

Easter/Ishtar: Paganism Repackaged

In this teaching we will be focusing on the history of Easter, exploring its disturbing undeniable Pagan roots. To be objective I have endeavored to garner input from not only Christian sources but also Catholic and Pagan sources as well; and as you will see all three sides are in agreement as to Easter's Pagan origin and history. We will explore exactly when the holiday of Easter was incorporated into the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD; whereby this practice then started to permeate and leaven many other branches of Christianity. Of further note we will prove how the date of Easter is always determined by (the Biblically forbidden practice of) Astrology and how its date changes every year as a result. If this were the true date of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, HOW COULD IT CHANGE? We will also be looking at Easter's close ties to Pagan goddess known as Ishtar and the specific associations and practices of Easter like: The Easter Bunny, Colored Eggs, Lent, Ash Wednesday, Hot Cross Buns, Spring Break, The Easter Ham, Wicker Easter Baskets, Easter Sunrise Service, Mardi Gras, etc. . . . Lastly we will explore why only the King James Version translates the Greek word "pascha" to "Easter" (instead of "Passover") in Acts 12:4; and how this is one more proof of the superiority of the Authorized King James Version.

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JUDE 3&4: "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."

Galatians 4:10-12: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, **how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.** I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

Mar 7:13 Making the **word of God of none** effect through your tradition

1Cr 14:33 For God is not the **author of confusion**, but **of peace**, as in all churches **of the saints.**

Proverbs 18:13: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

From Answer to Catholics: All too often we accept traditions merely because they are so old, or because they have "Christian" names placed upon them. Even if we know of their Pagan origin in fact. Christmas is proof of this fact. We all know Christ was not born in winter, we all know that Christmas trees have absolutely nothing to do with Christmas. We also know that telling our children about Santa is a bold faced lie. Yet, we do it for the sake of tradition. We openly allow the mixture of truth with lies and then call it acceptable Christian tradition. Yet, it is written, "...How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him..." -1 Kings 18:21

Easter is no different than Christmas. In fact it's worse in many ways. It actually affords us the opportunity to expose it with childlike ease. Yet, still, many call it a holy day and clamor to the churches to celebrate that which was solely invented by Satan to pay homage to him and him alone.

I ask the Christian that sees no wrong in celebrating this Pagan Roman Catholic festival of re-birth, how can you see no wrong in mixing Satanism with Christianity? How can you do this and still call it a day of worship for the Creator God when He clearly states to have no union with things of the world? How can you tell your children about an Easter bunny that symbolizes sexual prowess to the Pagan Sun worshipper? How can you claim the egg that this bunny supposedly lays represents Christ, or some aspect of His resurrection, when it is well known to first have been used to represent fertility to the Pagan. Mr and Mrs Christian, how can you allow your children to take part in the sexual games played by the Pagan's of old, and now re-named "Spring break" by the many young people during the Pagan festival of "Easter Week?" The children flock to the warmer climates this time of year from all over the world just for this purpose. Are you aware of what they do there? If not, ask anyone that has watched MTV during this time of year. This sinful broadcast revels in making all aware of the sexual decadence that is encouraged, and then embraced by our young people. They make it look acceptable, fun, and exciting. And for those that choose not to "go that far," they ridicule and use the

old favorite methods of peer pressure to get them to join in. The amazing thing is, they video tape all and most partns still embrace it.

The history of the Temple of Ishtar

Excerpt chapter from Sacred Sexuality by occultists AT Mann and Jane Lyle

In Her Temples in many lands from Egypt to Assyria to Babylon to Crete to India, in Rome and Greece and many Celtic lands, Her Temples had Sacred Priestesses who were also called Temple Prostitutes by Christians. Her worship was in the arms of the Priestess who embodied and represented The Goddess(s). These worshipers are sometimes known as pagans.

A fundamental difference in the concept of worship is important to note: In the Temples of the old ways people would go to the temple TO BE WORSHIPPED not to worship. Women would go to the temple to serve the Goddess to embody Her, to represent Her, to be worshipped as Her. Women would spend a day, or a week, or a year serving at the Temple as a priestess, as a sacred Prostitute, as a whore in service to the Goddess. There they would be worshipped as the incarnation of the Goddess, as The Goddess Herself.

