

WHERE Did God Command YOU to Observe *Easter*?

Christ did not rise on Easter Sunday! Here's an article explaining what Christ did command His church to observe

By Herbert W. Armstrong

HAVE you ever stopped to consider *why* you believe the things you believe?

Where did you learn the custom of observing Easter?

"I learned it from childhood," you reply. Of course you learned it from childhood. But where did the custom *really* originate?

You have *supposed* it was part of the true Christian religion to observe Easter, "Good Friday," Lent and "Holy Week"; to have colored Easter eggs, to dress up and go to Church Easter Sunday. Yes, you have *supposed* the Bible taught these customs.

But *where* did God ever command you to keep any of them?

The Meaning of Easter

From a child you have been led to believe that "Easter" signified the resurrection of Christ. For 1600 years the western world has been taught that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday morning. These are merely some of the *fables* that the apostle Paul never taught. If you really want to know *when* Jesus *did* rise from the dead, write immediately for the astonishing proof in our free booklet, "The Resurrection."

The name "Easter" is merely a slightly changed English spelling of the name of the ancient Assyrian goddess *Ishtar*. As Hislop says in *The Two Babylons*, Easter "bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than *Astarte*, one of the titles of Beltis, the 'queen of heaven,' whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country."

Easter, according to Webster's dictionary, comes "from the name of the old Teuton goddess of spring." You probably never were taught that, were you?

But if Easter came from a pagan origin, where did we get Lent?

Not from the true church! For Cassianus, who wrote in the fifth century, says, "It *ought* to be known that the observance of the forty days (Lent) had no existence, so long as the perfection of that primitive Church remained inviolate."

Jesus never observed Lent, nor did the apostles.

"The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonish 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." (From Hislop's *The Two Babylons*, pp. 104, 105.)

Lent came from the ancient heathen sun-worship, not from Jesus Christ. The same is true of the use of hot cross buns, of dyed eggs and the Easter *sunrise* services. You will want to learn many more facts about these pagan customs that can't be included in this short article.

Write for the free booklet, "Easter is Pagan," which explains these and many more facts you surely need to know.

Apostles Observed Passover

Instead of observing the customs of the churches of our day, the original, *inspired* church, under the guidance of the Apostles observed the Passover as Jesus commanded on the eve before his death. Even the writers of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, realized that when writing their article, "Easter":

"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 the observance of the Jewish (that is, God's) festivals, though in a new spirit, *as commemorations of events* which those festivals had foreshadowed."

Yes, the true, original church kept the Passover annually when God commanded.

It was years later, after the death of the Apostles, after many Gentiles had made a profession of faith, that we find the observance of Easter beginning. The Gentiles began observing the day on Sunday, rather than on the eve of the 14th day of God's first month, when Jesus always kept the passover, setting us an example. A controversy then arose between these Gentiles, who were bringing pagan customs into the Western or Catholic churches, and those who still remained faithful to the instructions of Jesus and the Apostles.

Here is a brief sketch showing how the "Easter" that you have been taught from childhood crept into the churches:

"Polycarp, the disciple of John the Evangelist, and bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome in 159 to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject, and urged the tradition *which he had received from the apostle* of observing the 14th day. . . . A final settlement of the dispute was one among the other reasons which led Constantine to summon the council of Nicaea in 325. . . . The decision of the council was unanimous that Easter was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world, and that 'none hereafter should follow the blindness of the Jews.'" (From the 11th edition, article "Easter," Ency. Brit.)

That, in plain language, is how the Catholic Church decreed that none should follow the ways of Christ—of the TRUE Christian Church! That's where the universal custom of observing Easter in the churches began.

It Was Prophesied

This astonishing account of the injection of Easter into the church, which will be much more thoroughly documented in our free booklet, "Easter is Pagan," was prophesied by Jesus and the Apostles. They did not tell of a widespread, popular growth of the true New Testament Church, but of A FALLING AWAY FROM THE TRUTH on the part of the great majority. Prophesying of this universal FALLING AWAY from the faith Jesus delivered for you and me to keep, Paul wrote the Thessalonians, "the *mystery of iniquity* doth already work," only some 30 years after the Church began! He referred to the very "Chaldean Mysteries," of which Easter and Christmas were the two chief festivals!

In another place, Paul wrote Timothy, that "*many* shall follow their pernicious ways." So today, it's the *many*, not the *few*, who are going the wrong way. It is the *many* who are keeping Easter, which God never once commanded you; but it is the *few* who are observing the ordinance Christ commanded.

Remember, the broad way leads to destruction. Let's quit these pagan cus-

toms and return to the faith once delivered.

What God Did Command

The "Lord's Supper," or the Passover, as the ordinance should properly be called, has fallen into the mire of erroneous tradition. On this, as on every practice, Jude exhorts "that ye should contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

Now that we know the *pagan* origin of the Easter celebration, let's clear away the web of error that covers the truth about keeping the passover, the memorial of Christ's death.

Let's examine the way Jesus observed this ordinance, because we can't be wrong if we follow His example. In Luke 22:14-20, we read, "And when *the hour was come*, Jesus sat down. . . . And He took bread, and gave thanks, and break it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: *this do in remembrance* of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Notice, it was "when the hour was come," that Jesus introduced the unleavened bread and the wine. There was a DEFINITE TIME—a definite hour—when He held this ordinance *as an example for us*.

Notice, too, He commanded them to observe it—"THIS DO!" And why? "In remembrance of me," said Jesus. He instituted this New Testament way of keeping the Passover, on that tragic night, the very eve of His death.

