

When Does the Sabbath Begin?

In modern culture, most of us have been raised to believe that a new day begins at midnight. There is no scriptural precedent for this belief and the way that midnight is reckoned today would be impossible without mechanical clocks.

Since Yahweh is the one who created days and nights, it is important for us to understand when He regards a new day to begin. This becomes important if we want to keep the Ten Commandments because the fourth commandment says that we must "Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy."

The purpose of this study will demonstrate from the scriptures that evening marks the time when a day has ended and a new 24 hour day begins. Some have written and asked me to address various objections where some believe that a day ends at sunrise. If you are interested in reading a response to those points, feel free to [contact me](#) and I'll give you a link to a point-by-point response.

As you read this study, you will notice that I often refer to the Hebrew and Greek. This is so that we can be sure that we are getting the true meanings that Yahweh intended when He inspired the scriptures. The best way to arrive at a proper understanding of a Hebrew or Greek word is to examine how it is used throughout the scriptures. Lexicons are nice, but examining the various contexts of Hebrew and Greek words is the very thing that lexicon writers do when coming up with their definitions. Therefore, it is important that we trace their steps rather than just blindly accepting what any lexicon may have to say.

Genesis 1

According to the scriptures, Elohim created the heavens and the earth, the waters, and all that is in them in six days:

Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim was hovering over the face of the waters.

So Elohim begins His creation of the heavens and earth in Genesis 1:1. The earth present in verse 2, otherwise there would not have been any "face of the waters" for the Spirit of Elohim to move upon, and there would have been not "face of the deep" for darkness to be upon. Therefore, Genesis 1:1 is describing the first event which occurred on day 1--the creation of the heavens and the earth. With this, other scriptures agree:

Exodus 20:11a "For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.

Exodus 31:17 'It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for *in* six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.' "

Therefore, since Yahweh made the heavens and the earth in six days, the creation of the heavens and the earth would have needed to occur on the first day of creation.

In Elohim's creation of the earth, the earth is described as being:

1. Without form (Hebrew #8414, "tohu")

The Hebrew word translated "Without form" is used in other verses such as:

Job 12:24-25 He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the people of the earth, And makes them wander in a pathless **wilderness**. (#8414 "Tohu") ²⁵ They grope in the dark without light, And He makes them stagger like a drunken *man*.

Jeremiah 4:23-26 I beheld the earth, and indeed *it was without form* (#8414 "Tohu"), and void; And the heavens, they *had* no light. ²⁴ I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. ²⁵ I beheld, and indeed *there was no man*, And all the birds of the heavens had fled. ²⁶ I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land *was a wilderness*, And all its cities were broken down At the presence of Yahweh, By His fierce anger.

Seeing how the Hebrew word #8414 "Tohu" is used in other verses of scripture, we can come to a clearer understanding of its meaning. Some of suggested it simply means that the earth didn't exist at all, and it was just "nothing." But we see that it's "Tohu" is used to describe the condition of an already existing earth in Job 12:24 and Jeremiah 4:23. Therefore this Hebrew word would also be describing the condition of an already existing earth in Genesis 1:2 as well.

2. Void

The Hebrew word translated "void" is also used in Jeremiah 4:23 above (**Jeremiah 4:23** "I beheld the earth, and indeed *it was without form and void*") as well as an existing (but empty) land in Isaiah 34:11 ("stones of emptiness").

3. Dark

The Hebrew word translated consistently means "darkness" in every place it is translated, including 3 places where it is translated "obscurity" but could easily have been translated "Darkness" and convey the same meaning.

So one of the things that existed in His initial creation of the heavens and the earth was darkness. Therefore, darkness existed as part of the creation of the heavens and earth. Therefore, in Genesis 1, we have Yahweh's creation of the heavens, and Yahweh's creation of a formless, empty, dark earth containing waters and a "face of the deep."

If the earth had not yet been created, the earth would not have had any attributes at all. It could not have had water for the Spirit of Elohim to hover over, and it could not have had a "face of the deep" for darkness to be upon. For something to have any attributes, it first needs to exist.

