

The Acts of the Apostles

[Wed. Oct. 8, 2014] Acts Series, Acts 12.1-4 - Craig A. Thurman

After our Lord's resurrection and ascension, we saw the continued gathering of the church which was at Jerusalem. (Acts 1.4) Remember that these were all Jewish saints, or at least proselytes of the nation of Israel who had believed in Jesus Christ. Following this was the constitution of the first Samaritan church; (Acts 8.14, 15-17) after which came the first Gentile church. (Acts 10.44, 45; 11.15-17) In Acts 11.22, 26 all of this is brought together into another church which was located at Antioch, the capitol city of Syria. Here, all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, were allowed to be in same body of Christ. They are not identified by their ethnicity, but rather, for the first time they are called Christians. (Acts 11.26)

Did we notice that there was no overt manifestation of the Holy Spirit as there was in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, or in Samaria and Caesarea when He fell upon them there in their respective places. But from this point forward (but for the Ephesian brethren in Acts 19), there is no public outpouring of the Holy Spirit. What was the purpose for the public display of the outpouring, baptism, gift of the Holy Spirit? It was to let them know that He had come, and to whom He had come specifically. That He had come was incontestably demonstrated at Pentecost. To whom He has come has been revealed in only these three churches, not every church, but only these three. The Holy Spirit has come to every properly ordered church whose disciples have professed faith in Jesus Christ, voluntarily received baptism by immersion at the hands of the disciples of churches, and are associated as one for the purpose of glorifying Jesus Christ.

Now there are two Scriptures in particular that are used by some that virtually destroy very important distinctions that do exist in the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are:

*Ga 3:27 For **as many** of you **as** have been baptized into Christ **have put on** ἐνεδύσασθε Christ.*

28 (c. A.D. 58, 59) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

*Col 3:10 And **have put on** ἐνδυσάμενοι the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him ...*

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11 (c. A.D.60) Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Since we have put on Christ, we should have learned that it was not because of any of these things. God does not treat us according to whether we are circumcised or not, whether intellectual or not, a master or slave, male or female, Jew or Gentile. He came to us without respect to our *persons*.

*1Pe 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, **who without respect of persons** judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear ...*

These Scriptures do not teach that there are not distinguishable characteristics in a church. There are kinds of people, men, women, boys, and girls, duties and gifts that distinguish one person from another.

Now, in light of this new merger of both Jew and Gentile believers in Jesus Christ into the same church, there are details that are yet to be hammered out upon the anvil of the truth of the Word of God. While the *oneness* in faith or walk with Christ found in Gal. 3.28; Col.3.11 is true, for them these Scriptures have not been written yet. Right now, most of these churches are steeped in Judaism, and they must learn, and shall be taught the significance of the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit's direction through the prophets and apostles, the composing of the N.T. Scriptures, the persecution of the church by unbelieving Israel, will all serve to help distance the churches from the Old Covenant, from the nation of Israel, and from Judaism, Temple worship, and the synagogues so that they shall appreciate their own church of which they are a part.

Heb 8:13 (c. A.D. 62) In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

1 ¶ Now about that time

Which follows the fact of a prophesied famine, and the coming of Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem. (Their return back to Antioch is noted in verse 25.)

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Albert Barnes' Chronology puts this after A.D. 44 – 45; his commentary remarks has chapter 12 beginning at A.D. 47

The Interpreter's Bible, Copyright 1954 by Pierce and Washabaaugh in the USA, vol. 9, p154, 'It must have happened in A.D. 44, the year that Herod died (Josephus *Antiquities* XIX.8.2), for it is plain that Peter left Jerusalem just before Herod's death, probably in the spring of 44.'

