



The Origins of Easter

* This study is downloadable for free at:
www.EasterTruth.info

[Easter – What comes to mind?]

- What do you think of when you hear the word "Easter"?

Easter – What comes to mind?



[Easter – What comes to mind?]

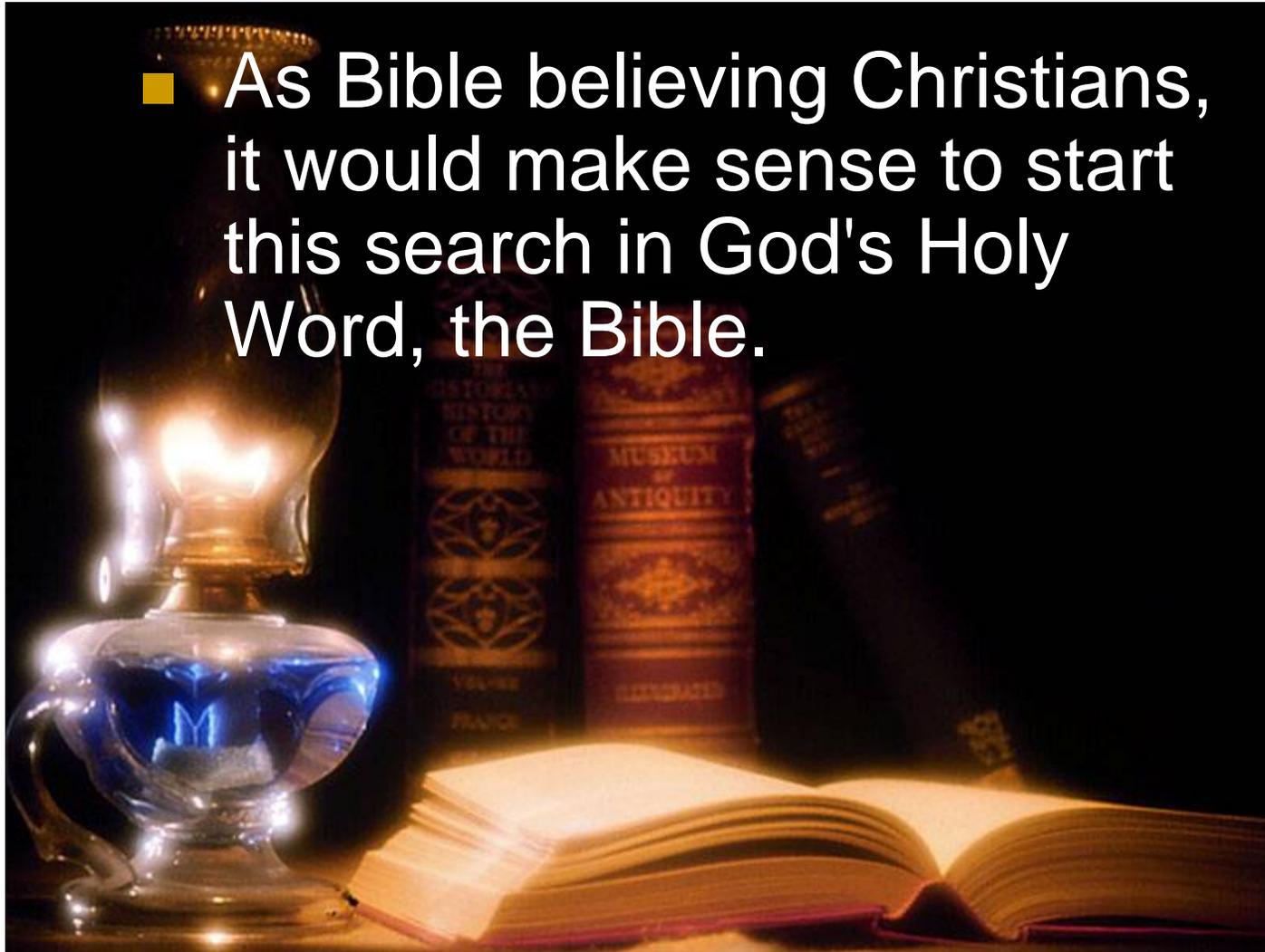
- In North American Culture, when someone is speaking of Easter, they are most likely referring to the events surrounding Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.
- Why is it though, that thoughts of easter eggs, chocolate bunnies, and pastel colours also run through our minds when we hear the term Easter?

[Easter – What comes to mind?]

- Are these things also related to the events surrounding Jesus' death?
- Where did they come from and how did they get associated with the celebration we now call Easter?
- The purpose of this presentation is to find answers to these questions.

What does the Bible say?

- As Bible believing Christians, it would make sense to start this search in God's Holy Word, the Bible.



“Easter” in the Bible?

- Is the word 'Easter' found in the Bible?
- The word "Easter" is not found at all in most Bibles, including the NKJV, NIV, NASB, NLT, ESV, CEV, NCV, ASV, YLT, TNIV and many others.

["Easter" in the KJV?]

- However, It is found once in the King James Version of the Bible (in 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." (Acts 12:4 KJV)

“Passover” – In the KJV?

- Using Strong's Exhaustive Concordance:
- The word "Passover" occurs 77 times in the KJV of the Bible.
- 49 times in the Old Testament as -> Strong's #6453 – ‘pesach’
- 28 times in the New Testament as -> Strong's #3957 – ‘pascha’

[Easter (KJV) = Passover?]

- The word "Easter" that appears in Acts 12:4 in the KJV of the Bible is also Strong's Greek word #3957 – 'pascha', which means passover.
- The scholars that translated the KJV of the Bible, translated the word pascha as passover 28 times in the New Testament and then in Acts 12:4 they decided to translate it as easter.

[Easter (KJV) = Passover?]

- The word "Easter" in Acts 12:4 in the KJV of the Bible is clearly a mistranslation of the Greek word "pascha".
- "Pascha" should be properly translated as "Passover" and is done so in most other translations.

[Easter (KJV) = Passover?]

- "...intending after **Easter** to bring him forth to the people." (Acts 12:4 KJV)
- "...intending to bring him before the people after **Passover**." (Acts 12:4 NKJV)
- "...Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the **Passover**." (Acts 12:4 NIV)
- "...intending after the **Passover** to bring him out to the people." (Acts 12:4 ESV)

[Pascha mistranslation...]

- “Pascha ... mistranslated ‘Easter’ in Acts 12:4, KJV, denotes the Passover ... The term ‘Easter’ is not of Christian origin.”

- *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 1985, p. 192, "Easter".

[Pascha mistranslation...]

- “As surprising as this may sound, nowhere in the New Testament can you find any reference to Easter. In the King James Version of the Bible (in Acts 12:4) you do find the word Easter, but it is a blatantly erroneous mistranslation that has been corrected in virtually every other Bible translation. The original Greek word there is pascha, correctly translated Passover in virtually every modern version of the Bible everywhere it appears in the Scriptures.”

- “Would Jesus Keep Easter?” by Jerold Aust

(<http://www.gnmagazine.org/issues/gn75/easter.htm>)

[Pascha mistranslation...]

- How did such a large mistranslation come about?
- “The King James Version Bible was written by scholars whose orientation was toward Catholic and Anglican church doctrines, and this caused some of the errors in translation i.e., the translation of the Greek word pascha, which means ‘passover’, as “Easter” in Acts 12:4.”

- [Biblestudy.org](http://www.biblestudy.org)

(<http://www.biblestudy.org/question/what-does-the-word-easter-mean.html>)

[Where did “Easter” come from?]

- Where did this term come from and what does it mean?
- So far, we have learned that the term "Easter" is not truly found in the Bible.
- Let us turn to the dictionaries to see what they say about the term “Easter”.

Easter - Definition

- **Easter:** *n.* festival (held on a variable Sunday in March or April) commemorating Christ's resurrection. [Old English]

- The Oxford Dictionary of Current English, New Edition, "Easter"

[Easter - Definition]

Easter:

- A Christian feast commemorating the Resurrection of Jesus.

[from Old English : *Eastre*]

- The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition (2000), “Easter”

Easter - Definition

- **Easter:** \Eas'ter\, n. [AS. e['a]ster, e['a]stran, paschal feast, Easter; akin to G. *ostern*; fr. Anglo-Saxon. *E['a]stre*, a goddess of light or spring, in honor of whom a festival was celebrated in April;

- Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913), "Easter"

Easter - Definition

"The word Easter may come from **Eostre**, the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic goddess of Spring and fertility, whose festival was celebrated at the vernal equinox."

- "Easter Word Origins" from Dictionary.com

(<http://dictionary.reference.com/features/easter.html>)

Easter - Definition

“According to the eighth-century theologian the Venerable Bede (who came up with the dating system of AD and BC), Easter is named for **Eostre**, an Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring. She is associated with the egg and with the hare, both symbols of procreation that have been enduringly incorporated by the church in the form of Easter eggs and the Easter bunny who brings them.”

