

When Does the Biblical Day Start?

By Tom Stapleton and Judith Koch

“Surely our fathers have inherited lies, Worthlessness and unprofitable things.” It seems as we study the Bible more closely we find that many things that we have been taught have been lies, as the text in Jeremiah 16:19 declares. But when some people come to the realization that much of what we have been taught is false, they seem to be ready to make a wholesale exchange on everything they have been taught. Because the waters have become so muddy, some are willing to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

This seems to be what is happening with the teaching of when a day begins. Why is this important? For a random weekday, it really doesn't matter when the day starts. But it makes a huge difference when it comes to remembering and keeping God's Sabbath days holy. God's Sabbath is the cornerstone of His worship system (Exodus 31:13). We worship in vain when we keep our traditions ahead of God's commands. Does it go any further? It is totally possible that the enemy of souls is doing what he's always done – trying to receive some of God's worship for himself. If he can deceive us as to the true start of the Sabbath day (called a moed in Leviticus 23), he will deceive us into worshipping only 50% of God's appointed Sabbath hours, successfully usurping half of God's throne. Isaiah 14:13: “For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation [H4150 moed/appointed times] On the farthest sides of the north.”

Could there be more to Satan's deception? With an evening-to-evening day start, God's people are awake and alert to welcome in the Sabbath, and to close out the Sabbath, but with a morning day start, God's people sleep through the start and end of the Sabbath. You've heard the phrase “guard the edges of Sabbath”, but what is there to guard if it opens and closes while you sleep? The whole concept should remind us of some virgins who were asleep and missed the bridegroom. Aside from death or illness, the state of being asleep is not a positive condition for God's people. Do we really think that God designed His worship time to start and end while we sleep?

This article will address the many points of Scripture that prove that God's words “from even unto even shall you celebrate your sabbath” apply to all of His sacred days, and that His days, sacred or working, all begin at sundown. It's not complicated. It is not hidden from our sight. It is so simple that a little child can understand.

The points covered in this article are:

Points That Confirm Evening-to-Evening

1. What Timing Does the Creation Story Teach?
2. Day of Atonement
3. Feast of Unleavened Bread

4. What Did Yeshua Do?
5. What Did Yeshua Say?
6. Crucifixion
7. Resurrection
8. Miscellaneous Supporting Texts

Counterpoints Often Made in Support of Morning-to-Morning

1. Passover/death angel; “Between the Evenings”
2. Day and Night/Night and Day
3. Apparent supporting texts
4. Only the Light Part of the Day is Holy

Point One: What Timing Does the Creation Story Teach?

Most dawn start studies begin with the question, “What was the first thing created?” They provide the answer: “Light”. This is a common understanding, but let’s see how well this holds up to the creation story.

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.

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.

Relying solely on Scripture, let’s ask the question again, “What was the first thing created?” The answer is in verse one: the heaven and the earth. Does verse one say there was light when it was created? No. What came first, darkness or light? We have the answer in verse two, “...and darkness was on the face of the deep...” Then what came last? The answer is in verse three: light. We must not throw out the first two verses in Scripture. They show the progression of creation, which began in darkness and moved to light, not the other way around. There was creation, there was dark, there was light, and the evening (dark) and the morning (light) were the first day. We are told plainly that evening preceded morning in the order of the 24-hour period of time. The order is clearly given six times throughout the creation story: evening, then morning=day one; evening, then morning = day two; evening, then morning = day three, etc.

When one starts to build a house, you cannot start with the framing until your foundation is sure. When any theory is based on ignoring the first verse, omitting the second verse, and mischaracterizing the third verse, anything that follows is not on a firm foundation because we would be assembling data to substantiate a faulty premise. But those teaching the day beginning at dawn make statements such as, “On the 'first day' God creates 'light'; that is followed by evening, then through to morning, which 'completes the first day'.” (Quoted from www.discoveryupdate.com, accessed 1/27/2018.)

If the light was the first thing that was created, we would have to do away with verses one and two, because God's word teaches that the light was not the first thing that was created. The dawn theory, paired with Genesis 1:2, asks us to assume that the first day had two dark periods: the verse two dark period (which they omit), then the light, then apparently another dark period that lasted through to morning.

Let's do some math. The Scripture says that we had creation in darkness (night) + light (morning) = evening and morning = one day that began in darkness (which equates to evening). But the study quoted above says that light (morning) + evening (night) + through to the next morning = one day. However, this is not what the Scriptures teach. The first day starts in darkness, so they are technically teaching that the first day had two dark periods (nights): one at the start which they omit, and another after light was created. This math just simply does not add up.

Did God Create Only During the Light?

Another argument put forth by those promoting the idea that day begins at dawn is that the order of each day was that God created only while it was light, and that He ceased from His work of creating from evening until morning, making a 24-hour period that started and ended in the morning. This reverses the order of the creation given in the Biblical creation account. Again, the creation began with the heavens and the earth, being in total darkness, so clearly the work of creation began in darkness. To say that God only creates in the light is purely a construct. It cannot be substantiated through the word and in fact it is contrary to the word. Both acts of creation on day one (heavens and earth; light) were done in darkness. There are many verses in Scripture that speak of God dwelling in darkness:

Exodus 20:21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

2 Samuel 22:12 And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.

To say that God does not create in darkness is limiting the Almighty. It is in human terms that we say that the creating has to be done in the daytime when it is light. When humans want to create something, we have to turn the lights on, but God began His creating in the dark. He created the heavens and earth, then He said, "Let there be light."

In The Beginning

The beginning darkness is omitted from their calculation on what makes a day. They put forth the idea that "In the beginning" is an unknown period of time that precedes the first day and therefore they disregard its relevance to the creation story. We have to be careful when we put a timeframe between verse one and verse three that goes outside of a 24-hour period for two reasons: 1) there is simply no indication that there is a gap between the verses, 2) by adding a period of time where Scripture mentions none, we are adding to Scripture, which we are repeatedly warned not to do. When we speculate that there is a gap, why are we doing this? Is it

so that our theology works? Scripture does not specify the timing between verse one and three, therefore, we need to be careful not to inject one into it.

Some people believe that God may have created the heavens and the earth millions, or even billions, of years ago which definitely is a possibility, but we really have no way of proving this. If this indeed happened, it does not change anything as to the order of the day or the order of the creation week. If the heavens and the earth were created eons ago, that would mean that this earth sat as a rock in space lifeless for those eons. This is really not a problem with what the Bible is teaching. All that we are told is that “in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”. What we have in the creation story is a semi-detailed account of the decoration of this planet. What we know for sure is before God said, “Let there be light”, the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Question: How long was God’s Spirit hovering over the waters? Two minutes? Five minutes? One hour? Four hours? Twelve hours? Evening to morning, maybe? You see, when we start to speculate as to timing we can arrive wherever we want. All we know for sure is that God was hovering over the waters in the dark when He started decorating this planet. So the question needs to be asked: when did He start working on this planet? We know for sure in the creation account that God began His creation in darkness. That is clear.

Point Two: Day of Atonement

In the clearest words possible, Yehovah defines the holiest day of His calendar:

Leviticus 23:27 Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

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.

Those who believe the day begins at dawn treat this explicit text as though it is an anomaly, something that deviates from what is standard, normal, or expected. It would only seem to be an anomaly if one believes the day starts in the morning. However, this text is not an anomaly, and there is no evidence whatsoever that it differs in timing from any other day. Nor is this timing a stand-alone text. God gives us a second witness with two other moedim (appointed times), and the five days between them, in Exodus 12:18 (the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which we will cover in detail in Point Three).

The passage in Leviticus 23:27-32 confirms specific starting and ending times for what is expressly identified as 1) a single day, 2) the tenth day, and 3) a 24-hour period – from even on the 9th until even on the 10th. Some go so far as to suggest that the “day” of Atonement actually spans two calendar days: the last 12 hours of the 9th and the first 12 hours of the 10th. Is God the author of confusion, so that He would have a “holy day” that is actually two halves of two days? The Bible does not say “for half of the ninth day and half of the tenth day shall be the time of atonement”.

God made it abundantly clear when the tenth day of the month started and ended, as this was by far the most important day on His calendar. In verse 27 it says, “On the tenth day of the seventh month shall be the day of

atonement. It shall be a holy convocation unto you. You shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.” So that we understand exactly when the tenth day is, God, in verse 32, defines it. The evening of the ninth is the beginning of the tenth day. Therefore God declares that the beginning of the tenth day is in the evening, and the close of the tenth day is in the evening. By these terms that are used, God plainly defines the beginning and end of the 24-hour period of the Day of Atonement, from even until even. This is exactly the same way the he defines the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

If there was a text that said, “from morning to morning you shall celebrate your Sabbath”, it would be repeatedly used as an irrefutable proof text that the day begins at dawn. But because the only texts that define the start and end of three moedim, and several days between two of them, declare even until even, they are brushed aside as an anomaly, an exception to the rule.

Exception to the Rule?

A common question put forth by dawn adherents is this: “If this is the way we are to observe all Sabbaths, why not say so in Leviticus 23:3, the weekly Sabbath instruction? And if it is because they already knew all Sabbaths were kept ‘evening to evening’, why was there a need to mention it at all for Day of Atonement and Feast of Unleavened Bread?”

What is really happening here is an assumption that the Day of Atonement and the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are exceptions to the rule for the timing of the other holy day periods. But if this is the case, where exactly is this rule found? Where are two or more days in Scripture (moedim or not) specifically, word-for-word, identified as dawn-to-dawn? To have an exception to a rule, you must first have a rule. If there is no rule, then how can these specifically defined word-for-word eight days be exceptions to that rule? Therefore, we can come to no other conclusion than that the so-called exception to the rule is actually the rule itself.

