

At this season of the year much emphasis is being placed upon “Easter.” Churches are advertising their special “Easter Services;” on this day many preachers will preach their special “Easter sermon,” and multitudes of otherwise indifferent people become momentarily “religious” on “Easter Sunday.”

What kind of special services will be conducted by the Seffner church of Christ in honor of “Easter Sunday?” Answer: There won’t be an “Easter service” at this congregation. What! **No** Easter Services?? **Why?** Answer: the Bible is our only guide in spiritual matters, and there is not a shred of biblical evidence which authorizes us to observe in a special way “Easter Sunday!”

In the King James Version of the Bible (the only version to my knowledge which even *uses* the word!), “*Easter*” appears a total of one time, and that is a mistranslation (cf. Acts 12:4)! “*Easter*,” in this verse is translated from PASCHA, which elsewhere (and in other versions) is translated “*Passover*,” denoting the Jewish feast instituted by God through Moses in remembrance of the day when the Israelites “*came out of the land of Egypt*” (Deut. 16:1-3). Albert Barnes, in his commentary on Acts, said of this verse: “There was never a more absurd or unhappy translation than this” (p. 190). Furthermore, from the text, we note that Herod (who had beheaded James and had imprisoned Peter) intended “*after Easter to bring him (Peter, bw) forth to the people*” (KJV). He was not waiting until “*after Easter*” (i.e. the **Passover**) in order to please the Christians! He was seeking to please the **Jews**, who had rejected Jesus Christ (John 1:11), and who were yet clinging to the Law of Moses, even though that law had been fulfilled (Matt. 5:17-18), blotted out, and nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14).

Hence, from whence came “*Easter*?” “*Easter*” is derived from Eostra, a Teutonic goddess of Spring..” “The church (i.e., the apostate church, bw) endeavored to give Christian significance to such of the pagan rites as could not be rooted out” (**American Peoples Encyclopedia**, Vol. 7, p. 486). Further references could be cited to prove that the observance of “Easter” had its origin in Paganism, Judaism, and Catholicism, but not in the Bible. Hence, believing that the Bible is our only creed book in matters religious, the Seffner church of Christ” does not observe “Easter” as a special religious holy day.

Lest any should say we do not remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I hasten to add that such is not the case! Our Lord was raised from the tomb on the “**first day of the week**” (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1-5). The church of our Lord came into existence on “*the day of Pentecost*” (Acts 2:1-4,41-47), called “*the feast of weeks*” in the Old Testament (Deut. 16:9-10), and which always fell upon the **first day** of the week (cf. Lev. 23:15-16). From its very beginning, the New Testament church “*continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*” (Acts 2:42). The “*breaking of bread*” refers to the partaking of “*the Lord’s Supper*” (I Cor. 11:20), wherein fellow saints eat of the unleavened bread and drink of the fruit of the vine which are symbolic of the “*body and blood of the Lord*” (I Cor. 11:27; Matt. 26:26-29). In keeping with our Lord’s instructions, they do this “*in remembrance of*” Jesus Christ (Luke 22:19), and in the observance thereof they “*proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes*” (I Cor. 11:26). Acts 20:7 provides us with an approved apostolic example of early Christians coming together upon “*the first day of the week...to break bread*” (i.e., to

partake of the “*Lord’s Supper*”). Hence, **every** first day of the week (the day of Christ’s resurrection), in keeping with the pattern set forth in the Scriptures, the Seffner church of Christ assembles together to “*break bread*” or to partake of the Lord’s Supper. By so doing, we reverently look backward to our Lord’s death and look forward to His glorious return. This is a **weekly** (every Sunday) occurrence; it is not an annual event!

The Bible says the same thing about Lent, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and Easter as it says about Ground Hog Day or the Fourth of July. It says a sum total of **nothing** about any of the days just mentioned. Therefore, being governed by the New Testament and being divinely prohibited from adding to or taking from what God has revealed (Rev. 22:18-19), we do not religiously celebrate “Easter.” If the Lord had wanted us to celebrate “Easter,” He would have at least left us with some instruction on **how** to do it, and He would have given us more information as to how to determine the precise **time** period when it ought to take place. You see, Easter does not always come on the same day of the year! It can come as early as March 22 or as late as April 25 (in other words, it can vary by over a month)! The method of determining **when** to celebrate “Easter” was set by the first Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. (over 200 years **after** the complete revelation from God was given). The **uninspired** “bishops” who came together in Nicea decided that “Easter” would fall on the first Sunday after the first full moon “on or after March 21” (**The World Book Encyclopedia**, volume E, page 25).

The religious observance of man-made, God-unauthorized “*holy days*” is condemned in the Scriptures (Gal. 4:10-11). Since we shall in the last day be judged by the word of God (John 12:48), it behooves us to be guided by the same today. We claim to “*speak as the oracles of God*,” I Peter 4:11, and we seek to be “*always ready to give a defense to everyone who asks... a reason for the hope*” that is in us, and we strive to do so “*with meekness and fear*” (I Peter 3:15). Hence, we solicit your questions, we welcome your presence, and we stand ready to give “book, chapter, and verse” for all that we believe, teach, and practice.

\*\*\* —B. Witherington