

EASTER OR PASSOVER?

by
Scott Jones

"In the **FOURTEENTH DAY** of the first month at even is the **LORD'S PASSOVER**. And on the **FIFTEENTH DAY** of the same month is the feast of **UNLEAVENED BREAD** unto the **LORD**: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread." *Leviticus 23:5-6*

"And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the **PASSOVER** of the **LORD**. And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten." *Numbers 28:16-17*

"And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (**THEN WERE THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.**) 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*

Everything that God has ever said, everything that God is saying now, and everything that God ever will say, can be summed up in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If that isn't quite clear, let it be stated this way -

Everything that God has ever said, everything that God is saying now, and everything that God ever will say, can be summed up in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If you require precedent for my method of expounding the Word of God by repetition, see *John 6:51-60*.

Beware, professing Christian, for if it is only your head that learns, you have neither part nor parcel in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. You must understand the resurrection of Jesus Christ by the Spirit of Christ, for no man can truly comprehend the resurrection of Jesus Christ apart from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Without the Spirit, all a man has is head-knowledge. On the other hand, the man who is born of the Spirit, yea, the man who is born of God, that man has **experienced** the resurrection of Jesus Christ by virtue of the new birth. Be not deceived - this statement is no more a metaphor than were Jesus' own words when he declared --

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." *John 6:63.*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ, therefore, is not only foundational, but central - central to Almighty God himself - and it cannot be set aside as secondary, for the resurrection of Jesus Christ literally explains God to creation - yea, the resurrection of Jesus Christ reveals God's holiness; the resurrection of Jesus Christ reveals God's righteousness; the resurrection of Jesus Christ reveals God's love and God's wrath simultaneously; in short, the resurrection of Jesus Christ reveals **GOD HIMSELF** - and apart from the resurrection, yea, apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the very glory of God himself would be forever hidden from both angels and men, concealed beyond eternity, his temple forever closed, the ark of his testament shrouded and never seen. *Revelation 11:19*

Gird up your mind therefore, professing Christian, and break up the fallow ground of your heart, and understand - the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very locus of the Almighty himself, and it is just here that every knee should bow, for Jesus Christ cannot be separated from that locus, not in any wise, yea, for Jesus Christ is **HIMSELF** the resurrection, and without him, yea, without Jesus Christ, there **IS** no resurrection, as it is written --

"I am the resurrection, and the life." *John 11:25*

Thus, let every professing Christian take heed, for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is preeminent in the character of God, preeminent according to the spirit of holiness (and the holiness of Jesus Christ has no measure), and only he who truly experiences the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is blessed indeed. Aye, be warned, professing Christian, for if you have not experienced the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in this life, you will never experience it in the next, for it is written --

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." *John 5:29*

The unjust shall never experience the resurrection of **life** - (which resurrection is the very resurrection of Jesus Christ himself) - but only the resurrection of damnation. The resurrection of **life** is reserved for those who are united to Jesus Christ by the new birth, and them alone, as it is written --

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." *1 Corinthians 12:13*

Yea, the resurrection of **life** is reserved for those who have oil in their lamps, and who have their wicks trimmed, and whose wedding garment has been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and whose spirit has been sealed by the Eternal Spirit evermore.

Do these words comfort or condemn you?

Significantly, Acts 12:4 in the Authorised Version proclaims the Lord's resurrection with holy boldness - (and holy boldness is a peculiar quality of the Authorised Version, a quality which sets the Authorised Version apart - whoever has ears to hear, let him hear) - yea, and the Authorised Version's translation in Acts 12:4, both in its theology and its etymology, is founded upon a rock of accuracy that cannot be moved, as we will shortly see. Yea, for when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon it - as they have for near four hundred years now - this translation shall nevertheless stand, it shall never fall, for this translation is verily founded upon a rock, and God himself has borne infallible witness that it is so.

Yet, the foolishness of an ignorant and unlearned age continues to abound.

To wit: the critics of the Authorised Version condemn its translation in Acts 12:4. The critics of the Authorised Version, with their habitual rabidity and gross blindness in the things of God, complain that the Greek word *PASCHA* cannot be translated as **Easter** in the above passage. This criticism usually takes the form of an assertion that goes something like this --

"Everybody knows that *PASCHA* means *PASSOVER*, not *EASTER*."

Such an assertion is especially disconcerting when it comes from those who proclaim themselves Bible scholars and thus familiar with the Greek language. In fact, they only demonstrate once again that they are by no means familiar with the Greek language.

Ask one hundred **NATIVE GREEKS** what the **Greek word** *PASCHA* means, and **ONE HUNDRED** out of **ONE HUNDRED** native **Greeks** will proclaim **resoundingly** that the **Greek word** *PASCHA* means *EASTER*, the **exact opposite of the critics**.

