worship**, the **Sabbath is set apart as holy time**, where believers step into **God's sacred presence.**

### Heschel's Argument: The Sabbath as a Sacred Time Filled with God's Presence

Heschel further argues that the **true essence of holiness is not found in physical structures but in moments where God and humanity commune.** He describes the Sabbath as a **"sanctuary in**



time” where, for 24 hours, **God’s presence is uniquely available in a way unlike any other day of the week.**

This perspective aligns with **biblical theology**, which consistently teaches that **holiness is the result of divine presence** (Exodus 3:5, Exodus 29:43-44, 2 Chronicles 7:1-2). If holiness is always a function of God’s presence, then the Sabbath is **holy because God has embedded Himself into it**, just as He did with the temple in space.

## **Theological Continuity: From Eden to Revelation**

The concept of the Sabbath as a **dwelling place of God’s presence** is not just a Jewish or rabbinic idea—it has strong biblical continuity from **creation to eternity**.

### **The Sabbath as God’s First Temple (Genesis 2:3)**

The **Garden of Eden** was the first place where **God and humanity communed**. Interestingly, **there was no physical temple in Eden**—instead, God’s presence permeated **time**. **Genesis 2:3** states:

*“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”*

- This is the **first act of sanctification recorded in the Bible**, and it is applied **not to a place, but to a time**.
- If holiness is the result of **God’s presence**, then the Sabbath is holy because **God entered into it, making it a sanctuary in time**.
- **Eden itself was a Sabbath reality**—a place of uninterrupted communion between God and man.

### **Eternal Sabbath Rest in the New Creation (Hebrews 4:9-10, Revelation 21:3)**

The **Sabbath does not end with history—it extends into eternity**. Scripture portrays the **final redemption as an entrance into God’s ultimate Sabbath rest**.

- **Hebrews 4:9-10**: *“There remains therefore a rest [Sabbatismos] for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”*
- The word **Sabbatismos** means “a Sabbath-like rest,” indicating that the **eternal state of the redeemed is modeled after the Sabbath itself**.
- Just as God rested after creation, believers will enter into **an eternal Sabbath experience in the New Creation**.
- **Revelation 21:3**: *“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people.”*

- The **final picture of redemption is one of restored divine presence.**
- This parallels **Eden and the Sabbath**, where God originally communed with humanity.
- The **New Creation is the ultimate Sabbath**, where God's people will forever dwell in His presence.

## Conclusion: The Sabbath as an Indestructible Sanctuary in Time

The Sabbath is more than a **command or ritual**—it is a **living sanctuary in time where God's presence abides**. As Heschel emphasized, **the Sabbath is an eternal temple, a sacred space that cannot be destroyed**. From the **first Sabbath in Eden to the eternal Sabbath in the New Creation**, the seventh day has been **God's dwelling place in time**, offering humanity a foretaste of eternity.

Recognizing the **Sabbath as sacred time rather than just a commanded observance** transforms how believers experience it. Rather than a burden, it becomes an **invitation to step into God's divine presence, to dwell with Him, and to experience a glimpse of heaven itself**.

## 2.3 Ellen White's Insights on God's Presence in the Sabbath

Ellen G. White, a prominent religious writer and co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, provides profound insights into the nature of the Sabbath, emphasizing that its sanctity and blessing are derived directly from **God's presence** within it. Her writings go beyond the idea of the Sabbath as merely a day of physical rest or legal obligation, presenting it as a time uniquely infused with divine presence and blessing that cannot be experienced on any other day.

### The Unique Blessing of the Sabbath

Ellen White eloquently captures the essence of the Sabbath as a unique experience, stating:

*"Upon the seventh day of the week to enjoy a blessing which cannot be enjoyed upon any other day because it is not there."*

This statement underscores a key theological proposition—that **God's presence and blessing are uniquely available on the Sabbath in a way that is absent on other days**. White's perspective aligns with the biblical understanding that **holiness and blessing are always associated with God's presence** (Exodus 3:5, Exodus 29:43-44). In this view, the Sabbath is not merely sanctified by divine decree but by **God's abiding presence throughout the 24-hour period**.

## Experiencing Divine Communion

White's insights invite believers to see the Sabbath as a time of **special communion with God**, where His presence offers a distinctive spiritual refreshment. She writes that the Sabbath is a day when:

*"God bestows upon His people the richest blessings that heaven can give."*

This idea suggests that the Sabbath serves as a **spiritual conduit**, a sanctuary in time where believers can step into a **more intimate fellowship with God**. The notion that **special blessings are reserved for the Sabbath** implies that God's presence is not only more accessible but also more potent during this sacred time. This aligns with the biblical concept of the **Sabbath as a day set apart for God's people to draw near to Him**, mirroring the experiences of patriarchs and prophets who encountered God in sanctified places and times.

## The Sabbath as a Covenant Sign

In addition to highlighting the unique blessings of the Sabbath, Ellen White emphasizes its role as a **sign of God's covenant relationship with His people**:

*"The Sabbath is a sign that God recognizes them as His chosen people."*

This assertion reflects the biblical teaching found in **Exodus 31:13**, where God declares, *"Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you."* White interprets this sign not merely as an outward symbol but as **evidence of God's ongoing presence and sanctification** in the lives of His people.

