

Church of Christ

3361 West State Street, Fremont, OH 43420

Worship Services

Sunday Bible Study	10:00 am
Sunday Worship	10:45 am
Sunday Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 pm

Classes for all ages

Preachers: Ted Bowen and Sean Rizor

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

1. Learn the truth (Hear) (John 8:32; 17:17; Rom 10:14-18)
2. Believe in Christ (John 8:24; 20:31; Heb 11:6)
3. Repent of all sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:9,10)
4. Confess faith in Christ (Rom 10:10; Acts 17:30; Matt 16:16)
5. Be baptized into Christ for remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
6. Live faithfully (Revelation 2:10)

7 THINGS TO REMEMBER DURING THE LORD'S SUPPER!

- 1 LORD. "There is one Lord." (Ephesians 4:5)
- 2 THIEVES. "There were also 2 others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death."
(Luke 23:32)
- 3 CROSSES. (Luke 23:39-43; Ephesians 1:7)
- 4 PARTS of HIS GARMENTS. "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier, a part, and also the tunic." (John 19:23)
- 5 WOUNDS. His head was crowned with thorns. His back was scourged.
His side was cut open. His hands were pierced. His feet were pierced. (John 19-20)
- 6 HOURS of AGONY. Christ was crucified at the 3rd hour and died at the 9th hour.
(Mark 15:25-37)
- 7 SAYINGS of The CROSS. (Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:34, 43-46; John 19:26-30)

April 21, 2019

Order of Worship

AM

Song Leader : Melvin Monroe
Lord's Supper : Melvin Monroe
Speaker : Sean Rizor

PM

Song Leader : Chris Frantz
Speaker : Ted Bowen

Wednesday

Song Leader : Greg Monroe
Invitation : Sean Rizor

Woman's Bible Study

April 30th @ 5:30 pm

Overview of the Bible - Jude

Prayer List

Kaitlin Baker
Russell Pannell
Gen Stanley
Nora Wiseman
Charlotte Williams
Mary Feasel
Nick Hall
Zephan Monroe
Isaac Advey
Jean Adkins
Sean Rizor
Jean Hatfield

Unscriptural Holy Days: Palm Sunday and Easter

Hoyt H. Houchen Aurora, Colorado

"Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain" (Gal. 4:10, 11). The foregoing statement of Paul to the churches of Galatia refers to Mosaic regulations such as Sabbaths, new moons, festivals, annual atonements, sabbatical years, and jubilees. These observances had been abolished (Col. 2:14-17). "The bond written in ordinances" which was taken away, is obviously "the law of commandments contained in ordinances" referred to by Paul in Eph. 2:15. "God has completely obliterated the document with its legal demands."(1) Judaizers, however, had successfully enforced some observances of the old law upon the Galatians (4:10), although they had apparently failed to bind circumcision at the time of Paul's writing.

The return to these "weak and beggarly rudiments" (Gal. 4:9) upon the part of Paul's readers was a most discouraging factor, and it indicated that they had more zeal and interest in observing Judaistic regulations than in serving Christ. He feared that he had bestowed vain labor upon them. Lenski properly points out: "Paul's work would certainly be in vain if all that it would eventually accomplish would be to make the Gentile Christians exchange their old pagan elements and observances for the old abrogated Jewish elements and observances."(2)

A problem of man has ever been to place his unholy hands upon that which God has made sacred and holy. And, every case of man's refusal to submit to what God has enjoined (e.g. Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10:1,2), or, every instance where man relegates a command of God to the non-essential (e.g. baptism, Mk. 16:16) illustrates this truth. But this problem of man is also seen in reverse; that is, man has made holy that which God has never made holy. So, he either makes unholy that which God makes holy, or he makes holy that which God does not make holy. Both acts are sinful; man stands condemned in either or both cases. Those whom Paul addressed were guilty of the latter sin for they were making days, months, seasons, and years a matter of religious observance. The rites, ceremonies with respect to feasts, new moons, Sabbath days etc. were not to be observed under the law of Christ, but some were attempting to revive them. But, while many today may not attempt to revive such dead ordinances, they institute the religious observance of such days as Palm Sunday and Easter, the subjects of this article.

