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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Easter and Passover.

(2013)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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Easter and Passover.

Topics.

- The birth of the Passover meal.
- The Passover lamb was to have no bone broken.
- A brief overview of the feast of Passover.
- Easter and the vernal equinox.
- The goddess Ashtoreth and the goddess of Egypt.
- The vernal equinox.
- Emperor Constantine (325 AD).
- Easter and the Christian Passover.
- The Jewish Passover and Easter.
- Pagan religions Easter and Passover.

INTRODUCTION: the aim of this study is to discover why the writers of the King James Bible used the word Easter instead of Passover in (Acts 12:4). Did the scholars have a deliberate reason for using the word Easter or is it a mistake in translation as some believe? Since we need to understand why God instituted the Passover Feast and what it was celebrating before we can understand why the translators chose to use the word Easter rather than Passover the study begins with a brief overview of the Old Testament Feast of Passover.

The meaning of Passover.

Passover comes from the Hebrew word Pasach in Greek it is spelled Pascha. It means to pass over. It was a feast instituted by God in commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt with the death angel passing over the blood on the lintel and the doorposts of the homes of the people of Israel.

The Birth of the Passover Meal.

There are seventy-seven occurrences of Passover before and up to the crucifixion then there are two in the New Testament that relate back in history. The first mention of the Passover Feast is in (Exod. 12:1-51). Here the house of Jacob is in slavery to Egypt and are not yet a nation. God used the 430 years of bondage to Egypt to make the house of Jacob a nation (God gave birth to a nation in one day).

In this chapter God tells Moses to tell the house of Jacob that this very month will be to the Hebrew people the 1st month of the year to them, in the 10th day of this month. Everyone was to take a one year old male lamb without blemish for each house and keep it 4 days, until the 14th day of the same month.

Then the entire congregation of the house of Jacob was to kill it in the evening of the 14th day and to take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in a basin of the blood and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood.

They were not to go outside of their houses until morning and each person in the house was to eat the lamb roasted with fire in the evening. It was to be spiced with bitter herbs and they were to eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on and their staff in their hand and eat it in haste. This meal was to be called the LORD'S Passover.

God told Moses and the house of Jacob that He will smite all the firstborn of man and beast in the land of Egypt that very night and execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt.

At midnight the death angel passed over the land and smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt including the firstborn of Pharaoh.

The Egyptians told Israel to go out of their land and gave to them jewels of silver, and of gold, and clothing and such things as the people required.

After 430 years of bondage in Egypt the multiplied house of Jacob went out from the land of Egypt on the very day God smote all the firstborn of Egypt and a nation was born (later the house of Jacob was named Israel). God told this new born nation of Israel that when they arrive in the Promise Land they were to keep this Passover Feast.

- This day was to be a memorial; feast to the LORD throughout all Israel's generations.
- Seven days Israel was to eat unleavened bread.
- On the 1st month, on the 14th day at evening, Israel was to eat unleavened bread, until the 21st day of the month.

On the first day: -

- All leaven was to be taken out of their houses, until the 7th day.
- There was to be no leaven found in any of their houses for 7 days.
- Anyone eating leaven, from the 1st day until the 7th day, was to be cut off from Israel.
- The 1st day and the 7th day were both to be a Sabbath Day (no work was to be done).

Israel was to observe this Passover Feast, in their generations for an ordinance forever. No stranger was to eat of the Passover, unless they had been circumcised and when their children asked them, "What the feast is about?" They were to say, "It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt" (Exod. 12:1-51).

The Passover Lamb was to have No Bone Broken.

Exodus 12:46 ----- ⁴⁶It (the Passover lamb) shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones.

Here is the stunning wonder and glory of the Bible thousands of years after this first Passover meal John wrote: -

John 19:30-42 ----- ³⁰When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. ³¹The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. ³²Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: ³⁴But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. ³⁵And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. ³⁶For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

How stunningly glorious is this, the very first Passover Lamb and everyone after that was to have no bone broken and here we are told Jesus the final Passover Lamb without blemish had no bone broken.

