

# Easter

Celebration  
or Pagan?



Brother Mark

# Preface

Easter is UnBiblical. I would like to preface the following study by saying, I'm absolutely convinced of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I'm convinced that He bodily rose from the dead, and was not found in corruption. I affirm, with all conviction and prompting from the Holy Spirit, that we must reverence and uphold the truth of the resurrection. This study is not about proving or disproving the resurrection—it's about discovering the truth of a holiday that we have been deceived into believing is the "actual day" our Lord Jesus rose from the dead.

We have been told, and believed for hundreds of years, that "Easter" is a holiday celebrating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is it wrong to celebrate the resurrection, and call it Easter, during this time? Yes. Is it good to celebrate the resurrection? Yes.

## **Old Testament**

In the Old Testament passages, looking forward to the resurrection, and its teachings are found in Job 19:26; Ps. 16:10, 49:15; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2,13; Hos. 13:14; Ezek. 37:1-10; typified in Isaac Gen. 22:13 with Heb. 11:19; in Jonah 2:10 with Matt. 12:40.

The resurrection of Christ is an established fact in the Old Testament which had its fulfillment in the New Testament.

## **New Testament**

Looking at the resurrection fulfilled in Christ, here are some of the many scriptures: Matt. 22:29-32, 20:19; Mark 9:9, 16:19; Luke 14:14, 24:45,46; John 5:28,29, 11:44, 2:19-22, 20:20; Acts 10:40, 13:33; Rom. 4:25; 1 Corin. 15:12-20.

The resurrection was fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ and established as a fact as presented in the New Testament. The true desire of all believers should be obedience to our Lord and His Word. Without the Bible's guidance, and instruction, we would be no example of the powerful transforming work of Christ in our lives. We're to follow our Lord and adhere to His Word without question.

In order to elucidate the topic of Easter we must go back and research information—to gain a complete understanding of it. We must be thorough.

# What's in a name?

The word "Easter" is used one time in the Bible—in Acts 12:4:

*"And when he had apprehended him, he put [him] in prison, and delivered [him] to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."*

The problem is clearly a bias on the part of the King James translators in rendering the word as such. In the original Greek it reads:

ὄν καὶ πιάσας ἔθετο εἰς φυλακὴν παραδοὺς τέσσαρσιν τετραδίους στρατιωτῶν φυλάσσειν αὐτόν βουλόμενος μετὰ τὸ πάσχα ἀναγαγεῖν αὐτὸν τῷ λαῷ

The word used by the original author was *pascha*. Which, in 28 out of the 29 times used in the New Testament, it's translated "Passover." However, in Acts 12:4 it's rendered "Easter" there is no good reason for this. We're not, nor would we ever, say that God's Word is in error; only that the translators "knew" it should have been "Passover" and rendered it "Easter." In our King James Bibles, it must read "Passover", not Easter.

*Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Gal. 4:8-11)*

The pagan year usually has four cardinal days, or periods, for celebration—fall, midwinter, spring, and midsummer.

## **The Vernal Equinox**

This is the day (or period of days) in spring when the days and nights are again of approximately equal length. This is a time of celebrating new life, the resurrection of nature from the dead, and it has typically featured fertility rites, merrymaking, and usually centers on orgiastic sexual activities.

In ancient times there was the sacrificing of virgins, the worship of fertility gods and goddesses (Pan, Isis, Demeter, Ceres) and worship of the phallus. "Maypoles" almost certainly had their origin as phallic shrines, around which orgiastic celebrants danced to honor the male sex organ. Such practices are known to have been featured in spring festivals in ancient Egypt, Babylon, Greece and among the Druids in Great Britain and Europe. Eggs, as symbols of fertility and new life, have always been featured in such pagan festivals, as have rabbits (symbols of vigorous sexual activity and reproduction). Many of these practices continue today.

Since the Resurrection took place in the Spring, and since the pagans had for many centuries been celebrating new life, fertility and the return of growing things each year at the same time (the Vernal, or Spring, Equinox when day and night were of equal length), the old pagan practices eased their way into this part of the life of the Church.

There was no Easter celebration, as such, in the Church in those early centuries. But the Springtime activities of paganism began to attach themselves to the annual time of the Passover, and slowly Easter grew, being finally embraced by the Church as an annual celebration of the Resurrection.

The name **Easter** is not Christian. One must remember it is wrongly translated in our King James Bibles from "Passover" to "Easter." According to the Venerable Bede, a Christian historian, and theologian, writing in the 8th century, *"the name is from the festival of Oestre (sometimes spelled 'Estre'), pronounced 'Eestruh', the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Spring, Fertility and New Life."* It is easy to see how "Eastre time" became "Easter time".

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 monuments, is Ishtar. The worship of Bel and Astarte was very early introduced into Britain, along with the Druids, "the priests of the groves." Some have imagined that the Druidical worship was first introduced by the Phenicians, who, centuries before the Christian era, traded to the tin-mines of Cornwall.

