

Which Day is the Sabbath in Australia?

...Or for that matter, *any* nation East of Jerusalem, such as Kenya, Iraq, India, China, Japan and Australia. There has been a suggestion that the present International Date Line is just a man made concept in conflict with the Bible, and that in God's coming Kingdom, Jerusalem will be the new International Date Line – the Sabbath then starting at Jerusalem and traveling **West** around the world with the sun. At first glance this sounds biblical.

As a result, some proponents of this concept have already begun to keep the Sabbath one day later here in Australia - on Sunday. However, it is important that we should consider what effect this concept would have in practicality.

The main problem is that if Jerusalem became the new Date Line, which would extend to the North and the South, the half of Jerusalem to the East of that line would be one day behind the half to the West, and one could walk back and forth in and out of the Sabbath day, for example. That is the reason why the present International Date Line is over the Pacific Ocean, almost empty of land and also opposite Greenwich in the UK, on the other side of the world– to avoid such problems.

Next, we should look at the reason *why* such a concept should arise, and we find it in Isaiah 2:3, last part, *'for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.'* Everything regarding the world's governance will then emanate from Jerusalem, for Jesus Christ will rule the world from there, His capital city, as King of Kings, Revelation 19:16, *'On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.'*

But there are other scriptures we should take into account, Genesis 1:5, *'And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.'* God's days start and end at sunset, unlike secular days which start and end at midnight. God's day starts with sunset followed by dusk or twilight, and then darkness before the daylight part of the day arrives. Also of course we need to follow the fourth Commandment, Exodus 20:8-11, and make sure it is the holy *seventh* day.

We must consider *each of these verses* in our conclusion, and there are many examples in the Bible of men who had to put them into practice. Take Daniel the prophet for example. He was taken into captivity by the Babylonians and carried away to Babylon, well to the East of Jerusalem. As he travelled East from Jerusalem he would have noted each day as it passed and so knew exactly which day was the Sabbath when he arrived in Babylon. He used Jerusalem as the determination of the true Sabbath day and took into account the time which passed in travel to the East, to find the true Sabbath at his destination.

And that is exactly what we must do today in order to follow Isaiah 2:3, as we will see!

1. First, let us accept the fact that the Sabbath is determined by the Sabbath at Jerusalem, as Isaiah 2:3 shows.
2. Jerusalem, in God's eyes is the centre of the world, Ezekiel 5:5, *"Thus says the Lord GOD: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries all around her."*
3. Jerusalem will then thus replace Greenwich as the starting point for time - 'Jerusalem Mean Time' instead of 'Greenwich Mean Time'. As now, time will be then determined in degrees East and West from Jerusalem, both, 180 degrees, placing the new Date Line exactly opposite Jerusalem

on the other side of the world, as occurs today with *Greenwich Mean Time*; still in the Pacific Ocean but a little further East, because Jerusalem is further East than Greenwich.

Thus Time, and **the Sabbath also goes forth from Jerusalem, fulfilling Isaiah 2:3**, though in a slightly more complex way, determined by the distance East or West from Jerusalem and the beginning of God's day at sunset.

4. *'On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it East to the Dead Sea and half of it West to the Mediterranean Sea, in summer and in winter.'* Zechariah 14:8 NIV. There was no reason for God to divide the river into two, except to reveal that principle. Just as God's Holy Spirit and His Way and His Laws will emanate from Jerusalem both to the East and to the West, so does the beginning of His Sabbath Day, though it remains linked and centered on Jerusalem.

5. When we turn this principle into practicality today, we find for example, that, based upon Greenwich Mean Time, the Sabbath starts 6 hours earlier in Perth, Australia, than it does in Jerusalem. The result is that Perth actually now shares **18** hours of the *same Sabbath day* with Jerusalem, as time flows out of Jerusalem in all directions in God's eyes, for He does not dwell on the Earth, as we do.

6. However, if God's Sabbath were to move only to the West, with the sun, instead of flowing out from Jerusalem in all directions, Isaiah 2:5, (Brown Driver Briggs compares it to water) and Zechariah 14:8, and Ezekiel 47, we are still left with the problem we mentioned at the beginning, about stepping from one day to the next over the Dateline, and then we in Perth, Australia, would only share **6** hours of *a common Sabbath* with Jerusalem, instead of **18**, most of it falling on a Sunday. Surely that is significant!

So, we are left with a choice and we must decide which is the most biblical, sensible and practical choice. Those who choose a Dateline at Jerusalem should be able to explain how that difficult problem of a Dateline over land would be overcome. I would love to hear their solution, for the International Date Line has to occur somewhere!

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