The next creation of Elohim was light:

Genesis 1:3 Then Elohim said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

There are some who believe a day begins at sunrise, so they regard this creation of light to be the initial act which began the six days of creation. But since Yahweh created the heavens and the earth in six days, we can't place the creation of the heavens and earth outside that six day period. So to start the first day in verse 3 is a contradiction.

Next, Elohim separates the light from the darkness:

Genesis 1:4 And Elohim saw the light, that it was good. And Elohim separated the light from the darkness.

Since the sun was not yet created, it is anyone's guess as to how the light was separated from darkness and what it all really looked like. But we know that at first that the earth He created in verse 1 was dark, formless and empty. The darkness existed first, and light was created afterward.

In the first part of the next verse, Elohim gives names to the light and darkness:

Genesis 1:5a And Elohim called the light 'day' and the darkness He called 'night.'

Some have suggested that light begins a day due to the fact that it says He called the light "day" first and then afterward calls the darkness "night." But that is a clear contradiction of the previous verses where we see that Elohim created the heavens as well the formless, empty, and dark earth before He ever created light. It doesn't say He waited until day and night came before He named them. Half of the earth is lit up and the other half is dark at any given time. Elohim, who is above the earth, could easily have named them both at the same time.

The first day's order of events is further confirmed by the remainder of verse 5 where the concept and order of time is first described:

Genesis 1:5b And there came to be evening and there came to be morning, **day one**.

Up until now, the timeframe in which Elohim did all these things had not been mentioned. But with these words, all the acts of creation up to this point are placed in an specific frame of time.

It is evident that "evening" describes the time when there is no light (beginning after the sun has set), and "morning" is describing the time when there is light (beginning at sunrise).

But what exactly is sunrise? We all know that sunrise begins when the sun casts its first beam of light over the horizon. This moment would begin the morning.

Now, let's look at the verse again with this understanding:

"And there was **evening (no beams of light over the horizon)** and there was **morning (the moment when the sun casts its first beam of light over the horizon)**, day one"

Since the phrase "there came to be evening" would apply to the first day of creation, the phrase "there came to be morning" would also need to apply to the first day of creation.

So there were two things that happened as part of day one:

- 1) A time period of no light
- 2) A time period of light.

Therefore, sunset would have begun the night portion of the first day and sunrise would have begun the light portion of the first day. Yahweh mentions the beginning of each half of a day and since the beginning of each half of the day is mentioned, the remaining portions must be encompassed as part of a day as well.

So it makes perfect sense that since darkness was first mentioned as part of the formless/empty earth, evening would need to be mentioned as starting the first part of the day, and morning starting the second part of the day. Elohim created the heavens and the dark, formless, empty earth during the evening. Then to cause morning to come, Elohim brought light into His creation. He then separates the light from the darkness and gave names to each.

The Four Evangelists (Gospels)

A careful study of the 4 accounts of Yahushua's resurrection will reveal that Yahweh regards a day to begin at evening. For simplicity, we will do a side by side comparison of the timing that the women came to the tomb:

| | | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|---|
| Scripture verse | Matthew 28:1 (ISR) Now after the Sabbath, toward dawn on the first day of the week, Miryam from Magdala and the other Miryam came to see the tomb. | Mark 16:2 And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. | Luke 24:1 Now upon the first <i>day</i> of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain <i>others</i> with them. | John 20:1 Now on the first <i>day</i> of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark , and saw <i>that</i> the stone had been taken away from the tomb. |
| Timing | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After the Sabbath 2. Toward dawn on the first day of the week | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very early on the first day of the week 2. When the sun had risen. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the first day of the week 2. Very early in the morning. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the first day of the week 2. Early, while it was still dark. |
| Position of sun | "Toward dawn" so sun had not yet risen | Sun had risen | "very early in the morning" so sun had risen | "Still dark" so sun had not yet risen |
| Time Reference | When they left to go to the tomb | When they arrived at the tomb | When they arrived at the tomb | When they left to go to the tomb |

On the surface it would appear that these four accounts contradict one another, but they are easily reconciled when we understand that Matthew and John are speaking about the time they set out to head to the tomb but Mark and Luke would be speaking of when they actually arrived at the tomb. Since a person needed to travel on foot, it would take some time to get there.