"The English name Easter is of uncertain origin; the Anglo-Saxon priest Venerable Bede in the 8th century derived it from the Anglo-Saxon spring goddess Eostre." (1994-1998 Online Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.)

"The term Easter... comes from the Old English easter or eastre, a festival of spring; the Greek and Latin Pascha, from the Hebrew Pesah, 'Passover.'" (ibid.)

The name Easter comes from Eostre, an ancient Anglo-Saxon goddess, originally of the dawn. In pagan times an annual spring festival was held in her honor. (Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index., Vol. 7., Chicago: Compton's Learning Company, 1987, p. 41)

It's called Easter in the English, from the goddess Eostre, worshipped by the Saxons with peculiar ceremonies in the month of April. (Encyclopedia Britannica., Vol. II., Edinburgh: A. Bell & C. Macfarquhar, 1768, p. 464)

EASTER: This is from Anglo-Saxon Eostre, a pagan goddess whose festival came at the spring equinox. (Dictionary of Word Origins, Shipley, Joseph T., New York: Philosophical Library, MCMXLV., p. 131)

EASTER: Old English Eastre, goddess of spring. (Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary, New York: Funk & Wagnal, 1979)

The word Easter comes from the Old English word eostre, the name of a dawn-goddess worshipped in the Spring. (Oxford Junior Encyclopedia, London: Odhams, 1957., p. 123)

EASTER: from Old English eastre, name of a spring goddess. (The Columbia Encyclopedia, Fifth Edition, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995)

Old English eastre, originally, the name of a dawn goddess. (Gage Canadian Dictionary, Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1983)

The pagan festival held at the vernal equinox to honor Eastre, the goddess of dawn, was called Eastre in Old English. Since the Christian festival celebrating Christ's resurrection fell at about the same time, the pagan name was borrowed for it when Christianity was introduced to England, the name later being changed slightly to Easter. (The Facts on File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins, Hendrickson, Robert, New York: Facts on File, 1987., p. 177)

EASTER: The name was derived from Eastre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring. (New Standard Encyclopedia, Vol. 6., Chicago: Standard Educational, 1991. p. E-25-E-27)

EASTER: West Germanic name of a pagan spring festival. (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1976)

The English word Easter comes from the goddess Eastre, whose festival was celebrated at the vernal equinox, and who presided over the fertility of man and animals. (Celebrate the Sun, Nickerson Betty, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969, p. 38)

EASTER: Bæde Temp. Rat. XV. derives the word from Eostre (Northumb. spelling Éastre), the name of a goddess whose festival was celebrated at the vernal equinox; her name . . . shows

that she was originally the dawn-goddess. (The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)

Before Christ was born the people living in northern Europe had a goddess called Eostre, the goddess of the spring. Every year, in spring the people had a festival for her. The name of our spring festival, Easter, comes from the name Eostre. (The Easter Book, Milan: Macdonald Educational, 1980, p. 5)

Eostre Saxon and Neo-Pagan goddess of fertility and spring-time whom the holiday Easter was originally named after. (The Concise Lexicon of the Occult, Dunwich, Gerina, New York: Citadel Press, 1990, p. 54)

As with the other Christian holidays, there was also a holiday in ancient times that was celebrated at about the same time. In this case, it was the celebration of the vernal equinox-the tribute to the goddess of spring, Eastre. Eastre was an Anglo-Saxon goddess who is reputed to have opened the gates of Valhalla for the slain sun god, Baldrun, thereby bringing light to man. Easter also refers to the rising of the sun in the east. (Encyclopedia of Superstition, Potter, Carole, London: Michael O'Mara Books, 1983, p. 69)

"The origins of pre-Christian Easter festivals in pagan cultures are well-known in history. In the ancient world, some of the greatest female deities were the various incarnations of the great fertility goddesses known as Ishtar (Babylonian), Astarte (Phoenician), Atargatis (Philistine), Ashtoreth (Hebrew), Eastre(Anglo-Saxon), Ostara (German) and Aphrodite (Greek). These goddesses are regarded as essentially the same deity due to the similarities of their names, mythologies, worship and festivals. These factors are what define a deity as its worship moves between cultures. The primary fertility festivals for these deities--and their associated male gods--were in the spring, a time of renewal and birth." (1996, Global Church of God)

"Easter - originally a Saxon word (Eostre), denoting a goddess of the Saxons, in honor of whom sacrifices were offered about the time of the Passover. Hence the name came to be given to the festival of the Resurrection of Christ, which occurred at the time of the Passover. In the early English versions, this word was frequently used as the translation of the Greek pascha (the Passover). When the Authorized Version (1611) was formed, the word 'Passover' was used in all passages in which this word pascha occurred, except in Act 12:4." (Easton's Bible Dictionary)

"Easter middle English estre, from Old English Eastre; akin to Old High German Ostarun (plural) Easter, Old English East." (Webster's Dictionary)

"Thus much already laid down may seem a sufficient treatise to prove that the celebration of the east of Easter began everywhere more of custom than by any commandment either of Christ or any Apostle." ( Socrates, Hist. Ecclesiast., lib. v. cap., 22.)

