

The Messenger

COLDWATER CHURCH OF CHRIST

April 24, 2011



EASTER

by Garland M. Robinson

The celebration of Easter is well-known in our society and is observed by the masses. Few, however, know its origin and that it holds no authority from the Bible. Many traditions exist as to the origin of the word "Easter," but one thought appears to be present in most all ideas, Easter refers to the East and rising sun, and in many people's minds, causing it to have a connection with the resurrection.

The observance of Easter represents a convergence of three particular events:

- 1) The Hebrew passover (celebrated during the month of Nisan which is the first of the month of the Hebrew calendar. It always fell in the Spring of the year).
- 2) The commemoration of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ (which happened to take place during the feast of the Hebrew passover).
- 3) A pagan festival of Spring which fell at the vernal equinox on March 21. This pagan festival embodied the worship of the goddess of the Saxons in whose honor sacrifices were offered annually.

The merging of these three events became associated with the unauthorized festival of the resurrection which was celebrated each year at the time of the passover.

The day on which Easter was to be observed has been much disputed. The council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) decreed it should be on Sunday but did not establish which particular Sunday. It was not until the 7th century that the rule was finally set and adopted. This same method of calculation is used today. Easter Sunday is determined to be: 1) The first Sunday after, 2) The first full moon after, 3) The first day of Spring (March 21).

Easter Sunday may fall anywhere between March 21 and April 25, a period of 35 days. This explains why Easter is on a different Sunday every year instead of on the same Sunday in the same month every year.

Many other occasions are connected with the celebration of "Easter Season."

LENT or "**Lenten**" is the name applied to the forty days of fasting preceding Easter Sunday. The word "Lent" signifies the Spring-fast for "lenten-tide." It is observed in commemoration of Jesus' fast in the wilderness for a period of forty days. It begins on "Ash-Wednesday" which is forty days before Easter (Sundays excluded). It is supposed to be a time of penitence where one shows sorrow for sin and their need to seek forgiveness. It is a time its observers prepare for Easter by abstaining from certain foods and activities. The Bible gives no authority as to anything concerning this event.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you... (1 John 1:5).

**VISITORS,
WELCOME!**

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Bible Class
10:30 a.m. WORSHIP
5:00 p.m. WORSHIP

Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Class

We have Bible classes for
all ages & Pew Packers
on 1st & 3rd Sundays at
4:15 p.m.

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ELDERS

Billy Bland

W. Timothy Wilkes, Sr.

Jim Jackson

DEACONS

Jason Bayless Jared Brown

Jerry Davis Jeffrey Ferrell

Ron Johnson Andy Ratliff

PREACHER

Clifton Angel

ASH-WEDNESDAY is the first day of Lent. It came from a custom observed by people expressing their humiliation at this time by appearing in sack-cloth and ashes. In some churches, ashes burned from the preceding years Palm Sunday is blessed by the priest and used to mark a cross on the foreheads of the members of the congregation. This reminds the people to begin their lenten penance in a humble spirit. Like the other observances in this study, there is no authority from the scriptures to observe such a day.

PALM-SUNDAY is the Sunday before Easter and marks the beginning of what many call “Holy Week” or “Passion Week.” Palm-Sunday is supposed to honor Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem where palm branches were used to align the road (cf. John 12:12-15). The first celebration of this was not known until the fourth century — 300 years after the revelation of God’s word was complete!

MAUNDY-THURSDAY (also called Holy Thursday) is the Thursday before Easter and is supposed to recall to one’s mind Jesus’ last meal with the twelve apostles in the upper room. In some places, the priest will wash the feet of twelve members of the congregation to show that Jesus washed his disciples’ feet.

GOOD FRIDAY (the Friday before Easter) is supposed to observe the death of Jesus on the cross and his suffering for our sins. However, according to the New Testament, Christians observe the Lord’s death the first day of every week, not simply on one day of the year (cf. Acts 20:7).

HOLY SATURDAY (the day before Easter) is supposed to be a day of solemn vigil (waiting). Some churches hold vigil services which often include the baptism of new members. Many times this leads up to a dramatic moment in which all the lights are put out leaving everyone in the dark. The priest will light a tall candle which represents the risen Christ. He then lights the members’ candles which is supposed to symbolize the light of Jesus going out into the world. Many vigils last until dawn which ends in a “sun-rise service.” Many denominations have a special “sun-rise service” on Easter morning.

