

Purely Biblical

~Easter~
by Bob Stokes

Having no part in the New Testament or early church of the 1st century, how did this pagan name (**Easter/Ashtoreth/Ishtar/Astarte/**) enter Holy Scripture and what has it to do with the teachings of Jesus?

Acts 12:4

And when he had apprehended him, 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.
(KJV)

Acts 12:4

When he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the **Passover** to bring him out before the people.
(NAU)

Acts 12:4

After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the **Passover**.
(NIV)

Acts 12:4

So when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after **Passover**.
(NKJ)

The word 'Easter' comes from the King James Version of the Bible in an incorrect translation of the word 'pascha' which, everywhere else and in every other translation, including the New King James Version, is correctly translated as 'Passover'!

[Intending after Easter] There never was a more absurd or unhappy translation than this. The original is simply after the Passover [meta (grk 3326) to (grk 3588) pascha (grk 3957)]. The word "Easter" now denotes the festival observed by many Christian churches in honor of the resurrection of the Saviour. ***But the original has no reference to that, nor is there the slightest evidence that any such festival was observed at the time when this book was written.*** The translation is not only unhappy, as it does not convey at all the meaning of the original, but because it may contribute to foster an opinion that such a festival was observed in the time of the apostles. The word "Easter" is of Saxon origin, and is supposed to be derived from "Eostre," the goddess of Love, or the Venus of the North, in honor of whom a festival was celebrated by our pagan ancestors in the month of April (**Webster**). Since this festival coincided with the Passover of the Jews, and with the feast observed by Christians in honor of the resurrection of Christ, the name came to be used to denote the latter. In the old Anglo-Saxon service-books the term "Easter" is used frequently to translate the word "Passover." In the translation by Wycliffe, the word "paske," that is, "Passover," is used. But Tyndale and Coverdale used the word "Easter," and hence, it has, ***very improperly***, crept into our King James Version." (**from Barnes' Notes**)

Acts 12:4

[**Intending after Easter**], [meta (grk 3326) ta (grk 3588) pascha (grk 3957)]-- it should be, `after the Passover: ' that is, after the conclusion of the festival. (The word employed in our King James Version being an ecclesiastical term of later date, is *improperly used here.*) (from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

Acts 12:4 PP2

"**The term Easter, inserted here by our translators, they borrowed from the ancient Anglo-Saxon service-books**, or from the version of the Gospels, which always translates the to (grk 3588) pascha (grk 3957) of the Greek by this term; e. g. <Matt. 26:2>: ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover. The Anglo-Saxon has: "Wite ge that aefter twam dagum beoth Eastro." <Matt. 26:19>: and they made ready the Passover. The Anglo-Saxon has: "And hig gegearwodon hym Easter thenunga" (i. e. the paschal supper). Prefixed to <Matt. 28:1>, are these words in Anglo-Saxon: "This part to be read on Easter even (ing)." And, before <Acts 12:8>, some similar words. <Mark 14:12>: "and the first day of unleavened bread when they killed the Passover." The Anglo-Saxon has: "And tham forman daege azimorum, tha hi Eastron offrodon." Other examples occur in this version. Wycliff used the word "paske", i. e. Passover; but Tyndale, Coverdale, Becke, and Cardmarden, following the old Saxon mode of translation, insert "Easter": the Geneva Bible very properly renders it the "Passover". There are several Saxon spellings of the name of the goddess Easter, whose festival was celebrated by our pagan forefathers in the month of April; hence, that month, in the Saxon calendar, is called "Easter month". *Every view we can take of this subject shows the gross impropriety of retaining a name every way exceptionable, and palpably absurd.*"

(from Adam Clarke Commentary)

"**pascha ^3957^, mistranslated "Easter"** in <Acts 12:4>, KJV, denotes the Passover (RV). The phrase "after the Passover" signifies after the whole festival was at an end. The term "Easter" is not of Christian origin. *It is another form of Astarte, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven.* The festival of Pasch held by Christians in post-apostolic times was a continuation of the Jewish feast, but was not instituted by Christ, nor was it connected with Lent. From this Pasch *the pagan festival of "Easter"* was quite distinct and was introduced into the apostate Western religion, as part of the attempt to adapt pagan festivals to Christianity. See PASSOVER." (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)

"**(es'-ter) (pascha, from Aramaic paccha' and Hebrew pecach, the Passover festival)**: The English word comes from the Anglo-Saxon Eastre or Estera, a Teutonic goddess to whom sacrifice was offered in April, so the name was transferred to the paschal feast. The word does not properly occur in Scripture, although the King James Version has it in <Acts 12:4> where it stands for Passover, as it is rightly rendered in the Revised Version (British and American). There is no trace of Easter celebration in the New Testament, though some would see an intimation of it in <1 Cor 5:7>. The Jewish Christians in the early church continued to celebrate the Passover, regarding Christ as the true paschal lamb, and this naturally passed over into a commemoration of the death and resurrection of Our Lord, or an Easter feast. This was preceded by a fast, which was considered by one party as ending at the hour of the crucifixion, i.e. at 3 o'clock on Friday, by another as continuing until the hour of the resurrection before dawn on Easter morning". (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia,)

EASTER (Gk. pascha, from Heb. pesah). The Passover (which see), and so translated in every passage except in the KJV: "intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people" <Acts 12:4>. In the earlier English versions Easter had been frequently used as the translation of pascha. At the last revision

Passover was substituted in all passages but this. See Passover.

"The word Easter is of Saxon origin, Eastr, the goddess of spring, in whose honor sacrifices were offered about Passover time each year. By the eighth century Anglo-Saxons had adopted the name to designate the celebration of Christ's resurrection." (from New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

Is there any Biblical command, precedent or example by the Lord, His Apostles or the 1st century believers, for us to follow in celebrating this day? Then why are we??