

The Truth About Easter

Reclaiming Christ's Passover in Early Church Tradition and Theology

We should not try to define God's nature according to our own ideas and desires (Exodus 32:1-8), but worship Him to the fullest of God's intent, as revealed in His Word. This is orthodoxy, as Jesus defined it to a woman he was evangelizing: "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). He did not copy the ideas and customs of her culture or pander to her tastes. If he had, the original meaning

and spiritual purpose for her salvation would have been lost. In Deut.12:29-31 God advises His people not to adopt pagan practices as aids to worship or evangelism. There should be no syncretism (Rom.10:17).



Yet "we are told by Eusebius that Constantine, to commend the new religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own. The use of temples, and these dedicated to particular saints... holidays and seasons, turning to the East, images at a later date... are all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption in the Church" (Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, Chapter 8, §6, by Cardinal John Henry Newman).

PASSOVER marks Israel's rescue from slavery in Egypt by YHWH their God, after mycotoxin exposure, exacerbated by poor food storage and hunger, killed Egypt's firstborn. (Documentary: [youtube.com/watch?v=I749gsQ_dPo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I749gsQ_dPo).) As a prelude to their deliverance from this tenth plague, God told each Israelite household to adopt a spring lamb on the 10th of Nisan, care for it till after dusk of the 14th, kill it before dusk of the 15th and apply its blood to the doorposts. God then vowed, "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:1-14). Later, God made the 15th an annual Sabbath, to help sustain an overarching expectation, during Israel's pilgrimage, of being rescued from all false gods and brought into the Promised Land, relying ("sabbath" means rest) on YHWH to do it (Exodus 15:6; Hebrews 4).

God made all things with Wisdom that comes to earth to reveal His hidden designs (Proverbs 8:12-31; Acts 14:11-28; Isaiah 55:10,11), and to rescue. The brightness of His glory came down as a theophany (God-manifestation) to Yehoshua, Israel's commander (Joshua 5:13-15). In the Aramaic of John 1:1, *Miltha* conveys a many-sided theophany: *word, emanation, power, substance, manifestation*. One man is all of them: (*w*) John 1:1,14; (*e*) John 3:31; 8:23; (*p*) John 10:38; (*s*) 1 Timothy 2:5; 3:16; 1 John 1:1; 4:2; (*m*) Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:15; 2:9. Ye(Ho)shuWaH is Hebrew for "YHWH saves", of which the Greek form in Matthew 1:21 is *Iēsous*!

When ritual sacrifices were first made to God, He looked with favour on a costly gift (Genesis 4:1-8; 22:16). A form of animal sacrifice developed among Israelites that emphasized the manipulation of blood, the life-force (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:18-23), more than killing. As the altar stood for God, the source of life, the sacrifice represented the laying of one's life on the altar in His service. It could not educate a backward morality (Amos 5:21-24; Matthew 5:24; Hebrews 9:9-14; 10:11-18). But a man from God, by choosing to die rather than erase sacred writ (Matthew 5:17; John 10:1-18; Hebrews 10:7), could free the faithful from the *cause* of sin (Galatians 2:17). Now a life, worthy of the Glorious Personage ("MarYah", Matthew 22:45; 1 Corinthians 12:3b, Roth AENT) and Messianic claimant (Daniel 7:13; Matthew 11:2-6; 26:63-66; Luke 4:17-24), was violently taken on an obviously specious blasphemy charge. Israelites would identify with the purity of their sacrifices as the vehicle for approaching God (Leviticus 10:17; John 14:6), and here was Master YHWH (Aram.), a perfect man (John 8:46), being made an example of, suffering a civil punishment that utterly violates one's sense of justice

(Luke 23:41; 1 Corinthians 1:25)! Why? He had rebuked the religious leaders for conforming to the letter of the law and not the spirit of its broader purpose (Matthew 5:17-48), and wrong thinking cannot lead to right doing. Seeing their dominance threatened (Matthew 27:18; John 8:44; James 3:14), they made him a curse, a defilement in Israel (Deuteronomy 21:22,23), by gibbeting him in the cruel, Roman way. This backfired when Jesus was miraculously raised from death, confounding his opposers, struggling in their futile ways to be righteous by Moses's law (Acts 2:22-41; 1 Peter 1:18). The misapplied curse underscores the fact that confiding in one's own integrity cannot conquer sin (Romans 7:4-8:4; 10:2-4; Galatians 2:21; 3:13), while faith in *his* integrity can (1 John 2:1-6,13,27; 3:5,22,24; 5:2-4)!

The slaying of the Paschal Lamb was part of the narrative of rescue from slavery. The promised sin-rescue was strikingly fulfilled upon his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:14; 1 Peter 1:3; 3:21). God has announced an amnesty to sinners and the backslidden (1 Peter 2:25) for them to apply the only effective cure for the defilements of sin, the world and corrupt religion (John 16:9; 2 Peter 2:20; Acts 2:40) – Jesus's blood to the doorposts of the *heart* (Romans 5:17-21)! In 1 John 1:5-2:2 John explains the soul-searching required. For Paul it makes the Lord's Supper on the first day of Unleavened Bread (Mark 14:12) an example of Judaism to be kept in a new spirit of moral de-leavening, purging out the old sourdough of vice and hypocrisy: “for even our Paschal Lamb, Christ, was sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7; Mark 8:15).

On the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) a similar drama was played out, in which harmonious relations with God were restored by a sacrifice (v.9) that removed the taboo of sinning by transferring it to a goat that was led to the goat-demon, Azazel (vv.20-29; Leviticus 14:7). The word “scapegoat” was coined for it, but it never took the blame. According to Maimonides it took away the propensity to sin. It echoed Paul's prescription: “Having these promises, let us purify ourselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1; Titus 2:11-14). Satan/Azazel is like a poisonous snake. His onslaught on Jesus was his last stand, stripping him of his fatal power to deceive (Genesis 3:15; John 8:44; James 4:7). Christ is the antidote for his venom (John 3:13-16, *cf.* Numbers 21:4-9), easily entering our bloodstream, because he was where we are (Hebrews 2:10-18). No scapegoat motivates like that (Romans 6; 13:11-14; Galatians 3:27)!

In Luke 7:36-40 a “loose woman” gate-crashed a meal where Jesus was guest, to testify before his censorious, self-righteous hosts to her new-found nonconformity not only to her own past thought-life and habits, but the world's and even theirs! He had won her over, sparing her life and forgiving her (John 8:3-11). In return, she washed his feet with her tears. The Greek for “testify” (*martūreo*) gained the martyrdom sense when the first believers noted that Christ had brought restorative justice by suffering a violent death – the death they often faced themselves (John 18:37; Hebrews 2:9,10). In the light of the Temple sacrifices it all made sense: he had offered his life to God in exchange for theirs (Matthew 27:20-23), making his blood their purification (Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:3; 4:19). How? Paul typified the impious pietist (1 Timothy 1:12-15) until confronted by the Messiah: “Why are you persecuting me (as I identify with the faithful)?” (Acts 9:5). Paul later used the idea of believers' reciprocal identification with Christ to enjoin a love correspondingly untainted by self-interest: “if one died for all, then all died” (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Tertullian held that penances earned divine favour: “by penitence God is *appeased*.” (Please go to scribd.com/document/343099015). If penances built up more merit

than was needed to cancel one's demerits, the grace could be transferred to others. The combined ideas of appeasing God with gifts requiring a proxy to suffer and transferred grace suggested to Cyprian that Christ's sacrifice could propitiate Him better than penitents could. When the priest at Mass offers up the sacrificial Victim (L., *hostia* = host) to God, to die on his cross, to merit the grace that only such sacrifice merits, we see how the Oblation satisfies the need to offer penance. It was overlain by later rationalizations, such as Anselm's, who implied that the victim was compensating God for sin's affront, to spare us, and Melanchthon's and Calvin's (both trained in legal theory), who thought of innocence being imputed to sinners, guilt being imputed to Christ, who becomes a punished proxy, like the whipping boys of tutored princes.