WEARING NEW CLOTHES (including a bonnet, hat) on Easter Sunday is an established tradition in some places. It originated from the practice of having those who had recently been baptized to wear new white robes for Easter. The new clothes represented the new life offered through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

EASTER EGGS have long been a part of the Easter Season. Eggs were considered to be a symbol of life and creation. The giving of multi-colored eggs was a custom throughout the East. Purple was the color of kings and nobility. In ancient times, purple dye was very expensive so that only the rich could afford it. Yellow was the color of the sun with its radiance and brilliance. White was the color of purity. In uninspired church history, the egg symbolized the immature hope of the resurrection.

RABBITS (Easter bunny) are connected with the observance of Easter because they are associated with the fertility of Spring. Their ability to multiply, bringing “new life” into the world, brings hope and joy. Tradition says the Easter bunny brings a basket of multi-colored eggs the night before Easter which is hidden either in the house or in the garden for children to find the next morning.

PRETZELS and **HOT CROSS BUNS** are supposed to be a Lenten food. The Saxons honored their goddess of Spring by eating wheat cakes. It is believed that from this ritual came the idea of hot cross buns and pretzels. The buns had a cross of icing on top and the pretzels brought to mind a person praying with their arms folded across their chest. In some places they are given to the poor to eat during Lent.

WHIT-SUNDAY is sometimes called Whitsuntide, White Sunday or Pentecost Sunday. It comes fifty days after Easter and marks the end of the Easter season. It is in commemoration of the Pentecost day we read of in Acts two when the Holy Spirit descended upon the twelve apostles. Newly baptized people would wear their robes of white on that day.

Easter, and its associated festivities, is considered by the masses to be the greatest event in the Christian religion. Some will “go to church” on that Sunday when they do not go any other Sunday of the year. Does the Bible claim Easter Sunday is of greater significance than any other Sunday of the year? You will search in vain to find it! It’s not there.

The facts bear testimony that Easter and its seasonal observance stand without any Bible authority whatsoever. There is no command, example or implication anywhere in scripture that would authorize...

Sermon Review

THE OLD LAW

(Matthew 5:17-20)

- I. IT IS FULFILLED (v. 17).
- II. IT IS FORTIFIED (v. 18).
- III. IT IS FUNDAMENTAL (v. 19, 20).

THE PASSOVER

(Exodus 12; 1 Corinthians 5:7)

Most of material and outline came from Glenn Colley's sermon for 2010 MSOP Lectureship.

- I. GENTLE.
- II. PERFECT.
- III. DELIVERANCE.
- IV. LEAVEN.
- V. BLOOD.

...the observance of this day with any religious significance. New Testament Christians observe and commemorate the death of Christ each and every Lord's day, the first day of the week (Sunday), in the observance of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23- 26).

Since the celebration of Easter came about after the time of the apostles and New Testament revelation, it has no place in worship guided by the Word of God. In fact, there are no special occasions, seasons, dates, or day(s) that have any religious significance for the Lord's church and Christians. The New Testament authorizes Christians to assemble and worship on every first day of the week. Since every week has a first day, the whole church assembles for worship. Authorized worship includes: singing (Eph. 5:19), praying (Acts 2:42), Lord's supper (Acts 20:7), giving (1 Cor. 16:1- 2) and preaching (Acts 20:7). Every Sunday is the same as the Sunday which comes before it and the Sunday which comes after it. Any "first day" is no more special than any other. It is man, not God, who makes some days or times more important and special than others; and, man does so to his own peril.

[Editor's Note: For the sake of space, I removed a section here from the original article concerning the word "Easter" being found in the King James Version. The section removed is also very informative and interesting, and I recommend any one desiring to read this section to visit:

<http://www.seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/stop/stop111.pdf>

Brother Robinson's article along with other articles can be found at this specific link; however, this link is only to one publication of "Seek the Old Paths". For other publications and resources, visit:

<http://www.seektheoldpaths.com>

Also, I want us to notice below that brother Robinson says "to celebrate Easter *with any religious significance*". He is not saying it is wrong to have special days where we enjoy fun, fellowship, and family, if I read this correctly.]

