ACTS 12:4 DON’T PASSOVER EASTER:
WHY EVERYTHING YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW IS WRONG

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March 26—April 9, 2017
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Grand Rapids, MI
Introduction

- This morning we are going to take a break from our study of preservation to look at something that I have been wanting to teach on for at least the past two years. Our studies of preservation over the past seven months (since September 2016) have made known that I have been rethinking some of the common messaging used to defend the King James position.

- The question of whether or not “Easter” is an accurate translation of the Greek word pascha in Acts 12:4 in the King James Bible (KJB) is, in many ways, a microcosm of the larger discussion we have been engaged in over the past seven months. Particularly as it relates to the subject of verbatim identicality.

- Critics of the King James in general and King James Onlyism specifically have sought to use Acts 12:4 as a case in point to prove that the KJB is not inerrant. It is alleged that “Easter” is a mistranslation of the Greek word pascha and, therefore, constitutes an error in the KJB.

- Defenders of the inerrancy of the KJB have sought to answer these critics and have put forth arguments for why “Easter” is not a mistake in Acts 12:4.

- The goal of these studies over the next couple weeks will be to look at both sides of this controversy with the goal of reaching a reasonable and factual conclusion. In order to accomplish this task, we will consider the following points:

  - Factual Considerations: Why the Controversy?
  - King James Only Defense of “Easter” in Acts 12:4
  - Is “Easter” Exclusively Pagan?
  - “Easter” in the English Bible: A Brief Look at the History of Translation
  - Scriptural Exposition of Acts 12:4

- In the end, it will be demonstrated that “Easter” in Acts 12:4 means “Passover” (the Jewish feast day) and is not a reference to a spring pagan festival or a Christian holiday.

Factual Considerations: Why the Controversy?

- The Greek word pascha occurs 29 times in 27 verses in the Textus Receptus (TR), the Greek text supporting the KJB.

- Of these 29 occurrences of pascha in the New Testament, the King James translators rendered it as “Passover” 28 times.

- Only in Acts 12:4 did the King James translators render the Greek word as “Easter” in English.
• Critics of the King James Only (KJO) position routinely point to Acts 12:4 to demonstrate that the KJB is not inerrant and contains mistakes. This critical theorizing is fundamentally based upon the following two points:

  o The Greek word *pascha* ALWAYS equals “Passover” in English. *Pascha* has NEVER associated with “Easter” in English. This notion is demonstrated by pointing out that Modern Versions (MV) translate *pascha* as “Passover” every time it occurs in the text, including Acts 12:4.

  o The perceived meaning of the word “Easter”: Parties on both sides of the textual debate view “Easter” as being pagan in origin and etymology. This is partly why MV advocates view “Easter” as a mistaken translation of *pascha*. Meanwhile, King James Only apologists admit that “Easter” is pagan and defend it accordingly in Acts 12:4 as an appropriate rendering of *pascha* in that context.

• The comments of Dr. James R. White in *The King James Only Controversy* regarding the use of “Easter” in Acts 12:4 by the King James translators are emblematic of the position taken by those who are critical of the KJB.

  o “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.

    The word that the KJV translates as “Easter” appears twenty-nine times in the New Testament. In each of the other twenty-eight instances the KJV translates the phrase as “the Passover.” For example, John 19:14, “And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto Jews, Behold your King!” And there is no reason for confusion as to what Luke is referring to here, for the preceding verse said, “Then were the days of unleavened bread.” The days of unleavened bread, of course were connected with the Passover celebration. Yet in this one place the AV contains the anachronistic [belonging to a period other than the one portrayed] term “Easter.” 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.” (White, 233)

• In summation, MV advocates such as James White view the use of “Easter” in Acts 12:4 as a translational mistake. Twice White refers to “Easter” as an anachronistic term. Therefore, the Greek word *pascha* NEVER meant “Easter” in English, according to White. Rather, it ALWAYS meant Passover. Note carefully, however, that White does not dispute the KJO assertion that “Easter” is a reference to a pagan holiday. Rather, he refutes the notion that Luke is speaking about a pagan holiday in Acts 12:4. This verse is routinely cited as a proof text against the notion of “perfect preservation” as it has been defined by most King James advocates i.e., “verbatim identicality.”

**King James Only Defense of “Easter” in Acts 12:4**

• Believers in the inerrancy of the King James have sought to defend the KJB’s rendering of *pascha* in Acts 12:4 in an effort to rescue their enterprise for critical scrutiny. The classic example of a KJO defense of “Easter” in Acts 12:4 can be found in Dr. Samuel C. Gipp’s 1989 publication *The Answer Book*. As the title suggests, *The Answer Book* is written in a question and answer format in which Dr. Gipp seeks to
answer some of the frequently asked questions regarding KJOism. The question and answer regarding “Easter” comprise the book’s second entry.

- QUESTION: Isn’t "Easter" in Acts 12:4 a mistranslation of the word "pascha" and should it be translated as "passover"?

  ANSWER: No, "pascha" is properly translated "Easter" in Acts 12:4 as the following explanation will show. (Gipp, 3)

- Consider the following summation of Dr. Gipp’s EXPLANATION for why “Easter” in Acts 12:4 is not a mistranslation on the part of the King James translators along with supporting quotations from The Answer Book.

  - “Easter” is an ancient pagan holiday connected with the worship of the goddesses Astarte and Ishtar.
    - “Coming to the word "Easter" in God's Authorized Bible, they seize upon it imagining that they have found proof that the Bible is not perfect. Fortunately for lovers of the word of God, they are wrong. Easter, as we know it, comes from the ancient pagan festival of Astarte. Also known as Ishtar (pronounced "Easter"). This festival has always been held late in the month of April. It was, in its original form, a celebration of the earth "regenerating" itself after the winter season. The festival involved a celebration of reproduction. For this reason the common symbols of Easter festivities were the rabbit (the same symbol as "Playboy" magazine), and the egg. Both are known for their reproductive abilities. At the center of attention was Astarte, the female deity. She is known in the Bible as the "queen of heaven" (Jer. 7:18; 44:17-25). She is the mother of Tammuz (Ezekiel 8:14) who was also her husband! These perverted rituals would take place at sunrise on Easter morning (Ez. 8:13-16). From the references in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we can see that the true Easter has never had any association with Jesus Christ.

  Problem: Even though the Jewish passover was held in mid-April (the fourteenth) and the pagan festival Easter was held later the same month, how do we know that Herod was referring to Easter in Acts 12:4 and not the Jewish passover? If he 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.” (Gipp, 3-4)

  - Passover occurred on the 14th of the month—no event after the 14th is EVER referred to as Passover (Exodus 12:13-18; Numbers 28:16-18; Deuteronomy 16:1-8).
    - “On the 14th of April the lamb was killed. This is the passover. No event following the 14th is ever referred to as the passover.” (Gipp, 7)

  - The Days of Unleavened Bread began on the 15th of the month the day after Passover. The Days of Unleavened Bread are ALWAYS after Passover and are NEVER referred to as Passover.
“Whenever the passover was kept, it always preceded the feast of unleavened bread. . .

On the morning of the 15th begins the days of unleavened bread, also known as the feast of unleavened bread.

It must also be noted that whenever the passover is mentioned in the New Testament, the reference is always to the meal, to be eaten on the night of April 14th not the entire week. The days of unleavened bread are NEVER referred to as the Passover. (It must be remembered that the angel of the Lord passed over Egypt on one night, not seven nights in a row.” (Gipp, 6-7)

- Peter was arrested during the Days of Unleavened Bread which is AFTER Passover.
  - “Verse 3 shows that Peter was arrested during the days of unleavened bread (April 15-21). The Bible says: "Then were the days of unleavened bread." The passover (April 14th) had already come and gone.” (Gipp, 7)

- Therefore, Herod could not possibly have been referring to Passover in Acts 12:4. The next Passover was a year away.
  - “The next Passover was a year away!” (Gipp, 7)

- Herod was a pagan Roman who worshiped the queen of heaven and had no reason to keep the Jewish Passover.
  - “But the pagan holiday of Easter was just a few days away. Remember! Herod was a pagan Roman who worshipped the "queen of heaven". He was NOT a Jew. He had no reason to keep the Jewish passover.” (Gipp, 7-8)

- Herod did not kill Peter during the Days of Unleavened Bread because he wanted to wait until later in the month after the Passing of his own holiday i.e., Easter.
  - “It is elementary to see that Herod, in Acts 12, had arrested Peter during the days of unleavened bread, after the passover. The days of unleavened bread would end on the 21st of April. Shortly after that would come Herod's celebration of pagan Easter. Herod had not killed Peter during the days of unleavened bread simply because he wanted to wait until Easter. Since it is plain that both the Jews (Matt. 26:17-47) and the Romans (Matt. 14:6-11) would kill during a religious celebration, Herod's opinion seemed that he was not going to let the Jews "have all the fun ". He would wait until his own pagan festival and see to it that Peter died in the excitement.” (Gipp, 8)

- God’s providence led the King James translators to choose “Easter” in Acts 12:4 given the details of the context.
Thus we see that it was God's providence which had the Spirit-filled translators of our Bible (King James) to CORRECTLY translate "pascha" as "Easter". It most certainly did not refer to the Jewish passover. In fact, to change it to "passover" would confuse the reader and make the truth of the situation unclear." (Gipp, 8)

- "Easter" is not a mistranslation or an error in the KJB because “the Spirit-filled translators” knew that Luke was referring to the pagan festival in this context and rendered pascha accordingly.

