

When Does God's Day start? – by Dan Roth

Sacrifice of Lambs

And it shall be to you for preservation (ye shall keep it) until the fourteenth day, and then...slay it at sunset." Among the reasons commonly assigned for the instruction to choose the lamb on the 10th, and keep it till the 14th, which Jonathan and Rashi supposed to refer to the Passover in Egypt alone, there is an element of truth in the one given most fully by Fagius, "that the sight of the lamb might furnish an occasion for conversation respecting their deliverance from Egypt,...and the mercy of God, who had so graciously looked upon them;" but this hardly serves to explain the interval of exactly four days. Hoffmann supposes it to refer to the four doroth ([Genesis 15:16](#)), which had elapsed since Israel was brought to Egypt, to grow into a nation. The probability of such an allusion, however, depends upon just what Hoffmann denies without sufficient reason, viz., upon the lamb being regarded as a sacrifice, in which Israel consecrated itself to its God. It was to be slain by "the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel:" not by the whole assembled people, as though they gathered together for this purpose, for the slaughtering took place in every house ([Exodus 12:7](#)); the meaning is simply, that the entire congregation, without any exception, was to slay it at the same time, viz., "between the two evenings" ([Numbers 9:3](#), [Numbers 9:5](#), [Numbers 9:11](#)), or "in the evening at sunset" ([Deuteronomy 16:6](#)). Different opinions have prevailed among the Jews from a very early date as to the precise time intended. Aben Ezra agrees with the Caraites and Samaritans in taking the first evening to be the time when the sun sinks below the horizon, and the second the time of total darkness; in which case, "between the two evenings" would be from 6 o'clock to 7:20. Kimchi and Rashi, on the other hand, regard the moment of sunset as the boundary between the two evenings, and Hitzig has lately adopted their opinion. According to the rabbinical idea, the time when the sun began to descend, viz., from 3 to 5 o'clock, was the first evening, and sunset the second; so that "between the two evenings" was from 3 to 6 o'clock. Modern expositors have very properly decided in favour of the view held by Aben Ezra and the custom adopted by the Caraites and Samaritans, from which the explanation given by Kimchi and Rashi does not materially differ. It is true that this argument has been adduced in favour of the rabbinical practice, viz., that "only by supposing the afternoon to have been included, can we understand why the day of Passover is always called the 14th ([Leviticus 23:5](#); [Numbers 9:3](#), etc.);" and also, that "if the slaughtering took place after sunset, it fell on the 15th Nisan, and not the 14th." But both arguments are based upon an untenable assumption. For it is obvious from [Leviticus 23:32](#), where the fast prescribed for the day of atonement, which fell upon the 10th of the 7th month, is ordered to commence on the evening of the 9th day, "from even to even," that although the Israelites reckoned the day of 24 hours from the evening sunset to sunset, in numbering the days they followed the natural day, and numbered each day according to the period between sunrise and sunset. Nevertheless there is no formal disagreement between the law and the rabbinical custom. The expression in [Deuteronomy 16:6](#), "at (towards) sunset," is sufficient to show that the boundary line between the two evenings is not to be fixed precisely at the moment of sunset, but only somewhere about that time. The daily evening sacrifice and the incense offering were also to be presented "between the two evenings" ([Exodus 29:39](#), [Exodus 29:41](#), [Exodus 30:8](#); [Numbers 28:4](#)). Now as this was not to take place exactly at the same time, but to precede it, they could not both occur at the time of sunset, but the former must have been offered before that. Moreover, in later times, when the paschal lamb was slain and offered at the sanctuary, it must have been slain and offered before sunset, if only to give sufficient time to prepare the paschal meal, which was to be over before midnight. It was from these

circumstances that the rabbinical custom grew up in the course of time, and the lax use of the word evening, in Hebrew as well as in every other language, left space enough for this. For just as we do not confine the term morning to the time before sunset, but apply it generally to the early hours of the day, so the term evening is not restricted to the period after sunset. If the sacrifice prescribed for the morning could be offered after sunrise, the one appointed for the evening might in the same manner be offered before sunset. Continued

HOW GOD MARKS THE DAY

When does one day end and a new day begin ? by Dan Roth (key part highlighted)

Several weeks ago one of the brethren called to say he had received and studied some written material on when the day begins. He said that the NEW thinking is that a new day begins in the morning, at dawn. This NEW understanding comes from Gen. 1:3 where "God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

The NEW understanding advocates that the first thing God created was light, therefore the day must begin with the morning light, or dawn. This may seem plausible, just as many of the NEW explanations for a NEW calendar may seem plausible, or correct. The question remains, will they stand up to the light of truth?