To celebrate Easter with any religious significance is to go beyond the authority of the scriptures and therefore, stands condemned (2 John 9-11). How would one explain to the Lord on judgment day that he added religious observances to the Christian life without any regards to the Bible? Human tradition makes worship vain (Matt. 15:8-9). Paul told the Galatian brethren, "*Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain*" (Gal. 4:10- 11).

The Lord's people (true Christianity) do not have a "Christian calendar" as the world often refers to it. The New Testament knows nothing about Saint Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, Advent, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Saint Andrew's Day, Saint Patrick's Day, All Saint's Day (they were running out of days so they grouped them all together), Christmas, Epiphany, Twelfth Night, on and on and on. Name them all, NOT ONE has any religious significance attached to it in the Bible. Man created them and with man they all will perish. As the Lord's people, we must not go beyond that which is written (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9- 11).

NEWS & NOTES

Please Pray

GOOD NEWS: Amanda Ferrell has officially passed all comps and will graduate with her Master's Degree May 7!

Nora Boling, is continuing to recover from her surgery and continues to experience some pain. It was good to see her Wednesday.

Wiley Tuggle, had a 2nd run of tests and found that he has a cyst on one kidney and an enlarged heart. He is taking medication for the cyst and doing well he says.

Chris Holmes; Betty Tuggle; Caleb Baker.

Tim II, Rachel, & Titus Wilkes with full time mission work.

Family & Friends

Doc Hunt--Jared's grandfather, is not doing well, and not expected to live much longer. Let us keep the family in our prayers.

Richard & Pat Allen--Richard is one of the elders at the congregation in Monroe, GA. His wife Pat has been battling cancer for some time and is not doing well.

Gilbert & Nancy Ray--Gilbert is another of the elders in Monroe, GA. His wife's (Nancy) mother (Eva Speakman) passed away.

Jo Smith--daughter of Sara Norris, is awaiting results from tests done concerning her heart.

Clanton Family; Collins Family; Margie Verrell; Hawkins Family; House Family; Imugene Mason Family, Jeannie Burrell Family; Carol Busch; Wilton Wooten; Clay Collums; Bob Spurlin; David Bragg; Brianna Edwards; Joe Culbreath; James Angel; Steve Angel; Dave Leonard, Sr.; Gloria Angel;

Let us not forget to pray for the works being done through Fishers of Men, Far East Missions, and the Open Door Ministry.

April Anniversaries

Ashby & Tammy Johnson 4/4

April Birthdays

Nora Boling 4/4
Ainsley Moore 4/6
Aubrey Ratliff 4/20
Jane Sowell 4/21

Get Involved!

GOSPEL MEETINGS:

Calvary Hill Church of Christ--Apr. 24-27--Gary Henry
Sardis Church of Christ--Apr. 24-27--Norman Starling
2nd Annual NW MS Gospel Meeting--May 2-4--David Lipe

Men & Children Camping--April 29

See Andy & Jeffrey for details.
Signup sheet in the foyer.

Coldwater Workday--May 7

Coldwater Lock-in--May 20

Coldwater VBS--June 12-16

SLCC--June 19-25--Session 2

Camp Applications in Foyer.

Privileged to Serve

Sunday, April 24

Morning

Prayer Before Class	Adam Sowell
Announcements	Jason Bayless
Song Leader	Andy Ratliff
Lord's Supper:	
Preside	Jeffrey Ferrell
	Johnny Bayless
Assist	Shane Staten
	Jim Jackson
Opening Prayer	Jerry Davis
Sermon	Clifton Angel
Closing Prayer	Jeremy Moore

Evening

Song Leader	Andy Ratliff
Opening Prayer	Jared Brown
Sermon	Tim Wilkes, II
Lord's Supper	Jeffrey Ferrell
	Shane Staten
	Ron Johnson
Closing Prayer	

Wednesday, April 27

Song Leader	Andy Ratliff
Prayer	Timothy Wilkes, Sr.
Invitation	Clifton Angel
Prayer	Johnny Bayless