

WHEN DOES THE SABBATH DAY START?

This article was edited and contributed by one of our listeners.

Genesis 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

The evening and morning concluded the first day.

The morning/dawn is the end of the day and the beginning of the next day.

The Jewish custom says their Sabbath begins on Friday evening at sundown. This has brought much confusion into the body of Christ. We hope to help eliminate that confusion. Some believe that custom comes from the passage in Genesis because it addresses “evening” first when it says “the evening and the morning were the first day”, that doesn’t mean that the evening was the beginning of the day. An evening and a morning together do not make up a whole day. Evening is not at the beginning of the description of what happened during that day. The literal meaning of the words are dusk and dawn. In the description of what occurred on each day we are told what creative actions the Lord performed then that description is followed by “and”, so the time frame that involves His creating, which was the daytime, combined with and followed by the evening and morning, or dusk to dawn, made up that day.

Day, or light, is usually compared to good. Also, Christ is the light of the world. Night is often compared to evil and lawlessness and we wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world. God did His work during the day and rested from His work at night. We don’t have a command to work during the day and rest at night but it is an example for us and He made our bodies to work best when we do that. Some verses to support that are:

John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

John 11:9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

John 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

All of these verses have spiritual meaning but they also have a practical meaning. I didn’t look up statistics but I do believe there is more lawlessness at night.

Our bodies have a certain rhythm, often referred to as the circadian rhythm, where we normally sleep at night and are awake during the day. In experiments with mice, when this rhythm was intentionally disrupted their glucose metabolism was altered, they became obese, and were predisposed to diabetes. We can alter that natural cycle too by our habits or work schedules and people that are blind often don't have this natural rhythm.

We need sunlight for our health and we can get depressed if we don't get enough sunlight. In Genesis 1:4 it tells us that He saw that the light was good. It doesn't say the same thing about the darkness or the night. In Revelation 22:5 it says:

Revelation 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

So, in the new Jerusalem there won't even be night. The point is that, as God's people, we should be starting off our days in light, not in darkness. The evil forces want to twist everything and change it from the way God designed it. The biblical calendar is so confused that we often don't know what's right. The Jewish practice now is to start at sundown, in darkness, and many are following the current Jewish custom of starting at sundown.

We have to be careful about the customs and practices that we observe. Just because something is a current Jewish practice, or a Jewish tradition, or a church tradition doesn't mean that it's biblical. We know from scripture that there were periods of history that the Israelites, or Jewish people, were close to God and times that they were following idols. The majority of the Jewish people are not close to God, because of their rejection of the Messiah. They are following a god but not the one true God, Yahweh, so we should be very careful following their practices and teachings. We need to confirm our beliefs in scripture. Many times Jesus rebuked and corrected the Jewish leaders for their practices.

Mark 7:7 *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* 8 *For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.*

Colossians 2:6 *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:* 7 *Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.* 8 *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

Let's talk about some of the commands that were given in the Torah. The first one is instructions about manna.

Exodus 16:19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. 20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. 21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. 22 And it came to pass, *that* on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one *man*: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

They gathered it in the morning because that was the beginning of the new day. They were told not to leave it until the next morning because they were only supposed to gather enough for that day and the next morning is when the next day begins.

Numbers 9:11 The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, *and* eat it with unleavened bread and bitter *herbs*. 12 They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.

This reference is for the second Passover but the commands for the first Passover are the same. It says, the 14th day of the month at even they shall keep it and eat it. Passover is entirely on the 14th and there are preparations on that day before the meal. If the day began in the evening, they would be eating it at the beginning of the day or on the following day. They were also told to leave none of it until morning because that is the beginning of another day.

Exodus 12:18 In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.

This is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. If the day began in the evening there would be no need to command them to do it from evening to evening because if the day started in evening they could just do it from the 14th to the 21st but that would make Passover and the first day of unleavened bread on the same day and the whole feast would only be a total of 7 days.

On the calendar, the first day of unleavened bread is on the 15th but they are told to eat unleavened bread for 7 days from the evening of the 14th, so they started eating unleavened bread when they had the Passover meal and ending at evening on the 8th and final day of the feast, which would be the 21st day of the month.

If they day began at sundown the first day of unleavened bread would actually be the 14th, since it says to begin on the 14th at evening. That doesn't work for the instructions that were given because the Passover and unleavened bread would both be on the same day and for the whole day of the 14th. The 15th would then be the second full day of unleavened bread and the feast would not be for 8 days because they were told to eat it from the evening of the 14th to the evening of the 21st. They ate unleavened bread for 7 full 24 hour periods but it was not the full day of the 14th or the 21st, which is why the feast is a total of 8 days. Please read this section again and check it for yourself and you will confirm that the day starts at sunrise.