The first thing to keep in mind is that Gen. 1:3, and the verses following, show a re-creation, or renewal, of what was in existence prior to that moment in time when the Father continued moving forward with His plan. That plan was to create a family of individuals who believed in His way of life so deeply that they would put that way ahead of their human existence.

At the time of the re-creation of the earth, the other heavenly bodies were already in existence. Job 38: 1-8 speaks of their initial creation, which followed the creation of the angles. Gen. 1:2 tells us that the earth was (became) void (waste.) As we know this was the result of Satan's rebellion. Read Mystery of the Ages, chapter 3, by Herbert W. Armstrong for a complete explanation.

It is very important to remember that we are dealing with a re-creation, not a new creation, when reading Gen.1:14-19. It appears that the sun and moon were created after God started the re-creation of the earth.

It is not hard to see why one could be led to this conclusion, because the translators chose to begin verse 16 with either "and" or "then," giving the distinct impression that the creation of the sun, moon and stars followed the bringing of light to the earth.

When checking this verse in the Complete Word Study of the Old Testament, there is no corresponding Strong's number for "and" or "then." The Interlinear Bible shows the same thing, no Strong's number for either of these words.

We understand that Satan's rebellion was the cause of the re-creation. This rebellion did not result in the destruction of the heavenly bodies, but they were left intact as a witness to the violence of it.

The moon is pock marked and desolate, and the historical surface of the earth shows two violent upheavals. The first is the result of the war between God and Satan; the second the result of the Noation flood.

All of the vast deposits of oil, coal and natural gas are mute testimony of this event. These great deposits of organic material were the result of growth; growth that was produced by the heat of the sun, and then buried as the result of the great battle. The evidence is clear and of undeniable quantity.

In Gen. 1: 2-3 God's Spirit moved upon the face (surface) of the waters. God worked with the surface of the water to bring light to it. He did not at that time create light. He had created light a long time prior to this event. The surface of the earth is what was worked with by God to bring light to it.

At this same time He did another thing. He divided the light from the darkness. There is only one way that this division could have been accomplished, and that is through the rotation of the earth.

Here is where we have the crux of the argument that morning must be the beginning of the day. The day is starting or ending constantly, depending where on the earth you happen to be at the moment that light fails to reach the earth with it's direct rays.

The starting point at this time was the Garden of Eden. The whole story of creation revolves around this focal point on the earth. The only allowable explanation for God's statement in Gen. 1:4, "and the evening and the morning were the first day," is that from that location on earth, as the light reached the earth as it rotated, the sun's direct rays disappeared below the horizon. Thus, God began the day with the setting of the sun.

What is pictured here requires the sun to be in existence at the time of the creation story, Gen. 1:2-5, and it was.

Before we continue to examine this it would prove worthwhile to look at the words translated "evening" and "morning" in these verses. Number 6153 in Strong's for evening. The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament gives the following for this word:

" ereb. Evening, night. This common masculine noun for "evening" likely developed from the expression, "the setting of the sun, sunset." It is cognate to Akkadian erubu, a common verb of wide usage, which includes, "to enter, go down (of the sun)." Akkadian erib samsi means "sunset." Compare Arabic garifa "to set (of the sun)," and Ugaritic 'rb sps (= m'rb), sunset." Other important Hebrew words for time periods of the day are: yom "day," et "time," boker "morning," and layla "night."

See number 1242 in Strong's for morning. The above referenced work gives the following:

"boqer. Morning, dawn. (ASV and RSV similar.) Linked with the root baqar, boqer (c.200 times denotes the breaking through of the daylight and thus dawn or more usually morning. This noun is peculiar to Hebrew though the assumed root is not.