- “Easter”, from [Answers.com](http://www.answers.com)
(<http://www.answers.com/topic/easter>)

Easter - Definition

"Easter, Ostara, or **Ishtar** was the goddess of Spring in the religion of the ancient Angles and Saxons. Every April a festival was celebrated in her honor. With the beginnings of Christianity, the old gods were put aside. From then on the festival was celebrated in honor of the resurrection of Christ, but was still known as Easter after the old goddess."

- "Easter", from *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (1934)

Easter - Definitions

- Though we use the term (or name) “Easter” to refer to Jesus’ death and resurrection
- “Easter” is clearly not connected with any sort of Hebrew or Christian origins.
- The term is derived from the name of an ancient pagan goddess (Eostre, Ostara, Ishtar) and has no relation whatsoever to the events surrounding Jesus' death.

[In other Languages]

- Upon studying the terms used to refer to the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection in other languages, we find that they use terms that are slightly more meaningful than the term “Easter” (pagan goddess of spring) that we use in English.

[Great Day or Great Night]

- In some languages the term used is “Great Day” or “Great Night”. Examples include:
 - Bulgarian: Velikden
 - Czech: Velikonoce
 - Latvian: Lieldienas
 - Polish: Wielkanoc
 - Slovak: Velka Noc
 - Slovenian: Velika no
 - Ukrainian: Vjalikdzen

Resurrection Day or Festival

- In others it is translated as "Resurrection", "Resurrection Day" or "Resurrection Festival". Some examples include:
 - Croatian: Uskrs
 - Chinese: Fuhuo Jie
 - Korean: Buhwalchol
 - Bosnian: Uskrs or Vaskrs
 - Serbian: Uskrs or Vaskrs
 - Vietnamese: Le Phuc Sinh
 - Lakota: Woekicetuanpetu

[Taking what?]

- In some languages the term used is quite peculiar:
 - Hungarian: Husvet
(literally "taking, or buying meat")
 - Estonian: Lihavõtted
(literally "meat taking")

[Pesach or Passover]

- However, in most other languages, the term used for the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection is more precisely derived from "Pesach", the Hebrew term for Passover.

Some examples include:

[Pesach / Pascha / Passover]

- Hebrew: Pesach
- Greek: Pascha
- French: Pâques
- Italian: Pasqua
- Spanish: Pascua
- Portuguese: Pascoa
- Romanian: Paste
- Russian: Paskha
- Polish: Pascha
- Japanese: Seidai Pasuha
- Albanian: Pashket
- Danish: Paske
- Finnish: Paasiainen
- Icelandic: Paskar
- Norwegian: Paske
- Swedish: Pask
- Irish: Caisc
- Turkish: Paskalya
- Indonesian: Paskah
- Persian: Pas'h

[Why do we still use “Easter” ?]

- Almost every other language uses a relevant term when it refers to the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- Why is it that we, English speaking Christians, still use the name of a pagan goddess to refer to this sacred event?

Calculating the date of Easter

- When is Easter?
- It is on a different date each year.
- Always on a Sunday
- Always in the Spring
- Most people just check a calendar

April 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MY CALENDAR
TELLS ME EASTER
IS ON THIS DATE

[Calculating the date of Easter]

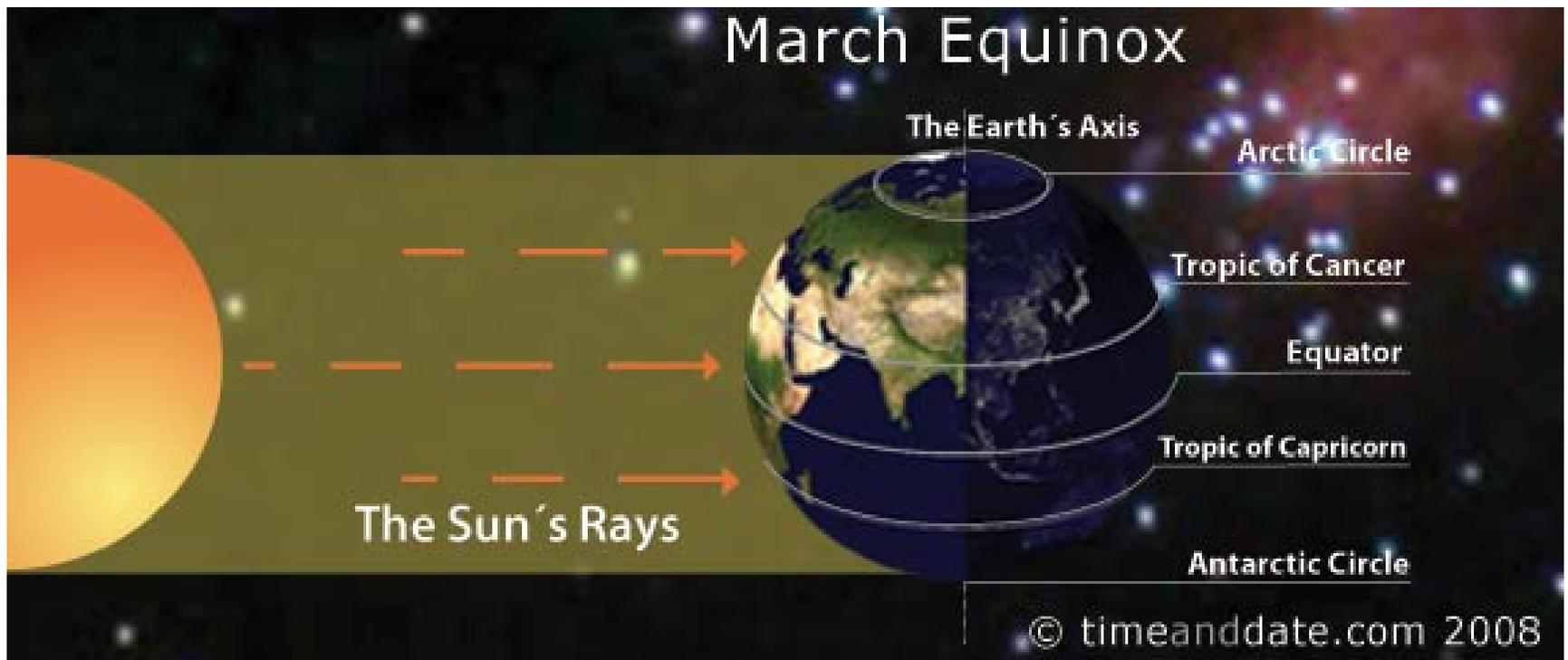
- "Easter day, on which the rest of the movable feasts depend, is always the first Sunday after the fourteenth day of the calendar moon which (fourteenth day) falls on, or next after, the 21st of March, according to the rules laid down for the construction of the calendar; so that if the fourteenth day happen on a Sunday, Easter day is the Sunday after."
- Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913)

[Calculating the date of Easter]

- "The day on which this feast is observed, the first Sunday following the full moon that occurs on or next after the vernal equinox."
 - The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Updated in 2003.

Spring or Vernal Equinox

- Equinox is latin for “Equal Night”
 - When daytime equals nighttime



Calculating the date of Easter

- "Though the New Testament contains no reference to an annual feast celebrating the Resurrection, the practice was well-established by the second century. Early churchmen were divided on whether to hold a feast on 14 Nisan (the date of the Biblical Pesach, which morphed into the name for Easter in many languages) or on the following Sunday; disputes and excommunications ensued in this Quartodeciman controversy until the Council of Nicea in 325 decided it must fall on a Sunday. Eventually the date was formulated roughly as "the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the vernal equinox." This can range between March 22 and April 25."

- Easter, from Answers.com
(<http://www.answers.com/topic/easter>)

Calculating the date of Easter

- “Easter Sunday typically falls on a different date each year. Easter is always the first Sunday after or on the first full moon, after the spring (vernal) Equinox. The first Ecumenical Council was held at Nicea in present-day Turkey in the year 325. It decreed that Easter would be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon that occurred after the spring equinox. This retained a lunar connection as a sort of 'memory' of the Jewish calendar system, and ensured that the feast would be on a Sunday. Because lunar phases occur independently of the solar year, this means that there is a 'window' of several weeks during which Easter may be celebrated. By this reckoning, in our calendar, Easter must occur between March 22 and April 25.”

- How is the Date for Easter Calculated, From WikiAnswers

(http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_is_the_date_for_Easter_calculated_each_year)

Calculating the date of Easter

- "The Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) set the date of Easter as the Sunday following the 14th day of the paschal full moon, which is the full moon whose 14th day falls on or after the vernal (spring) equinox. We know that Easter must always occur on a Sunday, because Sunday was the day of Christ's Resurrection. But why the 14th day of the paschal full moon? Because that was the date of Passover in the Jewish calendar, and the Last Supper (Holy Thursday) occurred on the Passover. Therefore, Easter was the Sunday after Passover."