- The argument presented above by Dr. Gipp in defense of the KJB’s use of “Easter” in Acts 12:4 is by no means unique to his writings. The same or very similar arguments are found in a host of pro-King James literature. The following list is a mere sampling of volumes articulating similar arguments.
  - Thomas Holland—*Crowned With Glory* see pages 183-186.
  - Floyd Nolan Jones—*Which Version is the Bible?* see pages 76-77.
  - D.A. Waite—*Defending the King James Bible* see pages 240-241.
  - D.A. Waite—*King James Bible Defined* see page 1,451.

  - “Ishtar—ancient pagan festival. Easter was originally the name of a pagan spring festival that occurred at about the same time as the Passover.”

- In summation, the prevailing defense of “Easter” in Acts 12:4 in KJO literature is based upon the following assumptions: 1) the Jewish Passover had already passed; 2) that “Easter” is referring to a pagan celebration that Herod, a pagan king, would have been observing.

- Mark well that on this point King James advocates agree with James R. White that “Easter” is pagan in origin, meaning, and application. White views this as justification for his position that “Easter” is a mistranslation of the Greek word pascha whereas KJOists defend “Easter” because they believe that the context points to a pagan festival that Herod was observing.

- For the record, and in the interest of full transparency, prior to 2007, while still the Pastor of West Side Grace Church in Muskegon Heights, MI; I brought an Easter message teaching the view outlined by Dr. Gipp above. In short, I accepted his teaching on the matter in an uncritical manner.

**Is “Easter” Exclusively Pagan?**

- An article on the KJV Today’s website titled “Easter” or “Passover” in Acts 12:4? first caused me the question the explanation provided by Dr. Gipp in the previous section. This article provides a framework for the discussion outlined in this section. While The KJV Today article does a fair job of highlighting the etymological history of the English word “Easter,” it is ultimately incomplete. The article fails to discuss the historic connection in the English language between “Easter” and the Jewish feast commonly known as “Passover.” Consequently, I do not agree with the article’s overall conclusion that “Easter” in Acts 12:4 is referring to a Christian festival.
In this section, we will consider the following sub-points regarding etymology of the English word “Easter.”

- The Influence of Alexander Hislop.
- The Etymology of “Easter”
- The Christian Use of “Easter”
- The Connection Between “Easter” and Passover
- Points to Ponder

The Influence of Alexander Hislop

- The true utility of the KJV Today’s article is found in that it serves to break the almost slavish connection between “Easter” and Ishtar/Astarte in the minds of many believers on both sides of the textual debate.

- The connection between “Easter” and the Semitic goddesses Ishtar or Astarte, in the minds of modern Christians can be traced back to the publication of The Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop in 1853. Hislop, an outspoken critic of Roman Catholicism falsely postulated an etymological relationship between “Easter” and Ishtar or Astarte based upon phonetic similarities.

  - “What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It 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. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar.” (Hislop, 103)

- According to the KJV Today’s article, “Easter” and Ishtar/Astarte are not etymologically related.

  - “While it is true that Ishtar (a form of Astarte) sounds similar to “Easter” the two words are not etymologically related. Astarte is "אשתרה (ashtarot)” in Hebrew. This name is derived from the word ".bitmap (ashterâh)” which means "increase" or "flock" (Brown-Driver-Briggs’ Hebrew Definitions). ".bitmap (ashterâh)” is translated as "flocks" four times in the KJV. Hence, the name "Astarte" or "Ishtar” is a Semitic word related to animal fertility. This makes sense because Astarte was regarded as a goddess of fertility.” (“Easter” or “Passover” in Acts 12:2

- Hislop’s false etymological connection between “Easter” and Ishtar/Astarte was only one of his mistakes. As we will see in the next sub-point, the true origin of “Easter” is connected with the Anglo Saxon goddess Eostre. More importantly, however, is his advancement of the notion that any word derived out of paganism mandates an absolute pagan meaning/connection in later/modern usage. For example, if I make a dinner appointment for Thursday night am I automatically worshipping the Norse god Thor; from whose name “Thursday” is derived? No, I am just talking about what day of week I am going to meet someone for dinner. This highlights that the true error of Hislop is found in his confounding of a word’s
origin with its later/modern usage. Just because a given English word is of pagan origin does not mandate pagan meaning in modern usage.

- Brian Tegart is the author of an internet article titled, *Acts 12:4 – Passover and Easter* in which he states the following regarding the errors of Hislop.

  o “. . . the idea that Easter is derived from Astarte/Ishtar seems to come first- or second-hand from Alexander Hislop's 1853 book *The Two Babylons.* As far as I can see, Hislop repeatedly makes the assertion of the connection between Easter and Astarte, but never provides any sources for his claim. What is entirely ironic is that Hislop is not arguing that "Easter" was associated with Astarte at the time of Herod - his argument is that "Easter" was originally entirely Christian but was corrupted by the Roman Catholic Church incorporating elements of pagan religions (including Astarte) in the 5th century A.D., long after Herod died. Despite this alleged connection of Astarte with Easter, many scholars now think this connection is a "false etymology," meaning that it is only assumed correct because of the similar sounds between "Easter" and "Ishtar". Instead, the name "Easter" is probably derived from the Anglo-Saxon pagan goddess (post-dating Herod) of "Eostur" (and for those anti-Easter folk out there: even if the name has some pagan origins does not mean the Christian commemoration is therefore also pagan).” (Tegart, *Acts 12:4 – Passover and Easter*)

- Once Hislop connected “Easter” and Isthar/Astarte it was picked up on by Protestants and Fundamental believers and advanced in an uncritical manner. In this way, the influence of Hislop looms large over the entire discussion of “Easter” in Acts 12:4.

*The True Etymology of “Easter”*

- The etymology of "Easter", on the other hand, has nothing to do with "flocks" or animal fertility, according to the KJV Today. "Easter" ("Ostern" in German) is a Germanic word derived from the word "east" ("Ost" in German). The *Online Etymological Dictionary* in quoted in support:

  o "Old English east "east, easterly, eastward," from Proto-Germanic *aus-to-, *austra- "east, toward the sunrise" (cf. Old Frisian ast "east," aster "eastward," Dutch oost Old Saxon ost, Old High German ostan, German Ost, Old Norse austr "from the east"), from PIE *aus- "to shine, especially "dawn" (cf. Sanskrit ushas "dawn;" Greek aurion "morning;" Old Irish usah, Lithuanian auszra "dawn;" Latin aurora "dawn," auster "south"), literally "to shine." The east is the direction in which dawn breaks." (Online Etymological Dictionary)

- The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, the recognized authority on the history of the English language, is in complete agreement with the *Online Etymological Dictionary* as to the etymology of the English word “Easter.”

  o See Appendix A on page 29 to read the OED’s etymological entry for the word “Easter.”

- There is nothing in "East" that suggests animal fertility. Hence the word has nothing to do with Astarte or Ishtar. Relating the Germanic word "Easter" to the Semitic word "Ishtar" is as fallacious as relating the English word "Baby" to the Semitic word "Babylon,” according to KJV Today’s article.
Today, "east" refers to the direction from which the sun rises. The direction of east goes by that name because the Saxon word "east" meant "dawn", "sunrise" or "morning." Therefore, etymologically "Easter" basically means "dawn." According to the Venerable Bede (672-735), the Old English word for the month of April was "Easturmonað" or "East/Sunrise month." "Eostre" came from the name of a Saxon spring fertility goddess who went by that name.

- See "Easter" or "Passover" in Acts 12:4? for more details on the historical development of the word "Easter."

Christian Use of "Easter"

- The fact that a Saxon goddess went by the name "Eostre" does not mean that "Easter" is a pagan word. Those who hold this myth make it sound as if there was once a goddess with a certain name and Saxon Christians simply took that name arbitrarily without any biblical basis. If, for example, the pagans worshiped a goddess by the name of "Sally" and Christians today refer to the day of the Lord’s resurrection as "Sally", then surely we have a problem. But that is not the case for Saxon Christians using "Easter" as the name of the day of the Lord's resurrection. As "easter" was a descriptive word that referred to the dawn or sunrise, we can understand why both pagans and Christians wished to use the word "east" for their respective purposes. Pagans wished to worship a goddess of sunrise so they called her "Eostre". Christians on the other hand wished to celebrate a very special dawn, so they called the day "Easter."

- The Bible describes Christ's resurrection as being discovered in the "morning" at "dawn" or at "the rising of the sun." One could view the resurrection morning as "dawn" par excellence.

  - Matthew 28:1—"... as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week ...

  - Mark 16:2—"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun."

  - Luke 24:1—"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning ...

  - John 20:1—"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark ...

- Per the OED, "Par excellence" means "By virtue of special excellence or manifest superiority; pre-eminently; supremely, above all." There have been many dawns throughout history, but that special dawn on the day of the resurrection is deserving of that noun more than any other. We often refer to notable biblical events using par excellence nouns, such as "the fall", "the flood", "the exodus", "the exile", "the advent," "the cross," etc. "Easter" is the Saxon word for this greatest dawn in all of history. By way of metonymical association, this term which refers to the "dawn" of the resurrection came to refer to the entire day of the resurrection. ("Easter" or "Passover" in Acts 12:4?)

- The imagery of "dawn" and the "rising of the sun" is not reserved for the morning of Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead. The scriptures utilize the same imagery to describe the second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ back to earth.
- Isaiah 60:1-3—“. . . to the brightness of thy rising.”

- Malachi 4:2—“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;”

- Luke 1:76-79—“. . . whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us . . .”

