

Evening to Evening Or Morning to Morning Which Is It?

Introduction

The contention of how to measure a scriptural day is as emotional as that concerning the correct calendar. Considering the current intransigence, I doubt either contention will be settled before the return of Mashiach. Yet there is only one truth. Possibly the answer is historical, and we need to ask, 'how did the ancients first measure a day'? It is widely assumed that the current Jewish practice of beginning days at sunset was always the case, but this is not correct?

The Creation Record

Some consider Gen.1:5 unequivocally confirms the evening-to-evening principle. But this contention relies on focusing on the latter part of the verse only and ignoring the earlier section, which is not only a bad practise but creates a contradiction within the verse. Plainly verse 5 commences with a day/night sequence and closes with the addition of an evening and morning thereby completing the 24hour day,

^a And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. ^b And the evening and the morning were the first day, (Gen.1:5).

From the preceding verses 3 and 4 the first thing YHWH did was create light out of darkness, whilst the darkness existed first, insofar as this creation record is concerned the light was the first work of creation. Hence in verse 5 the sequence starts with the first work of creation - a 12hour day followed by a 12hour night. Verse 5b is merely identifying that in the sequence of day and night the evening comes before the morning. In other words, the daytime ended with the evening and the nighttime ended with the dawn. So, verse 5 could justifiably be worded,

YHWH called the light day and the darkness night. And there was setting and dawning – one day.

After creating the day YHWH put a means of gently transferring from the light to darkness and vice versa: that means of transfer He called evening and dawn/morning respectively. When we consider the purpose of the evening is to gradually cause the dissipation of the light into darkness how can the evening have preceded that light? It is impossible. The light had to exist first for it to be dissipated. Frankly, there is simply no alternative from the creation record other than the 24-hour period commenced with the start of the daylight and YHWH working: not with the end of the daylight. That makes no sense.

When we study the creation record, each day starts with YHWH creating after which comes the evening.

The Sacrifice of the Peace Offering and Thanksgiving Offering

The meat of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for giving thanks is to be eaten on the day of his offering; he is not to leave any of it until morning. (Lev.7:15)

It says that the offering is to be eaten on the same day but continues none of it is to be left until morning. If a scriptural day spans from evening to evening this passage is contradictory.

When you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to YHWH, you must do it in a way such that you will be accepted. It must be eaten on the same day it is offered, leave none of it till morning: I am YHWH. (Lev.22:29-30,)

Here again morning is not seen as ‘the same day’ rather the next day.

Lot’s Incest With His Daughters

And it came to be on the next day that the first-born said to the younger, “See, I lay with my father last night. Let us make him drink wine tonight as well, and you go in and lie with him, so that we keep the seed of our father.” (Gen.19:34).

The elder sister says she lay with her father ‘last night’ clearly, she is talking to her sister the next morning which is described as the ‘next day’. With the evening-to-evening philosophy the next morning is not the next day, it is the same day.

Another example is the story of Saul’s conflict with David,

Saul also sent messengers to David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal, David's wife told him, saying, If you will not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be slain, (1Sam.19:11).

Yom Kippur,

And YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying, “On the tenth day of this seventh month is Yom Kippur. It shall be a holy convocation for you. And you shall afflict your beings, and shall bring an offering made by fire to YHWH. And you do no work on that same day, (the tenth day) for it is Yom Kippur to make atonement for you before YHWH your Elohim. For any being who is not afflicted on that same day, (the tenth day) he shall be cut off from his people. And any being who does any work on that same day, that being I shall destroy from the midst of his people. You do no work – a law forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It is a Sabbath of rest to you, (the tenth day) and you shall afflict your beings. on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you observe your Sabbath”, (Lev.23:26-32).

When measuring a day from evening to evening this passage becomes unworkable. First we are told to celebrate Yom Kippur on the tenth day of the month but the last sentence says the celebration is to start on the ninth day in the evening. Thus if the ninth day starts in the evening Yom Kippur becomes a two day celebration: on the ninth and tenth of the month.

The Judaic Scholar and Talmudist: Dr, Jacob Zallel Lauterbach commenting on the law for Yom Kippur confirms the Rabbis had a difficulty with the provision, ‘You shall afflict your souls on the ninth day of the month at evening’, enquiring “Are we to fast on the ninth day”? Judaism has never been able to overcome this dilemma. This year, 2025 according to the Rabbis, Yom Kippur starts on the evening of Wednesday 1 October ending Thursday 2 October. But Wednesday is the 9th Tishri, so in accordance with the evening-to-evening rule Wednesday evening is the start of the 10th Tishri. Therefore, the Rabbis are contravening the Torah and not starting the feast on the evening of the 9th Tishri.

The Pesach Rules confirm a day beginning at dawn. It is necessary to collect several verses.

