

How did we get from Passover to Easter?

Introduction

Today, I'd like to begin focusing on Passover, seeing that we're just a little over a month away from observing this holyday again. I believe it's good to gear our minds in the direction of studying and meditating on the Passover.

I've been observing Passover since 1998. Prior to that, I grew up celebrating Easter Sunday. Easter in our home wasn't a time of hunting eggs or being visited by the Easter bunny. My parents didn't teach us those things. Easter for us was a special church day, the day we celebrated the resurrection of the Lord. Christ died for our sins, and was resurrected on the third day. That was Easter in my mind as a child, and as a teenager.

The most different thing we did was take the Lord's Supper, focus on the resurrection accounts of Christ, and sometimes have what is called a "Sunrise Service" on Easter Sunday morning. We'd get up early and start a church meeting before the sun came up, and we would celebrate the resurrection as a church, while the sun rose in the east. This was said to be in remembrance of Christ resurrecting early in the morning on the first day of the week.

Each year at the same time, I would see Easter bunnies and egg hunts, and like today, I would see most churches advertise these. I do remember a few times going to a friends house on Easter Sunday afternoon and looking for hidden eggs. I soon found out about something called the "prize egg." I learned that was the egg with some money in it, so that was the egg I wanted to find.

When I first observed Passover in 1998, I began wondering: "How did we get from Passover to Easter? Did Yeshua observe Easter? Did his apostles observe Easter? How did we get from there to here?"

I wondered about these things because if you read the OT, you do not find any special, holy time called Easter. Someone will properly respond, "Well, that's because Jesus had not died and resurrected yet." **That's a good response**, but when we read the NT, I still find no special, holy time called Easter Sunday, and you can't say that Yeshua had not died and resurrected, because that is recorded for us at the end of each gospel. Then, through the book of Acts and the Epistles of the NT, I can't find any apostle, or anyone in the early apostolic assembly, celebrating what we now know as Easter.

Easter is celebrated in the spring time, so when we look to spring time on the Biblical calendar, we do find that an observance takes place among the people of Israel in the OT, known in English as Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Origin of Passover

Passover originated in Egypt with the deliverance of the children of Israel from harsh slavery. In Exodus 1, the Israelites began to be enslaved by the Egyptians, due to the Egyptians fearing that the Israelites would outnumber them and overpower them.

During this slavery an edict is made in Egypt, that any son born to a Hebrew family was to be killed by throwing the baby into the Nile river.

We then read in Exodus 2 of a Hebrew family (from the tribe of Levi) who has a baby boy they keep secret. The mother hides her son for 3 months, but then puts him in a basket, coats the basket with pitch, and places it into the river. The baby boy ends up being found and raised in an Egyptian home. His name is called *Moshe*. The Egyptian princess who found him knew he was a Hebrew baby, and in Hebrew *Moshe* means "to draw out (from the water)." Moshe/Moses grows up an Egyptian in practice, but later flees Egypt, and is called by the Almighty to go back to Egypt, and speak on Yahweh's behalf, telling Pharaoh, "Let my people go."

Yahweh sends a series of 10 plagues upon the land of Egypt, because Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go, and this leads up to one final plague upon Egypt, the death of the firstborn. We read in Exodus 11:1, 4-5: "And Yahweh said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence... And Moses said, Thus saith Yahweh, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts."

When we keep reading into Exodus 12, we see an entire section on how to observe a feast that surrounds this final plague. The feast is called in English: Passover, or in Hebrew "*Pesac*." The word *pesac* means "an exemption, sparing, or immunity." It comes from a root word *pasac* meaning "to hop or skip over." We see both these words in what is called a word play or a Hebrew word pun in Exodus 12:26-27 (KJV).

Exo 12:26-27 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? (27) That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S **passover**, who **passed over** the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

The first "passover" there in verse 27 is the word *pesac*. The second "passed over" is the word *pasac*. So the Hebrew word pun says, "It is the sacrifice of Yahweh's *pesac*, who *pasac'ed* over the houses."

The idea is that through observing the ordinance of *Pesac*, the Israelites could save, spare, or exempt their firstborn sons from the final plague. Yahweh would *pasac* or "skip over" their houses. He'd pass-over them. Thus the English compound word "passover."

The Passover instructions centered around a year-old male lamb that was slaughtered, roasted whole, and then eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The Passover meal was the beginning of a seven day feast of unleavened bread, which came to **memorialize**

the first Passover, when the Israelites left Egypt in a hurry and had to make quick, flat bread instead of the traditional loaf which was a more lengthy, slow process.

Passover at Yeshua's Time

Now, fast-forward about 1,500 years to the time of Yeshua our Messiah, the man from Nazareth that we claim as our Savior, our teacher, and our example. Christians call themselves "disciples of Jesus," and the word disciple means student or learner. In other words, a disciple of Yeshua is to watch Yeshua, listen to Yeshua, and then seek to imitate him.

Well, in Luke chapter 2, beginning at verse 40 (through 42) we read the following: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of the Almighty was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast."

So Yeshua was born (at the beginning of Luke 2), and here towards the end of Luke 2 we see him at 12 years of age (traveling with his parents Miriam & Yoseph) to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem (the designated focal point for the feasts for many years).

If his parents traveled to Jerusalem for Passover every year, that would mean Yeshua had been observing Passover as a child since birth, kinda like my son David here.

Now... this is a 12 year old Yeshua. Fast-forward from here to his early 30's. According to Luke 3:23 Yeshua was about 30 years old when he began his ministerial work.

Just before his death, right here in Luke (same book) we read in chapter 22:1: "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." The entire feast from the sacrifice of the Passover lamb until the end of Unleavened Bread was sometimes referred to by shorthand as "Passover."

So in Luke 22:1 Passover was drawing near, and if you keep reading into verse 8, Yeshua says to Peter and John (his disciples): "Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat." There's a huge debate about whether or not Yeshua actually did eat the Passover that year. I'm of the belief that he did not, but that's not the focus of this lesson. I'm just showing you that here at the end of Yeshua's earthly life, the Passover is still being observed.

Passover in Paul's Epistle

Next I'd like to mention a point *after* the resurrection and ascension of Yeshua to heaven, Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 5, where he is dealing with removing an unrepentant sinner from the congregation.

In Paul's instruction to the church, he uses the Passover as an illustration. Remember that Paul is a Hebrew who grew up doing Hebrew things. During Passover, the leavened bread was removed from the homes of people who served Yahweh.

Remember that this was done in order to remember how the Hebrews at the time of the Exodus had to leave Egypt in a hurry, and make quick, flat bread to eat rather than a loaf of bread (which takes more time to make). No leavened bread was to be eaten, or to be inside of a person's living quarters, during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You'll find this in Exodus 12:15, 19-20.

So Paul takes the practice of removing leaven from one's home, and uses it as an allegory into removing unrepentant sin from a congregation before it permeates or spreads through the church. Paul is saying that this man's open, unrepentant sin is like leaven. It will move through the whole batch of dough. The unrepentant man is the piece of leaven. The dough is the church.

In writing this, Paul says, "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." His point is a spiritual one. If Yeshua is the sacrificed Passover lamb (spiritually), then the leaven should be removed spiritually (unrepentant sinner). Keeping the literal feast loses its significance if we aren't really interested in living lives of holiness and separation from sin. The Christian life is a life of penitence, repentance, and constant examination of ourselves which leads to a removal of sin as we learn and grow.

So Paul says, "Excommunicate the unrepentant sinner from the fellowship. Get the leaven out."

My point is that Paul uses *Passover* as a teaching illustration, and it was at Passover time when he wrote this, or either when the Corinthians read it, because at the end of 1 Corinthians, 16:8, he says, "I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost." I believe this implies that he is writing before Pentecost (the next commanded, annual feast), and it makes perfect sense that he would have used a Passover illustration in his letter at a time when Passover would be on the minds of the believers.

Why does Acts 12:4 Say Easter?

So what's up with Acts 12:4's use of Easter? It's there in the KJV... but in the NKJV, NASB, RSV, and the 1560 Geneva Bible (which came before the 1611 KJV), Acts 12:4 reads *Passover* instead of Easter. How in the world did we get from Passover to Easter? Why did the KJ bible translators make the conscious decision to use "Easter" in Acts 12:4? I hope to answer these questions, and deal with further material in the next lesson.

I will close this lesson with something that will whet your whistle, and get your minds stirring for next week. For the last 20 years I have told several people that I believe Easter is a mistranslation in the KJV. However, because of some information that is new to me, I no longer believe that Easter is a mistranslation, or a bad translation, in the KJV of Acts 12:4. I believe there is scholarly reason for the KJB translators to use Easter here. (I told you I would get your minds stirring.)

All I ask is that you hear me out before jumping to conclusions.

Proverbs 18:13, in the KJV, says: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

If you disagree with me when I am finished with these lessons, that is fine. I couldn't see what I will show you for the last 20 years, so I will be patient with you just as Yahweh has been patient with me. I feel like Yahweh has been telling me over the last two weeks, "Matthew, don't ever stop studying." I began studying for this series in hopes of bringing something fresh. I didn't just want to rely on old study notes of my own.

