

A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF THE COMMON
PASSAGES USED TO “PROVE” THAT THE
OBSERVANCE OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK
IS SUPPOSEDLY BIBLICAL.

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NOTE: - All Bible passages are taken from the King James Version; and the compilers have supplied all emphasis.

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1. ACTS 20:7 - 11: -

“And upon the first [day] of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing [him] said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.”

This is traditionally claimed as being proof that the early Christians met regularly for public worship upon the first day of the week to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, by the breaking of bread.

But upon a closer examination, we shall see that this is not the case. Rather, this was a Saturday night meeting for the special occasion of Paul’s imminent departure at daybreak. Let us establish this truth by the following brief Scriptural points.

a.) The Bible measures a day from sunset to sunset, not from midnight to midnight as we do. At creation God himself laid down this measurement concerning a day.

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.**”

b.) The writer of the book of Acts – the physician Luke, uses this measurement of time in his gospel.

Luke 24:29: - “But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: **for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.** And he went in to tarry with them.”

In reality, this meeting would have been held on our Saturday evening – which was the first part of the Biblical first day of the week. Therefore as this was an evening meeting, there were “many lights” on in the room where the meeting was held – see VS. 8.

c.) When did the disciples “break bread”? After midnight, when Paul had raised the young man Eutychus to life again – Compare VS. 7 with VS. 9 & 10.

d.) Then at daybreak on Sunday morning, the apostle Paul left by foot on his long journey to Assos – VS. 11. This is **not** an example of Paul resting upon the first day of the week at all, when he undertook this long and physically tiring journey on foot.

e.) Many Christians emphasize the fact that this was a celebration of the Lord’s Supper upon the first day of the week, because of the fact that the disciples “broke bread” - VS. 7 & 11. But they overlook the fact that the early disciples broke bread **every** day, and not only upon the first day of the week.

Acts 2:46: - “**And they, continuing daily** with one accord in the temple, **and breaking bread from house to house,** did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.”

f.) Paul taught that the Lord’s Supper was to celebrate Christ’s **death** and **not** his resurrection from the dead.

1 Corinthians 11:26: - “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, **ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.**”

- ❖ The simple truth would appear to be, that this was a special Saturday evening meeting, held in honour of Paul’s imminent departure at daybreak. Paul chose this occasion to give a final exhortation of counsel and encouragement to the believers gathered there. And then at daybreak on Sunday morning, he departed on his long journey by foot.

2. 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.”

This passage is traditionally understood as “proving” that the apostle Paul commanded the early Christian churches to meet together upon the first day of the week, when they would have a public collection or offering for the saints.

But a closer examination of verse 2 reveals the fact that this was **not** a public collection for the saints, but rather an **individual or personal collection at home** for the saints.

The Greek expression that is translated in the KJV as “by him” in VS. 2, is “par heauto” - the second word is the **Masculine, Singular, Dative case** of the Reflexive Pronoun “heauto” – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 1438. This means in the singular - “himself”. In other words, let each **individual** believer lay up or put aside **by himself** offerings for the saints, upon the first day of each week. It is not grammatically possible to make this **singular** expression into a command by Paul to hold a public collection for the saints every Sunday.

3. REVELATION 1:10: -

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.”

Those who observe the first day of the week traditionally claim that here in this verse is indisputable proof from the Scriptures, that Sunday is called by the apostle John “the Lord’s day”, because it belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But a moment of reflection reveals the fact that those Christians who assert this point have used circular reasoning to arrive at this assertion. They already believe that Sunday is the Lord’s Day before they come to this passage, so when they read this verse in the book of Revelation, they claim this it as supporting “proof” that the apostle John recognized the first day of the week as the Lord’s Day.

The Greek word which is translated as “Lord’s” in the KJV is the word “kuriakos” – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek No. 2960. It is defined in Walter Bauer’s – A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 458, as “belonging to the Lord, the Lord’s.”

This verse alone does **not** inform us as to which day belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. There are three common beliefs concerning this expression that is used in this verse: -

- i.) By far the most popular belief is that it is referring to the first day of the week – Sunday. It should be stated simply, that nowhere in the Bible does the Lord Jesus Christ ever claim the first day of the week as belonging to him, or being his special day. The Scriptures are silent concerning this belief.

Generally, the writings of the early Church ‘fathers’ who wrote in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD are used as support for this belief. It should be stated that these writers are **not** part of the inspired writings of the Scriptures. And secondly, these writers wrote in the time after the death of the apostles of Christ, when false teachers and false doctrines were making their way into the Christian Church. Therefore, these writings themselves need to be evaluated by the Scriptures, to see if they are in harmony with the Bible, or whether they contain some of the false teachings, which the apostle Paul stated, would come into the church after his death.

Acts 20:29 & 30: - “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

- ii.) Some people believe it is referring to “the day of the Lord” – the 2nd Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Day of Judgment. We state simply that while John indeed could have and did have a vision of

“the day of the Lord” in the book of Revelation, he could not have received this vision upon “the day of the Lord”, because that day was future to his lifetime, and it is still future to us today in 2002.

- iii.) It is the Seventh day Sabbath of the fourth Commandment. We shall examine this belief from the Scriptures, because of the three beliefs this one is the only one that has plain and abundant Biblical passages in its support.

The Lord himself claims it as his Sabbath day.

Exodus 20:10: - “But **the seventh day [is] the sabbath of the LORD thy God**: [in it] thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that [is] within thy gates.”

The Lord calls it “my sabbaths”.

Exodus 31:12 & 13: - “ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, **Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep**: for it [is] a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that [ye] may know that I [am] the LORD that doth sanctify you.”

Leviticus 19:1 - 3: - “And **the LORD** spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God [am] holy. Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and **keep my sabbaths**: I [am] the LORD your God.”

The Lord calls it “my holy day”.

Isaiah 58:13: - “If thou turn away thy foot from **the sabbath**, [from] doing thy pleasure **on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD**, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking [thine own] words.”

Jesus claimed the title of being “the Lord of the Sabbath day”.

Matthew 12:8: - “**For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.**”

See also: - Mark 2:28 & Luke 6:5.

- ❖ **Allowing the Bible to interpret itself, which is the true Protestant way, the 7th day Sabbath of the fourth Commandment is the Lord’s Day of Revelation 1:10.**

Having examined these popularly used texts, we find no inspired evidence that they are enforcing the first day of the week as the “Christian Sabbath”. Moreover, we find no support from these passages that the apostolic Christians were worshipping upon the first day of the week in the lifetime of the apostles of Christ. These popularly held beliefs have to be found outside of the writings of the sacred cannon of Scripture.