

## When does the Biblical day start?

The first time it was brought to my attention that a Biblical day goes from evening to morning, I could not believe it, and I had to reach over and open my own Bible. Sure enough, that is exactly what Genesis 1 says.

And the evening and the morning were the First Day. (Genesis 1:5 KJV)

The evening comes first. The Day starts in the evening, and not in the morning.

We see this repeated in the description of the Day of Atonement, which occurs on the Tenth Day of the Seventh Month<sup>696</sup>.

It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and *you* shall afflict your souls: in the Ninth Day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall *you* celebrate your Sabbath. (Leviticus 23:32 KJV)

When combined with the other scriptures which place the Day of Atonement on the Tenth Day, this description shows that the Tenth Day starts after the Ninth Day has ended its daylight hours and then continues for 24 hours until the next evening. God appointed days to start in the evening, and so they do not start at midnight.

A Biblical Day goes from evening to evening.

The next question then is when does the 'evening' start?

Many, many traditions start the 'evening' at sundown, but that is not actually what the Bible says. Notice the sequence in Genesis 1:1-5.

- Darkness was upon the face of the deep (Genesis 1:2 KJV)
- God said, Let there be light (Genesis 1:3 KJV)
- And the evening and the morning were the First Day. (Genesis 1:5 KJV)

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<sup>696</sup> Leviticus 23:27, "Also the Tenth Day of this Seventh Month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy assembly for you".

The First Day began the 'evening' in darkness. It was before light was created. This defines the term 'evening' as when there is no light in the sky. More precisely, it defines it to be when there is 'no residue of sunlight in the sky', since on Day Four, God made the sun to rule the daytime light.

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. (Genesis 1:16 KJV)

The Biblical definition of 'Day' starts in the evening when the sun's light has left the sky (the residue of blue is gone), which is the *end* of twilight. It does not start at sunset which would be the beginning of twilight. This is a precise moment and is easily identified by the natural eye. Referring to the colour of the sky's atmosphere, for ease of terminology, I call this 'pitch black'. Note that 'pitch black' is not referring to 'light' altogether, since there is still other light available from the moon and the stars, which rule the night. It is only referring to the colour in the sky from the sun's light, which rules the daylight.

We see the progression of sunlight compared to Biblical definitions in Proverbs 7:9.

In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night (Proverbs 7:9 KJV)

In other words, after the 'twilight' comes the 'evening'. After the 'evening' comes the 'black and dark night'. This sequence places sunset as the start of 'twilight' and the definition of 'evening' as later than sunset.

Another example is in the New Testament. For the Passover, at the Last Supper, the 'evening' was later than sunset.

The first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover ... they made ready the Passover ... And in the evening He comes with the twelve. (Mark 14:12,16,17 KJV)

The Passover was killed at sunset, and then prepared after it was killed. By the time Jesus arrived at the dinner table, clearly from the context it

would be later than sunset (after the slaughter). By the time the meat was cooked and prepared, the sky would be dark by that time, which is the end of twilight. This was then called the ‘evening’.

Note that the context of the Bible verse needs to be considered rather than only the Hebrew word for ‘evening’, עֶרֶב (‘ereb), since sometimes ‘ereb refers to the beginning of twilight, which is sunset, sometimes it refers to during twilight, which is between sunset and a black sky, sometimes it refers to the end of twilight, which is when the sky turns pitch black, and sometimes it refers to after twilight, which is nighttime<sup>697</sup>. The context changes the meaning, so the word cannot stand by itself. When we look at the context where the definition of ‘day’ is given, Genesis 1:1-5, the context begins when there is no light from the sun in the sky.

Another Biblical witness is from the book of Judges.

And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. And they turned aside thither, to go in and to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging. And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which was also of mount Ephraim (Judges 19:14,16 KJV)

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<sup>697</sup> The word “evening” (‘ereb) depends on the context. Sunset: Joshua 8:29, “And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide (‘ereb): and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree”. After sunset: Zechariah 14:7, “But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening (‘ereb) time it shall be light.” Throughout twilight, which is *between* the two evenings (עֶרְבַיִם, dual ‘ereb): Exodus 12:6, “The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it (Passover) in the evening”. Pitch black: Job 7:4, “When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night (‘ereb) be gone?” What is shown in this section is that the context for ‘evening’ which defines the start of the Biblical day is that it starts at the end of twilight. This is when the last blue from the sun leaves the sky, which I call ‘pitch black’.

Here it shows that 'even' comes later than the sunset. The "sun went down" before they entered Gibeah. Then they entered Gibeah. Then the old man came into Gibeah "at even".

In other words, God starts the 'evening' when the last bit of blue from the sun has gone from the sky ('pitch black').

Another piece of evidence is the announcement of a New Moon Day. During Jesus' time, two human witnesses were needed to come to the Beth Din (which was the Court of the Priests) to verify visual sightings of the first crescent of light on the moon. After these witnesses were obtained, it was announced that the next month would begin that evening.

The moon's crescent can only be sighted after sundown due to the brightness of the sun obscuring the New Moon before sundown, so the earliest that the witnesses could sight the New Moon would be after sunset. Then it would take time for the witnesses to reach the priests to testify. Then the first day of the month would be declared, so the day could not have begun at sunset. It would have had to begun at 'pitch black', the end of twilight.

The reason the first crescent of the moon cannot be sighted before sundown is because of the lack of contrast between the moon and sky. On an astronomical magnitude scale of brightness, the scale goes from negative to positive, so farther left (more negative) is brighter, and farther right (more positive) is dimmer. A moon's crescent has a logarithmic magnitude of -6, and the sun before sunset has a logarithmic magnitude of -15.8. Converting this to the brightness scale, the sun is 8000 times brighter than a moon crescent, and is relatively close to the moon at the time of a New Moon. Aside from blinding our eyes if we look too long at the sun, the sun's rays also out shine the moon.

