

Thursday, April 5, 2012 – Leave Easter to the Bunnies

I guess I should be happy that once a year millions of people around the world focus on the fact that Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, overcame the clutches of death and was raised from the dead to then return home to the Father. Unfortunately, I cannot be happy regarding something that has no basis in Bible doctrine. As with Christmas, the Bible does not authorize the religious observance of Easter with its emphasis on resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The celebration of Easter originally referred to a pagan goddess and the occasion, annually, when she was worshipped. The pagan feast occurred each year near the time of the Jewish Passover. The Catholic Church, desiring to distinguish its annual commemoration of Christ's resurrection from the Jewish Passover, adopted the name of the pagan feast for its own use. The term "Easter," in the King James Version of the Bible (**Acts 12:4**), is a mistranslation. The Greek word is pascha, correctly rendered "Passover" in later translations. In fact, though pascha is found twenty-nine times in the Greek New Testament, it is only rendered "Easter" once, in the KJV. When correctly translated "Passover" in **Acts 12:4**, and understood correctly, not one day but a number of days are meant. This refers not to Passover day, but to the whole celebration of Passover which lasted eight days." Incidentally, the reference to "Easter" in the KJV or "Passover" when correctly translated, had no reference to any Christian activity. It was merely (1) a convenient reference to a particular time in the year, and (2) the Jewish feast days only after which Herod could proceed to execute another apostle without offending Jewish sensitivities; after all, the purpose of seizing Peter and planning his execution was for Herod to endear himself to the Jews.

Neither the feast known popularly as "Easter" nor the name "Easter" itself is biblically authorized. That is, the Bible does not prescribe an annual commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ. Rather, the New Testament teaches that the first century church, which was led by inspired apostles, met on the Lord's Day (Sunday on our calendars), which occurs once weekly. On that day of the week, Christians are to meet for worship, to include singing, preaching, the Lord's Supper (**Acts 20:7**) and the contribution (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**). The focus of the Lord's Supper or communion, which should be observed each Sunday, is not the resurrection of Christ, but his suffering sacrifice for our sins on the cross. His Resurrection is understood to represent an assurance that we can have forgiveness from our sins. Paul contended: "**If Christ hath not been raised, our faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins**" (**1 Corinthians 15:17**). The reverse of the apostle's affirmation would be this: if Jesus was raised, sins will be forgiven when we obey the gospel (**Acts 2:38; 22:16**).

Hide the eggs, buy the kids (of all ages) candy, but let's not make anything religious out of a manmade holiday.