However, to answer the exception to the rule question, we can try to get into the mind of God to discern an answer, but any answer that we give is speculation. Here are numerous possibilities, all of which would be far more reasonable than ordering festivals on a different schedule than the calendar days they span:

1. Perhaps He did this because Day of Atonement is THE most holy day of His calendar, and having the precise time exact on it was paramount in why He made sure it was crystal clear when it began.
2. Perhaps by His use of 7676 Shabbat twice in this verse, He was intending to point to all Sabbaths, as it is the same Hebrew word for the weekly Sabbath.
3. Perhaps He knew it would be utter confusion to have one weeklong feast made up of days that began morning-to-morning, but were celebrated on the half-day breaks of evening-to-evening. In other words, wouldn't God see confusion in making the entire weeklong feast of Unleavened Bread counted from even-to-even, while being made up of days that are reckoned from morning-to-morning?
4. Perhaps He wanted consistency. If God's holy days had different ways to reckon beginning and end, it would get extremely confusing, and some might forget which was which. Is it reasonable to

conclude that the spring festival of Unleavened Bread is even-to-even, and the summer festival of Shavuot is from morning-to-morning, then Trumpets is morning-to-morning, Day of Atonement is even-to-even, and Feast of Tabernacles is morning-to-morning? And, what about the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Would it be a morning-to-morning Sabbath in the midst of even-to-even days? And what would you do when the weekly Sabbath fell on the first or last day of Unleavened Bread? Now you'd have morning-to-morning moedim falling on the same day as an even-to-even moedim. God is not the author of confusion, and you have to admit that what we just laid out here is as confusing as you could possibly get.

5. Perhaps it was because they had already been observing the weekly Sabbath with the manna for some time before Pentecost at Mt. Sinai when the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath commandment, were given, so it didn't need to be spelled out to them. Their experience became the rule. Just because the words never got recorded in other Scripture doesn't mean that there was never a discussion or understanding about it between Yehovah and Moses. Moses did not record every single word that occurred during his multiple trips to the mountain. There are many things in Scripture that God's people kept, even from the creation, that are clearly not recorded, such as God's discussions with Adam. Don't you think Adam kept Sabbath? The text never said he did. How could he if the understanding didn't arrive until Exodus 20 or Leviticus 23? How did Abel know to give a blood sacrifice? How did Noah know about unclean animals? Just because these things were not previously recorded does not mean that God had not taught His children His ways.
6. Perhaps it doesn't matter, and this question is a distraction. The important thing to note is that He gave us this specific timing twice, covering three moedim and five regular days (Leviticus 23:32; Exodus 12:18). And by the mouth of two or three witnesses, a thing is established. *How much more so when the witnesses are both God Himself?*

Now let's turn the exception question around: If indeed Day of Atonement and Feast of Unleavened Bread are celebrated on different half-day increments than every other day, why did God make the timing of two of His moedim exceptions to the rule for his other moedim? What possible reason would God have had for causing such confusion? Why would He make two feasts as exceptions to the rule? Wouldn't this be "variableness", which is not in Him?

One of the reasons that is cited for claiming that the Day of Atonement is an exception to the rule is that this day is so holy that God starts our work of repentance on the ninth day so that when we arrive on the tenth day in the morning we are ready for it. This may sound reasonable at first, but when we carry on this reasoning process, it falls short. If in fact it is the holiest day of the year, and your acceptance by God is dependent on your actions during this day, why does God cut the last 12 hours out of the tenth day? Surely He would give you the full 24-hour period of the Day of Atonement before closing the door of mercy.

Point Three: Feast of Unleavened Bread

Exodus 12:18-19: 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. 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.

Leviticus 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

These passages are now the second time that Yehovah specified the timing of His moedim as beginning and ending at evening. This passage is even more persuasive, in that it spans seven days, two of which are moedim, and five of which are normal working days. By necessity, one day within those seven will also be a weekly Sabbath.

This feast is clearly identified as seven days, not eight. But by the dawn count, it covers part or all of eight calendar days: twelve hours on the 14th, all of 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and twelve hours on the 21st. That spans eight days, but the text clearly says seven. By the dawn reckoning, people would also have to start the week of Unleavened Bread twelve hours earlier than the command in Leviticus 23:6. With a dawn-to-dawn day, Exodus 12:18-19 (evening of the 14th) becomes in clear conflict with Leviticus 23:6 (the 15th), but with an evening to evening day, they are in full harmony.

Another sign that the day ended at sundown, related to the feast of Unleavened Bread, was that on the night before the morning wavesheaf offering for the day of Firstfruits, the priests went out just after sundown, and gathered their barley sheaves to begin the preparation to offer them the next morning. They would not have harvested on the Sabbath, so this is additional evidence that the Sabbath ended at sundown.

Point Four: What Did Yeshua Do?

At the time of Yeshua, without dispute, the Jews were keeping an evening-to-evening schedule. Those who believe that creation proves a dawn-to-dawn cycle explain this by saying that during the Babylonian captivity, the Jews switched to the Babylonian even-to-even cycle. However, with Yeshua declaring Himself to be Lord of even the Sabbath, surely He would have kept the correct Sabbath Himself. We can therefore look to His conversations with the Pharisees on when or how to keep the Sabbath, to see if they were in conflict.

He most certainly would have said something somewhere to correct the Jewish error or false doctrine, if He indeed was keeping Sabbath from dawn-to-dawn and they were keeping it from evening-to-evening. It would have been almost criminal for Him not to have said something. Otherwise, we would have to believe that the Torah-in-the-Flesh failed to correct the people He came to save, even as they were routinely trampling on 50% of His sacred Sabbath hours. Because there is an absence of a correction on when the Sabbath began and ended, it is safe to assume He found no need of a correction on this point.

Remember that Yeshua did address Sabbath issues with them – such as whether or not it was allowed to pull a sheep or ox out of a pit on Sabbath (Matthew 12:11-12, Luke 14:5), or lead their ox to water (Luke 13:15). It seems that *when* the Sabbath should be kept would be a point that would supersede *how* the Sabbath should be kept. Would He address an infrequent emergency such as an animal falling in a pit, but omit an error that dishonored 50% of the Sabbath day every week and every annual holy day?

Inversely, if Yeshua had been breaking 12 hours of the Sabbath according to the Pharisee traditions, they would have been all over Him or His disciples, as they did approach the disciples on other issues, such as washing of hands. But there is not even a hint of conflict over the timing of the Sabbath seen in any of the gospels, including the fabricated accusations against Him at His trial.

Yeshua was, in fact, repeatedly accused of Sabbath-breaking, but interestingly enough, not one of those accusations contained any reference to the hours that He was keeping. The Pharisees were all about the details of how to keep the Sabbath. Surely the time during which you were to keep the Sabbath would have been far more important to them than how to keep the Sabbath. If Yeshua was keeping morning-to-morning and the Pharisees evening-to-evening, the discussion would not have been only about whether it was lawful for Him to heal on the Sabbath, but also it would have been that He had been breaking 50% of the Sabbath every week.

Considering that Yeshua taught them on matters related to the Sabbath, and they challenged Him on matters related to the Sabbath, and neither one of them raised the timing of the Sabbath in their accusations, the only reasonable conclusion is that Yeshua was keeping the same Sabbath timing as the Pharisees, i.e. evening to evening. There is only one true Sabbath timing. If the Sabbath was being kept more times than one, some were technically not keeping the Sabbath, and the issue would have been front and center. Yeshua would have corrected them, and the Pharisees would have been fighting Him weekly over it, accusing Him of being a false prophet coming to change the customs that Moses came to deliver. But there was no such discussion or disagreement between them recorded on the timing of the Sabbath, which is evidence that there was no such disagreement.

The question about timing would not have had to come only from the Pharisees. Surely if the Messiah was doing one thing and the church leaders doing another, someone would have asked Yeshua about it, whether it be the rich young ruler or Nicodemus or even the woman at the well. When she questioned Yeshua about a different understanding of worship, it wasn't about when, but about where: "this mountain" (Gerizim) or Jerusalem. Don't you think "when" would have been an important question for someone to ask?

The fact is that the Scriptures do teach us the "who, what, when, where, how, and why" of Sabbath keeping.

- **Who:** Yeshua, the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8) and Creator of the Sabbath (John 1:3)
- **What:** To heal or not? To lead our livestock to water? To pull an ox from the pit? (Matthew 12:11, Luke 13:15-16, Luke 14:5, etc)

- **When:** Because there was no “when” question asked by anyone, this is powerful evidence that there was no dispute between them. Furthermore, because Yeshua said that “we”, “the Jews” do worship in truth, he confirmed there was no “when” dispute between them. (John 4:22-23)
- **Where:** Mt. Gerizim? Jerusalem? (John 4:19-24)
- **How:** “In spirit and in truth” (John 4:24)
- **Why:** As a sign between Yehovah and the children of Israel forever (Exodus 31:12-18)

The only other possibilities why there was no discussion on Sabbath timing would have been if Yeshua, the Lord of the Sabbath, did not think the timing of the Sabbath mattered, or that He did not correctly understand the timing and He was just simply keeping the same timing of the Pharisees. Those who believe that the creation and pre-Babylonian captivity proves a dawn-to-dawn Sabbath, would have to believe that Yeshua did not think it was important enough to correct the Pharisees on such a foundational topic, or evidently He did not understand the proper timing. If the possibility exists that Yeshua did not believe the timing of the Sabbath was important, then those promoting that we must change our timing from evening-to-evening to morning-to-morning are going beyond what Yeshua did Himself.

