

~HOUR (645)

[Greek, *ho'ra*]

- The 24-Hour Day
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- The Greek word *ho'ra*, hour is used in the Christian Greek Scriptures to denote a short period of time, a fixed, definite time, or a division of the day. No term for hour is found in the Hebrew Scriptures. The ancient Israelites may have divided the daytime into four parts.
- Then they rose up at their place and they read aloud from the book of the Law of Yehowah their God a fourth part of the day, and a fourth part they were making confession and bowing down to Yehowah their God. (Nehemiah 9:3)
- Instead of designating certain hours, the Hebrew Scriptures use the expressions morning, noon, midday, and evening as time markers for events.
- Eventually he had the camels kneel down outside the city at a well of water about evening time, about the time that the women who draw water were accustomed to go out. (Genesis 24:11)
- When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he at once said to the man who was over his house. Take the men to the house and slaughter animals and make preparation, because the men are to eat with me at noon. (Genesis 43:16)
- And you will indeed become one who gropes about at midday, just as a blind man gropes about in the gloom, and you will not make your ways successful, and you must become only one who is always defrauded and robbed, with no one to save you. (Deuteronomy 28:29)
- Accordingly they took the young bull that he gave them. Then they dressed it, and they kept calling upon the name of Baal from morning till noon, saying; O Baal, answer us! But there was no voice, and there was no one answering. And they kept limping around the altar that they had made. (1 Kings 18:26)

- Also, perhaps more precise designations were as soon as the sun shines forth.
- And it must occur in the morning that as soon as the sun shines forth you should get up early, and you must make a dash against the city, and when he and the people that are with him are going out against you, you must also do to him just as your hand finds it possible. (Judges 9:33)
- The breezy part of the day.
- Later they heard the voice of Yehowah God walking in the garden about the breezy part of the day, and the man and his wife went into hiding from the face of Yehowah God in between the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:8)
- The heat of the day.
- Afterward Yehowah appeared to him among the big trees of Mamre, while he was sitting at the entrance of the tent about the heat of the day. (Genesis 18:1)
- And it came about on the next day that Saul proceeded to put the people into three bands, and they made their way into the middle of the camp during the morning watch and went striking down the Ammonites till the day grew hot. When there proved to be some that were left over, then they were sent scattering and there were not left over among them two together. (1 Samuel 11:11)
- And the time of the setting of the sun.
- And it came about that at the time of the setting of the sun Joshua commanded, and they went taking them down off the stakes and throwing them into the cave where they had hid themselves. Then they placed big stones at the mouth of the cave, until this very day. (Joshua 10:27)
- When the sun has set, he must also be clean, and afterward he may eat some of the holy things, because it is his bread. (Leviticus 22:7)

- The Passover sacrifice was to be slaughtered, between the two evenings, which seems to mean a time after sunset and before deep twilight.
- And it must continue under safeguard by you until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole congregation of the assembly of Israel must slaughter it between the two evenings. ([Exodus 12:6](#))
- This view is supported by some scholars, as well as by the Karaite Jews and Samaritans, although the Pharisees and Rabbinites considered it to be the time between the beginning of the sun's descent and the real sunset.
- God commanded that burnt offerings be made on the altar, in the morning and between the two evenings. Along with each of these, a grain offering was made.
- And this is what you will offer upon the altar, young rams each a year old, two a day constantly. ([Exodus 29:38](#))
- And you will offer the one young ram in the morning, and you will offer the other young ram between the two evenings. ([Exodus 29:39](#))
- And a tenth part of an ephah measure of fine flour moistened with the fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a drink offering of the fourth of a hin of wine, will go for the first young ram. ([Exodus 29:40](#))
- And you will offer the second young ram between the two evenings. With a grain offering like that of the morning and with a drink offering like its, you will render it as a restful odor, an offering made by fire to Yehowah. ([Exodus 29:41](#))
- It is a constant burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before Yehowah, where I shall present myself to you people to speak to you there. ([Exodus 29:42](#))
- So it came about that expressions such as the going up of the grain offering, where the context indicates whether **morning** or **evening**.

