

The First Day of the Week

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Introduction: We live in a time where memorials are neglected and forgotten.

- A. Memorials were instituted by God for the nation of Israel.
 - 1. The Sabbath was observed for two reasons. (**Ex 20:11; Deut 5:15**)
 - 2. God had Israel build monuments for their good. (**Josh 4:4-7**)
 - 3. Monuments have no value if the people do not think and remember!
- B. Is there any significance in God's plan for Sunday, the first day of the week?
 - 1. The scriptures do indicate a day that is described as the "Lord's Day."
(**Rev 1:10**)
 - 2. What day is the "Lord's Day" and what significance does it have for us?

I. Jesus was raised on the first day of the week.

- A. Sunday was the completion of "three days and three nights!" (**Mt 12:40; 26:61**)
 - 1. The scriptures are very specific on this. (**Mt 28:1-4**)
 - 2. The events of this day would be the power behind convincing men to believe Jesus is the Son of God. (**Acts 2:32; Rom 1:3-4**)
- B. This fulfilled what had been a perplexing prophecy of Christ. (**Psa 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-33**)
 - 1. The resurrection of Christ allows us to look forward to His return with confidence. (**2 Cor 4:13-14**)
 - 2. On this day the death, resurrection and future coming of Jesus is central!

II. The church was established on the first day of the week.

- A. During the ministry of Christ Jesus spoke of a time where His church would be established. (**Mt 16:18**)
 - 1. This tells us that it was not yet a reality!
 - 2. By the day of Pentecost we now see the church spoken of as existing.
(**Acts 2:47**)
- B. On the day of Pentecost the kingdom of Christ was established. (**Mk 9:1**)
 - 1. Jesus wanted a strong anticipation of this in His disciples.
 - 2. He gave very specific instructions concerning their waiting in Jerusalem.
(**Lk 24:46-49; Acts 1:4-8**)
 - 3. These things were fulfilled in the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ!
- C. The baptism of Christ was first preached on this day! (**Acts 2:38-39**)
 - 1. This was how people became a part of Christ's church, the body of Christ.
(**1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:22-23**)
 - 2. Pentecost always occurs on the first day of the week. (**Lev 23:15-16**)

III. Churches were to take up a collection on the first day of the week.

- A. Paul gave great emphasis to this day when he instructed Cornith and other churches concerning a specific contribution. (**1 Cor 16:1-3**)
 - 1. The NASV properly gives the emphasis of the Greek text.

1 Corinthians 16:2 (NASB) ²On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.

- 2. This necessitates action surrounding the assembly so that no collections be

made when Paul comes.

- B. There is a command in this verse that applies to all churches at all times.
 - 1. Paul so noted that his writings to Corinth contained the will of God that all churches were to obey. (**1 Cor 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33-37**)
 - 2. While the specific need addressed in this passage was temporary the Holy Spirit revealed in this text the commanded way and time of raising money for the work of a local church.
 - 3. God gave us the New Testament as a complete guide to instruct us today!
(**Jude 3**)

IV. The Lord's Supper was observed on the first day of the week.

- A. On the day of Pentecost the apostles instructed Christians to be steadfast in partaking of the Lord's supper. (**Acts 2:42**)
 - 1. Does this verse describe the Lord's Supper?
 - 2. Breaking of bread can describe the Lord's Supper. (**1 Cor 10:15-17**)
 - a. It was to be partaken in the assembly by the whole church.
(**1 Cor 11:20-22**)
 - b. There is great spiritual significance attached to this feast! (**1 Cor 5:8**)
 - 3. There are some verses where the "breaking of bread" describes a common meal. (**Acts 2:46; Acts 20:11**)
 - a. When this is done in homes rather than the assembly.
 - b. When only one individual is described rather than an assembly.
- B. The early Christians partook of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. (**Acts 20:6-7**)
 - 1. This was something the whole church was to do!
 - 2. While they heard Paul preach we find great emphasis on this feast!
 - 3. What do the churches around us emphasize on this day?
 - 4. What have we in our hearts emphasized on this day?
 - 5. We also in this act look to another day. (**1 Cor 11:26**)

Conclusion: Do you see the need to remember?

- A. On the first day of the week we observe a feast and not a day.
- B. Are your actions on this day preparing you to meet God? (**1 Cor 11:27-32**)

Is Giving On the First Day Of The Week A Command?

Jerry Merten

Are the instructions of **I Corinthians 16:1-2** binding upon us? Is it necessary to follow those instructions when a local church collects funds for its authorized work? Some brethren say no and some go so far as to say that those instructions were not even binding upon the Corinthians. They claim that Paul was not *commanding* the Corinthians to give on the first day of the week to help the needy saints in Jerusalem, because **2 Corinthians 8:8** says that he was not speaking by commandment. Since they conclude that the instructions of **1 Corinthians 16:1-2** were not binding upon the Corinthians, they argue that those instructions can not be binding upon us. I would like to offer some thoughts for your consideration on this matter.

First Paul's instruction in I Corinthians 16:1-2 was indeed a 'command,' to the *Corinthians*. The words "I have given order to" (KJV are a translation of the Greek word *diatasso*. According to Young's *Analytical Concordance*, it is used a total of 16 times and translated in the KJV as follows:

- a. appoint (4)—**Luke 3:13; Acts 7:44; 20:13; Tit. 1:5.**
- b. command (7)—**Matt. 11:1; Luke 8:55; 17:9, 10; Acts 18:2; 23:31; 24:23**
- c. give order (1)—**I Cor. 16:1.**
- d. ordain (3)—**I Cor. 7:17; 9:14; Gal. 3:19.**
- e. set in order (1)—**I Cor. 11:34.**

On page 142 Thayer says that *diatasso* means ". . .to arrange, appoint ordain, prescribe, give order." Its meaning is given by Arndt and Gingrich on page 188 as ". . .order, direct, command." Vine's definition (p. 450), reads "to appoint, arrange, charge, give orders to."