Well... I can guarantee you, what we will cover over the next few weeks will be fresh material.

I'm certain this fresh material will upset some people in the Messianic or Hebrew Roots movement. But frankly, I don't care.

Let me explain that statement a little more. I don't upset people for the sake of upsetting; I don't believe in purposefully provoking people to anger. But... I'm not interested in being confined to any box or denomination. It doesn't matter to me if in one lesson I upset a Baptist, and in the next lesson I upset a Pentecostal, and in the next lesson I upset someone in the Messianic, Torah Keeping movement. I don't teach out of peer pressure, and I don't believe certain things in order to please certain people. I study the Bible, and believe what I see to be truth, in order to please the heavenly Father.

I'm thankful that we can continue to study, grow in understanding, and come to greater spiritual maturity as our Father leads us.

Is Easter a Pagan Word?

Review

I ended my last lesson telling you that for the last 20 years I have told numerous people that the word "Easter" in the KJV of Acts 12:4 is a mistranslation. I then told you that I no longer believe that to be true. I now believe that Easter is a good, scholarly, historical translation. I believe the KJ Bible translators did not make a blunder, or miss a word here.

KJ Translators

I'd like to begin today by looking at the translators on the committee of the King James Bible. It's called the *King James Bible*, because in the early 17th century, King James of England commissioned 54 of the best-learned-Christian scholars to issue a new English translation of the Bible to be read publicly in the Church of England. Prior to 1611 there existed several English translations of the Bible, done primarily in the 1500's, and mostly by single individuals rather than a committee.¹

¹ I'm taking my historical information from "A Visual History of the English Bible," by Donald L. Brake, as well as the website KingJamesBibleTranslators.org, which pulls from biographies written about several of the men on the committee of this 1611 translation.

A man by the name of Richard Bancroft (the bishop of London) constructed 15 translation principles to be used during the translation process. One of the principles was that the English translations from the 1500's be consulted, and specifically the Bishop's Bible (of 1568) to act as the guideline for their translation. The translators would not alter an already established English translation, unless they felt strongly that an established translation did not correctly convey the Hebrew or Greek manuscripts available to them at that time.

Lancelot Andrewes, one of the chief directors of the KJB, loved reading the Bible, and preaching the Bible. His sermon delivery and powerful content earned him the title "angel in the pulpit." Lancelot mastered at least 15 languages in his lifetime, including Arabic, Aramaic, and Syriac. Those who knew him well proclaimed him as a man of character and humility. He was a devout man who rose early in the morning, often spending 5 hours in prayer and meditation. People knew him as courageous, generous to the poor, and kind.

John Aglionby was another translator, predominantly of the NT text. John began college at Oxford at the age of 16 (in 1583). He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1587. A Masters in 1590. A Bachelor of Divinity in 1597, and a Doctorate of Divinity in 1600. In his adult life he was chaplain to Queen Elizabeth and King James I. He's described in a 17th century biography as: "A person well accomplished in all kinds of learning, profoundly read in the Church Fathers, and in school divinity, and exact linguist." He was also a highly skilled debater, and esteemed as one of the greatest students of the Greek language of any that lived in that age, and kept correspondence with learned men in every part of the Christian world.

Now that's just 2 out of the 54 translators. I could keep going, describing other highly skilled men that worked on the translation committee of the KJB, but my point is that **these were not ignorant men**. Were they perfect men? Of course not. Could they make mistakes? Of course. But they were more educated than the majority of Christians alive today, and that includes the majority of pastors and teachers in Christian churches. Bible historian Gordon Campbell wrote this in 2010:

"The population from which scholars can now be drawn is much larger than in the 17th century, but it would be difficult now to bring together a group of more than 50 scholars with the range of languages and knowledge of other disciplines that characterized the KJB translators."

Remember that these scholars were working together, not in isolation. In other words, one man can make a mistake much easier than 54. When something gets proofed by 54 intelligent minds, a mistake is just not as likely. In the multitude of council, there is safety.

Is Easter a Blunder?

Easter is usually put forth as a pagan blunder in the KJB, by those in the Messianic, Torah Keeping movement. This includes myself in the past. Acts 12:4 was the first place I would go to whenever I encountered a KJ only person. I'd explain to them that Easter is

a pagan term, and it should say "Passover." I'd point out that the Greek word behind the word Easter in Acts 12:4 is the word "pascha." And that is correct. That word has not changed. *Pascha* is the Greek word used in Acts 12:4.

What does Pascha Mean?

Pascha is a transliteration (letter-for-letter) from the Aramaic form (*pasha*: "skip over") of the Hebrew word we discussed last week, *pesac*. *Pesac* is the word used in Exodus 12 that we know today in English as Passover. So *pascha* is equal to *pesac*, and *pascha* is found 29x in the Greek NT.

One of those 29x times is in 1 Corinthians 5:7 where we read that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (KJV), the Greek word behind Passover is *pascha*. This shows us that the KJ translators used the English word Passover to translate *pascha* into English. Another one of those 29x is in the text from Luke 2:41 we looked at last week, where Yeshua's parents traveled to Jerusalem every year to keep the... *pascha* (it says in Greek). No doubt, they were keeping the *pesac* that originated in Exodus 12.

As a matter of fact, out of the 29x the Greek NT uses *pascha*, the KJB translators chose to translate that Greek word into English as "Passover" 28x. Only 1x did they translate it as Easter. So I would tell KJ only people that I met, "Don't you think they missed that one? I mean c'mon, 28x Passover and only 1x Easter?"

But... here's something to think about. Knowing that the KJB translators were learned scholars (much more than anyone I personally know in the Messianic, Torah Keeping movement), and knowing that they knew the word *pascha* *could be* properly rendered as passover (as they did so 28x in the NT), should we believe that all 54 of them just made a mistake, and put the name of a pagan goddess in Acts 12:4? I *think* that is highly unlikely, and I now *know* they did not mess up. I used to believe they made a mistake because of a lack of knowledge and study on my part for the last 20 years. I thought I had studied the word Easter sufficiently, but I had not done my due diligence.

At this point let me say that **there can be no doubt that pascha means pesac**. If it is a **transliteration** of the Aramaic form of *pesac* (Hebrew), then *pascha* means the same thing as *pesac* (Passover). **Acts 12:4 is talking about the Passover**. Let me also say at this point that **I still believe Easter is a legitimate English translation of pascha**. I know that sounds confusing to many of you right now, but please bare with me. I'm going to do my best to untangle what seems to be confusing.

A Common KJ Only Explanation

In studying this subject I have ran across an explanation given by most KJ only advocates, for the word Easter in Acts 12:4. These people believe that Easter is an exclusively pagan word (describing a fertility goddess), and that the KJ translators used Easter (in Acts 12:4) to refer to a pagan festival, as opposed to the Biblical festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread.

The contention is that since Peter was placed in prison during the days of unleavened bread, the Passover had already happened, because Passover takes place before the days of unleavened bread. So, *they say*, it had to be the pagan festival of Easter (which came *after* the Jewish feast) that Herod was waiting to pass in Acts 12:4.

This explanation is rather easily refuted. (1) The Greek word used in Acts 12:4 is *pascha* (pesac). (2) The days of unleavened bread are mentioned right in the context. (3) There are times in Scripture where the term "Passover" is shorthand for the entirety of the feast. Ezekiel 45:21 and Luke 22:1 both show that this is the case.

I do not believe the KJ translators were writing in the name of a pagan goddess in Acts 12:4. Remember, they translated pascha as "passover" 28x in the KJB.

Easter Charts in the 1611 KJV

In the front of the 1611 KJB, there is a chart titled, "To find Easter forever." It is a help to find where Easter falls on the church calendar each year. There's more to the history of the calculation of Easter, but let me briefly mention at this point that Easter is calculated by finding the first full moon after the spring equinox, and then by taking the Sunday that follows it. Easter falls on a different **date** on our calendar each year, and that is because it is *in part* determined by the solar-lunar calendar.

When the KJ translators included a chart in their Bible translation on how to find Easter, were they trying to find a pagan festival? No. They were charting out when to keep the festival of their church that celebrated the death and resurrection of Christ.

There are also other charts at the front of the 1611 KJB showing that the translators did not believe the word Easter referred to a pagan holiday. They mention certain psalms to be sung on Easter, or lessons to be read on Easter. These charts further disprove the claims in that last video. This shows that when the KJ translators used Easter in Acts 12:4, they were not thinking, "This is the pagan festival of Ishtar or Astarte that Luke is writing about when he writes in Greek, *pascha*."

Is the Word Easter Pagan?

It is so common among Torah Keeping believers to believe the word Easter itself is originally and exclusively a pagan word. You'll hear people say that Easter is Ishtar, or Astarte, or even Asherah (in OT scripture). **I used to say the same thing.** The problem is that when we who are not educated on ancient languages or the proper etymology of words... when we hear "Easter and Ishtar," we automatically think, "**Boom that proves it. Let's go force this on a Christian.**" We think that just because there is a similarity in the sound, they must be the same thing. Couple this ignorance with the fact that most in the Torah-keeping-movement are quick to accept something as pagan, simply because somebody says it is, and because it sounds good.

