

### The First Day of the Week

In FR 183 concerning the Lord's Supper and in FR 185 concerning collections, in dealing with our traditional notion that those two activities were limited to the first day of the week, I pointed out that the word "day" was not in the Greek text, but that it had been added by the translators.

In response to the first essay, I received the note below from a reader, Sari Slone, with whom I was not acquainted, adding more information that I think you can appreciate. It is appropriate research on the words used in those two references which you may want to consider.

"Hi Cecil, My family and I are enjoying your articles on "Why Assemble?" immensely.

"I know that you have dealt with Acts 20:7 in these articles and also in "Free to Accept." However, I would like to have your thoughts on the following:

"1. The word "day" in Acts 20:7 (as in all of the eight occurrences of the phrase "first day of the week" in the KJV) is in italics indicating that it was added by the translators.

"2. The Greek word "mia" which is translated "first" in this verse is translated "one" 62 times out of the 79 times it occurs in the KJV. "Mia" is the cardinal number "one;" "protos" is the ordinal number "first."

"3. The Greek word "sabbaton" (corresponding to the Hebrew word "shabbath") which is translated "week" in this verse is translated "sabbath" 59 out of the 68 times it occurs in the KJV.

"4. The Greek word for "week" is "ebdomas" or "ebdomados" (corresponding to the Hebrew "shabuwa" or "shabua") which appears in the Septuagint in these passages: Ex. 34:22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:9-10, 16; 2 Chr. 8:13; Dan. 9:24-27; Dan. 10:2-3, and others.

"5. The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament translates Acts 20:7: *"And on one of the sabbaths, having been assembled to break bread, Paul was lecturing them, being about to depart on the next day, and was extending the message until midnight."*

"It cannot be disputed that Christians very early began meeting on the first day of the week. However, this occurrence belongs to a period outside of the New Testament.

"I feel that the rendering of "mia" and "sabbaton" as "first day of the week" in Acts 20:7 (as well as in Matt. 28:1, Mark 16:1, Luke 24:1, John 20:1, John 20:19, 1 Cor. 16:2) is

highly suspect. I feel that this is just another case of revising the meanings of passages to accommodate centuries of tradition.

“Thanks so much for your help.” --Sari Slone, Martin, KY, <firefly@netburner.net>

After reading my articles on this matter, if you are still convinced that those two texts bind and limit the first day of the week as the lawful time for the communion and collection, then these further observations from our reader should convince you that your conviction does not have a solid basis in these passages. They do not offer a clear pattern or law (in case you are looking for patterns and laws). Only a search for clues to support pre-conceived suppositions could wring inferences of rigid dogmas from the two references.

It is a strange quirk of human nature that would cause persons to try to make God's way more stringent than he made it. Yes, I must confess that I did that for many years. He has not called on us to help make more laws to bind on those who would serve him. So why not enjoy the freedom to commune with him and to serve him with your money at any and all times instead of trying to fulfill supposed legal specifications?

[Have books helped you to find freedom in Christ? Share the joy of leading others to that same freedom by giving them liberating books.]

(Cecil Hook; October 2003) []