Reframing Anselm's God-appeasement through a legal paradigm is problematic: only pagans propitiate their gods! Occultists love the Cross for its mystique of God-appeasement, but Jesus's cry of desertion that underpins it (Matthew 27:46) flatly denies the Father's vow of solidarity with him (John 8:29). Real desertion would imply that God broke it (Luke 22:42). More honouring to both is the view that his cry was setting in motion the validation of his Messiahship for his hearers, as the prophesy of his ordeal in Psalm 22 began to unfold. His anguish was real; but the cry confirms *who* he was, not *where* (in a purgatory of a *treacherous* God's disfavour).

The cry would also be something the church could connect with in testing times (Hebrews 2:17). As martyrdom was the Lord's destiny (Matthew 21:33-42; John 8:28; 12:31-36; 18:37), so persecution would be theirs (Matthew 10:38; 20:23; John 15:18-20). The fact of this aspiration (Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10; Hebrews 13:13; 1 Peter 2:21; 4:1,13; Revelation 12:11) meant that, when severely tried by the sins of others (Psalm 22:1), they would still be encouraged (v.24), finding common ground with one who went before them, being first and first-rank (Colossians 1:18).

The *hilasmos/hilasterion* in 1 John 2:2/Romans 3:25 denotes the means of pardon, not "propitiation" (KJV), which cannot be contextualized with the authors' sermons on votive self-purification (1 John 1:5-9; 3:3/Romans 6; 12:1,2) as the normalizing factor in the restoration of relations with God, of which the Leviticus 16 *hilasmos* and Pentecost (Acts 15:9; 26:20) were prophetic bookends. More problematic than the sacrifice of fidelity to literalism is that this misreading coincided with Grotius's anti-Socinian 'Defence' of Anselm's Satisfactionism. He drew parallels with pagan human sacrifices that God hates, to conclude: "By Christ's death God is *appeased* and reconciled to us." Protestants voiced no disapproval of the assimilation of God to Moloch, *et al.*

The Penal Satisfaction Theory shows tacit approval of the Mass and Grotius's equating Jesus's finished work to pagan propitiations in ancient literature. To endorse a dubious translation of *hilasmos* that recalls such inhuman acts implies sympathy with the pagan mind, since it is through the name of Redeemer, not its antonym, Avenger, that sins are always forgiven. Would Jesus identify with a Father so out of keeping with his own line on forgiveness? Holiness is inconsistent with such a contradiction. Letting Scripture interpret itself (2 Peter 1:21) would have prevented any obscuring of the apostolic witness that at Pentecost was about priestly failure hypocritically to impose domination on a conscientious objector (Matthew 23). But God rescues the abused (Ezekiel 34:11-25; Matthew 11:28; 12:20), revives contrite hearts and rectifies the erring (Isaiah 57:15). The Greek for rectify, *dikaioō*, may be translated "justify" in such cases as Romans 2:13, where it has an OT forensic sense in the light of Hebrews 10:1. Predominantly, as in Romans 3:20, the sense is rectify. But it was given the forensic sense in *every* case after Erasmus changed the Latin *reputatum* to

imputatum to translate *elogisthe* (logged) in Galatians 3:6: “It was reckoned to him for righteousness.” Abraham’s faith was counted as rectitude (*dikaioō*), just as David’s contrition signified guilelessness (Psalm 32:2; John 1:47). God rates moral receptivity (Luke 18:14), a far cry from imputing innocence to the guilty, language more suited to penal judgments than *reputatum* [Moral Transformation, Wallace & Rusk, p.292]. When Jesus and his disciples denounced his murderers (John 8:44; 15:18ff; 16:8-11; Acts 5:27-33; 7:52), they had viewed the Calvary event as a fight with Belial, not as a penal exchange at all; as prophesy warrants. The term for perversity, mischief, devilry, contrariness, *awon* (from *avah*, make crooked), is handled in Isaiah 53:6 (KJV) as “iniquity”. In the narrative of rebellion (John 1:10,11) it is evident that what was “laid on him” was an atrocity, not God’s charges. The Isaiah 53:5,10,11 sermon notes for Peter’s advocacy at Pentecost made this *awon* the ground for repentance: “If he offers his *life* in atonement (implying active, not passive obedience), he shall see his heirs and through him what Yahweh wishes will be done. By his *knowledge* shall my servant turn many to righteousness (*tsadeq* = *dikaioō*), taking their faults on himself.” So it was not the idea that sin must exact *retribution* from God, based on forced readings of “iniquity” as punishment of iniquity, that launched the Gospel; it was the decree that it should exact due *repentance* from us (Luke 24:47), commensurate with Messiah’s being made “(an offering for) sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21), to exhibit God’s *restorative* justice (Acts 4:11,12; Romans 1:17; 3:25), as it turned to righteousness all who threw in their lot with him (Mark 10:45; John 1:29; Acts 13:39; Romans 5:17-21; 10:9). “He carried up our sins himself in his own body to the tree that we, having died to sins, may live to righteousness (1 Peter 2:24, Diaglott). So Christ died to put us right (1 Peter 3:18).

A Friday crucifixion mistakes the morrow as the weekly Sabbath, though John 19:31 has already noted its *special* solemnity: “The day of that Sabbath was a *great* one” (Diaglott). The Passover Feast itself on 15th of Nisan was marked by a sacred assembly of complete rest from labour (Leviticus 23:7). If the crucifixion preceded this Sabbath, Jesus’s ultimate, going for broke, conciliatory gesture was clearly timed for the 14th, to coincide with the lamb’s immolation at 3 pm (Exodus 12:6). The 14th began the night before with a token Passover ahead of time (Luke 22:7). Knowing that Jesus had joined the processional inauguration of the Paschal Lamb earmarked for the 10th (Exodus 12:3) in the event we commemorate on Palm Sunday (John 12:12,13), we infer that the 14th fell on a Thursday. The fact that six days before the 15th Jesus spent the Sabbath at Bethany (John 12:1) and Cleopas said on Sunday that the Master’s contest with evil was 3 days before (Luke 24:21) rules out Good *Friday* (‘good’ in Moloch’s estimation?). The eve of Nisan 14 (1 Corinthians 11:23) was a bitter-sweet time for the 2nd century faithful in Asia Minor, who obeyed the Saviour’s command to memorialize his Seder as a symbol of their bond with him as the slaves he freed, and as a reminder of what he had done to keep them free (Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 1:18,19). Paul gave directions for observing it (1 Corinthians 11:26), not ruling out a more than annual event.