What did Easter Originally Mean?

I want to present to you that the word Easter has Germanic roots, and is basically a word that means "east" or "eastern," referring to the springtime due east sunrise at the time of

the spring equinox. Here's the explanation of the prefix "east" from Oxford's online etymological dictionary:

Old English *east*, *eastan* (adj., adv.) "east, easterly, eastward;" *easte* (n.), from Proto-Germanic *aust-* "east," literally "toward the sunrise" (source also of Old Frisian *ast* "east," *aster* "eastward," Dutch *oost* Old Saxon *ost*, Old High German *ostan*, German *Ost*, Old Norse *austr* "from the east"), from PIE root **aus-** (1) "to shine," especially of the dawn. The east is the direction in which dawn breaks. For theory of shift in the geographical sense in Latin, see austral.

You can see in the etymology that the direction of the rising of the sun is what we are dealing with here. It's not much of a leap in English to go from saying "Easter" to "Eastern." The reality is that they mean the same thing. When you look up the actual word Easter in this same etymological dictionary, you find this definition.

Old English *Easterdæg*, from *Eastre* (Northumbrian *Eostre*), from Proto-Germanic *austron-*, "dawn," also the name of a goddess of fertility and spring, perhaps originally of sunrise, whose feast was celebrated at the spring equinox, from *aust-* "east, toward the sunrise" (compare east), from PIE root **aus-** (1) "to shine," especially of the dawn.

I'm certain my Hebrew Roots friends will point out to me the connection here with a goddess of fertility, and it is possible (it's debated) that there was later, hundreds of years after the first century, a goddess named Eostre, worshiped by the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon peoples in the spring. I do believe there is legitimate etymological connection between Eostre and Easter, because they both come from the Germanic root "ost" or "east." But I'd like us to think a little deeper here.

It makes sense for the Germanic word "east (ost)" that has to do with dawn and sunrise, to be a word that Germanic and Anglo-Saxon peoples used to name this goddess they worshiped in the spring time. In other words, **the word itself is not a pagan word, they used the word to describe a goddess who was celebrated during a spring, pagan festival.** That doesn't mean that the word Easter only means "this pagan goddess," it just means it was *applied* to this pagan goddess.

And yes, bunnies and eggs and fertility rites have nothing to do with Yeshua and his resurrection. All of that is certainly extra-biblical and may have been connected with the worship of Eostre in the spring by Germanic peoples. I'm not suggesting that anyone start associating these practices with the resurrection of the Messiah. But what all this doesn't prove is that **the word Easter itself** is a heathen word. It is not. Easter is a Germanic word that originally had to do with the location of the rising of the sun in the spring season. When we say "the sun rises in the east" we could just as easily say, "the sun rises in the *eastern* direction." Early Christians took the rising of the sun in the east as a picture of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and called it Easter (dawn, sunrise, etc.)

Conclusion and Preview

What happened was this. In the second century A.D. there was a split in the early church over when to celebrate pascha as a memorial of the death and resurrection of Yeshua. Some chose the 14th of Abib, and others chose the Sunday that came after the 14th of Abib. But at this time, both groups called the day "*pascha*." The group that celebrated on Sunday focused on the resurrection, but still called resurrection day pascha (passover) since the resurrection of Christ is closely associated with the death of Christ.

Later on, around the 8th century A.D. the German word "ost" or "east" (meaning sunrise or dawn) came to be a *secondary name* for pascha. While *pascha* is a word that is more focused on the death of Christ, *easter* is a word more focused on the resurrection of Christ. Easter, like pascha, came to be a way to refer to both the passover on the 14th of Abib, and the new resurrection memorial in the Christian church. The word Easter was used as an equivalent of pascha, long before the word Passover was ever coined as an English translation of pesac.

So now I'll get your mind stirring for next week. The KJ translators use of Easter in Acts 12:4 was actually a carry over from an established practice of old English speaking peoples that used the word "Easter" to describe the Hebrew *pesac*. One quick example is William Tyndale's translation of 1 Corinthians 5:7 in his 1526 NT: "For Christ oure esterlambe is offered vp for vs."

Let me also peak your curiosity a bit more for the next lesson. Many Messianic, Torah Keeping believers think that anytime they hear the word sun, sunrise, or east associated with the Messiah, it must be pagan. But is that the case? What does the Bible *really* say? Come back next week to start finding out.

Easter before the KJV + Yeshua the Sun

Review

In the last lesson I concluded that Acts 12:4 is talking about what we now call the Passover. The Greek word there is *pascha*, a transliteration of the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word *pesac*.

I also concluded that Easter was a legitimate English rendering for pascha *back at the time the KJB was translated*. Christians from the 8th to 16th centuries took a word that meant dawn/sunrise, and coupled it with the resurrection of Christ. Since the resurrection of Christ is intimately associated with the death of Christ, the word Easter came to be associated with the pascha.

I closed last week with William Tyndale's 1526 English translation of the NT in 1 Corinthians 5:7 where he writes that Christ our "esterlambe" is sacrificed for us. No doubt, Tyndale was talking about Christ being the antitype of the pesac lamb in Exodus 12, but he wrote "esterlambe" because that is how the word Easter was used in his day.

16th Century use of Easter

Let's begin today by looking at a couple more times Tyndale used Easter in his translation as a reference to the pesac (what we now call the Passover).

Matthew 26:1-2

1 And it came to passe when Iesus had fynished all these sayinges he sayd vnto his disciples:

2 Ye knowe that after ii. dayes shalbe ester and the sonne of man shalbe delyvered to be crucified. (Did Tyndale believe that Yeshua was speaking about Easter Sunday here or the Passover? Obviously the Passover [pre-resurrection], yet he calls it "ester.")

Mark 14:12

12 And the fyrste daye of swete breed when men offer ye pascall lambe his disciples sayd vnto him: where wilt thou that we goo and prepare that thou mayst eate the ester lambe? (It gets no clearer than this. Tyndale interchanges pascall lambe [an obvious carry over of the Greek pascha] and ester lambe.)

Out of the 29x the Greek NT uses pascha, Tyndale translates it as some form of Easter 26x, and paschal or paschal lambe 3x. But Tyndale was also the man to coin the term "Passover" as an English translation of pesac.

When translating the Torah portion of the OT, Tyndale used his newly coined English term "passover," but it took a while before catching on. English translations after him (Coverdale², Matthews, Great (all early 1500's); Geneva 1557) continued to use Easter predominantly in the NT, along with paschal and paschal lamb. It wasn't until the 1560 Geneva Bible that an English translation used "passover" predominantly in the NT, as a translation of the Greek word pascha.

The 1568 Bishops Bible, used in the Church of England prior to the 1611 King James Version, did not use Easter predominantly, but did retain it in 3 places in the NT. This means the Bishops Bible NT contained the word Passover 26x and Easter 3x. One of those 3x was Acts 12:4, and the other 2 are in John 11:55.

John 11:55 Bishops

And the Iewes Easter was nye at hande, and many went out of the countrey vp to Hierusale before the Easter, to purifie them selues. (It is clear that the use of Easter here is a reference to the pesac feast that the Judahites would keep in Jerusalem.) What's interesting is when you keep reading to the end of John 11 into John 12 in the Bishops Bible, in John 12:1 the Bishops Bible says, "...six days before the Passover." Once again, it is easy to see that they were using Easter and Passover as synonyms.

² Miles Coverdale's (1535) translation used Easter throughout the OT as an English translation of the Hebrew pesac. 2 Chronicles 30 is a prime example, where he uses Passover and Easter synonymously, even speaking of the ancient Israelites eating the "Easter Lamb."

I realize that in today's language and culture, over 400 years later, we do not use Easter and Passover synonymously. As culture changes, language changes. This is why the NKJV (made in 1979 [NT]) reads "Passover" in Acts 12:4. Is the NKJV wrong? Not at all. Does it contradict Easter in the 1611 KJV? No, so long as you understand the culture, and the language use back in the 16th century, and even long before that.³

West Saxon Gospels

I recently came across the "West Saxon Gospels" while studying this subject. This translation of the 4 gospels dates back to around 1000 A.D. (some 600 years prior to the KJB). The language is that of southern England at the time, and is what we would call old English. There is no way someone who speaks and reads only modern English can read these; it is much too primitive and different from our current English.

What we can see though in these Gospels is a uniform translation of the Greek word *pascha* into English as *Easter*. The word *pascha* is found 26x in the Greek NT Gospels, and all 26 times the West Saxon Gospels translate it with a form of the word Easter. One example is from Luke 2:41 where it says that Yeshua's parents went to Jerusalem every year for the Passover (*pascha/pesac*). The West Saxon Gospels say that they went to Jerusalem for the "Easter." Yeshua's parents were not going to Jerusalem to keep Easter Sunday. That's silly, and that's not what the West Saxon Gospels are talking about. When they wrote Easter back then, it meant Pesac to English speaking peoples.