For further information concerning no bones broken, see the title: -

- Bones (no Bones Broken).
- In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Old Testament Passover was held on:-

- The 14th day of Nisan (April).
- The first day was Passover Day (also called Preparation Day) it was to be a Sabbath Day.
- Then there were six days of feasting called the feast of unleavened bread (the last day was also a Sabbath Day).
- There was a Sabbath Day then five days and then another Sabbath Day giving the feast a total of seven days.
- The month of Nisan was to be the first month of the year and the start of the nation Israel.
- It was the celebration of the night the death angel passed over the blood on the doorpost.
- This miraculous event brought about the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.
- The Passover night was the birth of a new nation that later became called Israel.
- The Passover day was and still is always the 14th of the month of Nisan (April).

A Brief Overview of the Feast of Passover.

The first day of Unleavened Bread is the same day they sacrificed the Passover Lamb. It is called Passover Day and sometimes Preparation Day. There are seven days of unleavened Bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is six days and the day of Passover makes the seventh day. The first day of Unleavened Bread is Passover Day (the 14th day of Nisan) and is also called Preparation Day.

EASTER.

Acts 12:1-4 ----- ¹Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. ²And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. ³And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) ⁴And when he (Herod the king) had apprehended him (Peter) he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

During the time of Passover and unleavened bread King Herod was bringing great persecution against the church, with the killing of James and the intended killing of Peter.

NOTE: this is the only use of the word Easter in the entire Bible.

Easter: comes from the Hebrew Pesah or Pesach and means Passover it also comes from the Latin and Greek word Pascha and also means Passover. Easter was a celebration of the goddess of heaven that took place approximately the same date as the Passover Feast.

Easter and the Vernal Equinox: Easter is a word used in the Germanic language to denote the festival of the Vernal Equinox. It is also another form of Eastor, which came from the word Eastre, who in Chaldean times was spelt Astarte (also spelt

Atthart). All of these titles refer to the name of a goddess, the Queen of Heaven, whose festival was celebrated at the Vernal Equinox (the passing over of the moon).

Vernal means: spring or new like the spring it happens twice a year once sometime around March to April and also sometime in September. The Vernal Equinox is when the sun crosses the equator and day and night is of equal length everywhere.

Astarte: was the great goddess of the ancient Middle East and goddess of heaven. The name Ashtoreth (often mentioned in the Bible), is the plural form of Astarte and a general term denoting goddesses and paganism. Hebrew Scholars now feel that the name Ashtoreth is a deliberate blending together of the Greek name Astarte showing the Hebrew contempt for her cult

The following Scriptures show that King Solomon and the nation of Israel worshipped pagan gods and the so called Queen of Heaven.

King Solomon followed Astarte the goddess of the Zidonians: -

- It came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians (1 Kings 11:4-5).

Israel followed Ashtoreth, Chemosh and Milcom: -

- Because that they (Israel) have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father (1 Kings 11:33).

At this time Israel had turned away from God to worship: -

- Ashtoreth (also called Astarte) the goddess of the Zidonians.
- Chemosh the god of the Moabites.
- Milcom the god of the children of Ammon.

Israel burned incense to the Queen of Heaven: -

- Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, ¹⁶As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. ¹⁷But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. ¹⁸But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. ¹⁹And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men? (Jer. 44:15-19).

Israel determined to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven: -

- Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that are in the land of Egypt: Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We (Israel's men and women) will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven (Jer. 44: 24-25).

King Solomon built a high place for Ashtoreth for Chemosh and for Milcom: -

- The high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile (2 Kings 23:13).

At this time Israel had turned away from God to worship: -

- Ashtoreth (also called Astarte) the goddess of the Zidonians.
- Chemosh the god of the Moabites.
- Milcom the god of the people of Ammon.

The goddess Ashtoreth: (also called Astarte) was worshipped in Egypt and among the Hittites, as well as in Canaan her counterpart was Ishtar. Later Ashtoreth became assimilated with the Egyptian deities Isis and Hathor (a goddess of the sky and of woman). In the Greco-Roman world she was known as Aphrodite, Artemis and Juno.