We simply cannot conclude that Yeshua, the Lord of the Sabbath, did not consider it important or did not correctly understand when it was. Just because there are no recorded words of Yeshua’s that define the Sabbath as evening-to-evening, the fact that He was living it and doing it with them made it unnecessary and redundant for Him to teach on it.

Point Five: What Did Yeshua Say?

Never at any time was Yeshua recorded as having spoken any words that specified the beginning of the Sabbath or any other day. The closest words we have from the mouth of Yeshua that demonstrate that He believed the day began in the darkness are found in the story of Peter’s denial of Yeshua. The story, found in all four gospels, has all of the keywords to help us determine when a day begins. The story is found in Matthew 26:58, 69-75; Mark 14:30, 66-72; Luke 22:34, 54-62; and John 18:15-18, 25-27.

Look at the words that Yeshua tells Peter in Mark 14:30:

(KJV) Mark 14:30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

(NKJV) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."

(YLT) And Jesus said to him, 'Verily I say to thee, that to-day, this night, before a cock shall crow twice, thrice thou shalt deny me.'

The prophecy was made at night, and Yeshua said it would still be “this day” (“today”) when the rooster crowed. He did not say it would be “tomorrow morning.” When does a rooster begin to crow? It would not

have crowed twice before sunrise had occurred. This point is emphasized when you notice the time gap between crows, as shown in Matthew 26:73 (“after a while”), Mark 14:70 (“a little after”), Luke 22:58 (“after a little while”).

Both “this night” and the next morning after it was light enough to stir the roosters to crow twice with a “little while” between crows, were called “today” (one single day) by Yeshua. (We are aware that some believe that the rooster crowing was actually the temple crier sounding announcements to the priests to begin to prepare for sacrifices to begin. If this is the case, it is even more persuasive that the evening belonged to the next morning, because such announcements would not have begun before sunrise given that the morning sacrifice did not begin until 9:00 a.m.). Either way, Yeshua’s very words indicate that He understood that the night and the following morning belong to the same day, a 24-hour day that begins at night. We do not attempt to make the claim that Yeshua was giving us a calendar lesson. It is simply a sequence of events that just happen to reveal that Yeshua (the Creator – John 1:3) considered evening to be the start of the day.

Point Six: Crucifixion

The removal of Yeshua’s body from the cross provides powerful evidence that His followers were keeping an even-to-even Sabbath.

Torah contained a provision that anyone put to death by being hung on a tree was not to be left hanging at night.

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

We see this rule carried out by Joshua with the king of Ai in Joshua 8:29. This rule was still being followed at the time of Yeshua:

John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

There would have been no rush to break the legs of the thieves and remove them from the cross “on the Sabbath day” if it was still nearly 15 hours until the Sabbath day began. Remember that the command in the Old Testament is only about remaining on the cross overnight, with no specific mention of remaining on the cross during Sabbath. But John 19:31 shows that the concern was the bodies not remaining “upon the cross on the Sabbath day”. The implication is clear – the Sabbath was beginning at sunset.

Luke 23:52 (KJV) This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

Luke 23:54 (KJV) And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

Compare: Luke 23:54 (RSV) It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning.

Remember, this account by Luke was 30 or more years after the fact. Why would Luke have stated that “the sabbath drew on” or “was beginning” with an event we know happened at even, if indeed Yeshua had kept and taught a Sabbath that was not beginning for another 12 or more hours? The very wording that the “day of Preparation” was ending when the Sabbath was beginning, as the body was being removed just prior to even while it was still light, all prove the day ended at even. The removal of the body from the cross makes it quite evident that not only were the Pharisees keeping Sabbath at evening, but Yeshua’s followers were as well.

Point Seven: Resurrection

Adherents of a dawn-to-dawn day often claim that Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s account of the morning after the resurrection prove conclusively that the day begins at dawn. They admit that on the surface John’s version appears to contradict the others, and they give two possible reasons, both of which we will cover in this section. Before we look at John individually, let’s look at all four texts in detail. We will show that not only is there no contradiction between any of the gospels, there is also no evidence in any of the four gospels that the followers of Yeshua believed or observed a day that began at dawn.

Here are these four verses from the interlinear (see the end of this article for a link to a free interactive interlinear Scripture analyzer that you can download for your Scripture studies):

(CLV) Mt 28:1 Now it is the evening of the sabbaths. At the lighting up into one of the sabbaths came Mary •Magdalene and the other Mary to behold the sepulcher.

(CLV) Mk 16:1 And, for the elapsing~ of the sabbath, •Mary •Magdalene and Mary the mother of •James, and Salome, buy spices, that, coming, they should be rubbing Him. (CLV) Mk 16:2 And, very early in the morning on •one of the sabbaths, they are coming~ onto the tomb at the -rising of the sun

(CLV) Lk 24:1 Now in the early depths of •one of the sabbaths, they, and certain others together with them, came onto the tomb, bringing the spices which they make ready.

(CLV) Jn 20:1 Now, on •one of the sabbaths, Miriam •Magdalene is coming~ to the tomb in the morning, there being still darkness, and is observing the stone °taken~ away from the door o of the tomb.

First we need to address the Greek phrase “one of the Sabbaths” as rendered in a direct translation. Is this a reference to the weekly Sabbath, an annual Sabbath, or is there a valid explanation for why the KJV and other English translations render this phrase as “the first day of the week”? This point is disputed in some circles. There are Bible theologians that believe this phrase is referring to the Sabbath, as in “one of the Sabbaths” in the count of seven Sabbaths leading to Pentecost. This is a Greek idiom that needs to be treated as a whole, and not as a series of individual words. Evidence suggests that the correct translation is indeed “first day of the week” as most English translations state. For an in-depth Greek grammatical explanation of why the phrase “one of the Sabbaths” is properly translated “first day of the week”, see this page: <http://yahshua-ha->

mashiach.weebly.com/what-does-the-word-sabbaton-in-greek-really-mean.html. A brief quote from the page is as follows:

They assume from the order of the English words that the Greek says, “on one of the sabbaths.” But as shown above, the Greek grammar and syntax clarifies the meaning. The proper translation is “on [day] one after the sabbath,” or as we would say today, “on the first day (or day portion) of the week.”

So, as fine a tool as the Interlinear is for matching a single Greek word to a single English equivalent, some knowledge of Greek grammar is still required, especially when it involves translating the particular idiom in Acts 20:7 and similar texts:—“day one after the sabbath.”

After looking at the interlinear, here is what we see:

- In Matthew, it is clear we are not given a moment-by-moment delineation of all events, much less a calendar tutorial. This, along with the prior verse, goes from Pilate sealing the tomb, which would have happened on Passover, to the evening of the seventh-day Sabbath, to the light part of the first day of the week, all within a matter of a few words. **Conclusion for Matthew:** This lack of specificity makes this inconclusive as to the timing of the turning of a calendar page.

- In Mark, we have to acknowledge that this was not given to us to serve as a calendar tutorial, so trying to make it into one is bound to cause challenges. We analyzed it from two perspectives: a Wednesday and a Friday crucifixion. Mark specifies the elapsing of Sabbath, the Sabbath being past.

For those who understand a Wednesday crucifixion: Pilate would have sealed the tomb Wednesday night. This would have been the evening of the Passover meal, which was the beginning of Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:18). During the daylight hours of Thursday, they would have rested until evening since it was the first day of Unleavened Bread. They could have bought the spices Thursday night, if stores re-opened, or on Friday morning. They would have had all day Friday for any preparation necessary, as well as go to the tomb to anoint the body. If that is the case, the Sabbath mentioned in Mark 16:1 is Thursday, with no additional timing given until Sunday morning, intended only to tell us that they came to the tomb in the morning. As such, we have no indicators in this verse of when the weekly Sabbath transition to the first day occurred. **Conclusion for Mark (Wednesday):** inconclusive

For those who understand a Friday crucifixion: Notice that after the Sabbath was over, there was a purchase made before morning (just after sundown, perhaps?). Then, early in the morning on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb at the rising of the sun (clearly before we would expect funeral spice vendors to be open for business). Since the Sabbath was over before the spices were purchased, this proves even-to-even. If the Sabbath ended in the morning, i.e., at the rising of the sun, that would mean that they would have had to purchase the spices while it was yet Sabbath, a likely impossibility in their culture for two reasons: 1) no stores would be selling, and 2) they would not have broken the Sabbath to make a purchase, as Luke 23:56 stated they rested the Sabbath according to the commandment. If the Sabbath ended at the rising of the sun, how

could they have purchased spices and arrived at the tomb simultaneously with spices in hand? There simply would not have been time. **Conclusion for Mark (Friday): evening to evening**

- Luke speaks of the “early depths” of the first day of the week – what does deep mean? This word appears only three times in the New Testament: 1) here, 2) John 4 at the woman at the well story (deep well), and 3) Acts 20 with Eutychus’ deep sleep. One could logically guess that the “depths” of a day would refer to the dark part, as in “the darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Genesis 1:2). **Conclusion:** Although this text could well be pointing to an evening start for the day, it could also be seen as inconclusive.

- John speaks of “early, when it was yet dark”. This wording leaves no doubt, either in the English translations or the interlinear. It is indeed the first day of the week, while still dark. **Conclusion: even to even**.

For the simple reason that these texts are not lessons in the calendar, most are inconclusive. Of the four accounts, two (Matthew, Luke) are somewhat inconclusive on when the calendar page turned, although one (Luke) strongly leans toward even; one (Mark) is inconclusive, or conclusive for evening, depending on when you believe the crucifixion occurred; and John is conclusive for evening, both as translated and as written in the interlinear.