These old, southern England Gospels show us that the word Easter was known and used for *pesac* and *pascha* **hundreds of years before the word Passover was ever coined. The reality is that the word Easter is an older word for Pesac than the word Passover.** I think that Passover is a better translation *now*, due to our modern cultural understanding that Easter is something entirely different from Passover. But back in the 11th to 16th century culture, Easter was commonplace as a reference to the *pesac* in Exodus 12. (*To say then that it's a mistranslation in the 1611 KJV, is error.*)

Yeshua the Sun

I'd like to use the remaining time in this lesson to deal with the sunrise and dawn symbology in relation to the Messiah. Easter means "sunrise" or "dawn" referencing the direction the sun rises from (the east), but the word Easter was not used back in the earliest centuries A.D. Easter is a later, Germanic word that came in around the 8th century A.D. Germanic, Anglo-Saxon Christians used it, because they saw the rising of the sun in the east as a picture of the Messiah being the light of the world, and *rising* from the dead. (*"From darkness to light"*)

³ There are many words used not long ago that have changed their meaning now in everyday American English. "Terrible" (Psalm 47:2) used to mean "solemn awe and reverence." "Meat" used to mean food in general. If you don't understand this, you'll scratch your head wondering why there is no "meat" in the meat offering (Leviticus 2). Our English word gay doesn't mean now what it meant even 50-60 years ago. Sam Cooke sang "Twistin' the Night Away" back in 1962, mentioning people that "are so gay" up in New York city. He was not speaking of homosexuals. Gay meant jolly or happy. It means something entirely different now. If Cooke wrote the same song today, he wouldn't have rhymed "gay" with "way." Gay is actually used once in the KJB, in James 2:3, in reference to the *fine, showy* (expensive) clothing a man might wear. This was once a *secondary* use of gay. As time moves on, and culture changes, so does language.

Even though the word Easter did not come about until around 700 years after the time of Messiah, Christians from very early on saw the sunrise as a picture of Yeshua, and specifically his resurrection. **And it wasn't because they were sun-worshippers.** It stemmed from understanding that the sun was the *great light* that the heavenly Father created and ordained in Genesis 1. They saw this great creation of Yahweh as a wonderful depiction of Christ, and it had nothing to do with paganism. It was all based upon Scripture.

There is OT precedent for this in the fact that Yahweh Himself is referenced as the sun in Psalm 84:11 - "For the LORD God (YHWH Elohim) is a sun and shield: the LORD (YHWH) will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Commentator Albert Barnes states on this verse: "The sun gives light, warmth, beauty to the creation; so God is the source of light, joy, happiness to the soul." I believe Isaiah 60:1-3 is referencing Yahweh again as the rising sun in saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD (YHWH) is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD (YHWH) shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Yahweh the Father is symbolized as the rising, bright sun, and I will show that His Son Yeshua, an extension of Yahweh the Father, is also symbolized as the sun, shining the light of His Father. Hebrews 1:3 says that the Son is the *brightness* of the Almighty's glory, and the express image of His person.

We will begin looking at Yeshua the Sun in the OT, with a prophecy about the Messiah.

Malachi 4:1-2 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith YHWH of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. (2) But unto you that fear my name shall **the Sun (Heb. = shemesh) of righteousness arise** with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Notice that it says the SUN of righteousness shall arise, and then it uses the masculine pronoun HIS when speaking of the healing in HIS wings. The wings here are not a reference to the wings of a bird, but the wings or corners of a robe. In the Greek Septuagint, this word wings is *kraspedon*, hearkening back to Numbers 15:37-41, where the tassels are worn on the *kraspedon* (borders or wings) of one's garment. This fits nicely with the place in the Gospels (Mt. 9:20) where the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years touched the hem of Yeshua's garment. That word hem is *kraspedon* (a border, wing, tassel). The SUN of righteousness arose for her, with healing in his wings.⁴

⁴ I also believe that the wings (edges, extremities) is a reference to the rays or beams of the sun that stretch out and bless us with heat, growth in nature, vitamin D, etc. It is from the natural to the spiritual that this text extracts. Yeshua is like the sun in that all the sun gives to us naturally, Yeshua gives to us spiritually, and it all originates with Yahweh the Most High.

Now, is it pagan because an OT prophecy links our Messiah to the SUN? Of course not. The sun was created by Yahweh, and is an essential part of His time-keeping in the heavens, mentioned in Genesis 1:14-18. The Holy Spirit of Yahweh inspired the prophet Malachi to depict the coming Messiah as the rising SUN. And what direction does the sun rise? In the east... or we might say, in the easter.

We should not allow heathen sun-worship to detract us from the original, pure creation of the sun. Satan has always attempted to mimic the true (a counterfeit always looks like the original), so it should not surprise us to see him using the sun as a deity, or using the sun to symbolize false deities. The adversary does this in order to distract us from the true sun, YHWH, which shows us His light in Yeshua, the sun of righteousness.

I heard a radio broadcast once where a Christian pastor was condemning Islam because there was a crescent moon on the top of their mosques. He was saying that the Muslims were involved in moon worship, which holy scripture condemns (Deuteronomy 4:19). A Muslim called into the program and said, "Sir, do you know why that emblem is on top of our place of worship? It stands for our calendar. We do not worship the moon, but we do observe a lunar calendar." Now I do not believe Islam is the true faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I disagree with them on key points. But that doesn't mean we should be dishonest, and accuse them of something that they aren't doing.

My point is that just because a heathen may worship the sun, moon, or stars, doesn't mean that the sun, moon, and stars cannot be used in a proper manner; for our calendar, and as spiritual symbols. We are seeing in this lesson that the sun is indeed a scriptural type or representation of Yahweh and Yeshua.

I want to link Malachi 4:2 with another prophecy from the mouth of Zechariah the priest (the father of John the Baptizer). Zechariah had not been able to speak during his wife Elizabeth's pregnancy, but on the 8th day of his baby boy's life (at his circumcision), the father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to prophecy about his son Yochanan, and about the coming Messiah that would be born just a few months later.

Zechariah says that his son Yochanan would be a prophet of the Most High, going before the face of the Lord (YHWH) to prepare His ways. John would give knowledge of Yahweh's salvation unto the people, by the remission of their sins, and then he says this:

Luke 1:78-79 Through the tender mercy of our Almighty; whereby **the dayspring from on high hath visited us, (79) To give light to them that sit in darkness** and in the shadow of death, **to guide our feet** into the way of peace.⁵

⁵ I love Albert Barnes commentary on this text: " The word "dayspring" means the morning light, the aurora, the rising of the sun. It is called the dayspring "from on high" because the light of the gospel shines forth from heaven. God is its Author, and through His mercy it shines upon people. There is here, doubtless, a reference to Isa60:1-2; indeed, almost the very words of that place are quoted. Compare also

Zechariah says that the DAYSPRING from on high hath visited us, and it gives LIGHT to them that sit in darkness. Remember, this is Zechariah speaking under the influence of Yahweh's Spirit. He is prophesying here.

The word "dayspring" in Luke 1:78 is the Greek word "anatole," which is defined in Greek lexicons as "a rising of light, dawn, east, the rising of the sun and stars." *Anatole* is found 10x in the Greek NT, and in the KJB it is translated into English as "dayspring" 1x, and the other 9x it is translated as... "east." Why east? Because that is the direction where the sun rises.⁶

"Dayspring" is a beautiful, eloquent translation in Luke 1:78, but it could have just as easily read "whereby the **east** from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness."⁷ Luke 1:78 is a cross-reference to Malachi 4:2. The SUN of righteousness is Yeshua the Messiah. He is the dayspring from on High, sent by the tender mercies of the Most High, Father Yahweh.

Matthew 17:1-2 KJV states: "And after six days [Yeshua] taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."

The SUN is a creation of Yahweh that brings brightness to the earth when it rises. So also the SON of Yahweh brings spiritual brightness to the people of the earth when he is born in Bethlehem, throughout his ministry, and when he resurrected from death.

And after Yeshua was resurrected from death, when was the empty tomb found? Mark 16:2 says: "And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." There's nothing wrong or pagan with that. That's when the women (Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome; Mark 16:1) found the empty tomb. Yeshua had resurrected from death during the night, in the wee hours of the morning. They came to the tomb at the rising of the sun, and they encountered the rising of the son.

Preview

Now, I'd like to give a small preview for the next lesson. Was the first day of the week that the empty tomb was found, an Easter Sunday? How soon did early Christians begin keeping a new, Christian pascha instead of the Hebrew pesac? Did early Christians celebrate pesac?

Rev22:16."

⁶ NIV: "...by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven."

ESV: "...whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high."

⁷ The West Saxon Gospels that I spoke of earlier use the word "east dael" in Luke 1:78, which is an accurate and beautiful rendering of the Greek word *anatole* into the old English language.

Where did Easter Sunday come from?

Review

So far in this series we've covered the keeping of the Passover in both the Old and New Testaments, and looked at the word Easter in Acts 12:4 in the 1611 KJV. Much to my surprise, study has shown that the word Easter was originally a word used by German, Anglo-Saxon Christians to refer to the Hebrew Pesac (what we now call Passover).

