

What About Easter?

I. 'Proof' for Celebration of Easter

‘Mentioned in Acts 12:4’

- True: KJV
- Word occurs 29x in NT
- Each time: means ‘Passover’
- To translate ‘easter’ consistently would require disciples to celebrate ritual that could not have arisen before His death
 - Mt.26:2, 19

‘Mentioned in
Acts 12:4’

- **Wyclif** (1338): ‘pask’
in every occurrence
- **Tyndale** (1526):
‘ester’ everywhere
except Jn.18:28;
renders it ‘pasche’
- **KJV** removed this
word; used ‘Pass-
over’ everywhere
except Ac.12:4

‘Mentioned in Acts 12:4’

- Vine: *pascha*, mistranslated ‘Easter’ in Acts 12:4, KJV, denotes the Passover (RV).
 - “‘Easter’ is not of Christian origin. It is another form of *Astarte*, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven” (p.192).

‘Mentioned in Acts 12:4’

- David Schaff, Presbyterian: The Revised Version has rectified this inconsistency of translation” (Sch.-Herzog).
- Even Douay-Rheims (R. Catholic) Version does not render the word “easter.”
- Acts 12:4 – would Herod celebrate holiday of Christians??

Word refers to Jewish feast.

Some avoid term 'Easter' because of pagan associations

- But they give special emphasis to Lord's death at this time.
- Many attended sunrise services
- Many churches study resurrection of Christ because of this 'special day.'

I. 'Proof' for Celebration of Easter

II. What Is Wrong With
Celebrating Easter?

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Mark 7

1. The attack, 1-5

- Actually against
- 'Tradition': lit., a rabbinic oral code
- Poured water up (uncleanness should flow off wrists) then with fingers down, one fist rubbed the other hand.
- **What's wrong with washing hands??**

Mk.7: Tradition of elders replaced authority of God, 3, 5

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Mark 7

1. The attack, 1-5

2. The hypocrisy, 6

- Pretend / profess to obey God
- Actually serve themselves
- Church sponsors easter-egg hunts
- Pretends to honor God
- Actually do it for fun – a pious fraud

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Mark 7

1. The attack, 1-5
2. The hypocrisy, 6
3. Makes worship vain, 7
 - ‘Can celebration of days make worship vain?’ – Gal.4:8-11
 - ‘Can adding to Scripture make worship vain?’ – 2 Jn.9

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Mark 7

1. The attack, 1-5
2. The hypocrisy, 6
3. Makes worship vain, 7
4. Apostasy, 8
 - Led them to leave word of God.
 - Replaced with 'traditions of men' (pl.).
 - 'Hedge' became equal to / above Word.
 - **Apostasy usually starts small...**
 - Col.2:8, 16-18, 21-23

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Mark 7

- **Apostasy usually starts small...**
- Mary: first titles (mother of God; queen of heaven, etc.)
- Then position equal to Christ
- Then above Christ
- Then prayers to her, etc.

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Mark 7

- **Apostasy usually starts small...**
- Relics: bodies of saints are temples of HS, thus right to worship them, first with lowest form of worship, then with higher, and finally with the highest form of all.
- Thomas Aquinas quotes Augustine, not Scripture, to justify it ... just as Jews quoted elders.

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Mark 7

- **Apostasy usually starts small...**

- Easter: connected with East and sunrise; the transfer of celebration of Ostara, the old German divinity of the rising, health-bringing light, to the Christian Easter festival, was easy and natural, because all nature is a symbol of spirit... At first a free-will act, it gradually assumed the character of a fixed custom and ordinance of the church.

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Gregory I (590-604) fixed Wed. of the 6th week before Easter, ASH WEDNESDAY as the beginning of it. Priests & people sprinkled themselves with dust and ashes in token of their perishableness and repentance. In days preceding the beginning of Lent, populace gave themselves up to unrestrained merriment; this abuse later became legitimized in all Catholic countries. (Cf. Mardi Gras, Shrove Tuesday [Fat Tuesday], the last day before Lent, etc.

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Holy week also has prominent days – Palm Sunday, commemorating Lord's entry into Jeru.; Maundy Thursday (fr. maunds [baskets] in which the king of England distributed alms to certain poor; Good Friday, day of deepest penance and fasting; Great Sabbath, day of Lord's repose in the grave and descent into Hades.) —Sch. III, 400-404

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Mark 7

1. The attack, 1-5
2. The hypocrisy, 6
3. Makes worship vain, 7
4. Apostasy, 8
5. Nullifies Word of God, 9-13
 - Bible: honor parents, Ex.20:12
 - Human tradition: loophole; a way out

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.

Mark 7

5. Nullifies Word of God, 9-13

- 9: render useless
- 13: nullify, make ineffective

NOT: *in spite of your tradition*

BUT: *through your tradition*

- Today: Easter and Christmas replace assembling on every first day of the week

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.
2. It is not worship in spirit and truth.

John 4

1. Object: God

- Easter based on Anglo-Saxon Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.
2. It is not worship in spirit and truth.

John 4

1. Object: God
2. Manner of expression: in spirit
 - Jews praised Word, but practiced human tradition (on level of Samaritan errors)

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.
2. It is not worship in spirit and truth.

John 4

1. Object: God
2. Manner of expression: in spirit
3. Content of expression: in truth
 - Samaritans emphasized right attitude, not God's revelation

Jn.17:17,
TRUTH

Illustrated in Lord's supper

1. Day, Ac.20:7
2. Elements, 1 Co.11
3. Purpose, 1 Co.11

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.
2. It is not worship in spirit and truth.

John 4

1. Object: God
2. Manner of expression: in spirit
3. Content of expression: in truth
 - Samaritans emphasized right attitude, not God's revelation

1 K.12
Jeroboam

Changed objects, places,
personnel, times.
At what point did he go
astray? [1 K.13]

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.
2. It is not worship in spirit and truth.

Easter customs – pagan connections

‘The rabbit was sacred to the Germanic goddess ‘Eastre,’ the goddess of fertility and springtime... And if you stop to think about it, rabbits are an extremely appropriate symbol for springtime, because of what they are famous for – having more rabbits’ – Wm. Helms

‘It appears there was a custom among ancient Egyptians & Romans to give eggs as presents at this time of year. That was intended to insure that the recipient would have a very fertile or productive year.’ With the advent of Christianity, the egg, still taken as symbol of life, was simply borrowed to be a symbol of the Chr. holiday. The earliest Easter eggs were dyed red to represent the blood shed by Christ. People rarely discard a holiday. When a new system of beliefs comes along, you simply come up with a new mythic structure to explain why you were celebrating that holiday in the first place’ – Helms

1. Easter is a doctrine of men.
2. It is not worship in spirit and truth.
3. **It causes division.**

Second – third centuries: much controversy over proper date.

Asia Minor churches: Jewish chronology; celebrated Passover on 14th Nisan.

Others on day of week in which it occurred, making the 'Christian Passover' always fall on Thursday, celebrated resurrection on Sunday.

Difference in Roman & Greek orthodox...