Men would come to Her Temple TO BE WORSHIPPED. Men would be welcomed and served by the Priestesses and men would represent the divine male principal, the Horned One, the Sacred Bull, The God. Men would come to the temple to give their love and passion to The Goddess, and would receive the passion, love, and affection of The Goddess.

But some three millennia ago there came monotheists who refused Her Worship preferring instead to be diminished in body and spirit. They called Her, "The Whore of Babylon, who leads men into fornication." They called our sacred sexuality "sin," and cast shame on Her sacred Priestesses. They held up a "virgin" as the ideal that women should imitate instead of the sacred Goddess that they had always held as the most sacred image of Woman. This is essentially the state of things in the modern world.

The two principal deities of ancient Babylon were Baal and Ishtar. Baal was the god of war and the elements and **Ishtar the goddess of fertility** - both human and agricultural. These two deities have roots going back before Babylon to Nimrod at Babel and to Assyria. Through the ages they were imported into other nations and under different names but always retaining the same basic characteristics. Baal was also called Bel, Baalat, Molech, Merodach, Mars and Jupiter, and was frequently represented as a bull. Ishtar was also called Aphrodite, Astarte, Ashtoreth, Cybele or Sybil, HectaDiana, Europa, Isis, Semiramis and Venus (**Currently she is also known as the Roman Catholic "Virgin Mary" goddess**). The two main elements in the worship of Baal were fire and human sacrifice, usually children.

Ishtar was worshipped via offerings of produce and money as well as through fornication with temple prostitutes. It is this last characteristic that helps make the tie between religious Babylon and kings and merchants. In his book *The Secret of Crete*, H.G. Wunderlich reports that before marriage, every woman in Babylon was required to go to the temple of Ishtar and lie with a stranger. We have a similar report from Gerhard Herm in his book, *The Phoenicians* (1), where women in the Canaanite cities of Tyre, Sidon and Byblos were required to become prostitutes for a day and give themselves to foreign guests during the spring festival. **This festival survives today in the name of "Easter", which is derived from the word "Ishtar".** Now **OSTARA** is one of the Lesser **Wiccan** Sabbats, and is usually celebrated on the Vernal or Spring Equinox right around March 21. **Easter is determined as the first Sunday after the first Full Moon after the Vernal Equinox.**

Vernal equinox

Vernal" means, appearing or occurring in the Spring. "Equinox" points to the time when the sun crosses the planet's equator. When this occurs, night and day are of equal length in all parts of the earth for that day. The Vernal Equinox occurs on or about March 21st. This day was significant for Pagan sun worshippers because it marked the point where they believed the sun had been fully "resurrected" from its death during the Winter Solstice. This of course is one of the other Pagan festivals (Christmas)

"What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears the Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the [queen of heaven](#) (Virgin Mary apparitions and [Jer 7:18](#) "**The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger**".), whose name, as pronounced by the people of Ninevah, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments is **Ishtar**. - *The Two Babylons*, by the Rev. Alexander Hislop, published 1943 and 1959 in the U.S. by Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, New Jersey, page 103.

**Hot
cross
burns**

The history of the hot cross bun goes back to the Babylonian queen of heaven (Ishtar), and a reference to it is made in Jeremiah 7:18, which talks about making "cakes to the queen of heaven." The Hebrew word for "cakes" is "kavvan" and is also translated as "buns."

At Athens, about 1500 years before Christ, these buns or sacred bread, were used in the worship of the goddess. They were called "boun." Egyptians made buns inscribed with two horns in honor of the moon goddess, and the Greeks changed it to a cross, so it could be easily separated. The Angle-Saxons made buns with a cross on them in honor of their goddess of light. -Controlled by the Calendar p 49

The 11th edition of Encyclopedia Britannica's "Easter" article states, "There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the apostolic church Fathers." The ecclesiastical historian, Socrates is quoted in the same article as he points out that neither the Lord or His apostles enjoined the keeping of this day. He says, "The apostles had no thought of appointing festival days, but of promoting a life of blamelessness and piety". He attributes the observance of Easter by the church to the perpetuation of an old usage, "just as many other customs have been established." Early Church reformers such as Calvin and Knox protested strongly against Easter because of its pagan origins. Observance of the holiday was not widely celebrated in America until well after the Civil War. (*Easter: Its Story and Meaning* by Alan Watts; *Babylon, Mystery Religion*, Ralph Woodrow; *Calvin Tracts; Knox's History*)