It was a bit crazy to me when I discovered this. I remember sitting at my computer the first time I was reading the history about this and just shaking my head. A word that is today a reference to a Christian holiday, separate from Passover, was originally a synonym *for* the Passover.

Don't miss that this proves is that the only use of the word *Easter* in the KJB, is a reference to Passover. This means we have no reference to Easter Sunday anywhere in the Bible.

But what about Easter Sunday?

Today, I'd like to begin looking at the actual Christian holiday of Easter Sunday. When did this begin? Is there any evidence in the NT that the earliest Christians celebrated an annual holiday (on a first day of the week) commemorating the resurrection of the Messiah?

I realize that Easter Sunday is a huge deal in Christianity today, and I will show in a future lesson that such a practice does originate in the **2nd** century A.D. But, even this early evidence for some type of an "Easter Sunday" is about 100 years removed from the time of Yeshua. It is not found in scripture, but rather developed over the first 100 years of the Christian faith, in *some* Christian communities.

The earliest Christians may have commemorated Yeshua's resurrection on a first day of the week, but I believe such a commemoration was originally on wave-sheaf day or first-fruits day, a day that always came *after* the Sabbath, and was tied to Yahweh's holydays in Leviticus 23. I can't tell you how many times Christians have found out that I don't celebrate Easter Sunday, and they immediately reply: "You don't believe in the resurrection?" I then get to explain the day of first-fruits, during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as the day I commemorate Yeshua's resurrection, *but I'm getting ahead of myself*.

Seeing that I can't find anything in the NT about "Easter Sunday," I decided to open today's lesson with Acts 20:6-12, a text that speaks of Apostle Paul fellowshiping with the Christians in Troas, and a text that many in Christianity have used as proof for a regular, re-occurring, weekly church service on the first day of the week. This particular first day of the week happened in the spring time of the year, shortly after the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We know this because Acts 20:6 mentions the days of unleavened bread. Then, Acts 20:7 mentions the first day of the week.

Exegesis in Acts 20

I think Acts 20:7 is probably the best text someone has for showing something resembling "Easter Sunday" in the Bible. However, I believe it falls short from proving anything about Easter Sunday, and I also believe it falls short in proving a regular, re-occurring, weekly first day church service. We'll begin in verse 6.

Acts 20:6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

Luke, the author of the book of Acts, writes "we" (Luke and Paul) sailed away from Philippi "after the days of unleavened bread."

According to Hebrew scripture, the days of unleavened bread take place in the month/moon of Abib, which is the first month of the Hebrew calendar, around the time of the spring equinox. It's the month we are currently in as I'm teaching this lesson. Leviticus 23:5-8 tells us that Yahweh's Passover takes place on the 14th day of the first month, between the evenings, and then on the 15th day of the first month we have the feast of unleavened bread for seven days, from Abib 15 through Abib 21.

In Acts 20:6 Luke and Paul sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread. This could have been as early as Abib 22,⁸ but we are not specifically told that it was the day immediately after the Feast week. I assume from reading the text that Paul spoke of *shortly after* the days of unleavened bread, but the text just says after, not 1 day after. I'm going to put forth to you a scenario using 1 day after as a starting point.

So we have the month of Abib (and early Zif, 2nd month), with Passover (14) in yellow and the days of unleavened bread (15-21) in red. *At the earliest*, Paul sailed away from Philippi on the 22nd of Abib, and then came to Troas in 5 days, placing his arrival in Troas on Abib 26.

Acts 20:6 then tells us that Paul and Luke stayed in Troas for 7 days, which could be counted from Abib 26 (their arrival) to Zif 2, if Abib had 30 days that year. This would place Paul's fellowship on the evening as the New Moon ended, and then he would have left at dawn, the morning of Zif 2 (Acts 20:11). Once again, this is speculation. I believe it is educated speculation, but I must admit that the text is not this detailed.

My main point here is to show that at the earliest, the account recorded in Acts 20:7-12 took place at the beginning of the 2nd month on the Hebrew calendar. While my counting of days is speculation, my assertion that this was early 2nd month is not speculation. This

⁸ For those who observe Sabbaths according to the lunar cycle, the 22nd of Abib is always a weekly Sabbath. One may wonder why Paul would have left Philippi on the weekly Sabbath. First, this is not an absolute scenario. "After the days of unleavened bread" could have been two days after, or even a week after. Abib 22 is just the earliest he could have left. Second, later in Acts 20:16 we read that Paul was in a hurry to make it to Jerusalem (if possible) for Pentecost (Acts 20:16). It's possible that Abib 22 was a "ship day" where Paul could take a ship to sail away to Troas. If he missed that ship, there may have been no other for quite some time. He could have purchased his ticket ahead of time, and relaxed on the boat, sailing on the Sabbath. I'm certain the owners and workers on the ship weren't Sabbath keepers.

is the earliest that Acts 20:7 could have occurred. It *could have* occurred later in the 2nd month, but the days specified in Acts 20:6 make it *no earlier* than the beginning 2nd month.⁹ You may ask why this is significant? Let's look at the next verse:

Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. (*Take note that it was the first day of the week, but it was the night portion, after New Moon day, that this gathering took place.*)

The phrase "first day of the week," (*mia ton sabbaton*) is one that is much debated in Torah-keeping circles. Many Torah keepers claim that the phrase is mistranslated in the KJB, and should say something like "first of the sabbaths," or "one of the sabbaths." They claim that Acts 20:7 actually took place on a Sabbath, and not on the first day of the week.

I do not agree with that understanding. I believe the KJB is correct in saying "the first day of the week." I believe it's a reference to the day after the Sabbath. William Tyndale, in his 1526 NT translates Acts 20:7 as "and on the morowe after the saboth daye." John Wycliffe, translating in the late 1300's gives the phrase as, "and in the first day of the week." Modern day, scholarly translations (RSV, NASB, ESV, LEB) translate the phrase as "first day of the week" as well.

Sabbaton: Sabbath or Week?

So why do many Torah-keepers try to say the phrase is mistranslated? The claim begins by looking at the Greek word behind "week" here: *sabbaton*. The Greek word *sabbaton* is often translated as "sabbath" in the KJB, but is additionally translated as "week" in certain NT passages. I've heard Torah-keepers say that "week" is a mistranslation, because the Greek word *sabbaton* is most often translated as "sabbath" in the KJB.

The problem they have is not recognizing that the word carries more than one meaning, depending upon the context. *Sabbaton* can refer to (1) a sabbath day or (2) the interval between two sabbaths (week). In other words, the first day of the week is "one to the sabbath (*mia ton sabbaton*)." The second day of the week is "two to the sabbath," and so on. Nowhere in scripture do the Hebrews assign any names to the days of the week, except for the Sabbath, and preparation day. The rest are named by number.

Strong's Concordance gives part of the definition of *sabbaton* as: "the interval between two sabbaths." Thayer's lexicon gives this under the #2 definition of *sabbaton*: "seven

⁹ I did run across a teaching from one brother that posited the idea that the word "after" in Acts 20:6 ("after the days of unleavened bread") could have also been translated as "during." Believing that Paul and Luke sailed away from Philippi *during* the days of unleavened bread would indeed place Acts 20:7 earlier than the beginning of the second month. The problem is that I cannot find any major translation of the Bible that translates Acts 20:6 as "during" instead of "after." In looking at BibleHub.com, I found 28 translations that all read "after." It is true that the KJB translates the Greek word *meta* as "with," but this is done throughout the book of Acts mostly as a reference to being with people (or with some type of feeling), not in a reference to time. I believe *after* is proper in Acts 20:6.

days, a week." Both Strongs and Thayers list "the sabbath" or "sabbaths" as the primary definition of sabbaton, but they list the entire week as the secondary definition or use of sabbaton. Mr. Thayer gives Mark 16:2 and Luke 18:12 as two examples of this secondary use, and I'd like to look at both of them.

Mark 16:1-2 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. (2) And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

The phrase "first day of the week" here in Mark 16:2 is the same phrase in Acts 20:7. Notice here that this day comes "when the sabbath was past" (vs. 1). It makes no sense to translate the phrase in verse 2 as "first of the sabbaths" (a sabbath day) if the sabbath had just passed. It was rather "one to the sabbath" or "*day* one to the sabbath."

Here in Mark 16:1-2, we have both uses of the Greek word sabbaton. In verse 1 it is translated as "sabbath," seeing that Mark 15:42 mentions preparation day, (and calls it "the day before the Sabbath"; when Yeshua was crucified). Then in verse 2 sabbaton is translated as "week" ("And very early on the first day of the week"), since the sabbath day had just passed (vs. 1).

A common reply from many Torah-keepers is that "first of the sabbaths" is a better translation in Mark 16:2, because it references the first day in counting the seven sabbaths to Pentecost. I do not disagree that this particular day is the first day in counting the sabbaths to Pentecost (being the morrow after the first day of unleavened bread), but notice that **this still references the first day of the week**. In other words, the first day in counting the sabbaths to Pentecost IS the first day of a week; it's *not* a sabbath day.