- How Is the Date of Easter Calculated? By Scott P. Richert
(http://catholicism.about.com/od/holydaysandholidays/f/Calculate_Date.htm)

Calculating the date of Easter

- "The rule of Rome was that the celebration must always be on a Sunday - the Sunday nearest to the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year. And if the fourteenth day of that month should itself be a Sunday, then the celebration was not to be held on that day, but upon the next Sunday. One reason of this was not only to be as like the heathen as possible, but to be as unlike the Jews as possible."

- A.T. Jones, *The Two Republics*, p.214

[What some might be thinking...]

- Why does the calculation of the date of easter need to be so complicated?
- What was the original method of calculating it and why did it change?
- And what is with the constant connection with Jesus' death and the Passover?
- Isn't the Passover a Jewish thing?

[What does the Bible say?]



Passover in The Old Testament

- "It is the **LORD's passover**. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."

(Exodus 12:11-14 KJV)

Passover in The Old Testament

- "Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and **kill the Passover lamb.**" (**Exodus 12:21 NKJV**)
- "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." (**Exodus 12:27 KJV**)

Passover in The Old Testament

- “Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A **mixed multitude** went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.”

(Exodus 12:37-39 NKJV)

[Passover in The Old Testament]

- "These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the **fourteenth day of the first month** at even is **the LORD's passover.**"

(Leviticus 23:4-5 KJV)

[Passover in The Old Testament]

- "Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. In **the fourteenth day of this month**, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it."

(Numbers 9:2-3 KJV)

Passover in The Old Testament

- "And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land."

(Numbers 9:14 KJV)

[Passover in The Old Testament]

- God commanded all believers (Israelites and strangers) to keep the passover, which was to be observed on 14th day of the first month (Abib/Nisan) of the biblical Hebrew calendar.
- They were to select a perfect lamb without blemish and then it was to be sacrificed.
- They celebrated this as a memorial of what God did to save them from the plagues and bondage in Egypt.

[Passover is an important event]

- "The annual festivals commanded by God all prefigured some event relating to the Messiah. Also, something worthy of mention is that each of the festivals which have been fulfilled met their fulfillment on the actual day of celebration. That is to say, Christ was sacrificed as our paschal lamb on the day of Passover. Christ presented Himself before the Father on the day of Firstfruits. These parallels hold true to each of the holidays. Type met anti-type on the very same day, and it was all fulfilled in that day."

- *Atoning for the Day of Atonement,*
by Raymond Thompson, 20 April 2008

(http://www.spectrummagazine.org/collegiate/2008/04/20/atoning_day_atonement)

Passover in The New Testament

- Jesus observed the passover from his childhood.
- "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the **feast of the passover**. And when he [Jesus] was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast."

(Luke 2:41-42 KJV)

Passover in The New Testament

- Jesus knew exactly when and how He would die.
- "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the **feast of the passover**, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

(Matthew 26:1-2 KJV)

[What event is this?]



Passover in The New Testament

- “Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.” So they said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare?” And He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.”

(Luke 22:7-13 NKJV)

Passover in The New Testament

- “When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, “**With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.**” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.”

(Luke 22:14-20 NKJV)

[Some might be thinking....]

- Hey... that's not Passover. That's just communion.
- We do that all the time
- You know, whenever we feel like it
- Some people do it daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly
- There's no rule for that



Passover in The New Testament

- “The Passover meal Jesus ate with the disciples was without the paschal lamb because the Savior wanted to institute a new Passover meal commemorative of His redemption from sin through bread and wine, the new symbols of His own body and blood soon to be offered 'for the forgiveness of sins' (Matt 26:28).”

- Theologian Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi,
God's Festivals in Scripture and History
Part 2 - The Fall Festivals, 1996, p.33

- [
- What else took place during this observance of the yearly Passover feast that Jesus and the apostles took part in?



Passover in The New Testament

- “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.” Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” ”

(John 13:1-8 NKJV)

Passover in The New Testament

- “Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!” Jesus said to him, “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, “You are not all clean.” So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. **For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.** Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

(John 13:9-17 NKJV)

[Passover in The New Testament]

- If we weren't taught otherwise, we would almost think that Jesus was telling the apostles (and all believers) to continue observing the passover
- But from then on to do it how He did it that day (with the footwashing, and eating of unleavened bread and drinking wine).
- And every time we celebrate this Passover event (i.e. yearly), we should do so in remembrance of Him and His awesome Sacrifice for us.

Passover in The New Testament

- The apostle Paul also indicated that we should still be keeping the feast of Passover:
- "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

(1 Corinthians 5:7-8 KJV)

Passover in The New Testament

- "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

(1 Corinthians 11:23-29 KJV)

Passover in The New Testament

- "The meaning of the Christian Passover is both commemorative and prefigurative, just like the Old Testament Passover. On the one hand, it commemorates the past deliverance from bondage and sin through Christ's suffering and death. On the other hand, it prefigures the future celebration of the marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9) at the establishment of God's Kingdom. Christ Himself alluded to the eschatological fulfillment of Passover when He said to the disciples that He would not eat Passover again 'until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God' (Luke 22:16)."

- Theologian Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History - Part 2 - The Fall Festivals*, p.33

[Summary from the Bible...]

- Easter is not found in the Bible at all
- Passover is found all over the Bible
- Easter was not celebrated by Jesus
- Passover was celebrated by Jesus
- Easter observance was not commanded by Jesus or anyone else in the Bible
- Passover observance was to be done in remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice

[Jesus is our Example]

- “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps”

(1 Peter 2:21 NKJV)

[Reality Check Time...]

- Wait a second now...
- If all this is true, then wouldn't the early Christians have kept the Passover?
- And if so, would they have observed it on the Jewish Passover date or the date we now observe as Easter Sunday?

[The Early Christians]

- “The earliest Christians celebrated the Lord's Passover at the same time as the Jews, during the night of the first full moon of the first month of spring (Nisan 14-15). By the middle of the 2nd century, most churches had transferred this celebration to the Sunday after the Jewish feast. But certain churches of Asia Minor clung to the older custom, for which they were denounced as 'judaizing'. The first ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that all churches should observe the feast together on a Sunday”

- The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th edition, Macropaedia, Vol. 4, pp. 604-605, "Church Year".

[The Early Christians]

- “There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament or in the writings of the apostolic Fathers. The sanctity of special times was an idea absent from the minds of the first Christians.”

- Encyclopedia Britannica, volume VIII, p.859.

[The Early Christians]

- “Some church historians assert that Easter observance began in the first century (CE), but they must admit that their first evidence for the observance comes from the second century.”

- **BibleWorld.com**

(<http://www.bibleworld.com/easter.pdf>)

[The Early Christians]

- “By the later second century, it was accepted that the celebration of Pascha was a practice of the disciples and an undisputed tradition. The Quartodeciman controversy, the first of several Paschal/Easter controversies, then arose concerning the date on which Pascha should be celebrated. The term "Quartodeciman" refers to the practice of celebrating Pascha or Easter beginning on Nisan 14 of the Hebrew calendar, "the LORD's passover" (Leviticus 23:5).”

- **Easter, from Wikipedia**

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter>)

[The Early Christians]

- “The Quartodecimans contentiously keep Passover on one day, once per year...They keep the Passover on whichever day the fourteenth of the month falls...Christ had to be slain on the fourteenth of the month in accordance with the law”
 - Epiphanius. *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III (Sects 47-80), De Fide. Section IV, Verses 1,3;1,6;2,6. Translated by Frank Williams. EJ Brill, New York, 1994, pp. 23-25).*

[The Early Christians]

- “There is no doubt that Apollinarius was a Quartodeciman...Those who kept Passover in the evening understood it to be a repetition of the Lord's Supper”

- Stewart-Sykes A. Melito of Sardis On Pascha. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood (NY), 2001, p. 81).

[The Early Christians]

- “In Asia Minor most people kept the fourteenth day of the moon...Moreover the Quartodecimans affirm that the observance of the fourteenth day was delivered to them by the apostle John”

- Socrates Scholasticus. Ecclesiastical History, Book V, Chapter XXII. Excerpted from Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Volume 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. American Edition, 1890. Online Edition Copyright © 2005 by K. Knight.

[The Early Christians]

- “Audians...they choose to celebrate the Passover with the Jews--that is they contentiously celebrate the Passover at the same time as the Jews are holding their Festival of Unleavened Bread. And indeed that **this used to be the church's custom**”

- Epiphanius. The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Books II and III (Sects 47-80), De Fide. Section VI, Verses 8,11; 9,2. Translated by Frank Williams. EJ Brill, New York, 1994, pp. 410-411.