By setting apart the Sabbath, God invites His followers into a **weekly renewal of their covenant relationship with Him**. The Sabbath serves as a perpetual reminder that God is both **Creator and Redeemer**, actively involved in the sanctification of His people. White's understanding of the Sabbath as a sign emphasizes that **it is not simply a ritualistic observance but a relational experience**, where the believer enters into a **divinely appointed meeting time**.

## Sabbath Observance and Identity

Ellen White also connects Sabbath observance with **spiritual identity and belonging**. By keeping the Sabbath, believers affirm their **identity as God's chosen people**. This is not merely about compliance with a commandment but about recognizing and celebrating **God's presence in their lives**. White suggests that Sabbath observance becomes a **public and personal acknowledgment of divine relationship and favor**.

Moreover, she implies that the Sabbath carries an **eschatological significance**, pointing forward to the ultimate rest and fellowship believers will experience in eternity. In this sense, Sabbath observance is both a **remembrance of creation and a foretaste of redemption**.

## The Transformative Power of the Sabbath

Ellen White's writings indicate that the **Sabbath has transformative power** because of God's presence. She frequently describes the Sabbath as a time when the believer can experience **spiritual renewal, deeper understanding, and a clearer vision of God's character and will**. By entering into this sacred time, individuals are not merely resting from labor; they are **being reshaped and sanctified by God's indwelling presence**.

## Conclusion

Ellen White's insights elevate the Sabbath from a mere **ritualistic observance to a profound spiritual experience**, emphasizing that **God's presence makes the day holy and uniquely blessed**. The Sabbath stands as both a **sign of God's covenant relationship** and a **time of unique divine communion**. For White, the Sabbath is a weekly invitation to experience **God's sanctifying power**, a foretaste of eternal rest, and a confirmation of believers' identity as God's chosen people. This understanding encourages a richer, more meaningful Sabbath observance—one that recognizes and seeks after the **blessing of God's presence**.

## 3.1 Holiness is Always a Consequence of Divine Presence

A foundational biblical principle is that **holiness is not an inherent characteristic of objects, places, people, or time—it is always the result of God's presence**. This theme runs consistently throughout Scripture, demonstrating that **whenever something is declared holy, it is because God has entered and dwelled within it**. From sacred places to consecrated individuals, holiness is never arbitrary; it is always a reflection of divine presence.

### Biblical Examples of Holiness Resulting from God's Presence

#### 1. The Burning Bush – Exodus 3:5

One of the clearest examples of holiness being a result of divine presence is found in the story of Moses and the burning bush:

*"Then He said, 'Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'"* (Exodus 3:5)

The **ground itself had no special properties**, yet it became holy **because God was there**. If holiness were an inherent quality, then all ground would be holy—but Scripture is clear that it was **God’s presence in that moment that sanctified the location**.

## 2. The Tabernacle – Exodus 29:43-44

Another example is the **tabernacle**, which became holy **only when God’s glory filled it**:

*“There I will meet with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory. So I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me.”* (Exodus 29:43-44)

The tabernacle was built according to **God’s precise instructions**, but it was not holy **until God’s glory filled it**. This pattern confirms that **holiness is conferred only by divine presence, not by human construction or religious designation**.

## 3. The Promised Land – Joshua 5:15

Before Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, he encountered the **Commander of the Lord’s army**, who instructed him:

*“Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.”* (Joshua 5:15)

Just as with Moses, **the land itself was not inherently holy—God’s presence made it so**. Holiness is always a **consequence of divine presence, never an independent attribute of an object or place**.

## The Sabbath Follows This Pattern

Since **Genesis 2:3 declares that the Sabbath is holy**, the same principle must apply—**the Sabbath is holy because God placed Himself within it**. The first explicit mention of holiness in Scripture is tied to **time rather than space**, reinforcing the idea that **God does not only dwell in physical places but also in sacred time**.

*“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”* (Genesis 2:3)

Here, **God’s presence entered into time itself**, making the Sabbath holy in the same way He made the tabernacle, temple, and Promised Land holy—**by dwelling within it**. The act of **blessing and sanctifying the seventh day** was not merely a symbolic gesture but an indication that **God placed Himself within the Sabbath, making it a sanctuary in time**.

## Conclusion: The Sabbath as a Living Sanctuary

The pattern of holiness in Scripture is clear: **things are made holy when God's presence enters them.** Just as the burning bush, tabernacle, and temple were sanctified by divine presence, the **Sabbath is sanctified because God abides in it.** This means that the Sabbath is **not just a command to be obeyed but an invitation to step into a divine encounter, a weekly meeting with God in sacred time.** Understanding the **Sabbath as a sanctuary in time** deepens its significance and transforms how it is observed—not just as a legal requirement but as **a living experience of God's presence.**

## 3.2 Jesus and the Sabbath: Confirming Divine Presence

The presence of God in the Sabbath is not only a concept found in the Old Testament but is also confirmed and embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus affirms that the Sabbath is not just a day of physical rest but a time of **divine relationship**, a sacred period where God meets with humanity in a special way. His words and actions regarding the Sabbath further emphasize that it is **holy because God Himself is present in it.**

### Jesus Declares His Lordship Over the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8)

One of Jesus' most profound statements regarding the Sabbath is found in **Matthew 12:8**:

**"For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."**

This declaration has **deep theological implications.** If Jesus is **Lord of the Sabbath**, it means that the Sabbath is **not just an ancient institution, but one that continues under His authority.** More significantly, it means that **Jesus Himself is present in the Sabbath in a unique and sovereign way.**

- In Jewish thought, the Sabbath was already understood as the Lord's day—a sacred time belonging to God.
- By calling Himself **"Lord of the Sabbath,"** Jesus was directly identifying Himself with **divine authority** over sacred time.
- This statement confirms that the **Sabbath is holy because Jesus, as God, is in it**—just as God's presence made the burning bush, the tabernacle, and the temple holy.