Notice that while John 20:1 says it was already the "first day of the week," it also says that "it was still dark." If it is still dark, that would mean the first day of the week had already begun prior to sunrise. This would mean the first day of the week began at the previous sunset. The word translated "dark" does indeed mean dark and cannot have any other meaning.

The word translated "still" where it says "still dark" in John 20:1 is #2089 "eti." In every instance the word is found in scripture, always carries a meaning similar to "still" or "yet." The actual definition given in the Strong's Lexicon is "**yet, still (of time or degree).**"

Some who believe a day begins at sunrise have suggested that #2089 "eti" can carry a meaning of "no longer." But the only time it can mean "no longer" or "no more" is when it is accompanied by a Greek word which means "no." For instance:

Galatians 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are **no longer** <2089> <3765> under a schoolmaster.

Hebrews 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember **no** <3364> **more** <2089>.

The only time #2089 "eti" can mean "no longer" is when it is coupled with another word that means "no." To say that "eti" means "no longer" would be like a foreigner trying to tell us that our English word "light" actually means "darkness" because they saw the word "light" being used in the phrase "no light."

I've also heard that "eti" can mean "after that." Knowing that context is key, I looked diligently but could find any place where "eti" is translated "after that" in the KJV or any translation. The Strong's lists "after that" as one of the translations in the KJV (words after the "---" in any Strong's definition are the KJV translations of the word), but it simply does not exist and the Thayer's lexicon agrees that it does not exist.

Also, notice that Matthew 28:1 says it is "after the Sabbath" which indicates the first day of the week has begun. The sun had not yet risen though because it says that it was "toward dawn."

Matthew 28:1 (ISR) Now **after the Sabbath, toward dawn** on the first day of the week, Miryam from Magdala and the other Miryam came to see the tomb.

In this instance I used the ISR version because it accurately conveys the Greek word used in this instance which is #2020 and means "to begin to grow light." The Sabbath had ended at evening and now it was beginning to grow light outside just before the sun rose. Therefore, it was "toward dawn" but not quite sunrise when the women started heading toward the tomb. It does not mean "sunrise." There are two Greek words that actually do describe sunrise:

Luke 1:78 (ISR) through the tender compassion of our Elohim, with which the daybreak (#395 "anatoley") from on high has looked upon us,

2 Peter 1:19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns (#1306 "Diaugazo") and the morning star rises in your hearts;

But the word used in Matthew 28:1 "toward dawn" describes same period of time as John 20:1-- the time when they started heading toward the tomb. It was still technically dark outside, but the light of dawn was on the horizon.

In Mark 16:1, it appears that a possible reason it took some time to get to the tomb was due to their purchase of spices:

Mark 16:1-2 Now **when the Sabbath was past**, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother of James*, and Salome **bought spices**, that they might come and anoint Him. ² Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

So this is yet more evidence that the Sabbath had ended the evening before. Of course, if we believe the Sabbath day is still in effect until sunrise, the women and the seller of spices would have been breaking the Sabbath.

So based on the 4 accounts, it is evident that the chronology was that the women started heading to the tomb before the sun rose on the first day of the week, they bought spices "after the Sabbath" yet before sunrise, and they arrived at the tomb at sunrise.

Here is a summary of how these accounts actually contradict "sunrise to sunrise" Sabbath keeping:

- 1. John 20:1** says that it was "on the first day of the week", yet it was "still dark." Therefore the first day of the week had already begun prior to sunrise.
- 2. Mark 16:1** says that they bought spices "when the Sabbath was passed," yet it was before the sun had risen, proving the Sabbath ended at sundown.
- 3. Matthew 28:1** says that it was "after the Sabbath" during the period of time that it began to "grow light," a word that describes the period of time just before sunrise.