But then, native Greeks actually understand their own language, as well as the semantic rollover from the Old Testament to the New - unlike modern critics who's deprecation of the Authorised Version in this passage demonstrates not only their ignorance of Greek, but also their additional ignorance of English etymology, not to mention a rapturous unfamiliarity with both theology and church history, but especially theology, as we shall see.

The other common myth which the critics of the Authorised Version promote is the naked assertion that *Easter* is somehow derived from a pagan festival related to *Astarte*, the goddess of fertility. Once again, this is merely a demonstration of the malady that plagues this unlearned age, as there is not a **SHRED** of evidence that a pagan festival ever **preceded** or **replaced** the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a celebration which goes back to the **very Apostles themselves**.

Simply put, mainstream biblical scholarship and the critics of the Authorised Version continuously demonstrate that they prefer to promote myth and superstition over truth, especially when it comes to denigrating the Eternal Son of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ. [1](#)

In contrast to the bankrupt and literally absurd allegations that swarm around modern Christendom like locusts, here are the facts - the English word *Easter* is derived from Saxon and Germanic roots. This was ably noted by many scholars in the past. For example, examine C. F. Cruse's absolutely accurate declaration in 1850 AD regarding the etymology of our English word *Easter* --

"Our word *EASTER* is of Saxon origin and of precisely the same import with its German cognate *OSTERN*. The latter is derived from the old Teutonic form of *auferstehen* / *auferstehung*, that is - *RESURRECTION*."

[2](#)

Very briefly, the German word *Ostern*, which means *Easter*, is a cognate of *Ost* (east, or rising of the sun), and as Cruse noted, pools from the older Teutonic forms of *erster* (first), *stehen* (stand), which then became *erstehen* (resurrection - older form), and which in turn became *auferstehen* (resurrection - current form). Thus, **ESTER** in English, which later morphed into **EaSTER**, became the equivalent of **OSTER** which morphed into **OSTERN** in German.

Neither word was attached **in any way** to a pagan goddess, and as Hislop admitted --

"The name Easter is peculiar to the British Islands."

Thus, there is not a **particle** of evidence to support the naked assertions that swirl around this word. On the contrary, the evidence is all on the opposite side, for both the historical and etymological data is simply incontrovertible. In short, these accusations are nothing less than a blatant attempt to denigrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, not to mention the many Christians who celebrate that resurrection, including William Tyndale who **gave** us the word **Easter** in the first place. As stated previously, neither Tyndale nor any of his brethren, many of whom were profoundly familiar with not only English, but many other languages as well, and who lived at the very dawn of the English language itself, as it were, thus having **unparalleled** access to a **host** of etymologies in a **host** of languages, would have agreed or conspired for one second to attach a pagan word to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and those who make this assertion are doing nothing less than bearing false witness, especially since they haven't a **scintilla** of evidence to support them.

In summary, the English word **Easter** means - and has **always** meant - **RESURRECTION** - specifically, the **RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST**. Accordingly, keep this simple truth in mind -

There is a **pre-resurrection pascha**, and there is a **post-resurrection pascha**. The difference is night and day, and it is the very resurrection of Jesus Christ himself that **forces** both the schism and the distinction, that divides the New Testament **pascha** from the Old Testament **pascha**, just as he divided the light from the darkness in the very beginning. The fact that this simple truth is not understood by the critics only serves to demonstrate yet again the rampant unregeneracy that permeates mainstream Christianity, for the method of employment of this word in a **pre-** or **post-resurrection** context is **utterly** paramount. Utterly.

Alfred Edersheim, a Jew who converted to Christianity in the 19th century, and a master in Rabbinic scholarship, stated it this way when describing the fellowship of Jesus with his disciples at the Last Supper --

"It was to be the last of the old *paschas*; the first, or rather the symbol of promise, of the new." [3](#)

The scriptures at the very top of this paper tell the born again Christian all he needs to know with regard to this issue, for **God's definition** in Leviticus and Numbers takes precedence over the interpretations of men, and the **post-resurrection pascha** takes precedence over the **pre-resurrection pascha**. In other

words, for the born again Christian, the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST* is **paramount**, and it takes precedence over the Old Testament **type**. To emphasize this fact, Luke went out of his way to make the distinction by notifying his readers that "*then were the days of unleavened bread.*" In his Gospel, Luke was dealing with the **pre-resurrection pascha**, as the context and the semantic domain in each case clearly shows, but in Acts 12:4 the context was **entirely** different, as we'll demonstrate.

Moreover, Luke was certainly familiar with God's definition of *Passover* and *Unleavened Bread* in Leviticus 23. Accordingly, even a cursory examination of Luke's practice in his treatise demonstrates that Luke did not normally go out of his way to explain Jewish customs in the book of Acts. Rather, Luke merely "*ASSUMED FACTS IN EVIDENCE,*" as it were - that is, Luke assumed that his readers were *ALREADY* familiar with Jewish customs.

