

Evening or Morning?

by Bill and Karen Bishop

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Most Feast-keeping Sabbatarians (as well as Jews) begin their Sabbaths about sundown. However, not all concur. We have had questions through the years about how the day is to be rendered – morning to morning, or evening to evening. Our response has always been consistent. We firmly believe that the new evening twilight separates each 24-hour “day”. We believe Scripture clearly speaks to this, and have ALWAYS maintained that the Biblical day is considered to be evening to evening. It is as the darkness takes over the daylight hours that one day ends and the next begins. That is why point #4 in the Notations section that begins each of our Zadokite calendars states that we use “the time of sundown in Jerusalem as the dividing line between days as they are reckoned on the calendar.

So, let's begin with looking at some historical evidence to ascertain how they actually understood the timing of a day in ancient Israel. Flavius Josephus brings a reliable reference to us regarding the timing for the 7th day Sabbath to begin and end:

The Works of Josephus, Complete and Unabridged by William Whiston – The Wars of the Jews, Book 4, Chapter 9, Verse 12, (582) – pp 691-692

*... one of the priests stood of course, and gave a signal beforehand, with a trumpet, at the beginning of every seventh day, in the evening twilight, as also at the evening when the day was finished, as giving notice to the people when they were to leave off work, and when they were to go to work again.*

So this was what was being observed in the days of Josephus. Maybe THIS is one thing that should NOT have changed!

But – was that simply Rabbinical? What do the Dead Sea Scrolls say?

We have quoted directly from two different translations of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Each translation uses a subtitle before the actual quote, so these subtitles are shown before the text of each quote:

The Dead Sea Scrolls by Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Jr., & Edward Cook - Under the second part of the Damascus Document called the STATUTES - in fragment 10 of 4Q270 - p 68:

*About the Sabbath, how to keep it properly*

*A man may not work on the sixth day from the time that the solar orb is above the horizon by its diameter, because this is what is meant by the passage, "Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy (Deut. 5:12).*

The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English by Penguin Classics - Under the second part of the Damascus Document called the STATUTES - in fragment 10 of 4Q270 - p 141:

*Concerning the Sabbath to observe it according to its law*

*No man shall work on the sixth day from the moment when the sun's orb is distant by its own fulness from the gate (wherein it sinks); for this is what He said, Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy (Deut. v, 12).*

The text we quoted is drawn from the Zadokite Fragments (or the Damascus Document). This particular segment relates to the "Sabbath code" and how they observed it. This segment of the scroll showed their orientation to Deuteronomy 5:12. Being the Zadokite Fragments, it should be obvious that those who used the Zadokite calendar would have used this interpretation regarding Sabbath observance. The Zadokite priesthood was fastidious about specifications and precise restrictions relative to Statutes. This specific wording was in a section of the Scrolls sometimes called the Statutes, so these fragments would have been engineered to provide an exact snapshot of the precise timing for Sabbath to begin for their community.

So - let's dissect it:

Combining the wording from both translations, the image being shown was one where the sun **at its diameter** was still above the horizon. CLICK! There is your photo. It is time to end work and begin Sabbath. This image is implicit with the understanding that as it sinks down below the horizon, the full diameter of the sun is no longer visible, and Sabbath has begun.

This "sinking" imagery in the second translation confirms that it is indeed picturing the setting of the sun that concludes the sixth day and begins the

seventh. The Penguin Classics translation indicates that the orb of the sun will sink down at the gate where it sets until it is no longer in its fullness (its full diameter is no longer visible). Sabbath will then be underway. These two renderings work together to form the precise picture.

So if morning to morning was intended by Yah, why would the Zadokite priesthood be honoring evening to evening relative to their Sabbaths? They were sticklers to use Scripture as their guide. So we'll look at some Scripture as well. First though, we want to provide some notes about the key Hebrew word "yom", which is typically translated as "day" in our Bible.

The Blue Letter Bible shows that the entry is not SINGULAR in nature, but has MULTIPLE meanings. We will be listing the 3 most prominent meanings for "yom", but before we do, we should note that EACH of these three renderings for "yom" is valid, **dependent on context**. To limit the term "yom" exclusively to one segment of its Yah-given inferences is to destroy Biblical integrity. None these 3 options covers ALL the bases – even seeing it as "the daylight hours" falls short of this potential!

For instance:

Genesis 6:5

(5) And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

The word "continually" in this verse is "yom". So would this mean that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil in the "daylight hours"? No, it means over a protracted period of time in general, which applies to our third definition below.

