

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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"The Lord's Day" and "The Lord's Supper" By Terry Carter

INTRODUCTION

- × "What God has joined together, let not man separate" - **Matt. 19:6.**
- × I know the context of this passage is marriage, not the Lord's Day or the Lord's Supper.
- × Still, I believe we find a general concept here that applies.
- × We point out that it is not man, but God, that joins man and wife.
- × But it was God, not man, who joined the Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper.
- × We live in an age that has profaned the sacred rite of marriage by disobeying this.
- × We are also in an age where the sacred day and supper are being profaned, as well.
- × There are many who would uncouple what God has joined together:
 1. By worshipping on the Lord's Day without the Lord's Supper.
 2. By partaking of the Lord's Supper on other days than the Lord's Day.
 3. Some have abandoned both altogether.
- × Let's look at what each is and see why God has joined them.

- × Then, we will see what it really means to uncouple them.

WHAT IS THE LORD'S DAY?

- × The only place we find this phrase in Scripture is **Rev. 1:10.**
- × There has been much needless speculation as to what this means.
 1. By the end of the first century the first day of the week (and only that day) was commonly referred to as "The Lord's Day".
 2. Early church fathers contemporary with John made it clear in their writings: "And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection day, queen and chief of all days." Ignatius (100 A.D.)
 3. This is not an isolated example:

"The universal and uncontradicted Sunday observance in the second century can only be explained by the fact that it had its roots in apostolic practice...Sunday was devoted to the commemoration of the Saviour's resurrection, and observed as a day of thanksgiving..." Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 1, pages 478-479

"The celebration of the Lord's Day in memory of the

resurrection of Christ dates undoubtedly from the apostolic age. Nothing short of apostolic precedent can account for the universal observance in the churches of the second century. There is no dissenting voice. [Emphasis is mine.] *This custom is confirmed by the testimonies of the earliest post-apostolic writers, as Barnabas, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr. It is also confirmed by the younger Pliny. The Didache calls the first day 'the Lord's Day of the Lord.'* Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 2, pages 201-202

4. It was already the case that the first day of the month was called "Augustus Day", or "Emperor's Day".
 5. Money payments were made that day.
 6. It would be natural to refer to resurrection day as the Lord's Day - **I Cor. 16:1-2.**
- × It was a day of worship by the Christians...



“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.” Justin Martyr (150 A.D.)

- ✗ He goes on to tell about an offering being taken and used to help widows and orphans, etc.
- ✗ Finally, he says that they assembled on Sunday because it was the day when creation began and the day Jesus arose from the dead.
- ✗ Constantine didn't change it, he simply protected, legally, what was already being done.
- ✗ It is not the Christian Sabbath
 1. The Sabbath is the seventh day, not the first day - **Exo. 20:8-11.**
 2. What the Sabbath was - **Eph. 2:15-16, Col. 2:14-17:**
 - a. A memorial of creation - **Exo. 20:8-11.**
 - b. Part of the Law, the old covenant made between God and Israel.
 - c. A rest from physical labors.
 - d. A type that has been fulfilled - **Heb. 3-4.**
 - e. Neither Moses nor Joshua was able to give them the rest God promised.

- f. But we have it in Christ, yet it is not a day of the week.
3. What the First Day of the Week is:
 - a. A memorial of Jesus' resurrection - **John 20:1.**
 - b. A memorial of the new creation in Christ - **II Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15.**
 - c. Part of the new covenant in Christ - **Matt. 26:27-28.**
 - d. The day the church began and when the Gospel was first proclaimed in full.
 - e. The day when the apostolic church met each week - **Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:2.**
 - f. No mention of it being a rest, but certainly an expectation of our own resurrection.
4. This is borne out by the early church fathers:

“The fathers did not regard the Christian Sunday as a continuation of, but as a substitute for, the Jewish Sabbath, and based it not so much on the fourth commandment, and the primitive rest of God in creation, to which the commandment expressly refers, as upon the resurrection of Christ and the apostolic tradition...”

