

# Why Did New Testament Churches Worship on Sunday?

## Bible Answers About Worship

The church of the New Testament assembled on the first day of the week (Sunday) to worship as Luke records, "And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul {began} talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight" (Acts 20:7 NAS). The Lord's church met for worship on Sundays for some very special reasons.

First, churches met on Sunday because some very important events happened on that day:

- Jesus rose on the first day of the week. The Bible says, "Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week...." (Mark 16:9).
- The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles that day. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all together in one place.... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). This day of "Pentecost" literally means "fifty days." It was a special feast of the Jewish Law that was to be observed fifty days after their Passover Feast. It is to be "on the morrow, after the Sabbath" (Lev. 23:11, 15). So, the day on which the apostles received the Holy Spirit and began their work in preaching the gospel was on a Sunday.
- The church of the Lord Jesus Christ began that day. When the apostles began to preach salvation in the name of Christ, men repented and were baptized into Christ (Acts 3:37-42). They were added together in fellowship and began to evangelize the entire world. From that moment on in the New Testament, one can see a change, for the church of the Lord was now in existence.
- The churches met on Sunday (the first day of the week) to remember, in a special meal of worship, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the fact that He would come again (Acts 20:7).
- These churches continued to meet throughout the years on Sundays, and were given additional instructions about other things. They were told to "lay by in store" on this first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1-2). They were also to use this time for "exhorting one another to love and good works" (Heb. 10:24-25).

Second, the churches of Christ worshipped on Sundays because of a very important principle. Jesus said, when His disciples went into all the world, they were to teach the disciples "to observe all things, whatsoever I commanded you...." (Matt. 28:18-20). When one sees the early churches observing the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, it follows that the apostles taught them to do so. If the apostles thus taught them to eat the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, it was

done in order to follow the commandments of Jesus. Therefore, the example of the churches in the New Testament is very important, as they were being taught and led personally by the apostles.

Third, the evidence of historians is overwhelming that the churches met on Sundays for worship in honor of Jesus Christ.

- Ignatius of Antioch said, "Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection day, the queen and chief of all days (of the week)." Ignatius lived between 37 A.D. and 108 A.D. and is known as a reputable historian.
- Justin Martyr lived between 100 and 165 A.D. He said, "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in the cities and the country gather together to one place ... Bread and wine and water are brought ... There is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given.... But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God.... made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead." Justin shows the practices of the early churches continued on into the Second Century.

These scholars, along with many others, can be quoted to show the practice of the early centuries. They do not give us sacred teaching; they only show how the early Christians worshipped.

The Bible clearly teaches a worship assembly on the first day of the week (Sunday). On that day Christians remember the sacrifice of Jesus, they exhort one another, they give of their means, and they sing and pray.

If we intend to imitate them and restore the practices of the early churches, we will meet on Sunday and worship the Lord also. Why not visit the Monte Vista church of Christ and observe the same worship you can read about in the New Testament.

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