There are two theories put forth by dawn-to-dawn adherents as to why John appears to disagree when he states quite clearly that it was the first day of the week and yet dark (G4653): 1) Some claim that the translation of John’s account should have included the word “not”, as in “not yet dark”. 2) Some claim that “dark” should have been translated “dim”, and that John was saying that the sun was already dawning. We will now look at both of those theories in detail.

Could John 20:1 Actually Be “Not Yet Dark”?

The Discovery Update article referenced previously completely disagrees with our conclusions in all four gospels. It claims that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are conclusive for dawn, and that John was simply mistranslated. The following indented comments are a direct quote from their study:

The fact that 1 out of 4 appears to disagree, means the translation of "yet" dark may need to be examined, (because we know the Bible doesn't contradict itself). The Greek word translated as 'yet' = "eti" G2089, can also mean "no longer". Notice other use of the same word;

(Luk 16:2) ...give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. G3621 G3756 G2089

(Luk 20:36) Neither can they die any more: G2089 for they are equal unto the angels;

(Heb 10:17) And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. G3364 G2089

So using the meaning of G2089, as seen in the previous examples, the verse in John could well be saying "when it was 'no more' dark" or 'no longer' dark". This would also eliminate the apparent contradiction between the 4 gospel accounts.

When you consider the specific timing addressed by each gospel writer, there is no contradiction, apparent or otherwise, between their stories. They just focus on slightly different timing. We do not need to reinterpret what John says, to make it say something that it does not in that it was “no more” or “no longer” dark, or that it was “dim”. We can take it just as it reads, and if we do, it is in perfect harmony with the other three gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke begin when the women arrived at the tomb at sunrise. John begins a few hours earlier, by speaking about the time when the women were coming (walking from Bethany) to the tomb, while it was yet dark, and he identifies that it was the first day of the week. This proves that John believed and spoke with the understanding that the first day had begun in darkness, not after morning light. The women left before daybreak, travelling during the night of the first day of the week to arrive by dawn on the first day of the week. The other three gospels are speaking about the time when they arrived, at the break of dawn. None of the four mention when the calendar page turned, but they all mention the first day of the week, and putting the four together, it is obvious that the dark part preceded the light on the first day of the week. In unison, they prove that Yeshua’s followers were observing even-to-even without any contradiction.

However, let’s investigate the claim that G2089 could have been rendered “no more” or “no longer” dark to see how well this point holds up to scrutiny.

The Discovery Update study makes an error with all three of its “proof” examples: They apparently overlook that in each instance G2089 means “yet” or “more”, exactly the same meaning it has elsewhere, and that it is a second Greek word in each sentence that serves to turn the meaning into a negative. No such negative exists in John’s account. The article is essentially claiming that the Greek word being paired with a negative in three unrelated verses somehow should have implied a negative where none exists in this verse.

- In Luke 16:2, their assertion that G2089 means “no longer” is incorrect. G2089 only means “longer”. There is a second Greek word G3756, which means “no”, which they list in their explanation. The word “no”, G3756, negates “longer”, so the two words together mean “no longer”, but G2089 by itself does not mean “no longer”.
- In Luke 20:36, the “neither” (G3777) at the start of the sentence is what negates the word G2089. The study author did not include the Strong’s word for “neither”, but it is clearly in the text.
- In Hebrews 10:17 there is also a second Greek word for “not” (G3364, which again they also list above but then fail to translate). Again, G2089 means “more”, instead of the “not more” this study mistakenly claims.

All three of their proof texts to suggest that “it was yet dark” in John 20:1 should actually have been translated “it was not yet dark” rely on errors and omissions. Their error is that they are adding to the text of John a negative word that clearly is not there. Here is an example by the same author, John, which demonstrates why we cannot apply this interpretation technique where G2089 is used:

Revelation 22:11 He that is unjust, ^{G91} let him be unjust ^{G91} still: ^{G2089} and ^{G2532} he which is filthy, ^{G4510} let him be filthy ^{G4510} still: ^{G2089} and ^{G2532} he that is righteous, ^{G1342} let him be righteous ^{G1344} still: ^{G2089} and ^{G2532} he that is holy, ^{G40} let him be holy ^{G37} still: ^{G2089}

It is easy to see that adding the word “not” completely changes the meaning. No one would reasonably assert that the final Day of Atonement prior to the end of this world makes the unjust “no longer” unjust, the filthy “no longer” filthy, the righteous “no longer” righteous, and the holy “no longer” holy.

Here is another example from John, this time when he knows to add a negative, such as “no” G3756 and “neither” G3777 when he wants to negate the meaning of G2089:

Revelation 21:4 And^{G2532} God^{G2316} shall wipe away^{G1813} all^{G3956} tears^{G1144} from^{G575} their^{G848} eyes;^{G3788} and^{G2532} there shall be^{G2071} no^{G3756} more^{G2089} death,^{G2288} neither^{G3777} sorrow,^{G3997} nor^{G3777} crying,^{G2906} neither^{G3777} shall there be^{G2071} (G3756) any more^{G2089} pain:^{G4192} for^{G3754} the^{G3588} former things^{G4413} are passed away.^{G565}

John 20:1 was translated correctly: It was the first day of the week, while it was yet dark, proving the day began at darkness, not light.

Does “Dark” Really Mean “Dim”?

Strong’s Concordance lists “dimness” as a potential meaning of the word G4653 translated as “dark” in John 20:1, although it is never translated as such in the King James Version. The words “dim” or “dimness” never appear anywhere in the entire New Testament in the King James Version of Scripture, whether from this word or from any other. Is it possible that John meant “while it was yet dim”, with the intent of conveying the idea that it was already beginning to dawn? To determine the answer, we need to consider three points:

- 1) G4653 “darkness/dark” appears sixteen times in the New Testament, with John using it fourteen of those sixteen times. In none of those sixteen uses does it carry any implication of the onset of sunrise. In nine of John’s fourteen uses, the word light also appears, with the two being directly used as total opposites. Below are three examples of John contrasting darkness and light. He does this four other times, see also John 12:46; 1 John 1:5, 2:8, 2:9.

John 1:5 And the **light** shineth in **darkness**; and the **darkness** comprehended it not.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus 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 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the **light** with you. Walk while ye have the **light**, lest **darkness** come upon you: for he that walketh in **darkness** knoweth not whither he goeth.

John obviously considers light and darkness (G4653) as complete opposites.

In texts where John speaks of darkness without contrasting it to light, such as the verse below, try reading “dimness, beginning to be light” in place of darkness in all three uses of the word. This simply cannot be done with the verse still making any sense.

1 John 2:11 But he that hateth his brother is in **darkness**, and walketh in **darkness**, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that **darkness** hath blinded his eyes.

- 2) Even if “dark” did mean “dim”, (although G4653 is never translated into English as “dim” in any of its 16 uses), remember that John 20:1 would have taken place during the full moon, during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so if it was a clear night it might be fair to call the nighttime dim, not pitch black dark, due to the bright moonlight. But even in this sense, dim would still be referring to the dark hours of night. This is a possibility, but not likely considering John never used the word to mean dim.
- 3) If you could translate G4653 as dim, and if John had meant his words to indicate that the day had begun to dawn, he still would not have phrased this verse in this way. He would not have said “yet [still] dim”, because “yet” would indicate it had been dim (beginning to dawn) for an extended period of time. If the word meant “dim” for the onset of sunrise, it would be “dim” for only a short period of time before becoming bright. If what John truly meant to say was that it was beginning to dawn, he should have used the same language as the other gospel writers. He should have said “while it was beginning to get light” or “at the rising of the sun” if that is what he meant. But because his timing started a few hours earlier, with their journey from Bethany to the tomb, it was yet dark on the first day of the week, and he stated just that.

John said “the first day of the week...when it was yet dark”, and there is no evidence to suggest that he meant anything other than exactly what he says. Despite the word “dimness” appearing as a possible meaning in Strong’s, there is simply no reasonable basis for trying to reinterpret “dark” to mean “dim” in this text. This is just one of many possible examples to show that it can be misleading when we rely on concordance definitions for an individual word. Context, and how the word is used by both the same author as well as other authors of the Bible, must be considered. While tempting at times, we must not make the concordance into a tool to make the Bible say what we want it to say. Instead, it is imperative to look at all of the evidence when a translation is subject to doubt. John, the disciple that Yeshua loved, along with the rest of the gospel writers, believed that the first day of the week (as every other day) begins and ends at evening.

Point Eight: Even-to-Even Supporting Texts

Are there other passages of Scripture that help us define evening/sunset as when a day starts? While we need to remember that there are only two passages that expressly define a day straight from God Himself (Leviticus 23:32 and Exodus 12:18, both of which directly command an “even to even” day), there are other texts, while not specifically meant as calendar lessons, that nonetheless give us evidence of when the day begins and ends. Here are a few such texts:

Unclean Until Evening

There are 30 texts that declare being unclean until even. While this suggests that evening starts a new day, could it be that God was trying to teach us something bigger than this? Could this have been a lesson in salvation regarding the typology of the sanctuary service? A cleansing symbolizes a new start. So, the question should be asked, why unclean until even, if that did not start a new day? Even after washing, the person was still unclean until sundown. Therefore, it wasn’t the washing that made them clean, it was the onset of even that did. You don’t have a new start until the old has passed away. It is very logical that

declaring within the text that the day ended at evening is not necessary if one understood that it did. The point of these texts was much larger than a calendar study, yet they certainly hint at one. It should be noted that this is pre-Babylonian timing, before the supposed change to an evening day start was introduced to God's people.

Closing of the gates before Sabbath

Nehemiah 13:18-19 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. 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. "

If the Sabbath started at dawn, there would be no such thing as "beginning to be dark before the Sabbath". Instead, it would be "beginning to be light before the Sabbath".