Thus, Jesus is not just giving an opinion on Sabbath observance—He is **revealing that His presence is what makes the Sabbath meaningful.** Just as God dwelled in the temple, **Jesus dwells in the Sabbath, sanctifying it with His presence.**

## **The Sabbath Was Made for Man—A Relational Time with God (Mark 2:27-28)**

In another key passage, Jesus explains the **true purpose of the Sabbath**:

**“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”** (Mark 2:27-28)

This statement clarifies **two critical points**:

1. **The Sabbath was made for man**
  - The Sabbath was **never intended as a burdensome rule**, but as a gift from God to humanity.
  - It is a **time designed for human flourishing, spiritual renewal, and divine relationship**.
2. **Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath**
  - Just as God sanctified the Sabbath in Genesis **by placing His presence within it**, Jesus—**God in the flesh**—affirms that **He is the living presence within the Sabbath**.
  - The phrase **“Son of Man”** links Jesus’ mission to **humanity’s restoration and ultimate redemption**, meaning that the Sabbath is a **divine-human meeting place where God restores and renews His people**.

## **Jesus’ Sabbath Miracles: A Demonstration of Divine Presence**

Jesus often **performed miracles on the Sabbath**, reinforcing the idea that the Sabbath is not about restrictive legalism, but about **divine activity and presence**.

- In **Luke 13:10-17**, Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath, emphasizing that the day is meant for **liberation and restoration**.
- In **John 5:1-9**, Jesus heals a paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, showing that the Sabbath is a **day of divine intervention and renewal**.

These actions confirm that **the Sabbath is a day in which God is actively present, healing, restoring, and communing with His people**. Rather than ceasing all activity, **God is most present in bringing spiritual and physical renewal on the Sabbath**.

## **Conclusion: Jesus’ Presence Confirms the Sabbath as a Sacred Time**

Jesus’ teachings and actions reveal that the Sabbath is not just a **rule to be followed** but a **sacred time where God’s presence is fully experienced**. His claim of Lordship over the Sabbath (**Matthew 12:8**) and His statement that **the Sabbath was made for man** (**Mark 2:27-28**) confirm that:

1. **The Sabbath is a time of divine presence, made holy by God Himself.**

2. **Jesus' presence in the Sabbath further sanctifies it, making it a relational and restorative experience.**
3. **The Sabbath is not a legalistic burden, but an invitation to enter into God's healing, rest, and renewal.**

Understanding the Sabbath in this way transforms it from a **restrictive obligation** into a **joyous encounter with the living God**, where believers experience divine rest, communion, and restoration through Christ.

### **3.3 The Hebrew Language and the Sabbath: Indicating God's Presence in Sacred Time**

The Hebrew language offers profound insight into the **nature of the Sabbath as sacred time**, reinforcing the idea that the Sabbath is **not merely a cessation of labor but a divine dwelling where God's presence abides**. Several key Hebrew terms related to the Sabbath confirm that **holiness is not inherent to the day itself but is a direct result of God placing Himself within it**. These words—שָׁבַת (Shavat), נֹחַ (Nuach), מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ (Mikra Kodesh), and קָדֵשׁ (Kadash)—collectively reveal that **the Sabbath is a sanctuary in time where God meets with His people**.

#### **שָׁבַת (Shavat) – Ceasing to Dwell in Rest**

The word שָׁבַת (Shavat), used in **Genesis 2:2-3**, is often translated as “rested”, but its meaning goes beyond simply stopping work. It means **to cease, to desist, or to stop an action with intentionality**:

*“And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested (שָׁבַת, shavat) on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” (Genesis 2:2)*

- The word does **not** imply that God was **tired** but that He **stopped to dwell within the Sabbath**.
- God did not just **cease labor**; He **entered into Sabbath time** as an **act of divine presence**.

This is consistent with other biblical examples of **shavat**, where stopping work is associated with entering into a **state of divine purpose** (Exodus 31:17).

#### **נֹחַ (Nuach) – Divine Settling or Dwelling**

While שָׁבַת (Shavat) describes **ceasing labor**, the Hebrew word נֹחַ (Nuach) conveys the idea of **settling in a place, abiding, or dwelling**. It is used in **Exodus 20:11** when describing God's Sabbath rest:



*“For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested (נוַח, nuach) the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:11)*

- The term **nuach** implies **divine presence resting upon something**—it is the same word used when **God’s Spirit rested upon individuals (Numbers 11:25)** and when the **Ark of the Covenant “rested” in a sacred place (1 Chronicles 6:31)**.
- God did not just **stop working**; He **settled into the Sabbath as His dwelling place in time**.

### מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ (Mikra Kodesh) – A Holy Assembly and Divine Encounter

In **Leviticus 23:3**, the Sabbath is described as a **“holy convocation”**:

*“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation (מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ, mikra kodesh). You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.”*

- **מִקְרָא (Mikra)** means a **public gathering or an official summoning to meet**.
- **קֹדֶשׁ (Kodesh)** means **holiness or sacredness**, always associated with **God’s presence**.
- This phrase implies that the Sabbath is not just a **private rest** but a **divine appointment where God’s people are called into sacred time to experience His presence**.

The Sabbath, therefore, is **not merely a day off from labor but a sacred assembly where God meets with His people, much like He did in the temple or the tabernacle**.

### קָדַשׁ (Kadash) – Making Holy by Presence

Finally, the word **קָדַשׁ (Kadash)** is used in **Genesis 2:3** when God **sanctifies** the seventh day:

*“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified (קָדַשׁ, kadash) it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.” (Genesis 2:3)*

- **קָדַשׁ (Kadash)** means **to consecrate, to set apart, or to make holy**.
- Throughout Scripture, holiness is **always** the result of **God’s presence (Exodus 29:43-44, 2 Chronicles 7:1-2)**.
- The Sabbath was not **inherently holy**—it became holy **because God placed Himself in it**.

This is the same word used when describing the consecration of **priests, the temple, and sacred objects**—all of which were **only made holy because God’s presence dwelled within them**.

## Conclusion: The Sabbath as a Living Sanctuary in Time

The Hebrew language confirms the theological principle that **holiness is a consequence of divine presence**. These key terms—**שָׁבַת (Shavat)**, **נוּחַ (Nuach)**, **מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ (Mikra Kodesh)**, and **קֹדֶשׁ (Kadash)**—demonstrate that:

1. **God ceased (שָׁבַת, Shavat) to dwell within the Sabbath.**
2. **He rested (נוּחַ, Nuach) in the Sabbath as a sacred dwelling.**
3. **The Sabbath is a holy convocation (מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ, Mikra Kodesh), a time of divine gathering.**
4. **It was made holy (קֹדֶשׁ, Kadash) by God’s presence, just as the temple was sanctified by His glory.**

These linguistic insights confirm that **the Sabbath is not just a legal command—it is a sanctuary in time, a living space where God meets with His people**. Understanding this transforms Sabbath observance from a **duty** into an **invitation to step into God’s presence**, experiencing the divine rest and holiness that He has embedded within sacred time.

## 4.1 Worship and Experience of God on the Sabbath

The Sabbath is more than just a day of physical rest—it is a **time of worship and divine encounter**, where believers experience a unique connection with God. In **Isaiah 58:13-14**, the Bible explicitly links **Sabbath observance with delighting in the Lord**, reinforcing the idea that the Sabbath is a sacred time for experiencing God’s presence:

**“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.”**  
(Isaiah 58:13-14)

### Honoring the Sabbath and Delighting in the Lord

This passage highlights several key aspects of **true Sabbath observance**:

- The Sabbath is **“My holy day”**—God identifies it as uniquely **set apart**.
- Believers are called to **honor the Sabbath**, meaning they should not treat it as a **common day** for their own pursuits.
- Instead of pursuing self-centered activities, they are invited to **“delight in the LORD”**—suggesting that the **true joy of the Sabbath is found in experiencing God’s presence**.

This passage makes it clear that the **Sabbath is not just about ceasing work**—it is about **encountering the divine**. When one honors the Sabbath, **they step into a special relationship with God, finding joy and fulfillment in Him**.

## **A Special Encounter with God’s Presence**

The phrase **“delight in the LORD”** is significant because throughout Scripture, **delighting in God is associated with His presence**. For example:

- **Psalm 16:11** – *“In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*
- **Exodus 33:14** – *“My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

The Sabbath is a **weekly invitation to enter into this divine joy**, a sacred appointment where **God’s presence is especially near**. Just as the **temple was the meeting place between God and His people in space**, the Sabbath is the meeting place between God and His people in **time**.

## **Sabbath Worship: A Foretaste of Eternity**

When believers engage in **true Sabbath worship**, they **enter into the presence of God in a profound way**. The Sabbath becomes:

- A **time of spiritual renewal**—free from worldly distractions.
- A **time of corporate worship**—gathering with others to experience God’s presence.
- A **time of reflection and connection**—drawing closer to the Creator.

This **Sabbath experience** foreshadows the **eternal rest and worship** of God’s people in the New Creation. As **Hebrews 4:9-10** teaches, the **Sabbath is a foretaste of the ultimate rest in God’s kingdom**, where His presence will be fully revealed.

## Conclusion: The Sabbath as a Divine Encounter

Isaiah 58:13-14 confirms that **the Sabbath is not only a command but an opportunity to experience God's presence and joy**. When honored as God intended, it leads to **delighting in Him, spiritual renewal, and deeper worship**. Understanding the **Sabbath as a divine encounter** transforms it from a legal obligation into a **sacred privilege**—a time to rest in God's presence and experience the joy of communion with Him.

## 4.2 Sabbath Observance as Divine Relationship

The Sabbath is far more than a religious obligation or a ceremonial requirement—it is a **relational experience with God**. Scripture portrays the Sabbath as an invitation into divine fellowship, a sacred time when God and His people come together in rest, worship, and communion. This relational aspect of the Sabbath is beautifully summarized in **Hebrews 4:9-10**:

**“There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”** (Hebrews 4:9-10)

This passage reveals that the **Sabbath is not merely about ceasing labor—it is about entering into God's presence and sharing in His divine rest**. Sabbath observance, therefore, is not just a **duty to perform** but a **relationship to experience**.

