



Genesis 1, Part 3
Light

The book of ——— is the greatest work of Hebrew literature that has come down to us . . . (George Foot Moore)

The book of ——— is the Matterhorn of
the Old Testament. Among many other
lofty peaks it towers in solitary grandeur.
(Charles Foster Kent)

Another said of it: “. . . There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal merit. . . . one of the grandest things ever written by pen. . . . A noble Book . . . our first, oldest statement of . . . [man] and God’s ways with him here in this earth.” (Ibid.)

The long years spent amid desert solitudes were not lost. Not only was Moses gaining a preparation for the great work before him, but during this time, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis and also the book of Job, which would be read with the deepest interest by the people of God until the close of time. (EGW, *ST* February 19, 1880, Art. A, par. 14)

The title *'El-Shaddai*, “the Almighty” is used 31 times in the book of Job and 6 times in the book of Genesis, but occurs in this particular form nowhere else in the Bible. (*SDA BC*, Introduction to the book of Job)

A Description of God—Job 9:5–12

- * Removes mountains
- * Shakes earth
- * Commands the sun
- * Sealeth up the stars
- * Spread out the heavens
- * Treads upon the waves of the sea
- * Made Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, chambers of the south
- * Doeth great things past finding out
- * Doeth wonders without number
- * He passes by but is not perceived.
- * He takes away, and who can hinder him?
- * Who can say to him, What doest thou?

- * Zechariah 14:4—And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; And half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

- * Revelation 6:14—And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

- * . . . *but* the Lord *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the Lord *was* not in the earthquake: (1 Kings 19:11)
- * He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: He toucheth the hills, and they smoke. (Psalm 104:32)
- * For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.
(Matthew 24:7)

* And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. (Acts 16:26)

- * The day *is* thine, the night also *is* thine: Thou hast prepared the light and the sun. (Psalm 74:16)
- * They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. (Revelation 7:16)
- * And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. (Revelation 16:8)

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

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The physical heaven includes all that is above the earth.

It yields rain (Gen 8:2), snow (Isa 55:10), frost (Job 38:29), fire (II Kgs 1:10), dew (Deut 33:13), and thunder (I Sam 2:10). It holds the sun, moon, planets, and stars (Gen 1:14; 15:5; Isa 14:12; Amos 5:26). Zechariah 2:6 speaks of the four winds of the heavens, and Ps 135:7 says that God brings forth the wind from his storehouses. (*TWOT* condensed)

The heavens are frequently described in figurative language as having windows (Gen 7:11; II Kgs 7:2; Mal 3:10, gates (Gen 28:7), doors (Ps 78:23), pillars (Job 26:11), and foundations (II Sam 22:8). They are stretched out and spread out like a tent or a curtain (Isa 40:22). (Ibid.)

Such figurative language is often forceful. If the heavens were already conceived of as a metallic vault, as is commonly suggested from Genesis 1:8, 14, etc., then passages such as Leviticus 26:19 and Deuteronomy 28:23 would be meaningless, since the skies would already be metal. These passages state that a disobedient Israel would find the heavens to be like iron (Lev 26:19) or like bronze (Deut 28:23), not yielding the much-needed rain. The word *rāqîa'* comes from the verb meaning “to hammer out” and “stretch (a piece of metal) out” as an overlay. It is the idea of spreading out that carries over from the verb to the noun, not the idea of a metallic substance. “Expanse” is an acceptable translation. (*TWOT*, paraphrased)

Heavens also are the place of the abode of God
and tell of the glory of God. (Deuteronomy 26:15;
Psalm 19:1)

God will create a new heaven and a new earth.
(Isaiah 65:17; 66:22)

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- * And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. (Matthew 14:26-27)

- * And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? (Mark 4:39-41)

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* O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen. (Romans 11:33–36)

* Psalm 145:3

* Isaiah 40:28

* Isaiah 55:8–9

* I Corinthians 2:11

Let There Be Light

- * God spoke light into existence.
- * The light was good.
- * God divided the light from the darkness and called the light day and the darkness night.
- * The evening and the morning were the first day.
- * But how could there be day and night before the sun was created?