[The Early Christians]

- “It is not known how long the Nisan 14 practice continued. But both those who followed the Nisan 14 custom, and those who set Easter to the following Sunday (the Sunday of Unleavened Bread) had in common the custom of consulting their Jewish neighbors to learn when the month of Nisan would fall, and setting their festival accordingly. By the later 3rd century, however, some Christians began to express dissatisfaction with the custom of relying on the Jewish community to determine the date of Easter. The chief complaint was that the Jewish communities sometimes set their week of Unleavened Bread to fall before the spring equinox”

- **Easter, from Wikipedia**

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter>)

[The Early Christians]

- “Anicetus argued for Easter while Polycarp, a student of the apostle John, defended observing ‘the Christian Passover, on the 14th of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish ecclesiastical calendar, regardless of the day of the week’ ”

- Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th edition, Micropaedia, Vol. 8, p. 94, "Polycarp".

[The Early Christians]

- “The actual introduction of Easter-Sunday appears to have occurred earlier in Palestine after Emperor Hadrian ruthlessly crushed the Barkokeba revolt (A.D. 132-135)... The fact that the Passover controversy arose when Emperor Hadrian adopted new repressive measures against Jewish religious practices suggests that such measures influenced the new Gentile hierarchy to change the date of Passover from Nisan 14 to the following Sunday (Easter-Sunday) in order to show separation and differentiation from the Jews and the Jewish Christians”

- Samuele Bacchiocchi, God's Festival in Scripture and History, 1995, pp. 101-103

[The Early Christians]

- “A whole body of ‘Against the Jews’ literature was produced by leading Fathers who defamed the Jews as a people and emptied their religious beliefs and practices of any historical value. Two major causalities of the anti-Jewish campaign were Sabbath and Passover. The Sabbath was changed to Sunday and Passover was transferred to Easter-Sunday. Scholars usually recognize the anti-Judaic motivation for the repudiation of the Jewish reckoning of Passover and adoption of Easter-Sunday instead. Joachim Jeremias attributes such a development to ‘the inclination to break away from Judaism.’ In a similar vein, J.B. Lightfoot explains that Rome and Alexandria adopted Easter-Sunday to avoid ‘even the semblance of Judaism’”

- Samuele Bacchiocchi, *God's Festival in Scripture and History*, 1995, pp. 101-103

[Quote from Polycrates...]

- “We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away... Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, ... and, moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord,... And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr... All these observed the fourteenth day of the passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, do according to the tradition of my relatives... And my relatives always observed the day when the people put away the leaven... For those greater than I have said ‘We ought to obey God rather than man’.”

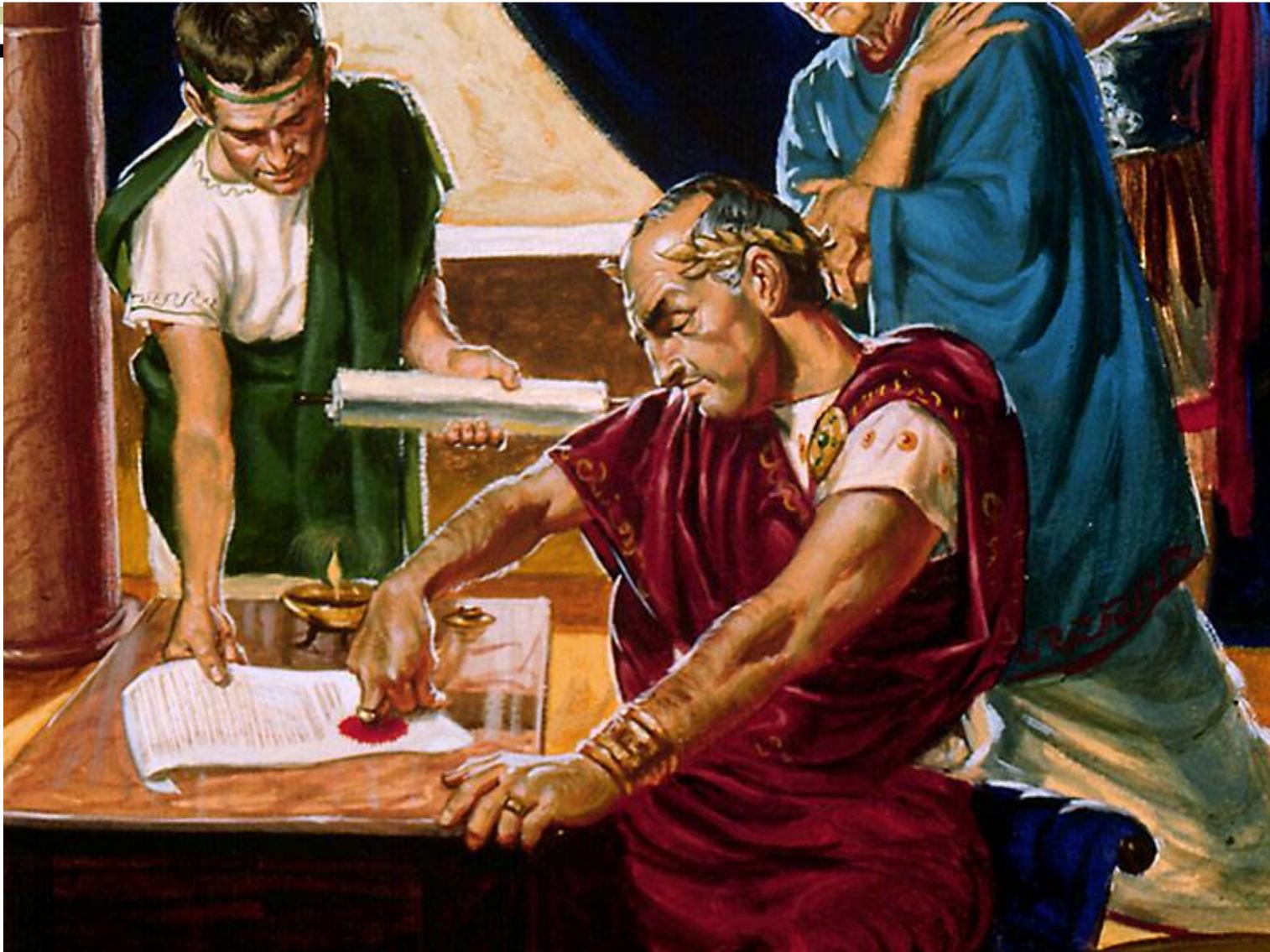
- Eusebius. Church History, Book V, Chapter 24. Translated by Arthur Cushman McGiffert.

[The Early Christians]

- “Originally both observances [Passover and Easter] were allowed, but gradually it was felt incongruous that Christians should celebrate Easter on a Jewish feast, and unity in celebrating the principal Christian feast was called for”

- The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967, Vol. 5, p. 8, "Easter Controversy".

The Emperor Constantine



[- Quote from Constantine]

- “The commemoration of the most sacred paschal feast being then debated, it was unanimously decided, that it would be well that it should be everywhere celebrated upon the same day... It was, in the first place, declared improper to follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this holy festival, because, their hands having been stained with crime, the minds of these wretched men are necessarily blinded. By rejecting their custom, we establish and hand down to succeeding ages one which is more reasonable... **Let us, then, have nothing in common with the Jews, who are our adversaries.** For we have received from our Saviour another way”

- Theodoret of Cyrus. Ecclesiastical History (Book I), Chapter IX.
Excerpted from Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Volume 3. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. American Edition, 1892. Online Edition Copyright © 2005 by K. Knight.

Reflections on that Quote...

- “Let us, then, have nothing in common with the Jews, who are our adversaries. For we have received from our Saviour another way”
 - Constantine’s quote from the previous slide
- I don’t know what Constantine was drinking, but the Bible tells us exactly what Jesus asked us to do
- And the last time I checked, worshipping on Easter Sunday was not one of them
- Someone should also have informed Constantine that Jesus was Himself a Jew

[Death Penalty...]

- “Edicts of Theodosius against the heretics, A.D. 380-394...Theodosius...decreed that...by the death of the offender; and the same capital punishment was inflicted on the Audians, or Quartodecimans, who should dare to perpetrate the atrocious crime of celebrating on an improper day the festival”
 - Gibbon E. Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Volume III, Chapter XXVII. ca. 1776-1788.

[The Early Christians]

- “The early development of the celebration of Easter and the attendant calendar disputes were largely a result of Christianity's attempt to emancipate itself from Judaism. Sunday had already replaced the Jewish sabbath early in the second century, and despite efforts in Asia Minor to maintain the Jewish passover date of 14 Nisan for Easter [or, rather, the true Passover] (hence the name Quartodecimans [meaning ‘Fourteeners’]), the Council of Nicaea adopted the annual Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox (March 21)”
- R.K. Bishop quote, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1984, Editor: Walter Elwell, "Easter".