- And it came about that, as soon as noon was past and they continued behaving as prophets until the going up of the grain offering, there was no voice, and there was no one answering, and there was no paying of attention. (**1 Kings 18:29**)
- And it came about at the time that the grain offering goes up that Elijah the prophet began to approach and say; O Yehowah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that you are God in Israel and I am your servant and it is by your word that I have done all these things. (**1 Kings 18:36**)
- And the time of the **evening gift offering**.
- And while I was yet speaking in the prayer, why, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the start, having been made weary with tiredness, was arriving by me **at the time of the evening gift offering**. (**Daniel 9:21**)
- Referred to a fairly well-defined time.
- The night was divided into three periods called watches. Mention is made of the night watches
- When I have remembered you upon my lounge, during the night watches I meditate on you. (**Psalms 63:6**)
- The **middle night watch**.
- In time Gideon came with the hundred men who were with him to the edge of the camp at the start of the middle night watch. They had just got through posting the sentries. And they proceeded to blow the horns, and there was a dashing to pieces of the large water jars that were in their hands. (**Judges 7:19**)
- And the **morning watch**.
- And it came about during the morning watch that Yehowah began to look out upon the camp of the Egyptians from within the pillar of fire and cloud, and he went throwing the camp of the Egyptians into confusion. (**Exodus 14:24**)
- And it came about on the next day that Saul proceeded to put the people into three bands, and they made their way into the middle of the camp during the morning watch and went striking down

the Ammonites till the day grew hot. When there proved to be some that were left over, then they were sent scattering and there were not left over among them two together. (**1 Samuel 11:11**)

.. The 24-Hour Day

- Egypt has been credited with the division of the day into 24 **hours**, 12 for daylight, 12 for night. These hours would not always be of the same length from day to day, because of the change of seasons, making the daylight hours longer and the night hours shorter in summertime, except at the equator.
- Our modern-day division of the day into 24 hours of 60 minutes hours, results from a combination of Egyptian reckoning and Babylonian mathematics, a sexagesimal system, founded on the number 60.
- The practice of counting the day from midnight to midnight, thereby eliminating the seasonal variation in the length of the hours, was a later development, perhaps Roman.

.. In The First Century

- In the **First Century C.E**, the Jews used the count of 12 **hours** to the day, starting with sunrise. There are **twelve hours** of daylight, are there not? Said Jesus.
- Jesus answered; There are **twelve hours** of daylight, are there not? If anyone walks in daylight he does not bump against anything, because he sees the light of this world. (**John 11:9**)
- Of course, this made the **hours** vary in length from one day to the next, according to the seasons, the only times that they were of the same length as our **hours** was at the time of the equinoxes. Evidently this slight variation, which would not be so great in Palestine, did not create any major inconvenience.
- The start of the day would correspond to about 6:00 A.M, our time. In the illustration of the workers in the vineyard, Jesus made mention of the 3rd hour, the 6th, 9th, 11th, and, one hour later, evening, which would be the 12th.

- These times would correspond to our 8:00 to 9:00 A.M, 11:00 a.m. to noon, 2:00 to 3:00 P.M, 4:00 to 5:00 P.M, and 5:00 P.M, respectively.
- Going out also about the third hour, he saw others standing unemployed in the marketplace; So off they went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth **hour** and did likewise. (**Matthew 20:33**)
- So off they went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth **hour** and did likewise. (**Matthew 20:5**)
- Finally, about the eleventh **hour** he went out and found others standing, and he said to them, Why have you been standing here all day unemployed? (**Matthew 20:6**)
- When it became evening, the master of the vineyard said to his man in charge, Call the workers and pay them their wages, proceeding from the last to the first. (**Matthew 20:8**)
- And said; These last put in one **hours** work, still you made them equal to us who bore the burden of the day and the burning heat! (**Matthew 20:12**)
- Now Peter and John were going up into the temple for the **hour** of prayer, the ninth **hour**. (**Acts of Apostles 3:1**)
- The next day as they were pursuing their journey and were approaching the city, Peter went up to the housetop about the sixth **hour** to pray. (**Acts of Apostles 10:9**)
- **Midnight** and **cockcrow** are time designations also used in the **Christian Greek Scriptures**.
- Therefore keep on the watch, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether late in the day or at midnight or at cockcrow or early in the morning. (**Mark 13:35**)
- Further, he said to them; Who of you will have a friend and will go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, loan me three loaves. (**Luke 11:5**)
- On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to have a meal, Paul began discoursing to them, as he was going to

depart the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.
([Acts of Apostles 20:7](#))