Easter has long been known to be a Roman Catholic pagan festival! America's founders knew this! A children's book about the holiday, *Easter Parade: Welcome Sweet Spring Time!*, by Steve Englehart, p. 4, states, "When the Puritans came to North America, they regarded the celebration of Easter—and the celebration of Christmas—with suspicion. They knew that pagans had celebrated the return of spring long before Christians celebrated Easter...for the first two hundred years of European life in North America, only a few states, mostly in the South, paid much attention to Easter." Not until after the Civil War did Americans begin celebrating this holiday: "Easter first became an American tradition in the 1870s" (p. 5). Remarkable! The original 13 colonies of America began as a "Christian" nation, with the cry of "No king but King Jesus!" The nation did not observe Easter within an entire century of its founding.

Notice this conclusive quote from Microsoft Encarta Multimedia Encyclopedia: "Ishtar was the Great Mother, the goddess of fertility and the queen of heaven." So, in actuality, **Ashtaroth** (Ishtar) was Nimrod's harlotrous, mother/wife widow, Semiramis, as many

other ancient historians attest! Easter is now established as none other than the **Ashtaroth of the Bible!** We can now examine the scriptures that show how God views the worship of this pagan goddess—by any name!

God calls easter evil!

“And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord...And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth [Easter]” (Judges 2:11, 13)

“...put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only...Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only” -1Samuel. 7:3-4

From: <http://www.answerincatholicism.com/catholicismexposed/paganisminthechurch/easterfestival/easterfestival.html>”**If this evil celebration had anything to do with the resurrection of Christ, it would be on an affixed date each year. Yet, every single year the date of Easter changes! How I ask can that represent the Lord's resurrection? It's no different than saying I was born on January 1, but every year I will celebrate my birthday in accordance with how the moon orbits the planet. Therefore, my birthday would never be the same date from year to year. Sounds ludicrous right? Yet, people still think Easter commemorates the DAY Jesus rose from the dead?**

The true gift of Babylon is confusion. And sadly, Christians the world over are very happy to embrace this confusion of Roman Catholicism as if it is some time honored acceptable practice the Creator Himself approves of. Why do people grasp at the gray areas instead of looking upon the simple truth. It's so black and white for those that simply open their eyes to see.”

Easter Sunday was formally recognized by the **Council of Nicea in 325 AD**. The **First Council of Nicaea**, held in [Nicea](#) in [Bithynia](#) (in present-day [Turkey](#)), convoked by the [Roman Emperor Constantine I](#) in [325](#), was the first [ecumenical](#)^[1] conference of [bishops](#) of the **Catholic Church**, and most significantly resulted in the first uniform Catholic [doctrine](#), called the [Nicene Creed](#)

Ash wednesday

The first day of Lent. As an act of penitence, palms saved from the previous year's "Palm Sunday" are burned to ashes and placed in the shape of a cross on individuals' foreheads on this day. (*Webster's Dictionary, Carnival*)

Lent

A forty-day period of penitence and prayer instituted by the Roman Catholic Church which begins on Ash Wednesday and prepares for the celebration of Easter. Though previously lasting less than a week, during the seventh century it came to represent the forty days, one day for every year of Tammuz's life.

The word "lent" comes from the old English "lencten," which means "Spring." Created by the Catholic Church around 525, under the guidance of Abbot Dionysus the Little,. The observance is not found in the Bible, so it was not recognized by Jesus, the apostles, or the early Christian Church.

This period of abstinence actually originated in Babylon, as a preliminary to the annual day that honored the death and resurrection of Tammuz; and later was observed in Egypt to honor Osiris, the son of Isis, who was the counterpart of Tammuz.

