

24 Hour Sabbath

Lately a relatively new argument has emerged and become accepted by a very small portion of those professing Christianity. That argument being, that with only a few exceptions, the sabbath day starts at sunrise and ends at sunset. This then being an approximately 12 hour period.

At first this argument seems kind of odd and perhaps self serving, but is it? Or, as these people claim, have we been deceived for millennia into believing a false concept not truly found in the bible. In other words, is a 24 hour sabbath day unfounded?

Being a bit of a skeptic and a little short on patience for some of these controversies I've seen emerge as of late, I can honestly say I've always considered these people off by half a bubble. But are they really? I was challenged to really look into the question and after doing so, was, to say the least, interested in their position.

Genesis 1:5 says... "God called the 'light' Day..." The **light** day. The word Day here, used to describe 'light' coming from the Hebrew word 'yom' . Now when we turn to the fourth commandment we read in Exodus 20:8 Remember the sabbath **day**, to keep it holy.

God could of just said... "Remember the sabbath, to keep it holy. But He didn't. He said, "Remember the sabbath **DAY** to keep it holy. The word 'day' being that exact same Hebrew word yom used to describe the 'light' portion of a 24hr. period.

Exodus 20:9 Six **days** shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

Exodus 20:10 But the seventh **day** is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

Exodus 20:11 For *in* six **days** the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh **day**: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath **day**, and hallowed it.

So, their position becomes quite plain, that the sabbath is really only the daylight portion of the 24hr. day.

Ah, but... as so many others quickly point out, what about Leviticus 23:32?

2.

Leviticus 23:32 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.

Notice now, it doesn't say sabbath DAY, now it just says 'sabbath'. And the word 'day' is added to the text after the word ninth, so the claim is, that this here is an exception to the general 12 hour rule that includes all the other 'sabbaths'; weekly and annual alike.

There is one other exception with the Passover. Here they recognize that Christ died on the preparation day and the sabbath was about to start. The Jews wanted the bodies removed and buried before the sun set. Why? Well a body wasn't to be buried on the sabbath, but if the sabbath didn't start until sunrise, what was their hurry? Well, the argument presented is that the sabbath the Jews were referring to, was the 'Passover', and that the 'Passover' started at sunset and ended at sunrise and was a special 12 hour sabbath that occurred at night. After all, didn't the death angle pass over at night? Then, at sunrise we have the first DAY of Unleavened Bread beginning. And the feast continues until the last DAY of Unleavened Bread.

Another point they make comes from Ecclesiastes 2:13

Ecclesiastes 2:13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

And since the sabbath is holy, why would it be associated with darkness and the connotations associated with that – like 'folly' in this verse. Or evil in this verse.

Isaiah 45:7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*.

There are numerous others... hundreds of others.

1 Thesalonians 5:5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

3.

Christ himself said in John 11...

John 11:9 Jesus 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.

The word 'day' occurs something like 1500+ times in the bible. Generally it comes from the Hebrew word 'yom'. And if you took the time you can **generally** read the word '**day**', with the meaning of '**daylight**', into almost every passage and **force it** to make some sort of sense. But that is not how we should be studying our bibles. If a word has more than one meaning, we need to be careful about how it is interpreted so that false arguments don't take hold and corrupt our understanding of God's word. Now let me stop and say that sentence one more time and please pay close attention to what I'm saying....

"If a word has more than one meaning, we need to be careful about how it is interpreted so that false arguments don't take hold, and corrupt our understanding of God's word."

Now having said that, what side of the argument am I on? Because, both sides of the argument use the same statement to further their point of view. Fortunately, only one side is right. So let's go through the bible, starting right back again in Gen. 1 and see if some of these arguments really stand the test of scrutiny and logic.

Genesis 1: The Creation

God created the heavens and the earth in 6 **DAYS**. Did He only create during the daylight? Did he restrict his work to daylight hours? No, he didn't. Obviously not as verse 3 takes place initially in darkness.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:2 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.

Genesis 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4.