So where does Easter Sunday come from? You will learn how the Established Church became a tool of oppression, shown by an anti-Jewish feast replacing the eve of Nisan 14 Passover. If there are skeletons in the closet, one should flush them out and make them dance. It is what Christ did, and demands (Matthew 23; Mark 4:22). We are to judge false gospels by the fruits and the strict standards of *sola scriptura* (Matthew 7:16; Galatians 1:8, cf. 2:17). Should I defend custom and dogma, doing my best to bury and cloud the truth about Easter (John 14:6)?

Hadrian's Divide-and-Rule Policy in Jerusalem after Jews Revolt

"Sixtus in 126 A.D. was the first to celebrate a Sunday Easter in Rome instead of the traditional Nisan 15 [full moon] date on the lunar calendar. This change from the lunisolar to a fixed solar calendar occurred in Rome as repressive measures were enacted against all Jewish customs and practices...The veneration of the Sun in the 2nd century began to pressure Roman culture to change the first day of their week from Saturday to Sunday." (The Creator's Calendar, website of lunar calendar)

After the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–136 A.D.) Jerusalem was ethnically cleansed.

"The emperor founded, under the name of Ælia Capitolina, a new city on Mount Sion, to which he gave the privileges of a colony; and, denouncing the severest penalties against any of the Jewish people who should dare to approach its precincts, he fixed a vigilant garrison of a Roman cohort to enforce the execution of his orders... They elected Marcus for their bishop, a prelate of the race of the Gentiles... At his persuasion the most considerable part of the congregation renounced the Mosaic law... By this sacrifice of their habits and prejudices they purchased a free admission into the colony of Hadrian... When the name and honours of the church of Jerusalem had been restored to Mount Sion, the crimes of heresy and schism were imputed to the obscure remnant of the Nazarenes which refused to accompany their Latin bishop." (E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol.I, pp. 389-391.)

Puppet Gentile Bishops Overthrow Apostolic Seventh-Day Sabbath



Paul could have preached on the first day of the week if it had fallen on Sunday and he believed it to be the Lord's Day, as we do [note that, as the lunisolar calendar was still in force (see above), the first day could have been any day]. He never did. For 18 months the church in Corinth heard him preach every Sabbath (Acts 18:4,11), keeping the first day of the week for mundanities, like organizing financial relief (1 Cor.16:2). Preaching to Jews at Antioch on the Sabbath (Ac.13:43), Paul could have addressed the locals next day, but kept them waiting till the next Sabbath (v.44). Why? Because Sunday (if Sunday it was) had been a normal working day, until

Constantine made it a day of rest in 321. By Jewish reckoning the new day began at sunset; so we know from Ac.20:7,8 that one sermon ran over into working time (perhaps Sunday, perhaps not). Jesus showed that Sabbath granted immunity to those employed by God, like David, to usurp priestly prerogatives (Matt.12:1-8), spelling doom for the Pharisaical blackmailers who had made Sabbath-keeping such a burden for the poor (Matt.11:28-30). They would be replaced by a more humanitarian provision (Mk.2:27), with him ruling that day, the Lord's day (Matt. 12:8); and the Lord taught how to keep it, not whether (Matt.5:19). The myth of Sunday sacredness was a product of the Nicene Council's ruling on keeping Easter on the Venerable Day of the Sun and was later enforced by Papal Inquisitions. The day God ordered to be sanctified as a foretaste of heavenly reward (Heb.4:1-7) spills over to sanctify the week (Ac.2:46) only because of who rules it.

Samuele Bacchiocchi (*Festival in Scripture and History*, pp. 101-3) wrote: "The fact that the Passover controversy arose when Emperor Hadrian adopted new repressive measures against Jewish religious practices suggests that such measures influenced the new Gentile hierarchy to change the date

of Passover from Nisan 14 to the following Sunday (Easter Sunday) in order to *show separation and differentiation from the Jews and the Jewish Christians* (the Sabbath was moved to Sunday). . . Scholars usually recognize the anti-Judaic motivation for the repudiation of the Jewish reckoning of Passover and adoption of Easter Sunday instead. Joachim Jeremias attributes such a development to ‘the inclination to break away from Judaism’. Anti-Jewish sermons by leading Fathers defamed the Jews and sought to empty their religious beliefs and practices of any historical value.” An example follows.

[The video at vimeo.com/159609701 after 40 minutes discloses Constantine’s secret antipathy to Jesus (whom he tried to usurp) and Judaism. He also vilifies Jews, even Messianic ones, 12 minutes into this video: youtube.com/watch?v=SgSe5ORMPEs.]

Writings of Some Church Fathers Showed a Spirit of Anti-Judaism

John Chrysostom ('Golden Mouth') (347–407 A.D.) wrote anti-Jewish sermons:

“[How can Christians dare] have the slightest converse [with Jews], most miserable of all men [Homily 4:1] . . . who are lustful, rapacious, greedy, perfidious bandits . . . [their rites are] criminal and impure; [their religion] a disease (3:1). [The Jews are corrupt because of their] odious assassination of Christ 96:4). . . no expiation possible, no indulgence, no pardon (6:2). [Why Christians must hate Jews:] he who can never love Christ enough will never have done fighting against those [Jews] who hate Him (7:1).”

The above was extracted from Chrysostom's homilies, *Adversus Judaeos*. Steve Katz in “Ideology, State Power and Mass Murder/Genocide” cites them as “the decisive turn in the history of Christian anti-Judaism, a turn whose ultimate disfiguring consequence was enacted in the political antisemitism of Adolf Hitler.” Richard Dawkins (youtube.com/watch?v=Kil77asSywo) puts the Christian legacy of anti-Judaism in the same ethically dubious, obscurantist tradition as Original Sin and the Penal Satisfaction Theory of John Calvin, whose God stands for justice of such an inexorable, retributive kind that He could only reconcile Himself to His loving side by having Himself tortured in the person of His Son. Proverbs 17:26 refutes such a blasphemy and should have been his caveat.

Conscience does not err in condemning outright such untrue, unkind and wicked vitriol, and raises questions as to when anti-Judaism crosses the line into anti-Semitism. *Mildly* anti-Judaic sermons of the day might have been aimed at either preventing Jewish Christians from secretly returning to their old ways while remaining part of the flock (hence the dread warnings against apostasy in Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:26-35) or preventing the poaching of weak Christians by Jewish proselytes. *Cautiously* critical sermons might have been designed to counter the allure of Jewish claims to be the true Messianic faith or to model the true life of the believer. It is spuriously alleged in Chrysostom's defense that he was criticizing those “Judaizing Christians who were participating in Jewish festivals and taking part in Jewish observances such as observing the Sabbath” (Wikipedia: *Adversus Judaeos*). The fear that Jewish observances might be the thin end of the wedge, perhaps leading on to an insistence on circumcision and being bound to the Mosaic Covenant again (Galatians 3), might have suggested to the hierarchy that the best form of defence is attack. But what if Jesus had felt that way? History shows in fact that the laity was ill-advised to call any man *Papa* (Matthew 23:9) . . .