Isis the goddess of ancient Egypt: was known as mourner of her murdered husband it is said that she gathered his body pieces together and raised him to life. Her husband was believed to be the God Osiris. Isis brother Seth murdered Osiris so Isis hid her son Horus from Seth for fear Seth would also kill her son. Isis spent her life sheltering her child Horus and became known as a goddess of protection. Horus and Isis became the perfect mother and son symbol, but her chief aspect was that of great magician.

She became one of the most important goddesses of ancient Egypt and was known to cure the sick raise the dead to life and was a symbol of fertility. She had many temples and was a dominant Egyptian goddess by Greco Roman times Isis also had many temples in Alexandria. The cult of Isis was brought to the shores of the Mediterranean, Greece and Rome during the age of Emperor Constantine, the first Christian Roman Emperor.

The Vernal Equinox: the festival for the Queen of heaven was celebrated at the Vernal Equinox which was the passing over of the moon. Since the word Easter comes from the Greek word Paschal and means, to pass over the name Easter was a very appropriate name for the festival of the Vernal Equinox.

Many religious disputes and debates were held over whether observing Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday or on the actual day of the Jewish Lunar month (14th day of Nisan regardless of the day). The 14th day was the actual day the Paschal (to pass over) Lamb was slain. The Christian church in the Roman province of Asia kept the actual Jewish day (14th day of Nisan).

Emperor Constantine (325 AD): met bishops from various sees at the ecumenical council of Nicaea. Constantine granted tolerance to Christians within the Roman Empire and ruled that Easter should be celebrated after the full moon following the vernal equinox. The date varies between March 22nd and April 25th this is the system the churches follow today. The Jews still celebrate the Passover Feast on the 14th day of Nisan (April) as the LORD commanded them.

Easter and the Christian Passover.

The pagan festival of the Vernal Equinox was associated with the passing over of the moon while the Christian Feast of Passover is associated with God's people being delivered from Egypt and their sins. The council of Nicea was summoned by Constantine in (325 AD). This council is described as the first ecumenical council of Nicea, the discussions at Nicea were far more effective than previous councils of Nicea, because the Emperor made them effective in secular law.

The council of Nicea was believed to be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and was especially sacred because bishops attended it from all parts of the church. It was recognised by both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics and the decisions made at this council represented the universal church; (this is why they are called ecumenical). The Council of Nicea was built upon the council in Jerusalem (Acts chapter fifteen).

The aim of Nicea for church unity: the council of Nicea statement for the unity of the body of Christ states, "Any vision worthy of the unity of the body of Christ cannot be identified or achieved by political or spiritual coercion, strategies of dominance or superiority. To achieve this vision calls for a return to the mother church based on casual friendliness. In the mind of the Council of Nicea, the Mother Church was the Catholic Church (the word Catholic means universal church) eventually it became known as the Church of Rome (Pontifex Maximus means Supreme Priest).

Apostate Western Religion and Easter: the Jewish festival of the Passover on the 14th day of Nisan (April) was quite distinct from the pagan festival of Easter (Eastre or Astarte). Easter was the celebration of the goddess of Heaven at the full moon and was called the Passover (paschal) moon after the Vernal Equinox. This happens between March 21st and April 23rd and is the date Christians celebrate Easter on today. It was introduced into the apostate Western religion as part of an attempt to adapt pagan festivals to Christianity.

The Jewish Passover and Easter: the Jewish Passover was 14th day of April with seven days of unleavened bread taking the final date to the 21st of April. This put it almost at the same time as the Vernal Equinox and by the time the writers of the King James Bible put the final canon together, the Passover Feast had been changed. The Council of Nicea linked it to the same time as the festival of the goddess of Heaven, being Eastre (or Astarte). The first Sunday after the full moon of the vernal Equinox became the effective day in secular and religious law for the festival of Easter, this is still the day Christians keep the celebration of Easter.

New Testament Holy Days: Jesus Christ and his apostles never instituted any feasts or holy days for New Testament believers so even if the festival (called Easter) that the Jews were keeping in (Acts chapter 12:4) had been a proper Passover Feast it would still have been considered pagan in the eyes of God, because the ultimate Passover sacrifice had been slain for all men on the cross of Calvary. To continue to hold the Passover Feasts was a denial of Jesus Christ, the final Lamb that was slain. Christ had the Last Supper which was the last of the Old Testament Passover's perhaps this is why the translators of the King James Bible use the word Easter instead of Passover.