Therefore, these verses clearly support the fact that the Sabbath ends at sundown and the first day of the week was already in motion prior to sunrise.

"Evening to evening shall you celebrate your Sabbath"

Scripture plainly commands "from evening to evening you shall celebrate your Sabbath."

Leviticus 23:27-32 Also the tenth *day* of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. ²⁸ "And you shall do no work on that same day, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before Yahweh your Elohim. ²⁹ "For any person who is not afflicted *in soul* on that same day shall be cut off from his

people. ³⁰ "And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ "You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. ³² "*It shall be* to you a sabbath of *solemn* rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth *day* of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

Numbers 29:7 On the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall afflict your souls; you shall not do any work.

Since Yahweh doesn't contradict Himself, it is no contradiction that the 10th day of the month is "Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement" while also commanding that we begin and end this day at evening. Since the 10th day began and ended at evening, the days surrounding it would need to begin and end at evening as well. Thus, all days begin and end at evening.

Another example:

Exodus 12:15-19 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

¹⁶ 'On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat -- that only may be prepared by you.

¹⁷ 'So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance.

¹⁸ 'In the first *month*, **on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.** ¹⁹ 'For **seven days** no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land.

Notice that the same language which described the timing of the tenth day of the seventh month (Day of Atonement) is also used to describe when the fifteenth day of the first month (the Feast of Unleavened Bread).

The common thread between this feast and the Day of Atonement is they both have eating restrictions of some kind. In ancient times, without the electric lights that we have today, it was typical for a person to work throughout the day until sundown. At that time they would all sit down to eat. But since the Day of Atonement and Feast of Unleavened Bread had eating restrictions, it would mean that they would need to break from their normal habit to keep these observances. Therefore, these are perfect places in scripture for Yahweh to explain when a day begins so that they would remember to refrain from eating leaven, or in the case of the Day of Atonement, refrain from sitting down to eat as they normally would in the evenings.

So why do these verses use a phrase like "on the 9th day at evening" or "on the fourteenth day at evening" to describe the time when each observance begins? We use similar language in our own day when trying to tell people when we start keeping Sabbath. One will often say "on 'friday' at sundown we start keeping the Sabbath" even though it's understood that "friday sundown" is actually the beginning of the Sabbath day.

"They came no more on the Sabbath"

If we take the time to study Nehemiah thoroughly in context, it will also clearly demonstrate when the Sabbath begins.

Let's take a moment and examine it in full context:

Nehemiah 13:15 In those days I saw *people* in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all *kinds of burdens*, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned *them* about the day on which they were selling provisions.

¹⁶ Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold *them* on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

¹⁷ Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing *is* this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day?"

¹⁸ **"Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our Elohim bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."**

What is Nehemiah speaking about when he says "Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our Elohim bring all this disaster on us and on this city?"

In the writings of the prophet Jeremiah, Yahweh made an offer to the children of Israel. It's a quite amazing offer actually. He said that if they would only stop bringing burdens through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath, to keep the Sabbath, He would bless the city and allow it to remain forever. And Kings & princes would enter those gates forever, sons of David riding in horses and chariots, to an everlasting city. He told Jeremiah to stand in each of the gates of the city and declare these things:

Jeremiah 17:19-27 Thus Yahweh said to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, by which the kings of Judah come in and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem;

²⁰ "and say to them, 'Hear the word of Yahweh, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates.

Notice that Jeremiah is standing at the gates while giving this message. Remember this for later:

Jeremiah 17:21 'Thus says Yahweh: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem; ²² "nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

²³ "But they did not obey nor incline their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear nor receive instruction.

²⁴ " And it shall be, if you heed Me carefully," says Yahweh, "to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it,

²⁵ "then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever.

²⁶ "And they shall come from the cities of Judah and from the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from the lowland, from the mountains and from the South,

bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, bringing sacrifices of praise to the house of Yahweh.