The sequence at twilight to see the New Moon is:

- the sun sets first,

- then the moon is sighted and the announcement that this coming evening will start the month,
- then the moon sets, and
- then the sky loses its last bit of blue from the sun, which starts the First Day of the month (the beginning of the 'evening').

When one watches a New Moon sighting, it becomes obvious that the day must start after sunset, and starts at the end of twilight, namely, at the start of the pitch black colour in the background sky.

Further Biblical evidence is that, in the book of Esther, God's months were equated to the Babylonian months.

In the first month, that is, the month Nisan ... the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar. (Esther 3:7 KJV)

The Babylonians officially set the first sighting of the crescent moon as the basis for their lunar calendar around 500 BC<sup>698</sup>. The events in the book of Esther occurred after that, between around 483 and 473 BC. By the Bible equating God's calendar with the Babylonian calendar, the Bible is affirming that God's calendar is based on visual sightings of the crescent moon just like the Babylonians did. For the visual sighting to occur as a signal that the Day will start, this means that the Day must begin *later than* sunset.

People who use 6 pm or sunset to start the evening likely received this tradition from the land of Israel, or from other countries close to the equator, since in those places sunset and pitch black are close together and start between approximately 6 and 7:30 pm all year around. In contrast, God did not require people to follow Jerusalem times, but appointed the lights in the sky for days and times, from wherever they are seen.

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<sup>698</sup> Eric W. Weisstein, Babylonian calendar, © 1996-2007,  
<https://scienceworld.wolfram.com/astronomy/BabylonianCalendar.html>

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. (Genesis 1:14 KJV)

As an example, Adam and Eve kept the Sabbath in the Garden of Eden three days after the above statement by God. The Garden of Eden was likely near modern day Shush, Khuzestan Province, Iran<sup>699</sup>. Shush is 0.4° latitude north of Jerusalem, and a different latitude means 'pitch black' starts at a different time than in Jerusalem. There would have been no human way for Adam to know the times from Jerusalem, yet he was able to obey God's commandment precisely in Shush.

Mount Sinai in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, where the children of Israel also kept the Sabbath and the feasts, was approximately 3.2° south of Jerusalem. Similarly, during Moses' time, there was no human way for Moses to know what the Jerusalem times were, yet they obeyed God's commandment precisely. So, the lights in the sky are relative to where one can see them from.

When one goes farther away from the equator, there is a greater variation in the number of hours of daylight at different times in the year, and twilight gets significantly longer. In Vancouver, Canada, for example, which is at 49.26°N, there is an hour and forty minutes (plus or minus 3 minutes) difference between sunset and pitch black year around, so observing the lights in the sky where one lives, and understanding this distinction from the Biblical writers' locations is very important for entering into God's time for His Sabbath. God's word is precise, and if we arrive at the wrong time, we miss the holiness.

The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. (Psalm 12:6)

For places farther north and farther south on the globe, my current understanding is that above and below the latitudes of 53 N/S degrees, when there is 24 hours of sunlight in their summertime, the Day can start when one goes to sleep and end the following midnight. For other

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<sup>699</sup> 2 Kings 19:12, "the children of Eden which were in Thelasar". Thelasar was likely Telassar, or Til-Asurri, also called Susa. Bible Hub Encyclopedia, <https://bibleatlas.org/telassar.htm>

times of the year, and around the world, the Biblical definition of the sky being pitch black to start the Biblical day applies everywhere.

Just a note that the Bible makes no requirement that everywhere on the earth be within the same 24 hour period for the same day on the man-made date line, though generally it is. Rather, God set the lights in the sky “for days”, which is based on wherever one is in the earth looking at them.

Can one enter into God’s holiness without being in Jerusalem? Yes, in fact Jesus said the hour has come for worship to not be in Jerusalem<sup>700</sup>. He said that one’s location is wherever one is worshipping in spirit and in truth.

Further, the Day could not start at conjunction<sup>701</sup> because Adam and Eve would have had no indicator when exactly conjunction was. The moon is dark for two to three days, and needs precise calculations to determine conjunction, whereas the first visible crescent moon could readily be seen by them and anyone thereafter to follow God’s order.

Now that we have seen Biblical references, we can also compare on a personal level. If one is spiritually sensitive, one can verify for one self when God’s Day begins. The test is to simply lie down before sunset on Friday evening with the intent to do nothing for 24 hours, and see if there is any difference between before and after sunset. Then do the same just before pitch black on Friday evening, and see if there is any difference once pitch black has begun. When I do this, I find there is no difference before and after sunset, but there is a significant spiritual difference at pitch black. At pitch black, a thick blanket of rest from God comes over me for His Sabbath, and I hear God’s voice saying His Sabbath has begun. Other Godly Christians have told me that they experience the same results.

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<sup>700</sup> John 4:21,23, “Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, the hour comes, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ... But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him.”

<sup>701</sup> Conjunction is when the center of the moon is on the line between the center of the earth and the center of the sun.

Also, I have noticed a significant positive difference in other people's lives when they changed from a 6 pm or sunset, to a pitch black Sabbath start time. These are all testimonies from God which support what the Bible already says.

A calendar of the pitch black start times in Vancouver, Canada, has been listed in the Appendix and is also available at [www.DayOfAtonement.ca](http://www.DayOfAtonement.ca)

Try it and let God show you! The Biblical Day starts when the last bit of blue from the sun has left the sky. Getting the right time is powerful because truth is precise.