For example, in Acts 1:12 Luke recorded that it was "*a sabbath day's journey*" from Jerusalem. Yet, not a word of explanation regarding the meaning of this Jewish custom. Not even a whisper. Only a few sentences later, in Acts 2:1, Luke relates that "*the day of Pentecost was fully come.*" Once again, not a word of description or explanation regarding the Jewish feast of Pentecost. Examples of this nature could be multiplied throughout. Yet, we come to chapter 12, and now Luke suddenly goes out of his way to explain this **particular** Jewish feast. His motive is clear.

In short, when Luke came to Acts 12:3-4, he departed from his normal habit of allowing Jewish customs to go unexplained. This was due, of course, to the significance of what was being stated. Indeed, there is a very good reason why Luke deviated from his practice in Acts 12:3-4 and suddenly took pains to explain this **particular** Jewish custom - this Jewish feast - to his readers, for Luke, like the other Apostles, was extraordinarily sensitive to the **pre-resurrection** semantic domain of *pascha* and the **post-resurrection** semantic domain of *pascha*. Bluntly stated, Luke was **jealous** for the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST*.

Had Luke merely stated that these things were taking place during the *pascha* without supplying any qualifier to his statement, there would be no reason to suppose that he had in mind any other meaning than the feast in its broadest context. But Luke **did** insert a qualifier - "*then were the days of unleavened bread*" - and it is clear that he did it **pointedly**. Luke was purposely narrowing the semantic range of *pascha*, for Jesus Christ had suddenly been manifested as the **fulfillment** of *pascha*; Jesus Christ had suddenly been revealed as the **true pascha**, and instituting a new word or a new feast for that revelation would wipe

out the distinction and the doctrine entirely. Instead, Luke narrowed the semantic range. As Edersheim noted, the last of the "*old paschas*" had already occurred.

In addition to being **jealous** for the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST*, there is also another reason that Luke made sure his readers understood that "*then were the days of unleavened bread.*" You see, there were feasts **within** the feast.

Accordingly, the Pharisees and the Sadducees differed radically on questions of doctrine and ritual, especially on the resurrection, and this battle reared its head in a dispute about which day the wave-sheaf would be offered. In other words, the dispute over this matter between the Pharisees and the Sadducees was **precisely** over whether the wave-sheaf should occur on the Sunday after the sacrifice - that is, *RESURRECTION DAY* - or whether it should occur on the festive Paschal day.

This was all perfectly understood by Luke and the other Apostles, as Alfred Edersheim observed --

"Thus the Sadducees would have interpreted Lev. 23:11, 15, 16, as meaning that the wave-sheaf (or, rather the Omer) was to be offered on 'the morrow after the weekly Sabbath' - that is, *ON THE SUNDAY IN EASTER WEEK* - which would have brought the Feast of Pentecost always on Sunday (Lev. 23:15, 16); while the Pharisees understood the term 'Sabbath' of the festive Paschal day. Connected with this were disputes about the examination of the witnesses who testified to the appearance of the new moon, and whom the Pharisees accused of having been suborned by their opponents." [4](#)

This was no small dissension, for not only was *pascha* considered the greatest of all the feasts, but the Pharisees and the Sadducees were constantly at each other's throats over matters of doctrine and interpretation of the law. There is not the slightest doubt that Luke was cognizant of this and that he took it fully into consideration when he narrowed the semantic range of *pascha* by inserting the qualifier - "*then were the days of unleavened bread.*" In Luke's view, it was **paramount** that his readers understand that he was referring to the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST* - regardless of which sabbath a person adhered to, for the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST* had **replaced** the Old Testament **type**, and Luke was writing to **Christians**, and his context was **post-resurrection**.

Like Edersheim, the translators of the Authorised Version not only understood all of this very clearly, for they were also masters of Masoretic and Rabbinic literature, but even more importantly, like Luke and the other Apostles, they were

also **jealous** for the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST*; they understood the significance of the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST* and its **contextual significance among the first Christians**, all of which has been lost on this careless and carnal generation of unregenerate scholars.

Regarding the first *Easter* - that is, the first **Christian pascha**, or **Resurrection Day**, Edersheim also noted --

"From that Easter-Day onwards the Church must, even without special institution, have celebrated the weekly recurring memorial of His Resurrection, as that when He breathed on the Church the breath of a new life, and consecrated it to be His Representative. Thus, it was not only the memorial of His Resurrection, but the birthday of the Church, even as Pentecost was her baptism day." [5](#)

Luke himself corroborates this, for it was not the **death** of Jesus Christ that offended the Sanhedrin; it was the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST* that offended the Sanhedrin, as it is written --

"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." *Act 4:1-2*

The book of Acts couldn't be clearer about this detail, for throughout the book of Acts there is **one** message, and **one** message only --

"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." *Acts 4:33*

The *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST* is the cardinal message of the book of Acts, and it positively supercedes every other doctrine throughout. The Apostles did **not** celebrate the Jewish *pascha*, for that would have been **fatal** to the entire tenor of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament types. Absolutely **fatal**. In fact, the Apostles celebrated the **Christian pascha**. Yea, the Apostles themselves **instituted** the *Christian pascha*, for the Apostles were **jealous** for the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST*.