- II Peter 1:19—“. . . until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts”

- Revelation 22:16—“I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

• Some Christians try to avoid anything that has to do with sunrise imagery, presuming that it is pagan. Yet God in his word compares Christ’s second coming to the rising of the Sun. The word, “Easter,” with its connotation to sunrise, pays tribute to this biblical imagery of Christ as the “Sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2). The Old West-Saxon version of the Gospel of Luke translates the word as "eastdæle", which is the Saxon word for "east/sunrise”. This is another proof that the word "Easter" came from the biblical language of the Saxons. Luke 1:78 in the West-Saxon translation of 990 reads:

  o "Purh innoþas ures godes mildheortnesse. on þam he us geneosode of eastdæle up springende;”

• “Easter” is etymologically related to "east" (the direction) and refers to the "rising" of our Lord from the dead. This connection between the eastern direction and the resurrection makes some Christians nervous about a possible pagan influence. However, there is no reason for such concern because this connection between the eastern direction and the verb "to rise” can be found in the New Testament itself.

  o “The Greek verb "ανατελλω (anatello)" means "to rise" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon) and it is the word translated as "arise" in the above passage in 2 Peter 1:19 about Christ rising in our hearts.” ("Easter" or “Passover” in Acts 12:4?)

• Biblically there is a connection between the eastern direction and the verb "to rise" even in the language of the New Testament. The writers of the New Testament did not avoid using the verb "ανατελλω" (to rise) despite its derivation from the Greek word for “east.”

• Despite any explanation that "Easter" is derived from a generic Saxon word for "dawn" that is not pagan in and of itself, the mere possibility that a goddess went by the name of "Eostre" appears to scare some Christians into avoiding the word "Easter”. These Christians need to realize that pagans should not be given monopoly over valid words in the English lexicon (See the KJV Today article for a discussion of pagan words that believers use every day such as the days of the week.). We just have to admit that the English language is the language of a people who were once pagan and that there are many vestiges of pagan etymology in English. Also to be noted is the irony that this word "Ishtar", which some Christians wish to avoid, appears to be related to "Esther" which is the name of an entire book of our Holy Bible. Esther lived in a pagan culture and was given a pagan name as with Mordecai (which is related to the pagan god Marduk). While it has been demonstrated that Easter has nothing to do with Ishtar, the Bible itself shows that God can redeem a name even if it is in fact related to Ishtar. ("Easter” or “Passover” in Acts 12:4)
The Connection Between “Easter” and Passover

- In addition, to being used as a reference to the dawn/day of Christ’s resurrection, “Easter” also has a long history of being used as a reference to the Jewish “Passover,” according to the OED. The KJV Today’s article completely overlooks this important and extremely relevant fact. The second definition provide for “Easter” in the OED reads as follows:
  - “2. = Passover n. 1. Now only in Jewish Easter or with other contextual indication.”

- Therefore, the OED states that the second definition of “Easter” is equal to the first definition of “Passover.” The first definition of Passover in the OED reads as follows:
  - “The major Jewish spring festival which commemorates the liberation of the People of Israel from Egyptian bondage, lasting seven days (in Israel) or eight days (in the Diaspora) from the 15th day of Nisan.”

- The Middle English Dictionary confirms this by offering the following as its second definition for “Easter:”
  - “The Jewish Passover.”

- Moreover, the Middle English Dictionary offers usage examples of “Easter” meaning “the Jewish Passover” from the 14th and 15th centuries.

- Therefore, ample historical evidence exists from a host of English language resources that “Easter” was used to refer to the Jewish feast day before the word “Passover” was coined by Tyndale in 1530 in the early 16th century.
  - See Appendix B on page 30 for photos of the dictionary entries quoted in this section.

Points to Ponder

- While there is no doubt that many practices associated with the current cultural celebration known as “Easter” are pagan in origin; the word itself is not inextricably tied to paganism as many have asserted. In order for one to truly understand the motives of the King James translators in rendering pascha as “Easter” in Acts 12:4, the slavish connection between the English word “Easter” and paganism must be broken as an important first step.

- Let the 1611 King James Bible stand as a case in point. If the King James translators understood “Easter” to be a reference to a pagan festival in Acts 12:4, why did they include a table in the front of the 1611 that would help the reader “To find Easter for ever?”
  - See Appendix C on page 32 for a photo of the table from the 1611 KJB.
• Translating nearly two hundred years before Hislop, the King James translators apparently knew something about the English word “Easter” that Hislop did not know. If they thought “Easter” was exclusively pagan, they certainly would not have included such a table in the front of their translation.

• While the KJV Today’s article is excellent in terms of highlining the etymological history of the English word “Easter;” I do not agree with their overall conclusion about the meaning of “Easter” in Acts 12:4. Luke is not referring to the Christian festival of Easter but to Jewish feast day of “Passover” as we will demonstrate in the next section when we look at point four: “Easter” in the English Bible: A Brief Look at the History of Translation. Not only does the English word “Easter” refer to the morning of the resurrection, but it was also used interchangeably with the word “Passover” to refer to the Jewish festival.

• As we conclude this Section, here are a couple of points for the reader to ponder.
  o Why did Dr. Samuel C. Gipp, an outspoken proponent of the 1611 edition of the KJB, not consider the table found therein for calculating the date of “Easter” into his explanation of the word’s meaning?
  o Recall from the beginning that Dr. James R. White also embraced the notion that “Easter” was an exclusively pagan word and therefore not an appropriate translation of pascha in Acts 12:4. Why does White, an opponent of Gipp’s, not refute the KJO understanding of the word “Easter” based upon a more accurate etymological history of the word?

• It turns out that the scholars on both side of the textual debate have not been very scholarly.

“Easter” in the English Bible: A Brief Look at the History of Translation

• In this section, we will seek to demonstrate the following two points: 1) “Easter” was used for centuries as a reference to the Jewish feast before Tyndale coined the term “Passover” in 1530, and 2) the Greek word pascha was translated as “Easter” in English as a reference to the Jewish holy day both before and after 1530. Therefore, the notion that pascha NEVER meant “Easter” in English is an ahistorical error.

• Translating from Latin into Middle English in the late 14th century, John Wycliffe transliterated the Latin equivalent of pascha into Middle English as “pask” or “paske” 29 times in his groundbreaking work. Translators of the English Bible during the early Reformation of the 1500s adopted a similar practice but on a more limited scope. For example, Tyndale (1526), Coverdale (1535), and Matthews (1537) each rendered pascha as some form of “pascall” at least once in their respective translations.
  o Tyndale (1526)—used a form of “paschal” three different times.
    ▪ “paschal” (Matthew 26:17)
    ▪ “pascall lambe” (Mark 14:12 & John 18:28)
  o Coverdale (1535)—used “pascal lambe” in John 18:28
  o Matthews (1537)—followed Tyndale in using a form of “paschal” three different times.
William Tyndale (1526)

- Being the real pioneer of these early translators, it is imperative that we study Tyndale’s work on this matter in detail. Above we noted that three times Tyndale rendered *pascha* as some form of “paschal.” But what about the other 26 occurrences of *pascha* in the *Textus Receptus*? Without exception, in every one of these 26 occurrences Tyndale translated *pascha* as some form of “Easter” (See the table in Appendix F on page 35 for a complete catalogue of occurrences.).

  - “ester”—15 times
  - “esterlambe”—3 times
  - “ester lambe”—7 times
  - “feeste of ester”—1 time

- Tyndale associated the English word “Easter” with the Greek word *pascha* in his ground-breaking translation of the *Textus Receptus* 26 times. Why did Tyndale do this? Translating from exile in Germany in 1526, Tyndale was influenced by Martin Luther’s German translation of the *Textus Receptus* from 1522. Please recall from our discussion in the previous section that the etymology of the English word “Easter” was impacted by the Old Germanic word “Oster.” Every time, without exception, that the Greek word *pascha* occurred in the New Testament text, Luther rendered it as some form of “Oster” in German or “Easter” in English.

  - “Ostern”—16 times
  - “Osterlamm”—12 times
  - “Osterfest”—1 time

- Before going any further we need to note two important points: 1) Luther and Tyndale clearly DID NOT think that “Easter” was pagan or they would not have used that word when translating into their respective languages, and 2) the notion that *pascha* NEVER meant “Easter” in English is certifiably false.

- Recall from above that according to the *Middle English Dictionary*, “Easter” was being used in the 14th and 15th centuries to refer to “The Jewish Passover” over two hundred years before Tyndale invented the term “Passover” in 1530. New research, conducted since our last study, has revealed that the WestSaxon Gospels from 990 and 1175 use some form of “Easter” exclusively in their respective texts to refer to “The Jewish Passover,” just as the *Middle English Dictionary* asserted.

  - An examination of Appendix F on page 35 will reveal that some form of “Easter” is used all 26 times in the text of the WestSaxon Gospels to refer to the Jewish Passover.
• The WestSaxon Gospels clinch the argument that “Easter” was not an exclusively pagan word as well as prove beyond doubt that “Easter” was used for centuries to refer to the Jewish “Passover” in the Biblical text.

• *Pascha* meant “Easter” in English before the word “Passover” was even coined by Tyndale in 1530 when he was working on this translation of the Pentateuch. The Hebrew word *pecach* occurs 22 times in 21 verses in the Pentateuch. In 1530, William Tyndale rendered *pecach* as “Passover” in English all 22 times. As previously stated, the English word “Passover” did not exist before Tyndale invented it in 1530. The *OED* confirms this by reporting that the first known usage of the word “Passover” in English was in Tyndale’s translation of the Pentateuch in 1530.

  o See *OED* entry for “Passover” in Appendix D on page 33.

• In summation, in English the Jewish feast day of “Passover” was known as “Easter” before the word “Passover” was even invented.

*Miles Coverdale (1535)*

• In 1535, Miles Coverdale published the first complete translation of the Hebrew and Greek into English. Recall from above that Wycliffe’s earlier work from the late 1300s had been a translation of the Latin Vulgate into Middle English. Coverdale had access to Tyndale’s work to inform his translation of the New Testament as well as the Pentateuch. This does not mean however, that Coverdale followed Tyndale with verbatim identicality.