- Now as the fourteenth night fell and we were being tossed to and fro on the sea of Adria, at midnight the sailors began to suspect they were drawing near to some land. ([Acts of Apostles 27:27](#))
- Under Roman domination the Jews seem to have adopted the Roman division of the night into four watches instead of the former three.
- And if he arrives in the second watch, even if in the third, and finds them thus, happy are they! ([Luke 12:38](#))
- But in the fourth watch period of the night he came to them, walking over the sea. ([Matthew 14:25](#))
- And when he saw them being hard put to it in their rowing, for the wind was against them, about the fourth watch of the night he came toward them, walking on the sea, but he was inclined to pass them by. ([Mark 6:48](#))

See Also COCKCROWING

.. A Seeming Discrepancy

- Some have pointed to what appears to be a discrepancy between the statement at;
- It was now the **third hour**, and they impaled him. ([Mark 15:25](#))
- Which says Jesus was impaled at the **third hour**, and that at
- Now it was preparation of the Passover, it was about the **sixth hour**. And he said to the Jews; See! your king! ([John 19:14](#))
- Which indicates that by about the **sixth hour** Jesus final trial before Pilate was just ending. John had access to Mark's account, and he certainly could have repeated the time stated by Mark. Therefore John must have had a reason for stating the **hour** differently from Mark.
- Why the seeming discrepancy? A variety of suggestions have been offered. None of these satisfy all objections. We simply do not

have enough information to explain with any certainty the reason for this difference between the accounts.

- Perhaps Marks or John's reference to the **hour** was parenthetical, not in chronological order. Whatever the case, one thing is certain. Both writers were inspired by Holy Spirit.

- The synoptic Gospels clearly indicate that by the **sixth hour**, or 12 noon, Jesus had already been hanging on the stake long enough for the soldiers to cast lots over his garments and for the chief priests, the scribes, the soldiers, and other passersby to speak abusively of him. They also indicate that about 3:00 P.M. Jesus expired.

- Then two robbers were impaled with him, one on his right and one on his left. (**Matthew 27:38**)

- So the passersby began speaking abusively of him, wagging their heads (**Matthew 27:39**)

- And saying; O you would-be thrower-down of the temple and builder of it in three days, save yourself! If you are a son of God, come down off the torture stake! (**Matthew 27:40**)

- In like manner also the chief priests with the scribes and older men began making fun of him and saying; (**Matthew 27:41**)

- Others he saved, himself he cannot save! He is King of Israel? Let him now come down off the torture stake, and we will believe on him. (**Matthew 27:42**)

- He has put his trust in God. Let Him now rescue him if He wants him, for he said; I am God's Son. (**Matthew 27:43**)

- In the same way even the robbers that were impaled together with him began reproaching him. (**Matthew 27:44**)

- From the sixth **hour** on a darkness fell over all the land, until the ninth hour. (**Matthew 27:45**)

- And they impaled him and distributed his outer garments by casting the lot over them as to who takes what. (**Mark 15:24**)

- It was now the third **hour**, and they impaled him. (**Mark 15:25**)

- And the inscription of the charge against him was written above, The King of the Jews. (**Mark 15:26**)
- Moreover, they impaled two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. (**Mark 15:27**)
- And those going by would speak abusively to him, wagging their heads and saying; Bah! You would-be thrower-down of the temple and builder of it in three days time. (**Mark 15:29**)
- Save yourself by coming down off the torture stake. (**Mark 15:30**)
- In like manner also the chief priests were making fun among themselves with the scribes and saying; Others he saved, himself he cannot save! (**Mark 15:31**)
- Let the Christ the King of Israel now come down off the torture stake, that we may see and believe. Even those impaled together with him were reproaching him. (**Mark 15:32**)
- When it became the **sixth hour** a darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. (**Mark 15:33**)
- But two other men, evildoers, were also being led to be executed with him. (**Luke 23:32**)
- And when they got to the place called Skull, there they impaled him and the evildoers, one on his right and one on his left. (**Luke 23:33**)
- But Jesus was saying; Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. Furthermore, to distribute his garments, they cast lots. (**Luke 23:34**)
- And the people stood looking on. But the rulers were sneering, saying; Others he saved, let him save himself, if this one is the Christ of God, the Chosen One. (**Luke 23:35**)
- Even the soldiers made fun of him, coming close and offering him sour wine (**Luke 23:36**)
- And saying; If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. (**Luke 23:37**)

