

When Does the Day Begin and End?

Walking in Torah | Constance Smith



For women who desire to order their homes and lives according to God’s Word, even the smallest questions matter. One of those questions is deceptively simple, and hotly debated is, “*When does a biblical day begin and end?*”

The answer shapes how we prepare for the Sabbath, how we rest, and how we teach our children to walk in the Father’s instructions.

This brief article sets aside rabbinic tradition, later church customs, and inherited assumptions and looks only to *Scripture itself*. By allowing *the Bible* to define what a “day” is—from creation forward—we gain clarity and understanding in how God established time and His rest.

When our understanding is rooted in the Scriptures, obedience becomes *easy and peaceful*. As keepers of our homes and teachers of the next generation, we can journey this path —trusting that God’s design is clear, good, and meant to bring rest to those who walk in it!

The Bible itself gives us a consistent, repeated definition—beginning in Creation and reaffirmed throughout the Torah and Prophets of what *exactly* a “day” is.

Scripture Defines a Day as Evening to Evening

We see this right in the very beginning, at Creation.

“God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. So there was evening, and there was morning, one day.”

— Genesis 1:5

“and God called the dome Sky. So there was evening, and there was morning, a second day.”

— Genesis 1:8

This pattern was repeated for every day of Creation — Genesis 1:13, 19, 23, 31

So what we see here is:

- Evening comes first
- Morning follows
- Together they form one *biblical* day

This establishes *God’s original definition of a day* before Israel, Torah, or Sabbath law existed.

The Sabbath Follows the Biblical Day Pattern

Because the Sabbath (Shabbat) is the *seventh day*, it follows the same God-defined structure.

“but the seventh day is a Shabbat for Adonai your God. On it, you are not to do any kind of work — not you, your son or your daughter, not your male or female slave, not your livestock, and not the foreigner staying with you inside the gates to your property.”

— Exodus 20:10

Scripture never redefines the day for the Sabbath. It assumes the Creation pattern.

Sabbath Begins at Evening (Sunset)

In Leviticus we see a very clear and emphatic instruction:

“It will be for you a Shabbat of complete rest, and you are to deny yourselves; you are to rest on your Shabbat from evening the ninth day of the month until the following evening.”

— Leviticus 23:32

Now this verse is specifically talking about keeping Sukkot – one of the Father’s appointed times. The Sabbath is only the most frequent of those special days that He has for us. The pattern is the same.

This verse leaves no ambiguity. Scripture defines the observance of a holy day as *evening to evening*.

We see this pattern continue into the New Testament:

“Now when evening came, after the sun had set [and the Sabbath Day had ended, in a steady stream] they were bringing to Him all who were sick and those who were under the power of demons,”

— Mark 1:32 (AMP)

The Gospel account reflects the already-established biblical understanding that the Sabbath *begins and ends at sunset*, not sunrise.

Preparation Day Confirms Evening Start

Preparation day is the day before the Sabbath. It is the day all of the “preps” are done in advance of the the day of rest.

“It was Preparation Day, and a Shabbat was about to begin.”

— Luke 23:54

The Sabbath begins *after the Preparation Day ends*, which happens at sunset.

This matches the pattern that we see in the Torah:

- Sixth day ends at evening
- Seventh day (Sabbath) begins immediately after

Sabbath Ends at the Following Evening

If the Sabbath begins at sunset, Scripture shows it also *ends at sunset the next day*, completing a full biblical day.

“...from evening... until the following evening...”
— Leviticus 23:32

This is reinforced where we see mention of the end of the Sabbath.

“After Shabbat, as the next day was dawning, Miryam of Magdala and the other Miryam went to see the grave.”
— Matthew 28:1

The Sabbath had already ended *before dawn*, meaning it ended the previous evening. It isn't the beginning of the new day, it is simply when it is getting light.

Looking Again at a Scripture-Only Timeline

According to the Bible alone:

- A biblical day begins *at evening*
- Evening → Morning = one day
- The Sabbath:
 - *Begins*: At sunset on the sixth day
 - *Ends*: At sunset on the seventh day

To Sum this Up

The Bible defines the Sabbath clearly and consistently:

Sabbath begins at evening (sunset)

Sabbath ends at the following evening (sunset)

This is not Jewish tradition.
It is not rabbinic law.
It is not later church practice.

It is the pattern that God established at Creation and reaffirmed in His Word.

A Gentle Reminder

Sister, the purpose of knowing *when* the Sabbath begins is not about rigid rules, it is about follow the ways of the Father.

God invites us into His time, His rest, and His patterns.

*“...if you call Shabbat a delight,
Adonai’s holy day, worth honoring...” — Isaiah 58:13*

When we honor the time He set apart, we are not earning favor—we are showing our Father how much we love Him, and want to spend time with Him.