### The Sabbath as a Time of Divine Communion

Throughout the Bible, God calls His people into a **covenantal relationship**. The Sabbath is **woven into this covenant**, acting as a **sign of belonging to God** (Exodus 31:13). It is a day when believers are invited to experience the **presence, peace, and sanctification of God** in a unique way.

- **In Genesis 2:3**, God **blessed and sanctified the seventh day**, setting it apart as a day of divine rest.
- **In Exodus 20:8-11**, He commanded His people to keep the Sabbath **as a memorial of creation**, reminding them that He is their Creator.
- **In Deuteronomy 5:15**, the Sabbath is linked to **redemption**, reminding Israel of their deliverance from Egypt.

These themes point to **relationship, not mere obligation**. The Sabbath is not simply about **stopping work**—it is about **stepping into God's presence**.

## Entering God's Rest: A Foretaste of Eternity

The **book of Hebrews** builds on this theme by showing that **the Sabbath is not just a past institution but a present and future reality**. The phrase **“there remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God”** (Hebrews 4:9) indicates that **the Sabbath is still relevant for believers today**. It also points to a **greater fulfillment of the Sabbath in eternity**, when God's people will experience **perfect communion with Him in the New Creation**.

This concept echoes **Revelation 21:3**, where God promises to dwell with His people forever:

**“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God.”**

Just as the Sabbath provides **weekly rest and renewal**, eternity will provide **unbroken fellowship with God**. Observing the Sabbath, therefore, is not just a **commandment**—it is a **foretaste of the relationship God desires to have with His people forever**.

## Conclusion: The Sabbath as a Covenant of Love

Sabbath observance is **not about legalistic rule-keeping**; it is about **cultivating a deeper relationship with God**. As **Hebrews 4:9-10** teaches, entering into **Sabbath rest is entering into God's presence**—sharing in His peace, joy, and holiness. It is a divine appointment where believers set aside their earthly concerns to **delight in God, worship Him, and experience His love**. Recognizing the Sabbath as a **relational experience transforms it from a mere duty into a cherished gift**, an opportunity to walk more closely with the Creator.

## 4.3 Eschatological Implications: The Final Sabbath Rest

The Sabbath is not only a **memorial of creation** and a **time of weekly communion with God**, but it also carries **profound eschatological significance**. It serves as a **foreshadowing of the ultimate rest** that believers will experience in eternity—a time when God's presence will dwell fully with His people. This final fulfillment of the Sabbath is beautifully captured in **Revelation 21:3**:

**“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God.”**

This passage describes the **culmination of God's plan**—the full restoration of the relationship between God and humanity. Just as the Sabbath provides a **weekly foretaste of divine communion**, the New Creation will be **an eternal Sabbath, where God's people will experience unbroken fellowship with Him**.

## The Sabbath as a Foretaste of Eternal Communion

The **book of Hebrews** builds on this theme by linking the Sabbath to **God's eternal rest**. Hebrews 4:9-10 states:

**"There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His."**

This passage confirms that the **Sabbath is more than a historical or ceremonial institution**—it points forward to **the ultimate rest that believers will experience in God's kingdom**. Just as God **rested on the seventh day after creation**, His people will **enter into His perfect rest in the New Creation**.

## God's Presence: The Essence of the Final Sabbath

The **heart of the Sabbath is God's presence**. Throughout Scripture, holiness is always associated with **where God dwells** (Exodus 3:5, Exodus 29:43-44, 2 Chronicles 7:1-2). In the final restoration of all things, **God's presence will no longer be mediated or distant—it will be fully realized**. Revelation 21:3 makes this clear:

- **"The dwelling place of God is with man."** This statement mirrors the Sabbath's purpose as a time of divine presence.
- **"He will dwell with them."** The word for **dwell** (σκηνώω, *skenoo*) means **to tabernacle or make a home among**—the same concept seen in the tabernacle and temple, where **God's presence sanctified space**.
- **"They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them."** This language reflects **covenantal fulfillment**, where the Sabbath finds its **ultimate expression in eternal communion with God**.

## The Sabbath and the New Creation

The **Sabbath rest** of eternity is also reflected in the **New Heavens and New Earth** (Isaiah 66:22-23):

**"For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before Me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain. From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, declares the LORD."**

This prophecy indicates that **Sabbath worship will continue into eternity**, symbolizing an **everlasting rhythm of divine fellowship**.

## Conclusion: The Sabbath as the Eternal Home of God's People

The Sabbath is not merely a **commandment to obey**—it is an **invitation to experience God's presence both now and in the future**. **Revelation 21:3** confirms that the ultimate goal of redemption is **restoration of full communion between God and His people**—the final Sabbath rest. Observing the Sabbath today is not only an act of obedience but a **participation in the reality of eternity**, a **weekly reminder of the day when God's dwelling will be permanently among His people**, and rest will be complete.

### 5.1 The Argument that the Sabbath is Holy Only Because God Declared It So

A common argument against the idea that the Sabbath is uniquely sanctified by God's presence is the claim that **the Sabbath is holy simply because God declared it so**. This perspective suggests that God's declaration alone, rather than His actual presence, is what makes the seventh day sacred. However, a careful examination of Scripture reveals a consistent **pattern of holiness being directly linked to God's dwelling presence**, rather than mere verbal designation.