Herod the king

This Herod is Agrippa I. He is grandson to Herod the Great who is recorded as having commissioned the slaying of all of the infants at Bethlehem, and son of Aristobulus. (Mt.2.16; Lk.1.5 cf. John Gill) This is not Herod Antipas who had John the Baptist beheaded. Agrippa II is mentioned in Acts 25.13. Rather than having to depend on external sources to confirm the Word of God let us keep in mind that this is the information that the Lord deemed we need to know:

We know that one Herod died very early in the gospel period:

*Mt 2:19 But when **Herod was dead**, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ...*

*Mt 2:22 But when he heard that **Archelaus did reign** in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither ...*

That another Herod had John the Baptist executed:

*Mr 6:16 But when **Herod** heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.*

*Lu 3:19 But **Herod the tetrarch**, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,*

*Ac 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with **Herod the tetrarch**, and Saul.*

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And whether this is the same as above, doesn't really matter as far as doctrine or practice of the church. Whichever Herod this is he shall die shortly:

*Ac 12:21 And upon a set day **Herod**, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.*

22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

*Herod the king
stretched forth*

ἐπέβαλεν; 3rd p sing, aor 2, ind, act of ἐπιβάλλω; ἐπί upon + βάλλω to cast.

his hands to vex (to hurt)

to vex, κακῶσαι; aor 1, infin, act of κακῶω; root κακός; this verb κακῶω is used 6 times in the N.T.: Acts 7.6 entreat them evil; 7.19 evil entreated; 14.2 made ... evil affected; 18.10 to hurt; 1Pe.3.13 will harm.

The only place where this is in the aor 1, infin, act:

*Ac 18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee **to hurt** κακῶσαι thee: for I have much people in this city.*

certain

τίνες, acc pl indef of τίς; τίνες is used 25 times in the KJV. Most often it is translated *certain*. Especially refer to Ro.11.14; 1Co.9.22; 2Pe.3.9.

Herod reached out to hurt *certain* of the church. **He purposely targeted the apostles for persecution.** What had they done to provoke his hatred? Nothing.

of the church.

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2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

Tradition says that James was beheaded in Jerusalem, AD.45. He was the first martyred of the twelve apostles during our Lord's earthly ministry. It was his mother who had asked of Jesus that her sons, James and John, be allowed to sit at His right hand. And the other 10 disciples became incensed with them over this.

Mt 20:21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

*23 And he saith unto them, **Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.***

24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

Stephen was the first disciple listed as martyred. But there were others of the disciples before James who we know nothing but for what Paul tells us in:

*Ac 26:10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; **and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.***

James, son of Zebedee (Boanerges, Thunder, Mk.3.17); son, brother, fisherman, disciple, and apostle. We know nothing of a trial, a process, a charge, nothing but this single, statement. Why? We are not told. But what we do see is that there are those who take pleasure in the death of the saints of God. Here the Jews took a pleasure in the execution of James. And when the wicked find a pleasure that unites them they are made even worse.

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Pv.4.14 ¶ Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

John, James' brother was last mentioned in Acts 8.14, when he was sent down to Samaria with Peter. He is not named again in the book of Acts. He will have a mention in Gal.2.9. And he writes the last four book of the N.T: I, II, and III John, and Revelation. Otherwise we know nothing from Scripture when he, or the other apostles, moved out from Jerusalem, but tradition records that they did move into the nations.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews,

Herod was moved out of the pleasure that it brought to others of the Jews, perhaps enjoying the appearance of national *infighting*. If these Jews could fight among themselves they would not have so much time and wasted effort complaining against Roman rule.

he proceeded further to take

to take, συλλαβεῖν; aor 2, infin, act of συλλαμβάνω; σύν with, together + λαμβάνω to take; This Greek word is used in Acts 1.16; 23.27; 26.21.

The only places where this is in the aor 2, infin, act:

*Mt 26:55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for **to take** συλλαβεῖν me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.*

*Mr 14:48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves **to take** συλλαβεῖν me?*

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Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

It might seem superfluous to say this, but this is not a church observance. This is an O.T. practice that was given to Israel. (Ex.12.14-15) Incidentally, because the first churches were in and around Jerusalem and Israel, and Jews they partook of this festival, BUT not because it was a church ordinance. However, the churches of the 2nd century began to err by observing Passover.

The New Bible Commentary: Revised, Copyright 1970 Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, England, p.987, 'The days of Unleavened Bread commenced on Passover eve, Nisan 14, and lasted till Nisan 21 (cfr.20.6). Nisan 14 fell in that year (AD 44) on May 1 – an unusually late date owing to the intercalation of a second month of Adar that year from March 19 to April 17 inclusive.'

