

## **The Lord's Day 6-25-17AM**

There are two mindsets in the approach to Scriptures and to our devotion to God. The first is a mind that looks to the Scriptures to approve of their choices. Such fall into the category of 2 Peter 3:16. The second mindset is that one that seeks God's approval by seeking to know the mind of God, as described in 2 Timothy 2:15.

In regards to communion, there are certain facts that the Scriptures reveal cannot be changed. We are told in the Gospel accounts of the emblems used in communion (the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine) and why these things are not changeable. We also can understand why it must be taken with the body of Christ (hence the very word communion). But the discerning mind may ask "when"? Jesus said we would take it regularly; consider the term "as often as" in 1 Corinthians 11:25-26. As well, we see that Christians met regularly to take it in Acts 2:42. So what is the regular observation that is approved by God? Could it be annually (such as the anniversary of Passover)? Could it be monthly? If so, is it the beginning or end of the month? A search of Scriptures reveals no evidence of either an annual or monthly observation. That leaves us with considering a weekly observation such as the Sabbath (last day of the week) Thursday (the day of its institution), or Sunday (the first day of the week).

Of course, most Bible students are aware of the Scriptural example found in Acts 20:7: *Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.* In this passage (the only one that refers to a day of the week which Christians take communion) we are given a very clear example of what was approved by God. In fact, when we consider that Paul the Apostle was in haste to get to Jerusalem (Acts 20:16 "he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem") and that he waited seven days to meet with the Saints in Troas on the day that they took the Lord's Supper, we see that this day could not be moved even by an Apostle with a need to move the day up (meaning – Paul needed to hurry to Jerusalem, but he had to wait the entire week in Troas until Sunday, and had no authority to compel the brethren to meet on another day of the week). Therefore, we conclude that this example sets an absolute standard for the day that we are to meet to take communion: The First Day of the Week.

Why this day? The concept of a seven day week is interesting because it is found in so many cultures, and goes back far into antiquity. While the movement of Earth and Sun give us natural concepts like days and years and the Moon's phases give us the month, there is no such natural reason for a seven-day week. The earliest record of 7 day weeks are ancient Babylon. It also existed in China, India, Ancient Greece. We must conclude that all ancients saw the significance of this from the creation recorded in Genesis 1. There we see that on the first day, light was created. Consider John 1:1-5. There we are told that, in parallel to Genesis 1, Jesus is the light of the world. Does the last day of the week hold such importance? Genesis 1 also reveals that the last day of the week, the Sabbath, was the day God rested from His labors. In the law of Moses (only) men were to rest on that day (it was not a day of worship). In fact, Jesus states that the Sabbath was for men, not for God (Mark 2:27). We are told that observation of this day was done away with by Christ (Colossians 2:16). Instead, the true Sabbath is now not the end of the week, but the end of time (Hebrews 4).

The importance of the first day can be seen in those events which occurred on it. First, we have already seen that light was created (and Jesus is the light of the world). Second, we know that it was the day that Jesus arose from the grave (John 20:1, Mark 16:1, Matthew 28:1, Luke 24:1). Third, it was the day Pentecost in which the doors of the kingdom were opened (Acts 2). Since this day has such significance,

can we conclude that it is the same day that is called in Revelation 1:10 “The Lord’s Day” (Not the same term as “the Day of the Lord”)? *“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet”* (Revelation 1:10).

Outside of Scripture, the earliest mention of the “Lord’s Day” is found in the *Didache*, a text that seems to describe worship practices in a local congregation and was written sometime in the early second century. There it describes Christians observing communion on “the Lord’s Day” (*But every Lord’s day gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure*). It seems clear from John’s suggestion that the Lord’s day is a particular day, from early non-biblical testimony, and from inference as to the meaning of the first day of the week, that it is appropriate to identify Sunday as “The Lord’s Day”.

Are we permitted to do things other than worship on the Lord’s Day? We know that the Sabbath was a day of rest, not a day of worship. There is no statement or example that suggests that we cannot labor or entertain on a day of worship, so long as we do not forsake the assembly (Hebrews 10:24-26). We owe Jesus what belongs to Him on the Lord’s Day; we are permitted to keep what remains.