

## On the First Day of the Week

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I have often heard a brother introducing the Lord's Supper say something like "and now we come to the portion of our service that is the reason we gather here every Sunday." I also have spoken to neighbors who attend at places that do not partake of the Lord's Supper every week. Are they both correct? Does it even matter?

In John the fourth chapter, Jesus is conversing with a woman of Samaria, and in verse 20 of that chapter, she makes a statement. "*Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship*" (**John 4:20**, ESV). This statement has a very similar sentiment to our questions. Are both Jews and Samaritans correct? Does it even matter?

Jesus responds in **verses 21-24**, telling her that they are not both correct, saying that the Samaritans "*worship what you do not know,*" but the Jews "*worship what we know.*" He concludes in **John 4:24**, "*God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*" God desires that we worship him in Spirit and in Truth. This means both cannot be correct, and it does matter.

So, how do we uncover the truth of this matter? Jesus tells us in **John 17:17** that God's word is truth. So, let us see what God's word has to say on this matter.

Three of the four gospels record Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper (see **Matthew 26:26-29**, **Mark 14:22-25**, **Luke 22:14-22**). In each of these accounts, Jesus gives the disciples instructions on the manner in which they were to partake and the symbolism inherent in both the fruit of the vine and the bread. How do we know that Jesus intended us to partake of this at all, let alone on a periodic basis? From these three passages, I think we can glean evidence that He intended for His disciples throughout the remainder of time to continually partake of the bread and fruit of the vine until He returns in judgment. The fact that Jesus makes it clear that this is not an ordinary meal but symbolizes something greater is evidence of this. The bread and the fruit of the vine are symbols of His life (His body, see **Matthew 26:26**) and death (**Matthew 26:28**). These symbols would not have real meaning until He had died. This indicates He was teaching this to His disciples so that they would continue after He was no longer on this earth. Further evidence is given of this in a statement from Jesus recorded in the book of Luke. Here, Jesus says, "*Do this in remembrance of me*" (**Luke 22:19**). Do we remember things in the present? Jesus is telling His disciples to remember Him, which they can only do when He is gone.

So, Jesus does command that we partake of the Lord's supper. But how often are we to remember Jesus by partaking of the Lord's Supper?

To answer this question, let us first examine the practices of the early church found in the book of Acts. In **Acts 20**, Paul is making his way to Jerusalem and is stopping at congregations on the way. In **Acts 20:6**, Paul makes a stop at Troas for seven days. In **Acts 20:7**, Luke records, "*On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.*" (ESV) The language that Luke uses is quite clear. Why did the brethren gather together on the first day of the week? To break bread. This usage of the phrase "break bread" in the way that it is used and the context in which it is used undoubtedly means partaking of the Lord's Supper.

This is further supported by the language Paul uses in **1 Corinthians 10:16-17**,

*The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*

Further, in **1 Corinthians 11:17-34**, Paul is both instructing and correcting the brethren at Corinth for their practices concerning the Lord's Supper. In verse twenty, Paul makes a statement, "*When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat*" (**1 Corinthians 11:20**). This phrase "*when you come together*" appears a total of five times in **1 Corinthians 11** (twice in **verse 17**, **verses 20, 33, 34**). When the Corinthian brethren assembled, they partook of the Lord's Supper. In conjunction with **Acts 20:7**, it is clear that the early church met on the first day of the week to eat the Lord's Supper. Where did they receive this instruction? The apostles (**1 Corinthians 11:23, 2 Thessalonians 2:15**).

We know that Jesus intends us to remember his life and death through the Lord's Supper, and we have evidence that the early Church partook of the Lord's Supper when they assembled on the first day of the week. If we are seeking to worship God in Spirit and truth, would any other interval for partaking of the Lord's Supper be scripturally defensible?