Clearly, the feast of Unleavened bread and Passover are the same feast.

*Lu 22:1 Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, **which is called the Passover.***

*Eze 45:21 In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have **the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.***

4 And when he **had** apprehended

πιάσας; nom, sing, masc, part, aor 1, act of πιάζω. Usually if the aorist is not in the indicative mood would not show the time *had*; It does appear that the indicative mood of the succeeding verb is brought forward because it is lacking there (*had put*) with that indicative.

*Ac 3:7 And he **took** πιάσας him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

him, he put him

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ἔθετο; 3rd p sing, aor 2, **ind**, mid of τίθημι; ἔθετο is used eight times in Scripture: Mt.14.3 *put*; Acts 1.7 *hath put*; 12.4 *put*; 19.21 *purposed*; 20.28 *hath made*; 1Co.12.18, 28 *hath set*; 1Thes.5.9 *hath appointed*. The middle voice brings the action back upon the subject *he ...he put him*

in εἰς prison φυλακήν, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers

Gill: ‘... each quaternion consisted of four soldiers consists. ...and it may be, that the reason of all this caution, and strong guard, **might be, because it was remembered that he, and the rest of the apostles, when committed to the same prison some years ago, were delivered out of it ...**’ (cf. Acts 5.25)

to keep

to keep, φυλάσσειν, pres, infin, act of φυλάσσω.

Only place this present, infinitive, active verb is used:

*Ac 16:4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for **to keep φυλάσσειν**, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.*

him; intending (willing)

βουλόμονος; nom, sing, masc, part, pres of βούλομαι; βουλόμονος is used seven times in the N.T.: Acts 12.4 *intending*; 22.30 *because ... would*; 23.28 *when ... would*; Mk. 15.15; Acts 27.43; He.6.17; 2Pe.3.9 **willing**.

after μετὰ Easter (or, Passover)

πάσχα, Pascha (not Easter) is used 29 times in the N.T., and but for this instance in our present text it is always translated *Passover*.

to bring him forth

to bring ... forth, ἀναγαγεῖν; aor 2, infin of ἀνάγω; ἀνά up, new, re- + ἄγω to lead, conduct.

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Only place this aor. 2 infinitive is used in the N.T.:

*Ro 10:7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, **to bring up** ἀναγαγεῖν Christ again from the dead.)*

to the people.

Herod is focused on the leadership of the church which is at Jerusalem.
And the unbelieving Jews were happy for this.

The Easter Holiday Considered in the Light of Scripture

Prefatory Remarks

It is necessary at this place to correct a teaching that I have misunderstood for a number of years. So please be patient as you read this through to the end. This might be a sore spot for some and it is in no way my intention to create offense. Prayerfully take these few moments to consider being as open and objective to God's Word as is becoming His children. Let us be subject to His Word, if it be found in this message today. There are times when it is necessary for us to have a change of mind. The only way to know if this is the time is to give an ear to the Word of God. *'He that hath an ear, let him hear.'* Our topic tonight concerns the celebration of Easter, and will as a result lead us also to another *Christianized* holiday. The occasion for this discussion arises from the single use of the word *Easter* in our KJV Bibles, so this is not an agenda of mine, or any hobby horse upon which I ride out of a personal ambition to drive people away. Had I a choice it would be easier to pass over this subject. But my calling of God requires a proper handling of the Word of God and that sound instruction be given to the saints of God.

It has been my assumption for years that Easter, as used in the KJV Bible, was a reference to a Pagan holiday that had coincided with the Jewish Festival of Unleavened Bread, also called Passover. It was my understanding that Herod was waiting until after his Pagan holiday, Easter (Ishtar), before bringing Peter out of prison to be executed. That is simply not true and has no biblical support whatsoever. Albert Barnes say it very well.

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Barnes' Notes, vol. 10, Acts, p.190, 'The word *Easter* now denotes the festival observed by many Christian churches in honour 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.**' (Bolding added)

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Copyright 1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Reprint, February 1983, vol. 2, p. 888, 'The word does not properly occur in Scripture, although AV has it in Acts 12.4 where it stands for Passover ... **There is no trace of Easter celebration in the NT** ... (bolding added)

There was no such holiday as Easter in the days when the book of Acts was written, much less in the days that these things actually transpired. I repent of having taught this error and will adopt the truth of the Word of God to my thinking from this day forward.