Everyone knows that the name "Easter," used in our translation of Acts 12:4, refers not to any Christian festival, but to the Jewish Passover. This is one of the few places in our version where the translators show an undue bias.

Gieseler, speaking of the Eastern Church in the second century, in regard to Paschal observances, says: "In it [the Paschal festival in commemoration of the death of Christ] they [the Eastern Christians] eat unleavened bread, probably like the Jews, eight days throughout...There is no trace of a yearly festival of a resurrection among them, for this was kept every Sunday." (Gieseler, Catholic Church, sect. 53, p.178, Note 35)

We know of, "The Syrian goddess with her consort Adonis whose death was mourned and resurrection celebrated each year...." (Stambaugh, The New Testament in its Social Environment, p.136)

"The name, strangely enough, comes from the name of a Teutonic goddess, Oстера, for whom a solemn feast was observed at about the same season of the year...." (M.F. Essig, The Comprehensive analysis of the Bible, p.180)

Some will say, "so the Old Testament book of Esther is named after a Jewish heroine who bore the name of the goddess Ishtar," true; however, Esther was not her true name it was Hadassah (Esther 2:7) her Jewish name. Most likely Esther was given to her, in the same manner, as Daniel was changed to Belteshazzar (Dan. 1:7).

# Who is this figure?

Who is this figure, and what rites were connected with her?

Easter comes from the pagan *Oestre (Estre)* and other names as we will see she was believed to be the goddess of Spring, etc. The pagan Festival of *Oestre (Estre)* coincided each Spring with the time of Passover, it isn't difficult to see how these pagan beliefs and customs eased into the life of The Church and replaced the Passover.

In that pagan story, there was a great bird who intensely desired to be a rabbit. The goddess *Oestre (Estre)* graciously turned the bird into a rabbit, and in gratitude, the rabbit (who could still remember how to lay bird eggs) came each Spring, during the Festival of *Oestre (Estre)*, and laid beautiful eggs for the benevolent goddess. This is exactly how we got a supernatural, egg-laying rabbit god in the Easter tradition.

Easter 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 monuments, is Ishtar. The worship of Bel and Astarte was very early introduced into Britain, along with the Druids, "the priests of the groves." Some have imagined that the Druidical worship was first introduced by the Phenicians, who, centuries before the Christian era, traded to the tin-mines of Cornwall.

It will not be difficult to believe that his consort Astarte was also adored by our ancestors, and that from Astarte, whose name in Nineveh was Ishtar, the religious solemnities of April, as now practiced, are called by the name of Easter - that month, among our Pagan ancestors, having been called Easter-month. The festival, of which we read in Church history, under the name of Easter, in the third or fourth centuries, was quite a different festival from that now observed in the Ro-

mish Church, and at that time was not known by any such name as Easter.

The Pagan Easter enforced by Rome, at the time of its enforcement, was a whole month; and it was only by violence and bloodshed, at last, that the Festival of the Anglo-Saxon or Chaldean goddess came to supersede that which had been held in honor of Christ.

At Easter, popular customs reflect many ancient pagan survivals--in this instance, connected with spring fertility rites.

The Anglo-Saxons had little girls performing dances at Easter in which a phallus was carried in front of them.

Many of the customs associated with Easter are derived from various spring fertility rites of the pagan religions which Christianity supplanted. (Encyclopedia International, China: Lexicon Publications, 1973, P.190)

Easter is connected in many ways with early pagan rituals that accompanied the arrival of spring. (Merit Students Encyclopedia, New York: P. F. Collier, 1983, pp.167-68)

Both of these festivals [Easter and Christmas] have roots in old pagan rituals that they have superseded. (Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy, MacGregor, Gedded, New York: Paragon House, 1991, p.207)

Even though it [Easter] has stood for over fifteen hundred years as the symbol of the resurrection of Jesus to members of the Christian Church, it is not entirely a Christian festival. Its origins go far back into pagan rites and customs. (Easter Idea Book, Adams, Charlotte, New York: M. Barrows and Company, 1954, p.11)

Many of the customs associated with Easter originate in pagan celebrations of spring. (New Standard Encyclopedia, Vol., 6, Chicago: Standard Educational, 1991, pp. E-25-E-27)

There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the [so-called] apostolic Fathers. The sanctity of special times was an idea absent from the mind of the first Christians. (The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., Vol. VIII, Cambridge: The University Press, 1910, p.828)

Around the Christian observance of Easter as the climax of the liturgical drama of Holy Week and Good Friday, folk customs have collected, many of which have been handed down from the ancient ceremonial and symbolism of European and Middle Eastern pagan spring festivals brought into relation with the resurrection theme. (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1992, p.333)

When Christians first spread across Europe, believers in the new faith changed many of the older rites and ceremonies, adapting them to fit with the life and teaching of Jesus. They did not try to stop people from having a great spring festival for their old pagan goddess, Eostre. (Easter, Fox, Julian, Vero Beach: Rourke Enterprises, 1989, p.11)

Thus, throughout the customs associated with Easter, there is a blending or interplay of symbols of spring with the religious significance of the resurrection. (The Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition, Danbury: Grolier, 1991, p.561)

The origins of pre-Christian Easter festivals in pagan cultures are well-known in history. In the ancient world, some of the greatest female deities were the various incarnations of the great fertility goddesses known as Ishtar (Babylonian), Astarte (Phoenician), Atargatis (Philistine), Ashtoreth (Hebrew), Eastre (Anglo-Saxon), Ostara (German) and Aphrodite (Greek).