- * Day—*yôm*—the most important concept of time in the OT
- * Among other things, it can denote:
- * The period of light in contrast to darkness
- * The period of 24 hours

And God said, Let there be **light**: and there was light. And God saw the **light**, that *it was* good: and God divided the **light** from the darkness. And God called the **light** Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (Genesis 1:3–5)

Light—'ôr

- * 'ôr—can be a verb—to become light—or a noun—light
- * The basic meaning of the noun 'or is “daylight.” The “day” began at the rising of the sun: “And he shall be as the **light** of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain” (2 Samuel 23:4).
- * The “light” given by the heavenly bodies is also known as 'or: “Moreover the **light** of the moon shall be as the **light** of the sun, and the **light** of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the **light** of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound” (Isaiah 30:26).
- * Who coverest *thyself* with **light** as *with* a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: (Psalm 104:2)

- * The entrance of thy words giveth light; It giveth understanding unto the simple. (Psalm 119:130)
- * For the commandment *is* a lamp; and the law *is* light; And reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life: (Proverbs 6:23)
- * This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light (*phos*), and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)
- * For God, who commanded the light (*phos*) to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light (*phōtismōn*) of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

- * Turn us again, O God of hosts, And cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. (Psalm 80:7; Numbers 6:25; Daniel 9:17)
- * The Lord *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

How God gave existence to light is above our comprehension. But he did it, and it has never ceased to exist. And now he separates the light from the darkness.

(J. N. Andrews, *Sermons on the Sabbath and the Law*, 6.2)

But getting back to the question of how could there be day and night before the sun was created, E. J. Waggoner wrote:

But the question is presented, “How could there be days before there was any sun?” Such a question implies ignorance, or at least forgetfulness, of what forms the day. The day is made by the revolution of the earth on its axis. Each complete revolution makes one day. As a matter of fact, the sun has nothing whatever to do in forming the day. If it should suddenly become a body of darkness, instead of a body of light, it would be days just the same, and they would be just the same length that they now are. (E. J. Waggoner, *The Signs of the Times*, December 29, 1887, page 795.2)

So there were days before the sun was appointed to rule the day. This appointment was not made until after the earth had completed three revolutions, or until three days of time had passed. The very statement that God set the two great lights in the firmament, “to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness,” shows that there were days independent of the sun. These great lights were to rule in the day and then the night, which had been arranged before they were given their office. (Ibid., December 29, 1887, page 795.2)

“Not being clear upon the division of time, I appeal to you for help. It seems to me from some scriptures that the day should begin in the morning. It seems to be more consistent in beginning the day in the morning at the creation. At the resurrection of Christ it says, “As it began to *dawn* toward the first day of the week,” etc. And again it speaks of darkness lasting from the sixth to the ninth hour. Now if the day began in the evening it would be dark all the time, and then it would make the crucifixion of Christ in the night.” (E. J. Waggoner, *The Signs of the Times*, March 24, 1887, page 192.23)

If our correspondent will read carefully the first chapter of Genesis he will see that it would not be consistent to begin the day in the morning. Time as distinguished from eternity, is reckoned from the first act of creation. The second verse of the Bible tells us that darkness was upon the face of the deep, that is, upon the chaotic mass which had been spoken into existence. The next act of creation is recorded in the third verse: "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." This constituted the first day's work. The evening, the darkness, and the morning, the light, were the first day.