Now transfer this understanding back to Acts 20:7 (which contains the same phrase). Remember I told you the calendar calculation was important in Acts 20? Well, Acts 20:7 could **not** be the first day in counting the sabbaths to Pentecost, because I've shown how the earliest Acts 20:7 could have taken place was *early 2nd moon*. Early in the 2nd month is too late for the first day in counting the sabbaths to Pentecost. The counting of the seven Sabbaths complete begins in the first month, not the second month.

Some do say that the phrase should be "**one** of the sabbaths" in Acts 20:7, recognizing that the Greek word **mia** (ton sabbaton) can be translated as either "one" or first." I still think that comparing Acts 20:7 with Mark 16:2 shows that the phrase "mia ton sabbaton" is better understood as "one *to* the sabbath" (or "the first day of the week"). Furthermore, let's not forget Mr. Thayer's other citation of this use of sabbaton in the Greek NT, Luke 18:12. We'll begin reading at verse 11 to get a little context.

Luke 18:11-12 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. (12) I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

This is Yeshua's parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, praying to the Father. One of the things the Pharisee mentions in his prayer is: "I fast twice in the **week**." The word week here is *sabbaton* (same word in Mark 16:1-2 and Acts 20:7). Surely the Pharisee isn't saying "I fast twice in the Sabbath." That's nothing to brag about, and really makes no sense.

Is the Pharisee perhaps saying, "I fast twice in the sabbaths (i.e. the seven sabbaths counting to Pentecost)? That's not much fasting to be bragging about either (2 out of 49 days). What makes the most sense is exactly how our English bibles translate it; the Pharisee was bragging about fasting two days out of the week. 2 out of 7 days. The word *sabbaton* here is used in its secondary sense of the interval between two sabbaths.

Summing up Acts 20:7

I believe the best way to understand Acts 20:7 is "the first day of the week." If we can prove that a particular translation is not best or accurate, by comparing it to other legitimate Bible translations, that's one thing, but to just up and claim a bogus translation based on half-way looking at Strong's Concordance, is not being honest with the text.

What we have here in Acts 20 is a first day of the week gathering, shortly after the days of unleavened bread. This is too far away from what would be called Easter Sunday or in early centuries "Christian pascha." If you'll recall in part 2 of this series, I mentioned how some Christians in the **2nd** century A.D. began keeping pascha (passover) on the Sunday that came after the 14th day of Abib. Acts 20:7 is too far removed from that date, being in the 2nd moon, not the 1st moon. So Acts 20:7 doesn't fit the Christian Easter Sunday model. But I don't believe it fits a Sunday model or first day model in general either.

What I'll begin arguing for in our next lesson is that Acts 20:7 is not a model for a habitual first day church service, but is rather an *out of the ordinary* gathering that took place in the night time, and went *all night long*, because Paul the Apostle was leaving the next morning. I believe what happened in Acts 20:7-12 is this: the Christians in Troas knew *the Apostle* was leaving them the next morning, so they organized a fellowship meal the night before his departure, and discussed the scriptures with Paul all night long.

It would be similar to something we do around here after the Feast of Tabernacles. After the Sabbath service, several of us are accustomed to going out to eat in the evening (first day of the week), knowing that we'll all be parting ways the next morning. We break bread (eat together), discuss scripture, and often time stay up late doing so. I think this is a modern day example in our congregation of what was going on in Acts 20:7-12.

Why Acts 20:7 is Out of the Ordinary

Review

We ended the last section in Acts 20:7, and I presented the understanding that this account is an *out of the ordinary* gathering, rather than a model for an ordinary, re-occurring gathering. I believe what took place here did not take place because early Christians always met for church on the first day of the week, but rather because Paul

was visiting the Christians at Troas, and leaving on the first day of the week. They organized a fellowship meal with Paul the evening before, and spent as much time with him as they could discussing matters in scripture.

So far, we've made it through Acts 20:6, and part of verse 7. We saw that the timing here was at the earliest, the beginning of the 2nd month on the Hebrew calendar - possibly the 2nd day of the 2nd month. We also saw that the phrase "the first *day* of the week" is a good translation of the Greek "*mia ton sabbaton*." Sabbaton in the Greek NT can either mean a sabbath, sabbaths (plural), or the interval between two sabbaths (i.e. a week).

Exegesis in Acts 20

Let's pick this back up in verse 7:

Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

The next two things this verse mentions is that (1) the disciples had come together to break bread, and (2) that Paul preached to them. This is why many Christian scholars believe we have precedent for a first-day church service in the NT. They see the breaking of bread to be the Lord's Supper, and then Paul's preaching to be the model of what they do on Sunday morning. For example, Adam Clarke (a commentator I generally consult) says this in part about Acts 20:7:

Upon the first day of the week - What was called... the Lord's day, the Christian Sabbath, in which they commemorated the resurrection of our Lord; and which, among all Christians, afterwards took the place of the Jewish Sabbath.

To break bread - To break... the eucharist, as the Syriac has it; intimating, by this, that they were accustomed to receive the holy sacrament on each Lord's day. It is likely that, besides this, they received a common meal together. Some think the... love feast, is intended.

You can pull up several bible commentaries at *BibleHub.com*, and you'll find that most of them say something similar to Adam Clarke on Acts 20:7. I want to let you know that what you're hearing from me, both last week and this week, is the *minority* view. There are scholars that hold the understanding I have, but they are few in comparison to how many scholars take the position that Adam Clarke just took. *Always consult a multitude of scholars, but that doesn't mean you always have to agree with them.*

Before I begin breaking this text down, I do want to point out that I can understand how Adam Clarke arrives at his conclusions about Acts 20:7. I know the tendency for Torah-keepers is to immediately holler "Sun worship! Paganism!" But Adam Clarke is much more intelligent and studied than that. Making this out to be a "Sunday conspiracy" may get me more hits on YouTube, but I'm not interested in hits or likes, I'm interested in being humble and honest, and I can see how these men arrive at their position. I do disagree with them, but I understand them.

I want to use the remainder of this lesson to show you why I disagree with most commentators approach to Acts 20:7-12.

Not a Morning Service

To begin with, this was not a Sunday *morning* service, or a *first day morning* service (*the names Sunday through Saturday, and their Greek or Latin forerunners, aren't found anywhere in Scripture*). Now there can be no doubt that the empty tomb of Yeshua was found early in the morning, on the first day of the week, at the rising of the sun. Mark 16:2 says exactly that. I have no problem with Yeshua resurrecting on the first day of the week, and I also have no problem with the sunrise on wave-sheaf day (Abib 16) being a symbol of the resurrection.

But... Acts 20:7 is not an early morning, first day of the week meeting as we are accustomed to see in church culture today. Most theologians say, "We worship in the morning on the first day of the week to commemorate the resurrection accounts in the gospels." Acts 20:7-12 is said by them to give us a precedent, but it doesn't fit.

Throughout this text we have references showing us that this was a *night* gathering, not a day gathering. **Midnight** is mentioned (vs. 7). Verse 8 says "there were many **lights** in the upper chamber where they were gathered together." Verse 9 says a fellow named Eutychus fell **asleep**, and then verse 11 says that Paul departed at **daybreak**. All of this points to a night gathering, and not just any night gathering, but an out of the ordinary *all night long* gathering.

Again, I want to mention that I believe the Christians at Troas wanted to spend the whole night with the Apostle that was in their midst, knowing that he'd be leaving the next morning. It wasn't everyday that a special Apostle was with you. I believe that's why they gathered together the last night of his stay. It was an out of the ordinary gathering, organized to pick the Apostle Paul's brain as much as they could.

The Breaking of Bread = Table Fellowship

So, it wasn't a first-day *morning* gathering, that's the first point, and the next point concerns the breaking of the bread. Some read that and think "the Lord's Supper," but that would be reading something into the text that it doesn't say. The text just says they gathered together to break bread. There's no mention of the Lord's Supper, and specifically, there is no mention of *the cup* in the Lord's Supper. The cup is just as much a part of the supper as the bread, but it is missing in the text.

"To break bread" can carry *in some contexts* the meaning of breaking the bread of the body of Christ, but it also can carry the meaning of coming together for table fellowship. While I may say today, "I *had dinner* with Rocket and Phyllis last evening," it used to be said, "I *broke bread* with Rocket and Phyllis last evening." Bread is the staple of life. It stood for food in general, being that it was one of the most common foods eaten then, and now. This is why in the Lord's Prayer we are told to pray, "give us this day our daily

bread." We aren't just praying for bread and nothing else. Bread stands for food, sustenance, provision, etc.

Earlier in Acts, the same author (Luke) speaks of the breaking of bread being done *daily* by the followers of Yeshua. I believe Luke is writing of common table fellowship among believers.

Acts 2:41-42, 46 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (42) And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, and in **breaking of bread**, and in prayers... (46) And they, **continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.**

Verse 46 speaks of *daily* fellowship, and "breaking bread" from house to house. That's eating meals together, which equals spending time together.