Papal Inquisitions to eradicate Sabbath-keeping as a supposed sign of legalism had been hypocritical, because the true Sabbath principle could be seen at work in their victims, like Glaydt and Fischer, whose lives operated out of rest that depended on freely choosing the path of devotion (Matthew 5:10-12, 17-19). It eludes bullies and controllers (2 Corinthians 11:20; James 3:16). The fact that the State Church overthrew the Sabbath by force (Daniel 7:25) is proof that it missed its full meaning and disrespected its lord (Matthew 12:8).

As the Reformation gained ground, radicals began to challenge the idea of the Church as a building/institution, operating above the members that comprise it. These “anabaptists” opposed infant baptism and ritual in favour of spiritual principles, rejecting trained ministers and the clergy-laity distinction for the organic practices and ethos of the first century church, as laid down by Paul (1 Cor.12:12-21). This Christ-centred, mutually participatory community was seen as a threat by advocates of Magisterialism, who crushed this primitivist, grassroots movement, so that any published touch-points of debate over unbiblical teachings were cast into the flames, along with their scholarly authors (e.g. Servetus*). Such atrocities are why Jesus' visionary plan for his church demanded disestablishment (John 18:36): crusading bellicosity and inquisitorial sadism testify to a Statist hubris that Caligula embodied (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

The fact that the religious leaders found no fault with Jesus's logic or character (Matthew 22:46; John 8:46), yet plotted against his life, tells us that there can be no true rest by listening to their successors today: by choosing the life of rebellion, they were renouncing the life God offers, as its exemplar, the flawless Lamb of God, stood before them. Any self-proclaimed emissary of Christ (Matt. 24:5), who follows a mystical or secular agenda, un-Christ's him (1 John 2:18-27; 4:1-6). It has been the mark of false prophets down the ages. Yet the ages are still shaped and the march of history dictated by Christ's words (Heb.1:2,3; 11:3).

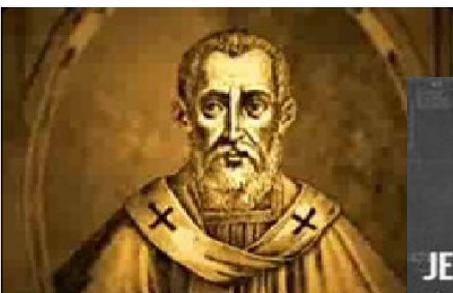
* **The victim of Calvin's personal vendetta:** [youtube.com/watch?v=XcOejV_hfjQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcOejV_hfjQ)

Polycarp and the Quartodeciman (“Fourteenth-er”) Controversy

Long after Pope Sixtus I had established an early form of Easter on a Sunday, Asiatic churches kept the same Nisan 14 Passover as Jesus and the apostles.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia (entry: ‘Pope St. Anicetus’) reports:

“ While Anicetus was Pope, St Polycarp. . . came to confer with him (160-162 A.D.) about the Paschal controversy. . . Polycarp and others celebrated the feast on the fourteenth of the month of Nisan, no matter on what day of the week it fell; whereas in Rome it was always observed on Sunday.”



Built upon the foundation of apostles & prophets.
JESUS CHRIST himself being the *chief corner stone*
(Ephesians 2:20)

Polycarp's Quarto-decimanism was learned at the feet of John and other apostles of his acquaintance.

“And when the blessed Polycarp was sojourning in Rome in the time of Anicetus, a slight controversy had arisen among them as to certain other points . . . For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp to forego the observance [in his own way], *inasmuch as these things had been always observed by John the disciple of our Lord, and by other apostles with whom he had been conversant*; nor, on the other hand, could Polycarp succeed in persuading Anicetus to keep [the observance in his way], for he (Anicetus) maintained that he was bound to adhere to the usage of the presbyters who preceded him. And in this state of affairs they held fellowship with each other; and Anicetus conceded to Polycarp in the Church the celebration of the Eucharist, by way of showing him respect.” (Irenaeus. Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus. Trans. Roberts & Donaldson. Vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers. 1885.)

Pope Victor I Threatens to Disfellowship the Church in Asia Minor

Victor I (189 – 198 A.D.) “now called upon the bishops of the province of Asia to abandon their custom and to accept the universally prevailing practice of always celebrating Easter on Sunday. In case they would not do this, he declared they would be excluded from the fellowship of the Church” (The Catholic Encyclopaedia, entry: ‘Pope St. Victor I’).

The church historian, Eusebius, later wrote (Life of Constantine, chap.24):

“But the bishops of Asia, led by Polycrates, decided to hold to the old custom handed down to them. He himself, in a letter, which he addressed to Victor and the church of Rome, set forth in the following words the tradition which has come down to him:

‘We observe the exact day, neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep . . . Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles . . . moreover, John, who was both a witness and teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord . . . All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith.’

“Thereupon Victor, who presided over the church at Rome, at once attempted to cut off from the common unity the parishes of all Asia, with the churches that agreed with them, as heterodox; and he wrote letters and declared all the brethren there wholly excommunicated.”

Why Polycrates Remained Faithful to the Quartodeciman Passover



Polcrates was a Proto-Protestant who resisted the rising power of Rome.

Acts 5:29
Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.**

He was not ‘Judaizing’.

Jude “... to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”

He was not being old-fashioned.

“I, therefore, brethren, who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord, and have met with the brethren throughout the world, and have gone through every Holy Scripture, am not affrighted by terrifying words. For those greater than I have said, 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'” (Polycrates, Letter to Victor. As quoted by Eusebius. Church History. Book V, Chapter 24.)

Dr Gerard Rouwhorst presents the case that the first Christians felt that the Quartodeciman Passover helped to clarify how their commitment to Christ and identity were to be experienced and conveyed to the unbelieving world:

“It played a central part in the life of early Christian communities and it is highly illustrative of their religious beliefs. Furthermore, celebrating it in the right way was considered by many early Christians as vital to their identity... It is quite generally agreed now that the oldest form of Christian Passover was the one celebrated by the Quartodecimans. This group, however, would end up becoming a marginal minority. On the other hand, the celebration of a Friday, Saturday and Sunday which came into existence in the second century as the result of a liturgical innovation, was eventually adopted by the majority of the Christians and regarded as normative.” (Gerard A.M. Rouwhorst, “The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought”, pp.64-65.)

Was Polycrates being divisive in resisting Rome's innovation? No; he was defending the Apostles' doctrine, convinced by the biblical support for a Quartodeciman Passover and the consensus it enjoyed in the East. His words were restrained and humble: “those greater than I have said, 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'” The real sectarians are those who exalt themselves above God, doctrines and man (2 Thessalonians 2:15). Victor excommunicated the Quartodecimans for a practice that gave them their Christian identity. A humble man serves others and submits to what he knows is true and right.

The Quartodecimans were not being legalistic either. Legalism is defined as pursuing good works with the aim of earning God's favour without believing that God justifies us by “the obedience of faith” that “works by love” (Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 16:26; Galatians 5:6; 1 John 4:10). But we recognise that something other than faith in Christ was the engine of obedience in persuading Christians to accept Easter Sunday: loyalty to the Pope. Passover was for the Quartodecimans an act of loyalty to Christ (Romans 14:23).