[The Early Christians]

- “From Rome there came now another addition to the sun-worshipping apostasy. The first Christians being mostly Jews, continued to celebrate, in remembrance of the death of Christ, the true Passover; and this was continued among those who from among the Gentiles had turned to Christ. Accordingly, the celebration was always on the Passover day, the fourteenth of the first month. Rome, however, and from her all the West, adopted the day of the sun as the day of this coloration. According to the Eastern custom, the celebration, being on the fourteenth day of the month, would of course fall on different days of the week as the years resolved. The rule of Rome was that the celebration must always be on a Sunday.”

- **A.T. Jones, Great Empires of Prophecy, 1898, p.389**

[Easter Customs....]

- Bible has no record of Jesus or the apostles observing an Easter Sunday service, dying easter eggs or going on an easter egg hunt
- The early Christians originally observed the Passover as a memorial of Jesus' sacrifice
- Constatine and the church at Rome decided to change the Passover to Easter Sunday
- But where did the easter bunny, easter egg and other easter customs come from?

[Easter Customs....]

- “As with almost all ‘Christian’ holidays, Easter has been secularized and commercialized. The dichotomous nature of Easter and its symbols, however, is not necessarily a modern fabrication. Since its conception as a holy celebration in the second century, Easter has had its non-religious side. In fact, Easter was originally a pagan festival.”

- The Traditions of Easter, by Jerry Wilson

(<http://wilstar.com/holidays/easter.htm>)

[Easter Customs....]

- “The reasons for celebrating our major feasts when we do are many and varied. In general, however, it is true that many of them have at least an indirect connection with the pre-Christian [pagan] feasts celebrated about the same time of year — feasts centering around the harvest, the rebirth of the sun at the winter solstice (now Dec. 21, but Dec. 25 in the old Julian calendar), the renewal of nature in spring, and so on.”

- The New Question Box - Catholic Life for the Nineties, copyright 1988 by John J. Dietzen, M.A., S.T.L., ISBN 0-940518-01-5 (paperback), published by Guildhall Publishers, Peoria Illinois, 61651., page 554.

[Easter Customs....]

- “The early church fathers were also careful to emphasize that Christian holidays should be very unlike pagan holidays. They were to be characterized by solemnity and decorum, in sharp contrast to the riotousness of pagan celebrations... Even more important to these early writers was that Christians stay away from pagan celebrations themselves, disobedience of which seems to have been a rather common occurrence... Despite this early concern about paganism infiltrating Christianity, it seems that Christians began to develop a different perspective on the matter of pagan holidays. Rather than seen as a threat to Christianity, pagan holidays and customs came to be viewed as a way to encourage and ease conversion to Christianity.”

- History of Christian Holidays.

(<http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/holidays/history.htm>)

[Easter Customs....]

- “Eostre was the Saxon version of the Germanic lunar goddess Ostara. She gave her name to the Christian Easter and to the female hormone estrogen. Her feast day was held on the full moon following the vernal equinox -- almost the identical calculation as for the Christian Easter in the west. One delightful legend associated with Eostre was that she found an injured bird on the ground one winter. To save its life, she transformed it into a hare. But ‘the transformation was not a complete one. The bird took the appearance of a hare but retained the ability to lay eggs. ..the hare would decorate these eggs and leave them as gifts to Eostre.’”

- Linkages between the equinox, Pagan celebrations & Easter (<http://www.religioustolerance.org/spequi2.htm>)

[Easter Customs....]

- “Many Easter customs come from the Old World...colored eggs and rabbits have come from pagan antiquity as symbols of new life...our name 'Easter' comes from 'Eostre', an ancient Anglo Saxon goddess, originally of the dawn. In pagan times an annual spring festival was held in her honor. Some Easter customs have come from this and other pre-christian spring festivals.”

- Compton's Encyclopedia, 1956, Volume 4, “Easter”

Easter Customs....

- "In time an elaborate system of beliefs in such natural forces was developed into mythology. Each civilization and culture had its own mythological structure, but the structures were often quite similar. The names of the gods may have been different, but their functions and actions were often the same. The most prominent myth to cross cultural lines was that of the fertility cycle. Many pagan cultures believed that the god of fertility died each year during the winter but was reborn each year in the spring. The details differed among cultures, but the main idea was the same"

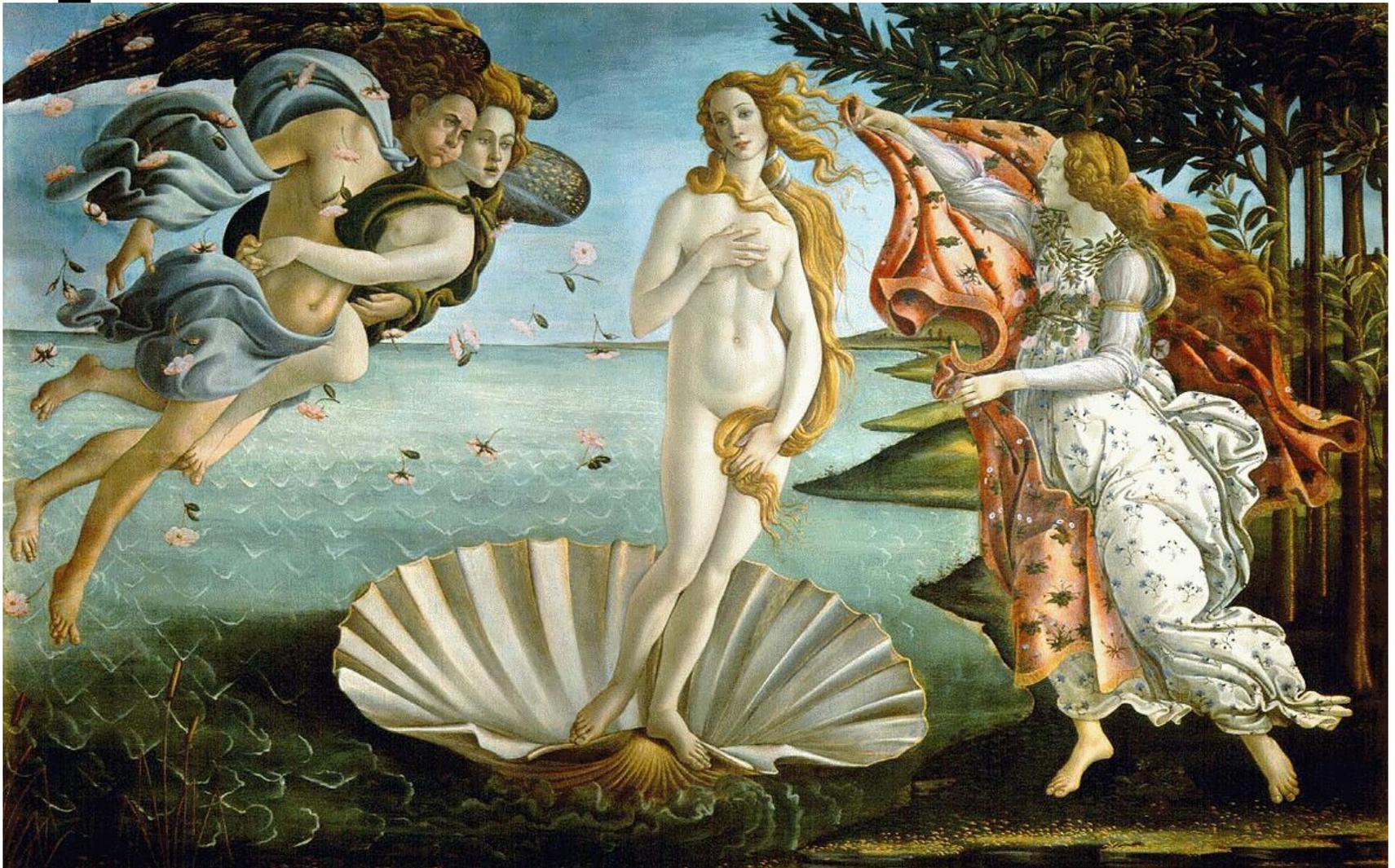
- Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary,
1995, "Gods, Pagan," p. 508

Easter Customs....

- “The egg was a sacred symbol among the Babylonians. They believed an old fable about an egg of wondrous size which was supposed to have fallen from heaven into the Euphrates River. From this marvelous egg - according to the ancient story - the Goddess Ishtar (Semiramis), was hatched. And so the egg came to symbolize the Goddess Easter”

- The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 9, p. 309.

Bottecelli's "Birth of Venus"



[Easter Customs....]

- “As Romans became familiar with the Greek myths of Aphrodite, they increasingly identified Venus with that goddess. They also linked Venus with other foreign goddesses, such as the Babylonian Ishtar. One result of this connection was the naming of the planet Venus, which Babylonian astronomers had earlier associated with Ishtar.”

- **Encyclopedia of Myths, "Venus"**

(<http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Tr-Wa/Venus.html>)

[Easter Customs....]

