



March 18, 2022

Easter Observed in the Bible?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here in southeast Texas. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that your week has been blessed.

We are less than a month away from the Passover, Night to Be Much Observed and Days of Unleavened Bread. You and I are in the process of examining where we are in our relationship with God, as well as the physical aspects of de-leavening our homes...

This upcoming month of April will be a busy month with 5 regular weekly Sabbaths, the Passover service, and the two annual holy days during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. My wife and I hope and pray that you will be blessed with nice weather for traveling, enjoying congregational assemblies, and other activities. We'll leave this coming Monday morning to return to Alabama after a weeklong visit here in Texas.

While here in Texas I've had time to sincerely reflect on what is coming soon for many religious folks.

Much of the Christian world will be focusing on the celebration termed "Easter" coming up on April 17. What's the focus of that celebration, and where did both the name and time of observance come from?

An even more important question is, is it biblical? What? You might ask?

The only place where the name Easter is found in the Greek Scriptures is in a *mistranslation* of Acts 12:4 found in the KJV translation. This is part of the account of the martyrdom of the apostle James and the arrest of the apostle Peter. "*And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put*

him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people." (Acts 3:3-4) The BBE translation renders the phrase in v.3 as: "*This was at the time of the feast of unleavened bread*" and renders "Easter" as "the Passover." The Greek word translated "Easter" in the KJV is *pascha*.

The Online Bible Greek Lexicon reveals that the Greek word *pascha* is translated 28 times as "Passover", and only 1 time as "Easter" in the KJV.

Notice the following comment in the Albert Barnes' NT Commentary on v. 4: "There never was a more absurd or unhappy translation than this. The original is simply after the Passover, *meta to pasca*. The word Easter now denotes the festival observed by many Christian churches in honor of the resurrection of the Savior. But the original has no reference to that; nor is there the slightest evidence that any such festival was observed at the time when this book was written. The translation is not only unhappy, as it does not convey at all the meaning of the original, but because it may contribute to foster an opinion that such a festival was observed in the times of the apostles. The word Easter is of Saxon origin, and is supposed to be derived from Eostre, the goddess of love, or the Venus of the North, in honor of whom a festival was celebrated by our pagan ancestors in the month of April."

What an admission, but also what an erroneous claim about the festival celebrating the resurrection of the Savior! The claim that Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week in the morning is used by many Sunday observers as the basis for their Sunday observance in place of the observance of the seventh day Sabbath.

Friends, what is the truth found in the Bible record? I know I might lose popularity with some by going through this, but we must seek His truth, even when it goes against what so many teach and believe.

Let's review. The Gospels state that the disciples of Jesus prepared for the Passover and *they and Jesus observed the Passover*, which included the killing of an animal. (Luke 22:7-8, 13-15) They came to the place where it was observed in

the evening. (Mark 14:17) Jesus had to follow the instructions of the law found in Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23. That meant that he observed the Passover ceremony with His disciples starting at the evening of Abib 14. Jesus introduced the foot-washing ceremony (John 13:4-12) following which Jesus gave Judas a piece of dipped bread and after this Judas left during the night. (v.30) Jesus instituted the symbols of the broken unleavened bread and poured wine and gave both comments and insights to the disciples. After they sang a hymn together they departed for the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. (Matthew 26:30) After praying in the Garden, Judas led "a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees" to seize Jesus and take Him to the high priest. It was still during the night of Abib 14 since they had lanterns and torches. (John 18:3)

Then in the early morning, Jesus was led to appear before Pilate at the Praetorium. (John 18:28) John records that "*it was the Preparation Day of the Passover.*" (John 19:14) It was then during the daylight portion of Abib 14. Jesus was condemned to be scourged. Then Pilate was bullied by the Jewish leaders to condemn Jesus to death by crucifixion. As Jesus hung on the cross an unusual darkness fell over the area from noon until 3 p.m. (Matthew 27:45). Shortly after this, he suffered the spear wound from the Roman soldier and died. (vv.49-50 TCNT) An important statement is found in John 19:31: "*Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*" Just as the sixth day is a preparation day for the weekly Sabbath, the Passover is a preparation day for the annual Sabbath, the day of a holy convocation on the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:16; Leviticus 23:7) The day that followed the Abib 14 day of Passover was Abib 15, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

We'll try to continue this analysis next time with the actions of Joseph of Arimathea who took the dead body of Jesus before sunset and then prepared it for burial. The sequence of events will clearly reveal there were 2 Sabbaths during the week and that it was during the second Sabbath of the week when Jesus was resurrected, not Sunday morning. It's an amazing story and reveals the truth...

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hoefker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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