These goddesses are regarded as essentially the same deity due to the similarities of their names, mythologies, worship, and festivals. These factors are what define a deity as its worship moves between cultures.

The primary fertility festivals for these deities--and their associated male gods--were in the spring, a time of renewal and birth.

"Aphrodite is primarily a descendant of the Mesopotamian Goddess Inanna-Ishtar, who became Astarte in Phoenicia and was called Atargatis by the Philistines, and Ashtoreth by the Hebrews. Inanna's consort, Dumuzi, and Ishtar's Tammuz became, in the Greek tradition, Aphrodite's Adonis, the dying and resurrected son-lover of the goddess in a new form.  
(Church of God)

Easter - originally a Saxon word (Eostre), denoting a goddess of the Saxons, in honor of whom sacrifices were offered.

Over 2000 years ago, before the time of Christ, people decorated eggs believing that great powers were embodied in the egg. To them, eggs symbolized the release of the earth from the shackles of winter and the coming of spring with its promise of new hope, new life, and prosperity.

"The Aphrodite Urania (celestial) of the Greeks was no other than the Phoenician celestial goddess, Astarte, held in special reverence at Carthage, where the Romans called her the Virgo Coelestis." (Salomon, Orpheus, A History of Religions, p.42)

"Adonis the beloved of, Astarte (Easter, Ishtar), was killed and bemoaned by his mistress...and after a few days celebrated his resurrection...the true sacred name of Adonis was Thamuz, the husband of the Babylonian Ishtar" (Ibid.)

"Artemis, like Astarte, was celebrated in the worship of trees and sacred pillars..." (Salomon, Orpheus, A History of Religions, p. 82)

"The great goddess Ishtar...was a female deity. goddess of love and fertility...she could be address with prayers and votive offerings. In astrology, she is linked with the evening and morning star (Venus)." (Parrinder, World Religions, p.117)

"The Phoenicians[called her] earth-mother goddess called Ash-tart...with her son Adonis whose yearly death and resurrection reflected the annual cycle of the seasons...young children were sometimes killed, evidently by cremation, to satisfy the deities." (Time-Life, TimeFrame 1500-600 B.C., pp. 106,107)

What does God's Word say about this practice and its continuation cloaked under the guise of a "Christian" holiday?

*Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. (Jere. 10:2)*

*And they shall teach my people [the difference] between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. (Ezek. 44:23)*

*Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Gal. 4:8-11)*

*Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.*

*Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, say-*

ing, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. (Deut. 12:2-4, 30,31)

*If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. (Deut. 17:2-5)*

*Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. (Josh. 24:14)*

*And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. (1 Sam. 7:3)*

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Luke 4:8)*

*But I [say], that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*

*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? (1 Corin. 10:20-22)*

*Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. (Eph. 5:11)*

*When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. (Deut. 12:29-32).*

*This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men. (Mark 7:6-8).*

c.f. Deut. 18:9-13; Josh. 7:11-13; 24:15; John 2:6; 14:23,24; 1 Corin. 10:20,21; 2 Corin. 6:17, 7:1; Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 4:1-3; 1 John 2:6.

God speaks volumes of warning to His people not to be involved in any pagan practices, and also commands them not to become idol worshippers of any kind! He told Israel to destroy the "groves"--asherah, asheyrah, groves (for idol worship) a Babylonian (Astarte)-Canaanite goddess (of fortune and happiness), the supposed consort of Baal. Remember we traced, easily I might add, the name of asherah, astarte, and so on, to Easter? It all ties in. God says:

*But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [is] Jealous,[is] a jealous God. (Ex. 34:13)*

*But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that [are] upon the face of the earth. (Deut. 7:5,6)*

*And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. (Judges 3:7)*

c.f. 1 Kings 14:15,23; 18:19; 2 Chron. 17:6; 24:18; 33:3; Jer. 17:2; Micah 5:14, and so on.

# How did it Spread?

We must understand the very early Church was never instructed to celebrate "Easter." There is no command to celebrate such a holiday in the Scriptures. Observe and remember Jesus' death and resurrection, Yes. However, Easter and all its festivities? No.