- “The egg has become a popular Easter symbol. Creation myths of many ancient peoples center in a cosmogenic egg from which the universe is born. In ancient Egypt and Persia friends exchanged decorated eggs at the spring equinox, the beginning of their New Year. These eggs were a symbol of fertility for them because the coming forth of a live creature from an egg was so surprising to people of ancient times. Christians of the Near East adopted this tradition, and the Easter egg became a religious symbol. It represented the tomb from which Jesus came forth to new life”

- Greg Dues, *Catholic Customs and Traditions*, 1992, p. 101

[Easter Customs....]

- “The origin of the Easter egg is based on the fertility lore of the Indo-European races ... The Easter bunny had its origin in pre-Christian fertility lore. Hare and rabbit were the most fertile animals our fore-fathers knew, serving as symbols of abundant new life in the spring season”

- Francis Weiser, professor of philosophy at Boston College, Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs, 1958 , pp. 233, 236.

[Easter Customs....]

- “As at Christmas, so also at Easter, popular customs reflect many ancient pagan survivals—in this instance, connected with spring fertility rites, such as the symbols of the Easter egg and the Easter hare or rabbit”

- The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th edition, Macropaedia, Vol. 4, p. 605, "Church Year".

[Easter Customs....]

- “Motives of the same sort may have led the ecclesiastical authorities to assimilate the Easter festival of the death and resurrection of their Lord to the festival of the death and resurrection of another Asiatic god which fell at the same season. Now the Easter rites still observed in Greece, Sicily and southern Italy bear in some respects a striking resemblance to the rites of Adonis, and I have suggested that the Church may have consciously adapted the new festival to its heathen predecessor for the sake of winning souls to Christ”

- Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 1993, p. 359.

[Easter Customs....]

- “When we reflect how often the Church has skillfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith on the old stock of paganism, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis [the Greek name for Tammuz], which ... was celebrated in Syria at the same season”

- Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 1993, p. 345.

[Easter Customs....]

- "Easter is different. The very name comes from the Babylonian fertility goddess Ishtar, and the main attractions are eggs and rabbits, symbols of fertility. There's a tradition that colored eggs originated in the dyeing of eggs with the blood of newly sacrificed children, whose lives were given in the hope of a plentiful harvest. I can't think of anything more repulsive to God. The date of Resurrection Morning is well known. It's the Jewish Feast of Firstfruits. It's by far the most important event in human history and deserves our full attention in a heart felt expression of praise and thanksgiving." (continued...)

Easter Customs....

- “We might be able to convince God that we didn’t know the date of His birth, but we have no such excuse with His resurrection. Various pagan groups have made headlines lately accusing Christians of hijacking their holidays. Sometimes I think that the only way to re-focus our attention on the reason for their celebration is to give them back and to the best of our ability memorialize the days on which the events we revere actually took place.”

- The Pagan Origin of Christian Holidays

(<http://gracethrufaith.com/ask-a-bible-teacher/the-pagan-origin-of-christian-holidays/>)

Easter – a pagan holiday?

- “So, once I got started reflecting on how Pagan holidays had been kidnapped, I then thought of the old Pagan holiday Easter, where the return of the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre from the Land of the Dead bringing Spring in Her wake was celebrated. For centuries this Pagan celebration’s rituals included things like Easter eggs, the Easter hare (or bunny for us Americans) , and decorating our houses with Easter lilies and other beautiful flowers in celebration. I think it’s only fair to talk about how we Pagans were there first, and how we’d like to get some credit for all the Pagan contributions involved when other folks celebrate the return of their own particular Redeemer from Death with our borrowed trappings when springtime comes around.” (continued...)

Easter – a pagan holiday?

- “But of course, now it’s time for the big one – Yule. You know, celebrating with Yule logs, and holly, and mistletoe (not to mention the stolen kisses!) . Singing those old Yule time carols. Putting up the evergreen Yule tree and decorating it. Drinking a lot of mead - or these days, spiced cider or spiked eggnog. Giving presents. Lots of presents. The Sun [pause] of God being born with the New Year. Gathering together and celebrating with family and friends...did I mention drinking a lot? Yule’s a GREAT Pagan holiday! Yes, my friends, the Puritans were right – Yule (by any other name smelling as sweet) is definitely NOT a Christian holiday.”

- **We Want them Back! (A Pagan View of the Holidays), by Bluehawk, December 18th 2005**

(http://www.witchvox.com/va/dt_va.html?a=usga&c=holidays&id=10378)

Easter – a pagan holiday?

- Ostara (March 21st):
As spring reaches its midpoint, night and day stand in perfect balance. (With light on the increase.) The young Sun God now celebrates a sacred marriage with the young maiden Goddess, who conceives. In nine months she will again become the Great Mother. It is a time of great fertility and growth, and newborn animals. Ostara is the time of Fertility of the Earth.
- Other Names: Eostre and Spring Equinox.

- A Beginner's Guide To The 8 Wiccan Holidays

Author: Silver Wolf Posted: October 28th. 2007

(http://www.witchvox.com/va/dt_va.html?a=usor&c=holidays&id=11776)

Easter – a pagan holiday?

- Yule (December 21st):
Yule has the longest night and the shortest day of the year. It is the time when the Goddess gives birth to a son, the God. Witches and Wiccans celebrate the Festival of the God's Rebirth. It is a time to honor the Holly King. Accomplishes of the past, love, togetherness, and love are also celebrated. These things are celebrated by burning the Yule Log in a bonfire.
- Other Names: Winter Solstice, Christmas, Alban Arthan, Finn's Day, Festival of Sol, Yuletide, Great Day of the Cauldron, and the Festival of Growth.

- A Beginner's Guide To The 8 Wiccan Holidays

Author: Silver Wolf Posted: October 28th. 2007

(http://www.witchvox.com/va/dt_va.html?a=usor&c=holidays&id=11776)

Easter – a pagan holiday?

- "Ostara or Oestara... also known as the Spring Equinox, Ostara falls on 21 March. Ostara is sacred to the Ancient Goddess Eostar or Astarte, whose symbols are the egg and hare and who give rise to the term Oestrus. She is probably the oldest Goddess of fertility and can be traced back over 4, 000 years. Ostara is the first sign of spring; it also is the Witches' version of Easter. It is a time to celebrate that spring is here and that the land is alive."

- How to Get the Most Out of Your Year,
by Merlin EA, August 20th, 2006

(http://www.witchvox.com/va/dt_va.html?a=ukgb2&c=holidays&id=10898)

[Can it get any closer to home?]

Greater Toronto

»TORONTO STAR«

ME

A WICCAN WELCOME

Today is the first day of spring. Pagans hail the coming of their Goddess Eostre, **GT3**



SECTION GT
FRIDAY
MARCH 20, 2009
thestar.com

OUTSIDE

Pagans welcome goddess of spring

To Wiccans, the vernal equinox is about more than stargazing.

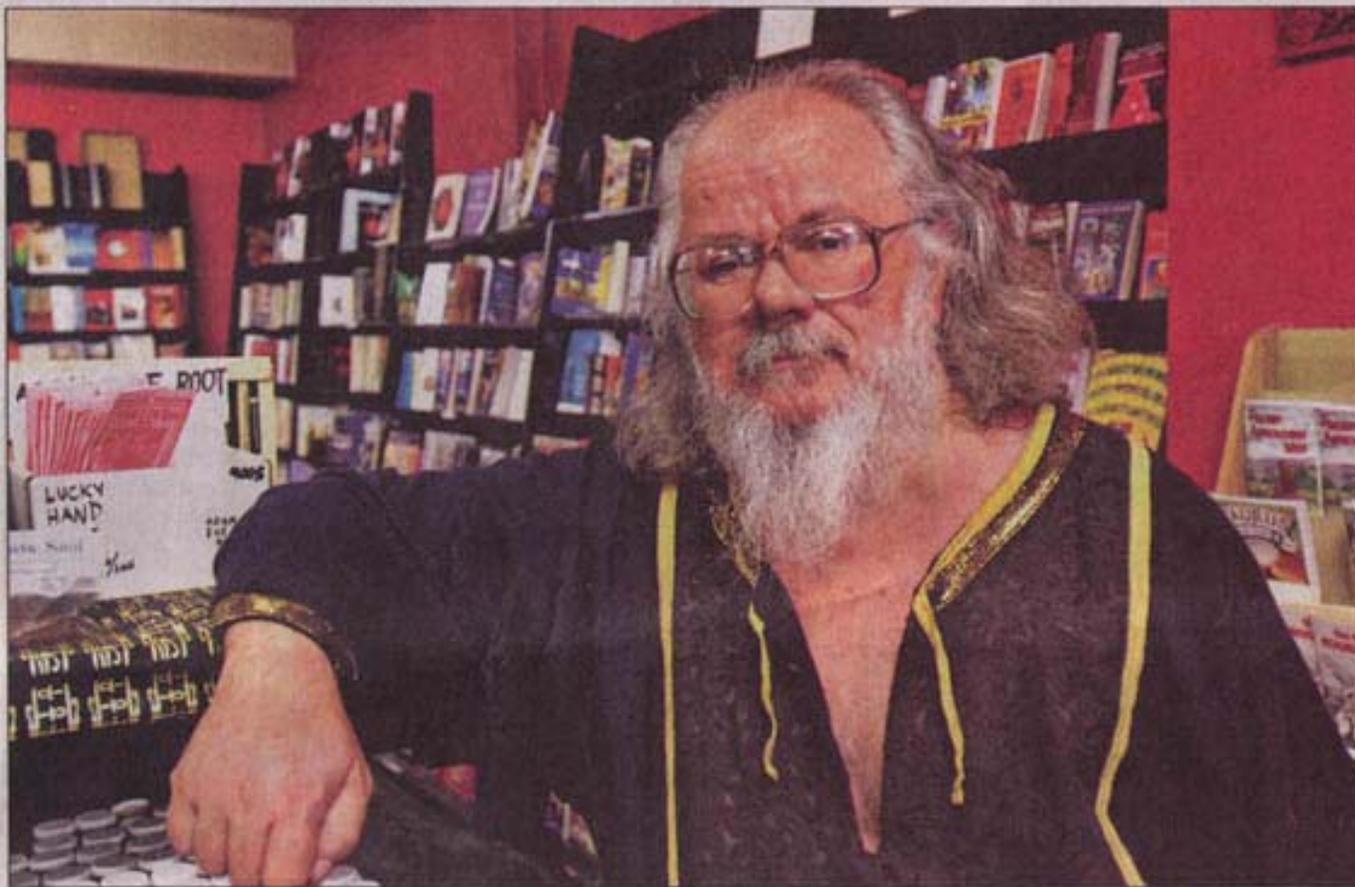
Known as Eostre, or the more colloquial Lady Day, it is a religious occasion of mid-level importance.