When I invite someone over to my house, from our congregation, or if you invite me over to your house, the odds are extremely high that we are going to sit down at the table together, eat a meal, and pray. During our meal something about the Bible is going to come up (*I'll make sure of that*), and we are going to enjoy Christian fellowship. Whether or not actual bread was on the table, we "broke bread" with gladness and singleness of heart.

I think singleness here (Acts 2:46) means "simplicity and unity." The early congregation in Messiah lived much more simple and unified lives than most now. Old-town life, even 100 years ago, was more simple and unified. Everyone lived closer to each other, which means they *were* closer to each other, in community. Acts 2 even tells us the early believers were all together and had all things in common. They sold their possessions, gave the money to the apostles, and distribution was made as each person had need. No one lacked, and they were all equal. That's singleness of heart.

The breaking of bread doesn't have to mean the Lord's Supper, and here in Acts 2, I don't believe it means the Lord's Supper. I believe the same thing is taking place in Acts 20. The disciples gathered together to have table fellowship. Look at Acts 20:11:

Acts 20:11 When he therefore was come up again, **and had broken bread, and eaten**, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

This is after the raising of Eutychus from the dead (vss. 9-10), and the phrase "breaking of bread" is associated with the word "eaten," a word used in contexts of satisfying hunger (something the Lord's Supper is not for). This also shows that the breaking of bread didn't take place till *after midnight*. Remember, verse 7 said that Paul continued his speech till midnight, then Eutychus fell out of a window, Paul raised him from the dead, went back to the upper chamber, broke bread and eaten, and kept talking to the break of day.

Acts 20:7 doesn't say they broke bread right at the beginning of their gathering. It just says the disciples gathered together TO break bread... and they did, after midnight (vs.11). They probably did like I've done before and got so wrapped up in discussing scripture that they forgot to eat, and worked up an appetite.

Did Paul *Preach* to Them?

That brings me to the next point about Paul's preaching to them. Now, it's possible that Paul may have preached some type of a sermon to them. I've preached sermons to people even though it wasn't on the Sabbath day. That's fine. I've had people over to my house for Bible studies and a meal, and it had nothing to do with a holy convocation. But I think there is more to this word "preached" in verse 7 than we get from just reading the KJV.

"Paul preached to them" is not a wrong translation from the Greek, but it's not the most accurate translation from the Greek. Consider these other translations:

ESV "Paul **talked** with them, intending to leave on the next day"

LEB "Paul began **conversing** with them, because he was going to leave on the next day"

TS "Shaul, intending to depart the next day was **reasoning** with them"

YLT "Paul was **discoursing** to them, about to depart on the morrow"

The reason these other Bible translations do not read *preached* is because the Greek word used here is *dialegomai*, from where we get our English word dialogue. Look how Thayer's Greek lexicon defines this word:

- 1) to think different things with one's self, mingle thought with thought
- 1a) to ponder, revolve in mind
- 2) to converse, discourse with one, argue, discuss

Also check out this reference from Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT words (blueletterbible.org).

"Discourse: primarily "to ponder, resolve in one's mind" (dia, "through," lego, "to say"); then, "to converse, dispute, discuss, discourse with;" most frequently, "to reason or dispute with." In Hbr 12:5 the RV "reasoneth with" is to be preferred to the AV, "speaketh unto." The AV translates it "preached," in Acts 20:7, 9; this the RV corrects to "discoursed," lit., "dialogue," i.e., not by way of a sermon, but by a "discourse" of a more conversational character. See DISPUTE, PREACH, REASON, SPEAK. In the Sept., Edx 6:27; Jdg 8:1; Isa 63:1"

This Greek word is used 13x in the NT, and in the KJB it is translated as "dispute" 6x, "reason with" 2x, "reason" 2x, "preach unto" 1x, preach 1x, speak 1x. One alternate example in Acts 18:4 (KJV) says that Paul "**reasoned** in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." (*Only 7 out of 28 translations at BibleHub.com read "preached" or "preaching."*)

In Acts 20:7-12, I believe Paul was *reasoning* or *discussing* with the Christians in Troas all night, not preaching to them. You may call certain portions of what he said preaching,

as I'm sure in his explanations or answering questions he spent a long time, but it's not like a holy convocation where a pastor or elder is giving a sermon.

Paraphrasing Acts 20:7

With everything we've covered today in mind, we may paraphrase Acts 20:7 like this: *"In the evening, at the beginning of the first day of the week, we gathered together for a fellowship meal. Paul discussed with the people, and kept on discussing until midnight, since he was going to leave in the morning."*

I believe that this was an out of the ordinary occurrence rather than a habitual, re-occurring custom. I do not believe Acts 20:7 gives precedent for a habitual first-day, morning church service, as is in the mind of Adam Clarke and other commentators.

And with that being said, this is the only place in the entire NT that would even begin to possibly insinuate a re-occurring first day service. **There's nothing else.** If this doesn't prove such, then we have nothing in the NT showing that the earliest Christians gathered together every first day of the week for church. **I believe such came later, in the 2nd century A.D.**

Preview for the Next Lesson

The first day service did develop from the resurrection of Christ. In other words, I don't believe it developed from sun worship or paganism or Constantine (that's a huge myth). Some early Christians took Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week and developed a re-occurring first-day service and Christian pascha as a commemoration of the resurrection. **But this was not practiced by the earliest Christians.**

The NT shows that the *earliest* Christians kept the Sabbath, and gathered on the Sabbath, just like they had been doing during the time when Yeshua was on the earth. Yeshua always kept the Sabbath, including the holy convocation. His custom was to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). The earliest Christians also kept the Pesac feast on the 14th day of Abib, just as they had done while Yeshua was still on the earth. Only later did some Christians decide to celebrate Pascha on the Sunday after the 14th day of Abib. This later practice is where we get Easter Sunday today. Whether the intentions were good or not doesn't really matter. There is nothing in the Bible that gives anyone authorization to move the Pesac feast from Yahweh's solar-lunar calendar, to a set day on a Roman calendar. I'll discuss this in more detail in the next lesson.

Easter Sunday is not in the Bible

Review

In the last two sections we've looked at the only text in the NT that could even begin to support an Easter Sunday practice (Acts 20:7-12). I say that because it is the only text we have that speaks of Christians gathering on a first day of the week.

What we have seen though is that (1) this first day of the week was too far away from the Passover to be an equivalent of Easter Sunday, and (2) this first day of the week gathering was not a habitual custom or model, but rather an out-of-the-ordinary gathering.

And if you understand and accept this, then there is nothing in the Bible promoting Easter Sunday, or a Christian Pascha at a different time than the Hebrew Pesac.

The Passover Lamb

In the first lesson in this series I showed the origin of the Passover from Exodus 12, and where Yeshua observed the Passover about 1,500 years later in Luke 2 when he was 12 years old. I then pointed you to the end of the gospels where the Passover is mentioned as being observed in connection with Yeshua's death. Finally, we looked at Apostle Paul's use of Passover in a teaching illustration to the congregation in Corinth.

All the Biblical evidence points to the earliest Christians still observing the Passover after Yeshua's ascension. *Why wouldn't they?* That's what their Master and Teacher did.

There is no hint of a different date for a *new Pascha* (what is now called Easter Sunday) anywhere in the Bible. There's nothing in the NT teaching a regular, re-occurring, first day of the week church service either. These things were not practiced by the early Messianic assembly. The earliest followers of Messiah were all Hebrews or proselytes to the Hebrew faith, who like Yeshua, observed the Law of Moses.

We do see in the NT, uncircumcised heathens from among the nations repenting of their sins and placing faith in Yeshua (joining the Messianic faith). But there is nothing suggesting that when Gentiles joined the Hebrew faith that the date and day for Passover changed.

I do believe that after Yeshua's life, death, burial, and resurrection, there was new, Messianic significance to Passover. Remember, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 5 that Messiah is our "Passover" sacrificed for us. Yeshua is the spiritual fulfillment of the natural Passover lamb.

Yeshua, Yahweh's Sacrificial Lamb

Who sacrificed Yeshua? We may say the Romans nailed his hands to the cross. We may say the Judahites cried out "Crucify him! Crucify him!" But in the big picture, in the foreordained picture, **the Father in heaven sacrificed him**, according to the great Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53:6 says: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Yahweh hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." And then in verse 10 of the same chapter we read: "Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him, he hath put him to grief: when Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin..."

Ephesians 5:2 follows this line of thinking, where Paul writes: "And walk in love, as Messiah also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to [Yahweh] for a sweetsmelling savor."

It is no wonder then that Yeshua is referred to as the Lamb of Yahweh in the NT writings. He is Yahweh's lamb. He is our Passover. And he was sacrificed on Passover.

I believe the NT assembly continued to follow in Yeshua's footsteps of keeping the Passover that Yeshua kept, but with *greater* significance. The Passover was no longer just a remembrance of the deliverance of Israel from the land of Egypt, but it was also a remembrance of the greater, spiritual deliverance from slavery, with the sacrifice of Yeshua. The ordinance of the bread and wine, representing the body and blood of Yeshua, was instituted at none other than the Passover season.