- "...must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his *RESURRECTION*." *Acts 1:22*
- "He seeing this before spake of the *RESURRECTION* of Christ..." *Acts 2:31*
- "...and preached through Jesus the *RESURRECTION* from the dead." *Acts 4:2*
- "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the *RESURRECTION* of the Lord Jesus." *Acts 4:33*

Indeed, even the liberal scholar, Philip Schaff, who was the driving force behind the American revision and who questioned the rendering of the Authorised Version in this passage because he himself didn't understand the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, nevertheless immediately opposed himself by admitting that the semantic domain of *pascha* forced a notable change and distinction in its different shades of meaning --

"Easter is the resurrection festival *WHICH FOLLOWS THE PASSOVER PROPER*, but is included in the same festive week." [6](#)

Unbeknownst to Schaff and other unregenerate scholars, this is **precisely** why Luke went out of his way to inform his readers, "*then were the days of unleavened bread.*" Yea, as the Holy Ghost testifies, Luke and the Apostles were **jealous** for the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST*, as were the translators of the Authorised Version.

It doesn't take a savant to figure it out: the **death** of Jesus Christ - "Christ our passover" (*1 Corinthians 5:7*) - occurred **before** the days of unleavened bread. The **resurrection** of Jesus Christ occurred **during** the days of unleavened bread, and Luke went out of his way to explain to his readers, "*then were the days of unleavened bread.*"

The *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST* occurred **during** the days of unleavened bread, and God's lexicon takes precedence over man's lexicon.

The day Jesus Christ rose from the dead, the Apostles **ceased** celebrating the Jewish *pascha*, which was only a **type**, and instead began to celebrate the **Christian pascha**, which was the **fulfillment**. That's why Christians to this very day celebrate the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST*, and that's why it's called *EASTER*, for *EASTER* means - and has **always** meant - *RESURRECTION*.

This matter was so universally known among primitive Christians that although a dispute arose in the second century over exactly **which** day the resurrection of Jesus Christ ought to be celebrated on, there was never the slightest disagreement about the fact that it **should** be celebrated, as John Owen so carefully disclosed in his knowledgeable discourse on this matter --

"There was also a signal vindication of the truth pleaded for, in an instance of fact among the primitive churches. There was an opinion which prevailed very early among them about the necessary observation of Easter, in the room of the Jewish passover, for the solemn

commemoration of the death and resurrection of our Savior. And it was taken for granted by most of them, that the observance hereof was countenanced, if not rendered necessary unto them, by the example of the apostles; for they generally believed that by them it was observed, and that it was their duty to accommodate themselves unto their practice... That Easter was to be observed *BY VIRTUE OF APOSTOLICAL TRADITION* was generally *GRANTED BY ALL.*" [7](#)

Philip Schaff concurred --

"From some hints in the Epistles, viewed in the light of the universal and uncontradicted practice of the church in the second century it may be inferred that the annual celebration of the death and the resurrection of Christ, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, originated in the apostolic age. In truth, Christ crucified, risen, and living in the church, was the one absorbing thought of the early Christians; and as this thought expressed itself in the weekly observance of Sunday, so it would also very naturally transform the two great typical feasts of the Old Testament into the Christian Easter and Whit-Sunday. The Paschal controversies of the second century related not to the fact, but to the time of the Easter festival, and Polycarp of Smyrna and Anicet of Rome traced their customs to an unimportant difference in the practice of the apostles themselves." [8](#)

As if further explanation were required, it should also be noted that the translators of the Authorised Version translated *pascha* as *Passover* in all of its **other** contexts, thus demonstrating that they were fervently aware of the semantic range of this word, unlike our modern critics, who still have no clue that native Greeks have understood the whole matter concerning this word for some two thousand years now. So did the translators of the Authorised Version, and they translated the word *pascha* as *Passover* in the other contexts because those other contexts required that the word be translated that way, as the other passages clearly employ the word *pascha* in a **pre**-resurrection context. Yet, due to the unction of the Holy Ghost, the translators of the Authorised Version had the grace to perceive the distinction in context in Acts 12:4, and thus realized that this distinction mandated the **post**-resurrection translation of **Easter**. [9](#)

There's more.

It is generally recognized that the **INVENTOR** of a word is the world's foremost authority on the definition of the word he invents. That's pretty simple. The man who invents the word is the very man who determines what that word means.