Eastern Orthodox Church Preserves the Timing of Jesus' Passover

Passover was originally observed at night by the Eastern Orthodox Church:

“Our earliest sources for the annual celebration of the Christian Pascha come to us from the second century . . . The feast, however, must have originated in the apostolic period . . . According to the earliest documents, Pascha is described as a nocturnal celebration.”

- Calivas, Alkiviadis C., “The Origins of Pascha and Great Week”

Nisan 14 Overshadowed by a Resurrection Holiday in the West

Over time, instead of being a holy day in memorial to Christ's sacrifice, Easter became a resurrection holiday in the West:

“The first Christians celebrated the death of Jesus with a Pascha meal (Eucharist) on the lunar date of the Jewish Passover (note 1 Cor. 5:7-8).

At first there was no annual celebration of the resurrection. Eventually, in the Gentile world, the day of resurrection was added to the Pascha festival. That day was Sunday. At the Council of Nicea (325) it was ruled that Easter Sunday would be celebrated on the Sunday immediately following that full moon which came after the vernal equinox. At the same time the Council decided that the vernal equinox would be March 21 in the Julian calendar.” (Eusebius, Vit. Const. 3.18.)

The Power of the Roman State Used to Outlaw Quartodecimanism

In 325 A.D., at the Council of Nicaea, Quartodecimanism was outlawed by Emperor Constantine.

“The emperor . . . convened a council of 318 bishops in the city of Nicaea. They passed certain ecclesiastical canons at the council besides, and at the same time decreed in regard to the Passover that there must be one unanimous concord on the celebration of God's holy and supremely excellent day.” (The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, De Fide. E.J. Brill, NY, 1994, pp.471-472.)

Sunday was a convenient choice for the Roman Church. Constantine had made the Day of the Venerable Sun a public holiday in 321 A.D, and the Mithraic rites of the Birthday of the Sun on 25 Dec



would become Christmas. Yet Jesus would have reprov'd such unfettered consumerism, exploitation of the poor and idolatry of things in his name, things that “do not edify” (1 Cor. 10:23).

According to Eusebius' Life of Constantine (III, ch. 18), the Roman emperor Constantine declared:

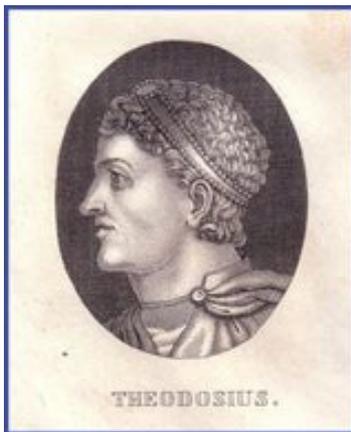
“Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way.”

It is doubtful whether any bishops who agreed with his term, “detestable Jewish crowd”, had actually received from their Saviour “a different way”.

“1170. At the Council of Nicaea in 325, all the Churches agreed that Easter, the Christian Passover, should be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon (14 Nisan) after the vernal equinox.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church. Doubleday, 1995, p. 332.)

The consensus that Easter Sunday should be “the Christian Passover” – not “the day of the Resurrection”, as we might expect – suggests that expediency, and not devotion, lay behind the change. Sunday was chosen because Pope Sixtus's fixed solar calendar overturned the Sanhedrin's lunar calculation of the Passover, and because of pressure from Constantine for the Church to be less Jewish by using a pagan holiday dedicated to the Sun only four years before.

“Edicts of Theodosius against the heretics, A.D. 380-394. Theodosius decreed that . . . the guilt of the Manichaean heresy was esteemed of such magnitude, that it could be expiated only by the death of the offender; and *the same capital punishment was inflicted on the Audians, or Quartodecimans, who should dare to perpetrate the atrocious crime of celebrating on an improper day the festival of Easter.* Every Roman might exercise the right of public accusation;



The office of Inquisitors of the Faith was first instituted by Emperor Theodosius I

but the office of Inquisitors of the Faith, a name so deservedly abhorred, was first instituted under the reign of Theodosius. . . The theory of persecution was established by Theodosius, whose justice and piety have been applauded by the saints: but the practice of it, in the fullest extent, was reserved for his rival and colleague, Maximus, the first, among the Christian princes, who shed the blood of his Christian subjects on account of their religious opinions.” (Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Volume III, Chapter XXVII. pp.49-50.)

“Emperor Theodosius (378-398 A.D.), made Christianity the State Religion of the Roman Empire, and made church membership compulsory. This was the worst calamity that has ever befallen the church. The forced conversion filled the churches with unregenerate people . . . The church had changed its nature, had entered its great Apostasy (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12), had become a political organization in the spirit and pattern of Imperial Rome, and took its nose-dive into the millennium of Papal abominations. The Imperial church of the 4th and 5th centuries had become an entirely different institution from the persecuted church of the first three centuries. In its ambition to rule it lost and forgot the spirit of Christ” (Halley’s Bible Handbook, *Paganization of the Church*, p. 760).

Is killing those who followed the example of Jesus and John in observing the Passover on the 14th, instead of Easter Sunday, the mark of a true Christian leader, or an anti-Christ? Does it supercede the authority of Jesus's teaching

and example? Undoubtedly. Did Jesus not repeatedly say, “Love one another” (John 15:12)? So surely Easter is the legacy of an anti-Christ (1 Jn.4:2; 2 Jn.9)? Chrysostom (already mentioned above for his anti-Jewish homilies) wrote this eulogy and defence of the bishops at Constantine's Council of Nicaea:

“Three hundred Fathers or even more gathered together in the land of Bithynia and ordained this by law; yet you disdain their decrees. You must choose one of two courses: either you charge them with ignorance for their want of exact knowledge on this matter, or you charge them with cowardice because they were not ignorant, but played the hypocrite and betrayed the truth. When you do not abide by what they decreed, this is exactly the choice you must make. But all the events of the Council make it clear that they showed great wisdom and courage at that time. The article of faith they set forth at the Council show how wise they were... At that time the whole synodal gathering, welded together from these champions, along with their definition of what Christians must believe, also passed a decree that they celebrate the paschal feast in harmony together. They refused to betray their faith in those most difficult times [of persecution]; would they sink to pretense and deceit on the question of the Easter observance? Look what you do when you condemn Fathers so great, so courageous, so wise.” (John Chrysostom, Homily III Against the Jews, III:3,4-5. Preached at Antioch, Sept., 386 A.D.)

So, the noble Fathers had made the change in the timing of Passover from the biblical date to a State-approved one an article of faith at the instigation of an emperor who had stated (according to his biographer, Eusebius) that he wanted to have “nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd”!