First let's consider origin of the Easter

First these two citations.

Barnes' Notes, vol. 10, Acts, p.190, '*Intending after Easter.* ...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 honour of whom a festival was celebrated by our pagan ancestors in the month of April (Webster).'

Church History, C. B. Hassell & Sylvester Hassell, p.603 'The word *Easter* is derived from *Eastre*, **the Anglo-Saxon goddess of Spring**, to whom the fourth month answering to our April, was dedicated. The ninth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica well remarks: "The ecclesiastical historian, Socrates, states with perfect truth that neither Christ nor His Apostles enjoined the keeping of this or any other festival. The sanctity of special times of places was an idea quite alien from the early Christian mind.'

Easter came from the Christless masses of the nations, especially among the Germanic tribes. It was the name of a goddess among many gods. She was celebrated in the springtime at the time of the vernal equinox. This is when the

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sun begins to overtake the darkness; more light to the day. Generally beginning about March 21st.

The Apostate Church Assimilates Easter

Easter has no basis in Christianity.

As John Owen remarked, "... as every undue presumption hath one lameness or other accompanying it, – it is truth alone which is square and steady." (*John Owen*, vol. 15, p.152)

Easter is derived from pagan practices. There is little doubt that the infusion of *Easter*, was relatively easy being Pascha came at about the same time of the year. Easter is nothing less than a Christianized, Paganized, Jewish festival of Passover.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Copyright 1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Reprint, February 1983, vol. 2, p. 888, 'The Eng. word comes from the AS *Eastre* or *Esteræ*, a Teutonic [Germanic] goddess to whom sacrifice was offered in April, **so the name was transferred to the paschal feast.**' (bolding added)

Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Copyright 1868, 1896 by Hurd and Houghton and Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Reprinted 1981 by Baker Book House Co., vol. 1, p.637, 'There was a Teutonic goddess *Ostera*, whose festival was celebrated early in the Spring by the Saxons, and the occurrence of the Easter festival at the same season **made it easier for them to give up their heathen feast, and perhaps led to their attaching thereto a name to which they were already accustomed.** Francis Garden.'

Sometime in the early centuries of Christianity, probably late 1st and 2nd, as a result of the churches failing to make a distinction between the Jewish festival of Passover (Greek *πάσχα*, Pasche) and the Lord's Supper they began to incorporate a holiday and celebrated the Paschal feast, or Passover festival. The relationship that both the Jewish and Pagan festivals have to spring appears to give Easter the focus on the propose day of Christ's resurrection. This late preacher proves the point that many fail to discern between Passover and the Lord Supper.

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Acts, J. Vernon McGee, vol.1, p.136, 'The word "Easter" should be "Passover." **Actually, they are at the same time** because you remember that Jesus ate the meal with His disciples just before He was crucified.' (bolding and underlining added)

Since the Israelites had this holiday season of seven days, and being the Lord's Supper is (supposedly) an extension of this festival the rationale would be that the churches should do the same. Thus churches incorporated *Holy Days*, holidays into their services. Once this holiday becomes established practice the next issue is to come to agreement about when it should be observed. Therefore a council was held in Nice, June 14th – July 25th, A.D.325 to settle the disagreement. While it is thought to have settled the matter the east and western Catholic (meaning, Universal) churches split.

Ante-Nicene Church Fathers, vol. 1, p.310, 'At the council of Nice, the rule for the observance of Easter was finally settled by the whole Church ... (cf. *ibid.* vol. 5, p.126, fn. 6)

Introduction of Easter into England

The heretical practice of Easter, adopted from the Germanic tribes by the apostate church, ultimately carries over into England. Austin is likely to have been the one to introduce this to England sometime after A.D. 600. It was A.D. 664 that England would adopt the Roman system for calculating the days of celebration so that everyone could observe in unison.