"The term Easter, commemorating the Resurrection of Christ, comes from the Old English easter or eastre, a festival of spring; the Greek and Latin Pascha, from the Hebrew Pesah, "Passover." The earliest Christians celebrated the Lord's Passover at the same time as the Jews, during the night of the first (paschal) full moon of the first month of spring (Nisan 14-15). By the middle of the 2nd century most churches had transferred this celebration to the Sunday after the Jewish feast. But certain churches of Asia Minor clung to the older custom, for which they were denounced as "Judaizing" (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book V, chapters 23-25). The first ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that all churches should observe the feast together on a Sunday. Yet many disparities remained in the way the several churches calculated the date of Easter. Today the Eastern churches follow the Julian calendar, the Western churches its correction by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, so that in some years there may be a month's difference in the time of celebration." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

"In 679 he was elected abbot of Iona, the ninth in succession from St. Columba, the founder. While on a visit to Northumbria, he adopted the Roman rules on the tonsure and for determining the date of Easter that had been accepted for England at the Synod of Whitby in 663/664. He failed, however, to enforce the changes at Iona. He then traveled much in Ireland to promote the observance of the Roman Easter, but he was never able to persuade his own community." (Saint Adamnan)

"Most of the churches decided to observe the Lord's Passover (Easter) always on a Sunday, after the Jewish feast was over." (1994-1998, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.)

"A new focus of celebration, to commemorate the birthday of Christ, the world Redeemer, was instituted at ancient winter solstices (December 25 and January 6) to rival the pagan feasts in honor of the birth of a new age brought by the Unconquered Sun." (1994-1998, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.)

"It is called Easter in the English, from the goddess Eostre, worshipped by the Saxons with peculiar ceremonies in the month of April." (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. II., Edinburgh: A. Bell & C. Macfarquhar, 1768, p.464)

"At the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, it was agreed that Easter would be linked to the full moon on or following the spring equinox." (The Macmillan Compact Encyclopedia, Aylesbury: Market House Books, 1994, p.175)

"...a view commonly held among modern, secular historians that there was a significant continuity in "Christianized" Gentile cultures with their pagan past. They had a tendency, over time, to superimpose Christian themes as a veneer over their existing pagan practices, which were already deeply ingrained in their societies and psyches. They are saying that in history, the Christian version of Easter as a memorial to Christ's resurrection is essentially a modification of an earlier pagan resurrection festival. The practice did not originate in Christianity.

By the time of Christ and the early Christian Church, the Gentile cultures of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean already had ancient cultural roots involving spring festivals associated with fertility, rebirth, and resurrection. These fertility festivals occurred around the time of the Passover when the paschal lamb was sacrificed by Jews as a memorial of the Exodus. But when Christ instructed His followers to keep the Passover with a new, Christian meaning, it became a memorial to His

sacrifice as the Lamb of God--not a memorial to His resurrection. Christ avoided confusing the meaning of His memorial with the well-known pagan customs of His time and antiquity.

The Roman church, which advocated the observance of Easter, labeled those who continued the practice of observing a Christian Passover on Nisan 14 as "Quartodecimans"--from the Latin for "four and ten." The eastern or Asiatic churches, however, insisted on continuing in the faith delivered to them by the apostles.

Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John and Bishop of Smyrna, debated the issue with Pope Anicetus (c. 155 A.D.) and asserted that he had been personally taught the proper observance by the Apostle John.

Later, "an attempt by Pope Victor I (189-198 A.D.) to impose Roman usage [Easter] proved unsuccessful in the face of a determined opposition led by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus [a church founded by the Apostle Paul]... All accepted the Roman practice except the Asiatic bishops.

When Victor attempted coercion by excommunication, St. Irenaeus of Lyons intervened to restore peace (Eusebius, History Ecclesiastical, 5. 23-25). During the 3rd century Quartodecimanism waned; it persisted in some Asiatic communities down to the 5th century" (New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967, vol. 5, p.8; vol. 12, p.13)." (Church of God website)

"Easter is of Saxon origin, Eastr, the goddess of spring,...by the 8th century Anglo-Saxons had adopted the name to designate the celebration of the resurrection." (Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 283)

"..used in the Germanic languages to denote the festival of the vernal equinox." (New Bible Dictionary, p. 294)

"..derived by Bede (8th century) from the name of a goddess whose feast was celebrated at the vernal equinox." (Hoad, English Etymology, p. 140)

"In England and Wales the Saxon invaders gradually won the upper hand. The British Christians became divided...by the end of the sixth century the pagan kingdom of Kent, with its capitol at Canterbury, dominated most of England south of the Humber...but it was an evident practical necessity that the Celtic and Saxon churches inhabiting the same island should be in harmony with one another and with the continent on so important a matter as Easter." (Chadwick, The Early Church, p.256)

"Later the monk "Bede" (8th century) derived the name, Easter, of a goddess whose feast was celebrated at the vernal equinox. This from a man that believed, "The British Isles... can remain united in itself only with the leadership from St Peter's successor in Rome...." (Chadwick, The Early Church, p. 257)

We hold to what Scripture teaches us not what a heathen Romanist teaches.