The passage in Nehemiah says both "began to be dark" and "before the Sabbath". Both are imminent phrases. Beginning to be dark means that darkness is already setting in, which is obviously long before sunrise. Before the Sabbath means just that, it was nearly Sabbath, obviously then also long before sunrise since the two events mentioned were occurring at the same time. They would not have said it was before the Sabbath if it was still at least 12 hours until the Sabbath.

If they closed the gates at night anyway, as Nehemiah 7:3 implies, why do they even mention that they closed the gates when Sabbath was drawing near? That would have been redundant. It is very likely that they closed them earlier than normal on Friday night in order to guard the edges of the Sabbath. Logically, during the week, they probably didn't close the gates until it was almost dark, or maybe even shortly after dark, to allow for late arrivals.

Nehemiah, being a reformer and prophet of Israel, would have understood the correct timing of the Sabbath. Clearly in these texts we see that he understood that the Sabbath began in the evening.

Healing on the Sabbath

Mark 1:21-35 is among the most solid proofs that the Sabbath was being kept even-to-even in the time of Yeshua. As established in point four above, whatever timetable Yeshua was keeping, it was the same timetable the Pharisees were keeping, as neither one of them included timing in their many debates on how to observe the Sabbath.

Mark 1:32-33: "Now at evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick, and those who were demon possessed. And the whole city [*surely that would that have included at least some of the Pharisees, maybe even some of their spies*] gathered at the door."

Evidently, according to Mark 1:21-35 and Mark 3:2,4, it seemed that the whole city believed that it was unlawful to heal on the Sabbath, although we know from Yeshua's example that it was not. Nonetheless, the whole city waited to bring their sick to Yeshua in the evening, after the sun had set, so as not to be seen as Sabbath-breaking by the Pharisees, which would have brought dire consequences.

This text proves unequivocally that the entire Jewish nation, including followers of Yeshua, believed that Sabbath ended at sundown. If after the sun went down it was still considered the Sabbath by the legalistic Pharisees, this event surely would not have gone unnoticed. They would have been lined up to accuse everyone of breaking the Sabbath, but they didn't, because it wasn't the Sabbath. The Sabbath had ended at evening, at the going down of the sun, just as Mark 1:32 declares.

It is interesting to note that Mark's book was written approximately 25 years after the events occurred. If the actual timing of the Sabbath kept by Yeshua and His disciples was from morning-to-morning, this would have been a perfect spot for Mark to bring this to light, but he does not, demonstrating that no change or correction was necessary.

Many of the ideas brought forth to support a day beginning at dawn have already been covered in our points above. Below are some additional points offered by dawn adherents that have not been addressed elsewhere.

Counterpoint One: Passover/Death Angel

The Passover story in Exodus 12 is repeatedly used as proof that the day begins at dawn. The argument is that the Passover lamb was crucified at even (3:00 p.m.) on the 14th day, the meal was eaten at even (sundown, approximately 6:00 p.m.) on the 14th day, and the death angel passed at midnight, which they claim was still the 14th day. Their reasoning for this is that they believe that the death angel event had to take place on the same day of the Passover sacrifice. Since we know that the Hebrews began the exodus in the morning on the 15th day, this leads them to conclude that the day began at dawn. But is their reasoning correct? Must the death angel occur on the same day of the sacrifice? There is no Scripture that makes this declaration. Here is what we know from Scripture:

1. The Passover lamb was slain "between the evenings" of the 14th.
2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins at even on the 14th and continues until even on the 21st. It is a seven-day feast (Exodus 12:18-19). (This was covered in Point Three above.)
3. The Passover meal was eaten with unleavened bread. None of it was to be left until morning.
4. The death angel passed at midnight. The question we must answer is – what day does midnight belong to, the 14th or the 15th?
5. The leaven was removed from the houses on the first day of Unleavened Bread, which is the 15th (Exodus 12:15).
6. The exodus occurred on the 15th day (Numbers 33:3).

Let's look at each of these six points in detail.

1. What is "Between the Evenings"?

Six times, in the original Hebrew, Passover is stated to be "between the evenings". Some Bible students assume that the phrases "between the evenings" and "evening to evening" are the same thing. They are not. The phrase "evening to evening" is the full 24-hour period from one sundown to the next, and defines the moedim (examples: Day of Atonement, and the entire week of Unleavened Bread). The phrase "between the evenings" is used exclusively with the evening sacrifice, and refers to only one-quarter of a 24-hour period. It is defined by the *Jewish Encyclopedia* as:

The time "between the two evenings" ("ben ha-'arbayim") was construed to mean "after noon and until nightfall," the killing of the lamb following immediately upon that of the "tamid," the burning of the incense, and the setting in order of the lamps, according to daily routine. [Source: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11933-passover>]

In the 11 instances in the Hebrew wording of Scripture where the phrase "between the evenings" appears (H996 H6153, often translated into English as "at even" or "in the evening"), six are in reference to the Passover meal (Exodus 12:6, 16:12; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 9:3, 5, 11), and five are in reference to the evening sacrificial events such as the offering of the animal sacrifice and the lighting of the menorah at evening (Exodus 29:39, 41; 30:8; Number 28:4,8). Below is one such example that plainly shows that "between the evenings" is NOT a reference to a 24-hour period:

(CLV) Num 28:4 »The one he-lamb shall you offer in the morning, and »the second •he-lamb shall you offer between the evening hours,

(Jubilee Bible) Numbers 28:4 The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer between the two evenings,

"Between the evenings" refers to the approximate six-hour period of time from when the sun first begins its descent toward the horizon (noon) until it sets. The "evening sacrifice" occurred at the ninth hour of the day, which we commonly call 3:00 p.m. (Daily/Tamiyd). The term "even" or "evening" refers to sunset, the twelfth hour of the daylight, which depending on the time of year was around 6:00 p.m. (Mark 1:32). The phrase "even to even" is the 24-hour period of time between one sunset and the next.

The phrase "between the evenings" always refers to the timing of events that occurred during the period between noon and the evening sunset. It does not refer to the entire day of Passover, just the timing of the Passover sacrifice and its preparation. The reason you don't see this phrase used to describe 24-hour days, such as the Day of Atonement or the seven days of Unleavened Bread, is that they begin and end at even/sunset. Calendar days are properly described as "even to even" instead of "between the evenings".

The reason it was correct to use the phrase "between the evenings" in the Passover account is that the lamb was sacrificed at the time of the evening sacrifice (14th at 3:00 p.m.) and eaten at sundown of the 14th day

(which was also the start of the 15th day). To have said “even to even” in this case would have confused the time of day when the lamb was to be slain, as that would have meant anytime in the 24-hour period. The reason it was correct say “even to even” in the Day of Atonement account is that the Day of Atonement is a 24-hour period, not simply the six-hour period between noon and sundown.

To solidify our understanding of the Hebrew idiom “between the evenings”, we can use the sanctuary service, and apply it to our Passover Lamb, Yeshua. By doing this, we can reverse engineer what we are told regarding the Passover in the Books of Moses. By understanding that Yeshua is our Passover Lamb, we can look at the time that He died to see precisely the time that the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed. He died at 3:00 p.m., which was the time of the evening sacrifice, which is the mid-point between noon and nightfall (between the evenings). See Luke 23:44-46. Thus, we know that the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed at the time of the evening sacrifice/Tamiyd, at 3:00 p.m.

On the Passover day, the 14th, the whole purpose was to prepare the lamb and household for the meal. This is why it is called “the preparation”. The preparation for the meal really consisted of a heart and mind preparation. The complete process contained a number of different events, all on separate days. The Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread actually began four days earlier when the lamb was selected on the 10th day. It was examined for four days, until the 14th day when it was slain. What had to happen during the four days before the lamb could be slain was the heart and mind had to come to grips with the need for a sacrifice on their behalf. Once this realization had been made, the Passover lamb had to be slain. This is the meaning of the time from the 10th day until the 14th day of Nisan. Clearly, the focal point is the Passover sacrifice. This sacrifice typified Yeshua standing in our place at precisely the time of the evening sacrifice. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, makes this point:

1 Corinthians 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

When Paul speaks of Christ our Passover, he is in no wise referring to the death angel event. He is referring to the sacrificial lamb, when Yeshua stepped into our place on the day of Passover.

2. Feast of Unleavened Bread

This seven-day feast, which included a moedim the first and seventh days, and a weekly Sabbath, are all clearly identified as days that begin and end at sundown. This was covered in detail in our Point Three near the beginning of this article. Please refer back to that section if further explanation is necessary.

3. None of the Passover Meat Remained Until Morning

Exodus 12:10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

Deuteronomy 16:4 And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificed the first day at even, remain all night until the morning.

Why is there a provision that none of the flesh remain until morning? Was it a calendar lesson to teach us that the new day begins at dawn on a day that was previously defined as beginning at evening? Or is there is something bigger here that we are dealing with? We need to understand the “why” behind the command to eat it that same night. Understanding typology is the key. Could it be that what God is trying to get across to us is that when we accept Yeshua as our Passover, we need to accept His life into our life immediately? Not in a week, or a month, or a year, but immediately following the acceptance of Christ our Passover. Hence also eating of the unleavened bread, representing His sinless life giving us new life.

The entire Passover experience, including fleeing into the wilderness, is typical to what is to come. For us, if we are to escape the destroying angel, we must fully internalize the Passover Lamb, and leave nothing left unconsumed. Leaving nothing until morning is symbolic that there is a deadline to accepting the sacrifice. The sooner we do that, the better. Today is the day of salvation.