So Yahweh gives a promise here. And what a promise it was, for He didn't even ask them to serve Him or not worship idols, etc. Just keep the Sabbath. I think Yahweh knew that if they would keep the Sabbath, the Sabbath would keep them (Meaning, cause them to delight themselves in Yahweh). And this memorial of creation would cause them to seek Yahweh weekly. But if they chose to bring burdens through those gates and break the Sabbath, He would burn those gates with fire.

He said if they will only keep the Sabbath and "bring no burden through the city gates of this city on the Sabbath," Yahweh would allow Jerusalem to remain forever. But if they chose to break the Sabbath and allow the carrying of burdens through the city gates on Yahweh's holy day, He would destroy the city:

Jeremiah 17:27 "But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." ' ' "

So it makes sense why Nehemiah says:

Nehemiah 13:18 "Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our Elohim bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

Nehemiah's course of action from this point will make a lot more sense when we understand his comments in the proper context. Jeremiah said that Yahweh would allow Jerusalem to remain forever if they would keep the Sabbath and forbid the bringing of burdens into the gates of the city, but He would destroy it if they permitted these things. So what does Nehemiah do?

Nehemiah 13:19 So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted *some* of my servants at the gates, *so that* no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day.

To ensure that no burdens were brought through the gates on the Sabbath, He made a special point to command that the gates be shut "as it began to be dark before the Sabbath." In looking at the Hebrew, there is no doubt that this refers to a time prior to sunset. The Hebrew word translated "dark" in this verse is #[6751](#) which means "shadowing." Other words related to #[6751](#) carry this kind of meaning as well:

4699 mtsullah mets-ool-law' from [6751](#); shade:--bottom.

6738 tsel tsale from [6751](#); shade, whether literal or figurative:--defence, shade(-ow).

6751 tsalal tsaw-lal' a primitive root (identical with [6749](#) through the idea of hovering over (Compare [6754](#))); to shade, as twilight or an opaque object:--begin to be dark, shadowing.

6752 tselel tsay'-lel from [6751](#); shade:--shadow.

Here are a couple of examples of these words:

Job 40:22 The lotus trees cover him *with* their **shade** ([#6752](#)); The willows by the brook surround him.

Ezekiel 31:3 Indeed Assyria *was* a cedar in Lebanon, With fine branches that **shaded** ([#6751](#)) the forest, And of high stature; And its top was among the thick boughs.

Psalms 17:8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow ([#6738](#)) of thy wings

Thus, the New International Version Nehemiah 13 as:

Nehemiah 13:19 When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day.

But no matter how one translates it, it has something to do with shadows. Since there are no shadows after sunset, the verse would have to be speaking of a time prior to sunset. Long shadows are a characteristic of the time just before sunset.

So now that we have established that the timing of Nehemiah's closing of the gates occurred just before sundown, what would have been the purpose of shutting at that time? Obviously, it was the time just "before the Sabbath." Nehemiah did not want people bringing in and carrying burdens into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day so he had the gates shut just before sundown to ensure that. If he shut the gates right at sundown, someone could have come in just prior to sundown and lugged their wares around to their destination on the Sabbath.

Nehemiah 13:20 Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice.

²¹ Then I warned them, and said to them, "Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do *so* again, I will lay hands on you!" From that time on they came no more on the Sabbath.

²² And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my Elohim, *concerning* this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!

If the previous verses were not clear enough, we have Nehemiah himself telling us when the Sabbath is. Note the progression of events here.

1. The merchants came and spent the night around the wall, presumably in hopes to bribe their way in or to buy/sell to anyone leaving the city.
2. Nehemiah threatens to lay hands on them if they spend the night around the wall.
3. Inspired scripture says, "**From that time on they came no more on the Sabbath.**"

Since the scriptures tell us they were coming on the Sabbath, and they were coming to spend the night around the wall, this would clearly tie in the Sabbath as beginning in the evening. The gates were shut as the shadows fell upon the gates of

Jerusalem just before the Sabbath, then the merchants came afterward and tried to spend the night around the wall, hoping to get in the next morning. Nehemiah then threatened them to prevent them from spending the night around the wall--a time that scripture calls "the Sabbath."