It is the English state church that took up this debate in A.D.664 at Whitby. (cf. *History of England and the British Commonwealth*, Laurence M. Larson, Copyright 1924 Henry Hold and Co., p. 21)

The *O.E.D, Compact Edition*, vol.1, p.827 records the celebration of Easter as early as Aelfred A.D. 890. A.D.1175 we can read of Easter Sunday.

c. **1175** *Lamb Hom. 45* Uwilc sunne-dei is to locan alswa ester dei

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The outgrowth of this error in England is phenomenal. And one can truly appreciate the need for the Word of God coming into the native language of the country when once we realize how easily the masses can be affected with such error. But when error takes a foothold, but for the grace of God it is hardly diminished. Even the people of God become infected with church holiday fever and spend their lives afflicted with it, for some reason oblivious to it though it is a glaring error. It is sometime beyond explanation. God deliver us from the errors of which we are unaware!

The Early Use of Easter in English Translations of the Bible

The climate of England, to have a Bible of their own, in their own tongue has begun to rise and swell, though fiercely resisted by the false church of Catholicism. There is a powerful wave of Reformation vying for change. This movement begins to see Scriptures come into the hands of the common people. Among those who would stake their lives to bringing the word of God to the English masses are two notable men named John Wycliffe and William Tyndale. While many call them reformers, these men were not of the apostate church and, though they would have joyed at any reforms in a religion whose use and abuse of civil powers has wielded the sword against all dissenters, they kept to the work of the ministry and calling of God to put the Scriptures into the hands of the religiously oppressed masses.

Wycliffe never uses the word Easter in his version of the Bible (A.D.1380). He translated from the Latin Vulgate into English. This may account for the absence of the word Easter. It is not because he was unfamiliar with that holiday. He mentions Easter Monday, perhaps a reference to the day of the week during this Christianized festival.

O.E.D. Compact Edition, vol. 1, p.827, 'c. **1380** Wyclif *Serm Sel. Wks, II, 133*
On Eester monedai'

It is as if Easter became as *ecclesiastical* a term in the English language as baptism or church because William Tyndale, the father of the King James Version Bible, uses *Easter* very liberally. But perhaps he was following suit with his reformer predecessors, Myles Coverdale and John Rogers. We would note these numerous

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occurrences of Easter in their versions. Keep in mind that these versions precede the King James Version Bible released in A. D. 1611.

Tyndale/Rogers/Coverdale translation which has Easter/Ester in Ez.45.21; Mt. 26.2, **17**, 18, 19; Mk. 14.1, 12, 14, 16; Lk. 2.41; 22.1, 8, 11, 13, 15; Jn. 2.13, 23; 6.4; 11.55; 12.1; 13.1; 18.39; 19.14; Acts 12.4; 20.6; 1Co.5.7; He.11.28. (**At least 27 times**) But I cannot say if that is someone's compilation of versions, or if there is such a version of the English Bible.

Coverdale (1535) Ez.45.21 confirmed by reference in *O.E.D. Compact Edition*, vol.1, p. 827.

Tyndale (1534)

Mt. 26.2, 18, 19; Mk. 14.1, 12, 14, 16; Lk. 2.41; 22.1, **7**, 8, 11, 13, 15; Jn. 2.13, 23; 6.4; 11.55; 12.1; 13.1; 18.39; 19.14; Acts 12.4; 20.6; 1Co.5.7; He.11.28; I could not confirm Ez. 45.21. (27 verses)

Cranmer (1539)

Mt. 26.2, 19; Mk. 14.1; Lk. 2.41; Jn. 2.13, 23; 6.4; 11.55; 12.1; 13.1; 18.39; 19.14; Acts 12.4; I could not confirm Ez. 45.21. (14 verses)

Geneva (1557)

Mt. 26.2, 19; Mk. 14.1, 12, 14, 16; Lk. 2.41; 22.1, 8, 11, 13, 15; Jn. 2.13, 23; 6.4; 11.55; 12.1; 13.1; 18.39; 19.14; Acts 12.4; 1Co.5.7; He.11.28; I could not confirm Ez. 45.21. (24 verses)

Geneva (1599)

Has removed ever occurrence of the word Easter from this version.