"Easter is not a Christian term but is of Chaldean origin. The name of Easter is found on Assyrian monuments as Ishtar. In Phoenicia it is the goddess Astarte which was one of the titles of Beltis, the Queen of Heaven. The worship of Astarte and Bel was introduced into Briton very early along with the Druids. The Druids were the priests of the groves. The Easter egg was one of the symbols of Astarte...." (Author Unknown)

# Easter Customs?

Many of the customs associated with Easter are derived from various spring fertility rites of the pagan religions which Christianity supplanted. (Encyclopedia International, China: Lexicon Publications, 1973, p.190)

Easter is connected in many ways with early pagan rituals that accompanied the arrival of spring. (Merit Students Encyclopedia, New York: P. F. Collier, 1983, pp.167-68)

Both of these festivals [Easter and Christmas] have roots in old pagan rituals that they have superseded. (Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy, MacGregor, Gedded, New York: Paragon House, 1991, p.207)

Even though it [Easter] has stood for over fifteen hundred years as the symbol of the resurrection of Jesus to members of the Christian Church, it is not entirely a Christian festival. Its origins go far back into pagan rites and customs. (Easter Idea Book, Adams, Charlotte, New York: M. Barrows and Company, 1954, p.11)

Many of the customs associated with Easter originate in pagan celebrations of spring. (New Standard Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, Chicago: Standard Educational, 1991, pp. E-25-E-27)

There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the [so-called] apostolic Fathers. The sanctity of special times was an idea absent from the mind of the first Christians. (The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., Vol. VIII, Cambridge: The University Press, 1910, p.828)

Around the Christian observance of Easter as the climax of the liturgical drama of Holy Week and Good Friday, folk customs

have collected, many of which have been handed down from the ancient ceremonial and symbolism of European and Middle Eastern pagan spring festivals brought into relation with the resurrection theme. (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1992, p.333)

When Christians first spread across Europe, believers in the new faith changed many of the older rites and ceremonies, adapting them to fit with the life and teaching of Jesus. They did not try to stop people from having a great spring festival for their old pagan goddess, Eostre. (Easter, Fox, Julian, Vero Beach: Rourke Enterprises, 1989, P.11)

Thus, throughout the customs associated with Easter, there is a blending or interplay of symbols of spring with the religious significance of the resurrection. (The Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition, Danbury: Grolier, 1991, p.561)

### **Easter eggs**

Eggs were a primitive symbol of fertility; but Christians saw in them a symbol of the tomb from which Christ rose, and continued the [pagan] practice of coloring, giving, and eating them at Easter. (New Age Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, China: Lexicon Publications, 1973, p.190)

The Persians and Egyptians colored eggs and ate them during their new year's celebration, which came in the spring. (The New Book of Knowledge, Danbury: Grolier, 1991, p.44)

Since man's earliest time, the egg, symbolizing the universe, figures in creation mythologies including those of China, Japan, Finland, Siberia and parts of Africa. . . . When today's children hunt for Easter eggs they are re-enacting one of man's oldest rituals. (Celebrate the Sun, Toronto: Nickerson, Betty, McClelland and Stewart, 1969, p.38)

The exchange of Easter eggs, which symbolize new life and fertility, is one of the oldest traditions. Rabbits and flowers are

also pagan fertility symbols. (New Standard Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, Chicago: Standard Educational, 1991, pp. E-25-E-27)

### **Easter bunny rabbits**

Nobody seems to know precisely the origin of the Easter bunny, except that it can be traced back to pre-Christian fertility lore. It has never had any connection with Christian religious symbolism. (Easter the World Over, Sawyer, Priscilla, and Daniel J. Foley, Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1971, p.104)

The Easter hare was no ordinary animal, but a sacred companion of the old goddess of spring, Eostre. (Easter, Fox, Julian, Vero Beach: Rourke Enterprises, 1989, p.11)

Like the Easter egg, the Easter hare, now an accepted part of the traditional Easter story, came to Christianity from antiquity. The hare is associated with the moon in the legends of ancient Egypt and other peoples. (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 7, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1955, p.859)

The hare, the symbol of fertility in ancient Egypt, a symbol that was kept later in Europe, is not found in North America. Its place is taken by the Easter rabbit, the symbol of fertility and periodicity both human and lunar, accredited with laying eggs in nests prepared for it at Easter or with hiding them away for children to find. (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1992, p.333)

The white rabbit of Easter, beloved of small Americans, comes hopping down to us from eras when the sun and the moon were gods to men. (The Book of Religious Holidays and Celebrations, Ickis, Marguerite, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966, p.133)

### **Easter fires**

Pagan festivals celebrating spring included fire and sunrise celebrations. Both later became part of Easter celebrations. (The New Book of Knowledge, Danbury: Grolier, 1991, p.44)

The Easter Eve bonfires predate Christianity and were originally intended to celebrate the arrival of spring. (Merit Students Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, New York: P. F. Collier, 1983, pp. 167-68)