#### Response: Holiness Only Exists Where God Dwells

The biblical concept of holiness is **not arbitrary or static**; rather, it is always the result of **God's presence inhabiting a space, object, or time**. Holiness is not a status that God imposes externally—it is a reality that exists **because of divine presence**.

#### Exodus 29:43-44 – The Tabernacle Made Holy by God's Presence

**"And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests."** (Exodus 29:43-44)

- This passage explicitly states that **the tabernacle became holy because of God's presence** (*"sanctified by My glory"*).
- Holiness was **not an inherent quality** of the tabernacle—it became holy **only when God's presence filled it**.
- This aligns with the principle that **holiness is always a function of divine habitation**.

#### Exodus 3:5 – The Ground Made Holy by God's Presence

**“Then He said, ‘Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’” (Exodus 3:5)**

- The **ground itself** was not intrinsically holy—it became holy **because God’s presence was there**.
- If God had not appeared to Moses, that same ground would have remained **ordinary and unremarkable**.
- This reinforces the principle that **holiness is always linked to God’s dwelling or presence**.

## **Applying This Principle to the Sabbath**

If holiness is always the result of **God’s presence**, then when **Genesis 2:3** states that God **sanctified the seventh day**, it implies that **He placed His presence into it**. Just as He sanctified the **tabernacle** by filling it with His glory, and sanctified the **ground near the burning bush** by manifesting Himself there, He **sanctified the Sabbath by dwelling within it**.

- If holiness were simply a verbal declaration, then **any place or time could be made holy arbitrarily**. However, biblical patterns show that **only where God dwells does true holiness exist**.
- The Sabbath is **not holy by decree alone**; it is **holy because God abides in it, making it a sanctuary in time**.

## **Conclusion: The Sabbath is Holy Because God’s Presence Fills It**

The claim that the Sabbath is holy **only because God declared it so** fails to align with the biblical pattern of **holiness being a direct result of divine presence**. Just as the **tabernacle, temple, and sacred ground were sanctified because God was there**, the **Sabbath is sanctified because God dwells in it**. Observing the Sabbath, therefore, is not just about acknowledging a divine command—it is about **entering into the very presence of God, stepping into the sacred time that He has filled with His holiness**.

## **5.2 The Argument that All Days Are Holy**

A common objection to the sanctity of the Sabbath is the claim that **all days are holy**, meaning that no single day should be considered more sacred than another. Some argue that since God is omnipresent and can be worshiped at any time, there is no reason to treat the seventh day as



uniquely holy. This perspective suggests that every day should be a time for spiritual devotion and rest in God's presence, eliminating the need for a specific, divinely appointed Sabbath.

While it is true that believers can and should worship God daily, the argument that **all days are equally holy lacks biblical support**. Scripture consistently distinguishes **certain times as uniquely set apart by God's presence and blessing**, with no indication that every day is sanctified in the same way.

## **Response: No Scriptural Evidence Exists That God's Presence Sanctifies Every Day Equally**

### **1. The Principle of Sanctification Requires God's Presence**

Holiness in Scripture is always **a result of God's direct presence**. If all days were equally holy, there should be **explicit biblical evidence showing that God sanctified every day in the same way He sanctified the Sabbath**. However, no such evidence exists. Instead, the Bible clearly emphasizes the **seventh day as uniquely set apart**:

- **Genesis 2:3** – *“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”*
- This is the **first mention of holiness in the Bible**, and it is applied specifically to **one day**, not all days.
- **Exodus 20:8-11** – *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God.”*
- This passage **explicitly contrasts six common days with the one holy day** that belongs to God.
- If all days were equally holy, this distinction would be meaningless.
- **Exodus 31:13** – *“Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.”*
- God repeatedly refers to **“My Sabbaths”**, indicating that **they are uniquely His and not interchangeable with other days**.

### **2. The Biblical Pattern of Consecrated Time**

Throughout the Bible, God designates **specific times for divine encounter**, distinguishing them from ordinary time. Examples include:

- **The Sabbath (Genesis 2:3, Exodus 20:8-11)** – Set apart at creation as a day of rest and divine presence.
- **The Festivals (Leviticus 23)** – Appointed times of worship that were distinct from regular days.
- **The Jubilee Year (Leviticus 25:10)** – A sacred time of restoration, different from all other years.

These examples confirm that **God does not treat all time equally**. He sanctifies **specific times for specific purposes**, and the Sabbath is the **primary example of consecrated time**.

### 3. The Absence of Scriptural Support for Universal Holiness of Time

Nowhere in Scripture does God declare, **“All days are holy.”** If such a teaching were true, it would be stated clearly, just as God explicitly sanctifies the **seventh day** (Genesis 2:3) and **commands its observance** (Exodus 20:8-11). Instead, the Bible consistently differentiates between:

- **Sacred time (Sabbath, festivals, holy convocations) and ordinary time (six working days).**
- **God-ordained days of worship (Sabbath, appointed feasts) and human-declared times (which are not divinely sanctified).**

The idea that **all days are holy** contradicts this clear biblical pattern. While believers are called to live holy lives daily, **this does not mean that every day is equally sanctified as the Sabbath.**

### Conclusion: The Sabbath Remains Unique in Holiness

The claim that **all days are equally holy** lacks biblical foundation. Scripture **never states that every day is sanctified by God’s presence in the same way as the Sabbath**. Instead, it repeatedly **emphasizes the seventh day as distinct and set apart**. While believers should seek God daily, the Sabbath remains a **special, divinely appointed time where God’s presence is uniquely experienced**. Recognizing this distinction allows believers to **enter into the blessing and sanctification that God Himself placed in the Sabbath**, rather than treating time in a way that **Scripture does not support**.