William Tyndale **INVENTED** the English word *PASSOVER*. As the Trinitarian Bible Society noted --

"When he [Tyndale] began his translation of the Pentateuch, he was again faced with the problem in Exodus 12:11 and twenty-one other places, and no doubt recognizing that *EASTER* in this context would be an anachronism he coined a new word, *PASSOVER*, and used it consistently in all twenty-two places. It is, therefore, to Tyndale that our language is indebted for this meaningful and appropriate word."

William Tyndale **did not use his own word** in Acts 12:4. William Tyndale employed the word **ESTER** in his translation of Acts 12:4. He invented the other word - *PASSOVER* - yet, he determined that his own word did not accurately represent the Greek word *PASCHA* in Acts 12:4. That's because William Tyndale, like the Apostles before him and the Authorised Version translators after him, was also **jealous** for the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST*.

Let's state the matter in plain English - the man who coined the word *Passover* for the English language affirmed that **Passover** was **not** the correct rendering of *pascha* in Acts 12:4. In fact, in his 1534 version, Tyndale did not use his own word even **once** in the New Testament. Rather, Tyndale varied his definitions of *pascha* frequently in the New Testament, sometimes referring to it as **ester**, sometimes **paschall lambe**, sometimes **ester lambe**, sometimes **ester fest**, and so forth, but **never** *Passover*, even though he invented the word *Passover*.

Moreover, William Tyndale was the **first** person to employ the word **ester** in an English Bible. **Ester** later morphed into *Easter*, as we saw earlier, thus dispelling the absurd notion that the term **Easter** had pagan origins. Prior to Tyndale, the Greek word *pascha* was simply transliterated. Again from the Trinitarian Bible Society --

"When Tyndale applied his talents to the translation of the New Testament from Greek into English, he was not satisfied with the use of a completely foreign word, and decided to take into account the fact that the season of the passover was known generally to English people as *ESTER*."

Naturally, we are not asserting that Tyndale must be followed in each and every instance of his translation of the Greek word *pascha*. Nevertheless, it is clear that he who **invented** the English word *Passover* did **not** insist upon a rigid uniformity of meaning for that word. Au contraire - Tyndale realized, like all accomplished linguists, that each word has a life of its own, as it were, and therefore any imposition of rigidity would be fatal to a correct translation and a correct understanding of the original meaning.

In a nutshell, if the **inventor** of the word *Passover* did not apply it to *pascha* in Acts 12:4, it is nothing less than arrogant and presumptuous - not to mention utterly foolish - for newcomers to maintain that the **inventor** of the word got it wrong. The newcomers are too late, for the very word they are insisting upon - *Passover* - was minted by another, and he did **not** insist upon a rigid meaning, and since he **invented** it - *alea iacta est*.

The fact that modern bible scholars rigidly insist that *pascha* must mean *Passover* regardless of context is iron-clad proof of the deplorable state of learning in our day. Their insistence not only demonstrates a severe ignorance of both Greek and English etymology, but even more, a gross and pervasive ignorance of the dynamics of language itself. In short, modern bible scholars have become slaves of words, slaves of lexicons, slaves of very language itself. Instead of manipulating the language - which is what God intended - language manipulates the scholar. The scholar of today cannot comprehend the simple truth that language was made for man, not man for language. The scholar's taskmaster has become the lexicon, even though the lexicon is the very **least** trustworthy of **all** tools when it comes to language, not only in its emphatic inability to cover many shades of often necessary meaning, but even waxing misleading at times. That is simply elementary, and thus, this almost cosmic vacuum of knowledge on behalf of modern bible scholars is as pathetic as it can possibly be.

Then again, the very Bible they criticize predicted that it would be so.

Conversely, it is eminently refreshing to read the words of a man like John Burgon, a truly born-again Christian who was himself an absolute master of various languages, including Greek, Latin and English. And yet, not even Burgon could hold a candle to the translators of the Authorised Version, and Burgon understood that, for he greatly lamented the uncouth production of Westcott and Hort who, like the scholars of our day, demonstrated a complete and utter slavery to a language they barely even understood. It hasn't changed.

In Burgon's day, however, he literally rejoiced when describing the grace and brilliance of the translators of the Authorised Version. Commenting on the various semantic shades and varying contexts of seemingly static words, a concept which must be thoroughly understood before one even begins to translate God's Word, Burgon noted --

"The Translators' of 1611, towards the close of their long and quaint Address 'to the Reader,' offer the following statement concerning what had been their own practice - 'We have not tied ourselves' (say they) 'to

an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish that we had done.' On this, they presently enlarge. We have been 'especially careful,' have even 'made a conscience,' 'not to vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified the same thing in both places.' But then, (as they shrewdly point out in passing,) 'there be some words that be not of the same sense everywhere.' And had this been the sum of their avowal, no one with a spark of Taste, or with the least appreciation of what constitutes real Scholarship, would have been found to differ from them."