Frequent in narrative portions of the OT, boqer denotes a time marker as in the expression, "Joshua rose early in the morning" Josh.3:1). Boqer, when combined with evening ('ereb) may refer either to a full day (Gen.1:5), or in phrases "from evening to morning" designate night time (Lev.24:3), or "from morning to evening" (daytime; Ex 18:13). Occasionally boqer refers to "the morrow." "

Looking at these two words shows that God composed the day starting with a dark period, followed by a light period.

He reiterates this sequence of evening first, and morning to follow six times in Gen. 1. God did this to ensure our understanding of how He wanted the day to begin and end. After all, that is how He counted His days of creative work.

As the heavenly bodies were already in existence, what was God's creative work of the fourth day? God properly relocated the relative positions and movements of the heavenly bodies.

Gen. 1:14, "and God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night." This is obviously a restatement of what God did in vs. 5 (day one.) The reason it is restated is to bring continuity and understanding of the relationship of the earth to the other heavenly bodies. The creation of the 24-hour day had already taken place as stated above.

The real creative work of this day was, #1, for signs: miraculous events to come. #2, for seasons: religious assemblies (feast days,) #3, to enable the marking of a span of time in days. #4, years: to enable the tracking of time in years. In verses 17 and 18 a statement is made, "And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good." This is a summation, showing that the work was the setting, or the placing, of these heavenly bodies, and their relative purpose as to man's existence.

The advocating of this NEW teaching regarding the day beginning at sunrise, rather than at sunset, brought to mind a similar NEW revelation by Mr. Joe Tkach, Jr. In a 1991 letter written to me. There he championed the idea that the day did not end until total darkness. My response to his NEW ideas, which follows, should remove all doubt about how God wants us to determine our days.

FROM SUNDOWN TO DARK

When does one day end and a new day begin? This sounds like a basic question that should have a relatively straight forward answer. I felt this way until I received the following explanation from Joe Tkach, Jr. In a personal letter to me, dated June 24th, 1991, he says, "You also argue about what time one day ends and the next begins. It is important to realize that this question was raised in connection with understanding the time elements of the Passover in Egypt."

"At the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis 1 we are told that God separated the light from the darkness. The light was called "day" and the darkness "night." Gen. 1:3-5. From this, we can see that the dividing of one day from another is at the dividing point of light and darkness. " He continues: "the day was ruled by the sun, Gen.1:16. So long as any light remained from the day's sun, it was still considered to be that day. Thus, the 14th of Nisan ended when all light from that sun was gone."

Joe Tkach, Jr. says that the day is ruled by the sun (Gen.1:16), and that is true. From this he concludes that the day lasts until there is no longer any light from the sun present. Based on this reasoning, the day never ends because the entire earth is bathed in the light of the sun 24 hours a day. This is the result of the refraction and reflection of the light rays coming from the sun. The earth's atmosphere contains water vapor, ice crystals, and dust, besides its basic composition of gases. As the light rays hit these particles in the air, it is reflected to the side of the earth that is not in the direct path of the sunlight. Once the sun has dropped below the horizon all remaining light is the result of this process. Thus, light from the setting sun would continue to diminish until a point of equilibrium was reached with the light rays coming from the rising sun on the opposite side of the earth. Thus, the darkest point of any 24 hour period occurs at about midnight. It would appear that this method of time keeping would more agree with Satan's midnight to midnight day.

Further, Joe Tkach, Jr. says that the sun rules the day. We know that when a ruler passes from the scene his rule is ended. The sun is no different.

The letter continues, "But the Bible uses terms such as "morning" and "evening" which are not precise in any language. The same word translated "evening" (ereb) in Gen. 1 is rendered night in Job 7:4, obviously referring to the whole night, not just the evening."

What we, and Joe Tkach need to understand is how this term "evening" is used and what it meant to the people who used it in the Bible; not how we understand the term today. In short, what did God intend its meaning to be? If we can find sound and clear scriptural references defining this term then all questions can be eliminated.

Let's see how the men of the Old Testament used and understood its meaning. From the following scriptures we can see how they viewed the end of the day.

Joshua 8:29, "And the King of Ai, he hanged on a tree until EVENING. And as soon as the SUN WAS DOWN Joshua commanded that they should take the corpse down."

Joshua 10:26-27, "And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them. And hanged them in five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until EVENING. So it was at the time OF THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees."

