

Friday, May 22, 2015 - Let Us Remember

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day and borne out of the Civil War, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in service of the United States of America. It was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic. It is good for us to take time to honor those who laid down their lives so that we can live free in this country. It is right that we should remember.

Memorial's are important to our existence. First, they perpetuate the memory of some great day, event, or thing, which is good to remember. Second, the monument of the event, naturally serves to indelibly write the author of the event, and its memorial in the minds and hearts of the people. Some things are too important ever to be forgotten. Third, such would serve to produce and strengthen faith in human hearts through the ages.

The feast of the passover was a memorial feast which God commanded the Israelites to keep (Exodus 12:14.) As the Lord Jesus and his disciples ate at the last scriptural observance of the old passover supper, the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus instituted his supper, called "the Lord's supper" (1 Cor. 11:20). This is not the passover supper, but more strictly speaking, "the Lord" as it is a reference to Christ, the Son of God, and his supper, a New Testament supper (Acts 2:28; Phil. 2:11).

At the last passover, Jesus took some of the bread of that supper, and some of the fruit of the vine, and instituted his supper by the use of these simple elements which may be had wherever man is found (Matt. 26: 26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-34).

The Lord's Supper is a memorial institution, a great monument among many other monuments in the Bible. It is a memorial of the death and sufferings of Christ "for our sins." (Matt. 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 15:1-4.) The Lord's supper came from God! Jesus often made it clear that what he taught came from God. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." (John 7: 16). "Then said Jesus unto them, when you have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." (John 8: 28). "For I have not spoken of myself: but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12: 49). Yes, the Lord's supper came from heaven; it is a heavenly feast on earth. It should not be taken lightly; it should be eaten reverently and in the fear of God who gave it.

As such a monument, it declares to every proper observer that Christianity cost the suffering and death of God's only begotten Son, and that he is coming again, all of which is proclaimed very eloquently and with great feeling of deep appreciation on the part of every Christian.

Also very fittingly the "Lord's day" is another New Testament monument, and is a memorial of the Lord's resurrection from the dead, upon the first day of the week (Mark 16: 1, 9; Luke 24: 1, 7, 13, 21. 46.) Now, it was upon this first day of the week, "the Lord's day," the day on which Christ rose from the dead, that the disciples were to eat the supper in communion with Christ, and in remembrance of his death. The supper celebrates his death for us, and "the Lord's day" is in celebration of his resurrection, which proved him to be the Son of God, (Rom. 1: 4). "The Lord's day," like the "Lord's supper," both proclaim throughout the civilized world, that Jesus died for all, tasting death for every man (Heb. 2:9), and that he rose again on the third day after his death, and is alive for ever more, and there is life after death for all of us (John 5: 28-29), and that there is a great judgment day coming to one and all (Acts 17: 30-31).

Our Saviour instructed his disciples to eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine in remembrance of him (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25.) In thus eating and drinking the Lord's people also "do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Corinthians 11:26). The Lord's supper is truly a memorial feast. It is indeed a memorial of Christ's death. However his death was significant only because of the kind of life he lived, a sinless, perfect life. Without that kind of life, his death would not have been beneficial and sacrificial. Therefore, the Lord's supper is a memorial of Christ! He said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

Our instructions based on New Testament writings and practice teach us that partaking of the Lord's supper on the first day of every week is a matter of faith. No wonder the Hebrew writer said "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). We see, in Acts 20:6-7, that Paul was intent on being in Jerusalem by Pentecost; "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." He arrives in Troas on Monday and delays his journey for 7 days. The purpose is to partake of the Communion with these brethren. Paul knew that the only day the disciples would be partaking of the Supper would be Sunday (the first day of the week). After partaking of the communion with them, he immediately departed, continuing his journey.

The Lord's supper was not observed daily, monthly, quarterly or yearly in New Testament churches, but was observed weekly, and upon the first day of each week. The disciples had a regular meeting. Their regular stated meeting was for the purpose of eating the Lord's supper.

With such an important memorial feast being observed weekly, it would be imperative that no Christian willfully absent himself from the assembling. To do so would be to neglect an opportunity to thank God for Christ's sacrifice and be built up by the memory of that great gift.

Remember those who died so that we might live free in America; but a far greater remembrance is prepared for you weekly provided by the blood of the Lamb.