Bede Claims that Easter Sunday Preserves the Apostolic Witness

The Mediaeval historian and RC priest, Bede, left a record of a Catholic Abbot living around the beginning of the 8th century, named Wilfrid, who tried to justify the Papal rejection of Quartodecimanism [source: COGwriter, see end]:

“John (who) observed the decrees of the Mosaic law when the Church was still Jewish in many respects . . . began the celebration of Easter Day in the evening of the fourteenth day . . . When Peter preached at Rome, remembering that the Lord rose from the dead and brought to the world the hope of the resurrection on the first day of the week . . . he always waited for the rising of the moon on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, as John did . . . But if the Lord's day was due, he waited for it, and began the holy Easter ceremonies the night before, that is *on Saturday evening*; so it came about that Easter Sunday was kept only between the fifteenth day of the moon and the twenty-first. So this evangelical and apostolic tradition does not abolish the law, but fulfils it . . . All the followers of St. John in Asia since his death, and also the whole church throughout the world, have followed this observance . . . that this is the true Easter and this alone must be celebrated. (Bede. Ed. J. McClure & R. Collins. The Ecclesiastical History of the English People. OUP, NY, 1999, pp. 156-157.)

Bagatti, a Catholic scholar, referred to the change from the 14th of Nisan to Sunday in the 2nd century as “new usage”, as something that was not the church’s original position, in his book below (*ibid.*, p. 10). He also admitted:

“Since St. John spent the first years of his apostolate in Palestine, together with James, it is obvious that he had the custom of celebrating Easter (Passover) on 14th of Nisan from the mother Church. (Bagatti, *Church from the Circumcision*, p. 80).

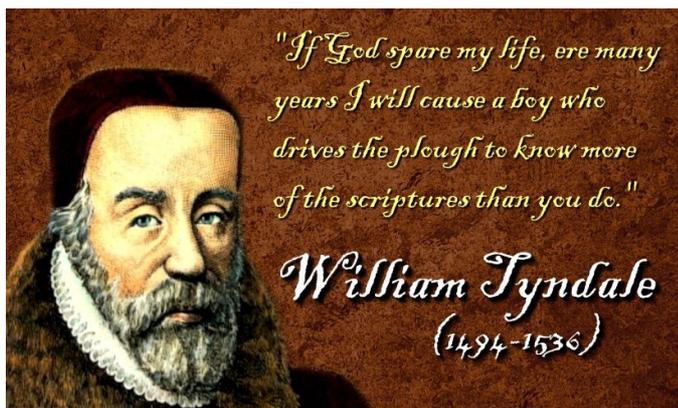
Since James referred to believers as “first-fruits” (James 1:18), we can reasonably infer that he, and indeed all the disciples, viewed Christ’s appearances to them on the first day of the week (John 20:19,26) in a Judaic light: not as a new ordinance to keep the first day as Resurrection Day, but as a recognition that it was Wave-sheaf Day, the first day of the seven weeks leading up to Pentecost (see p.16, this booklet). Wavesheaf Sunday meant that they were Christ’s first-fruits.

So Wilfrid’s account of Peter’s endorsement of Easter Sunday suggests two radical departures on Peter’s part from the practices of the mother Church: he had rejected the 14th of Nisan Passover and Wave-sheaf Sunday. But is such a swing away from Judaic to Roman thinking plausible, or even intelligible?

- Abbot Wilfrid accepted that John and the early Church were “still Jewish in many respects”, and that John kept the Quartodeciman Passover.
- John was often with Peter (Acts 3:1-11; 4:13; 8:14; Galatians 2:9). Is it likely that they kept differing dates, one being the “new usage” of Easter?
- The See in Antioch, which Peter reputedly founded, had embraced Jewish practices, including Quartodecimanism, into the early third century. There is no written proof that Peter either practised or endorsed a change to Saturday evening as the date for the Christian Passover. Wilfrid’s proposal that Peter ordered the observance of Christ’s death on the eve of the celebration of his resurrection makes even less allowance for the duration of burial than for Peter’s Jewishness. It suggests that he wanted to build a case for the apostolic validation of the Sunday morning Catholic liturgy on the Jewish custom of deeming each day to commence the evening before. The evening solemnities would be Peter’s seal of approval on the following Sunday morning liturgy.
- Wilfrid cunningly suggested that Easter’s coincidence within the time-frame of the days of Unleavened Bread proved loyalty to the Passover. Forgetting that Passover was instituted to *prevent* compromise in worship, he claimed an unlikely precedent of Peter’s to allow Easter Sunday to overrule the Passover’s fundamental message of *purging sin* (1 Corinthians 5:8) and to override the significance given by Christ to Wave-sheaf Day by his Sunday visitations which were a call to *bear fruit*. Wilfrid was shifting the authorship of these compromises onto Peter.
- All John’s followers for at least 100 years after his death kept the Nisan 14 Passover (Eusebius, “The History of the Church”, Book V, chap. 24, v.6, p.114).

We see how Wilfrid tries to implicate Peter in Papal rejection of the Church’s original practices on a specious claim of apostolicity based on temporal coincidence.

The Lamb of God (Jesus) Was the Pashal (Πασχα) Lamb of Passover



In 1534 A.D. a man by the name of William Tyndale, an acquaintance of Martin Luther, decided that the word ΠΑΣΧΑ known to refer to Passover since the scriptures were written should be Easter.

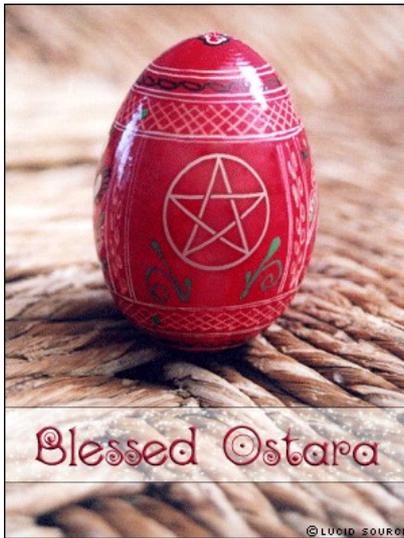
Not only that, but when referring to Passover in another 26 places he uses the words ester - easter - easterlambe and ester fest

The Hebrew word for Passover (*Pesach*) in a Greek form is *Pascha*. Jerome adopts it untranslated in his Latin version of the Bible, as does Wycliffe in his English translation from the Latin (*Paske*). But it drops out of usage with Tyndale's translation, despite his grasp of the nuances of both Hebrew and Greek. His replacement of *Pesach/Pascha* with *Easter* gives a sense of the times, but should not detract from the courage, theological and linguistic prowess of this beacon of the Reformation. Yet it is because of Tyndale that the King James Version translators put "Easter" for "Pascha" in Acts 12:4.

The Trappings of Easter are Derived from Paganism and Rome

"ISHTAR was one of the most prominent of the deities of the Accadian and Assyrian Pantheon. She was the Assyrian goddess of Love. She was the Ashtoreth of the Jews or Hebrews. She is the planetary Venus, and in general features corresponds with the classical goddess of Love. Her name Ishtar is that by which she was known in Assyria, and the same name prevailed, with slight modifications, among the Semite nations generally . . . She may be identified with Eostre of the Germans, or Easter . . . The Phoenician name of Ishtar was Astarte, the later Mendaeen form of which was Ashtar. She was called "the queen of heaven", Jer.vii,18, and xlv. 17-25 . . . She was sometimes called "the goddess of the chase", corresponding to Diana as well as Venus, the goddess of love. Mr. George Rawlinson says: "The worship of Ishtar was widespread, and her shrines were numerous. She is often called "the queen of Babylon" . . . It may be suspected that her symbol was the naked female form . . ." (Hamilton, L.L.C., note. In "Ishtar and Izdubar, the epic of Babylon"; restored in modern verse by L.L.C. Hamilton, 1884. Original from Oxford University, Digitized Jun 19, 2007, pp. 207-208.)