Ignatius was the first who contrasted Sunday with the Jewish Sabbath as something done away with. So did the author of the so-called Epistle of Barnabas. Justin Martyr, in controversy with a Jew says that the pious before Moses pleased God without circumcision and the Sabbath, and that Christianity requires not one particular Sabbath, but a perpetual Sabbath. He

assigns the reason for the selection of the first day of the week for the purpose of Christian worship, because on that day God dispelled the darkness and the chaos, and because Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to his assembled disciples, but makes no allusion to the fourth commandment... Dionysius of Corinth mentions Sunday incidentally in a letter to the church at Rome, A.D., 170: Today we kept the Lord's Day holy, in which we read your letter.” Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 2, pages 202-204

“We see that the ante-Nicene church clearly distinguished the Christian Sunday from the Jewish Sabbath, and put it on independent Christian ground.” Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 2, page 205

WHY WE MEET ON THE LORD'S DAY:

- ✗ Primarily to partake of the Lord's Supper - **Acts 20:7.**
- ✗ Paul also makes this clear in **I Cor. 11:17-22.**
 1. Sometimes I think we need to read these verses instead of the following ones before partaking.
 2. Observing the Lord's Supper improperly causes our meetings to be for the worse, not the better.
- ✗ I believe this is what the Hebrew writer is referring to in **Heb. 10:24-31.**
- ✗ **Acts 2:42** is often put forth as containing the elements of worship.
- ✗ We have examples of the apostolic church doing three of these daily.
- ✗ Note that Paul delayed leaving Troas when in a hurry so he could meet on Sunday and break bread - **Acts 20:6, 16.**

WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?

- × Primarily a memorial of Jesus' death - **I Cor. 11:23-26.**
- × A proclamation of our faith in His death and return - **I Cor. 11:26.**
- × A time of self-examination - **I Cor. 11:27-34.**
- × A time of fellowship, communion - **I Cor. 10:16-22.**
- × A participation in His sacrificial death - **I Cor. 10:16-22.**
- × A corporate unifier - **I Cor. 10:16-22.**

WHAT WE ARE SAYING WHEN WE SEPARATE THE DAY AND THE SUPPER:

- × To memorialize either the death or the resurrection without the other is meaningless.
 1. The Lord's Supper memorializes His death.
 2. The Lord's Day memorializes His resurrection.
 3. Neither has meaning for us without its proper counterpart.
- × To meet on the Lord's Day without the Lord's Supper:
 1. Ignores the very reason for assembling.
 2. Is remembering a resurrection without a sacrificial death.
 3. Makes the resurrection meaningless to us without the sacrificial death.
- × To partake of the Lord's Supper on a day besides the Lord's Day:
 1. Ignores the clear apostolic precedent of Scripture.
 2. Remembers His death without remembering His resurrection.
 3. Brings meaninglessness to His death for us without His resurrection - **I Corinthians 15:12-19.**

Who do you suppose would want us to remember His death and forget His resurrection?

- × To forsake the Lord's Day for Saturday in particular.

1. Usually done for pragmatic reasons.
2. We would rather please the "seekers" than the Author of the memorials.
3. We prefer a convenient schedule to the Consecrated Covenant.
4. Our "theology" has followed the practice, not vice versa.
5. It acknowledges the holy day of the old covenant rather than that of the new.
6. But there is no salvation in that covenant.
7. It honors Law and forsakes grace.
8. It memorializes the physical creation rather than the spiritual new creation – **Exo. 20:8-11.**
9. It honors rest, rather than anticipating our resurrection.
10. It observes a type and ignores its fulfillment.

CONCLUSION

- ✓ I began by quoting Jesus when He said, "What God has joined together, let not man separate" – **Matt. 19:6.**
- ✓ I'm certain many have done this and not considered its implications.
- ✓ But God has joined the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day for a reason.
- ✓ Let's not dishonor Him by usurping authority that doesn't belong to us.
- ✓ Let's make a clear sound for all the world to see concerning these sacred memorials.