The three most prominent meanings for "yom" are:

**Strong's H3117 (yom)** – 1) day (as **opposed to night**) (from sunrise to sunset); 2) day (**24 hour period**) (from sunset to sunset) 3) **temporal references**, such as today, yesterday, tomorrow, or a time period general

Strong's definition legend says: whether literal (**from sunrise to sunset, OR from one sunset to the next**), or figurative (a space of time defined by an associated term).

Now let's return to the first few words of our Bible for a closer look at this to see how these terms might apply. Torah lays it out for us:

Genesis 1:1-5

- (1) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
- (2) And the earth was without form, and void; and **darkness was upon the face of the deep**. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
- (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**.

So – Here is the question? Which came first – the darkness or the light?

The obvious answer is darkness.

Verse 2 answers that for us when it says “**DARKNESS was upon the face of the deep**” **BEFORE light is created** in verse 3. We know that darkness is merely an absence of light. It was by the creation of light that darkness was dissipated. The darkness was divided from the light because it could not exist in the presence OF light. Elohim had just established a protocol regarding the darkness and the light. Light was shown to overpower the darkness.

He called light “day”, and the darkness “night”. Then He said “And **the evening and the morning were the 1<sup>st</sup> day**”. Again – which came first – the evening or the morning?

Genesis verse 5 clearly indicates the evening came BEFORE the morning and TOGETHER they were called “the 1<sup>st</sup> day” (yom). Going back to our glossary of terms, This is definition #2 for the word. The evening began the day, and the morning closed the day so the evening of verse 8 could begin the next day.

Genesis 1:8

- (8) And God called the firmament Heaven. And **the evening and the morning were the second day**.

So what is the evening?

**Strong's H6153 (ereb) – evening, night, sunset**

This term is VERY PREDOMINANTLY used as evening in the Bible, and carries the implication of **mingled**, as the period when the light of the daylight hours begins to fade into darkness.

We need to realize that the demarcation between day and night is somewhat like using a slide trombone. It is a flow of transition rather than having crisp and sharp lines. Hebraically, the term “between the evens” implies this gradual transition. This transitional “evening” brings in the dark part (night) of the 24-hour span of time.

**Strong's H3915 (layil) – night**

H3915 is sometimes translated as midnight, with implications of being very dark as in the **opposite of daylight**.

THEN the light dissipates the darkness as morning arrives. Then as the light begins to recede at the end of the 24-hour day, it makes room for the darkness that signals the start of the next day.

But is it that way on Sabbaths?

Leviticus specifies that the annual Sabbath day of Yom Kippur is to begin and end in the evening:

Leviticus 23:27&32

(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.

(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.

But which evenings?

Note that verse 27 says the TENTH day of the month, and verse 32 specifies the NINTH day. It is showing that the “even to even” specified in this passage was the transition from the NINTH day TO the TENTH day. The day of atonement would be for a full 24-hour “yom” (definition 2 from our notes

on "yom"). It would be considered to be the TENTH day of the month, which began as the NINTH day was ending at "even". It was specified this way so the reader would know not to begin this 24-hour span of time when the TENTH day was ending at even. There is no forked tongue language here, it is specifying which evening – the one that ended the NINTH day and began the TENTH. Our Elohim is strong in patterning, and He is consistent in His patterning, so all other Sabbaths would be evening to evening as well!

These words of Leviticus regarding the Sabbaths are simply showing identical patterning carrying forward from the Genesis concept of beginning the day in the evening.

Earlier in Leviticus it speaks of a soul being unclean. It says that one will be unclean **until the evening** – which strongly implies until the 24-hour day is ended, and he will be clean to begin the following day.

Leviticus 22:6-7

(6) The soul which hath touched any such shall be **unclean until even**, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water.

(7) And **when the sun is down**, he shall be clean, and shall afterward eat of the holy things; because it is his food.

Likewise when the people mourned for Saul, Jonathan, and the house of Israel, they fasted until even, with strong implication that they could eat as the new day began at even.

2 Samuel 1:12

(12) And they mourned, and wept, and **fasted until even**, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

Another such instance was when David said he would not taste bread **until the sun was down**.

2 Samuel 3:35

(35) And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, **if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down**.

This is yet another strong indication that the end of the sunlight portion of the day was the end of one day at sundown, and evening would be the start

of the next day.