[10](#)

It is clear from that statement what Burgon would think of modern "scholarship."
He continues --

"But then it speedily becomes evident that, at the bottom of all this, there existed in the minds of the Revisionists of 1611 a profound - shall we not rather say a prophetic? - consciousness, that the fate of the English Language was bound up with the fate of their Translation... Of all this, the great Scholars of 1611 showed themselves profoundly conscious... Verily, those men understood their craft! 'There were giants in those days.' As little would they submit to be bound by the new cords of the Philistines as by their green withes. Upon occasion, they could shake themselves free from either. And why? For the selfsame reason: viz. because the Spirit of their God was mightily upon them." [11](#)

The truly born-again believer can only say, "*Amen and amen!*"

Burgon's wise words must be allowed yet one more hearing. After exposing the abhorrent translation of Westcott & Hort, whose deplorable quality and tastelessness and inaccuracies have been reproduced ad nauseam in modern bibles without exception, Burgon made this observation --

"Our contention, so far, has been but this - that it does not by any means follow that identical Greek words and expressions, wherever occurring, are to be rendered by identical words and expressions in English... The truth is - as all who have given real thought to the subject must be aware - the phenomena of Language are among the most subtle and delicate imaginable: the problem of Translation, one of the most many-sided and difficult that can be named. And if this holds universally, in how much greater a degree when the book to be translated is the Bible! Here, anything like a mechanical leveling up of terms, every attempt to impose a pre-arranged system of uniform rendering on words - every one of which has a history and (so to speak) a will of its own - is inevitably destined to result in discomfiture and disappointment. But what makes this so very serious a matter is that, because holy scripture is the Book experimented upon, the loftiest interests that can be named become imperiled; and it will constantly happen that what is not perhaps in itself a very serious mistake, may yet inflict irreparable injury." [12](#)

And then speaking of the mastery of the Authorised Version, Burgon discloses -

"There are, after all, mightier laws in the Universe than those of grammar. In the quaint language of our Translators of 1611: 'For is the Kingdom of God become words or syllables? Why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free?'" [13](#)

Here is irony - most everyone admits that the English of the Authorised Version is unsurpassable. The Authorised Version has been called the "*Monument Of English Prose*," and many other noteworthy and well-deserved appellations. In short, the English language has never shined anywhere as brightly as it shines in the Authorised Version, and even its critics begrudgingly concede this inescapable fact. Simply put, the Authorised Version is far and away the most glorious representation of the English language that has ever existed, or ever will. And yet, the critics still cannot understand the simplest of contingencies relative to that basic truth - namely, that the skill that it took to produce the **ENGLISH** must perforce have been **EQUALLY AS GREAT IN THE UNDERLYING LANGUAGES!**

Indeed, *dira necessitas!*

"Verily, those men understood their craft!"

A relatively recent publication by Harvard University Press entitled, *The Literary Guide To The Bible*, made similar observations. After comparing numerous passages between the Authorised Version and modern bibles, the following conclusions are drawn --

"All these examples can be seen to have doctrinal or theological implications, but they also have one distinct literary implication: that the Authorized Version's translators were artful and, in the best Renaissance sense, witty, contriving to make what they wrote have a variety of meanings. In their view the translator's task was not to assume that there is one clear meaning to which the text should be reduced, but instead to open out the text to include as much as possible... Many modern versions eschew anything which smacks of imagery or metaphor... The loss is measurable not only in terms of aesthetics but also in terms of meaning. Particularly in the narrative sections of the Bible the Authorized Version emerges from comparison with twentieth-century versions as more attractive and more accurate... At its best, which means often, the Authorized Version has the kind of transparency which makes it possible for the reader to see the original clearly. It lacks the narrow interpretive bias of modern versions, and is the stronger for it... Through its transparency the reader of the Authorized Version not only sees the original but also learns how to read it." [14](#)

"Verily, those men understood their craft!"

Modern bibles proclaim the "*OLD pascha*" in a post-resurrection context in Acts 12:4.

The Authorised Version proclaims the "*NEW pascha*" in a post-resurrection context in Acts 12:4. Yea, the Authorised Version proclaims the *RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST*.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." *Colossians 2:16-17*

Farewell.

Footnotes

1. Alexander Hislop in the early 20th century prosecuted his theory concerning the origin of Easter, and he did so by making an assertion that neither he nor anybody else has ever provided a **SHRED** of evidence for --

"What means Easter? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing less than Astarte..." *Hislop, The Two Babylons, p 103.*

Not only does both the New Testament and church history demolish this false assertion concerning **EASTER** - an assertion without a **SHRED** of actual **EVIDENCE** behind it, an assertion based on **100% SUPPOSITION** - but the etymology of our word **EASTER** is also devastating to this lie, for - as you'll soon see - the word **EASTER** is derived from the German word for **RESURRECTION!**

Notice also that **Astarte** is merely the Greek translation of **Ashtoreth**, a Canaanite goddess found in the Old Testament, and there is no linkage at all between either **Ashtoreth** or **Astarte** with the Saxon word **Easter**. None whatsoever.