Leviticus 7:14 And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation *for* an heave offering unto the LORD, *and* it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings. 15 And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.

Exodus 23:18 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning.

Leviticus 22:28 And *whether it be* cow or ewe, ye shall not kill it and her young both in one day.

Leviticus 22:29 And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the LORD, offer *it* at your own will. 30 On the same day it shall be eaten up; ye shall leave none of it until the morrow: I *am* the LORD. 31 Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I *am* the LORD.

These are just more examples of not leaving something until morning because that was a new day.

Exodus 10:4 Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast: 13 And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all *that* night; *and* when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

These verses make it seem obvious that the day begins in the morning.

There are 7 feasts in the first 7 months of the biblical year. Three of them are noteworthy exceptions to the rule of a normal day. Those 3 are Passover, Unleavened Bread and the Day of Atonement. These begin in the evening and all 3 are explicit pictures of Jesus rescuing His people from death and darkness. That's why they begin in darkness and not in the light. The world was in darkness, death, and misery until the light, life, and peace of Jesus entered the world. These 3 feasts focus on our inability to save ourselves and on Jesus rescuing us from darkness and making peace between sinners and the Father. The last one of the feasts to discuss is the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 23:27 Also on the tenth *day* of this seventh month *there shall be* a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Leviticus 23:32 It *shall be* unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth *day* of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

Verse 27 says that it's on the 10th day of the month and verse 32 says that it begins on the evening of the 9th day of the month. It cannot be from evening to evening and include the 9th and 10th days

if the day starts at sunset. If the common day observed at that time began in the evening then there would be no need to tell them to begin at evening and it would only be on one day.

Here are a few additional verses.

Jonah 4:7 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

Job 3:9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but *have* none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:

Acts 4:3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

Genesis 19:33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. 34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

Let us discuss the time of Jesus death and burial.

John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

Jesus is our Passover lamb and died on Passover. The day that follows Passover is the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, which is a high Sabbath.

Matthew 27:57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: 58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

We can see here in Matthew 27:57 that evening had already come. If the day started in evening, the Sabbath of the 15th day would have been there already but let's continue to look at everything else that happened on that night. At this time of year sunset would have probably been around 7pm. We see in verse 58 that Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body. Jerusalem would have been a very busy place at Passover time and it would have taken some time to get through the crowd of people, then get through whatever security Pilate had and explain why he wanted to talk with him, they would have to tell Pilate that someone was there to speak with him and ask if he would see them, and time for Joseph to talk to Pilate and answer his questions. These things would have probably taken at least a half hour but probably more.

Mark 15:42 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. 44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

Pilate was surprised that Jesus was dead already so he sent for the centurion. Someone had to go from there, through the crowd, find the centurion, then the centurion had to go back, speak with Pilate, answer his questions, and confirm that Jesus was dead. Then Pilate gave the order to release the body. They would have probably written an order for Pilate to sign or seal to give them authority to get the body. I think that would have been at least another half hour and probably more. That would be at least an hour so far, which would make it 8 pm or later, but most likely that would have taken a couple of hours.

Mark 15:46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

Joseph then went and bought the fine linen. He didn't have it already since he didn't know if he would be able to get the body of Jesus. If it was already the Sabbath of the 15th day he would not have been able to buy the linens and he was going to buy it while the crowds were in Jerusalem for the feast and everyone was preparing for the Sabbath day. After purchasing the linens he had to get to the crucifixion site and at some point he had to get word to Nicodemus to bring the myrrh and aloes. These things would have easily taken another 30 minutes. I would say an hour but I want my time estimate to be very conservative.

John 19:39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Joseph and Nicodemus took down the body. It would be difficult to take a lifeless body down from a cross. They would have wanted to be very careful and respectful as they took Him down. They would have to remove the cross and lay it down or they would have needed ladders to pull the nails and support the body of Jesus while removing it and lowering it to the ground. Then they had to get Him into the tomb, along with the linens and about a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. They would need something to carry Him on, along with tools, and maybe ladders. They wouldn't just leave all of these things laying there at the crucifixion site. We are told Joseph and Nicodemus took down the body. This would have taken quite a bit of time. Then they would need to wrap the body, and that would include the time it took from the time of Jesus death, getting His body down and off

the cross, until they began to wrap the body of our Lord..

