

When Does a Day Begin?

Does a Biblical Day Begin at Sunrise or Sunset?

The Beginning of All Things

The law of first discovery simply stated is that a Bible topic when first mentioned is the starting place to begin our study. Everything first revealed about that subject must be in harmony with all future findings. We cannot start our discovery in the middle of a topic and then work toward both ends. Our introduction to the topic is the basic truth upon which all additional discoveries must conform. The Sabbath first appears in the Old Testament which makes it our guide (Gen. 2:2).

Day Begins at Creation

There are many lessons we learn from the creation account. An important fact that is discussed elsewhere deals with why the term “Elohim” (in lieu of Yahweh) is used here in describing the creation account. All matter, all substance or material, space and time began with creation. The Heavenly Father Yahweh dwells in the spirit realm where time and space do not exist. There was nothing material or substance such as matter before creation existed. Prior to creation, time did not exist. Space and time do not exist where there is no matter. Only when Elohim began to create did He bring into existence that which could be called earth, air or water. The earth and the universe itself formed. Time then had a beginning.

Note the earth was without form and void, (Hebrew *tohu & bohu*). It was a shapeless mass of water, mud, rocks sand, loam, etc.; a soupy glob.

In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim moved upon the face of the waters.

The creation of the earth began as a formless mass. When first formed, it was not the spherical ball it now is but was without form, void, and shapeless. It was a fluid soup-like matter with the water mixed in with the earth all blended together. It was without life, empty with no grass, trees, herbs or plants. The earth was a dark, gloomy mix of rocks, mud, sand, loam and silt. Within this murky chaos were the nutrients needed for sustaining plant growth such as trace elements, and organic matter. Once the fluid, turbid earth was created, only then did the Spirit of Elohim move upon the face of the waters.

Spirit Moved, Hovered

- The word “moved” is *rachaph*, #7363 in Hebrew, and means to brood over, to hover with a gentle wavering of fluttering motion as a bird over her young, [Deut. 32:11] (*Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*).
- **Strong’s** #7363 *rachaph*, a Prime root: To brood, by implication to be relaxed: flutter-move-shake.
- **RYRIE Bible** — Moved upon in the sense of protecting and participating in the creative work.
- **Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius**; hovering over face of waters, or perh. (v.syr.) brooding (and fertilizing).
- **The JPS Torah Commentary** — The basic idea of the stem is vibration, movement. Hitherto all is static, lifeless, and immobile. Motion, which is the essential element in change, originates with [Elohim’s] dynamic presence.

The Spirit of Elohim moved in darkness upon the face of the murky, turbid waters, which covered the earth. The principle of all life, the Spirit energy force of Yahweh, began separating, preparing, brooding upon and animating the earth filling the earth with vitality needed for life. There was no light or motion until the agitation of the Spirit stirred the earthy particles, of which the heaviest sunk lower, and waters being lighter rose above the solids. Peter describes the earth as covered with water, some standing out of the water not yet fully organized or prepared for growth of vegetation:

*For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of Elohim the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, 2 Peter 3:5 **Authorized Version** (AV) 1769 edition.*

The Spirit of Elohim continued to move (brooded, fluttered, shook, hovered,) over the newly created earth. Through His Spirit, Elohim separated the waters from the land and formed the earth into its present oval shape. The earth was formed with rocks and stones beneath the waters with sands and soil atop the earth, which was fertilized and energized by Yahweh's Spirit.

Light of the World

And the Spirit of Elohim moved upon the face of the waters. And Elohim said, "Let there be light: and there was light." And Elohim saw the light, that it was good: and Elohim divided the light from the darkness. And Elohim called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day, Genesis 1:1-5 AV.

Once Yahweh had formed the earth into its present rounded, global shape by His Spirit, He then started the earth revolving on its axis. As the earth turned away from Him, the far side would be in darkness, for the source of light would be from the Creator Himself:

*Who coverest Thyself with **light** as with a garment: Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain, Psalms 104:2 AV.*

And he said, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." And He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of Yahweh before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." And He said, "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live," Exodus 33:18-20 AV.

We read of many places where the Mighty One of the Old Testament was a bright, blinding light. (Exodus 33:23; 34:5-7) The Creator was the LIGHT of the world.

*O send out **thy light** and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles, Psalms 43:3 AV.*

*Then spake Yahshua again unto them, saying, I am **the Light** of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have **the Light** of life. (John 8:12)*

(Yahshua) was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. (Matthew 17:2 AV)

The sun and celestial planets had not yet been created, but the Creator Himself was His own bright, blazing light (Exodus 3:2-3; 33:20 and 19:21). As the newly created earth revolved, a 12-hour period of daylight and darkness prevailed. Yahweh's Spirit went forth and cast light on His handiwork. The first chapter in Revelation describes the appearance of Yahshua today, and what He will look like when He returns:

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right

hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength, Revelation 1:13-16 AV.

Unfettered spirit energy is a glistening, bright light. Both Yahweh and Yahshua will be the LIGHT of the New Jerusalem in the Kingdom:

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of Elohim did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, Revelation 21:23 AV.

On the second day the atmosphere (firmament) was created, which gave the earth the clouds of water vapor and ice crystals above much like a greenhouse effect which Yahweh called heaven. Evening came and the second day ended. Not until the fourth day was the sun and moon created.