But think about this: **wasn't Passover always looking forward to Yeshua?** I realize the Old Covenant saints did not have as clear a picture of this as we do now, because we are on this side of the cross (prophecy is always clearer after it's fulfilled), but it was still there in the plan of Yahweh. Pesac has always been a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt, and has also *always* been a type and shadow of Yeshua our Pesac Lamb.

Just as the blood of the Pesac lamb had to be applied on the doorpost and lintel, in order for Yahweh to *pass-over* a house in Egypt, the blood of Yeshua must be applied to our lives by faith, in order for Yahweh to *pass-over*, and spare us from condemnation and death.

Observing Scriptural Holydays

These are all Bible things brothers and sisters. All of this can be found in the Bible. If you meet an unbeliever, and you begin witnessing to him or her about why you practice the things you practice (in your faith), isn't it better to be able to show them, from the Bible? Why sure it is.

But you can't do that with Easter Sunday. You can't do that with a first day of the week church service. Even if these customs came about with good intentions. Even if some Christians in later centuries began doing these things out of a desire to please Christ, they are still not in the Bible.

A Christian recently asked me, "How do you know which days to observe and celebrate, faith-wise?" I told him: "I stick with what Yeshua did. If he observed it, sanctioned it, blessed it, then I'm okay with it."

Let me say this before we move on. You will never go wrong imitating Yeshua. He did everything right. We all fall short from his perfect obedience, but we will never do anything wrong by doing something that he did himself.

Origin of Easter Sunday

So what began the Easter Sunday observance? For starters, it didn't begin by being called Easter Sunday. In the second century A.D. it was still called Pascha, even by those who observed it on a Sunday. The Sunday after the 14th day of Abib was kept by some Christians who believed it better to celebrate on a set **day** of the Julian calendar week (memorializing the resurrection), rather than a set **date** of the Hebrew month of Abib. And yes, it did come about with Gentile Christians, who more and more wanted to separate themselves from anything Hebrew.

At this time in church history, the Christians who observed Pascha on a Sunday had no bunnies or egg hunts in their celebration. These things came later, as customs from various peoples came to morph together. There were many celebrations and observances in the spring-time by different religions. Such customs tend to mix over time, and get re-interpreted. Thus in our modern Easter Sunday, we see both biblical and extra-biblical practices.

I'm not going to spend my lesson reading the entirety of this next reference, but you'll find some good material on the origin of a Sunday Pascha in *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*. Eusebius lived in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries A.D. and wrote on the history of the Christian church up to his time. Being born around the year 260 A.D. Eusebius likely met some of the Christians who lived in the 2nd century during the Pascha Controversy, or he at least met the children and grandchildren of those earlier Christians.

In Book 5 Chapter 23 of this work Eusebius writes much of the difference of opinion respecting the observance of the Pascha season. He writes that "the churches of all Asia, guided by a remoter tradition, supposed that they ought to keep the 14th day of the moon for the festival of our Savior's Passover, in which day the Jews were commanded to kill the Paschal Lamb."

While the churches in Asia observed the 14th day of Abib as Pascha, there was a large majority of Christians who observed the Sunday AFTER the 14th of Abib as Pascha. Sometimes Sunday came 1 day after the 14th, but Sunday could come 6 days after the 14th. It depends on where the 14th lands on a Sunday through Saturday week.¹⁰

The Bishops of Asia wrote in a letter to the church at Rome the following (though not in entirety): "We therefore observe the genuine day; neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom. For in Asia great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again in the day of the Lord's appearing..."

These "great lights" spoken of are Saints that had then died, but had once lived holy lives, and observed the 14th of Abib for Pascha. Philip (one of the 12 apostles) is mentioned.

¹⁰ I need to do more research on this next point, but it appears from reading the *Paschal Canons of Anatolius* (Ante-Nicene Church Fathers) that there were some who would celebrate the Sunday Pascha if Sunday fell out on the 14th day of Abib. Later on it was ruled that if Sunday fell on the 14th day of Abib, Pascha (Easter) was postponed until the following Sunday, so as not to be following the custom of Hebrew Pascha.

John who rested on the bosom of our Lord is also mentioned. A man named Polycarp (a disciple of John) is mentioned. The letter states that "All these observed the 14th day of the Passover according to the gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith."

Eusebius writes that Polycarp (a disciple of John) once visited Rome and spoke with a bishop there named Anicetus about this controversy, but the bishop could not persuade Polycarp to observe the Sunday after the 14th of Abib, "because he had always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated."

It's quite an interesting read for anyone wanting more detail, but let me say this before I move on. With Polycarp, we have a man who said he observed Passover with John the disciple, and also some Apostles, on the 14th of Abib. I believe it's safe to believe that John and the Apostles observed it **the same way** they observed it *with Yeshua*, before he went to heaven. If Polycarp had been observing on this day with John and other Apostles, I can't see any way at all that he would back off of that. I know I wouldn't.

Eusebius also writes that Polycarp couldn't persuade Anicetus either. The bishop said, "he was bound to maintain the practice of the presbyters (elders) before him." I'm not sure if *before him* means "before in time" or "before in rank," but either way, how could this be as old of a custom as John and the Apostles? It couldn't. The 14th of Abib is certainly the older of the two customs.

The Timing Issue

Now I want you to think a little deeper with me here. We are not told in this history that Polycarp or Philip, or any of the "Fourteeners" pushed a Friday celebration (as in *Good Friday* today). We *are* told that the Roman church pushed a Sunday celebration, and while the crucifixion may have fell out on a Friday in the crucifixion week (I currently believe that it did), Polycarp was not pushing a Friday observance of Pascha, but rather an observance on a particular *date* of the moon of Abib (14th).

Why by the moon? I believe it was because the older custom held to the 14th day of Abib as both the crucifixion *date* and *day*. The 14th of Abib was not only the 14th day of the moon, it was also originally the 6th day of the week, or preparation day.

Yeshua was crucified on the 14th (preparation), laid in the tomb on the 15th (Sabbath), and resurrected on the 16th (wave-sheaf; first-fruits). As I said, this very well could have landed on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday *in the Julian calendar week that existed during the time of the crucifixion*, but that does not mean that Abib 14, 15, and 16 would always fall out on a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The next year it could have been Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. The year after that it could have been Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. But Scripturally, the 14th, 15th, and 16th (Preparation, Sabbath, First Day), would remain.

Each year as the Passover season arrives, the 14th day of Abib is seen as the ancient Pesac (Passover) date, but it's not always on a Friday. Sometimes, like on the chart, the 14th day of Abib falls on a Wednesday. This is why the Christian church observes what

they call "Good Friday." They realize (correctly) that Yeshua died on the preparation day to the Sabbath, but only *sometimes* does Friday fall on the 14th day of the moon of Abib, *not always*. It will always be *close* to the 14th, but not *consistently* on the 14th.

In the scenario on the current chart Abib 14 falls on a Wednesday. If this happened, the Christian Church today would celebrate the Friday after this as "Good Friday," the day of the crucifixion. But as you see, it's not the correct date of Abib. Friday here would fall on the 16th of Abib, not the 14th.

This year (2018), we observed the 14th of Abib on a Saturday, because that's the day it fell out on. Good Friday fell on Abib 13, and Easter (the day the Christian Church celebrates the resurrection) on Abib 15.

Back in 2013 I studied this, and kept records showing the 14th of Abib fell on a Monday. That means the 14, 15, 16 sequence was Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Yet "Good Friday" was observed later in the week, and Easter Sunday after that.

If you observe Abib 14 as the consistent crucifixion day (the Passover day), then there must be a way that Abib 14 is always the 6th day of the week, preparation day. The model that consistently works like this is *the lunar Sabbath model*. Each year we observe the Master's Supper, not just on the same date (beginning of Abib 14), but also on the same day, the start of the 6th day of the week (evening). We then observe Passover in the afternoon of Abib 14, but not just on the same date of the moon, but also on the same day of the week (6th day), each and every year. This in turn means that Abib 16 (wave-sheaf) day, always falls out on the first day of the week, and can be consistently celebrated as both resurrection day and date.

As our opening text said. Christ died for our sins, *according to the scriptures*. He was buried and rose again the third day, *according to the scriptures*. Where does the scriptures teach he rose on the third day? I believe the scriptures teach this in the Passover reckoning during the month of Abib. 14, 15, 16 **or** 1, 2, 3. It's beautiful harmony when you see it. I'm persuaded that the Paschal controversy in the second century contains a vestige of lunar Sabbatarian reckoning. Polycarp was not arguing for a Friday observance of Passover, but a 14th day of Abib observance, because that was originally always the 6th day of the week. I could be wrong, but that's what I see currently.

Conclusion

In the end, there is nothing in scripture authorizing a removal of Pascha, off the 14th day of Abib and onto the Sunday that follows it. None of the earliest Christians did this. None of the earliest Christians observed Easter Sunday, much less with egg hunts and bunnies, etc. I'm interested in doing what our Savior and his apostles did. I'm interested in going back as far as we can to the most original practices and observances we can find, and imitating those. I don't want later developments or so-called "improvements." I want the real thing. May Yahweh help us to want the real thing, and be pure and primitive in our worship.