

Biblical Time¹

All time-of-day references given in the Bible's original languages are written as **hours of the day**, not **hours of the clock**. What do you do if you want to understand those timeframe references given in the Bible? You need a clock that tells time measured in hours of the day. Clocks that tell time that way are called **Bible Clocks**.

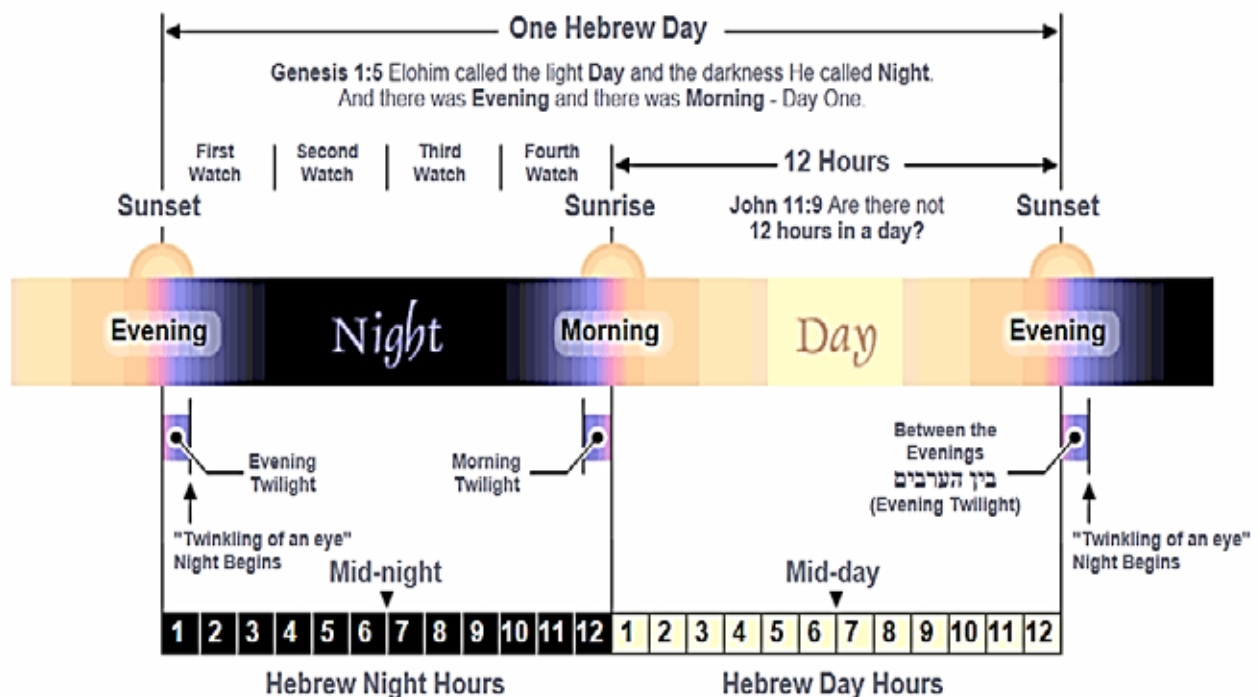
Another fact to keep in mind is that nowhere does the Bible use zero in any form of counting. If someone has no sheep, they have no sheep, not zero sheep. The digit zero (0) did not exist in the Bible's original languages, nor was it used in western languages until after the 600's A.D., well after the time when the Bible was written.

BIBLICAL CALENDAR DAY

The **Natural Day** was from sunrise to sunset.

The **Natural Night** was from sunset to sunrise.

However, the **Civil Day** was from sunset one evening to sunset of the next.



¹ Excerpts for this document were gleaned from the Internet: Phil Stone 2008-11-20, revised 2014-03-09; Chabad.org, and Thompson Chain Topics (Watches).

DOCTRINE

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BIBLE CLOCK

Anyone who knows how to tell time using an analog 12-hour clock can read the location of the hour and minute hands on the clock—this is referred to as the **hour of the clock**. By changing the position of the numbers on the face, from the modern **hour of the clock** to the Biblical **hour of the day**, a Bible Clock can be used to tell the hour of the day in Biblical time.

FIXED LENGTH OF HOURS

Just as the Bible Clock uses different scales for minutes and seconds, so too does it label hours of a calendar day differently. There are 12 hours in the day and 12 hours

in the night. Hour 1 of the day starts immediately at Sunrise. Hour 7 of the day carries with it a **mid-day Sabbath** connotation.