After taking care of that problem, Nehemiah then commands the Levites to cleanse themselves and guard the gates so that the Sabbath would be sanctified. Earlier he had placed his own servants there but now he is trusting the Levites to do what they are supposed to do and guard those gates from Sabbath breakers, lest the gates be burned with fire again as Jeremiah prophesied.

Another scripture supporting the fact that the Sabbath ends at evening is in Luke chapter 4:

Luke 4:38-40 And having risen out of the synagogue, he entered into the house of Simon, and the mother-in-law of Simon was pressed with a great fever, and they did ask him about her, ³⁹ and having stood over her, he rebuked the fever, and it left her, and presently, having risen, she was ministering to them. ⁴⁰ And at the setting of the sun, all, as many as had any ailing with manifold sicknesses, brought them unto him, and he on each one of them *his* hands having put, did heal them.

For people to wait until the setting of the sun to bring the sick people to Yahushua for Him to heal demonstrates that it was certainly a first century practice to end the Sabbath at sundown. After all, why wait until sundown to carry the sick to him if it's still considered to be the Sabbath day?

Historical Evidence

Confirming the above scripture, we also have historical evidence that in the first century, the Sabbath was observed starting at evening. Josephus, a first century Jewish historian makes the following comment:

Wars of the Jews 4:582 and the last was erected above the top of the Pastophoria, where 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 that day was finished, as giving notice to the people when they were to stop work, and when they were to go to work again.

So his report is that a trumpet was blown at the beginning of every Sabbath, to mark when the people should stop working, and begin working. Josephus had no reason to lie, and archaeological finds concur with Josephus' comments about the place of trumpeting:

"When we excavated the beautifully paved Herodian street adjacent to the southern wall and near the southwestern corner of the Enclosure Wall, we found a particularly large ashlar block. On the inside was a niche where a man might stand, especially if the ashlar were joined to another which would enlarge the niche.

On the outside was a carefully and elegantly incised Hebrew inscription: LBYT HTKY 'H LHH [RYZ]; "To the place of Trumpeting to (declare)." If the restoration of the word "declare" is correct, the rest of the missing part of the inscription probably went on to tell us more about the declaring of the beginning and the end of the Sabbath.

The stone had been toppled during the Roman destruction of the Temple onto the street below where it had lain for nearly two thousand years until we uncovered it.

It must have originally come from the pinnacle of the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount. From a spot on top of the Temple chambers a priest would blow a trumpet on Sabbath Eve, to announce the arrival of the Sabbath and the cessation of all labour, and to announce, on the following evening, the departure of the Sabbath and the resumption of all labor.

The entire city was visible from this spot on the southwest corner of the Temple Mount; the clarion call of the trumpet would reach the farthest markets of the city. Such a scene is recounted by Josephus in his work, *The Jewish War*. (IV, 582)." Editor, H. S. 2004; 2004. *BAR* 06:04 (July/Aug 1980). Biblical Archaeology Society

I know that some might say that the Jews (e.g. Pharisees) were observing it wrong in the first century. But wouldn't it seem pretty odd that Yahushua would say things like "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loosen his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?**" but then never once mention that they break the Sabbath every week when the trumpeter sends out his call to resume working after sundown? I think we can be certain that such a major issue would not escape the attention of Yahushua and the apostles.**

With as strict as the Jews were about Sabbath breaking, it seems quite unlikely that they would even try to change it. And the idea that all the Jews scattered around the world would simultaneously change the time that they observed the Sabbath is quite incredulous--especially when you consider that there is not a shred of evidence indicating such a change.

Conclusion

The scriptures seem pretty clear that Yahweh reckons days from evening to evening. While modern reckoning is from midnight to midnight, we need to submit ourselves to the daily heavenly clock that Yahweh Himself established at creation. It makes perfect sense that a day ends when a day ends...at evening.

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