Fire, once part of the pagan spring festival, is now a Christian Easter symbol. (The New Book of Knowledge, Danbury: Grolier, 1981, p.41)

Spring fire rites to honor the sun god were forbidden until the year 752 A. D. By that time the pagan fires had changed into Easter fires. (Lilies, Rabbits, and Painted Eggs: The Story of the Easter Symbols, Barth, Edna, New York: Seabury Press, 1970, p.15)

Bonfires on Easter Eve are particularly common in Germany, where they are lighted not only in churchyards but upon hill-tops, where the young people gather around and jump over them, dance, and sing Easter hymns. These are remnants of pagan and sacrificial rites in which quantities of tar-soaked barrel staves, branches and roots of trees were burned. (Easter the World Over, Sawyer, Priscilla, and Daniel J. Foley. Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1971, p.103)

### **Sunrise services**

The custom of a sunrise service on Easter Sunday can be traced to ancient spring festivals that celebrated the rising sun. (The New Book of Knowledge, Danbury: Grolier, 1981, p.41)

### **Easter parades and wearing new clothes**

The Easter Parade which is held after church services in many cultures is another survival from long ago. Before there were courtiers or fashion pages there was a lively superstition, dear

to princesses and peasant maidens alike, that a new garment worn at Easter meant good luck throughout the year. (The Book of Religious Holidays and Celebrations, Ickis, Marguerite, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966, p.133)

For centuries, even in pagan times, it had been the custom to put on new clothes for the spring festival. (Easter the World Over, Sawyer, Priscilla, and Daniel J. Foley. Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1971, p.134)

### **Hot-cross buns**

The hot-cross bun, for example, is pagan in origin. The Anglo-Saxon savages consumed cakes as a part of the jolity that attended the welcoming of spring. The early missionaries from Rome despaired of breaking them of the habit, and got around the difficulty at last by blessing the cakes, drawing a cross upon them. (The Book of Religious Holidays and Celebrations, Ickis, Marguerite, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966, p.134)

### **Lent**

The celebration of Lent has no basis in Scripture, but rather developed from the pagan celebration of Semiramis's mourning for 40 days over the death of Tammuz (cf. Ezek 8:14) before his alleged resurrection-another of Satan's mythical counterfeits. (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians, MacArthur, John Jr., Chicago: Moody, 1984)

The word Lent is of Anglo-Saxon origin, meaning spring. (The Book of Religious Holidays and Celebrations, Ickis, Marguerite, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966, p.114)

# Easter or Passover?

1998 4/12; 1999 4/4; 2000 4/23; 2001 4/15; 2002 3/31; 2003 4/20; 20018 4/3. The so-called date for Easter never falls at the same time.

"Western Christians celebrate Easter on the first Sunday after the full moon (the paschal moon) that occurs upon or next after the vernal equinox (taken as March 21). If the paschal moon, which is calculated from a system of golden numbers and epacts and does not necessarily coincide with the astronomical full moon, occurs on a Sunday, Easter day is the succeeding Sunday. Easter, therefore, can fall between March 22 and April 25." (1994-1998, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.)

"Hebrew *Pesah*, 'Passover.' The earliest Christians celebrated the Lord's Passover at the same time as the Jews, during the night of the first (paschal) full moon of the first month of spring (Nisan 14-15). By the middle of the 2nd century most churches had transferred this celebration to the Sunday after the Jewish feast. But certain churches of Asia Minor clung to the older custom, for which they were denounced as 'Judaizing' (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book V, chapters 23-25). The first ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that all churches should observe the feast together on a Sunday." (1994-1998, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.)

"In the Christian Church, disputes concerning the correct date for observing Easter (Greek *Pascha*). The earliest controversy was over the question of whether Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday or on the actual day of the Jewish lunar month (14th of Nisan) on which the Paschal lamb was slaughtered. The latter practice, followed by the church in the Roman province of Asia, was generally condemned at the end of the 2nd century because it meant celebrating Easter when the

Jews were keeping Passover." (1994-1998, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.)

Notice, in the following quote, how the date and easiness of changing it proves it was not commanded by our Lord.

"In the West, the subject has ceased to be a matter of dispute, and the Second Vatican Council stated in 1963 that there was no objection in principle to observing Easter on a fixed Sunday (probably early in April)." (1994-1998, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.)

"The churches of Asia Minor continued to celebrate Easter on the same date (the 14th of Nisan) as the Jews celebrated Passover, whereas the Roman Church maintained that Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday (the day of the Resurrection of Christ)." (1994-1998, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.)

"The establishment of Christianity as a state religion, following the conversion [so called]of the emperor Constantine (AD 312), brought new developments. The Paschal season was matched by a longer season of preparation Lent. [The celebration of Lent has no basis in Scripture, but rather developed from the pagan celebration of Semiramis's mourning for 40 days over the death of Tammuz (cf. Ezek 8:14)]" (1994-1998, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.)

