

WHY IS EASTER IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE?

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THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A BIBLE

- Today's sermon is "unusual" in that it seeks to investigate the use of one word in one translation of the Bible.
- Almost everyone in the evangelical world would view this as a ridiculous exercise, but this view stems from the fact that evangelicalism has become comfortable with a "close enough" view of knowing what the Bible says.
- Do you-
 - Believe that the Bible is the Word of God?
 - Believe that God spoke in words and that His Word (the Bible) is made up of His *words*?
 - Believe that one word is as adequate as another word?
- If you answered YES, YES, and NO, then this sermon matters.
- My belief: that Christians need to take more scrutiny of the text of their English translations to make sure they actually have a Bible.

AN ILLUSTRATION: ROMANS 14:23

- One word in five "translations."
 - KJB – *He that doubteth is damned*
 - NASB – *He that doubts is condemned*
 - TEV – *If they have doubts...God condemns them*
 - NCV – those who act *without being sure it is right are wrong*
 - The Message – *you are out of line*
- Questions:
 - Do all of those mean the same thing?
 - Are all of those correct?
 - Which one is the Bible?

SHOULD "EASTER" BE IN ACTS 12:4?

FIRST LINE OF THINKING: KJB IS WRONG AND USED AN ANACHRONISM

- The easiest (and least intellectual) route to take is that the KJV made an anachronistic error of using a modern word (Easter) to refer to Passover.
- Dr. James R. White in *The King James Only Controversy* "One might include the KJV's unusual rendering of Acts 12:4 as more of a mistranslation than an ambiguous rendering, and it would be hard to argue against that assertion, given the facts.... Luke's reference to the days of "unleavened bread" makes it clear that he is referring to the Jewish holiday season, not to some pagan festival that

did not become known by the specific term "Easter" for some time to come." (pg. 233).

- This view asserts that "Easter" *never meant* "Passover" in the English language and to use *Easter* for *Passover* is simply error.

SECOND LINE OF THINKING: KJB IS RIGHT AND WAS TALKING ABOUT THE PAGAN HOLIDAY

- King James Only advocates often say that the KJB is the *only* right translation and that the reference is to a pagan holiday called Easter and NOT to Passover.
- The assumption: the word *Easter* comes from the ancient *Ishtar*, an ancient pagan feast of the goddess *Astarte*.
- Dr. Samuel C. Gipp, *The Answer Book*. "If he [Herod] was referring to the passover, the translation of "pascha" as "Easter" is incorrect. If he was indeed referring to the pagan holyday (holiday) Easter, then the King James Bible (1611) must truly be the very word and words of God for it is the only Bible in print today which has the correct reading." (pgs. 3-4)
- The reasoning: if **the days of unleavened bread** (v. 3) had already begun, then *Passover* was past, therefore it must be a reference to the April feast of *Ishtar*.
- Note that both the first and second line of thinking adopt the "Easter is pagan" view.

THIRD LINE OF THINKING: KJB IS RIGHT AND IS TALKING ABOUT PASSOVER, USING AN APPROPRIATE ENGLISH WORD

- The word Easter is *not* from *Ishtar* but from the Germanic word for "east" which is *Ost*. The connection with the rising sun (on Easter morning) is strong.
- The translators of the KJV did not at all consider the word *Easter* to have pagan connotations. They had a page called, "To Find Easter Forever."
- To say that *pascha* was never translated Easter in the English language is erroneous.
- William Tyndale's translation (1526) used the then-current form of Easter all 26 times the word *pascha* was found in the original.
- Martin Luther's German translation (1522) use *oestern* all 26 times.
- The word *Passover* was coined by Tyndale in 1530 in his translation of the Pentateuch.
- Miles Coverdale (1535) used *Passover* and *Easter* interchangeably, as did the Geneva Bible (1560) and the Bishop's Bible (1568).
- The KJV translators were given 15 rules, and the first was "The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit."
- Conclusion: the KJV used the word Easter because in 1611 the word Easter was the *older term* for Passover, which had only been coined in 1530.