• Above we saw that all 22 times that the Hebrew word *pecach* occurred in the Pentateuch, Tyndale rendered it as “Passover” in English. Of these 22 occurrences in the Pentateuch, Coverdale translated *pecach* as “Passover” five times and some form of “Easter” 17 times.

  o “Passover”—Exodus 12:11, 21, 27, 43, 48
  
  o “Easterfeast”—Exodus 34:25
  
  o “Lord’s Easter”—Leviticus 23:5
  
  o “Easter”—Numbers 9:2, 4-6, 10, 12-14 (2x), 16, 28:16, 33:3; Deuteronomy 16:1, 2, 5-6

• All told, of the 48 occurrences of the word “Passover” in the Old Testament, 25 times Coverdale used the English word “Easter.” The remaining 23 times he used the English word “Passover.” Therefore, it is clear that Coverdale viewed “Easter” and “Passover” as interchangeable terms to describe the Jewish feast. In fact, in II Chronicles 30, Coverdale uses these terms interchangeably in the same context.

  o II Chronicles 30:1—“And Ezechias sent into all Israel and Iuda, and wrote letters vnto Ephraim and Manasses, that they shulde come to the house of the LORDE at Jerusalem, to kepe easter vnto the LORDE God of Israel.”
II Chronicles 30:2—“And the kynge helde a councell with his rulers, and all the cogregacion at Jerusalem, to kepe Passeouer in the seconde moneth:”

II Chronicles 30:5—“And they appointed it to be proclaimed thorow out all Israel from Berseba vnto Dan, that they shulde come to kepe Passeouer vnto the LORDE God of Israel: for they were not many to kepe it as it is wrytten.”

II Chronicles 30:15—“and slewe the Passeouer on the fourtenth daye of the seconde moneth. And ye prestes and Leuites were ashamed, and halowed them selues, and broughte the burntofferynges to the house of the LORDE,”

II Chronicles 30:18—“There were many peopl also of Ephraim, Manasses, Isachar and Zabulon, which were not cleane, but ate the Easter lambe not as it is wrytten: for Ezechias prayed for them, and sayde: The LORDE, which is gracious,”

- In terms of the New Testament, Coverdale expanded the connection between the Greek word pascha and the English word “Easter” in his 1535 New Testament. In 1526 Tyndale used the word “Easter” 26 times whereas Coverdale used it 28 times in 1535. Therefore, even after the word “Passover” was coined by Tyndale in 1530, it did not immediately replace “Easter” as the preferred translation of pascha.

Matthews Bible (1537)

- The Matthews Bible was published in 1537 by John Rodgers under the pseudonym Thomas Matthews, during a time when printing the Bible in English was both illegal and risky. Rodgers’ translation was largely identical to that of Coverdale’s in at least half the work, according to English Bible historian David Norton. (Norton, 16)

- The Matthews Bible nearly standardized the use of the English word “Passover” in the Old Testament by utilizing it 47 out of 48 times (Ezekiel 45:21 contains the sole occurrence of “Easter” in Matthews Old Testament.). The same, however, could not be said for the New Testament. Rodgers followed Tyndale in translating the Greek word pascha as some form of “paschal” three times and some form of “Easter” 26 times. The verses in which these various forms are used are identical between the work of Tyndale and Rodgers.

  - See the tables in Appendix F beginning on page 35.

- From this we see once again that “Passover” had not yet supplanted “Easter” as the preferred English translation of pascha.

Great Bible (1539)

- The next English translation, again conducted by Miles Coverdale, was the Great Bible of 1539, also known as Cranmer’s Bible because of the preface by the Archbishop included in the second edition onwards. (Norton, 17) “It was the first major revision [of Tyndale] done under the auspices of the English Church.” (Norton, 17)
• In terms of the Old Testament, the Great Bible was similar to the Matthews Bible in that it used the word “Passover” 47 out of 48 times. The Great Bible, like the Matthews Bible, utilized “Easter” in Ezekiel 45:21.

  o Matthews Bible—“Vpon the .xiiiij. daye of the fyrrste moneth ye shall kepe Easter. Seuen dayes shall the feast contynue wherein there shall no sower neuer leuened breed be eaten.”

  o Great Bible—“Upon the .xiiiij. daye of the fyrrste moneth, ye shall kepe easter. Seuen dayes shall the feaste contynue, wherein there shall no sower neuer leuened breed be eaten.”

• The same, however, could not be said for the Great Bible’s New Testament text. Of all the Reformation Era, English Bibles we have looked at so far, the Great Bible exhibits the most diversity in terms of how the Greek word pascha was translated in the New Testament. In fact, there is almost a 50/50 split between the use of “Easter” and “Passover” in the Great Bible’s New Testament. Of the 29 times that pascha occurs in the text, the Great Bible uses some form of “Easter” 15 times and “Passover” 14 times. Furthermore, the Great Bible uses these English words interchangeably within the same context in multiple different passages.

  o Matthew 26:2—“ye knowe that after two dayes shalbe Easter, and the sonne of man shalbe deluyuered ouer, to be crucifyed.”

  o Matthew 26:17—“The fyrrste daye of swete breed, the disciples came to Iesus, sayinge vnto him: where wilt thou that we prepare for the, to eate the passeouer?

  o Matthew 26:18—“And he sayd: go into the cytie, to soche a man, and saye vnto him, the master sayeth: my tyme is at hand, I will kepe myne Easter by the, wyth my disciples:”

  o Matthew 26:19—“And the disciples dyd as Iesus had apoynted them, and they made ready the passeouer.”

  o Luke 22:1—“The feast of swete breed drue nye, which is called Easter,.”

  o Luke 22:7, 8, 11, 13, 15—“ Passouer”

  o John 18:28—“Then led they Iesus from Cayphas into the hall of iudgement. It was in the mornynge, & they them selues went not into the iudgement hall lest they shulde be defyled, but that they myght eate Passeouer.”

  o John 18:39—“Ye haue a custome, that I shulde deliuer you one loose at Easter. Wyll ye that I lose vnto you the kyngle of the lewes?”

• Translated in 1539, nine years after Tyndale coined the term “Passover” in 1530, the Great Bible is the first English New Testament to connect the Greek word pascha with the newly minted English word “Passover.” Moreover, the move to “Passover” nearly half of the time in the Great Bible is representative of a growing expectance and confidence in the word “Passover’s” ability to communicate the sense of the Greek text in English. Mark well, however, that it took thirteen years (1526-1539) for the Greek word
pascha to be connected with the English word “Passover.” Even after the word “Passover” was invented, it took nine years (1530-1539) and three English translations for the connection between pascha and “Passover” to be formally established. Therefore, the notion that pascha NEVER meant “Easter” in English is completely false. The connection had been established and in use for thirteen years in three different English translations before “Passover” first appeared in the New Testament text of an English Bible.

**Geneva New Testament (1557)**

- After the publication of the Great Bible in 1539 the English-speaking world would have to wait eighteen years before a new transition of the Bible would appear. This new translation was the 1557 Geneva New Testament. According to English Bible historian David Norton, “The Geneva Bible was the first truly collaborative English version. It was the work of a dozen or so Protestant scholars living in exile from an England that had returned to Catholicism under Queen Mary. The leader was William Whittingham who had produced a remarkable preliminary draft, the 1557 Geneva NT.” (Norton, 19) Three years later, in 1560, a complete Bible would be published by these Genevan exiles.

- Rather than follow the Great Bible in expanding the use of “Passover” in the New Testament, the 1557 Geneva New Testament significantly reversed the trend. The English word “Passover” is only found 3 times in the 1557 Geneva New Testament (Matthew 26:17, 19; Luke 22:7). Twice the term “Pascal lambe” is used (Mark 14:12; John 18:28) by the Genevan exiles, a phrase that did not appear at all in the Great Bible. The remaining 24 occurrences of pascha were rendered as some form of “Easter” in the 1557 Geneva New Testament.

- One similarity between the Great Bible and Geneva New Testament of 1557 was that “Passover” and “Easter” were used interchangeably in the same passage (I did not have the capacity to copy and paste the text of the 1557 Geneva New Testament into the notes).
  - Matthew 26:2—“Easter”
  - Matthew 26:17—“passouer”
  - Matthew 26:18—“Easter”
  - Matthew 26:19—“passouer”

**Geneva Bible (1560)**

- As stated above, in 1560 a complete English Bible containing both Old and New Testaments was published in Geneva, Switzerland. The Geneva Bible was groundbreaking in many respects that we will discuss in due course in our regular class on the KJB. For the purposes of this lesson, it is important to note that the Geneva Bible was the first English translation to use the word “Passover” all 29 times that pascha is found in the Greek text.
• By 1560 there was 34 years of translational practice in terms of using the English word “Easter” to express the Greek work *pascha*. In addition, 21 years of translation tradition existed (1539-1560) during which the English words “Easter” and “Passover” were used as synonymous terms.

• Thus far, in terms of the history of the English Bible, the Geneva’s exclusive use of “Passover” to convey the truth of *pascha* in English is the exception rather than the rule. As we will observe shortly it would remain the exception until the late 19th century.

*Bishops Bible (1568)*

• The Bishops Bible of 1568 was the second official Bible of the English Church. It was intended to be a revision of and replacement for the Great Bible of 1539 in terms of official use in the Anglican Church. As its title suggests, it was primarily the work of Anglican Bishops. (Norton, 22-25)

• Even though the 1560 Geneva Bible adopted the exclusive use of “Passover” in the New Testament the Bishops Bible did not follow suit. The Bishops Bible retained the use of Easter on three occasions in two verses.

  - John 11:55—“And the *Iewes Easter* was nye at hande, and many went out of the countrey vp to Hierusale before the *Easter*, to purifie them selues.

  - Acts 12:4—“And when he had caught hym, he put hym in pryson also, and delyuered hym to foure quaternions of souldiers to be kept, intendyng after *Easter* to bryng hym foorth to the people.