- There was also an inscription over him. This is the king of the Jews. (Luke 23:38)
- But one of the hung evildoers began to say abusively to him; You are the Christ, are you not? Save yourself and us. (Luke 23:39)
- In reply the other rebuked him and said; Do you not fear God at all, now that you are in the same judgment? (Luke 23:40)
- And we, indeed, justly so, for we are receiving in full what we deserve for things we did, but this man did nothing out of the way. (Luke 23:41)
- And he went on to say; Jesus, remember me when you get into your kingdom. (Luke 23:42)
- And he said to him; Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise. (Luke 23:43)
- Well, by now it was about the sixth hour, and yet a darkness fell over all the earth until the ninth hour. (Luke 23:44)
- The truly important thing to remember is that Jesus died for our sins on Nisan 14,33 C.E.
- About the ninth hour Jesus called out with a loud voice, saying; Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)
- At hearing this, some of those standing there began to say; This man is calling Elijah. (Matthew 27:47)
- And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge and soaked it with sour wine and put it on a reed and went giving him a drink. (Matthew 27:48)
- But the rest of them said; Let him be! Let us see whether Elijah comes to save him. Another man took a spear and pierced his side, and blood and water came out. (Matthew 27:49)
- Again Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit. (Matthew 27:50)

- And at the ninth **hour** Jesus called out with a loud voice; Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? Which means, when translated. **My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?** (**Mark 15:34**)
- And some of those standing near, on hearing it, began to say; See! He is calling Elijah. (**Mark 15:35**)
- But a certain one ran, soaked a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and began giving him a drink, saying; Let him be! Let us see whether Elijah comes to take him down. (**Mark 15:36**)
- But Jesus let out a loud cry and expired. (**Mark 15:37**)
- Well, by now it was about the **sixth hour**, and yet a darkness fell over all the earth until the **ninth hour**. (**Luke 23:44**)
- Because the sunlight failed, then the curtain of the sanctuary was rent down the middle. (**Luke 23:45**)
- And Jesus called with a loud voice and said; Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit. When he had said this, he expired. (**Luke 23:46**)

•• Other Uses

- The **Greek** word *ho'ra* is often used in the **Christian Greek Scriptures** to denote **immediately** or within a very short period. A woman who touched the fringe of Jesus outer garment became well, from that **hour**.
- Jesus turned around and, noticing her, said; Take courage, daughter, your faith has made you well. And **from that hour** the woman became well. (**Matthew 9:22**)
- **Hour** could refer to a special or momentous point of time not exactly specified or to the starting point of that time. For example, Jesus said; Concerning that day and **hour** nobody knows.
- Concerning that day and **hour** nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father. (**Matthew 24:36**)
- The **hour** is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a sacred service to God.

- Men will expel you from the synagogue. In fact, the **hour** is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a sacred service to God. (**John 16:2**)
- I have spoken these things to you in comparisons. The **hour** is coming when I will speak to you no more in comparisons, but I will report to you with plainness concerning the Father. (**John 16:25**)
- Again, **hour** might designate a general time of day, as when the disciples said to Jesus about the multitude of people that had followed him to a lonely place. The place is lonely and the **hour** is already far advanced. Send the crowds away.
- But when evening fell his disciples came to him and said; The place is lonely and the **hour** is already far advanced. Send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves things to eat. (**Matthew 14:15**)
- By now the **hour** had grown late, and his disciples came up to him and began to say; The place is isolated, and the **hour** is already late. (**Mark 6:35**)

