

Bible e-Study on the book of Acts (20: 6-7)

Seeing God use old and new!

“6 But we sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days. 7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread.”

Acts 20: 6-7

NUGGET – God is forever teaching us new things but He uses old things to help us get to understand those new things! Take these nugget verses. God is using old and new together on at least 2 levels I can see. The first is

- old and new traditions.

We see a reference to the Festival of Unleavened Bread used here by Luke as a time keeping device. That reference tells his readers when things were taking place in their travels. It would have been a common marker because of the traditions they shared. They knew when that Festival took place each year so they'd have understood when they sailed from Philippi.

But notice the new tradition in vs 7, *On the first day of the week we came together to break bread*. Most bible scholars understand this to be a reference to the new tradition of sharing Holy Communion on the day when Jesus rose from the grave, the first day of the week. This is a new thing. But it's tied to the old. And, though the two are different, yet Paul and the others hold them in tension together without compromising either one.

Jesus resurrection took place 3 days after He died and He died at Passover, but He arose on the first day of the week, Sunday. That marked a new thing. God did something so new that we are still coping with trying to understand it! God raised His Son from the dead so that the world would be made new in Him. And we, like Paul and the others still celebrate that event by 'breaking bread' together, generally on the first day of the week. So we learn to use this new thing by how they used it.

And then there is a second level of the old and the new that God uses, it's

- the old pointing us to the new.

We understand that the new 'breaking of bread' is like the old festival of unleavened bread, which points us to how God cares for every detail of life. The old festival pointed to how God brought the Israelites up out of the land of slavery in Egypt, while the new 'breaking of bread' points to how God brings the whole world up out of our slavery to sin through the body and blood of His son Jesus Christ.

So while the old was still helpful, it became far overshadowed by the power of the new. And the new takes on a depth of meaning that, while rooted in the old replaces its narrow application that the Jews applied only to themselves, to the new being used by all believers to understand that God's grace is for all people. While the old needed to give way to the new, yet both point to God's love and care.

APPLICATION -

1. Looking in your own life, what old things has God used to teach you new things? And what may God be showing you new today that lets you let go of some old things?

PRAY – Holy God of all creation, grant us to trust you in all things, old and new, that we may better learn of Your love. In Jesus name, Amen.