There were certain customs kept in order to wrap the body to prepare it for burial. Everything would have been done carefully, respectfully, and properly. A 5 gallon bucket of 100% pure aloe is 38 pounds. That would come out to just over 13 gallons for 100 pounds. It would take many hours to wrap and properly prepare the body for burial. Also, according to John 19:42 it is still the preparation day when they laid Him in the tomb, so It is still the 14th day. The Sabbath of the 15th had not yet come.

Luke 23:53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. 54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. 55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

It's after sundown and it is still the preparation day. Verse 54 says that the Sabbath drew on, and that word is Epiphosko. It is Strong's G2020 and it means to begin to grow light, or to dawn. That is when they left to go home and observe the Sabbath, just before sunrise.

Matthew 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Mark 16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Luke 24:1 Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

John 20:1 The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

At dawn is when the Sabbath was ending and a new day was beginning. That's when they returned to the tomb. John mentions that it was early and still dark. They were in route to the tomb while it was still dark, since it is permissible to walk a certain distance even on the Sabbath and they would have wanted to get there as soon as they could.

It was about 4 hours between Jesus' death and sunset. It would have been impossible for everything that is recorded in scripture to happen before sunset. They arrived back at the tomb very early, at dawn, just as a new day was beginning on the first day of the week, which would be what we call Sunday. He was already resurrected, so the resurrection did not happen on Sunday like churches teach. That is why they say that the Sabbath was changed from Saturday to Sunday. The day starts

at sunrise, the resurrection had already occurred at sunrise, so it happened on the Sabbath. That's even more reason that we should be keeping the Sabbath on the 7th day of the week, as we are commanded, and not on the 1st day of the week.

John 20:1 The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher. 2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him.

John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

In verse 1 it said that Mary came to the tomb early on the first day of the week and in verse 19 it says, the same day at evening. It is still the first day of the week in the evening.

On the topic of the first day of the week, some people will say that the first day of the week is now the day that we gather together and they will also say that it takes the place of the 7th day Sabbath. The Catholic Church changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, not the Lord. One reason people believe this is because they believe that the resurrection occurred on the first day of the week, but you have been shown that it didn't happen that way. Also, it was the first day of the week here in verse 19 and they were gathered together, but if you read on it says that they were together again 8 days later when the same thing happened. That day would have been the second day of the week. In Acts 20 when they came together on the first day of the week to break bread Paul preached to them. Previously, at the end of Acts chapter 2, it said that they were together daily in the temple and breaking bread from house to house. They were together daily. Paul was preaching to them on that day because he was leaving the next day. Then in 1 Corinthians 16 there is an instruction to lay aside money on the first day of the week for collections. That goes along with giving God our first fruits, from the first part of our earning, and not from what's left over at the end of the week. The final thought on this is that in Revelation 1 when John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day it does not say what day of the week that was.

How about the resurrection on the Sabbath? There may be someone out there thinking, the resurrection wouldn't happen on the Sabbath because that would be work, but consider how many times Jesus did things on the Sabbath that the Jewish leaders thought was a violation of the Sabbath. He healed people, He told the man to pick up his mat and walk, He walked places, the disciples picked the heads of grain. Here are some verses about that:

Mark 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: 28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Mark 3:1 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand,

Stand forth. 4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. 5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Matthew 12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? 6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple. 7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

John 7:22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. 23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? 24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

Luke 13:10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. 11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*. 12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. 15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?* 16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? 17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Jesus set people free and healed on the Sabbath. The ultimate act of healing and setting us free is His resurrection. He is Lord of the Sabbath, it is on the 7th day of the week and it starts at sunrise.

You will find when you are observing Your Sabbath, starting at sunrise and as you read the scriptures with this new understanding, you will start to see even more scriptures that make it plain that the day starts at the first glimmer of sunlight.

From Merriam Webster's
: daylight noun

day·?light | \ 'da-?lit \

Definition of daylight

1: the light of day

2: DAYTIME

3: DAWN...

AND OTHERS:

Daylight noun

“the light of day as opposed to the darkness of night; the light of the sun, as opposed to that of the moon or to artificial light”

Praise our Heavenly Father who knew we would need a day of rest. Enjoy the Day He has reserved for us who love Him. After He created the world He said:

Genesis 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Genesis 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

That is what He wants us to do. He wants us to cherish our Sabbath day of rest and be thankful for all He has created.