## 6. Final Conclusion

The **Sabbath is holy because God places Himself within it**. This foundational truth, drawn from **Scripture, theology, and Hebrew linguistic analysis**, challenges the common misconception that the Sabbath is simply a **ritual, a day of mandated rest, or a legalistic command**. Instead, the evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that the **seventh day is sanctified because it is uniquely inhabited by God's presence**, much like the tabernacle and temple were made holy when God's glory filled them.

This understanding **transforms how we perceive the Sabbath**. It is not just a **command to cease labor** but a **sacred time in which God calls His people to meet with Him, much like He did with Israel in the Most Holy Place**. To observe the Sabbath, therefore, is to **enter into God's dwelling in time**, experiencing divine communion, restoration, and holiness.

### **Restating the Main Proposition: The Sabbath is Holy Because God Places Himself Within It**

The concept of **holiness in Scripture is always tied to God's presence**. The Sabbath, from its first mention in **Genesis 2:3**, follows this pattern:

- **Genesis 2:3** – “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”
- God **blessed** and **sanctified** the seventh day **because He rested in it**—meaning that He **entered into it, setting it apart from all other days**.
- **Exodus 3:5** – “Then He said, ‘Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’”
- The ground where Moses stood **became holy because God was present there**.
- If **God's presence makes a place holy, then God's presence in time must make time holy as well**—this is the foundation of the Sabbath's sanctity.
- **Exodus 29:43-44** – “There I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory.”
- The **tabernacle was not holy because of human craftsmanship but because God's glory filled it**.
- This same principle applies to the Sabbath—it is holy because **God abides within it, making it a sanctuary in time**.

Understanding this **corrects the misconception** that the Sabbath is **holy only because God declared it so**. While divine proclamation is important, **biblical patterns reveal that holiness is**

always a function of divine presence. Just as the **burning bush, the tabernacle, and the temple** became holy because God's presence dwelled there, so too does the **Sabbath become holy because God inhabits it.**

## **Theological Significance: Understanding the Sabbath as God's Appointed Dwelling in Time**

This **understanding of the Sabbath** carries profound theological implications. If the Sabbath is a **sanctuary in time**, then it serves as **God's appointed meeting place with humanity**, much like the temple was a designated meeting place in space.

### **1. The Sabbath as a Relational Experience**

- **Mark 2:27-28** – “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”
- Jesus affirms that the Sabbath is **not a burden but a divine gift**—an opportunity for humanity to experience **God's presence, rest, and restoration.**
- The phrase “**Lord of the Sabbath**” signifies that **Jesus Himself is present in the Sabbath, reinforcing its sacredness as God's dwelling in time.**
- **Hebrews 4:9-10** – “There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”
- The **Sabbath is not just about physical rest—it is about entering into God's presence.**
- This passage connects Sabbath rest with **salvation and eternal communion with God**, confirming that the Sabbath is a **foretaste of heaven.**

### **2. The Sabbath as a Sign of Divine Relationship**

- **Exodus 31:13** – “Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.”
- The Sabbath is more than just a command—it is a **sign of belonging to God**, much like a marriage covenant signifies the bond between husband and wife.
- Keeping the Sabbath is **not about legalism—it is about stepping into an identity as God's chosen people, experiencing His presence in a way that no other time provides.**

- **Isaiah 58:13-14** – “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable... then you shall delight yourself in the LORD.”
- This passage confirms that the Sabbath is **a time of joy, not restriction**.
- The **delight of the Sabbath is found in experiencing God Himself**, not just abstaining from labor.

## **Call for Reexamination: Approaching Sabbath-Keeping as an Opportunity to Encounter God’s Presence**

Given the overwhelming evidence that the Sabbath is **God’s dwelling place in time**, believers should **reexamine how they approach Sabbath observance**. Instead of seeing it as **a burdensome rule**, we should view it as **an invitation to experience divine communion**.

### **1. The Sabbath as a Divine Appointment**

If the Sabbath is truly **a time where God’s presence abides**, then keeping the Sabbath is not just **about obedience**—it is about **meeting with God in a special, sanctified space of time**.

- Just as people would not neglect an **appointment with God in the tabernacle**, they should not neglect an **appointment with Him in the Sabbath**.
- The **Sabbath is the only time specifically blessed and set apart for divine-human encounter**, making it uniquely powerful for **spiritual renewal**.

### **2. Transforming Sabbath-Keeping from Obligation to Celebration**

Many view the Sabbath as a **legalistic restriction**, but this understanding **misses the true purpose of the day**. Instead, believers should approach Sabbath-keeping with:

- **Expectation** – Looking forward to entering **God’s presence in sacred time**.
- **Joy** – Embracing the Sabbath as **a day of spiritual and relational refreshment**.
- **Reverence** – Recognizing that **this time is made holy because God is there**.

