

FACING THE EASTERN SUN

EASTER MORNING

Easter is mentioned once in the New Testament (Acts 12:4 KJV). Its Greek word, *pascha*, is used 29 times elsewhere in the New Testament where it is translated Passover. "Easter" is not found in the Greek or Hebrew lexicons. Why is it inserted in this one verse? This particular verse is noted contextually when James was executed and Peter imprisoned by King Herod at the time of the Passover and Unleavened Bread. Why "Easter"?

This word is distinctly English. Sometime between the first century and 1611 A.D., when the King James Version was written, it was inserted in a translation. The word goes back to a Saxon word, *eostre*, from ancient northwest Germany. *Eostre* was a Germanic pagan goddess related to rebirth or beginning a new life. This, in turn, related to the estrus cycle of an animal when it ovulates (is in heat), creating a time for a new birth. A new Anglo-Saxon word was then coined, *ostara*, which was associated with a goddess related to spring (rebirth of life) and the rising sun (personification of a new beginning).

The first English Bible translation was a handwritten document by John Wycliffe. No one knows how he interpreted Acts 12:4. One hundred and fifty years later William Tyndale printed the first English New Testament (1525-1526 A.D.). Subsequently, this object of the wrath of the Roman Catholic Church led to the burning of most of his Bibles. They then killed him. He deeply wanted the English-speaking people to be able to read God's Word.

In Tyndale's Bible, the word "ester" is used for *pascha* in Acts 12:4. He relied on the *Textus Receptus* to a great degree, a non-Latin Vulgate Catholic translation by Dutch scholar, Desiderus Erasmus, dated 1516 A.D. Did this word appear in that Roman Catholic Bible? It is not clear. Was it part of the Anglo-Saxon influence of Tyndal's life? That isn't clear either. Tyndal's translation was even more problematic since in most areas where *pascha* existed he used either "ester" or "easter." That introduced a foreign element into the gospels because Jesus was now the "ester lamb" or "easter lamb" instead of the Passover Lamb.

In the 1611 A.D. authorized King James Version all of these were removed except for Acts 12:4. It appears as though that was a mistake or oversight. All other English translations since then have the word Passover in that text. The error was corrected.

What hasn't been remedied is the *meaning* of the goddess Estore in religious practice. Historically, it can be shown to go back to a chief Babylonian goddess, Ishtar, a goddess of love and fertility. A sun god, Tammuz, was intimately associated with Ishtar. He died each year and was reborn in the spring. In turn, he was later associated with the male god Baal with the sun often depicted between its horns, representing the same – new birth and life.

In Ezekiel 8 the divine messenger introduced Ezekiel to a series of abominations. Two related to women (God's people in Israel) weeping for Tammuz because he died and men in the temple court facing east, worshiping the sun (8:14-18). Immediately after that (chapter 9) God's true people are sealed, these apostates are slain and the latter rain is poured out (chapter 10). Then typological messages of the last appeal to repent, the fall of Babylon and time of trouble

are given (chapters 11-18). Finally, the sword of the Lord (chapter 21) follows, which parallels Revelation 19, relating to the final judgment and His coming. These visions relate to the end of time. Honoring the sun and festivals to other gods are issues predicted to be part of who call themselves His at that time!

Why is all this relevant to Easter? It is a pagan holiday celebrated only on Sunday and has as its time of celebration "sun-rise." Historically, those threads of apostasy have wound their way to us today from paganism, religious mythology and early apostate Christianity. It was exactly that abomination, *towebah*, or disgusting idolatry that brought God to declare to Ezekiel: "Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." Ezekiel 8:18.

I can hear some say, "Easter, sunrise and worship – how innocent! It represents the resurrection, assurance of the covenant promise and the 'risen Savior.' The Easter bunny and colored eggs are only festive." But there is a deeper issue.

If I bow to an idol representing Jesus and declare it is only symbolic, a representation of the "One I adore" sounds innocent, doesn't it? But God said, "Thou shalt not." If I steal from the "haves" so I can give to the "have nots," I may even save a life. Sounds logical, doesn't it? But God said, "Thou shalt not." If my Sabbath worship is on a day that God has not sanctified, and especially at the time of the rising sun (a pagan practice), innocence has been lost. The Bible says that *very symbolism* stirs the wrath of God.

Easter has its roots in paganism, not Christianity. Almost every major culture of Europe and the Middle East has paid homage in one way or another to the mythical goddess and her lover, a sun god – sometimes seen as protector of the dead. Jesus is called the "Sun of righteousness" (Malachi 4:2). He said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18). Why does that salvic story have to be linked to pagan tradition, to a god that dies and rises each year? God asked Job, "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him?" (Job 40:1). Shall we design spiritual truth for God and teach Him the best way religious exercise is to be conducted?

When did this pagan ritual obtain a Christian name and reference? It began during the Roman Empire with Emperor Constantine by the Edict of Milan. Christianity became the legal religion. That civil union with an already corrupt church in Rome soon became the Roman Catholic Church. Roman festivals became Christian holy days.

The *abominations* that lead to desolation in Daniel 8–12, the *abomination* in the harlot's cup in Revelation 17 and that of Ezekiel 8, all share the silver thread of false worship. The "transgression" of the little horn of Daniel 8:13 refers to the same *abomination* and relates to idolatry and sun worship. Something to think about when Easter approaches.

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EndTime Issues..., April 2004

General References:

[1] www.aloha.note/~mikesch/easter.htm

[2] www.endtimeprophecy.net/~Hbbs/EPN-1/Articles/Article-Pagan/easter-1.html