In Matthew's account, the Bible shows that this ordinance was at the very time of the passover, "as they were eating." (Matt. 26:2,26) Jesus knew that His time had come. He was our passover, sacrificed for us. (I Cor. 5:7)

The passover had always been held on the eve of the 14th of God's first month. It was the night of the final and last passover supper that Jesus introduced these NEW TESTAMENT emblems—the unleavened bread and the wine—in place of the lamb that was always slain annually.

For a full explanation of the *original* Passover as God instituted it, write immediately, by air mail, so you will learn how to keep the *New Testament* form of this ordinance yet this spring. Remember Jesus commanded: "this do in remembrance of me." Why? Because the Passover was commanded "FOREVER."

The Passover was to be observed *annually*, along with the days of unleavened bread. "Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season year to year." (Ex. 13:10) Jesus set us an example (I Peter 2:21), observing this ordinance at the same time once a year.

(Luke 2:42) Suppose the Israelites in Egypt had observed this ordinance at some other time than that set by God? They would not have been saved when the death angel passed by that night! God does things ON TIME. He has given us an exact time for this ordinance. Jesus instituted the New Testament symbols "when the hour was come."

The Ordinance of Humility

In giving us their account, Matthew, Mark and Luke describe the taking of unleavened bread and wine. But John relates another part of this ordinance.

In the 13th chapter of John we notice that after the Passover supper was ended (verse 2), Jesus took a towel (verse 4) and began to wash His disciples' feet (verse 5).

"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, THAT YE SHOULD DO AS I HAVE DONE TO YOU." (John 13:12-15)

If any of you are wondering if this ordinance of humility is a *command* to you, then turn to Matthew 28:19,20. Here Jesus said to these same disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them . . . *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded YOU*." So they were to teach us to observe ALL things WHATSOEVER Jesus commanded them!

Kept Once a Year in the Apostolic Church

In I Cor. 5:7,8, Paul tells the Corinthians: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven . . . but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." And in the 11th chapter he gives the directions regarding this ordinance.

Some misunderstand verse 26 which says: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup," by interpreting it "take it as often as you wish." *But it does not say that!*

It says "as often" as you observe it, "ye do show the LORD'S DEATH till He come." Even Jesus commanded, "this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (verse 25) We do it in remembrance of THE LORD'S DEATH—a memorial of His death. As you know, *memorials* are celebrated annually, once a year, on the ANNIVERSARY of the events commemorated. This nation sets aside every July 4th as a special day of commemoration. So we observe the memorial of Christ's death *annually*. And just as often as each year comes around we are

to "show the Lord's death till He come," by keeping this memorial.

Christ instituted this ordinance on the EVE OF HIS DEATH. It was the 14th of Abib, by God's sacred calendar, in the very beginning of the day. God starts days at sunset, not midnight. So, later that same day, after Jesus had gone out to Gethsemane, Judas Iscariot led the crowd to seize Jesus. Then He was crucified later that same day, in the daylight part of this same 14th of the month Abib.

By following the example of Jesus in observing this sacred ordinance at the same time He did—the very same time the passover was forever commanded to be observed—we continue to remember His death, annually, on the eve of the crucifixion.

Some always question the meaning of Paul in verses 27-29, in I Corinthians 11. The apostle is not speaking about a Christian being worthy or unworthy to take it. It is speaking of the *manner* in which it is done. We take it unworthily if we take it wrongly, in the wrong manner. Once we learn the truth about its observance, and yet take it at any other time than what God says, then we take it unworthily. We take it unworthily if we do not accept the body and blood of Christ. So let's not take this most sacred ordinance to our condemnation, but take it *worthily* instead!

"Easter" a Mistranslation

Following the example of Jesus and the apostles, the early Church observed the Passover, and the days of unleavened bread which immediately followed. Notice Acts 12:3. The Holy Spirit of God inspired these words: "Then *were* the days of unleavened bread." But in the next verse we read of "Easter."

We have just seen that "Easter" was injected into the church years after the time of Christ. This word "Easter" is a MISTRANSLATION. The original Greek word is "pasha" meaning PASSOVER. In every other place, exactly the same word is used in the original and always rendered PASSOVER. Many other translations faithfully render this verse in Acts as "intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people." So this verse, instead of mentioning Easter, really proves that the church, ten years after the death of Christ, was still observing Passover.

What Does "Break Bread" Mean?

There are some denominations that read Acts 20:7 as a proof that the "Lord's Supper" should be taken each Sunday morning. First notice that this was after the days of unleavened bread (verse 6). Paul was preaching a farewell meeting, not on Sunday morning,

Please continue on page 10

as we are commanded, at the scriptural time, after sunset, the 14th of Abib according to the sacred calendar. If you haven't as yet written where you can observe this ordinance as a memorial of Christ's death with brethren of like faith, write us immediately.

Why Observe Easter?

Continued from page 6

but on Saturday night. It was after midnight (verse 7), that they broke bread because they were hungry. When they "had broken bread, *and* EATEN, and talked a long while, even *till* break of day," Paul departed.

So this was just an ordinary meal! If you would like this verse explained in much greater detail be sure to write for the booklet, "The Sabbath of the New Testament," which is absolutely free.

The same expression "break bread" is found in Acts 27:34,35. "Wherefore, I pray you, take some MEAT . . . *he took bread . . . and when he had broken it, HE BEGAN TO EAT.*" Again in Acts 2:46: "and *breaking bread* from house to house, did EAT THEIR MEAT with gladness." This could not possibly have been the "Lord's Supper" or passover, because Paul says that if we take it to satisfy our hunger, we take it to our condemnation. (I Cor. 11:34) In that day, everyone "broke bread" at ordinary meals, because they did not have the kind of bread that we slice. Jesus broke bread because it was at the passover supper, while "*at meat,*" eating a meal.

We need to return to the faith Jesus delivered to us. Let us humbly and obediently observe this sacred ordinance