

# Easter

Dr. David J. Rodabaugh

ACT 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.

- I. The Greek Word here
  - A. Greek 3957. pascha, pas'-khah; of Chald. or. [comp. Heb 6453]; the Passover (the meal, the day, the festival or the special sacrifices connected with it):-Easter, Passover.
    1. The notation in Strong's Concordance
      - a. The Word—Greek 3957. pascha, pas'-khah; of Chald. or. [comp. Heb 6453];
      - b. The meaning(s)—the Passover (the meal, the day, the festival or the special sacrifices connected with it):
      - c. Translations in the KJV—Easter, Passover.
    2. This word occurs in 27 verses (KJV), sometimes more than once and is correctly translated 'passover' every time but once
      - a. MAT 26:2, 17-19; MAR 14:1, 12, 14, 16; LUK 2:41;22:1, 7-8, 11, 13, 15; JOH 2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14; ACT 12:4; 1CO 5:7; HEB 11:28
      - b. All recent translations translate it correctly—*passover*
    3. This proves the KJV has flaws!
  - B. Origins of the symbols are all from pagans even though they might have been re-interpreted or modified (summary)
    1. Christmas
      - a. date—Lk 1:5 comp. 1Chr 24:10 implies fall or spring for John and hence fall or spring for Jesus
      - b. 12/25—pagans had such a festival in honor of birth of Babylonian queen of heaven
      - c. tree—common in worship of Astarte and son Tammuz—see Jer 10:1-5; 2Ki 17:10-12
      - d. Yule log is related to same.
      - e. Christmas is from Christes Masse—the Mass of Christ
    2. Easter
      - a. name from Astarte—queen of heaven in paganism—this title appears in Jer 7:18; 44:17-25
      - b. This and Lent borrowed from worshippers of Babylonian goddess.
      - c. Rabbits and eggs used for centuries in worship of Astarte
      - d. From Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd College Edition under "Easter," "orig., name of pagan vernal festival almost coincident in date with paschal festival of the church < *Eastre*, dawn goddess..."
    3. Our Testimony
      - a. It is a blasphemous testimony to try to use the symbols of paganism to worship the Lord
      - b. To those who say that the world wishes to discuss the Lord at these times—we will discuss the Lord at any time
      - c. The world knows about the pagan origins—look at the encyclopedias
- II. God's Work Done in God's Way
  - A. The High Places—1 Kings 3:2-3

1KI 3:3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

    1. Only—raq—an adverb of limitation, restriction or exception (Gesenius' Lexicon)
    2. The High Places—bamoath—plural of bamah
      - a. Of false gods—Nu 21:28; 22:41; Jos 13:17 etal.

- b. God said He would destroy—Lev 26:30 comp. Ps 78:58; Ezk 6:3,6
  - c. God told Israel to destroy—Nu 33:52
  - 3. The record of the 'good' kings (The others lived in idolatry.)
    - a. Solomon—1Ki 3:2-3—built the temple BUT still worshipped at the high places
    - b. Asa removed the idols but not the high places—1Ki 15:14
    - c. Jehoshaphat—1Ki 22:43
    - d. Jehoash—2Ki 12:3
    - e. see also 2Ki 14:4; 15:4,35
  - 4. Hezekiah removed the high places—2Ki 18:4
  - 5. Manasseh rebuilt—2Ki 21:3
  - 6. Josiah destroyed—2Ki 23:5,8,9,13,15,19,20
- B. Uzziah and the Ark of God

2SA 6:6-7 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

- 1. The only proper way to move the ark was with poles inserted in the rings that were at the four corners of the ark—Ex 25:12-15
  - 2. Anything else brought death and destruction even if *the motives were good!*
- C. Comments from article—**Karen Hoyt**, "Ritual and Christmas," Eternity (December 1988) pp. 30-33, vol. 39 no. 12
- 1. Note: This article is definitely pro-Christmas but you might be interested in its comments and its justification for Christmas
  - 2. The following is from paragraphs 2 and 3 in the article:

"But is Christmas Christian? Christmas wasn't celebrated by Christians until the fourth century when the church at Rome, unable to stamp out the popular pagan celebration of the renewal of the sun god at the winter solstice, tried to Christianize it by transforming it into a winter celebration of Christ's birth, the Son of Righteousness. As Christianity and Christmas moved through Europe and the centuries, the holiday continued to acquire new pagan symbols, the Christmas tree, the yule log, candles, snow, the colors green and red, Santa Claus, sweets, stars, holly and berries, etc.

"The Puritans, rooted in Scripture and resistant to paganism, tried to suppress the celebration of Christmas, both in America and in England, but they failed and in the 19th century, Christmas became a popular holiday."