We can see by the above scriptures that evening and the going down of the sun are considered synonymous. Also, that Joshua considered this the end of the day. He did not wait until the light of the sun had completely disappeared. Of course, if he had he would still be waiting!

II Sam.3:35, "And when all the people came to persuade David to eat food while it was still day, David took an oath saying, God do so to me and more also, if I taste bread or anything else 'TIL THE SUN GOES DOWN."

David did not say I will not taste bread until the last light of the sun disappears. He surely understood when the day legally ended. There was no question in David's mind as to the end of the day. It occurred at sundown.

I Kings 22:35-36, "The battle increased that day and the King was propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians, and died at EVENING. The blood ran out from the wound onto the floor of the chariot. There, as the SUN WAS GOING DOWN, a shout went throughout the army."

II Chron. 18:34, "The battle increased that day and the King of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Syrians until EVENING, and about the time of SUNSET he died."

There does not seem to be any question in the minds of the men who wrote these books about when evening occurs, and the day ends. There is not any mention here of waiting until the last light of the sun had disappeared.

How did the people of the New Testament look at the end of the day? Was it any different from those of the Old?

Mark 1:32, "Now at EVENING, when the SUN HAD SET, they brought to Him all who were sick, and those who were demon-possessed."

Luke 4:40, "Now when the SUN WAS SETTING all those who had anyone sick with various diseases, brought them to Him."

Eph. 4:26, "Be angry and do not sin: do not let the SUN GO DOWN on your wrath."

It is quite clear that the men and women of the New Testament clearly understood that every day ends and begins at the GOING DOWN OF THE SUN.

As we can plainly see, the people of the Old and New Testaments were in total agreement on what constituted the end of one day and the beginning of the next. Where did they get the basis for these beliefs?

Continuing with Joe Tkach, Jr's letter, he says, "The evening sacrifice, still considered the sacrifice of that day, was offered "between the evenings," or "between sunset and darkness. (Ex.29:38-39). This was the same time that the lamps were lit in the Tabernacle, (Ex.30:8). Some versions of the Bible render this time as "dusk." Since "dusk" is still part of the previous day, we can see that calendrical days do not end at sunset. If they were to end at sunset, the day would have a fairly light part (dusk) followed by a dark part (night) followed by a light part (day). This is obviously not logical and contradicts Gen. 1."

I would like to point out here that in Ex. 29:38-39, God tells them to sacrifice two lambs each day. He does not say the first lamb is to be sacrificed in the morning and the second after sunset. He does not give the time order. He only states at what time of the day they are to be sacrificed. There is no mention that this is the beginning or end of the day. This is also true about Ex.30:8; there is no mention of time order, or that the lighting of the lamps is to signify the beginning of a new day. There is no place in the Bible that states that the day begins with total darkness. Therefore, the day can begin with a light part, as we shall see when all the scriptures are looked at. The plain truth is that no where in the entire Bible is a calendrical day ever mentioned.

Now, if one wanted to understand when the government of Israel officially ended each day we would need to look to the statutes and judgments for that pronouncement.

If we are able to find in the scriptures where the Living God defines for us, in statutes and judgments, when the day ends, then we will not need the guess work of scholars as to the meaning of the word evening. Let the eternal God, the creator of all, tell us legally when He says the day ends. By the way, the legal end of the day is how the calendar days were counted.

In Ex.22:26 God says, "If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the SUN GOES DOWN." Here God is making a judgment. How does He ascertain the end of the day? By the going down of the sun! God does not say, "now watch for the last light of the sun to disappear before returning the garment," it is simply the going down of the sun.

In Deut.24:15 God says, "Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the SUN GO DOWN on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you." This is another judgment of God, where the going down of the sun designated the end of the day. God says to pay the man his wages before sundown, or you have broken His judgment. It is clear, plain, and understandable.

Another clarifying pronouncement that God makes is found in Lev.22:6-7. "The person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until EVENING, and shall not eat the Holy Offering unless he washes his body with water. And when the SUN GOES DOWN he may come into the camp again."

Could there possibly be a question as to what constitutes the end of the day? As the Bible itself is witness, the men of the Old Testament used the going down of the sun to determine the end of the day. The people of the New Testament also concurred on this issue. Why did they follow this practice? Because God Himself designated the going down of the sun in statutes and judgments as the end of one day and the beginning of the next.