• It is clear from an examination of the context of John 11:55 that what the Bishops Bible calls the “Jews Easter” is everywhere else in the gospels referred to as “Passover.” Furthermore, three verses later in John 12:1 the Bishops Bible mentions “Passouer.” Therefore, there is no doubt that the two English words were viewed as a reference to the same event.

  - John 11:55—“And the *Iewes Easter* was nye at hande, and many went out of the countrey vp to Hierusale before the *Easter*, to purifie them selues.

  - John 12:1—“Then Iesus, sixe dayes before the *Passouer*, came to Bethanie, where Lazarus had ben dead, whom he raysed from death.”

• The rendering of “Easter” in Acts 12:4 in the Bishops Bible is of critical importance. First, is there any reason within the Bishops Bible to think that “Easter” in Acts 12:4 is referring to something different from the “Jews Easter” in John 11:55 i.e., the Jews “Passover?”

  - John 2:13—“And the *Iewes Passouer* was at hande, & Iesus went vp to Hierusalem.”

• Second, per Rule 1 given to the King James translators, the Bishops Bible was to serve as the base text for their translation.
• Rule 1: 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.

• When the King James translators left the word “Easter” in Acts 12:4 they were following Rule 1 as set forth by Bishop Bancroft. The Bishops Bible had “Easter” in Act 12:4 and the King James translations saw no reason to alter the text.

King James (1611)

• By the time one gets to the publication of the KJB in 1611, there is roughly 80 years of translational precedent regarding the interchangeable use of “Easter” and “Passover” after the term was coined by Tyndale in 1530. Both were acceptable ways of capturing the sense of the Greek word pascha in English.

• As previously noted, the KJB only uses the word “Easter” one time in Acts 12:4.

  o Acts 12:4—“And when hee had apprehended him, hee put him in prison, and deliuered him to foure quaternions of souldiers to keepe him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.”

• Acts 12:4, being the singular place that “Easter” was used in the KJB means, of course, that the translators altered the Bishops text in John 11:55 from “Easter” to “Passover.”

  o John 11:55—“And the Iewes Passeouer was nigh at hand, and many went out of the countreyp vp to Hierusalem before the Passeouer to purifie themselues.”

• The Second Oxford Company did the translation work on the four Gospels as well as the book of Acts. Twice they elected to change the rendering of pascha from “Easter” to “Passover” and once they decided to leave it as “Easter.”

• When the translators made this decision were they intending to refer to a pagan festival celebrated by Herod in Acts 12:4 or were they simply using an acceptable English synonym for “Passover?” Given the totality of the evidence presented in this section, it makes far more sense to view “Easter” in Acts 12:4 as a reference to the Jewish festival of “Passover” then it does to think that the King James translators ascribed a meaning to the word “Easter” wholly apart from the way that that word was used and understood in the English Bible up to 1611. In short, when they used “Easter” in Acts 12:4 they were referring to “Passover” not a pagan festival celebrated by Herod or a Christian holiday as asserted by the KJV today.

• Once again, the OED bears this out when one considers the second definition for “Easter” offered therein:

  o “2. = Passover n. 1. Now only in Jewish Easter or with other contextual indication.

• So, the OED says that the second meaning of “Easter” is equal to the first definition of “Passover.” The first entry for “Passover” in the OED to which the second meaning of “Easter” equates with reads as follows:
o “The major Jewish spring festival which commemorates the liberation of the People of Israel from Egyptian bondage, lasting seven days (in Israel) or eight days (in the Diaspora) from the 15th day of Nisan.”

- According to the *OED*, “Easter” and “Passover” mean the same thing. Clinching the point are the historical word usage examples provided in the *OED*’s entry for “Easter”, two of which are scriptural in nature.

  o 1535 *Bible* (Coverdale) Ezekiel xlv. 21 Vpon ye xiiij. daye of the first moneth ye shalt kepe Easter.

  o 1611 *Bible* (King James) Acts xii. 4 Intending after Easter to bring him foorth.

    - See Appendix E on page 34 to view a photo of the *OED*’s entry for “Easter.”

- The most authoritative source on the history of the English language, the *OED*, just said that “Easter” in Acts 12:4 is a reference to “Passover.” When the King James translators rendered *pascha* as “Easter” in Acts 12:4 they were referring to the Jewish “Passover” not a pagan holiday or a Christian festival.

**Points to Ponder**

- Thus far, through four points we have debunked the following myths.

  o “Easter” is an exclusively pagan word.

  o The Greek word *pascha* NEVER meant “Easter” in English.

  o The English word “Easter” has no association to the Jewish feast day of “Passover.”

- Moreover, we have proved beyond historical doubt that *pascha* meant “Easter” in English before the word “Passover” even existed. Likewise, we have demonstrated that, even after the invention of the word “Passover” by Tyndale in 1530, the two words were used interchangeably to refer to the Jewish feast.

- So then why did neither Samuel C. Gipp nor James R. White discuss any of these FACTS in their respective discussions of “Easter” in Acts 12:4?

- All that remains is for us to demonstrate that “Passover” is an acceptable Biblical term to refer to the entire paschal week i.e., Passover (14th) and Unleavened Bread (15th–21st). In the next point, we will seek to demonstrate the connection and check out the scriptural veracity of our conclusion that “Easter” in Acts 12:4 in the KJB is a reference to the Jewish “Passover.”

**Scriptural Exposition of Acts 12:4**

- Having proved our case beyond reasonable historical doubt regarding the etymology and translational history of the English word “Easter,” we will now demonstrate that Luke is referring to the Jewish feast day in Acts 12:4. It is to this point that we will now turn our attention.
Acts 12:1—what Church is Herod seeking to vex? In this context, Herod is NOT vexing the church the body of Christ; but rather the Jewish Kingdom Church at Jerusalem, i.e., the Little Flock.

Acts 12:2—Herod’s vexation of the church in verse 1 takes the form of the execution of “James the brother of John” in verse 2. James was one of the twelve Apostles chosen by Christ during his earthly ministry.

- Matthew 4:21-22

- Matthew 10:2—James was one of the twelve chosen by the Lord and commissioned to preach the gospel of the Kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

- Matthew 19:28—as an Apostle to the Little Flock, James was promised by Christ that he would sit upon a throne in the millennial kingdom and judge Israel.

Acts 12:3—when Herod saw that the death of James in verse 1 pleased the Jews i.e., the apostate religious leadership of Israel, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. The leadership of Israel had long been plotting how they might punish the Little Flock and its leadership.

- Acts 4:17-21

- Acts 5:17-19, 40

- Acts 7—trial of Stephen

- Acts 9:1-2—Saul obtained letters from the High Priest to go to Damascus and bring back the followers of the Lord bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 12:3—the Jews were pleased with Herod’s action in arresting Peter because they had been endeavoring to take care of their “Little Flock” problem for some time. Luke is very clear in verse 3 about when Herod arrested Peter; the parenthesis tells us that it was during the “days of unleavened bread.”

Acts 12:4—Herod apprehended Peter in verse 4 to please the Jews in verse 3. He kept him in prison “intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.” What people? The Jews in verse 3 who were pleased with Peter’s arrest.

Mark well that these verses say nothing about Herod keeping or observing anything, much less the pagan spring festival of “Easter” as defined by Hislop. The people observing something in the context are the Jews whom Herod was aiming to please by arresting Peter. What were the Jews observing at the time? “The days of unleavened bread” as verse 3 clearly asserts. The most natural reading of these verses is that Herod elected to hold Peter until after the conclusion of the feast that the Jews were observing.
• We have already proven beyond doubt that “Easter” was a synonym for “Passover” in English. Therefore, the most natural reading of Acts 12:3-4 is that Herod would bring Peter forth unto the people after the conclusion of “Easter/Passover.”

• Recall from point 2 above that Dr. Samuel C. Gipp states the following in The Answer Book regarding the meaning of the English word “Easter” as well as the timing of “Passover” and the “days of unleavened bread” in Acts 12:
  
  o “Easter” is an ancient pagan holiday connected with the worship of the goddesses Astarte and Ishtar.
  
  o Passover occurred on the 14th of the month—no event after the 14th is EVER referred to as Passover (Exodus 12:13-18; Numbers 28:16-18; Deuteronomy 16:1-8).
  
  o The Days of Unleavened Bread began on the 15th of the month, the day after Passover. The Days of Unleavened Bread are ALWAYS after Passover and are NEVER referred to as Passover.
  
  o Peter was arrested during the Days of Unleavened Bread which are AFTER Passover.
  
  o Therefore, Herod could not possibly have been referring to Passover in Acts 12:4. The next Passover was a year away.
  
  o Herod was a pagan Roman who worshiped the queen of heaven and had no reason to keep the Jewish Passover.
  
  o Herod did not kill Peter during the Days of Unleavened Bread because he wanted to wait until later in the month after the Passing of his own holiday i.e., Easter.

• So, per Dr. Gipp, Luke could not have been referring to the Jewish “Passover” in Acts 12:4 because Peter was arrested during the “days of unleavened bread” which were after “Passover” from the 15th till the 21st of the month. According to Dr. Gipp, no day after the 14th is EVER referred to as “Passover.”

• At no point in his discussion of “Easter” in Acts 12:4, did Dr. Gipp make mention of Ezekiel 45:21, Matthew 26:17-18, or Luke 22:1; in terms of how these verses include/connect the “days of unleavened bread” with “Passover.”
  
  o Ezekiel 45:21—“In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.”
    