The Passover and the New Testament: the Old Testament Passover is not instituted for New Testament believers the Lord Jesus Christ instituted a new Passover, but it is not an eight-day feast, but a remembering of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said: -

- This is my body which is for you and this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

Jesus said as often as you celebrate this meal meaning there is no set date, no legalistic requirement or day upon which this should be celebrated. Breaking bread and drinking the cup in remembrance of the Lord can be done wherever and whenever brothers and sisters come together to share a meal in the Lord's name. The New Covenant and the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ annulled all the laws concerning the Old Testament feasts, the ordained acts of service, the High Priest, animal sacrifices and the instituted feasts and holy days all become pagan festivals in the New Covenant.

Pagan religions Easter and Passover: ancient pagan religions linked Easter with the Passover to celebrate the resurrection of Christ, because of this many churches today keep the Passover or Easter festival to celebrate the resurrection of Christ, yet after the ultimate sacrifice of the Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary; there are no celebrations of Christ in the New Testament instituted by Jesus or his disciples.

The end of the Old Testament Passover: the Last Supper of Jesus with the apostles and the crucifixion of the Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary was the end of the Old Testament Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread. Christ instituted a New Testament celebration and gathering when he took bread and broke it saying: -

- This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me (Luke 22:19).

And when he took cup saying: -

- This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

This New Testament celebration could be observed at any location and anytime when two or more were gathered together to honour Christ.

Christ our Passover: Paul in his letter to the Corinthian brothers and sisters in Christ wrote: -

- Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:7)

These words of Paul clearly show that the old outward feast of Unleavened Bread has been replaced by a meal that is eaten in Jesus name with other brothers and sisters in Christ who are gathered together to celebrate the Lord Jesus Christ. This meal can be eaten on any day of the week and in any location.

SUMMARY: Easter or Passover

The Jews were keeping the Old Testament Passover from the 14th to the 21st day of Nisan (our April). The festival for the goddess of Heaven fell almost at the same time between the 21st March and April the 23rd. The ecumenical council of Nicea in 325 AD linked the Jews celebration of Passover with the festival of the goddess of heaven held on the first Sunday after the Vernal Equinox.

Neither Christ, the apostles or Paul instituted any feast, festivals or holy days for New Testament believers. The unbiblical feast of Easter had been established long before the canon of the King James Bible was put together. The evidence suggests that the writers of the King James Bible took all these facts into account when putting the Scriptures together and that it was not by mistake, but a deliberate action by the translators to use the word Easter because this festival was not Christian based, but a pagan celebration linked to the goddess of Heaven.

NOTE: this does not mean when Christians gather together in faith at Easter it is a sin or an offense to God since they are not gathering together to obey any legalistic command of God nor are they gathering together to worship any pagan god, but to honor the Almighty and majestic God and give thanks to Christ for the suffering he endured on the cross of Calvary.

Anything done in faith toward Christ is honoring God. Christians are not gathering together to worship the Queen of heaven or any other deity, they only have one focus and one love and his name is the Lord Jesus Christ, the final Passover Lamb of God without blemish that was slain for our sin. But if a church or religious leader is teaching Passover as a law and it is being kept out of legalism faith is not involved and therefore it not only counts for nothing, but is also denying what Christ achieved for all believers on the cross.

Those who in faith gather together to praise and worship Christ at Easter are pleasing to God; similarly those who in faith do not gather at Easter are also pleasing to God. Each believer must be true to his or her own conscience before God and not judge another brother or sister's freedom in Christ, especially when they are being true to their own conscience and belief before Christ.

The God Christians worship is not bound by the stone walls of legalism and dogma or religious customs and traditions, He is a living God with a father's heart and quite capable of perceiving and understanding the true motive of the heart of those who stand before Him in sincere love and worship toward His beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

For further information concerning the Passover, see the titles: -

- The Lord's Supper.
 - In, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).
 - Passover in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).
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End