

EVERY Sunday?



JANUARY

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By JAMES E. GIBBONS

● *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them. . ."*—Acts 20:7

HERE we have an example and pattern authority for the weekly observance of the Lord's supper. If it were left entirely up to the account of Jesus instituting the Lord's supper (Matthew 26:26-29), we would be at a loss as to knowing the frequency we should partake of this supper. However, Jesus promised the apostles that not only would the Holy Spirit bring all things to their remembrance (John 14:16), he would guide them into all unrevealed religious truth (John 16:13). Now in Acts 20:7 the church at Troas, operating under the very sight of an inspired apostle, came together on the first day of the week "to break bread." It is incidental that the apostle Paul was there and preached; the purpose of their coming together was to have the Lord's supper. Every week has a first day, and it is implied that this was their customary practice. Under the Old Testament the Jews were commanded to, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." They didn't ask, "Which sabbath (seventh) day?" Every week had a seventh day and they understood this to mean they should keep every sabbath unto God. The same is true as we read Acts 20:7 of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week.

We are not left to this Scripture only for evidence of the practice of weekly communion; it is evident in I Corinthians. The church at Corinth was a problem church rent asunder by partyism, immorality, and the abuse of divine worship. It seems they had reduced the Lord's supper to a drunken feast. Notice: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry and another drunken" (I Cor. 11:20,21). The Amplified New Testament's applica-

tion of verse 20 is a little plainer, "So when you gather for your meetings, it is not the supper instituted by the Lord that you eat." In other words, they were supposedly observing the Lord's supper, but had reduced it to a common meal and a drunken feast. What we wish to emphasize is that they were doing this "WHEN" they came together; in other words, every time they were regularly assembled. They were keeping the Lord's supper, although in a greatly degenerated fashion, every time that the church met. When was the regular meeting time? If we can establish this, we can know the frequency of the Lord's supper observance. I Corinthians 16:2 gives the answer: "*upon the first day of the week.*"

It is also of interest to note, and not without significance, that the Lord's supper was observed on the day the church was established, the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). On what day of the week was this Jewish holy day celebrated? Check Leviticus 23:15,16. Seven sabbaths followed the Passover, and the next day after the seventh sabbath was Pentecost (50th). Thus, it was celebrated on the first day of the week. The church had its beginning on this day, and the church first observed the Lord's supper on this day. Having reference to their worship on this day, the record reads, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Furthermore, it is a fact from outside history that the early church observed the Lord's supper every Lord's day, and competent scholarship (even denominational scholarship) is agreed to this. The following, as examples, will illustrate the latter. These are comments made by denominational scholars (in their well-known commentaries) on Acts 20:7, explaining why the church at Troas came together on the first day of the week.

ALBERT BARNES (*Presbyterian*): "Evidently to celebrate the Lord's supper. . . It is probable that the apostles and early Christians celebrated the Lord's supper every Lord's day."

ADAM CLARKE (*Methodist*): "To break the Eucharist, as the Syriac has it: intimating by this that they were accustomed to receive the Holy Sacrament on each Lord's day."

KIND READER, In the light of this array of information, we are made to ask why modern "churches" are not having the Lord's supper every Lord's day. Yes, *why not?* Obviously this is a neglected Scriptural teaching which has been replaced by tradition. But, as we are seeking unreservedly to return to the divine pattern to be simply the Lord's "New Testament" church, we will have this supper each Lord's day as the very center of our worship. Faithful Christians will be there to remember the supreme sacrifice made for their salvation. . . to worship the Lord in the way he would have them to worship. *Will you?* □

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