    ▪ This verse clearly states that “passover” was a feast of seven days that began on the 14th of the month during which unleavened bread was eaten.
  
  o Matthew 26:17-18—“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? 18) And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.”
In verse 17, the Apostles approached Jesus about eating the “Passover” on the first day of the “feast of unleavened bread.” According to Gipp’s exposition in *The Answer Book*, this practice on the part of Apostles runs contrary to Old Testament practice. Adding insult to injury, Jesus does not rebuke or correct the Apostles’ false chronology but agrees to eat the “Passover” with his disciples on “the first day of the feast of unleavened bread” in verse 18. By doing so, Christ is violating the Old Testament scriptures, according to Gipp’s explanation. Furthermore, why does Dr. Gipp not mention this connection between “Passover” and the “days of unleavened bread” in Matthew 26:17-18; when he is clearly aware of the passage as we will demonstrate shortly.

- **Luke 22:1**—“Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.”

- Luke, the same person who wrote Acts 12 explicitly states in Luke 22:1 that the “feast of unleavened bread” was called “Passover.”

- These verses explain why Luke included the parenthesis about the “days of unleavened bread” at the end of Acts 12:3 i.e., to help the reader identify the timing of Peter’s arrest by Herod. As the second part of a two part “treatise” addressed to Theophilus (see Luke 1:1-4 & Acts 1:1), the connection between Luke 22:1 and Acts 12:3-4 would have been clear to Theophilus. Luke is clearly reporting that Peter was arrested by Herod during the Jewish paschal or “Passover” week as identified by Ezekiel 45:21, Matthew 26:17-18, and Luke 22:1. Because he sought to please the Jews in Acts 12:3, Herod elected to hold Peter until after “Passover” or “Easter” (when properly defined) before bringing “him forth to the people.”

- In summation, the context of Acts 12 is thoroughly Jewish and the English word “Easter” has a long history of being used as reference to the Jewish feast. The King James translators used “Easter” in Acts 12:4 to refer to the Jewish festival. This is the simplest, most Biblical, and most charitable answer to the alleged controversy.

- The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) confirms this by providing Acts 12:4 from the KJB as an example of the second definition for “Easter” equating with “Passover” in English.

- See Appendix A on page 12 for a copy of the OED entry for “Easter.”

- “Easter” in Acts 12:4 in the KJB means “Passover.” The KJB is not in error with this rendering nor is it a mistranslation of the Greek word *pascha*. Rather it is a perfectly acceptable English way of referring to the Jewish feast, as attested by the etymological and translational evidence.

- “Uniformity of phrasing” was not a demand placed upon the text by King James translators. According to the Preface, the King James translators did not employ a principle of rigidity when taking words from the donor language (Hebrew/Greek) and rendering them in the receptor language (English) which means that in the minds of the translators there are multiple acceptable ways of saying the same thing.

- “Another thing we think good to admonish thee of, gentle reader that we have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish that we had done, because they observe, that some learned men somewhere, have been as exact as
they could that way. Truly, that we might not vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified that same in both places (for there be some words that be not the same sense everywhere) we were especially careful, and made a conscience, according to our duty. But, that we should express the same notion in the same particular word; as for example, if we translate the Hebrew or Greek word once by PURPOSE, never to call it INTENT; if one where JOURNEYING, never TRAVELING; if one where THINK, never SUPPOSE; if one where PAIN, never ACHE; if one where JOY, never GLADNESS, etc. Thus to mince the matter, we thought to savour more of curiosity than wisdom, and that rather it would breed scorn in the Atheist, than bring profit to the godly Reader. For is the kingdom of God to become words or syllables? Why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free, use one precisely when we may use another no less fit, as commodiously?"

- In other words, as long as an English word fits the sense of the Hebrew or Greek in a given passage; the King James translators did not lock themselves into rendering a given word from the donor language with the same word in the receptor language every time. This was done on purpose by the translators, so as to enrich the translation despite their knowledge that some would take issue with the practice. Such is the case with how the translators chose to handle the Greek word *pascha*; either “Easter” or “Passover” were well suited for conveying the idea of the Jewish feast in English.

### How Did Gipp Get it So Wrong?

- In the end, the KJB is correct in Acts 12:4 but not for the reasons identified by Dr. Gipp or those espoused by any other KJO advocate I have ever encountered. As stated in Lesson 1, most KJO advocates offer some form of the Gipp argument presented in *The Answer Book* for why “Easter” is correct in Acts 12:4.

- Essentially Dr. Gipp and those who argue similarly make mistakes in each of the following three categories: definitional, scriptural, and theological.

  - **Definitional**—the mistake here is found in substituting Hislop’s false etymology regarding Ishtar/Astarte for the true etymology set forth in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Online Etymology Dictionary*, and the *Middle English Dictionary*. Moreover, Dr. Gipp makes no attempt to discuss the pre-1611 translational history of the word “Easter” in the English Bible.

  - **Scriptural**—Dr. Gipp fails to compare scripture with scripture when he tells his readers that no other day other than the 14th is EVER referred to as “Passover.” This is completely false as demonstrated by Ezekiel 45:21 and Luke 22:1; verses that Dr. Gipp conveniently left out of his explanation. Why would Dr. Gipp leave these verses out his explanation?

  - The answer is because he must! In this way, we see the tension between the scriptures and false etymology created by Hislop and embraced by Dr. Gipp. In an effort to explain why the KJB is not mistaken in its use of “Easter” in Acts 12:4, as Dr. Gipp has defined the term, he must overlook Ezekiel 45:21 and Luke 22:1 because they do not fit the paradigm he is seeking to advance. If “Passover” is EVER used to refer to anything beyond the 14th or could be proven to include the “days of unleavened bread” which begin on the 15th and end on the 21st, then the modern versions would be right and King James wrong, according to the way Gipp has structured his argument. Recall from Lesson 1 that Dr. Gipp admits as much:
“Problem: Even though the Jewish passover was held in mid-April (the fourteenth) and the pagan festival Easter was held later the same month, how do we know that Herod was referring to Easter in Acts 12:4 and not the Jewish passover? **If he 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.**” (Gipp, 4)

- Before moving off this point, a further observation regarding Dr. Gipp’s exposition is in order. Above we noted that Dr. Gipp failed to note the connection between “Passover” and the “days of unleavened bread” in Matthew 26:17-18. This oversight on Gipp’s part is curious given the fact that he clearly references Matthew 26:17-19 on two different occasions in his “Explanation” for why “Easter” is not a mistake in the KJB in *The Answer Book*. Twice on page 8 Dr. Gipp uses Matthew 26:17-18 to support an alternative point about the Jews not being averse to killing Christ during the feast of “Passover.”

- “Second, he could not have been waiting until after the passover because he thought the Jews would not kill a man during a religious holiday. They had killed Jesus during passover (Matthew 26:17-19,47). They were also excited about Herod's murder of James. Anyone knows that a mob possesses the courage to do violent acts during religious festivities, not after. . . It is elementary to see that Herod, in Acts 12, had arrested Peter during the days of unleavened bread, **after the passover**. The days of unleavened bread would end on the 21st of April. Shortly after that would come Herod's celebration of pagan Easter. Herod had not killed Peter during the days of unleavened bread simply because he wanted to wait until Easter. Since it is plain that both the Jews (Matthew 26:17-47) and the Romans (Matthew 14:6-11) would kill during a religious celebration, Herod's opinion seemed that he was not going to let the Jews "have all the fun ". He would wait until his own pagan festival and see to it that Peter died in the excitement.” (Gipp, 8)

- From this we observe that Gipp referenced a passage (Matt. 26:17-18) that contradicts the point he is endeavoring to make in the very paragraph in which he referenced it. Therefore, we conclude that Dr. Gipp knows how to use a concordance and was very aware of verses such as Ezekiel 45:21, Matthew 26:17-18, and Luke 22:1; but chose to ignore them in his exposition because they did not fit with the doctrinal paradigm he was seeking to advance.

*Theological*—Dr. Gipp’s exposition is theologically confused. At one point, he offers the following reason why Herod would not have waited until after “Passover” to release Peter:

- “. . . Peter was no longer considered a Jew. He had repudiated Judaism. The Jews would have no reason to be upset by Herod's actions.” (Gipp, 8)

- Is this a dispensationally accurate statement? Had Peter, the leader of the Little Flock “repudiated Judaism?” Did we not observe above that Peter and the other Apostles were laboring during the early Acts period to save their kinsman according to the flesh? It was Peter and the Apostles who stayed in Jerusalem when the persecution broke out following the death of Stephen (Acts 8:1). The bottom line here is this; Gipp’s assessment of what is going on in Acts 12 is based at least in part on a faulty dispensational theology. Peter agrees to limit his ministry at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 to the circumcision, after Gipp says that Peter has “repudiated Judaism” as of Acts 12.
• Furthermore, in the context of Acts 12, the Jews had not asked Herod to do anything with respect to Peter. Herod did that on his own when he saw how happy they were at his actions toward James in verse 1. The circumstances were completely different in Acts 12 than they were in Matthew 26 when the Jews demanded the execution of Jesus. Rather than create a scene by executing Peter during the Jewish feast of unleavened bread/passover, Herod elected to wait until after the paschal week was over.

• In this way, we see that a matrix of poor definitional, scriptural, and theological thinking caused Dr. Gipp to misidentify the events of Acts 12.

**The Christian “Passover” View**

• Other more informed defenders of the KJB have advanced a different argument than the one enunciated by Dr. Gipp. These folks have broken free from the false etymology advanced by Hislop and realized that historically “Easter” was used to refer to both the Christian festival and the Jewish feast day.

• These believers, therefore, reject the traditional KJO defense of “Easter” in Acts 12:4 on pagan grounds and instead argue that Luke was referring to a Christian celebration as opposed to a pagan or Jewish one. The KJB Today article *Easter or Passover in Acts 12:4* is emblematic of this approach as is the YouTube video titled *Why We Should Not Passover Easter*.

