

***Evening or Morning?***  
(revised)  
*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 weekly 7<sup>th</sup> 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. But – was this simply a rabbinical thing? What do the Dead Sea Scrolls say?

Here we will quote 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 quoted text above 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 a 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 the Holy Bible. The Blue Letter Bible shows that the entry is not SINGULAR in nature, but has MULTIPLE meanings and usage. For this discussion, we will be considering the 3 most prominent meanings of "yom":

**Strong's H3117 (yom)** –

- 1) **day - as opposed to night; daytime** (from sunrise to sunset);
- 2) **day - a complete 24-hour period** (from sunset to sunset);
- 3) **day - an age, a general period of time** (as defined by context).

We should note that EACH of these three renderings for "yom" is valid and **dependent on context**. To limit the term "yom" exclusively to one segment of its inferences would not uphold proper Biblical exegesis.

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 mankind's heart was only evil in the "daytime" or only for a 24-hour period? No, it means over a protracted period of time in general (all day, everyday), which applies to our third definition above.

Now let's return to the first few words of our Bible for a closer look to see how the other definitions 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**.

In verse 5, we see the first definition for day as the daylight portion, and we see the second definition for day as a full cycle, evening and morning. So – Here is the question - Which came first – the darkness or the light?

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

Genesis verse 5 clearly indicates the evening 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. The evening begins the day with the nighttime portion, and the morning begins the daylight portion of the day, thus composing a full day. Then the evening of verse 8 could begin the next day as the cycle repeats.

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, erev)** – **evening**, night, **sunset**

This term is VERY PREDOMINANTLY used as “evening” in the Bible, and carries the implication of **mingled**, as the period of mingled light and darkness 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” imparts 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 completes the full cycle, making room for the darkness that signals the start of the next day.

This Biblical definition of a day seems to be very clear to us in Scripture. However, we are aware of a movement that seems to be gaining momentum which states just the opposite – using these same Scriptural references from Genesis. In our opinion, it really takes some etymological gymnastics to get there, and it shows how our finite human reasoning alone cannot be relied upon for understanding the ways of Yah. We must always defer to ALL the words in His Word, AND we must also stay consistent with the patterns He gives us in His Word.

In the first 3 verses of Genesis, we are shown that we have a Supreme Creator of Everything (aka God or Elohim), and there is this unexplained darkness, and He introduces light to it. First, there is darkness, then there is light that is separated from it, **bringing order out of chaos**. This is a pattern that is established in these first 3 verses that is a foundational basis for everything that comes after them throughout the entire Bible. It is the most basic purpose for everything that our Heavenly Father does – both physically and spiritually. He is -

- overcoming darkness through Light,
- overcoming death through Life,
- overcoming sin through Love! (John 3:16)

Furthermore, Yah's Word is extremely precise in defining a day when it comes to the DAY of Atonement. Leviticus clearly 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.

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 which evening was to begin Yom Kippur. It was to be the evening which ended the NINTH day and began the TENTH.

Our Elohim is strong and consistent in His patterning, so why wouldn't all other Sabbaths be evening to evening as well? Then by extension, why wouldn't all other days be evening to evening? Having some days be morning to morning, and having other days be evening to evening just doesn't mesh – at all! These words of Leviticus regarding the **DAY** of Atonement are simply showing **an identical pattern being carried forward from the foundational concept in Genesis of beginning the day in the evening.**

Additionally in Leviticus, the Torah speaks of souls becoming unclean by having contact with various sorts of impurity. It says that even after washing the uncleanness, one will still be considered as unclean **until the evening**. Would this be in the middle of a 24-hour period that began in the morning? That seems very dubious and problematic to us. Instead, this strongly indicates that the day when the uncleanness occurred is ending, and a new 24-hour day is beginning – in that evening. The person will be officially clean at even, beginning a new day. Here is one classic example of declaring when the state of uncleanness is truly abated:

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. This too carries a strong implication that they could be able to 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 swore, 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 Greek word translated as "dawn" in our English Bible doesn't have to relate to the sun coming up AT ALL!

