

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The First Day Of The Week

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In the Old Testament, the phrase “*the first day*” occurs often. In the beginning, it was literally the very first day (*Gen. 1:5*). Then under the Law of Moses, “*the first day of the month*” was an important day (*Deuteronomy 1:3*). But it is not until the New Testament that “*the first day of the week*” takes on significance.

Paul, trying to make sure the Corinthians had their proposed contribution for the poor saints in Jerusalem ready, commanded the saints to lay by in store on “*the first day of the week*” (*I Corinthians 16:2*). Laying by in store was not something the Christian was to do at home, as some believe, because the purpose of “laying by” was “*that no collections be made when I come*”. If the Christian was laying by at home, a further collection would be necessary from each individual. The Christians were meeting together on the first day of the week and while they were together they were to lay by in store.

Why were they together? Luke records a practice of the early disciples, answering the

question: “*And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight*” (*Acts 20:7*).

“*Breaking bread*” refers in this context to the Lord’s supper which Jesus instituted. “*The Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me’*” (*I Corinthians 11:23-24*). After giving thanks for the cup which held the fruit of the vine, saints partook remembering the sacrificial death of Jesus. “*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till he come*” (*I Corinthians 11:26*).

Christians were gathering on the first day of the week to remember his death which occurred on a Friday, or the day before the seventh day. Why?

The answer lies in that Jesus arose from the dead on “*the first day of the week*.” Each of the authors of the Gospels speak of this

special day (*Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20: 1; 19*). Combined, we learn that four women came with prepared spices early on the first day before dawn. When they arrived at the tomb, they learn that Jesus had already arisen. He would appear to Mary Magdalene early on the first day of the week, and before the day ended, he would appear to the apostles in the evening.

Nowhere do you read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John declaring the day as “Easter”. In our English Bibles we do find “Easter” which is a mistranslation in the King James Version for the Greek word “*Pascha*” denoting the Jewish feast, the *Passover*. (*Acts 12:4*).

Christians today, as they did in the first century, gather on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord’s supper and give as God has prospered them. Jesus was raised on the first day of the week. It is the first day of the week, not Easter that we gather to remember the sacrificial death of Jesus and worship a risen Savior. Why have you gathered today?