We can see that this Christianize, Paganized, Jewish festival had become so popular that to mention *Easter* was as common as repeating a day of the week. It was for this that it found its way into the Scriptures.

A Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings, vol. 1, p.635, 'The anachronism [meaning, out of place] of AV was inherited from older Vss which avoided, **as far as possible, expressions which could not be understood by the People.** A. C. Headlam.' (bolding and underlining added.)

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Right or wrong, the fact is, *Easter* has become a part of history and in the Scriptures. The masses of a pseudo-religious people readily understood what the term referred to and therefore it was accepted as a properly *Christianized* term. This does in no way legitimize the observing of holidays by the true churches of Jesus Christ, but we must acknowledge the fact it was a received, common term.

The King James Version's Retention of the Word Easter

The King James Version has in Acts 12.4 retained the only instance of the ancient and heretical holiday called Easter. While many would point to this and renew calls for a new translation of the Bible, there are some things we need to consider in this vein of thought.

The use of the term *Easter* in our KJV Bible gives us an occasion to speak against this Christianized, Paganized, Jewish festival popularly celebrated by most of Christendom today. But contrary to some who claim it condones a false practice it does not.

The King James Version is replete with a self-interpretive device of repetition. The Proverbs is a good example of this device. We read a phrase of a statement and then you have a restatement of the same principal immediately following. We have the same with Easter. We are already informed that *Then were the days of Unleavened Bread*. (vs. 3) The days of Unleavened Bread and Passover are the same Jewish festival.

Eze 45:21 In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

Lu 22:1 Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

The English saints in the day that the KJV was completed (1611) understood that Easter referred to a holiday that emphasized the day of Christ's resurrection, which closed the Paschal feast. This one instance in all of Scripture poses no problem for us to understand the season, and the festival to which it refers. For

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the inclusion of this one word we are forced to consider the truth about the terrible and antichrist history that stands behind it. It also presents a good opportunity to touch on another sacred cow, the Christianized, Pagan holiday called Christmas.

What Should the Saints of God Do about Christian Holidays?

The best things we can do is steer clear of all so-called *Christianized* holidays. These days are filled with error that cannot help the saints to walk in the truth. We cannot take to ourselves these *days* without sacrificing truth in our doctrine and in our lives. Christ is NOT held before others when we practice these things. At the Christianized, Pagan festival of Christmas there is a man who represents Christ, being omniscient, to whom we teach our children to confess their sins, he brings them reward and punishments, there are lights and wreathes to keep away evil spirits, an evergreen trees erected in the house, and much revelry. Then there is the issue is wasting our substance to buy things that we would otherwise never have done. And for what? If we could only see that we have no Scriptural basis for this practice we could begin to denounce it. What truth is there in Christmas? There weren't three wise men. They did not come to the manger? Angels did not sing. Jesus wasn't born at this time of the year. When we stop to consider these things, and scrutinize them with the Word of God, we discover one error after another.

And what of Easter? The symbols of bunnies, chicks, eggs, spring themes, sunrise observances, baskets, new clothes, baptisms, all descended from early paganism. What biblical truth is contained in this, we should ask ourselves? The claims of a Friday crucifixion and burial are false. The claim for a first day of the week resurrection is false. The very core purpose for this holiday is a ruse. It is not based on any truth whatsoever from a biblical standpoint. But so many continue to justify these practices because it has Jesus in it. Have we been deceived? If it is false it cannot glorify our Lord Jesus Christ or our Heavenly Father. Dear saints of God, renew a commitment to abstain from all appearance of evil.

Jer 10:2 Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen ...

1Thes.5.21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

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22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

23 ¶ And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

While our flesh is habituated to these things, we can truly get clear of them if we have a genuine Bible-based conviction. Understand for yourself the teaching of the Word of God and then act. Believe the truth. Bear with the inconvenience, the temporal discomfort, and the continuous criticism. My personal experience has been one of great thanksgiving to God for His deliverance from such a grievous and fruitless exercise. The things of the world have a hold on us that we are so unaware of; that is until we begin to try to get clear of them. God grant us the faith to stand more for Christ in every way that He reveals to us through His Word.

Joh 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

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