

# Lighthouse Beacon

April 2011

## “EASTER”

This year Easter falls on April 24<sup>th</sup>, which seems to be awfully late in the year. So, I decided to research just how late Easter can occur, and uncovered some interesting facts that I will share with you this month.

Easter is a great time to share your faith with your family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. So please consider how the following info might help you open a conversation with someone and perhaps tell them about the Savior you love. Easter is a wonderful time to.....*Let Him Shine!*

Here is a great scripture that exhorted Israel to look forward to their King who would forever free them and fulfill God's covenant with them. From **Zechariah 9:9**—

**Rejoice, O people of Zion!  
Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!**

**Look, your king is coming to you.**

**He is righteous and victorious,**

**yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—**

**riding on a donkey's colt.**

Unfortunately, most of Israel did not really recognize Jesus on that donkey as their King, so within one week after His arrival in Jerusalem on a small donkey (we call this day Palm Sunday), those who would declare Him King, instead crucified Him. Thus began the journey to the appointed time we call Easter.

“The name ‘Easter’ derives from the Anglo-Saxon goddess of Spring (Eostre or Ostara), but the Christian festival developed from the Jewish Passover (Heb. pesach, Gk. *pascha*), because according to the Gospels the events of Jesus' last days took place at the time of Passover.



Easter was originally observed on the day following the end of the Passover fast (14 Nisan), regardless of the day of the week on which it fell. In the mid-second century, however, some Gentile Christians began to celebrate it on the Sunday after 14 Nisan, with the preceding Friday observed as the day of Christ's crucifixion, regardless of the date on which it fell. The resulting controversy over the correct time for observing the Easter festival reached a head in A.D. 197, when Victor of Rome excom-

*“Let your light shine so that others may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matt 5:16*

municated those Christians who insisted on celebrating Easter on 14 Nisan. The dispute continued until the early fourth century, when the Quarto-decimans (from Latin for '14') were required by Emperor Constantine to conform to the empire-wide practice of observing Easter on the Sunday following 14 Nisan, rather than on that date itself.

Currently celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox, Easter falls differently for Orthodox Christianity which, unlike Western Christianity, did not accept the Gregorian calendar reform in 1582." From Harper's Bible Dictionary

Eerdmans Bible Dictionary also adds: "The Western church, following the Gospel accounts of Christ's resurrection in Matthew, set the festival on a Sunday, the first to follow the new moon which occurs on or immediately after the vernal (spring) equinox as determined by the Council of Nicaea (325); thus the dates for Easter may range from March 22 to April 25." Here is the passage Eerdmans is referring to from **Matthew 28:1-7**:

<sup>1</sup>Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.

<sup>2</sup>Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His face shone like lightning, and His clothing was as white as snow. <sup>4</sup>The guards shook with fear when they saw Him, and

they fell into a dead faint. <sup>5</sup>Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He isn't

here! He is risen from the dead, just as He said would happen. Come, see where His body was lying. <sup>7</sup>And now, go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and He is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Him there. Remember what I have told you."

And several sources cited the beginnings of Easter from what they called "an unusual translation of "Passover" in the King James Version of **Acts 12:4**:

"And when he had apprehended Him, he put *Him* in prison, and deliv-



**"...you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." —Ephesians 5:8**

ered Him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep Him; intending after Easter to bring Him forth to the people."

So here we have a lot of interesting background information con-

cerning the Biblical and religious foundations for Easter. But during my research I was reminded of what may be the very best perspective to help Christians explain Easter, as it was penned by Charles Wesley:

### *Gwen's Corner*

Our friend Jacquie gave us a subscription to Guideposts Magazine for Christmas. I enjoyed reading a recent article about a woman who, with her husband and son, moved to a new neighborhood. She expected to be greeted by the neighbors but even after one month of living there, there had been no greetings at all. So she decided to take the initiative and took gifts and greetings to them. She was warmly received and found out there were reasons the neighbors had remained homebound—one had a brand new baby and another was an elderly woman whose adult son had just moved back home to recover from hip surgery. After living there for several years now, she enjoys many friendships in the neighborhood.

Kim & I had some new neighbors move in two doors up from us about a month ago. We met them briefly outdoors one day but after reading the Guideposts article, I was convicted that I needed to take them a welcome gift. So I picked up a bright orange Gerber daisy at the store and baked some chocolate chip cookies and took them up to them last week. The husband & wife invited me in and were so gracious and grateful. We talked a few minutes and I invited them to come to church with us some Sunday. The husband thanked me for extending such kindness to them but especially for inviting them to church. I left thanking God for leading me to make that visit.

Sometimes we need just a little encouragement or prompting to do what we need to do. The timely Guidepost article was just what I needed to spur me on to go visit my new neighbors. And now, I pray that this article will be an encouragement for you to make a visit or reach out to someone in your neighborhood!

*Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.  
Hebrews 10:24*

**"You are the light of the world." —Matthew 5:14**

**"CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY!"**

Christ the Lord is ris'n today, Alleluia!  
Sons of men and angels say: Alleluia!  
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!  
Sing, ye heav'ns, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious king: Alleluia!  
Where, O death is now thy sting? Alleluia!  
Dying once, He all doth save: Alleluia!  
Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!  
Fought the fight, the battle won; Alleluia!  
Death in vain forbids Him rise; Alleluia!  
Christ has opened Paradise. Alleluia!

Soar we now, where Christ has led, Alleluia!  
Foll'wing our exalted Head; Alleluia!  
Made like Him, like Him we rise; Alleluia!  
Ours the cross, the grace, the skies. Alleluia!

This is Easter—that He came to die so we may live. And as Jesus told the man freed from the demons called Legion: "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." Luke 8:39

So, this Easter let us all do as Jesus commanded and go share with everyone the good things God has done for you. Hopefully, this will be their very best Easter, especially if they respond to His Good News and accept Jesus as their Savior! And it will be a great Easter for you when you .....*Let Him Shine!*

**LightShine's Praises & Prayer Requests:**

**PRAISE!** We have found a designer for our website and have officially started work on that. But there is much work to do so please continue to **pray** for us and all the text that must be rewritten and also for the designer, for him to receive from God insight and creativity.

**PRAY** for all Christians everywhere to reach out in the God's love toward their neighbors and anyone the Lord might bring into their path.

***Who Is LightShine Ministries?***

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