Genesis 1:4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

Genesis 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

So now we come to our next word problem. The Hebrew word for 'evening' is '**ereb**' which can mean **evening, dusk or night**. The Hebrew word for 'morning' is '**boqer**' which can mean **morning, sunrise, or daytime**. So to find the right context we simply have to read the verse and plug in each meaning. In this case, if it is meant **as translated**, then a day would start at evening and end at morning. What we call the 12 hour night portion of a 24 hour day. If this verse was more accurately translated night and day then we would see a 24 hour period emerging. The 'day' starting with approximately 12 hours of night-time and ending with approximately 12 hours of daylight. Coincidentally, the first 'day' of creation started with darkness and ended with light.

Here's a quote from one of the pro 12 hour articles...

Just as God tells us in Genesis 1:5 when He calls the LIGHT "DAY". The very next thing that God says in Genesis 1:5 is, ". . . and the DARKNESS he called NIGHT. . ." Please notice that God does not call the DARKNESS DAY as man does. He simply calls the DARKNESS NIGHT. One reason is because day and night in scripture are two completely different seasons. They are not the same:

Well let's see if that's true.

Let's move ahead to Exodus 12.

Exodus 12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this **night**, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD.

So here God is specific, He calls the dark period 'night'. It is a quote from God. Let's look at another one.

5.

Num 3:13 Because all the firstborn *are* mine; *for* on the **day** that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I *am* the LORD. (Also ch 8:17)

Num 8:17 For all the firstborn of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

So the first born are killed at night, yet God says he smote them “on that **day**...”. Same Hebrew word ‘yom’. So does God refer to a night and a day under the same all inclusive word, **DAY**, like we do? **Yes He does !**

Numbers 9:2 Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season.

Numbers 9:3 In the fourteenth day (yom) of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the **rites** of it, and according to all the **ceremonies** thereof, shall ye keep it.

The Passover **rites and ceremonies** should really lead right into the first day of Unleavened Bread. The Passover is not a ‘sabbath’, it is a ‘ceremony’. Christ had to be removed from the cross so as not to desecrate the ‘sabbath’, The First Day of Unleavened Bread, which the Jews believed **started at sunset**. And did Jesus ever correct them? Actually, Christ corrected the Pharisees over and over. He called them hypocrites and whitened sepulchers. He gave all sorts of examples of how to really keep the sabbath holy, what was and wasn’t acceptable to do on the sabbath, and yet **NEVER** bothered to correct them on keeping a 24 hour sabbath. Why? Everything else that they did to excess he seemed to be fond of pointing out. But not a **“double long sabbath”**. Why?

The Passover, being a “12 hour nightly sabbath” as they claim, is not found anywhere in the bible or in any Jewish literature. This here is a case of trying to make scripture fit an idea, instead of reading scripture as it was meant to be read.

But I’ve jumped ahead, let’s get back to the old testament.

6.

Exodus 12:15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

Now certainly no one reads this and thinks that we are only **not** suppose to eat leavening **during the day**. Each night we then meet at Tim's to enjoy a donut (cause the leavening can't be in our homes). Obviously this is 7 periods of 24 hours. The first period being a holy 'day', and the last period being a holy 'day'. A 24 hour period.

Let's go to the 4th Commandment again. Exodus 20...

Exodus 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Exodus 20:9 Six **days** shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

This too is part of the command. Get your work done in six days. Can I work a night shift? Of course, the time period is 6, 24 hour days. To read this as a commandment to only work during the daylight would be absurd.

Exodus 20:10 But the seventh day...

(Now all of a sudden it's only the daylight portion)

is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

Exo 20:11 For *in* six days...

(Now we've already shown that God actually worked in the dark part of the day too, so here a day is back to 24 hours. Confusing isn't it?)

the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day:

(oops, back to the 12 hours of light.)

wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

7.

The more you look, the harder it is to believe that anyone would believe this. Yet human determination should not be underestimated. Now at this point, I personally am looking for motive. But let's continue.

Leviticus 11...

Leviticus 11:24 And for these ye shall be unclean: whosoever toucheth the carcase of them shall be unclean until the even.

Why evening? Because that was the start of a new 'day'. It was actually quite symbolic.

Next comes Leviticus 23:32 I hate to even go there as it seems all too obvious. But they have an argument.

Leviticus 23:32 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.

This, they say is not a Sabbath 'Day'. It is an annual Sabbath, which, like a seventh year in farming, the fallow year, which is called a Sabbath, can encompass more than 1 day. It's an exception.