These passages and definitions show that the word *diatasso* has the force of a command. When used it shows that something is being required. This is especially the case in **I Corinthians 16:1**, because after saying "I have given order to" (*diatasso*), Paul also tells the Corinthians "so do ye." Paul, having the authority of an apostle, was ordering what was to be done and expected those orders to be followed. Nothing in the context shows that the Corinthians could choose not to follow Paul's orders and maintain divine approval.

The fact that in the second letter Paul chose to "speak not by commandment" (**2 Cor. 8:8**) does not mean he did not speak by commandment in the first letter. Nor does it mean that they had a choice in the matter. It just meant that in the second letter Paul chose to appeal to their sense of love.

For example, in **Philemon 8** Paul told Philemon that he could have commanded him what was fitting, instead he chose to appeal to him. Did the fact that Paul chose not to command Philemon mean that Philemon actually had a choice? Did it mean that it was not a requirement? Absolutely not! In reality Philemon had no choice at all. Paul expected Philemon to do what he asked. It was Philemon's responsibility. Paul just chose, for expediency sake, to appeal to him rather than to command him. Likewise in the 2 Corinthian letter Paul's decision to appeal rather than to command did not mean that the Corinthians had a choice or that they were not responsible. It just meant that he decided to appeal to them rather than use his authority as an apostle to command them as he did in the first letter. Either way they had the same responsibility and were expected to do what he said.

Are the "orders" (commands) of **I Corinthians 16: 1-2** or Paul's appeal of **2 Corinthians 8** to us in the same *sense* as they were to the Corinthians? No, because the specific need is over. Those needy **saints in Jerusalem** are no longer around. Furthermore the instructions in I Corinthians 16 and 2 Corinthians 8 were specifically directed to the Corinthians. In fact **Romans 15:25-28** seems to indicate that not all the churches were ordered to help the needy saints in Jerusalem. But while the instructions to the Corinthians are not to us in the same sense as they were to the Corinthians, they do set a pattern for us, just like Paul's instructions in **2 Timothy 4:2-5** sets a pattern for evangelists today.

Paul's instructions in **2 Timothy 4:2-5** were specifically to Timothy, evidently about circumstances that were to come in his day. Yet who would say that an evangelist today does not have to follow those instructions? Likewise, the instructions of I Corinthians 16 and 2 Corinthians 8 were specifically to the Corinthians about a circumstance in their day, but that does not mean that Christians today do not have to follow those instructions in similar circumstances. So, is the

instruction of **I Corinthians 16:1-2** an "order" (command) to us? Yes, in the same way **2 Timothy 4:2-5** is a command to evangelists today.

In the past I have looked at the instructions of **I Corinthians 16:1-2** in a backwards way. I saw "giving" and emphasized it without considering the why. Paul's instructions were based on the *need* that arose in Jerusalem and as an inspired apostle he told the Corinthians how to take care of that need. They were given no choice. Even if one would be correct in saying that the Corinthian church could decide whether to help the needy saints in Jerusalem, that would not nullify the fact that once they were so committed they had no choice as to "how" they were to go about it. Besides what plan could possibly be better than a plan given by an apostle through inspiration?

Likewise today it is not a just a matter of "giving." It is "giving" because there are needs that a local church has a responsibility to take care of for which it must raise funds. But how is the local church to raise those funds? Paul's instruction in I Corinthians 16:1-2 give us the pattern we must follow. We have no more a choice as to the "how" than did the Corinthians or than an evangelist does in regards to the instructions of **2 Timothy 4:2-5**. In the same way we use **2 Timothy 4:2-5** to show an evangelist must use patience in his preaching we must use **I Corinthians 16:1-2** to show that when a local church collects funds it must do so on the first day of the week. Both Scriptures are profitable for training in righteousness.

Most agree that a church can take a collection on Sunday. We know this is right because of the teaching of **I Corinthians 16: 1-2**. But how do we know that a local church can collect funds in any other way? Where do the Scriptures authorize by command, statement, example or inference a church to collect funds in any other way? If the Scriptures do not authorize any other way, then a local church can only accumulate funds by first day of the week collections.

Some argue that the reason why Paul in **I Corinthians 16:1-2** told the Corinthians to collect the funds the way he did does not apply upon us. This is not so! Paul told the church at Corinth to collect funds upon the first day of the week so that the funds would be ready when he came. It is true that Paul is not coming to us today, but the principle of having the funds stored up so that they are ready for the time of distribution is just as needful today. It would be very inconvenient for the one handling the treasury to have to call the members together to collect funds every time he needed to write out a check.

We apply **2 Timothy 4:2-5** to show how to deal with the problem Of people turning from the truth even though it was evidently originally written because people would turn from the truth in Timothy's day. We do this because the principle of needing to keep others from turning from the truth is just as applicable today. In like manner we ought to apply the teaching of **I Corinthians 16:1-2** even though Paul's original purpose was to deal with circumstances in his day. The principle of needing the funds stored up for the time of distribution is just as necessary today, hence the principle still applies.

Some may wonder what the fuss is all about. It is about adding or taking away from the word of God (**I Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:6-9**). If, by saying that the church can only collect funds on the first day of the week, then I am adding a command where God has not I am wrong and condemned. But if by saying that we do not follow the instructions of **1 Corinthians 16:1-2** today a person is taking away from the word of God, *then he is wrong and condemned!* I urge all to study thoroughly the question "Is giving on the first day of the week a command?" Please search for truth, for only truth will free us (**John 8:31-32**).