•• **Figurative Or Symbolic Use**

- Symbolically or figuratively used, **hour** means a relatively short period of time. Jesus said to the crowd who came out against him,
- While I was with you in the temple day after day you did not stretch out your hands against me. But this is your **hour** and the authority of darkness. (**Luke 22:53**)
- The ten horns on the scarlet-colored wild beast are said to represent ten kings who are to receive authority as kings **one hour** with the wild beast.
- And the ten horns that you saw mean ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they do receive authority as kings **one hour** with the wild beast. (**Revelation 17:12**)
- Of Babylon the Great, it is said, In **one hour** your judgment has arrived!
- While they stand at a distance because of their fear of her

torment and say; Too bad, too bad, you great city, Babylon you strong city, because in **one hour** your judgment has arrived! (**Revelation 18:10**)

- **In harmony with Jesus words at;**
- **While men were sleeping, his enemy came and oversowed weeds in among the wheat, and left. (**Matthew 13:25**)**
- **The field is the world, as for the fine seed, these are the sons of the kingdom, but the weeds are the sons of the wicked one. (**Matthew 13:38**)**
- **Concerning the wheat and the weeds, Paul's warnings at;**
- **I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness. (**Acts of Apostles 20:29**)**
- **Let no one seduce you in any manner, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness gets revealed, the son of destruction. (**2 Thessalonians 2:3**)**
- **True, the mystery of this lawlessness is already at work, but only till he who is right now acting as a restraint gets to be out of the way. (**2 Thessalonians 2:7**)**
- **Regarding the coming apostasy, and Peter's statement at;**
- **However, there also came to be false prophets among the people, as there will also be false teachers among you. These very ones will quietly bring in destructive sects and will disown even the owner that bought them, bringing speedy destruction upon themselves. (**2 Peter 2:1**)**
- **Furthermore, many will follow their acts of loose conduct, and on account of these the way of the truth will be spoken of abusively. (**2 Peter 2:2**)**
- **Also, with covetousness they will exploit you with counterfeit words. But as for them, the judgment from of old is not moving slowly, and the destruction of them is not slumbering. (**2 Peter 2:3**)**

- John, the last surviving apostle, could well say; Young children, it is the last **hour**, and, just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now there have come to be many antichrists, from which fact we gain the knowledge that it is the **last hour**. It was a very short time, indeed, **the last hour**, the final part of the apostolic period, after which the apostasy would spring forth in full bloom.
- Young children, it is the **last hour**, and, just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now there have come to be many antichrists, from which fact we gain the knowledge that it is the **last hour**. (1 John 2:18)
- And when he opened the seventh seal, a silence occurred in heaven for about a **half hour**. (Revelation 8:1)
- And I saw the seven angels that stand before God, and seven trumpets were given them. (Revelation 8:2)
- And another angel arrived and stood at the altar, having a golden incense vessel, and a large quantity of incense was given him to offer it with the prayers of all the holy ones upon the golden altar that was before the throne. (Revelation 8:3)
- And the smoke of the incense ascended from the hand of the angel with the prayers of the holy ones before God. (Revelation 8:4)
- The apostle John saw, during a silence in heaven for about a **half hour**, an angel with incense that he offered with the prayers of all the holy ones. This reminds one of the practice in the temple in Jerusalem at the hour of offering incense.
- And all the multitude of the people was praying outside at the **hour** of offering incense. (Luke 1:10)
- Alfred Edersheim, in *The Temple* [1874, p. 138], presents the traditional Jewish account of this **hour**: Slowly the incensing priest and his assistants ascended the steps to the Holy Place. Next, one of the assistants reverently spread the coals on the golden altar, the other arranged the incense, and then the chief officiating priest was left alone within the Holy Place, to await the signal of the president before burning the incense.

- As the president gave the word of command, which marked that the time of incense had come, the whole multitude of the people without withdrew from the inner court, and fell down before the Lord, spreading their hands in silent prayer.

- It is this most solemn period, when throughout the vast Temple buildings deep silence rested on the worshipping multitude, while within the sanctuary itself the priest laid the incense on the golden altar, and the cloud of odors rose up before the Lord.