More importantly, In addition to the fact that the resurrection of Jesus Christ **PRECEDES** all of the supposed associations with pagan festivals that later attempted to adapt themselves to Christianity, it is simply ludicrous to allege (without any proof whatever, I might add) that born again Christians, many of whom were dying for their faith, would both sell out to idol worship and simultaneously associate their risen Lord, even the Lord Jesus Christ, with a pagan word in such a devilish undertaking. Christian martyrs were tough as nails in the early days of Christianity, and they went to their deaths in droves for refusing to renounce Jesus Christ. This whole matter is nothing but yet another Satanic attempt to marginalize the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost testifies against the assault utterly.

Furthermore, neither Hislop nor anybody else has ever shown that Christianity - **true** Christianity - tried to merge with pagan festivals. In fact, Hislop's argument is based on nothing but **HEARSAY**, and there is not an **ATOM** of actual **EVIDENCE** to substantiate his assertion, as Hislop himself unwittingly conceded, for after rambling on about Phoenician and Babylonian customs without ever tying a single, solitary strand to the word **Easter**, he was forced to confess --

"The name Easter is peculiar to the British Islands." *Ibid.*, p 104.

Which is to say, this word does not occur in any other culture or any other language until the settlement of the Germanic tribes on the European continent sometime after the 1st century AD - that is, well **after** Christianity. Accordingly, those who attempt to attach **EASTER** to **ASTARTE** do so out of sheer imagination.

Moreover, when speaking of the primitive church's celebration of the resurrection, Hislop admitted --

"That Festival agreed originally with the time of the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified, a period which, in the days of Tertullian, at the end of the second century, was believed to have been the 23rd of March. That festival was not idolatrous, and it was preceded by no Lent." *Ibid.*, 104.

Hislop further noted --

"To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals amalgamated..." *Ibid*, p 105.

Hislop then ties this whole event to the adjustment of the calendar by Dionysius in the **SIXTH CENTURY AD**. In other words, five hundred years **AFTER** Christianity. Further still, neither Hislop nor anybody else has ever actually produced any **EVIDENCE** to sustain the assertion that any **TRUE** Christian body fell prey to this heresy.

In fact, the evidence goes the opposite way, as the 17th century Puritan scholar John Owen noted --

"Besides, if the only prevalent religion in Brittany were, as you fancy, that which came from Rome, how came the observation of Easter, both amongst the Britons, as Beda manifests, and the Scots, as Petrus Cluniacensis declares, to be answerable to the customs of the Eastern church, and contrary to those of the Roman? Did those that came from Rome teach them to do that which they judged their duty not to do? But what need we stay in the confutation of this figment?" *John Owen, The Works of John Owen, A Vindication Of The Animadversions on Fiat Lux, p 394*

Thus destroying all notions of the pagan origin of the word **Easter** in one fell swoop, for Rome had no connection with early Christianity in Britain, as all of the early testimony affirms, and this is the backbone of Hislop's entire fable.

Owen goes on in another treatise to point out that the evidence for Apostolic Christianity in Britain can be traced back to the 1st century, thus decimating the multiple heresies - most of which have

come from Rome - that have arisen with regard to the spread of Christianity. For example, he stated --

"...and as the British churches were in the first century independent of the Roman see, had the same forms of worship, and observed Easter at the same **TIME WITH THE CHURCHES OF GAUL**, which doubtless had an Asiatic origin, the evidence is very strong that the gospel reached us originally by a course exclusive of Rome." *John Owen, The Works of John Owen, Volume 14, Footnotes, p 667*

The only thing Hislop is successful in doing is showing that various pagan practices have attached themselves to the Easter celebration many centuries later, **LONG AFTER** the Easter celebration had its beginning, for Easter has **ALWAYS** been celebrated during the season of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We not only have the testimony of the New Testament itself on this matter, but Polycarp (a disciple of the Apostle John), Irenaeus, and others proclaimed that this was so, and that the **EASTER** celebration - that is, the **RESURRECTION** celebration - was **INSTITUTED BY THE APOSTLES THEMSELVES**. Thus, if any type of amalgamation took place, it was the **PAGAN** festivals that **ADAPTED THEMSELVES** to Easter - **NOT** the other way around.

Unfortunately, some of our modern dictionaries and encyclopedias, along with rationalistic bible dictionaries such as ISBE, etc., have swallowed this blasphemous perpetration concerning the word Easter hook, line, and sinker, and all without an **IOTA** of proof. Not an **IOTA**. Indeed, the world truly hates the Lord Jesus Christ, as it is written --

"The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." *John 7:7*

Hislop himself is apologetic about his forays into heresy on this matter, as well as conceding yet again that his dissertation is fabricated out of nothing but supposition, for he remarks --

"Those who have been brought up in the observance of Christmas and Easter, and who yet abhor from their hearts all Papal and Pagan idolatry alike, may perhaps feel as if there were something untoward in the revelations given above in regard to the origin of these festivals. But a moment's reflection will suffice entirely to banish such a feeling. They will see, that if the account I have given be true, it is of no use to ignore it." *Ibid, p 107.*

Once again, while Hislop maintains his allegation, he at least had sense enough to know that he had no actual evidence to support it, so he wisely provided himself a caveat --

"IF THE ACCOUNT I HAVE GIVEN BE TRUE..."