1. Now let us consider the rules for Pesach starting with Exod.12,

¹ And YHWH spoke to Moshe and to Aharon in the land of Egypt, saying, ² This month is the beginning of months for you, it is the first month of the year for you. ³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth day of this month each one of them is to take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next to his house take it according to the number of the beings, according to each man's need you make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Let the lamb be a perfect one, a year old male. Take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then all the assembly of the congregation of Israel shall slay it between the evenings. ⁷ And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. ⁸ And they shall eat the flesh on that night, roasted in fire – with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire, its head with its legs and its inward parts. ¹⁰ And do not leave of it until morning, and what remains of it until morning you are to burn with fire. (Exod.12:1-10).

¹⁸ 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, in the evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month in the evening. (Exod.12:18).

Let us summarize the above,

- I. Verse 6: the lamb is slayed on the 14th 'between the evenings': 3:00 -6:00pm
 - II. Verse 8: the lamb is to be roasted and the flesh is to be eaten that night
 - III. Verse 18: instructs for matzah which is to be eaten with the Pesach – is to be eaten on the evening of the 14th. That is impossible because the lamb is killed at the end of the day on the 14th. The evening after the killing of the lamb is the start of the 15th.
2. Let us go further and consider the rules for Pesach in the Land. Let us look at Deut.16,

¹ Guard the month of Aviv and perform the Pesach to YHWH your Elohim, for in the month of Aviv YHWH your Elohim brought you out of Egypt by night. ² And you shall slaughter the Pesach to YHWH your Elohim, from the flock and the herd, in the place where YHWH chooses to put His Name. (Deut.16:1-2).

Three festivals were to be performed 'where YHWH 'puts His Name' that is Zion. These festivals were Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. Continuing with Deut.16,

⁵ You are not allowed to slaughter the Pesach within any of your gates which YHWH your Elohim gives you, ⁶ but at the place where YHWH your Elohim chooses to make His Name dwell, there you slaughter the Pesach in the evening, at the going down of the sun, at the appointed time you came out of Egypt. ⁷ And you shall roast and eat it in the place which YHWH your Elohim chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. (Deut.16:5-7).

Summarizing

- I. The 'Pesach' had to be performed in Jerusalem. According to verse 7 the definition of the term 'Pesach' includes the killing, preparation, cooking and eating. All on the 14th.
- II. If the Pesach was to be killed between the evenings 3:00 – 6:00pm. If the last lamb is killed at 5:45pm, how it is possible to complete the Pesach on the 14th if the next day 15th starts at 6:00pm.
- III. To accommodate the evening to evening rule Judaism considers only the killing of the animal is to be on the 14th. But this against Deut.16:7.
- IV. The torah commands for the 'Pesach' that is the whole celebration to be performed on the 14th (Lev.23:5) which requires a dawn to dawn day.

The Exodus also confirms a day beginning at dawn.

We can abstract the pertinent verses from Exodus 12

⁵ *Let the lamb be a perfect one, a year old male. Take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then all the assembly of the congregation of Israel shall slay it between the evenings.*

²¹ *And Mosheh called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go out and take lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and slay the Pesach.*

²² *And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.*

³¹ *And he called for Moshe and Aaron by night, **Only these two were able to go out during the night** and said, arise go out from the midst of my people both you and the children of Israel; and go, serve YHWH as you have said.*

³⁵ *And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moshe; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and garments ³⁶ And YHWH gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and they plundered the Egyptians.*

Summarizing

- I. Verse 21 says to slay the Pesach and the following verse says to remain inside all that night. Yet both Deut. 16:1 and Num.33:3 says they left Egypt at night,

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Pesach to YHWH Elohim: for in the month of Abib YHWH Elohim brought you out of Egypt by night. (Deu 16:1).

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

The evening to evening philosophy not only creates a contradiction but necessitates restricting the term Pesach to the killing of the animal only on the 14th, which contradicts Deut.16:7.

- II. With the evening to evening philosophy in one night the Israelites had to,
 - a) Cook and eat the Pesach.
 - b) Collect all their herds and flocks and get them ready for travel
 - c) Plunder the Egyptians
 - d) Exit Egypt

It is estimated that three million people left Egypt and they left in an orderly fashion not as a rabble (Exod.12:51). For all of this to be completed in one night is impossible. Moreover, they were instructed to remain in doors all this night. – the night of the 14th.

New Testament Evidence

1. Mashiach's Removal from the Execution Stake and Burial

The Gospels record this event as follows.

And when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Shabbat, Yoseph of Ramathayim, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the reign of Elohim, came, boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Yahusha. But Pilate wondered whether He was already dead, so summoning the captain, he asked him if He was already dead. And when he learned this from the captain, he gave the body to Yoseph. (Mark 15:42-45).

And he (Yoseph), having bought fine linen, took Him down. (Mark 15:46).

And Nicodemus who at first came to Yahusha by night, also came, bringing a mixture of Myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Yahusha and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices. (John 19:39-40).

And at the place where He was impaled there was a garden, and in the garden a fresh tomb in which no one had yet been laid. There, then, because of the Preparation day of the Judeans, they laid Yahusha, because the tomb was near. (John 19:41-42).