Palm Sunday

This is the name usually gives to the last Sunday of Lent (the Fast period observed before Easter by Catholics and many Protestants); it is named in commemoration of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem when the multitude took branches of palm trees (emblems of victory) and went forth to meet Him (Matt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Jn. 12:12-16). The date of its first observance is uncertain.(3) "In the Greek Church Palm Sunday was apparently observed as early as the 4th century. The writings of the Greek fathers contain allusions to the celebration of this day. In the Western Church there are no signs of the observance of it during the first six centuries."(4) So, although the time of its first observance is uncertain, it evidently originated with the Greek Church.

Various procedures are employed in religious services on Palm Sunday. A description of how some of the Catholic Churches of the West observe this special day is given in the following: "A procession is formed, the members of which issue from the church carrying branches in their hands, and singing a hymn, suited to the occasion, of very ancient origin. In the Greek Church the book of the Gospels is borne in front. In some of the Catholic countries of the West, a priest, or occasionally a lay member, was led at the head, mounted upon an ass, in commemoration of Christ's entry into the city-a usage which still exists in some parts of Spain and Spanish America. Before the party returns to the church the doors have been closed, and certain strophes of the hymn are sung alternately by the choir within the church and by the procession without, when, on the subdeacon's knocking at the door, it is again thrown open, and the procession re-enters. During the singing of the Passion in the solemn mass which ensues, the congregation hold the palm branches in their hands, and at the conclusion of the service they are carried to their respective homes, where they are preserved during the year."(5)

History asserts that the 4th century is as early as Palm Sunday was observed, so it is obvious and significant that this special day is not of New Testament origin. Its observance is therefore without scriptural authority.

Easter

The word "Easter" appears one time in the King James Version. Herod (Agrippa I), having killed James with the sword, imprisoned Peter, "intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people" (Acts 12:4). "Easter" is both inconsistent and erroneous upon the part of the translators of the King James or Authorized Version. "In the earlier English Versions Easter had been frequently used as the translation of pascha. At the last revision Passover was substituted in all passages but this."(6) Pascha appears 29 times in the Greek New Testament, 28 times it is translated "Passover," but this one time it is "Easter."

To Pascha, the Greek words in Acts 12:4 and translated "Easter" in the King James Version, have no connection whatsoever with the religious observance of what is known today as "Easter." Arndt and Gingrich define the Greek words To Pascha in Acts 12:4 as simply "the Passover (Festival)."(7) The following by W.E. Vine is significant: "Pascha, mistranslated "Easter" in Acts 12:4, A.V., denotes the Passover (R.V.). The phrase 'after the Passover' signifies after the whole festival was at an end. The term Easter is not of Christian origin. It is another form of Astarte, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven. The festival of Pascha held by Christians in post-apostolic times was a continuation of the Jewish feast, but was not instituted by Christ, nor was it

connected with Lent. From this Pasch the Pagan festival of Easter was quite distinct and was introduced into the apostate Western religion, as part of the attempt to adapt Pagan festivals to Christianity."(8) So, the word "Easter" in Acts 12:4 (AV) is an inconsistent and erroneous translation, and which regretfully has influenced many to falsely assume that the religious observance of Easter is of divine origin.

The observance of Easter as a religious holiday is of pagan origin. " 'Easter' " is a word of Saxon origin, and imports a goddess of the Saxons, or rather, of the East, Estera, in honor of whom sacrifices being annually about the Passover time of the year (spring), the name became attached by association of ideas to the Christian festival of the resurrection, which happened at the time of the Passover: hence we say Easter-day, Easter Sunday, but very improperly; as we by no means refer the festival then kept to the goddess of the ancient Saxons."(9) The idea of Easter eggs came to us from ancient Egypt and Persia. The eggs are a sign of new life, handed down by legend that they are laid by the Easter rabbit on Easter eve. Churches are often decorated with white lilies, a symbol of purity and light. The cross is used as a reminder of the religious significance of Easter.