When Nimrod died, and was made the sun god, Semiramis then had an illegitimate son called Tammuz, who she claimed to be the son of Nimrod. She said that he was the "promised seed of the woman," (Genesis 3:15) and demanded that both her and Tammuz be worshipped. He became symbolized by the golden calf. She became known as the "queen of heaven," **and was the prototype from which all other pagan goddesses came**. Her representation can be seen in the Roman Catholic Church's worship of Mary, who is called the "Mother of the Church," the "Queen of Heaven and Earth," and the "Queen of the Universe." These titles can not refer to Mary, the mother of Jesus, because nowhere in the Bible does it talk about Mary's role in such a way. [1Ti 2:5](#) For there is **one** God, and **one mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

According to Babylonian tradition, when Tammuz was killed, his mother cried so much, that he came back to life. The manifestation of this was the rebirth and blooming of all vegetation in the Spring, which came to symbolize his resurrection, and why Tammuz is honored in the Spring. Very similar, is the story in the ancient writings of the Sumerians, in Mesopotamia, which said that Tammuz was married to the goddess

Inanna (Ishtar), the "mother goddess."

Ezekiel 8:12-13 talks about the women weeping for Tammuz and this actually refers to what became the 40-day Lenten period. –*Controlled by the Calendar* p 46, 47

Ezekiel 8:13-14: He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which [was] toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen [this], O son of man? turn thee yet again, [and] thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, [were] about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

According to Johannes Cassianus, who wrote in the fifth century, "Howbeit you should know, that as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, **this observance of Lent did not exist**" (*First Conference Abbot Theonas*, chapter 30).

A forty-day abstinence period was anciently observed in honor of the pagan gods Osiris, Adonis and Tammuz (John Landseer, *Sabaeen Researches*, pp. 111, 112).

"The forty days abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, in the spring of the year, is still observed by the Yezidis or Pagan Devil-worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a *Lent* of forty days was held in spring by the Pagan Mexicans...Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt..." -[Alexander Hislops, The Two Babylons, p. 104-105](#)

Sunrise service

This too, was an aspect of old pagan customs associated with sun worship. Though the custom no longer celebrates the rising of the **sun** among Christians, God does condemn the type of service from which it was derived (Ezek. 8:16). Many years after Christ's death, the Catholic church began to associate the tradition with Christ's supposed early morning resurrection in an apparent effort to compromise with their new converts' previously held religious traditions. Yet, when the ladies came

to Christ's tomb early Sunday morning, *He (the **Son**) wasn't there!* The Jews during the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel had blended sun worship with the worship of God, as we can see in the Scriptural references in regard to the "queen of heaven." Ezekiel 8:15-16 talks about men standing with their backs to the Temple of God, facing the east and worshipping the sun. **Ezekiel 8:15-16** "Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen [this], O son of man? turn thee yet again, [and] thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, [were] about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

Albert Pike wrote that all pagan religions worshipped the sun. **Whether they knew it, or not, they were actually worshipping Satan, because, as an angel, he was known as Lucifer, or the "bearer of light."** [Isa 14:12](#) How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, **son of the morning!** [how] art thou cut down to **the** ground, which didst weaken **the** nations! The Jewish Temple faced the east, so that when they worshipped God, they would be turned away from the rising sun in the east. The sunrise service actually stems from the pagan rite of Spring that was held during the vernal equinox to welcome the coming sun. According to pagan tradition, when the sun would rise on Easter morning, it would dance in the heavens, so, those who would congregate, would dance in honor of the sun. - *Controlled by the Calendar p 47*

The verse that is found in Mark 16:2 is often given to justify the promotion of Easter sunrise services: "*And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising sun.*"

Carnival and mardi grass

"In the traditional Christian calendar, it is a period of feasting and merrymaking immediately preceding Lent." Within Europe, traditions and customs are "especially strong in rural areas where magical rites carried over from pre-Christian times mingle comfortably with Christian ritual and precept." (*Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 5).

"The most important day of Carnival is Shrove Tuesday, the day immediately preceding the first day of Lent.." (*A World of Holidays: Carnival*, by Catherine Chambers, 1998, p. 6)

Shrove Tuesday is well known as Mardi Gras in the United States. The French word "Mardi Gras" actually means "Fat Tuesday." This was the day that everyone gorged themselves on all their rich foods. They did this before the "Lenten fasting"

In rural Europe several of the main features that have endured in the Carnival celebrations are: 1) dramatizations symbolizing the death of winter and the resurrection of life in the spring; 2) customs and rites to ensure fertility and abundance in man and nature; 3) rich food, drink and merrymaking, (*Encyclopedia Americana*).