4. What Day Did the Death Angel Pass?

Between the evenings of the 14th was when the Passover sacrifice was made so that The Feast of Unleavened Bread could be eaten, and it was to be eaten that night. The 15th is the first day of Unleavened Bread, when The Feast of Unleavened Bread was consumed. The 15th day begins at even (Leviticus 23:5-6, Exodus 12:18). These two events clearly show the transition from one day to the next took place at sundown. God, in His mercy, gives the entire Passover day for His people to accept the sacrifice. When the calendar day turned, the opportunity to accept the Passover lamb had gone and judgment then followed.

The “Passover” (the sacrifice, when the judgment was set) and being “passed over” (escaping of execution of the earlier judgment) are clearly related, but they are separate events with separate (although closely related) Hebrew words and phrases. One event follows the other, with no requirement stated in any text that they would happen on the same calendar day. The Passover sacrifice is H6453 (pesach). The phrase “passed over” is a two-word phrase H6452 H5921 (pawsach al).

Exodus 12:27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, H6453 who passed H6452 over H5921 the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt,

Numbers 33:3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover H6453 the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

If we may paraphrase the first verse for clarity, “...It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s Passover (sacrificial lamb to escape judgment). The LORD passed over (death angel execution of judgment) the houses of the children of Israel...” The word Passover in Numbers 33:3 is pesach, H6453, not the phrase “passed over”. It is a reference to the sacrifice, not the event of the destroying angel. If the death angel had to happen on the 14th day of the

month, Numbers 33:3 should read the morrow/morning “after the passing over” (H6452 H5921) instead of “after the Passover” (H6453). Our paraphrase of Numbers 33:3 would be something like, “...on the morning after the Passover sacrifice had been made, the children of Israel went out...” The word “morrow” in Numbers 33:3 does not mean a new calendar page, it simply means morning.

Don't miss this point: just because God executed the firstborn of Egypt, the execution itself is not symbolic of the Passover Lamb. Passover is about the sacrificial lamb, only. We see this typology at the crucifixion. There was no death angel event when Yeshua died. The two events are not the same. We must be careful not to confuse the acceptance or rejection of the sacrificial Passover Lamb with the execution of judgment that follows. They are connected, but they are not one and the same. The execution took place after the rejection of the Passover Lamb, and nowhere is it written that those two events had to happen on the same calendar day. The Israelites were commanded to remove the leaven from their houses the first day of unleavened bread (Exodus 12:15). God, in essence, removed the leaven by destroying the firstborn in the first day (15th), as He commanded. As noted above, Paul's use of the term Passover is directly related to the Lamb of God, and not the destroying angel.

With the clarification of the difference between the Passover sacrifice and the passing over of the death angel being made, let's continue looking at the point dawn keepers are making: If indeed the lamb was sacrificed at 3:00 p.m. on the 14th, and hours later at midnight it was still the 14th, this would be powerful evidence that the night belongs to the preceding day. However, the killing of the Passover lamb was the 14th. The meal was eaten without leaven (the first day of unleavened bread is not until the 15th- Leviticus 23:6, which begins at even/sundown after the 14th- Exodus 12:18). The passing over of the death angel occurred after the meal had been eaten. Since the two texts together show that the meal was eaten at the time the calendar page transitioned, and the death angel followed a few hours later, the death angel had to have happened on the 15th in the night. The exodus that imminently followed was also on the 15th the next morning. Thus we can paraphrase the creation story: The evening and the morning were the 15th day.

The Passover (Pesach) lamb is what saved them, which was sacrificed on the 14th day, at the 3:00 p.m. evening sacrifice. That continued the sequence of events that had begun on the 10th day when the Passover lamb was selected. The events continued over into the whole week of unleavened bread, a progression of events. They had to be circumcised to partake, which symbolized a cutting away of the fleshly nature, making it possible to put away sin. The Passover Lamb was sacrificed on the Passover day (14th). It, along with unleavened bread, was eaten with that meal, at the transition into the first day of Unleavened Bread (15th). This prepared the way for the destroying angel at midnight, which made way for their freedom (deliverance) departure at first light. This sequence of events continued the following day by picking up the bones of Joseph on the Feast of Firstfruits (wavesheaf), symbolizing the resurrection.

Numbers 9:11 is often cited to prove the meal had to be eaten before the end of the 14th, and at first glance it does appear that way.

Numbers 9:11 The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

It is necessary to dig deeper into what is being said in this verse. The interlinear divides this verse into two sentences: "In the second month on the fourteenth day, between the evening hours shall they observe it. Over unleavened bread and bitter herbs shall they eat it." They were to prepare the lamb on the 14th. They were to eat the meal, complete with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, at evening/sundown at the transition to the 15th, which is the first day of Unleavened Bread. The meal is The Feast of Unleavened Bread, which straddled the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th. This verse is not stating that the meal had to be eaten before the end of the 14th, only that it was prepared between the evenings, and to be eaten with the specified unleavened bread and herbs. This point is made clearly in Exodus 12:8, where we are directly told that the meal was eaten in the night (darkness), as opposed to even.

Exodus 12:8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night (H3915 Laila), roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

Many see this point as a stumbling block, but there is no problem with the wording here at all. The interpretation by dawn believers is that eating the flesh "that night" must refer to the 14th. While it is translated into English as "that night", the interlinear says "this night". It was simply the night immediately following the sacrifice. The lamb was killed around 3:00 p.m. on the 14th, and it needed to be roasted with fire. The Hebrew word for night is Laila, the same word used in Genesis 1:5 as "the darkness He called night". It can only refer to the night immediately following the sacrifice. No date was given here, but we know from elsewhere that the first unleavened meal would correspond with the onset of the first day of Unleavened Bread, which begins at the transition from the 14th at even to the 15th. The very fact the verse mentions unleavened bread proves that it was linked to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which starts on the 15th, which was "that night" or "this night" immediately following the 14th evening sacrifice. The meal was taking place right at the transition from the 14th to the 15th, at evening, proving the calendar change occurred at the moment, and making the death angel event several hours later also on the 15th.

5. Leaven was Removed on the First Day of Unleavened Bread

Some use Exodus 12:15 as pointing to the daylight of the 15th for removal of leaven, but in context with the clear words of Exodus 12:18, the leaven was to be removed by even of the 14th, which was in fact the transition into the 15th day. For millennia, Jewish households have made a game with their children of getting the last bit of leaven cleaned up as part of the Passover meal, which is clearly identified as being leaven-free. This search for the leaven at the Passover meal/Feast of Unleavened Bread was the last final check to make sure the house was clean of leaven before entering into the seven-day feast of Unleavened Bread. It is not logical to make the assumption that the Passover meal was eaten on the 14th with unleavened bread, but they didn't remove the leaven from their houses until the following day. The leaven had to be out by the 15th (which began at even of the 14th), not gotten out midway into the 15th.

This is paramount to fit the festival typology. Is it reasonable to believe that those who partake in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will come to the table with leaven in their hearts, and not until after the marriage is consummated will they rid the leaven from their lives? There is a reason why the Israelites were commanded that they must be circumcised before they kept the Passover. That cleansing had to take place before the feast was consumed. The leaven was removed prior to the exodus, which occurred immediately at dawn of the 15th. The cleaning before the feast was further brought to light at the Last Supper when Judas was not allowed to finish the meal before he was put out. Yeshua identified him as unclean (John 13:11).

This typology proves an evening day start, as the meal was in the evening, and the day of deleavening was the 15th, which Exodus 12:18 shows started at sundown on the 14th. You cannot delay the start of the 15th until 12 or more hours after The Feast of Unleavened Bread is eaten.

6. The Exodus Occurred on the Fifteenth

Numbers 33:3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

This text was explained above with respect to the word "Passover". There is no question that the exodus occurred on the morning of the 15th, just as there is no question that the first day of unleavened bread, which is the 15th (Leviticus 23:6), began at the close of the 14th at even (Exodus 12:18).

Summary

The preparation of the Passover sacrifice took place late in the day of the 14th, with the lamb being slain at or near 3:00 p.m. The cooking time and readying of the meal would have taken several hours, and the lamb was to be eaten that night, most likely at or shortly after sundown. The first day of unleavened bread is specified both as beginning at evening, and being the 15th, so the meal would have been over within the first couple of hours of the 15th. The death angel followed at midnight, about six hours into the 15th, leading the way for the exodus the morning of the 15th. This demonstrates unequivocally that the calendar page turned at even.

Counterpoint Two: Day and Night/Night and Day

Those looking to Scripture to prove that the day starts at dawn point to the fact that the phrase "day and night" appears twice as often as "night and day", and that in all instances where both words are in the same verse, the order of "day" preceding "night" is four times as frequent as "night" preceding "day". (We did not verify these numbers, but rather cite them from a study that was given to us regarding the day starting at dawn.) This is simply common vernacular, and not evidence of when a day begins. Texts that do specifically identify the order of the day always begin with evening first, as in the creation story "the evening and the morning were the ... day", and the texts that identify the exact start and end of the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Furthermore, if one wants to insist that everything happens in the “day or night, night or day” order given in Scripture, they would have to call Yeshua a false prophet.

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Regardless of if one understands a Wednesday or a Friday crucifixion, His body was put into the tomb at evening. Yeshua said it would be three days and three nights. But by going in the tomb at evening, it is the reverse order of what he stated would happen. Are we to conclude that Yeshua was wrong to use common language of “days and nights” when it actually ended up being “nights and days”? More likely, it is reasonable to conclude that the effort to make a calendar policy based on whether a passage puts the word “day” or “night” first is not a valid way to establish the start of the day, especially since not a single verse that uses the words “day” and “night” give specific instruction on when to begin the day.

Three times, God clearly identifies His days: creation (evening and morning), Day of Atonement (evening to evening), Feast of Unleavened Bread (evening to evening). There are no texts in all of Scripture that ever say “from morning to morning” or “from dawn to dawn” shall you observe any day.