(Ibid., March 24, 1887, page 192.24)

Here it is seen that in the first day the dark preceded the light part, and consequently the same order must necessarily follow in all succeeding days. The record of creation is alone sufficient to show that the day begins with the evening. Where our correspondent falls into difficulty is in forgetting that while each day is twenty-four hours long, and is composed of a period of darkness and a period of light, the dark part of the day is called night, and the light part is also called day; so we use the word "day" in two senses: (1) as applying to the whole period of twenty-four hours, and (2) as applying to the part of the day when the sun shines. (Ibid., March 24, 1887, page 192.24)

The Hebrews always began their day at the going down of the sun, but they had a separate reckoning for the hours of the night and for those of the day. The night was divided into four watches of about three hours each; the day was divided into twelve hours. To be sure, at some seasons of the year, there are less than twelve hours of daylight, and at other seasons more, but throughout the year there is an average of just twelve hours of darkness and twelve hours of light in each day. Therefore they reckoned the period of daylight uniformly from six o'clock. (Ibid., March 24, 1887, page 192.25)

Then the first hour of the day would be seven o'clock, the third hour nine o'clock, the sixth hour twelve, the ninth hour three o'clock, and the twelfth hour six o'clock. So at the crucifixion of Christ darkness was from noon until three o'clock. This mode of reckoning is everywhere used in the Bible and yet it is well understood that the day properly began at evening, as we read in Leviticus 23:32, "From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath." (Ibid., March 24, 1887, page 192.25)

Having settled the fact that the day begins and ends at evening, the only thing necessary to understanding of the main question is to find when it is evening. This is easily settled by the following passages: “But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrificed the Passover at even, *at the going down of the sun.*” Deuteronomy 16:6. “And the king of Ai hanged on a tree *until eventide*; and *as soon as the sun was down*, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree.” Joshua 8:29. Also, Joshua 10:26, 27: “Joshua smote the them, and slew them, them on five trees; and they were hanging upon the trees *until the evening*. And it came to pass at the *time of the going down of the sun*, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees.”

(Ibid., August 11, 1887, page 488.3)

These texts plainly show that the evening and the setting of the sun are identical. In the New Testament we have additional testimony. In the first chapter of Mark we have an account of the events of one Sabbath in the life of Christ. First he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and taught. Verse 21. Here he found a man with an unclean spirit, whom he healed. Verses 23-27. Then he left the synagogue, and went to the house of Simon, whose mother-in-law he healed. Verses 29-31.

(Ibid., August 11, 1887, page 488)

The rest of the people, however, dared not ask him to heal their sick during the hours of the Sabbath, but waited till its close. We read in verse 32, “And at even, *when the sun did set*, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and then there were possessed with devils.” Thus we see that the people unanimously regarded sunset as the close of the Sabbath, and if sunset was the close of the Sabbath of course sunset twenty-four hours earlier must have been the beginning. This was the divinely appointed order. (Ibid., August 11, 1887, page 488)

The question then arises, How does it happen that people nowadays begin and end the day at midnight? The answer is this: When men became idolaters, and did not like to retain God in their knowledge (Romans 1:28), they soon lost all knowledge of the institutions and commandments of God, so that their forms of worship and of daily life differed entirely from those of God's people. Each nation had gods of its own, and customs peculiar to itself. The Persians and the Syrians worshiped the sun, and began the day at sunrise. That the Jews, during their captivity, did not lose their reckoning, and conformed to that of the Babylonians, is proved by the passage in Mark already quoted. The Romans, for some reason, selected midnight as the time for the beginning and ending of their day. (Ibid., August 11, 1887, page 488.5)

The barbarous tribes that conquered Rome accepted her customs, and transmitted them to their descendants. Thus the Roman method of beginning the day has become the settled custom in Europe and America. Since it is an established custom, it is necessary, in order to be understood, to conform to the usage in speaking with others, also in business, since the custom is fixed by law. But in the observance of the Sabbath, God's order is unchangeable. Those who accept the Sunday festival, which is a man-made institution emanating from Rome, may be allowed to keep it in such a manner as man decrees; but those who keep God's rest day-the memorial of his creative power-will take the day just as God gave it, and not offer a substitute by attaching a portion of two days together. (Ibid., August 11, 1887, page 488.5)