Cardinal Newman admits in his book that; the "The use of temples, and these dedicated to particular saints, and ornamented on occasions with branches of trees; incense, lamps, and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness; holy water; **holydays and seasons**, use of calendars, **processions**, blessings on the fields; sacerdotal vestments, the ring in marriage, turning to the East, **are all of pagan origin**, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church. {374}" -An Essay on the *The Development of the Christian Doctrine* John Henry "Cardinal Newman" p.359

The penetration of the religion of Babylon became so general and well known that **Rome was called the "New Babylon."** -*Faith of our fathers* 1917 ed. Cardinal Gibbons, p. 106

"In order to attach to Christianity great attraction in the eyes of the nobility, **the priests adopted the outer garments and adornments which were used in pagan cults.**" - *Life of Constantine, Eusabius, cited in Altai-Nimalaya, p. 94*

"The Church did everything it could to stamp out such 'pagan' rites, but had to capitulate **and allow the rites to continue with only the name of the local diety changed to some Christian saint's name.**" -*Religious Tradition and Myth. Dr. Edwin Goodenough, Professor of Religion, Harvard University. p. 56, 57*

In Stanley's History, page 40: "**The popes filled the place of the vacant emperors at Rome, inheriting their power, their prestige, and their titles from PAGANISM.**"

Revelation 17:5, "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

Easter History: Christian and Pagan Traditions Interwoven (From A Pagan Website)

II Corinthians 6: 14-17: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the

Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

The history of Easter reveals rich associations between the Christian faith and the **seemingly unrelated practices of the early pagan religions. Easter history and traditions that we practice today evolved from pagan symbols, from the ancient goddess Ishtar to Easter eggs and the Easter bunny.**

Easter, perhaps the most important of the Christian holidays, celebrates the Christ's resurrection from the dead following his death on Good Friday. . . a rebirth that is commemorated around the vernal equinox, historically a time of pagan celebration that coincides with the arrival of spring and symbolizes the arrival of light and the awakening of life around us.

Ostara, Goddess of Spring and the Dawn (Oestre / Eastre)

Easter is named for a Saxon goddess who was known by the names of Oestre or Eastre, and in Germany by the name of Ostara. She is a goddess of the dawn and the spring, and her name derives from words for dawn, the shining light arising from the east. Our words for the "female hormone" estrogen derives from her name.

Ostara was, of course, a fertility goddess. Bringing in the end of winter, with the days brighter and growing longer after the vernal equinox, Ostara had a passion for new life. Her presence was felt in the flowering of plants and the birth of babies, both animal and human. The rabbit (well known for its propensity for rapid reproduction) was her sacred animal.

Easter eggs and the Easter Bunny both featured in the spring festivals of Ostara, which were initially held during the feasts of the goddess Ishtar | Inanna. Eggs are an obvious symbol of fertility, and the newborn chicks an adorable representation of new growth. Brightly colored eggs, chicks, and bunnies were all used at festival time to express appreciation for Ostara's gift of abundance.

History of Easter Eggs and Easter Candy

During the rule of Caesar Augustus, Hyginus, an Egyptian who was the librarian at the Palatine library in Rome, wrote: "An egg of a wondrous site is said to have fallen from heaven into the river Euphrates. The fishes rolled it to the bank, where the doves having settled upon it, and hatched it, out came Venus, who afterwards

was called the Syrian goddess (Astarte)." Part of their worship to this goddess was the ritual involving the "golden egg of Astarte." This was where we got the tradition of the Easter egg.