Counterpoint Three: Apparent Conflicting Texts

Studies that provide a list of Bible texts to prove that the day begins at dawn routinely use texts that had no intent to provide a calendar lesson. We cannot logically expect to see Scripture include a neatly packaged definition of the beginning of day in every single instance when a period of more than 12 hours is stated. Now, if we decide to read that into things when it was not intended or specified for that purpose, it would be quite easy to form an incorrect conclusion. To insist that every single mention of day or night or morning or evening is intended to define the start or end of the day, you are adding a requirement to Scripture that does not exist.

When studying Scripture, there are a number of questions that a seeker of truth should ask when analyzing what is being said, to ensure that they have the full context and understanding of what the text is trying to teach us. Here are questions that should be asked of each of the texts we will cover:

- What was said?
- Who said it, and who did they say it to?
- Why was it said? (For this topic: Was it said with the purpose of teaching about the calendar?)
- When was it said?
- Where was it said?

When analyzing texts that supposedly support a dawn calendar day start, they tend to fall into one of several categories:

1. They are out of time or sequence with historical events
2. They are simply a recounting of events, with no calendar tutorial included (or intended)

3. They include the word “morrow”, which is incorrectly interpreted as “the start of a new 24-hour day” when it really only means “morning” without including the implication of a new turn of the calendar page
4. They say, “that day” and/or “that night”, but the Hebrew actually says, “the day” and “the night”, which removes the implication that they are occupying a single page on a calendar
5. They are conversational language spoken exactly as we would speak them, with no intent of teaching on the calendar
6. They are simply poetic in nature
7. They really have nothing of value to add to this topic and are apparently included due to some type of confusion, albeit sincere, as to their meaning and purpose

Let’s look at a few examples for each of these.

1. Out of time or sequence with historical events

Many of the texts cited to try to prove a dawn day start expose a point of significant confusion. Pro-dawn adherents believe that the creation proves a dawn day start, and that it was during the Babylonian captivity that the Jewish nation began the “pagan” practice of an evening day start which continues to this day. Yet many of the texts that they cite as proof that the Bible teaches a dawn day start are post-Babylonian, after the supposed change to evening took place. Every text written after the Babylonian captivity would fall into this category, which would include every verse in the New Testament. None of these texts can be logically used to prove a dawn day start after acknowledging that the Jewish practice since Babylon was an evening day start.

Despite the fact that they do not dispute that the Jews were keeping Sabbath based on evening since at least the Babylonian captivity, the dawn proponents erringly attempt to use post-captivity verses to prove that they were keeping dawn. To be consistent, since they acknowledge that in New Testament times the Jews were keeping evening-to-evening, if they want to prove a dawn day start from the New Testament, rather than focusing on the Pharisees and Jews as a whole, they need to either:

1. make a case that Yeshua kept a dawn day start in opposition to the rest of His countrymen, and taught His disciples to do the same. (This would also require them to explain why He didn’t correct the Jews, who He came to save, from their error, and explain why the Pharisees didn’t chastise Him for keeping a different time that they did.)
2. or, they would need to show that Yeshua, along with the entire Jewish nation, was keeping a dawn day start during His life, which would require them to prove that sometime after Babylon and before the birth of Yeshua, the Jews returned to dawn, then sometime after Yeshua’s death, they reverted back to evening which they still keep today, with both changes escaping the notice of both Scripture and history. Otherwise, they need to credibly explain why Yeshua, the Lord of the Sabbath, through whom all things were created (John 1:3), was also keeping the Pharisee time of evening—was it out of disobedience, out of a lack of understanding that He had created a dawn day start, or some other reason?

If neither of these scenarios can be achieved, the only other option is that Yeshua and the entire Jewish nation were correctly keeping evening-to-evening, which is what we should still be doing today.

2. Simply a recounting of events, not intended as calendar tutorials

There are quite a few texts cited as an attempt to prove a dawn start which are simply telling a sequence of events, without noting when the calendar page turned. Here is one example:

Jonah 4:6-7 And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

The gourd grew up one day, the next day it withered when the sun shone on it. We have a 24-plus-hour period that started one day and continued to the next, but what is missing is that this verse does not teach us at what point along that timeline the calendar page turned. Here is another example:

Judges 19:26 Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was, till it was light.

Again, it is just simply a sequence of events, into which no teaching of the calendar was intended. The woman apparently travelled just as the sun was about to rise, and remained at her master's door until it was light. Where is the intention of a calendar lesson in this story?

3. Morrow

It is understandable in 2018 English speaking countries to assume that "morrow" is the same as "tomorrow", and that it implies the start of "a new day". However, this is an incorrect interpretation of the meaning of the word "morrow". The KJV and others actually make it two words, "to morrow" which would indicate the actual meaning of "toward morning". The definition of the word "morrow" in 1828 Webster's, which is the English dictionary nearest in time to the writing of the KJV, means "morning", not the moment in which the calendar page turned. This dictionary includes as one of the entries: "Good morrow, a term of salutation; good morning." (Consider the linguistic root of the word "**morrow**" and "**morning**".) Similarly, it is also not the case in a statement such as, "I have an appointment at 8:00 tomorrow". This does not mean that the calendar page turns at 8:00. Trying to read an unintended definition of a calendar page turning into the use of the word "morrow" will muddy the interpretation of what was actually being conveyed.

Here is an example given to try to show the calendar page turns at "morrow":

Genesis 19:33-34 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay last night with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also;

When the daughters had their father drink wine at night, “on the morrow” means the following morning, but it does not automatically mean that one calendar day had passed into another in that space of time. The intent of this text had nothing to do with pronouncing when a day begins, or of teaching any kind of calendar lesson at all. What it is demonstrating is there were no lengthy time periods between these events, just that they followed on the heels of one another.

Additional “morrow” verses often quoted by dawn adherents, but which do not in fact teach about the calendar: Exodus 32:5, Jonah 4:6-7, Numbers 33:3, Exodus 16:23, 1 Samuel 28:19, Acts 4:3, Acts 23:32

4. *The use of terms such as “That day” or “Same day”*

The idea is that any verse that uses a phrase like “that day” or “this day” or “same day” prove that all events surrounding the phrase all belong on a single calendar page. Often this is not the case, as in this widely quoted passage:

Genesis 15:9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

Genesis 15:10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. [All of this took time, gathering the sacrifices, and preparing them. This would have had to be during the day time.]

Genesis 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. [Nearly sundown]

Genesis Gen 15:17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. [After sundown]

Genesis 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: [Same day]

Is the “same day” of Genesis 15:18 referring to three events: Abraham preparing the sacrifices in verse 10, the lamp at night in verse 17, and Yehovah making a covenant in verse 18, thus proving the day belonged to the following night with no calendar break at sundown? The lamp was after sundown, and that was the “same day” the covenant was made. Only those two events are specifically identified as being “the same day”. There is no implication or requirement in this passage that Abram’s offerings could not have at the time of the evening sacrifice a few hours before the calendar page turned, and then God gave the covenant through the act of the passing of the lamp in the night after the calendar page turned. That fits with verse 18 “in the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram” – the passing of the lamp was the same day the covenant was made. This again is not a calendar lesson, which is why the exact moment the calendar page turned was not spelled out in it. The intent of this verse was far more important than defining the start of the new day.

Here is another example that gets confused in a similar fashion:

Exodus 10:13 So Moses stretched out his staff over Egypt, and the LORD made an east wind blow across the land all that day and all that night. By morning the wind had brought the locusts;

If a day started in the morning and ended the next morning, then the text is redundant in that it says, “all that day and all that night” for it would only need to say “all that day”. But that isn’t the biggest problem in using this verse to prove when the day starts. You’ll find something interesting by looking up this verse (and most verses with this phrase) in an interlinear. The word “that” in “all that day and all that night” is italicized in KJV and NKJV, meaning they were inserted by translators. You’ll discover the Hebrew says “the”, not “that” – “all the day and all the night”, in other words, not attaching them as belonging to part of the same calendar page. By translating the Hebrew “hey” (the) into “that”, as the quoted translation does, it certainly implies they share the same calendar day, but on what basis did the interpreter make that translation which differs slightly from the original text? And even if the Hebrew did say “that” (which it does not), just because a day and night shared a common event, and because morning follows night regardless of at what moment along that spectrum the calendar may or may not have advanced, it does not change the fact that this verse is giving us times during which an event occurred, and is not attempting to define the start of the day.

Other texts that incorrectly rely on “that day” or similar wording to prove a dawn day start, (many of which fall apart when consulting the interlinear): Exodus 12:8-51 (heavily edited in their Scripture list to add to the confusion), Exodus 14:13-27, Leviticus 23:14, Number 11:32, 1 Samuel 19:24

5. Conversational Language

In many of these types of texts, common vernacular must be considered. For example, if you were under the conviction that sundown Friday to sundown Saturday was the Sabbath, on Friday afternoon at 3:00 p.m., would you call a Sabbath-keeping friend and ask them if they wanted to come over “tomorrow night” if you meant to come over Friday night? Wouldn’t you instead say “tonight”, even though you and they firmly believe that the new day begins at sundown? Would you have been asserting when a change in calendar days had taken effect, or were you contradicting your belief by simply speaking in practical terms? It is not reasonable to suggest that conversations by laymen, on topics not related to teaching the calendar, where they are speaking in practical terms, somehow define when the day, or more importantly, when the moedim, begins.

