

WEEKLY COMMUNION

Text: 1 Cor. 11:23-25

INTRO: One thing that distinguishes churches of Christ from most other religious groups of our time is the practice of weekly communion. We believe it is God's will for all faithful Christians to observe the Lord's supper each first day of the week.

In this lesson we will look at the testimony of several well known theologians, the evidence of history, & most importantly, the teachings of the Scriptures on this subject.

I. THE TESTIMONY OF THE THEOLOGIANS.

- A. Methodist scholar Adam Clarke: "They were accustomed to receive the Holy Sacrament on each Lord's day."
- B. Church of Scotland scholar Albert Barnes: "It is probable that the apostles & early Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper every Lord's day."
- C. Anglican bishop A.C. Hervey in Pulpit Commentary: [Acts 20:7] 'is also an important example of weekly communion as the practice of the first Christians.'
- D. E.H. Trenchard of the Brethren Church referred to the same passage, saying, "We understand v. 7 to indicate that the Breaking of Bread on the 1st day of the week was customary during the apostolic period."
- E. F.F. Bruce, another Brethren scholar, in the book, Answers to Questions, agrees that "a weekly celebration is probably indicated."
- F. Reformer John Calvin believed that this practice should continue to prevail. Presbyterian preacher & writer Andrew W. Blackwood admits, "Ideally, many think with Calvin, we should follow the apostolic church in observing Communion every Lord's day."
- G. Finally, Clarence Edward Macartney, author of over 30 books of sermons one-time moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., wrote in one of his sermons on the subject: "centuries have passed since then, & yet never a week has passed in all those years that his followers have not remembered him in the Lord's Supper."
- H. Many other voices could be added to these. lost religious scholars are well aware that it was the practice of the

N.T. church to observe the Lord's supper every Sunday.

II. THE EVIDENCE FROM HISTORY.

- A. Oscar Hardman in A History of Christian Worship:
“By the end of the 1st century, however, the 1st day of the week had come to be generally observed as the Lord's Day, & to be invariably marked by the celebration of the Memorial of the Passion...”
- B. The Didache (about 120 A.D.): “On Sunday, the own day, come together, break bread, and give thanks...”
- C. Justin Martyr (about 140): “On the day which is called Sunday, all who dwell either in town or country come together to one place. The memoirs of the apostles & the writings of the prophets are read for a certain time... And then the distribution of the bread & wine, over which the thanksgivings have been offered, is made to all present, & all partake of it.”
- D. Again, other historical sources could be called to record but suffice it to say that the evidence is overwhelming that the practice of the early church included weekly communion.

III. BUT WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS THE TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

- A. The Lord commanded His disciples to observe the L.S. in His memory, LK 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24-25.
- B. His wording indicates that the L.S. was to be observed often, 1 Cor 11:25-26.
- C. Unless the L.S. is an exception, all memorials God ever commanded had a set time for observance. Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25.
- D. The church in Jerusalem observed the L.S. on a regular basis, Acts 2:42.
- E. The apostles taught the same doctrine, the same worship, the same practices in all 1.T. churches.

READ I COR. 4:17; 7:17; 14:33

F. The N.T. churches, under the direction of the inspired apostles & prophets observed the L.S. every 1st day of the week.

1. Troas, Acts 20:7.
2. The practice of the church in Corinth.
 - a. abusing the L.S., severely rebuked, 1 Cor 11:20. NOTE A.S.V.: “It is not possible to eat the L.S.”
 - b. Were admonished to examine themselves, their attitude toward L.S.--then eat when you come together, vs. 17, 18, 20, 23.
 - c. When did they come together?
1 Cor. 16:1-2. “Every 1st day” RSV, NASB, Williams, NEB, NIV.
3. It is obvious from 1 Cor 16:1-3 that the churches in Galatia were expected to do the same as was expected of the church in Corinth I Cor. 16:1-2.

CONCLUSION: Thus, we conclude that the church in Corinth had been taught to do what the church in Troas had been taught to do: come together on the 1st day of every week to break bread. This was the universal practice of the congregations we read about in the N.T. under the direct ion of inspired men. History records that this was the practice for several centuries. Scholarly theologians of several denominations admit that this is so. Can you think of any good reason Christians should not do the sane today, and until the Lord comes again?

READ I CORINTHIANS 11:26

La Porte, TX, January 22, 1984
Exton, PA, March 30, 1986