The egg was a mystical symbol to the pagan religions of Egypt, Japan, Greece, Persia, Phoenicia, India, and Babylon. On page 496, he wrote: "The serpent entwined round the egg, was a symbol common to the Indians, the Egyptians, and the Druids. It referred to the creation of the universe. A serpent with an egg in his mouth was a symbol of the universe containing within itself the germ of all things that the sun develops. The property possessed by the serpent, of casting its skin, and apparently renewing its youth, made it an emblem of eternity and immortality." Thus, we see an indication that the egg initially represented serpent worship, and, by extension, Satan worship. - *Albert Pike, an Illuminati member, in his Masonic treatise "Morals and Dogma,"*

Because the use of eggs was forbidden during Lent, they were brought to the table on Easter Day, coloured red to symbolize the Easter joy. This custom is found not only in the Latin but also in the Oriental Churches. The custom may have its origin in paganism, for a great many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter. -*Catholic Encyclopedia*

"The history of Easter Eggs as a symbol of new life should come as no surprise. The notion that the Earth itself was hatched from an egg was once widespread and appears in creation stories ranging from Asian to Ireland.

Eggs, in ancient times in Northern Europe, were a potent symbol of fertility and often used in rituals to guarantee a woman's ability to bear children. To this day rural "grannywomen" (lay midwives/healers in the Appalachian mountains) still use eggs to predict, with uncanny accuracy, the sex of an unborn child by watching the rotation of an egg as it is suspended by a string over the abdomen of a pregnant woman.

Dyed eggs are given as gifts in many cultures. Decorated eggs bring with them a wish for the prosperity of the abundance during the coming year."

Easter ham

Ham at Easter is also popular among Americans and Europeans because the pig was considered a symbol of luck in pre-Christian European culture" (*The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 1987, p. 558, "Easter".)

The pig was sacred to the Greek goddess Demeter, the corn goddess, who represented fertility and abundance, and is another counterpart of Astarte. In

various depictions of her, she is either shown carrying, or being accompanied by a pig. So, pigs were regularly sacrificed to her, and it was believed, that by eating what they felt, represented and embodied their goddess, they were in fact, eating of her body. The prophet Isaiah warned of this in Isaiah 65:3-5. Another source says that the pig represents the wild boar that killed Tammuz, and eating ham was done in remembrance of him.

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Question: Why should the KJV not say "Passover" in Acts 12:4? The King James translates pascha as "Passover" 28 times, in every other place it appears in the New Testament. Why not in Acts 12:4?

Answer: "Passover" is not the correct translation of pascha in this single New Testament passage. If we examine the Passover celebration and Days of Unleavened Bread from the Old Testament, we will see why Acts 12:4 cannot be about Passover.

When Are the Days of Unleavened Bread?

Here is what the Bible says in Acts 12:1-4

1. Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.
2. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.
3. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

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.

Please note the time in which the apostle James was killed: "Then were the days of unleavened bread." When were these days?

The Bible is very specific. In Leviticus 23:5-8 and Numbers 28:16-25 we find two very clear definitions of the days of Passover and the Feast / Days of Unleavened Bread.

1. Passover (Hebrew: *Pesach*) occurs on the 14th day of the first month at even (starting at sunset).
2. The Feast and Days of Unleavened Bread start after Passover, on the 15th day of that month (Numbers 28:17) and continuing through the 21st day. Both the 15th and 21st days were treated as Sabbath days, days of worship and not of "servile work" (Lev. 23:7-8; Num. 28:18, 25).

The Bible tells us clearly: Passover is before the Days of Unleavened Bread, not after.

What Was Herod Talking About?

A simple summary of the Scriptures will help us understand. The Bible says Herod killed the apostle James (John's brother) with the sword. Then he took the apostle Peter as well. Those days were the Days of Unleavened Bread when he did this. But while Herod wanted to put Peter in front of the people, (intending to kill him with their approval), he decided to wait for something the Greek calls *pascha*. Then he would bring out Peter.

Here is a simple order to keep in mind:

Passover (14 Abib), then Days of Unleavened Bread (15-21 Abib), then *pascha*.

Please note that Passover was **before** the Days of Unleavened Bread, and this *pascha* Herod was waiting was **after** the Days of Unleavened Bread. Therefore while Herod may have been waiting for Easter (the feast of Ishtar*, which the **Greeks also called *pascha***), he was not waiting for Passover. That is why the King James Bible, in this single instance, had to translate *pascha* by a word other than Passover. The translators of the King James knew their Bible. Do the translators of the modern versions?