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 we define a day as beginning with the daylight portion, then the first day of the week "when it was yet dark" would have to come at the end of the first day (as opposed to "very early in the morning" per Mark 16:2). This creates 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 "begun 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 ending 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.

In Luke's rendering of Acts, Paul was commissioned by Y'shua and told to open the eyes of the Gentiles.

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.

We see here that this verse correlates turning them from "darkness to light" with turning them from the power of "Satan unto God". This then projects the strong spiritual connotation of "darkness" and "light" being as "Satan" and "God" which runs throughout Scripture.

The Apostle John used the same corollary of darkness and light in much of his writing, as seen here:

John 3:19-21

(19) And this is the condemnation, that **light is come into the world**, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil**.

(20) For **every one that doeth evil hateth the light**, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

(21) **But he that doeth truth cometh to the light**, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

The Apostle Paul shows a slightly different application of our analogy when he says that **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**.

It's interesting to see here how the context clarifies THIS use of the word "day" in verse 12. Even though it is being used figuratively, it is quite literal in utilizing definition #1 for "yom" - as the LIGHT portion of the 24-hour span which we also know as a "day" (per definition #2).

In this passage, Paul speaks first of the spiritual aspects by contrasting spiritual blindness with having spiritual insight from the instruction of the Torah. Then he uses the physical aspects of nighttime moving into daytime, as a metaphor in verse 12, when he equates that pattern to the works of darkness being cast off by the armour of light.

We were given the **physical aspect of light** on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of creation when Yah placed lights in the sky to rule over "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 Yah. **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 of the Tree of Life itself – spiritual in nature, exuding spiritual energies into the existence of creation itself.

You see, Yah brought physical light into being for our physical comfort and necessities. However, Biblical references correlate the physical and the spiritual. They work hand in hand. Yah brought spiritual light into being with an even more profound purpose: to defeat the pervasive spiritual 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 darkness, and once again, Acts shows how this entire concept of darkness relates to the adversary.

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 morning patterning (evening FOLLOWED BY morning) is repeated each day throughout the week of creation. Yah's patterning usually points to a more complete reality that is important for us to comprehend. 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.

As we see in day 1 of creation, the day began, there was darkness, and the light came into the picture to bring order out of chaos by conquering darkness. Herein appears to be the deeper spiritual focus of this patterning as we perceive it: **Light wins at the end of the DAY!** Even our movies today depict this – first the villain, then the hero conquers at the end of the feature. That is based upon a Biblical maxim. Darkness is present as the day begins, but in the end of the day, the light will conquer it!

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 a 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.

When we look at the beginning of Yah's Word, we can easily see the patterning of darkness and light, defining our days, and the days comprising

the 7-day week. These patterns from the beginning of creation will continue with us until the end of creation. There will be a millennial "day", an example of definition #3 in our "yom" notes. In a relative manner, it will begin with the darkest period of human history, which will be swept up in the return of Messiah as the light returns to conquer and vanquish this spiritually darkened time. Then precious rest will be instituted for all of mankind. It is this seventh millennial "day" that culminates the patterned week of creation. At its conclusion, the day will not yield to darkness any longer, but the kingdom will be relegated by the Son to the Father:

1 Corinthians 15:24-26

(24) Then cometh the end, when **he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father**; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

(25) For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

(26) **The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.**

Death is the epitome of darkness, and with the conquering of death (verse 26), Y'shua's victory will be complete – light over darkness will prevail throughout eternity in the Father's Kingdom. The day will no longer end with a transition to darkness, as darkness will no longer have a place in Yah's creation. What began in darkness will end in light –

Revelation 21:6-7

(6) And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

(7) He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Revelation 22:3-5

(3) And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

(4) And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

(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.