"There is a goddess that we don't know very much about from the Saxony area of Germany, and her name is sometimes spelled Eostre," says Richard James, a third-degree High Priest in the Wiccan Church of Canada. "Apparently, the Christian celebration is named after her. We just celebrate the arrival of the goddess of spring."

The church has not organized anything for today, but James expects members of Toronto's 3,000-strong Pagan community to celebrate individually. There is also a special service planned for Sunday.

"Sometimes we might have a celebration in which we take a priestess and wrap her up in something that looks like ice, and celebrate having it melt," he said. "Then we can dance around that and celebrate the goddess coming free."

Nick Aveling



HENRY STANCLU/TORONTO STAR

Wiccan high priest Richard James says Toronto's 3,000 Pagans will celebrate the arrival of spring.

[Something to think about....]

- Without a doubt, the worship of Easter is of pagan origin and there are still people today, even in modern cities, that observe the purely pagan worship of the goddess of spring.
- Anyone professing to be a Bible believing Christian would admit that is totally wrong and an abomination to God.

[Something to think about....]

- However, most people still observe Easter, not as a pagan celebration, but in remembrance of the death and resurrection of Jesus even though there is no biblical command to do so.
- They also use the date that Constantine and the church at Rome declared for this celebration at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.
- They also often use symbols and activities that are directly taken from pagan worship and then use them to worship the true God.

[Some might be thinking...]

- Who cares?
- What's the big deal anyway?
- Does it really matter how and when we worship this sacred event?
- We know that we are worshipping Jesus' death and resurrection and that's all that matters, right?

[What does the Bible say?]



[Regarding Worship...]

- “Take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way”

(Deuteronomy 12:30-31 NKJV)

[Regarding Worship...]

- The very next verse states:

“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

(Deuteronomy 12:32 NKJV)

[Regarding Worship...]

- "Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. **For the customs of the people are vain"**

(Jeremiah 10:2-3 KJV)

[Regarding Worship...]

- **Clearly, not all forms of worship are acceptable to God. Here are some examples:**
- **Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-5)**
- **Golden Calf (Exodus 32:1-10)**
- **All involved claimed to worship the True God**
- **But what was God's reaction?**
- **“That My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them.” (Exodus 32:10 NKJV)**

[Faith delivered to the saints...]

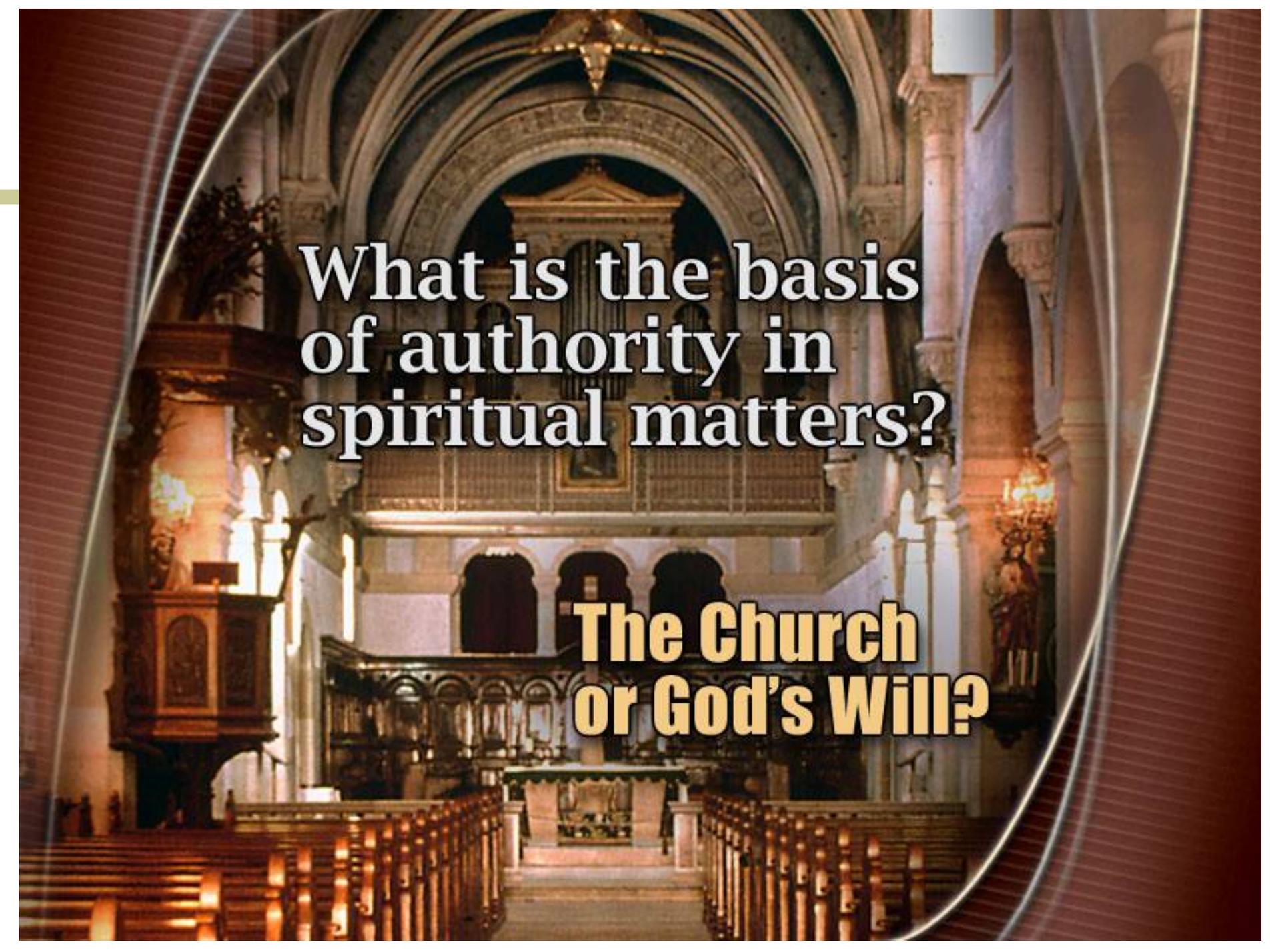
- "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you **that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**"

(Jude 1:3 KJV)

[Regarding Worship...]