Whatever. Actually they believe Atonement fell over parts of 2 24 hour periods. Two days. They hate to say days because that means 'only the light portion of the "season" '.

If you read it plainly, it says the Atonement sabbath goes from evening to evening. Very simple. Very concise.

In 2 Samuel 13 we read how Absalom had Amnon, David's son, killed.

2 Samuel 13:37 ...And *David* mourned for his son every day.

Oh he partied at night. Ate his fill too. But during the day.... it was very sad. Same word that is interpreted 'the light portion of the day' by some. Again, David fasted for 7 **days** before his first child with Bathsheba died. He did **NOT EAT AT NIGHT** !

8.

It was seven full days. They couldn't get him off the dirt floor! **Day** does not only mean **daylight**! That is something you have to read into so many passages to come up with this distorted concept.

Joshua 10:13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. *Is not this written in the book of Jasher?* So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a **whole day**.

Joshua 10:14 And there was no day like that before it or after it...

So... the sun never set for a whole **day**. Duh... if day only means the **daylight portion** then the sun **ALWAYS** never sets for a whole day! What would be so special about this 'day'? Nothing! The whole thing makes me shake my head. But there's more.

Now in Nehemiah's time the Jews were trying to get back to keeping the sabbath and some insisted on selling their wares during that day.

Nehemiah 13:19 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.

So as the sun started to set, he closed the gates and kept them that way until when? Well both sides would agree, **sunset the next day!** From sunset to sunset.

So let's go to Matthew 12:40

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three **days** and three **nights** in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three **days** and three **nights** in the heart of the earth.

Here we agree with the pro 12 hour sabbath keepers, that the word 'day' used in **this context** would mean 'daylight'. Three daylight periods of 12 hours and three nighttime periods of 12 hours. Christ himself gave them this sign.

9.

When exactly did Christ die?

Matthew 27:46 And about the **ninth hour** ...

When is the ninth hour?

Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Matthew 27:47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

Matthew 27:48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

Matthew 27:49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

Matthew 27:50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

He died right around 3pm. Pretty much the same time as the Passover lambs were starting to be slain.

When did Christ rise? Let's see...

Matthew 28:1 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.

So the sabbath was over and it's beginning to get light. It was **'dawning'**.

Mark 16:2 And very early in the **morning** the **first day of the week**, they came unto the sepulchre **at the rising of the sun**.

'Very early',... 'at the rising of the sun'. Was it light out yet? Was it 'daytime'? We know it was the first 'something' of the week. Actually here and in the following two verses you see the word 'day' italicized because it has been added by the translators. Why? Because they all felt this wording more accurately reflected the implications in the original texts. After all in Hebrew and Greek the word 'day' can mean both the 12 hour daylight portion or the whole 24 hour day.

10.

Luke 24:1 Now upon **the first day of the week**, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

Luke 24:2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

Luke 24:3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

First day of the week, very early in the morning... light or dark?

John 20:1 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.

Why was the stone rolled away? Because Christ was in the sepulcher Wed. night, Thursday day, Thurs. night, Friday day, Friday night (that's three nights now) and Saturday day (three full 'days'). I'm sure he rose sometime the next night, probably shortly after sunset, but apparently scholars would have you believe, on the first **DAY** of the week.

Zechariah 14... Here we read of Christ's return.

Zechariah 14:6 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the light shall not be clear, *nor* dark:

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 time it shall be light.

Zechariah 14:8 And it shall be in that **day**, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

Zechariah 14:9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Verse 7 ... one DAY. Of course it says day because the end of the verse says 'at evening time it shall be light.' And day = light. But right after the first 'day' in verse 7, it continues on to say 'not day'. In other words 'not just the daytime portion of the day'. In that day. Still translated from the Hebrew word 'yom'. Both times. Two meanings, same word. Put it in context and it's not a big mystery.

11.

The problem lies in this desire some have, to attain some 'special' knowledge. Some special revelation that will make us special too. Why? Because we see it and others don't.

When you study the bible try to let the scripture interpret itself as often as possible. Are there difficult passages to understand? Certainly. Are we going to need each other, reference books and newer translations to sometimes get to the bottom of things? Absolutely. But for goodness sake, don't try to change the meaning of basic words to further a distorted cause. Just like in Hebrew, there are many English words that have numerous meanings. Just put them in context.