According to Babylonian legend, a huge egg fell from heaven into the River Euphrates, from which the goddess Ishtar hatched. The Easter egg does not represent the stone rolled away from the tomb, as the Mediaeval church claimed. The Easter egg hunt is based on the idea that anyone finding Ishtar's egg during her Spring-time rebirth would go on to live a charmed life.



the coloured egg after churches in Mesopotamia stained them red to symbolize Jesus' blood. But the Bible uses wine as a symbol of Christ's blood (Matthew 26:27-29; Luke 22:20), not coloured eggs.

The Church of Rome adopted many of the customs of Easter, and considered the eggs as the emblem of the resurrection. Notice the prayer blessing of Pope Paul V, about 1610, on Easter eggs, which, in English, reads thus:

"Bless, O Lord! we beseech thee, this thy creature of eggs, that it may become a wholesome sustenance to thy faithful servants, eating it in thankfulness to thee on account of the resurrection of the Lord." (Easter Eggs. Donahoe's Magazine, Volume 5, T.B. Noonan, 1881. Original from the University of Wisconsin, p. 558.)

"Since Ishtar, or Eostre, was a goddess of fertility, and because rabbits procreate quickly, the rabbit became associated with the sexual act, and the egg became a symbol of birth and renewal." (Chapman T.L., God's Law of Love: The Perfect Law of Liberty. In Universe, 2010, p. 133.)

But it is Paganism, not the Bible, that teaches about the use of eggs:

"The symbolic meaning of a new creation of mankind by Jesus risen from the dead was probably an invention of later times. The custom may have its origin in paganism, for a great many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter. The egg is the emblem of the germinating life of early spring." (Simrock, Mythologie, 551.)

Some have claimed that Gentile Christians adopted

The Catholic Encyclopedia acknowledges that Nisan 14 is apostolic:

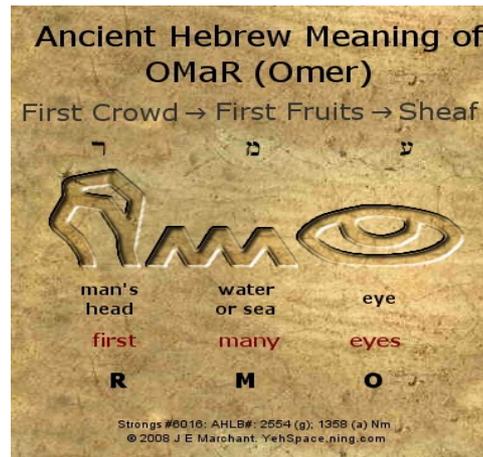
"Easter is the principal feast of the ecclesiastical year. Leo I (Sermo xlvii in Exodum) calls it the greatest feast (festum festorum) . . . The Jewish Christians in the Orient followed the Jewish method (of dating) . . . For this observance they claimed the authority of St. John and St. Philip. In the rest of the empire another consideration predominated. Every Sunday of the year was a commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ."

The Encyclopedia Britannica confirms that Easter Sunday is NOT apostolic :

"There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the apostolic Fathers . . . The first Christians continued to observe the Jewish festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed. Thus the Passover, with a new conception added to it of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb and the first fruits from the dead, continued to be observed"

- "Easter". In: The Encyclopaedia Britannica. Edition XI, 1910.

The First Day was Set Apart for the Offering of the First-fruits



Ronald Dart (Christian Education Ministries) noted that there was a Jewish/Christian observance on the Sunday after the Passover crucifixion: an omer of barley as the firstfruits of the harvest.

“On the evening after the Sabbath was over, the very first sheaf of grain of the early harvest was cut from the ground. It was prepared that night by threshing the barley from the chaff and then parching it over a fire. The next morning, the priest lifted an omer of the grain to God as the presentation of the firstfruits of the harvest. Now, compare this to Christian theology of the resurrection:

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20).

“It is clear enough that, in referring to ‘Christ the firstfruits’, Paul is referring directly to that first sheaf offered on the morning after the Sabbath by the priest. His wording leaves no room for doubt. James will refer to this as well: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, *that we should be a kind of first-fruits* of his creatures” (James 1:18). What we see here is Christ as the first of the firstfruits in the resurrection, with the remainder of the firstfruits to follow at his coming.

“So this particular Sunday was important to both Jews and Christians. To Jews, it was the day of the offering of the first-fruits, the first day of the seven weeks to the Feast of Firstfruits. To Christians, it was the morning of Jesus’ presentation to the Father and of his first appearances to his disciples after his resurrection from the dead. And it was the first day of the seven weeks to Pentecost. For the first Christians, the symbolism of the Jewish observance was seen to point directly to Christ. The connection was clear and strong from the start. The early church had not adopted a calendar different from that of the Jewish majority in the first century. The calendar was crucial, because it defined the time of observance of the feasts. There is not a word in the New Testament to suggest any change from the Jewish observance . . . so the comparison between liturgy and events was, to them, even more apparent.

“Now consider this carefully. This Sunday was celebrated early on as the day of Christ’s first appearances after his resurrection. It was an anniversary that appeared on the Jewish calendar on the first Sunday after Passover every year. As explained in the last chapter, every place in the New Testament where you see the expression “The first day of the week” it is referring, not to a Sunday, but to a singular day of the *year*. The first day of the seven Sabbaths or weeks leading up to Pentecost. It is an *annual*, not a weekly observance. It was, for want of a better term, ‘wave sheaf Sunday’.”

- Dart, R., “From Passover to Easter” (April 12, 2006).

The Celts Kept Quartodeciman Passover and Seventh-day Sabbath

The opponents of Easter were not entirely eradicated, however. Pope Vitalin learned that the Nisan 14 Passover was still observed among the Celts:

“Pope Vitalin supported efforts of the king of Northumbria, following the Synod of Whitby (664), to establish in England the Roman, as opposed to the Celtic, date for Easter (that is the Sunday after the Jewish Passover, rather than the Passover itself) and other Roman practices as well.” (McBrien, Richard P., *The Lives of the Popes: The Pontiffs from St. Peter to Benedict XVI*. Harper, San Francisco, 2005, p. 109.)

Massacre of Celtic Scholars at Bangor-is-y-Coed University in 613

The Celtic Church's resistance to the Roman date for Easter was a legacy of its Sabbath-keeping, for which it had long been a thorn in the Papacy's side. I conclude with two Web extracts that tell of a massacre of scholars at Bangor-is-y-Coed University near Wrexham. In Britain Sabbatarianism was well-entrenched among the Celts. The following lengthy extract is from the SundayLaw.net webpage (address at the end):

“In a footnote to Blair's translation of the historian, Bellesheim, we read:

‘We seem to see here an allusion to the custom, observed in the early monastic Church of Ireland, of keeping the day of rest on Saturday, or the Sabbath’ – *The History of the Catholic Church in Scotland*, Vol. I, p. 86.

