

From where does the word “Easter” come?

by Gene Veith on April 5, 2010

David Koyzis has a fascinating post on that question. Other languages call the festival of Christ’s resurrection some version of the Aramaic word for “Passover,” namely, “Pascha.” This is a good Biblical term. But the Germans call it “Ostern” and the English call it “Eastern.” The Anglo-Saxon historian the Venerable Bede said that the word derives from “Eostre,” a pagan fertility goddess with rites in the beginning of Spring.

But twentieth-century scholarship has called into question Bede’s interpretation. There is still no general agreement on the origin of the word, but it has been suggested that it may come, not from the name of a goddess, but from *eostaran*, the Old High German word for the dawn itself. (Our word *east* obviously has similar origins.) In fact there are some remarkable similarities between the words for resurrection, Easter and dawn in several Indo-European languages. The common meaning underlying these words is a rising of some sort.

If our own word Easter originally meant sunrise, then perhaps it was fittingly applied to the Rising of the Son of God from the dead by our Teutonic forebears. And if this is so, then it seems that we English-speakers do after all have a most appropriate name for the feast of Christ’s Resurrection.

WHAT IS A PASCHAL CANDLE?

The paschal candle is an ancient symbol of the risen Jesus and commonly used in liturgical parishes during the Great Fifty Days of Easter. It is a very large white candle, the largest and tallest of all sanctuary candles. Paschal candles are always inscribed with a cross, usually with the current year, and the Greek letters alpha and omega (Revelation 1:8 and 22:13), signifying that the Lord is present in His church now in the present year and forever in eternity. Sometimes, five grains of incense, symbolizing the five wounds of Christ, are pressed into the arms and center of the cross with pins or small nails. The paschal candle is prominently featured in the Easter Vigil Service (Holy Saturday) at which it is first lighted and brought into the sanctuary. According to ancient liturgical tradition, it is allowed to shine continuously throughout the Great Fifty Days until it is finally extinguished on Ascension Day. For much of the year many churches stand the paschal candle near the font used for baptisms. Here it provides a reminder that baptism is a death and rebirth with Christ; just like Christ’s death and Resurrection. It is lighted at baptisms to remind Christians that in baptism we are crucified and raised with Jesus (Romans 6:3-5). The paschal candle is also lighted at Christian funerals as a reminder that those who die in Christ

The Resurrection of our Lord

March 31, 2024

INTROIT

Exodus 15:2a, 6,13,17-18; Antiphon: Exodus 15:1b

*I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.*

*The LORD is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation.*

*Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power,
your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.*

*You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed;
you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.*

*You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain,
the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode,
the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.*

The LORD will reign forever and ever."

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.*

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P *Almighty God the Father, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,
You have overcome death and opened the gate of everlasting life to us.
Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection,
may be raised from the death of sin by Your life-giving Spirit; through
Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy
Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

C *♪[Amen]♪*

GRADUAL

adapt. From Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6

Christ has risen from the dead.

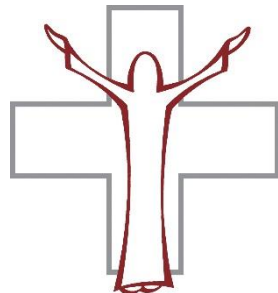
[God the Father] has crowned him with glory and honor,
*He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
he has put all things under his feet.*

RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

After each petition:

P *Lord, in Your mercy,*

C *hear our prayer.*



Isaiah 25:6-9 (ESV)

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,

of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain

the covering that is cast over all peoples,

the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸ He will swallow up death forever;

and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,

and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day,

“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for him;

let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (ESV)

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one

time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Mark 16:1-8 (ESV)

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³ And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”

⁴ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. ⁶ And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” ⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

EASTER SUNDAY

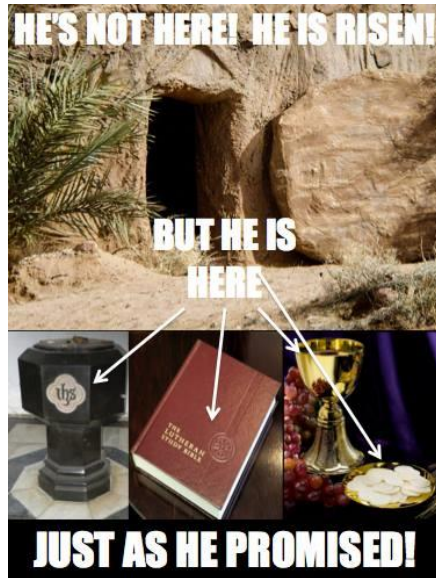
Isaiah 25:6–9

1 Corinthians 15:1–11

Mark 16:1–8

The Risen Christ Has Swallowed Up Death Forever!

The entire fallen world is veiled in a funeral shroud “*that is spread over all nations*” and “*cast over all peoples*” (Is. 25:7). But the Lord of hosts, in the Person of the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, has removed that terrible pall and swallowed up death forever. By submitting Himself to death He burst it apart from the inside out. Now He wipes away all tears from our faces, and He invites us to “*be glad and rejoice in His salvation*” (Is. 25:9). His Body and His Blood, crucified and risen, are given and poured out for us as a feast “*of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined*” (Is. 25:6). We enter that feast through Holy Baptism, whereby our old man is buried with Jesus Christ, and we are raised up in Him, “*dressed in a white robe*” of His perfect righteousness (Mark 16:5). What St. Paul and the other Apostles received “*by the grace of God*” is also “*delivered to you*” by the preaching of Christ, “*in which you stand, and by which you are being saved*” (1 Cor. 15:1–11).



Next Week's Readings from God's Word:

April 7: The Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 148 (v.13); 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31