Yoseph wanted to have Mashiach off the execution stake and in the tomb all before Shabbat. He had to go to the palace, seek an audience with the emperor, who had to then enquire for himself if Yahusha was dead. He would have sent an officer to check if Yahusha was indeed dead. Yoseph, having received permission to remove the body, went and purchased linen sheets, returned to the execution site and began the arduous task of removing Yahusha's body. His body would have been held with seven-inch iron nails hammered into solid wood. Having taken His body off the stake he and Nicodemus anointed and embalmed the body then transported and placed it in the tomb. Finally, they rolled a large stone across the entrance. All this would certainly have taken some time, yet all had to be completed before the Sabbath day and Mark 15:42-45 says the evening had 'already come' before the work had even started. Clearly the Sabbath did not start in the evening.

2. The Two Marys Visiting the Tomb

But late, in the Shabbat, as it was dawning, into day one of the week, Miryam (Mary) from Magdala and the other Miryam came to see the tomb (Matt.28:1).

The record of the two Mary's visiting the tomb in Matt.28:1 Here it explicitly states they arrived at the tomb late on the Sabbath day, just as it began to dawn on the first day of the week. Dawn is not late in the day if measuring from evening to evening it is only halfway through the 24-hour period. Let's consider what is said in the other gospels,

Mark:

*When Shabbat was over, Miryam from Magdala and Miryam the mother of James and Salome bought spices, to go and anoint Him. And very early on day one of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen (Mark 16:1-2).
And they said among themselves, "Who shall roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb for us?" (Mark 16:3).*

Luke:

But on day one of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing spices which they had prepared (Luke 24:1).

And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb (Luke 24:2)

John:

And on day one of the week Miryam from Magdala came early to the tomb, while it was still dark and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb (John 20:1).

Mark leaves us in no doubt that the women started out to the tomb after the Shabbat, and they arrived when the sun had risen. In other words, they arrived at the rising of the sun. Clearly it must have been early morning. Whilst Matthew at first appears ambiguous describing it as being late in Shabbat, the Greek '*opse*' can be rendered 'late,' 'end' of 'after' and we must use it in context agreeing with the other Greek word '*epiphosken*' which means 'to grow light.' Any further doubt is removed with what is said in Luke; that the women arrived at the tomb at early dawn on day one of the week. Accepting that passages in scripture must be interpreted in a harmonious and not contradictory manner, when we correlate each of the above separate records, we have the following story.

3. Paul's Record in Acts

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight, (Acts.20:7).

It is clear from this record that Paul spoke through the night and departed the next morning which is described as 'the morrow'. A further example is the story of Paul's transfer to governor Felix in Caesarea recorded in Acts.23: 23-35,

Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle, (Acts.23:31-32).

How Did the Ancients Measure a day?

The following are examples of scholarly comments concerning Gen.1:5,

1. Even medieval Rabbinical scholars admitted the truth of this verse. The following is from Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir (1080-1158),

It does not say it was nighttime, and it was daytime, ‘but it says ‘it was evening’ which means that the period of the daytime came to an end and the light disappeared. And when it says, ‘it was morning’, it means that the period of the night came to an end and the morning dawned. Then one whole day was completed.

2. Another Scholar of note: Jacob Zallel Lauterbach, (1873–1942) an American Judaica scholar and author, in the book ‘Rabbinic Essays’ comments,

There can be no doubt that in pre-exilic times, the Israelites reckoned the day from morning to morning. The day began with the dawn and closed with the end of the night following it. i.e. with the last moment before the dawn of the next morning. The very description of the extent of the day in the biblical account of creation as given in Gen.1:5 presupposes such a system of reckoning the day, for it says, ‘And it was evening and it was morning, one day.’

3. Rabbi Israel Drazin a Professor in Judaic studies with a master’s degree in Jewish literature wrote,

It is well known that Jews began their day in the evening at sunset, not at midnight and not at daybreak, but this was not always so. Many scholars are convinced that the biblical Israelite day started at daybreak. It seems possible that the Judeans who were exiled to Babylon accepted the Babylonian practice of beginning the day with the prior evening.

We know for certain that the day began in the Temple at daybreak, and it is assumed that the priests in the Temple retained the ancient practice for as long as the Temple existed. When the Bible states, “There was evening and there was morning, one day” in Gen.1:5 its meaning is literal: God completed what was stated earlier during the “daylight period” and this was followed by evening and when morning came the day ended – one day.

4. Rabbi Drazin says we know for certain that the temple began at daybreak. How do we know? From the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls the House of Zadok. King established the twenty-four priestly courses for the administration of the temple (1Chron.24). Each group was to attend the temple for one week twice a year. The scrolls tell us that the changeover between the priests occurred at dawn on the first day of the week. In other words, it was the dawn not the evening that ended the seventh days service.

Other Biblical Proof

Prolifically Scripture offers a ‘day/night sequence, never a night/day sequence, examples are,

- The record of the flood, Gen.7:4,12
- Moshes stay on Mt. Sinai, Exod.24:18,34:28
- Job's friends, Job.2:13
- Jonah in the belly of the fish, Jon.1:17
- Elijah's stay on Mt. Horeb 1Kgs.19:8
- Mashiach's temptation in the wilderness, Matt.4:2

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