

1 CORINTHIANS 16:2 EXAMINED: -

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NOTE: - All Bible texts are taken from the King James Version; and the compiler has supplied all emphasis throughout this article.



The following passage from Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians is traditionally put forward as "proof" by those who observe the first day of the week (which we call Sunday) that the apostolic Christians were meeting together for public worship upon the first day of the week. And they further assert that Paul in verse two is enforcing public worship upon the Corinthians upon the first day of the week, as he had already done to the churches of Galatia.

1 Corinthians 16:1 & 2: - "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

WHAT ARE THE TRUE FACTS CONCERNING 1 CORINTHIANS 16:2?

The whole claim for apostolic authority for first day observance from this verse is supposedly founded upon the first part of the verse: -

"Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store".

First day observers read this phrase carelessly through the mindset of their preconceived traditions regarding first day observance. But a careful reading of even our common English translation above indicates that Paul is **NOT** enforcing a public collection for the saints on the first day of the week at all.

Rather, he is exhorting the Corinthians as he had already exhorted the churches of Galatia that each individual believer is to put aside or store up **by himself at home** what the Lord had prospered him or her for the collection for the saints.

The following portion of VS. 2 as it appears in the King James Version, is what we need to examine carefully: -

"Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store" -

A literal English translation would read as follows: -

"Every first *day* of the week let every one of you place by himself".

The whole of the key words in the Greek text above which the true meaning of this clause rests upon are all in the **SINGULAR**, and thus Paul is exhorting the **INDIVIDUAL** Corinthian believer to place by himself or herself at home, every first day of the week what God had prospered them. This was to be a private laying aside at home.

- The adjective that Paul uses as a substantive and that the KJV and I have translated above as “every one” – “hekastos” [See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 1538] is in the **SINGULAR**.
- The prepositional phrase that the KJV has translated as “by him”, and that I have translated as “by himself” above is “par heauto”; this phrase is also clearly in the **SINGULAR**.
- The imperative form of the verb “tithemi” [See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 5087] that the KJV has translated as “lay”, and that I have translated as “place” above is also in the **SINGULAR**.

This truth concerning 1 Corinthians 16:2 is reinforced further by the following Biblical facts concerning the Corinthian church: -

- It was founded by a seventh-day Sabbath-keeper, the apostle Paul. He testified that he was obedient to the Hebrew Law and Customs.

Acts 25:7 & 8: - “And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. **While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.**”

Acts 28:17: - “And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, **Men [and] brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.**”

NOTE: - Paul couldn’t truthfully make the above two statements if he had been violating the seventh-day Saturday Sabbath, during his many years of gospel ministry. Paul could not have been obedient to the Law and Customs that God entrusted to the Hebrew people, if he was not indeed a seventh day Sabbath keeper.

And we do know that it was his personal custom or manner to worship in the synagogue upon the Sabbath day.

Acts 17:1 & 2: - “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, **where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures.**”

- The foundation members of the Corinthian Church were seventh day Sabbath keepers when Paul preached Christ to them.

Acts 18:1 - 8: - “**After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;** And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. **And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.** And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews [that] Jesus [was] Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook [his] raiment, and said unto them, Your blood [be] upon your own heads; I [am] clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. **And he departed thence, and entered into a certain [man's] house, named Justus, [one] that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.**”

- The Thessalonians that believed in Christ were examples to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - 8: - “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: **So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.** For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.”

As is the case with the Corinthian church, a seventh day Sabbath keeper, the apostle Paul founded the Thessalonian church; and its foundation members were already seventh day Sabbath keepers when Paul preached Christ to them.

Acts 17:1 - 4: - “**Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,** opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. **And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.**”

NOTE: - As the Corinthians were part of the province of Achaia, the Thessalonian believers were examples to them. And as the Thessalonians were Sabbath keepers, the Corinthians would also have been Sabbath-keepers.

- Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus.

1 Corinthians 16:8: - “But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.”

Paul and his fellow Christian disciples at Ephesus worshipped on the Sabbath day **with** the Hebrews until religious opposition started. The apostle Paul with the Christian disciples at Ephesus (see Acts 19:1) worshipped in the Hebrew synagogue for three months. These meetings would have occurred every Sabbath day (see Acts 15:21). Paul only removed the Christian disciples from the synagogue because of the opposition of the Hebrews who didn't accept Jesus as the Messiah of Bible prophecy. Obviously, the Sabbath here referred to is the seventh-day Sabbath, for the Hebrews accepted no other.

Acts 19:8 & 9: - “**And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.** But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, **he departed from them, and separated the disciples,** disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.”

NOTE: - Therefore, while Paul was worshipping on the Sabbath day at Ephesus with the Christian disciples, he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians. He would therefore **NOT** be exhorting the Corinthians to public worship upon the first day of the week, while he was keeping the seventh day Sabbath at Ephesus. To do so, would make Paul a hypocrite! It would be a case of “Don't do as I do, but do as I say.”

And that was **NOT** the message Paul had written to the Corinthians. Far from it! He exhorted them to be followers of himself even as he followed Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1: - “Be ye followers of me, even as I also [am] of Christ.”

And Christ's personal custom was to worship in the synagogue on the Sabbath day.

Luke 4:16: - “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, **as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.**”

NOTE: - Therefore, as Paul was a Sabbath keeper himself, and we certainly know that he was keeping the Sabbath with the disciples at Ephesus when he wrote 1st Corinthians, the Corinthians would have been following Paul's example and would have been Sabbath keepers as well.

☞ 1 Corinthians 16:2 gives no support for public worship upon the first day of the week at all. Such an interpretation of this verse is another uninspired tradition of man. And Jesus said that all such worship of him was in vain.

Matthew 15:7 - 9: - "Ye] hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men."