- 3. How do they justify such paganism—look at paragraph 4
 

"The celebration of Christ's birth is not prescribed or even suggested in Scripture. It is not that God was against ritual and ceremony, quite the contrary. The Old Testament is filled with detailed prescriptions for holy days. The Day of Atonement is prescribed in minute detail. Nothing is left to man's imagination, creativity or spontaneity. In the Old Testament, ritual with deep emotional, symbolic and spiritual significance is commanded. As the Israelites practiced these rituals, they were bonded together as God's people."
- 4. Notes on this:
  - a. The children were never to use pagan symbols in their worship.
  - b. Nothing was left to their imagination—much less the imaginations of idolatry.
  - c. We are forbidden to be involved in Israel's ceremonies and holy days in Col 2.

- III. Isn't Christmas questionable and thus an individual decision according to Ro 14; 1Co 9 and 10?
- A. The issues separated
    1. The issues in Ro 14
      - a. Meat offered to idols
      - b. The sabbath
    2. 1Co 9:19-23—Israel's law
    3. 1Co 10:23-33—meat offered to idols
  - B. The parts related to Israel's law are dispensational. Any involvement with such is forbidden in Col 2.
  - C. The question of eating meat.
    1. Has nothing to do with worship. Using pagan symbols for that is clearly a sin according to any scripture that is pertinent.
    2. Has to do with things that are not necessary but would normally be all right.
    3. As an example: eating various types of food—forbidding these things in and of themselves is clearly of the devil—1Ti 4:1-3; 1Co 10:25. This is the matter of discussion in both Ro 14 and 1Co 10
  - D. Principles of conduct in cases such as this
    1. Outline of 1Co 10:23-33
      - a. Lawful things may not be edifying or profitable to others—23,24
      - b. You need not raise the issue since God has given such things (as meat) for our pleasure—25,26.
      - c. If others raise the issue, you must not eat because they connect it with an unlawful or forbidden practice—27-30.
        - i. note: It has nothing to do with whether they like or dislike the matter. The only issue is whether they connect it with something you are forbidden to do.
      - d. Do all for God's glory—31-33
        - i. His glory (in context) = men obeying God's word and not thinking of themselves as involved in paganism.
        - ii. Causing no one to stumble—that no one sins or is tempted to disobey or to revert to pagan practices.
        - iii. Pleasing men—their spiritual profit. The issue is not to make men happy but to edify in the things of God.
  - E. Applications—things acceptable in themselves that we can't do because of the connection others make.
    1. Giving gifts or cards at the end of December (even if nothing religious is intended or mentioned).
      - a. Giving to others is commendable and fun
      - b. But—our children and others will instantly see that these are 'just like' Christmas gifts. Therefore, we can't give them then by the principles in this passage.
    2. Special music or singing 'appropriate' (even though true) resurrection or incarnation songs.
      - a. Such music may be appropriate any other time of the year
      - b. But—our intentions and purposes will be misunderstood by the unsaved and the weaker saint.
- IV. The Resurrection of Christ
- A. Basic Greek word (noun)—Greek 386. anastasis, an-as'-tas-is; from Grk 450; a standing up again, i.e. (lit.) a resurrection from death (individual, gen. or by impl. [its author]), or (fig.) a (moral) recovery (of spiritual truth):-raised to life again, resurrection, rise from the dead, that should rise, rising again.
  - B. We will track the verses in which this noun occurs. (Note that there are other words that should be included like rise, raise, etc.)
    1. Resurrection in general

- a. Christ's response to the Saducees—MAT 22:23-31; MAR 12:18-23; LUK 20:27-36
- b. Simeon's blessing of the Christ child—LUK 2:34
- c. The resurercction of the just and that of the unjust—JOH 5:29; ACT 24:15-21
  - 1. Of the just—LUK 14:14
  - 2. A fundamental doctrine—2TI 2:18; HEB 6:2; HEB 11:35
  - 3. At the end of the millenium—REV 20:5-6-
- d. The raising of Lazarus—JOH 11:24-25
- e. Our life involves death and resurrection—PHI 3:10
- 2. The resurrection of Christ
  - a. Required for Judas' successor—ACT 1:22
  - b. Central to Biblical teaching
    - 1. Peter's witness of David's teaching—ACT 2:29-31
    - 2. Peter's epistles—1PE 1:3 ; 3:21
    - 3. Offensive to some and a cause for trouble—ACT 4:1-14
    - 4. Boldly proclaimed—ACT 4:33
    - 5. Central to Paul's message
      - 1. Mar's Hill—ACT 17:18-32
      - 2. Paul and the Sadducees—ACT 23:6-8
      - 3. Paul's proclamation—ACT 26:23; ROM 1:4
      - 4. Our identification with Christ—ROM 6:5
      - 5. There is no Christianity without the resurrection of Christ—1CO 15:12-13
      - 6. Basis of our resurrection—1CO 15:13, 21, 42