Now let's shift gears, and take a look at a verse in Matthew that is often used to substantiate the day beginning in the morning:

Matthew 28:1

(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.

They say that "**began to DAWN toward the first day**" shows that the day begins with dawn.

Actually, the word "dawn" which they relate to so strongly is the Greek word Strong's G2020 (epiphosko), which can simply mean **draw on toward**. So - this This Greek word translated as "dawn" in our English Bible doesn't have to relate to the sun coming up AT ALL!

So – we see that this verse can actually be saying: **in the end of the Sabbath, as it began to draw on toward the first day of the week**. Actually the phrase "**in the end of the Sabbath**" implies that the dusk of Sabbath was just ending, which corroborates the idea that it was only beginning to draw on toward the first day of the week.

This harmonizes well with the gospel of John:

John 20:1

(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.

If the day begins with daylight, then the first day of the week "when it was yet dark" would be at the end of the first day (as opposed to "very early in the morning" per Mark 16:2). This would create a major Biblical contradiction.

The word "yet" in John 10:1 is Strong's G2089 (eti), and can mean "**has begun to exist**". So – we see the potential that the twilight transition from the end of Sabbath was occurring and the likelihood that the dark had just "began to exist". In other words, it was just beginning to get dark at the end of Sabbath, and was starting to draw on to the first day of the week when the women were en route to the sepulchre.

When we couple this with what happens later in the chapter, it shows us a very complete picture of a day. Setting the stage, we must realize that the period we call dusk or "between the evens" is when the days blur together. It can be considered either the day that is exiting or the next day that is beginning OR BOTH, depending on your perspective.

The women were journeying to the tomb at the END OF SABBATH, which is TRANSITIONING INTO the first day of the week as darkness had taken hold, beginning the night. It was just starting to cross over into the first day of the week.

Eighteen verses later John tells us that it was the **SAME DAY at evening** when Y'shua appeared to the disciples. Verse 18 says that Mary went to the disciples and told them she had seen Y'shua.

John 20:18

(18) Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Then verse 19 shows us a time lapse when it says the same day at evening:

John 20:19

(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.

Mary had come and gone and the day was far spent when Y'shua appeared to the disciples that evening. This verse not only says though that it was the **SAME DAY**, but clarifies that indeed it was still the **FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK**, and it was apparently at its transition **IN THE EVENING!**

To summarize, Genesis specifies that Yahweh had seven specific segments in time during His creative process. Each began with the evening, proceeded through the morning, and each ended the following evening to start the next 24-hour period. This evening to morning itself points to His creation power of bringing light to the darkness. When the evening and morning of the sixth day ends, our full 24-hour day of rest begins.

Paul was commissioned by Y'shua when he was confronted in Acts and told to open the eyes of the Gentiles and turn them from Satan (darkness) to Elohim (light).

**Being instructed out of the Law**, we too are to be guides to the blind and a **light of those who are in darkness**:

Romans 2:18-19

(18) And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, **being instructed out of the law**;

(19) And art confident that thou thyself art **a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness**,

Romans 13:12

(12) The **NIGHT** is far spent, the **DAY** is at hand: let us therefore **cast off the works of DARKNESS**, and let us **put on the armour of LIGHT**.

Paul speaks first of the spiritual aspects such as blindness versus Torah insight, then he speaks of the physical aspect when he equates night with darkness and day with light. The context here clarifies that THIS use of the word "day" is definition 1 for "yom" in our notes for "yom". It is the LIGHT portion of the 24-hour span which we also know as a "day" (per definition 2).

Likewise, we were shown the **physical aspect of light** on day 4 of creation when we were given lights in the sky to rule this "night" and "day". The light from the bodies in the celestial realm would distinguish the relativity of time in a definable way. The first lights put into place were established to divide time into day and night.

Genesis 1:14

(14) And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven **to divide the day from the night**; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

(15) And let them be for **lights in the firmament of the heaven** to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

(16) And God made **two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night**: he made the stars also.

This produced physical light – the light and the lack thereof that we use to determine when the the days start and end.

However, the light that preceded Genesis 1:14 was not from the sun, as the sun was non-existent at that point. It was **a spiritual light** from Heaven itself. **Both darkness and light have physical and spiritual components.** The light that first pierced through the darkness to divide it asunder during the week of Creation was the Divine light from the Tree of Life itself – spiritual in nature, exuding spiritual energies into the atmosphere of our world.