Consider this example: If I work from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. two consecutive days, is it wrong of me to say that I worked two days, even though the actual hours of labor were 16, and the start time of the first to the finish time of the second was 33, not 48, hours? Am I obligated to speak of the work experience only as “I worked a total 16 hours of out of a consecutive 33-hour time block that occurring during a 48-hour time period of two calendar days”? No, we simply use common conversational language by saying we worked two days. Conversations in Scripture do the same.

Here is an example of conversational language being misinterpreted as having a calendar lesson:

1 Samuel 19:10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.

1 Samuel 19:11 Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life tonight, tomorrow thou shalt be slain.

This verse is simply saying “if you don’t flee tonight, in the morning you will be slain”. That would be a true statement as worded regardless of when the calendar page turns. Again, this is not a text where Michal’s intent was teaching David when the calendar page turned. In addition to conversational language, by citing this verse dawn adherents also make the earlier mistake of interpretation of “morrow” as “a calendar page turn”. Another example:

Exodus 16:23 And he said unto them, This *is that* which the LORD hath said, To morrow *is* the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake *that* which ye will bake *to day*, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

Now read that Scripture assuming you were on an even-to-even Sabbath. How would you have you said this on Friday morning, considering that manna was only present to be gathered in the morning? Would you not have said it exactly the same way? “Tomorrow is the Sabbath, and we don’t gather on Sabbath morning, so anything extra keep until morning so we have food tomorrow”, and the next morning “today is the Sabbath”? This is simply conversational language, not designed to teach a calendar lesson.

Other texts that fall in this category: Exodus 18:13, Exodus 32:5, Deuteronomy 16:4, 1 Samuel 9:19, 2 Samuel 2:32.

6. Poetic

Some texts which are simply written in a poetic nature are quoted when trying to prove the day begins at dawn. For example:

Song of Solomon 2:17 and 4:6 both say, “day breaks and shadows flee away”. Not only do these not discuss a direct command of when to celebrate moedim, it is simply a poetic way of stating a plain fact, that when the sun rises, shadowy dimness disappears.

Job 3:9 “dawning of the day”. Every day has a dawn, but is that evidence of a calendar page? This text was clearly poetic or metaphorical because it also speaks of stars of the morning being dark, looking for light but finding none. Was Job intending to reorder God’s calendar cycle for us here?

7. Confusion out of context, etc.

Often verses that are quoted to support a dawn calendar page turn really are not germane to the topic at all. Not every text that mentions “day” is a calendar lesson. Here are some examples:

Genesis 32:24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

Where is the calendar lesson in this verse? Jacob wrestled until morning (“ascending of early light” could be a translation of the two Hebrew words in this phrase). But there is no context here to conclude that the point of ending the wrestling was so Jacob could turn the page on his calendar. This is just a normal way any speaker would convey the idea that the wrestling persisted through the night and stopped when the sun came up.

Psalm 113:3 From the rising of the sun to its going down The LORD's name is to be praised.

Is the purpose of this text to teach us that we cannot praise Yehovah during dark hours? Obviously, David was not teaching us how to read the calendar, but rather had a different objective to this verse – encouraging us to praise Yehovah all of our waking hours.

Other texts that fall into this category: Joshua 6:15; 1 Samuel 30:17; Lamentations 3:22-23

Counterpoint Four: Only the Light Part of the Sabbath is Holy

Some (not all) of the people who have adopted the idea that the day begins at dawn believe that the “Sabbath day” is only twelve hours, from dawn to dusk. Surely cutting our appointed time with God in half is not going to strengthen our relationship with Him. Did God really intend the Sabbath day to be only 12 hours instead of 24?

A Biblical “day” has many interpretations:

1. An undetermined length of time, which could be years, as in 2 Peter 3:8 “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”, or as in Genesis 5:27 where “...the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years...”
2. An undetermined future single point in time, as in the “day of judgment” (Matthew 10:15 and many others)
3. A full 24-hour cycle, as in Genesis 7:17 where says it says the flood was 40 days (compare Genesis 7:12 where the flood is identified as 40 days and 40 nights), or the “day” of atonement that is “even to even”
4. Daylight only, as in John 11:9, where Yeshua asks, “Are there not twelve hours in the day?”

Because there are different meanings associated with the word “day”, if we intend to make a doctrine of how much time we are going to “remember” and “keep holy” for the fourth commandment, we’d better make sure we have the right definition. If in doubt, we should keep the most generous length of time, rather than the shortest length of time. His Sabbaths are a “delight” (Isaiah 58:13), and we should recognize them as such.

Relying on Yehovah is the best place to start. He declared to Moses that the “day” of atonement, the “tenth day of the seventh month”, is from “even unto even”. He also declared that the seven “days” of unleavened bread are 24-hour days from even of the 14th until even of the 21st. The “day” that Yehovah made his covenant with Abram occurred with His lamp passing during the night hours. There are no words out of Yehovah’s mouth that lead us to believe that the Sabbath day is only twelve hours.

The statements of Yeshua are in line with His Father. He prophesied that in “three days” he would rise again (John 2:19). Those were 24-hour days, not only 12-hour daylight periods. He frequently stated that He would rise on the “third day”. There is no doubt that Yeshua rose while it was yet dark, so Yeshua obviously believed that the dark hours belonged to the “day”. We also see this in Mark 14:30 when Yeshua said, "that this day, even in this night..." that Peter would betray Him.

Reflect also on Nehemiah, those removing Yeshua from the cross, the gospel writers who told the resurrection story, and all of the other examples laid out in this study that show the day began at evening. We are to “keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant” (Isaiah 56:5.) Is taking one single text of Scripture, and using it to cut your worship time in half each week, in line with that command? Would it be wise to take one isolated statement (John 11:9), and decide that it applies across the board for all instances of the use of the word “day”? Doing so would mean that during the week of unleavened bread may we eat leaven after sundown throughout the week, since the command is to not eat it for seven “days” instead of seven “days and nights”. If “day” is going to be interpreted as only twelve hours, what do you do with texts like 2 Kings 7:7-9, where the lepers say "this day is a day of good tidings" when their discussion was identified as being after twilight and before morning light, so their “day” of good tidings was exclusively within “night” hours. Similarly, if “day” only means the twelve hours of daylight, then how will the "day" of the Lord come as a thief in the “night” (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10)? The normal expected definition of a day, unless context proves otherwise, is a 24-hour period.

Even those who believe the day begins at dawn understand the creation story to be 24-hour days, from dawn to dawn, so why suddenly would the seventh day be only 12 hours? To interpret John 11:9 into Yeshua giving permission for His followers to disregard 50% of God’s Sabbath is not in keeping with the whole of Scripture. The idea that we are only to keep 12 hours holy each week is from the same source we are warned about in Daniel 7:25, the power who “seeks to change times and law”.

What was Yeshua saying in this verse? John 11:9 is just a simple analogy to His disciples, that He, Yeshua, is the light of the world, and while they are with Him, they have nothing to fear. This was not intended as a calendar lesson, nor was it His command or blessing for His people to disregard 50% of the fourth commandment. Look at the context of this statement. Two chapters before, and one chapter afterward, Yeshua speaks of Himself as the “light of the world”.

John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

John 11:8-9 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? 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.

John 12:46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

Just as the sunshine has 12 hours of appointed time, Yeshua had an appointed time to walk this earth as the light of the world. Those not walking with Him were walking in darkness. When His disciples were worried about Him going back to Judaea, He was simply carrying forth with His earlier and later analogy, and assuring them that His appointed hours of being the light were not yet expired, and they should not hinder His mission out of fear that He would be stoned.

Conclusion

While those who teach the dawn theory generally agree that there is room for ambiguity, we strongly disagree. The clear words that were specifically uttered by Yehovah to establish the start and end of His moedim, from “even to even”, are not at all ambiguous. Yes, there are statements and conversations in Scripture that are not in any stretch meant to be calendar lessons but if taken as though that was their intent, you could say there was room for ambiguity in them. But given that they were not calendar lessons, should we put those potentially ambiguous conversations ahead of the plain directives of Yehovah Himself, and go as far as to say that His instructions are “anomalies”? It would not be wise to do that.

Furthermore, if people who keep Sabbath starting at dawn admittedly see ambiguity, why are they willing to throw away the clear words of Yehovah and the example of Yeshua, all for something that they acknowledge has room to be considered questionable? Shouldn't we have a more solid rock on which to stand before we decide to move from the rock on which Yeshua and God's people have been standing for 6000 years? Before we change the hours we “remember” and “keep” according to God's command, let us never forget who is it that “thinks to change times and laws” (Daniel 7:25).

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Contained in the word are God's calculated methods for our salvation. We are warned that satan will specifically attack Yehovah's appointed times. Why does he do this? If satan creates a counterfeit, he has to have a purpose in it.

Exodus 31:13 “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.’”

God has specified the time in which He will meet with us for the purpose of us knowing Him. The appointed times are about relationships – our relationship with God and our relationship with His people. It should be no surprise to us that satan will go after the vehicle which God uses to become known to His creation—His appointed times, and in this verse specifically, His weekly appointed time, the Sabbath. Satan has calculated that if he can interrupt this time, we will not arrive at God's destination—knowing Him.

In moving the Sabbath so half falls on the first day of the week, Sunday, satan is actually attempting to usurp God's throne. God has warned us ahead of time that the moedim is from where satan's attack will come:

Isaiah 14:13-14 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation [moed] On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

We need to be extremely careful about thinking to change something as important as the Sabbath hours without 100% concrete evidence to do so. This is a serious matter and yes, it is a salvation issue, and that is why satan is attacking it. Satan's deceptions are growing stronger with each passing day.

###

[Study note: When we cite interlinear translations, they were taken from the Interlinear Scripture Analyzer, available as a free download here: http://www.scripture4all.org/download/download_ISA3.php. This is a very valuable tool for undertaking a study such as this.]