• This position is justified on the grounds that the King James translators rendered *pascha* as “Easter” only one time in Acts 12:4 after the resurrection of Christ. In contrast, before the resurrection or in clear references to the Jewish feast as in I Corinthians 5:7 and Hebrews 11:28 the translators used “Passover” exclusively. Therefore, those holding this view maintain that the King James translators reserved “Passover” for references to the Jewish holy day and confined “Easter” to the post-resurrection Christian festival. It is believed by those holding this view that this practice on the part of the King James translators served to settle the use of this terminology for the English language. In other words, from 1611 onward “Passover” would be confined in meaning and usage to the Jewish festival whereas “Easter” would apply exclusively to the Christian commemoration of the resurrection.

• While this view is an improvement over the pagan view advanced by Dr. Gipp and others, it still falls short for the following reasons:
  
  o First, it ignores the clear Jewish context of Acts 12 outlined above.

  o Second, it does not take into account the clear cross references connecting the “days of unleavened bread” with the Jewish Passover.

  o Third, it makes the dispensational assumption that Peter, James, and John and their followers in Jerusalem were automatically “Christians” after the resurrection in the sense that they were no longer following the Mosaic Law or Israel’s holy days outlined therein.

  o Fourth, the producer of the YouTube video *Why We Should Not Passover Easter* quotes the *Oxford English Dictionary* at the end of his video to prove that “Easter” could refer to the Jewish
Pastor Bryan Ross

Passover but fails to mention that Acts 12:4 is used in the very same dictionary as an example of the Jewish Passover.

- Given the totality of the evidence, the conclusion that “Easter” in Acts 12:4 is a reference to the Jewish feast of “Passover” is the soundest conclusion at which one can arrive.

Final Thoughts

- While we have been very critical of Dr. Gipp in these Lessons we cannot let James R. White off the hook either. Recall from Lesson 1 that White accepted the notion that “Easter” was pagan in origin and used it to argue that “Easter” was a mistranslation of pascha in Acts 12:4. If Dr. White had adequately done his homework, he would have known that etymologically “Easter” was a perfectly acceptable way of referring to the Jewish “Passover.” Moreover, he would have observed the long history of translating the Greek word pascha as “Easter” in English prior to 1611.

- These observations regarding the suspect scholarship of Dr. White on this point highlight an important overall takeaway. The anti-King James/Modern Version side of the textual/version debate does not have the market cornered in terms of scholarship as many have falsely assumed. Both sides have fallen prey to the notion that preservation requires “verbatim identically” of wording which has led them to advance unscriptural notions regarding the doctrine of preservation. One side confines inspiration and inerrancy to nonexistent original autographs as a means of accounting for variant readings. Meanwhile, the other side ignores the existence of variant readings and insists upon “perfect” or “verbatim” preservation by faith for faith’s sake.

- In this way, the debate regarding “Easter” in Acts 12:4 is a microcosm of the greater textual/version debate. KJO advocates such as Dr. Gipp claim that the KJB is inerrant. This invites Modern Version advocates such as Dr. White to prove that the KJB is not inerrant. Thus, we have the current controversy regarding “Easter” in Acts 12:4 in the KJB.

- Meanwhile, confined by the standard of “verbatim identically” for “perfect preservation” Dr. Gipp endeavors to defend why the only correct rendering of pascha in Acts 12:4 is “Easter.” In the mind of Dr. Gipp, there is no possible way that Luke is talking about “Passover” in Acts 12 or God would have providentially caused the translators to use that word. Therefore, he proceeds to erect a justification for that “exact” word; this is done without even considering that there might be a different way of saying the same thing. Put another way, Gipp is demanding “uniformity of phrasing” in a way that the King James translators did not. In this way, Gipp’s preconceptions limit the scope of his research before he even commences his investigation. This explains why he ignores the clear cross references in Ezekiel 45:21, Matthew 26:17-18, and Luke 22:1; his explanatory model does not know how to account for these verses.

- All of this highlights the need for King James Bible believers to go the extra mile in their study of the KJB. Those who adopt a pro-King James stance will often cite the KJB’s archaic forms and manners of speaking as being more precise than modern English in their ability to convey Biblical truth. While I wholeheartedly agree with this notion, it also mandates that additional study is occasionally in order to understand what words meant in the early 17th century when the translation was made. Too often King James advocates ascribe modern usage and meaning to words that did not necessarily mean the same thing in the early 17th century.
- This study of “Easter” stands out as a case in point. Modern readers have adopted the false etymology of Hislop and are completely unaware that “Easter” had a long history of being used as a reference to the Jewish “Passover.” It was only by looking at pre-1611 English translations, as well as etymological dictionaries, that a clear understanding emerged.

- Consider the illustration of the United States Constitution (I am not saying the Constitution was inspired. I am just using it as an illustration.). Written in the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century, the Constitution, like the KJB; contains some archaic language. In our day people argue about the nature of the Constitution. Strict constructionists view the Constitution as a fixed static document that means what it says (literal hermeneutic); whereas loose constructionists view the Constitution as a fluid document that is subject to societal and cultural interpretation (allegorical hermeneutic).

- To understand the nature of what is being said, strict constructionists will appeal to what words meant in the late 1700s when the Constitution was drafted as justification for their strict/literal interpretation. Moreover, the Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers are viewed as commentaries on the “original intent” of America’s founders and framers. Strict constructionists will appeal to these sources in order to establish “original intent” or what the Constitution meant at the time of its drafting.

- By comparison, King James advocates need to be concerned with the “original intent” of the translators in terms of how they understood and used certain words. Consequently, a willingness to go the extra mile in terms of research is occasionally in order on the part of King James advocates to make sure their understanding of a particular English word corresponds with how the translators understood/used that specific word. Just as the Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers, in addition to dictionaries from that time-period aid in establishing the “original intent” of the Constitution; etymological and early 17\textsuperscript{th} dictionaries, as well as pre-1611 English translations of textus receptus aid in establishing the meaning of English words in the early 1600s when the KJB was translated.

- Sometimes, as in the case of “Easter”, King James advocates need to be willing to conduct additional study in order to arrive at sound conclusions.
Works Cited

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“Easter” or “Passover” in Acts 12:4? at KJV Today.


Hislop, Alexander. The Two Babylons. 1853.


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Appendix A

Etymological information on “Easter” provided by the Oxford English Dictionary

Pronunciation: Brit. /ˈɛstər/, U.S. /ˈɛstər/
Forms: ... (Show More)
Frequency (in current use): ⬤⬤⬤⬤⬤onio
Origin: A word inherited from German.

Etymology: Cognate with Old Dutch ėster- (in östermōned April, lit. ‘Easter-month’), Old Saxon ēster, ēstarn, ēstare, ēstern, plural), Old High German ēstrum, ēstrum (in plural ēstrona, ēstrana, ēstrana), Middle High German ēstern (in plural ēstrona, ēstrana), German Ostern, singular and (now chiefly regional) plural), probably < the same Germanic base as O-Euostara, (and hence ultimately cognate with Sanskrit ēstra, Avestan aštra, ancient Greek ἕστηρ, ἑστήρ, classical Latin ēstrum, all in sense ‘dawn’). For alternative (and less likely) etymologies see the references cited below. It is noteworthy that among the Germanic languages the word (as the name for Easter) is restricted to English and German; in other Germanic languages, as indeed in most European languages, the usual word for Easter is derived from the corresponding word for the Jewish Passover; compare RANΣT ID. 

Bede (De Temporibus Ratione 15, 97 see note below) derives the word < ēstra (a Northumbrian spelling; also ēstera in a variant reading), according to him, the name of a goddess whose festival was celebrated by the pagan Anglo-Saxons around the time of the vernal equinox (presumably in origin a goddess of the dawn, as the name is to be derived from the same Germanic base as O-Euostara, see above). This explanation is not confirmed by any other source, and the goddess has been suspected by some scholars to be an invention of Bede’s. However, it seems unlikely that Bede would have invented a fictitious pagan festival in order to account for a Christian one. For further discussion and alternative derivations see J. H. Green Law. & Hist. Early Germanic World (1996) 371–3. J. Udolph & K. Schäferdecker in J. Hopp’s Religion in der germanischen Altertumskunde (ed. 2. 2003) 133–3, and for a parallel development compare the Latin ēstera. Bede’s etymology comes in a passage explaining the origin of the Old English names of the months:

735. Ælfric De Temporibus Ratione xxi. Eostres-mōna, quia uinc paschalis mensis interpretatur, quoniam a des illorum quae ēstera vocabulur, et cui in illo festa celebrabatur, nomen habuit.

Compare Old English ēastres-mōna April, cognate with or formed similarly to Old Dutch ēstermōned (in an adaptation from German), Old High German ēstramōned (Middle High German östramōned, German Osternmōn, now archaic) < the Germanic base of Easter, the Germanic base of March.

A borrowing of the Old English word into West Slavonic (during the time of the Anglo-Saxon mission to Germany) perhaps underlies Polish jastrel, Lower Sorbian jástř, (regional) jastř, Czech jastř, all in sense ‘Easter’; however, it has been argued that these are rather to be derived from a native base meaning ‘clear, bright’, and thus (via a connection with the coming of spring) show a parallel development to the Germanic word.

The form of the word in Old English shows much (especially dialectal) variation: in West Saxon usually a weak feminine plural (Ēasteor, esp. as form Ēastor, also Ēastron, Ēastron), probably reflecting a variant form of the Germanic thematic element; see A. Campbell Old Eng. Gram. (1959) 504–5; also occasionally found in the singular (Ēastron); an apparently strong feminine plural by-form (Ēastron), apparently Merian, is rarely attested; in Northumbrian usually a strong feminine plural (Ēastron, Ēastron), also occasionally found in the singular (sometimes apparently derivable as Ēastron, sometimes as inflected forms, e.g. Ēastron, Ēastron). The combining form ēastor is widely attested.

