# Polycrates

A letter to Victor, Bishop of Rome, quoted in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* v. 24. 2-8 translated by Kirsopp Lake, Vol.1 (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949). pp.505, 507, 509. Reprinted by permission of the publishers and The Loeb Classical Library, says the following:

"*Therefore we keep the day undeviatingly, neither adding nor taking away, for in Asia [Minor] great luminaries sleep, and they will rise on the day of the coming of the Lord, when he shall come with glory from heaven and seek out all the saints. Such were* ***Philip*** *. . . and his two daughters. . . . There is also* ***John****, who lay on the Lord's breast. . . . And there is also Polycarp at Smyrna, both bishop and martyr, and Thraseas, both bishop and martyr, from Eumenaea. . . . [Also] Sagaris, . . . Papirius, . . . and Melito. . . . All these kept the fourteenth day of the* <u>*Passover*</u> *according to the gospel, never swerving, but following according to the rule of faith. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, love according to the tradition of my kinsmen, and some of them have I followed. For seven of my family were bishops* [elders in the church] *and I am the eighth, and my kinsmen ever kept the day when the people* <u>*put away the leaven*</u>*. Therefore, brethren, I who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord and conversed with brethren from every country, and have studied all holy Scripture, am not afraid of threats, for they have said, who were greater than I, "It is better to obey God rather than men." . . .*

I couldn't have said it better myself. Love that last line. The bishop of Rome was probably livid! Wish I could have been a fly on the wall....

Polycrates was summoned to appear before the Bishop of Rome to explain why he would not observe Easter or teach its observance. As a young believer, Polycrates was a contemporary of the disciple John before John died. He apparently knew the disciple Philip as well.

Polycrates is very emphatic about the practices of the early assembly. The early assembly unswervingly observed Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread. Regrettably, as the early leaders died and paganism began to creep into the assembly--brought by Satan under the guise of Gentile converts, Easter replaced Passover entirely in the realm of believers. Only Israelites remained faithful to the feasts ordained by the Almighty. As the "Jews" were more and more reviled by believers, and persecution of the "Jews" increased, Christianity distanced itself from the faith of Israel by adopting "Christian festivals" forsaking the Divinely ordained festivals.

Do New Years, Valentines, Good Friday, Easter, Lent, Halloween, Christmas, and Sunday worship sound familiar? Beast days vs. Feast Days. It's past time to return to the original holy days.