Twelve Hour Night And Day

How long did Yahweh's Spirit hover or move upon the face of the waters? Many reputable scholars feel it was likely 12 hours. The revolving earth obviously started its spin at that time and has continued to bring us a 24-hour day. Yahweh begins with darkness and is the master of darkness, because He is the light of the world.

Yahshua 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," John 11:9 AV.

It is clear from the above that Elohim began the 24-hour day with darkness. He starts with a 12 hour period of night, and then brings the daylight. Although man is not expected to work in the darkness, Yahweh continues to monitor His creation and His work is not hindered by darkness as is puny mankind;

But Yahshua answered them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," John 5:17 AV.

In each of the days of creation, Elohim's creation account begins with evening, then comes morning. An interesting point made by scholars is that by giving something a name, one has control over that which one has named. Thus, Yahweh named the light day and darkness he called night. He named the atmosphere heaven; the dry land earth; the waters seas. Mankind was given dominion over sea life, animals, birds on this earth (Gen. 1:26). Adam was created and then named the animals and birds over which he was given dominion (Gen. 2:19-20). Adam named every living creature and called them by name, by which he established his dominion over the earth. The Almighty also named Adam (meaning, red earth or clay) and allows man freedom within certain parameters, but Yahweh is over all.

"Day" Has Several Meanings

In our society the word "day" has several meanings:

- ▶ It can mean a 24-hour period of time, including night and day.
- ▶ Daylight, the period between the rising and setting of the sun.
- ▶ Extended time, such as "Abraham's day," or "The Day of Yahweh."

The Egyptians and Babylonians reckoned their 24-hour day from sunrise to sunrise, the Umbrians from noon to noon. The Greeks and Romans began their day at midnight. We find the Bible starts the days with the setting sun. For proof, we go back to Genesis 1:6:

And Elohim called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day, Genesis 1:5 AV.

Days Begin at Sunrise? Sunset!

The day (as opposed to night) indeed begins at sunrise and ends at sunset when the sun sets and daylight ends. But in reference to a day of the week, the 24-hour day begins when the sun has set and twilight comes on. The evening begins each day of the week and the night lasts for some 12 hours, and then the sun rises and we have daylight for 12 hours.

There are groups that begin their 24-hour day with sunrise, just as did the Egyptians and Babylonians. The Bible, however, shows that Yahweh's day ends and begins with sunset, not our present midnight. Let us examine the following verses:

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, Exodus 12:18.

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, Leviticus 23:32 AV.

It is Yahweh's command that we begin our day with sunset. As the sun sets, one day ends and another begins. We still have some 30 minutes of twilight before total darkness to prepare for nightfall. In Nehemiah's time the setting sun began to cast long shadows, darkening the gates of Jerusalem, signaling the approaching sunset, which brought on the weekly Sabbath. The gates were then shut at sunset:

And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the Sabbath day, Nehemiah 13:19 AV

Samson offered a riddle to the Philistines to be solved in seven days. They had no answer but appealed to Samson's wife who deceitfully (but successfully) pleaded with Samson for the answer. On the seventh and last day, just before the day ended at sunset, they solved the riddle:

And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, "What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?" And he said unto them, "If ye had not plowed with my heifer, you had not found out my riddle," Judges 14:18 AV.

Had the Philistines solved the riddle AFTER sunset, the seventh day would have been over, and they would have lost the wager for another day had started.

Yahshua's Example

Certainly, Yahshua knew which day was the Sabbath. Yahshua was teaching:

And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day He entered into the synagogue, and taught, Mark 1:21.

While in Capernaum, Yahshua responded to an appeal for healing of a man with an unclean spirit. He did not ordinarily heal on the Sabbath, but He did here in Mark 1:23-28 in response to a special request. Leaving the synagogue on the Sabbath, He went to Simon's house and there healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law (vs. 29-31). Take note that Yahshua did heal a few as He encountered them on His way, but did not have a healing campaign until the Sabbath was over. Notice that He waited until the sun did set ending the Sabbath, then healed many and cast out demons:

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him, Mark 1:32-34.

Beginning in Luke 4:31, we learn that Yahshua spent much time in Capernaum teaching on the Sabbath. On occasion He took time in the synagogues to heal certain ones. Interestingly, Luke's

account mentions that a healing campaign took place when the sun was setting (bringing on a new day) the sick and infirm were brought to the Savior who healed each of them:

Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them, Luke 4:40.

Luke explains Yahshua waited until the sun had set ending the Sabbath before He began His healing campaign. It was the contention of the rulers of the synagogue that any healing is work, and Yahshua was therefore breaking the Sabbath.

He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10), and healed a woman, verse 13) And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Yahshua 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 (Luke 13:14).

Except in extreme cases, the Savior waited for the sun to set which ended the Sabbath day before He set out to heal the sick and infirm.

There are those who choose verses having to do with the twelve hours of daylight and attribute this to mean a 24-hour day begins at sunrise. Our Creator began His day with the evening darkness and ended it with the daylight's setting sun. Each day has one evening which begins at sunset. Yahweh takes the weakest of things (such as Israel, Deut. 7:7) and you and me and promises to make us into His sons and daughters if we are faithful. Thus we are reminded of His handiwork every day. He takes darkness and replaces it with light. Yahshua said He is the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:6).

*There was a man sent from Yahweh, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of **the Light**, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that **Light**. That was the true **Light**, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not, John 1:6-10 AV.*

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