

THE 24 HOUR SABBATH

Is the Sabbath meant to be held only during daylight hours? There are those who hold to the belief that the word 'day' as it relates to observing the Sabbath day represents only daylight hours. To be clear, such people believe this means that at Friday sunset, when it has become dark, Sabbath keepers are not obligated to stop from doing work because it is not day but night. This booklet is written in rebuttal to the theory of a daylight-only Sabbath observance.

Those who advocate for observing the Sabbath only during daylight hours may pose the question: if the Sabbath was meant to be observed for a 24-hour duration, then wouldn't we presumably be required to work six, 24-hour days? Such a remark is not rational. Does anyone really think this is what the Creator intended, that is, to be compelled to work day and night for six days a week? Obviously, God did not require this of his creation. In today's modern age, the average work day is 7 to 10 hours, which comprises of a 5 to 6 day week, maybe longer if you are a farmer, doctor, etc. Depending on where you live, we do not spend the entire hours of available daylight in continuous manual labour. In the last few decades, we find more and more people spending their hours of labour working at night, which we call "working the night shift", more than in any other period of history. The people on these job shifts sleep during the daylight period.

Throughout the scriptures, it mentions people doing tasks during the night. However, this does not imply that they were working a 24-hour, non-stop work day. For Christians who believe in a literal six-day creation, we know that darkness existed prior to the light of the sun radiating upon this earth while God was in the process of his creative works. That is, the Father created the earth and the waters before he had positioned the sun to give its radiant energy to the earth. ***“And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”*** Genesis 1:15 to 19; see also Psalms 8:3 and 136:7 to 9. The concept of observing only the daylight hours during the Sabbath is a very restricted view that gives no acknowledgment to the astronomical time period of a 24-hour day that was created by the Father for mankind to enable him to coordinate his daily life. In fact, the day, month, and year were all created by God for the benefit of mankind. ***“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.”*** Genesis 1:14.

An interesting fact that relates to the rotational motion of the earth's 24-hour cycle is that it activates our conscious and unconscious states. Our awake or conscious hours usually consist of 15 to 18 hours of the day. During these awake hours, our bodies are normally in continuous activity. With every movement of lifting, turning, walking, and bending, our muscles are continuously being used during those 15 to 18 hours of consciousness. The recurrence of body inactivity (sleep) which happens every twenty-four hours, constitutes a rhythm. Periods of sleep are absolutely necessary for the preservation of life, and during these periods of unconsciousness, the body recuperates from the effects of our conscious activity. Very important body changes occur during sleep: breathing is slowed, circulatory activity decreases, the heart is slowed, the muscles relax (but they do not relax all at the same time), and there is a change in the patterns of the electrical activity in the brain.

The point being made here is that our very lives are regulated and interlocked with the twenty-four hour day consisting of both darkness and light. Our physiological welfare is connected to the rotational cycle of the earth (*"And the evening and the morning were the second day."* Genesis 1:18). Whether a person wants to acknowledge it or not, the fact remains that our lives are inextricably-linked to the 24-hour day.

Most people would not misinterpret the meaning of 'six days of work' as referred to in Exodus 20:9 as instructing us as to how many hours we are to spend at work. During those active hours that we are awake, our manual labour may be performed in a six, eight, twelve, or even a fourteen hour work day. The argument of the believers of daylight-only observance suggests that their interpretation of the fourth commandment in Exodus 20 is that those who believe the Sabbath should be observed for 24 hours, should also be working 24-hour work days during their work week. However, the scriptural point being made in Exodus 20:9 (i.e. *"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work..."*) is simply that all work that we need to perform should be performed within the six day cycle so that we may rest upon the sabbath day, as instructed in the commandments. The text is not instructing us to work all available 24 hours in each of the six days, but simply that we complete our weekly duties within the six day cycle, which would include our leisure activities and daily rest as well.

The following is the latter part of the text from Genesis 1:5, which has been taken from the King James, the Peshitta and from the Jewish Masoretic bibles, respectively:

- *"...And the evening and the morning were the first day"*
- *"...And there was evening and there was morning, the first day"*
- *"...And the evening and the morning were the first day"*

The texts from the three different bibles all read with the same meaning, only with the slight difference of "the morning" and "there was morning". The theologian, Hippolytus, who lived during 160 to 235 A.D., wrote on this subject and this is what he said about Genesis 1:5b: *"And it was evening, and it was morning, one day". He did not say night and day, but ONE DAY, with reference to the name of the light. He did not say the first day, he would also have had to say that the second day was made. But it was right to speak not of the first day, but of one day, in order that by saying one, he might show it [ie. the earth] returns on its orbit..."* His commentary does not coincide with the three previous texts which use the wordings "were the first day" or "the first day". Hippolytus, in quoting Genesis 1:5, writes "one day". Why did he quote this text as such? Did he misquote Genesis 1:5? The text he quoted actually came from the oldest bible, the Septuagint, and this is how it reads: *"And it was evening, and it was morning, one day."* In respect to Hippolytus' remarks, one may assume he may be saying one day is in reference to the light only. However, if so, then he is contradicting his own remarks by further stating **"but it was right to speak not of the first day, but of one day, in order that by saying one, he might show that it returns on its orbit..."** We do not believe, however, that Hippolytus was implying this. For when the earth returns to its original position from one rotation, it has encompassed the evening (night) and morning (light) making the ONE sidereal day. In Hippolytus' day, the knowledge of the heavens would not be available to him to the degree that it is to us today. Nevertheless, Hippolytus did quote Genesis 1:5 correctly, and ONE day does equal an evening and morning.

Let us now read Leviticus 23:30 to 32: ***“And whatsoever soul it be that DOETH ANY WORK IN THAT SAME DAY, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 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.”*** Though these texts are referring to the Sabbath associated with the feast of the atonement, what is relevant is the reference to "that same day" is a 24-hour day. We know this because the verse explicitly informs us "from even unto even". The tenth day was to be held as a sabbath. Verse 32 says ***“It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest”***, therefore, the feast day sabbath was observed from "even unto even", that is, one revolution of the earth making one day.

We pray that people who observe the seventh-day Sabbath only during daylight hours will come to better understanding of the Scriptures and will consider the evidence laid out in this tract. We also pray that people who have held to such a belief did so out of a sincere belief in what they were doing was correct and did not just subscribe to such a belief out of a matter of convenience, that is, to allow them to work longer hours on Friday nights. Let us be sincere Christians and observe the Sabbath during the rotational 24-hour cycle of the earth, encompassing the evening (darkness) and the morning (light), making the complete sidereal day.