The first celebration of Easter in church history is dated back to the 2nd century. By the 8th century, Anglo-Saxons had adopted the name "Easter" to designate the celebration of Christ's resurrection. "While there is reason to suppose that Easter had been honored from early in Christian history, the first definite record of its celebration is in connection with a visit of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, to Anicetus, bishop of Rome, in 154 or 155."(10) A belief that Easter was observed by the New Testament Church would be nothing short of mere supposition. "The 'first day of the week,' the Lord's Day, was the regular, weekly commemoration of our Lord's resurrection. It is more than doubtful if there was an annual commemoration ('Easter') in Apostolic times."(11)

Bitter controversies arose after the 2nd century as to when Easter was to be celebrated. Jewish converts in particular insisted that it be on the 14th of their month Nisan, regardless of what day of the week it would occur. The Romans and some parts of the East contended that it was always to be on Sunday. So, the question was whether the time for the celebration would always be on Sunday or the 14th of Nisan, whichever day of the week it would happen to be. But the problem became more complicated when a dispute arose in about 167 A.D. as to whether the celebration was to be on the 14th or the 15th of Nisan, some contending that the death of Christ took place on the 14th while others maintained that it was on the 15th.(12) The long dispute was one of the principal reasons for the convening of the council of Nicea in 325 A.D. A uniform day was decided upon by the council-that Easter should be observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox.(13) Easter would fall in future years on any Sunday from March 22nd to April 25th. But the decision of the council did not settle all differences. Although the Roman Catholic Church and many Protestant denominations observe the date decreed by the council of Nicea, the Eastern branch of the Catholic Church has another date for the observance of Easter.

In no uncertain terms the apostle Paul denounced all unauthorized religious days and seasons such as Easter, Lent, Good Friday, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, and Christmas. He strongly wrote, "Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain" (Gal. 4:10, 11).

Christians observe every first day of the week, the Lord's day, by assembling for worship and engaging in those acts which are authorized by the Lord. This day is a memorial of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the Lord's Supper is a memorial of His suffering and death for our sins.

There is not one scintilla of divine authority for such unscriptural holy days as Palm Sunday and Easter. Thousands of people throughout the world observe these days and seasons with zeal, promptness, and precision, while at the same time, they reject God's commands to obey the gospel by being baptized for the remission of their sins and living daily the kind of lives in harmony with the will of Jesus, the Son of God. They observe unauthorized days, but reject divine commands. Remember, it is sinful to make holy that which God did not make holy, and it is sinful to make unholy that which God made holy. How much vain labor of divine teaching is bestowed upon those who pursue either or both of these ways! They are the ways which seem right to men, but they are the ways of death (Prov. 16:25). May we never be guilty of making any day or season holy which God has not made holy, and may we be equally sure that we never relegate any of God's commands to the realm of the unholy.

1. William Hendricksen, *New Testament Commentary, Colossians* (Grand Rapids: 1964), p. 121.
2. R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation Of St. Paul's Epistle To The Galatians* (Minneapolis: 1961), p. 215.
3. McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia Of Biblical, Theological, And Ecclesiastical Literature* (Grand Rapids: 1970), Vol. 7, p. 599.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 599.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 599.
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 12.
7. Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament* (Chicago: 1957), p. 639.
8. W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words* (New Jersey: Revell, 1959), Vol. 2, pp. 14-15.
9. McClintock and Strong, *Op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 12.
10. Williston Walker, *A History Of The Christian Church* (New York: 1950), p. 64.
11. James Hastings, *Dictionary Of The Apostolic Church* (Grand Rapids: 1973), Vol. 2, p. 133.
12. Walker, *Op. cit.*, p. 64.
13. Isaac Boyle, *A Historical View Of The Council Of Nicea* (New York: 1856), p. 23.

A Search For "Easter Sunday"

By Larry Ray Hafley

"Easter Sunday" I sought to find;
Through the Bible I searched a lot,
And though I'm not blind,
Try as I did, I could not.

I turned many Bible pages
Hunting for the "Easter Holiday,"
But all I found were sin's wages
For adding to God's holy way.

I am not trying to be "cute,"
Nor to be simply funny, But with error to refute,
I may as well've looked for the Easter Bunny.

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April 8, 1996