### **3. Recognizing the Eschatological Implications of the Sabbath**

Finally, the **Sabbath is not just a weekly practice—it points to eternity**. **Revelation 21:3** declares:

**“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people.”**

- The **Sabbath is a foretaste of the eternal Sabbath rest** that believers will experience when **God’s presence is fully realized in the New Creation**.
- Keeping the Sabbath now is **not just about looking back to creation**—it is about **anticipating and preparing for the ultimate Sabbath rest in God’s kingdom**.

## **Conclusion: The Sabbath as a Living Experience of God’s Presence**

The **Sabbath is holy because God places Himself within it**. This truth has **theological, relational, and eschatological significance**, confirming that the **Sabbath is not just a commandment, but an opportunity to encounter God in a uniquely sanctified moment of time**.

Believers should approach the Sabbath **not as an obligation**, but as a **privilege—a weekly invitation to step into sacred time, commune with the Creator, and experience a foretaste of the eternal rest that is to come**. Recognizing the Sabbath as **God’s dwelling in time transforms it from a religious duty into a divine encounter**, deepening faith, worship, and relationship with the Almighty.

## **7. References**

This section compiles all **biblical, theological, linguistic, and Ellen White sources** referenced throughout the study on the **Sabbath as God’s dwelling in time**. These sources provide **scriptural, linguistic, theological, and historical** foundations for understanding the Sabbath’s holiness as a function of **divine presence rather than arbitrary designation**.

### **1. Biblical References**

The Bible serves as the **primary authority** in establishing the holiness of the Sabbath. The following passages support the argument that **holiness is always tied to God’s presence, and that the Sabbath is sanctified because He abides within it**.

#### **1.1 The Sabbath as Holy Because of God’s Presence**

- **Genesis 2:3** – *“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”* (New King James Version)

- **Exodus 20:8-11** – *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God.”* (NKJV)
- **Exodus 31:13** – *“Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.”* (NKJV)
- **Leviticus 23:3** – *“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation.”* (NKJV)

## 1.2 Holiness Is Always a Function of God’s Presence

- **Exodus 3:5** – *“Then He said, ‘Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’”* (NKJV)
- **Exodus 29:43-44** – *“There I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory.”* (NKJV)
- **2 Chronicles 7:1-2** – *“When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.”* (NKJV)
- **Joshua 5:15** – *“Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy.”* (NKJV)
- **Isaiah 57:15** – *“For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit.’”* (NKJV)

## 1.3 The Sabbath as a Sanctuary in Time

- **Mark 2:27-28** – *“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”* (NKJV)
- **Matthew 12:8** – *“For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”* (NKJV)
- **Hebrews 4:9-10** – *“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”* (NKJV)
- **Revelation 21:3** – *“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.”* (NKJV)
- **Isaiah 66:22-23** – *“From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, declares the LORD.”* (ESV)

## 2. Theological and Scholarly Sources

### 2.1 Jewish Theological Insights on the Sabbath

- **Heschel, Abraham Joshua.** *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951.
- Heschel presents the **Sabbath as a “sanctuary in time”**, arguing that just as the **temple was a sacred place**, the **Sabbath is a sacred time, filled with God’s presence**.

### 2.2 Christian Theological Contributions

- **Calvin, John.** *Institutes of the Christian Religion.* Translated by Henry Beveridge. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Calvin recognizes the **Sabbath as a divine ordinance**, emphasizing its role in **spiritual renewal and worship**.
- **Beale, G. K.** *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Beale explores the **theme of God’s presence**, showing that the **Sabbath is an extension of the temple motif**—a place where **God meets His people in time**.
- **Wright, N. T.** *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church.* New York: HarperOne, 2008.
- Wright connects the **Sabbath with eschatology**, explaining how it **foreshadows eternal rest and divine communion** in the New Creation.
- **Tonstad, Sigve K.** *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day.* Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009.
- Tonstad presents the **Sabbath as a continual sign of God’s covenant**, emphasizing its role in **divine-human relationship and redemption**.

## 3. Ellen White’s Writings on the Sabbath and Divine Presence

- **White, Ellen G.** *The Signs of the Times, May 13, 1886.*
- “Upon the seventh day of the week to enjoy a blessing which cannot be enjoyed upon any other day because it is not there.”



- **White, Ellen G.** *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1901.
- *“The Sabbath is a sign that God recognizes them as His chosen people.”*
- **White, Ellen G.** *The Desire of Ages*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898.
- *“It is the presence of Christ that makes sacred the temple, the Sabbath, the individual soul.”*
- **White, Ellen G.** *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1888.
- *“The Sabbath points forward to the time when the redeemed shall rest in the new earth.”*

#### 4. Linguistic and Exegetical Sources

- **Brown, Francis, et al.** *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1906.
- Provides definitions for שָׁבַת (Shavat), נוּחַ (Nuach), מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ (Mikra Kodesh), and קֹדֶשׁ (Kadash), confirming that the **Sabbath is holy because God has placed Himself within it.**

#### Final Remarks on the Sources

The **biblical evidence, theological scholarship, and Ellen White’s writings** all support the same conclusion:

- The **Sabbath is not holy merely by divine declaration**, but because **God’s presence uniquely abides in it.**
- It serves as a **sanctuary in time**, offering believers **weekly access to divine communion.**
- It foreshadows **the ultimate Sabbath rest in eternity**, where God will permanently dwell with His people.

This reference list affirms that the **Sabbath is more than just a commandment—it is a relational experience, a theological reality, and an eschatological promise.**