You see, Yah didn't bring Light into being so we could smile and say how nice it is. He brought it into being with a purpose: to defeat the pervasive darkness of Genesis 1:2:

Genesis 1:2

(2) And the earth was without form, and void; and **darkness was upon the face of the deep.** And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters..

**Strong's H2822 (hosek)** - the dark; hence (literally) **darkness**; figuratively, misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness: —dark(-ness), night, obscurity.

Our definition shows the wickedness associated with this darkneses. Paul equates this darkness with the enemy of mankind – Satan:

Acts 26:18

(18) To open their eyes, and **to turn them from darkness to light,** and **from the power of Satan unto God,** that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

If the Zadokite calendar shouts one thing to us, it is that Yah's patterning is paramount in importance, and is not to be broken! This is for good reason, as Yah provides us with His patterning to point us to His deeper Spiritual Truth. Genesis shows us that this same evening AND the morning pattern (evening FOLLOWED BY morning) is repeated each day throughout the week of creation. Yah's patterning usually points to a more complete reality that He needs us to understand. Just as the Feast days point to what Y'shua is fulfilling as time proceeds, so this specific patterning in the week of creation points to a much deeper truth.

Here is His deeper spiritual Truth that was given to us at day 1 of creation: As the day began, there was darkness, and the light came into the picture to

conquer the darkness. Herein is the deeper spiritual Truth of this patterning! **Light wins at the end of the DAY!** Darkness is present in this day, and in the end of the day, the light will conquer it!

We must understand that LIGHT IS NEVER CONQUERED BY DARKNESS. Once light entered the picture, darkness was destined to be vanquished. Now darkness is only able to come forth when the light recedes to allow it to come forth. This is allowed every 24-hour "yom" (day) simply to provide the continuous ebb and flow that marks each of our seven days in the week so our calendar can progress through the year. This ebb and flow allows for our calendar count to stay on track.

Psalms 90:12

(12) So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Paul warns us that we are to be careful not to fall prey to the enemy's tactics. His subtle twists can bring division to the body and cause errant thought patterns to prevail. Look at how Paul's words were twisted by well-meaning pastors to show that Torah is passe and we don't need it today. We see this happening with the way verses are being misconstrued by well-meaning individuals in regard to this morning or evening issue as well.

The enemy is quite uncanny! One of His favorite tactics is to strike at our emotions. It seems to be such a lofty endeavor - to put emphasis on the light of Yah as grounds to start Sabbath in the daylight hours. If he can excite us about finding a new and unique way of exalting Elohim (such as honoring the light part of the day to glorify Him), then emotional reasoning takes over where cohesion of Scripture falls away. The emotional surge that draws us into this pattern of thought does NOT mean that thought is valid, and it may actually be in opposition to the Truth. We fully realize how EASY it is to embrace an emotion and fall into line with the teaching that surrounds it, and we pray for gentle revelation that will restore Truth.

The book of Hebrews equates the seventh "yom" (day) of creation to the last millennial "yom" (day) of time.

Hebrews 4:4 & 9

(4) For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

(9) There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

This millennial "day" is an example of definition 3 in our "yom" notes. Considering this, it sickened us to realize that the enemy is so sly that he has coerced people to do exactly the opposite of what they think they are doing. By proposing this reversal of Yah's continuous patterning, they have actually shattered His perpetual pattern of light prevailing at the end of the day. When they show the day beginning in the light and ending in darkness, they are inadvertently pointing to the destruction the light (Elohim) by the darkness (haSatan) at the "end" of the "yom" (7<sup>th</sup> millennial day).

Let us never judge one another in this respect, as we are all subject to being diverted in our beliefs if we are not careful. Constant vigilance is needed more than ever today, as deception of all flavors is so RAMPANT! That is why Y'shua warned us not to be deceived in these days, and why we are to help one another avoid such traps:

Luke 21:8

(8) And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

This can have a two-fold meaning:

1) Many will come saying they are Christs and deceive many

AND/OR

2) many will come claiming that He (Y'shua) is Christ and still manage to deceive many.

Deception can follow in either case! Just because people claim Y'shua is Messiah does not mean they may not be passing along concepts that were conceived through misguided Scriptural interpretation.

We find no Biblical mandate to change that which was ordained in Genesis as the evening and morning pattern that Yah established, and we have shown how this was carried forward throughout time.

As always, we must be careful to do due diligence and keep our discernment antennas in constant repair and operation! So, let us all lift one another up in prayer as we continue to seek clarity in this matter.