The 12 hours of the day and night of a calendar day are fixed in length, no matter what the sun might be doing relative to sunrise and sunset times. However, according to Biblical law, dawn marks the beginning of the daytime, and all mitzvot (religious duties) associated with daytime hours can then be performed. For various reasons, however, the Sages instituted that the observance of many of these mitzvot should be delayed until sunrise, or the moment when "*one can recognize a familiar acquaintance.*"

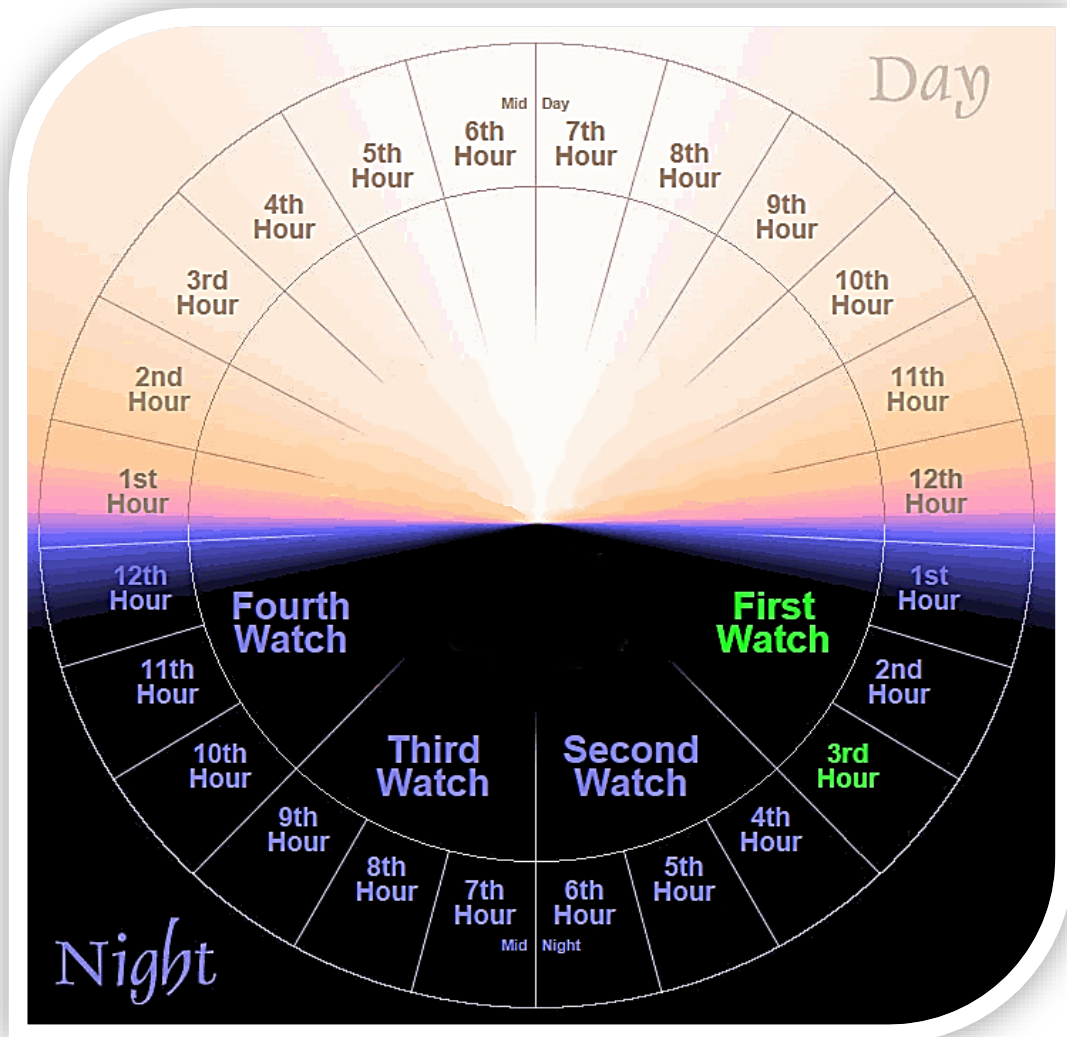
HOURLY SABBATH

In today's world, many places of employment take a 10-minute break every hour. This is very similar to the way many places take a Lunch Hour at noon. Studies have showed that taking a 10-minute break every hour helps people refresh and be more productive in the other 50 minutes of the hour. In part, this study is why so many high schools use a 50-minute class period, with a 10-minute break between classes.

Since every Biblical hour is broken down into 7 major divisions of time, there is fundamentally a Sabbath Break at the end of each Bible Hour. That $\frac{1}{7}^{\text{th}}$ of an hour is about 8.5 minutes long, and is referred to as the **hourly Sabbath**.

GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

This graphic shows a complete breakdown of Bible hours and watches as defined by the time of day.



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