Hislop's entire treatise on Easter is completely devoid of any evidence. It is based instead wholly on Hislop's suppositions without any verifiable ties to Christianity at all, at least not until Roman Catholicism came into real power many centuries later.

Certainly, pagan practices have attached themselves to the Easter celebration in the centuries **AFTER** the Easter celebration was instituted, but to assert that born again Christians attached a pagan word and a pagan celebration to the resurrection of Jesus Christ is nothing short of blasphemy and treason to the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

William Tyndale, who lived four hundred years before Hislop and who was fully aware of the history and etymology of the word Easter - as he was the first person to even use the word Easter in an English Bible - went to the stake for the Word of his Testimony. He would have sacrificed his life many times over before employing a pagan word in his Bible. Here is his own confession concerning the Word of God --

"For I call God to record against the day we shall appear before the Lord Jesus, to give a reckoning of our doings, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me."
Alexander McClure, Translators Revived, p 26

In summary, the **EASTER** celebration was **PURELY** Christian, a **SINGULAR** celebration of the **RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST** in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and types, instituted **BY THE APOSTLES**, and any assertion claiming that born again Christians adapted the **EASTER** celebration - that is, the **RESURRECTION** celebration - to a pagan festival is condemned on its own face by both the Word of God and the Holy Ghost also bearing witness.

2.. *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*, Translated by C. F. Cruse, Hendrickson Publishers, p 437

For a discussion and demonstration on vowel morphologies and how they dropped or added to words in transitions between Old Saxon, Old Frisian, Old German, Old English, et. al., see *Old English And Its Closest Relatives*, Orrin W. Robinson, Stanford University Press.

The parallels are quite startling. For example, not only is there a strong similarity in nouns (Mann = man), but comparative and superlative adjectives (dick - dicker = thick - thicker); (gut - besser = good - better), the verbal system (lachen - lachte = laugh - laughed), and so many others. Ibid., p 2.

In short, while it is difficult to trace all of our cognates to an archetype in particular, we can nevertheless with absolute **certainty** demonstrate the relationship between our languages and their cognates. This is what makes the naked assertions of the critics so foolish, for they speak without a speck of evidence, whereas the etymological evidence opposing them is simply undeniable.

3. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Hendrickson Publishers, Book 5, Chapter 10, p 817

4. Ibid., Book 3, Chapter 2, p 222

5. Ibid., Book 5, Chapter 17, p 917-918

6. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol II, Chapter 5, Footnote 320

7. John Owen, *The Works of John Owen, A Discourse Concerning Evangelical Love, Church Peace, and Unity*, p 185-186

8. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol I, Chapter 9, p 385

9. The critics have tried to manufacture ammunition against the Authorised Version from Luke's statement in Luke 22:1 - "*Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.*" This attempt against the Authorised Version is a classic example of eisegesis - that is,

of reading into the text what isn't there. The critics have based their argument on what they **wished** Luke had said instead of what Luke **actually** said.

The context is **pre**-resurrection. Luke related that the feast of unleavened bread was **called** the Passover. It is certainly true that Jews referred to the entire feast in its broad - or general - sense in this manner, as Josephus also remarks. However, when the word is used in a **specific** context, the matter is entirely different, as God himself demonstrated in Leviticus and Numbers. Luke did not use the word in a **specific** context in Luke 22:1. Luke **did** use the word in a **specific** context in Acts 12:4.

Furthermore, what people may **call** something does **not** - indeed, **cannot** - invalidate **God's** definition, and **God's** definition in Leviticus and Numbers could not possibly be plainer.

Edersheim, the converted Jew and rabbinic scholar, clearly recognized the difference between **popular** notions and **biblical** notions in the Word of God --

"When the traitor returned from Jerusalem on the Wednesday afternoon, the Passover, in the popular and canonical, though **NOT IN THE BIBLICAL SENSE**, was close at hand." *Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Hendrickson Publishers, Book 9, Chapter 5, p 805.*

Context **always** takes precedence. Luke's references to pascha in his Gospel are all **pre**-resurrection. In Acts 12:3-4 the context is **post**-resurrection, and he who does not consider that fact as utterly **paramount** has grave theological deficiencies.

10. John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p 187-188

11. *Ibid.*, p 188-189, 191, 196

12. *Ibid.*, p 196-197

13. *Ibid.*, p 198

14. Edited by Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, Harvard University Press, Copyright 1987, p 663-665