The 5 forms represent Old English ēastor (the form of both the weak feminine plural and the inflected form of the weak feminine singular) and are later reflexes. The forms of some compounds in Middle English and early modern English may reflect compounds of the Old English weak feminine genitive singular or plural (respectively Ēaston and Ēastre).

(Show Less)
Appendix B

Relevant Dictionary Entries

“Easter” 1.a. from the Oxford English Dictionary

a. The most important and oldest of the festivals of the Christian Church, commemorating the resurrection of Christ and observed annually on the Sunday which follows the first full moon after the vernal equinox. Also (more generally): Easter week or the weekend from Good Friday to Easter Monday, Eastertide. In Old English freq. in pl.

Easter is observed on the first Sunday after the paschal full moon (not the astronomical full moon) which occurs on or after 22 March. The actual date varies according to the calendar used in its calculation.


IOE. Anglo-Saxon Chron. (Laud) anno 1105. To Cristenamæan heolde se cyng Heorung his hired on Westwymeste & to Eastren on Winccestre.
81275 (*790.80) MS Tran. Camb. in e R. Morris Old Eng. Homilies (1872) and Sec. 105 (MED)., Ælhere dage biforn æstry [ben] celpt swidages.
81775 (*790.80) Lassæme Bryt (Calig.) 9230. He feore to Lindem. He was þær an Eastre.
9025 (*790.52) Gen. & Ecel. (1868). 389. For of in estere be we wumen Seone side to sunt cumen.
1100. Promptorium Parvaerum (Harl. 251) 443/2. Easternes, Pascha.
1150 St. Edith (Tans.) (1883) l. 310. Dis miracle was þis, þ-de. In þe artuere norste æfter hurre boþu-þvange.
1530 Myngeoure Nede (fawkes) (1873) ii. 276. From passyon sundag til Esternes.
1553 R. Hookes Of London Ecol. Politie ev. xi. 104. Keeping the feast of Easter on the same day the lovs kept theirs.
1657 T. Fuller Church-hist. Brit. ii. 55. The Spring-time, wherein the Feast of Easter was celebrated.
1980 Durrie Kind Keeper sv. l. 39. He made me keepe Lent last year till Whitountide, and out-landed me with Oathes, it was but Easter.
21720 G. Mairan Religieuse Dix Andrews (1797) 188. The simple meat. beginning the second week after Easter.
17680 J. Pleseley Hist. Corruptions Christianity II. viii. 129. The first festival. that was observed was Easter.
1838 W. Howes Rural Life Eng. II. iv. 166. Easter was the great festival of the church.
1808 G. M. Cornwell Let. 15 Apr. (1870) l. 199. By the way, my darling little man came home at Easter.
1916 Tarratt, Pincher Martin vii. 142. Most of the younger men were past caring whether it was Christmas or Easter.
1924 Los Angeles Times 12 Apr. n. 104. A bowlful of posynky, blessed at Easter, guards a Ukrainian home against lightning and fire.
1934 Independent 22 Feb. 10/4. I used to visit her at Easter and the summer hols, and cried buckets when I left her.
5006 St James Parish Mag. (Blackburn) Apr. 9. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross, enfolded in the glory of Easter.

“Easter” 2. from the Oxford English Dictionary

Passover 1.a. from the Oxford English Dictionary

I. Senses relating to the Jewish festival.

1.

a. The major Jewish spring festival which commemorates the liberation of the People of Israel from Egyptian bondage, lasting seven days (in Israel) or eight days (in the Diaspora) from the 15th day of Nisan. Cf. Passover.
1.
The church festival of Easter, Easter Sunday: the Easter season -- usually without article

2.

The Jewish Passover.

"Easter" from American Dictionary of the English Language (1828)
Appendix C

1611 Chart for Determining the Date for Easter

When ye have found the Sunday letter in the uppermost line, guide your eye downward from the same, till ye come right over against the same, and there is shewed both what Sunday, and what day of the Sonnes Easter fallith that yeere.
Appendix D

*Oxford English Dictionary* entry for “Passover”

I. Senses relating to the Jewish festival.

1. The major Jewish spring festival which commemorates the liberation of the People of Israel from Egyptian bondage, lasting seven days (in Israel) or eight days (in the Diaspora) from the 15th day of Nisan. Cf. *Pesach* n.

1530 *Bible (Tyndale)* Exod. xii. i. xiv. And ye shall eate it in haste, for it is the Lordes passeover.

1535 *Bible (Coverdale)* Exod. xii. 43 This is the maner of the keepynge of Passeover.

1561 *G. H. Sco Confit. Abbot of Corragnels Masse* 62 If the eating [of the Pascall lamb] had bene omittt the whole action of the Passouer wes but a sacrifis.

1608 *Disput. Kneeling Sacram.* 49 The circumstance of the Evening, and of the interamentation belonged peculiarly to the feast of the Passover, and of the unleavened bread.

1662 W. GODWILL, *Christian in Armour: 3rd Pt.* 687 Baptism is clearer than Circumcision, Lords Supper than Passeover.


1797 *Encycl. Brit.* XIV. 17/2 The modern Jews observe in general the same ceremonies that were practised by their ancestors, in the celebration of the passover.

1840 *Penny Cyclo.* XVII. 304 Passover...also called the feast of unleavened bread.

1893 J. A. *Brodan Harm. Gospels* 243 The Bi-paschal theory makes the time of the public life of Jesus one year, allowing only two Passovers to the Gospel of John.

1947 *Amer. Social. Rev.* 32 150/2 He was introduced to matzoth when a Jewish woman brought some to his family on Passover.

1963 *Jrnl. Afr. Hist.* 4 337 The only restriction of which the Jews complained was the prohibition of exhibiting the Tora in public at Passover.

2002 *Vanity Fair (N.Y.)* Jan. 150/2 The Palestinian leader called to congratulate him on the birth of twin grandsons and to wish him a happy Passover.
Appendix E

*Oxford English Dictionary entry for “Easter”*

2. = *Passover* n. 1. Now only in *Jewish Easter* or with other contextual indication.

OE *Blickling Homilies 67* Hælend cwom syl ðagum ær ðeode eæstrum. to Bethania.
OE *West Saxon Gospels: Mark* (Corpus Camb.) xiv. 1 Sællice æa æfter twam dagum weron eastron.

- c1450 (C1.400) *Bk. Visits & Virtues* (Huntington) 131 (MED). Wip gote desire I haue desired þis Eastren, þat is þis Paske.
- 1588 *Bible (Coverdale)* Ezek. xlv. 21 Vpon y siriij. dayes of the first moneth ye shal kepe Easter.
- 1563 *2nd Tome Homelyes Whitsunday* 1. in J. Griffiths *Two Bks. Homilies* (1879) ii. 453 *Easter, a great, and solenne feast among the Jews.*
- 1614 *Bible (King James)* Acts xii. 4 Intending after Easter to bring him fourth.
- 1662 P. Georgius *Paschal or Lent-Fast 57* S. John and S. Phillip finding it usefull...to observe the Christian Easter on the same day with the Jewish Easter.
- 1792 J. Dodwell *Disc. Infl. Christian Religion* xii. 213 *The catastrophe took place at the celebration of Easter, when the Jews had flocked to the city from the distant regions of the empire.*
- 1812 *Port Folio* Sept. 397 An extract from two Hebrew words on the Jewish easter.
- 1883 J. L. Macginn *Fastal Year* viii. 261 *The Jews held their Easter on the fourteenth moon of the month of March.*
- 1934 *Times* 24 Dec. 9/6 During the 14 years from A.D. 30 to 33 the only year in which the Jewish Easter (15 Nisan) fell on a Friday was the year 27.
- 1973 *Adolescent Psychiatry* 3 60 Hence, the English name Passover for the Jewish Easter.
- 2004 J. Lawrence tr. J. Pérez *Spanish Inquisition* 19 They ceased all activities on the day of the sabbath, recited Jewish prayers, celebrated Jewish Easter and other festivals.
### New Testament Occurrences

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### Totals

- **WestSaxon** (990 uses) of Easter/Tyndale used some form of Ostern used /29 times that it occurs in the New Testament
- **Wycliffe** (1382-1395) used /39 times that passover was found in the TR
- **Luther** (1522 NT) used /39 times that Ostern is used in the TR
- **Tyndale** (1526 NT) used /39 times that Ostern is used in the TR
- **Coverdale** (1535) used /39 times that Ostern is used in the TR
- **Matthews** (1537) used /39 times that Ostern is used in the TR
- **Great** (1539) used /39 times that Ostern is used in the TR
- **Geneva NT** (1557) used /39 times that Ostern is used in the TR
- **Geneva** (1560) used /39 times that Ostern is used in the TR
- **Bishops** (1568) used /39 times that Ostern is used in the TR
- **KJB** (1611) used /39 times that Ostern is used in the TR

- The WestSaxon Gospels of 990 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The WestSaxon Gospels of 1175 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Wycliffe Gospels of 1382-1395 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Luther Gospels of 1522 NT use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Tyndale Gospels of 1526 NT use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Coverdale Gospels of 1535 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Matthews Gospels of 1537 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Great Gospels of 1539 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Geneva NT Gospels of 1557 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Geneva Gospels of 1560 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Bishops Gospels of 1568 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The KJB Gospels of 1611 use some form of Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament

- The WestSaxon Gospels of 990 use the word Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The WestSaxon Gospels of 1175 use the word Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
- The Wycliffe Gospels of 1382-1395 use the word Ostern /29 times that Ostern is used in the New Testament
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### Appendix F

*“Easter” in the English Bible: A Brief Look at the History of Translation*

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*The WestSaxon Gospels of 990 use some form of “Easter” all 26 times the Jewish Passover is referenced in the Gospels.*
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