

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Origin of “Easter” and “Holy Communion”

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Have you ever investigated to see if the New Testament ever says anything about “Easter”? Have you ever wondered why in all the “Easter Services”, people partake of the Lord’s supper, known as “holy communion” when they might not do so the rest of the year?

In the King James Version of the New Testament, the term “Easter” is found in Acts 12:4. The Greek term here is “*pascha*” which is the word denoting the Jewish “*passover*”. It occurs twenty-nine times in the New Testament and is translated “*passover*” every other time (*Matthew 26:2, I Corinthians 5:7, etc.*)

The word “*Easter*” is from the Anglo-Saxon word of “*Ostara*” or “*Eastre*”, the name of the goddess of Spring and dawn. The pagan practice of celebrating the beginning of life in the Spring was combined with the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. Man made this connection, not God! Since Jesus died during passover week, and rose from the dead three days later, the term “*pascha*” began to include both

the death and resurrection of Jesus. Man made this linguistic connection with the Jewish passover in the fourth century A.D., not God!

Man, not God has legislated Easter. The council of Nicea (A.D. 325) fixed the date as “*the Sunday immediately following the fourteenth day of the so-called paschal moon, which happens on or first after the vernal equinox... Easter, then cannot occur earlier than March 22, or later than April 25*”. And in the council of Antioch (A.D. 341), it was called “*the holy feast, the pascha of our salvation*” (The New Schaff-Herzon Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. IV, page 44).

The practice of partaking the Lord’s supper as something mandatory on “Easter Sunday” also originates with man. In A.D. 1215, a council was held in Rome. The twenty-first canon of this council is “*Every believer, of either sex, who has come to years of discretion, must as least once a year confess honestly his sins to his own priest and perform the penance which may be enjoined as far as he is able, and at least on Easter solemnly receive the Eucharist...*”

You will find the command of partaking of the Lord’s supper on “Easter Sunday” in the New Testament when you locate the place where God authorizes confessing sins to a priest and paying penance. IT IS NOT THERE!

What you do find in the New Testament is: “*upon the first day of the week*” Christians “*gathered together to break bread*” or partake of the Lord’s supper (*Acts 20:7*). Since every week has a first day, this was a weekly practice in the first century church, not a yearly one. Every first day of the week Christians remember the Lord’s death when they partake of the Lord’s supper, and in doing so, we “*proclaim the Lords’ death till he come*” (*I Corinthians 11:26*).

This is a special day before God because it is the first day of the week, and we worship today as we always do on every first day of the week.

We hope you too will want to worship according to this New Testament pattern and be back with us next Sunday.