

The First Day Of The Week – A God Given Memorial

Larry Rouse

The provisions our God has given us to maintain our faith is misunderstood and often ignored by carnal men. The Creator knows that the greatest struggle men have is in the keeping of their hearts in harmony with the mind of God (Jer. 17:9-10; Prov. 4:23). Even when men are brought to God in humility and as a result find that marvelous relationship with God, they often, over time, drift from Him when blessings and abundance comes into their lives.

Israel, having been born in Egypt, and then humbled in the wilderness was about to experience blessings that previously were only distant promises. The generation that entered Egypt was full of faith, but God knew what lay ahead for this people.

“So it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant – when you have eaten and are full – then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deuteronomy 6:10-12).

Even though the next generation did those very things that God said they would, they forgot God because they ignored the perfect provisions He had given them to remember Him.

Consider some of the memorials God had given Israel. The Sabbath was to remind the Jews of their deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 5:15). Each of the Feasts that God gave Israel was to remember God's actions on their behalf (Exodus 12:14). God even instructed Israel to make a heap of stones from the river bed of the Jordan where they had crossed so that future generations might “remember” (Joshua 4:7). Why did these memorials fail in helping Israel remember? Memorials are only effective when people of faith use them. Israel neglected theirs.

Just like Israel, Christians need to be reminded of their deliverance from Satan and the bondage of sin. Our God has also given us a feast and a day as memorials to the great things He has done and will do for us. The Lord's Day was given and expected to be recognized as His (Rev. 1:10). The Lord's Supper was given “in remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:23-25).

These memorials are very simple and common to the carnal mind – a day of the week and a simple partaking of bread and fruit of the vine. However, to the Christian, these represent powerful events that give power to one's faith and bind one's heart to God.

The evidence of the Scriptures points to Sunday as being the Lord's Day. Consider these truths:

- It was on the first day of the week that Jesus rose from the dead (Matthew 28:1-4).
- It was on the first day of the week that Jesus established His kingdom. The day this occurred in Jerusalem was on the day of Pentecost, a day that is always on Sunday (Luke 9:1, 24:46-49; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1).
- It was on the first day of every week that the Christians in Corinth were commanded to take a collection for a specific work. *“On 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* (1 Corinthians 16:2)”.*”*
- It was on the first day of the week that the church at Troas partook of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16).

It did not take long for the church at Corinth to change these God-given memorials into a man-centered, carnal feast (1 Cor. 11:18-20). Can you imagine how the wrath of God was kindled when this great Memorial was turned into a fleshly centered activity where God's Son was forgotten by the very people that were redeemed by His blood?

“Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep” (1 Corinthians 11:27-30).

One of the most common forms of memorials men make is in the gravestones that accompany their graves. For almost all of us those memorials will be used by no more than one generation. I will never forget how I stumbled across an abandoned graveyard a few years ago that had been revealed by a brushfire. Some of the graves were less than 30 years old, but they all had been forgotten. My heart ached at the message this neglect spoke.

If my assembling on the first day of the week is not producing the rejoicing, the self-examination, and the strong anticipation of our returning Lord, then I am not remembering. Please do not blame that on others. It is up to you. Just like that abandoned graveyard spoke volumes to a generation that forgot their loved ones, so does the neglect of God's memorials speak volumes about the real nature of your faith. Will you remember?

How I look forward to these special occasions the Lord has given to remind me of His grace, His love and His present and future care. Thank you Lord for all the rich provisions you have bestowed upon us!