Professor James C. Moffatt, D. D., Professor of Church History at Princeton, says: ‘It seems to have been customary in the Celtic churches of early times, in Ireland as well as Scotland, to keep Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labor. They obeyed the fourth commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week.’ – *The Church in Scotland*, p. 140.

“But the church of Rome could never allow the light of pure apostolic Christianity to shine anywhere, for that would reveal her own religion to be apostasy. Pope Gregory I, in 596, sent the imperious monk Augustine of Canterbury with 40 other monks, to Britain. Dr. A. Ebrard says of this ‘mission’:

“Gregory well knew that there existed in the British Isles, yea, in a part of the Roman dominion, a Christian church, and that his Roman messengers would come in contact with them. By sending these messengers, he was not

only intent upon the conversion of the heathen, but from the very beginning he was also bent upon bringing this Irish-Scotch church, which had hitherto been free from Rome, in subjection to the papal chair." –"Bonifacius", p. 16. Guetersloh, 1882. (Quoted in Andrews' History of the Sabbath, fourth edition, revised and enlarged, p. 532.) Through political influence, and with magnificent display, the Saxon king, Ethelbert of Kent, consented to receive the pope's missionaries, and "Augustine baptized ten thousand pagans in one day" by driving them in mass into the water. Then, relying on the support of the pope and the sword of the Saxons, Augustine summoned the leaders of the ancient Celtic church, and demanded of them, 'Acknowledge the authority of the Bishop of Rome. These are the first words of the Papacy to the ancient Christians of Britain.' They meekly replied: 'The only submission we can render him is that which we owe to every Christian.'" – History of the Reformation, by D' Aubigne, Book XVII, chap. 2.

"Then in 601, when the British bishops finally refused to have any more to do with the haughty messenger of the pope, Augustine proudly threatened them with secular punishment. He said:

"If you will not have peace from your brethren, you shall have war from your enemies; if you will not preach life to the Saxons, you shall receive death at their hands.' Edelfred, King of Northumbria, at the instigation of Augustine, forthwith poured 50,000 men into the Vale Royal of Chester, the territory of Prince of Powys, under whose auspices the conference had been held. Twelve hundred British priests of the University of Bangor having come out to view the battle, Edelfred directed his forces against them as they stood clothed in their white vestments and totally unarmed, watching the progress of the battle – they were massacred to a man. Advancing to the university itself, he put to death every priest and student therein, and destroyed by fire the halls, colleges, and churches of the university itself; thereby fulfilling, according to the words of the great Saxon authority called the Pious Bede, the prediction, as he terms it, of the blessed Augustine. The ashes of this noble monastery were smoking; its libraries, the collection of ages, having been wholly consumed." – "Early British History", by G. H. Whalley, p. 18. London: 1860. See also Six Old English Chronicles, pp. 275-6; by J. A. Giles (ed). London: 1906.

"D'Aubigne says of Augustine:

'A national tradition among the Welsh for many ages pointed to him as the instigator of this cowardly butchery. Thus did Rome loose the savage Pagan against the primitive church of Britain.' – History of the Reformation, by D'Aubigne, Book XVII, chap. 2.

"This was a master stroke of Rome, and a great blow to the native Christians. With their university, their colleges, their teaching priests, and their ancient manuscripts gone, the Britons were greatly handicapped in their struggle against the ceaseless aggression of Rome. Still, they continued the struggle for more than five hundred years longer, till finally, in the year 1069, Malcolm, the King of Scotland, married the Saxon princess, Margaret, who, being an ardent Catholic, began at once to Romanize the primitive church, holding long conferences with its leaders."

sundaylaw.net/books/other/edwardson/facts/fof13.htm

The second extract is from Keith Blayney, a local historian, who described the appalling massacre on his website:

“It has been claimed that it was under the protection of Brochwel Ysgythrog that the hierarchy of the British Church assembled in conference to give an answer to Augustin, an emissary from Rome (probably St Augustine of Canterbury meeting Welsh Bishops in 602 at Aust near Chepstow, or a later meeting in 604). Their reply was "We know of no obedience that he whom you call the Pope, or Bishop of Bishops, can command, claim or demand; the Bishop of Caerleon (St. David's) is alone, under God, our ruler to guide us right in the way of salvation." St Augustine died in 605, but in 613, under his influence, Aethelfrith, King of Northumbria, poured 50,000 men into Brochwel's territory in the Vale of Chester and 1,200 British Priests of the University of Bangor (Bangor Monachorum) at Bangor-is-y-Coed, wearing their white vestments and totally unarmed, who had come out to aid by their presence or prayers the unequal contest, were massacred to a man. Aethelfrith then put to death every priest and student in the University and burnt its halls, colleges, churches and libraries. Note that this Bangor-is-y-coed is not the same as the current Bangor in Caernarvonshire, but in Flintshire, on the river Dee, about 20 km from Chester. In former times there was a very extensive monastery at this place. In addition to the students who were learning the sciences, there were 2,400 religious persons who read the service in rotation, a hundred at a time, every hour in the twenty-four; so that the worship of God was continued by day and night throughout the year.

“It would appear that the Brochwel, who failed to protect the monks in 613/616, was in fact Brocmail, consul of the city of Legecester who, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, "having a less army to withstand [Ethelfrid], at last quit the city and fled, though not without having made a great slaughter of the enemy." The Venerable Bede, however, paints an apparently cowardly figure with his history, stating: "About twelve hundred of those that came to pray are said to have been killed, and only fifty to have escaped by flight. Brocmail turning his back with his men, at the first approach of the enemy, left those whom he ought to have defended, unarmed and exposed to the swords of the enemies." (Keith Blayney)

Such retribution for non-observance of the Catholic Easter Sunday, exacted for being a mark of disaffection to Christ! Historical coercion and violence, with a view to conformity to Sunday sacredness (keeping Constantine's Venerable Day of the Sun) which underlies it, turn unquestioning acceptance of Easter, that rejects inquiry into its roots in Sun-worship, into silent concurrence with Rome's undemocratic and uncivilized methods. Uniformity is the strongest bulwark of authority. Constantine understood this well, and his successor, Theodosius, deemed any divergence from it a crime against the Roman State. Thus history confirms that Caesar usurped Christ, exactly as Revelation 13:11 had prophesied.

Conclusion

The first Christians kept the Nisan 14 Passover. Easter Sunday was an imposition from Rome, the legacy of anti-Judaism, anti-Sabbatarianism and flirtation with paganism, the syncretism stemming from Constantine's preferential treatment.

Further Reading: Moral Transformation by A.J. Wallace & R.D. Rusk. (Bridgehead, 2011). I am indebted to Dr R. Thiel for his fine potted history, quoting from Bacchiocchi, Irenaeus, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Bede and Dart in "Did Early Christians Celebrate Easter?" on "COGwriter"'s webpage and to my readers for conscientious effort expended in studying this PDF. **Email: georgeprl@aol.com**