- “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him”

(1 Kings 18:21 NKJV)

The image shows the interior of a Gothic cathedral, viewed from the nave looking towards the altar. The architecture features high, pointed arches and ribbed vaulting. A balcony with a decorative railing is visible above the altar area. The lighting is warm, highlighting the stone and woodwork. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

**What is the basis
of authority in
spiritual matters?**

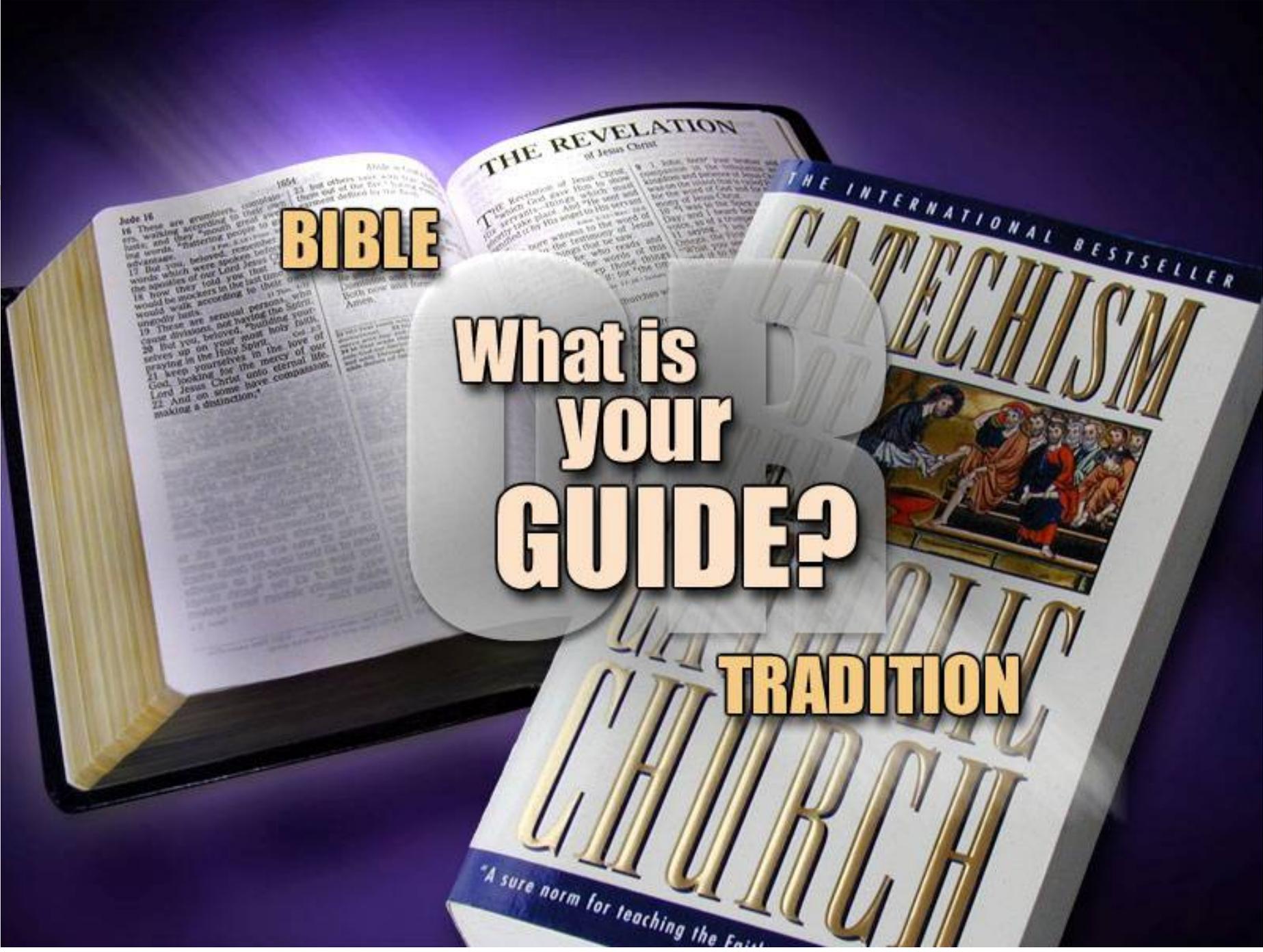
**The Church
or God's Will?**



JESUS

**Who is
your
MASTER?**

CHURCH LEADERS



BIBLE

**What is
your
GUIDE?**

TRADITION

THE REVELATION
of Jesus Christ

Jude 16

16 These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.
17 But you, beloved, remembered the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time, who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.
19 These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.
20 But you, beloved, building up one another on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, subjecting yourselves to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.
21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.
22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction;

1664

23 but others save them out of the fear of God, lest they should be defiled by the flesh.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which he gave unto his servant John to show unto his brethren which must shortly take place. And he sent his angel to testify unto the servants of Jesus Christ the words of this prophecy, and he said unto them, Blessings are they who keep the prophecies of this book. I John have written and sent unto you these things, and I have heard behind me a voice, as of a trumpet, saying, Blessings are they who do the commandments of this prophecy. I say unto all who hear the words of this prophecy, if they will, let them take hold of the words of this prophecy, lest they come to the tribulation of the days: and he that doeth these things shall have his right to the tree of life, and shall enter in by the gates of the city.

THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

CATECHISM



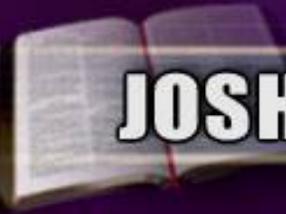
CATHOLIC CHURCH

"A sure norm for teaching the Faith"

[Whom will you serve...]

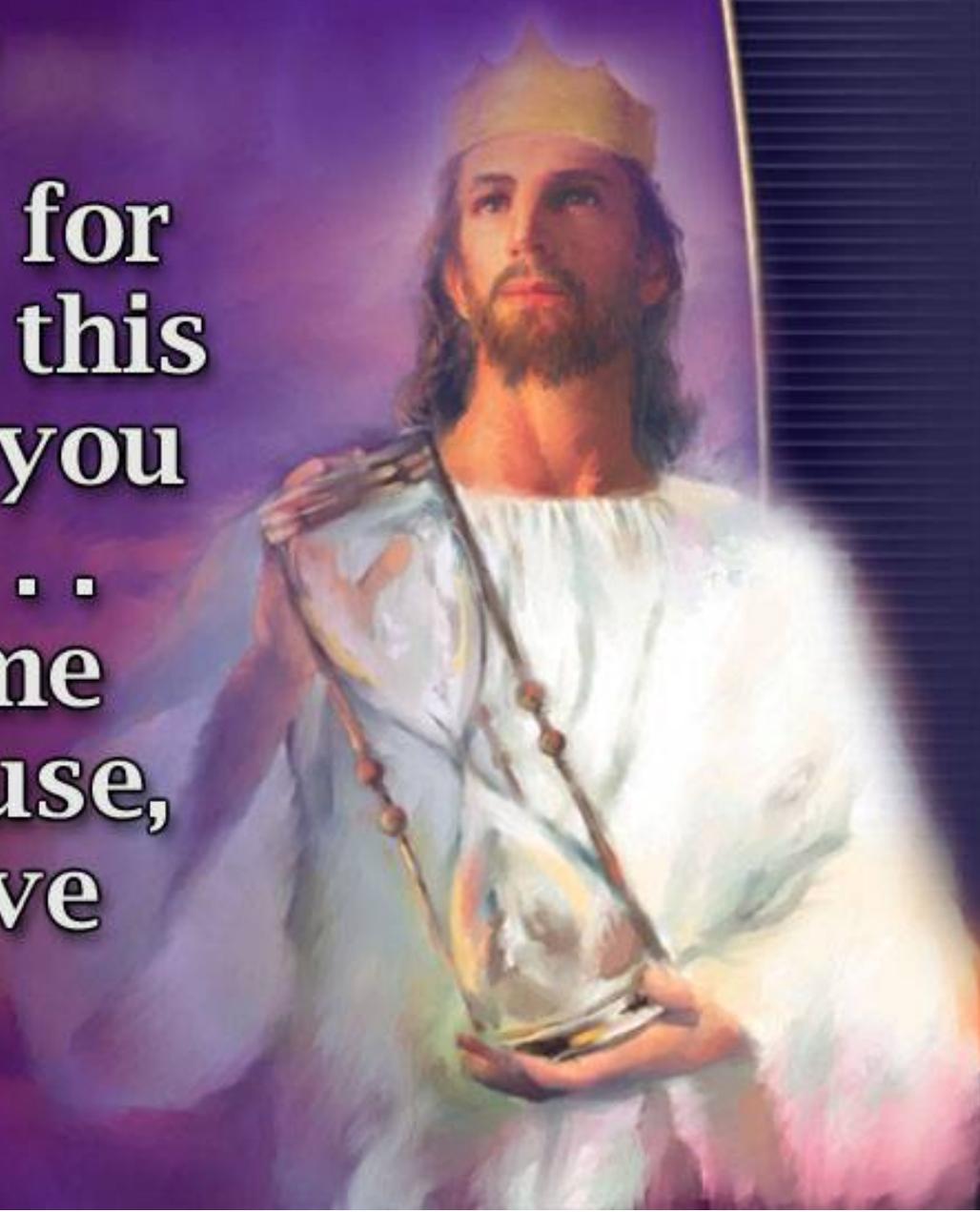
- “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. **But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**”

(Joshua 24:15 NKJV)



JOSHUA 24:15

“ . . . Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”



Whom will you serve?



"choose you this day whom you will serve" Joshua 24:15

[The End!]

- Thank you for your time!

■ Any Questions?

- Compiled by: FLO BORS (April 2009)
- email: floski@hotmail.com