"At the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, it was agreed that Easter would be linked to the full moon on or following the spring equinox." (The Macmillan Compact Encyclopedia, Aylesbury: Market House Books, 1994, p.175)

"The Julian calendar year of 365.25 days was too long, since the correct value for the tropical year is 365.242199 days. This error of 11 minutes 14 seconds per year amounted to almost one and a half days in two centuries, and seven days in 1,000 years. Once again the calendar became increasingly out of phase with the seasons. From time to time, the problem was

placed before church councils, but no action was taken because the astronomers who were consulted doubted whether enough precise information was available for a really accurate value of the tropical year to be obtained.

By 1545, however, the vernal equinox, which was used in determining Easter, had moved 10 days from its proper date; and in December, when the Council of Trent met for the first of its sessions, it authorized Pope Paul III to take action to correct the error. Correction required a solution, however, that neither Paul III nor his successors were able to obtain in satisfactory form until nearly 1572, the year of election of Pope Gregory XIII. Gregory found various proposals awaiting him and agreed to issue a bull that the Jesuit astronomer Christopher Clavius (1537-1612) began to draw up, using suggestions made by the astronomer and physician Luigi Lilio (also known as Aloysius Lilius; died 1576).

The papal bull appeared in March 1582. First, in order to bring the vernal equinox back to March 21, the day following the Feast of St. Francis (that is, October 5) was to become October 15, thus omitting 10 days. Second, to bring the year closer to the true tropical year, a value of 365.2422 days was accepted. This value differed by 0.0078 days per year from the Julian calendar reckoning, amounting to 0.78 days per century, or 3.12 days every 400 years. It was therefore promulgated that three out of every four centennial years should be common years, that is, not leap years; and this practice led to the rule that no centennial years should be leap years unless exactly divisible by 400. Thus, 1700, 1800, and 1900 were not leap years, as they would have been in the Julian calendar, but the year 2000 will be. The bull also laid down rules for calculating the date of Easter." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

Was that confusing or what? How silly and carnal to go through all these gymnastics to determine a holiday. It's ridiculous and confusing at best, and God's Word says:

*For God is not [the author] of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (1 Corin. 14:33)*

Let me outline some things to help us understand. When Israel was in Egypt, and the plagues were about to end, deliverance was at hand. God was going to "Passover" those that placed the blood of a lamb on the doorposts.

*And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike [it] on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. (Ex. 12:6,7)*

### **God called this "Passover."**

*And thus shall ye eat it; [with] your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it [is] the LORD'S Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I [am] the LORD. (Ex. 12:11,12)*

The institution of the Passover was to take place on the night God called the 14th day of the first month.

*And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. (Ex. 12:6)*

*Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed sea-*

*son: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it. (Num. 9:2,3)*

*And in the fourteenth day of the first month [is] the passover of the LORD. (Num. 28:16)*

The first month was originally called "Abib."

*And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this [place]: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib. (Ex. 13:3,4)*

*Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty. (Ex. 23:15)*

*Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. (Deut. 16:1)*

Later it was called "Nisan."

*In the first month, that [is], the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that [is], the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, [to] the twelfth [month], that [is], the month Adar. (Esther 3:7)*

The naming of "Nisan" remained through Jesus' time until the present. When Jesus had the last supper it was the first month (Jewish calendar) Nisan the 14th day. The fact that the Passover is celebrated on the 14th day of the first month Nisan has never changed.

We know Jesus kept the Passover as appointed—the 14th day of the first month Nisan (Abib).

*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? 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. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. (Matt. 26:17-19)*

c.f Mark 14:12-14; Luke 22:7-11; John 13:1,2.

We know after this Passover He endured suffering and crucifixion. According to scripture, Jesus rose from the dead on the first Sunday following Passover. See Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1-3, Luke 23:56-24:3, and John 20:1. That is the first Sunday after the Jewish Passover, which is 14 Nisan on the Jewish calendar. No one in ancient times denied that the Resurrection took place on a Sunday.

To simplify, Jesus kept the Passover on the 14th day of the Jewish first month Nisan (Abib).

“Now notice on what day of the Hebrew calendar these events took place. It is important to note that by Israelite reckoning, a day begins at sunset and ends with sunset the next day.

The Jewish Passover, which is a high day and a Sabbath, falls on Nisan 15 of the Hebrew calendar and begins at the evening ending Nisan 14 (Lev. 23:5-6). In the time of Christ, the Jews killed the Passover lamb the afternoon of Nisan 14 at about the hour Christ, the Lamb of God, died at the hands of the Romans.

Christ's last supper took place at the beginning of Nisan 14, on the evening before the crucifixion. That night He was betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter and beaten before the high priest (Matt. 26:30-75; John 18:1-27).

The following morning--still Nisan 14--He was tried by Pilate, condemned, scourged and crucified (Matt. 27; John 18:28-40). Notice in John 19:31 that Christ had to be buried before evening "because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day)." These scriptures show conclusively that the Passover memorial that Christ ordained was on the evening that began Nisan 14. This was the evening before the Jewish Passover celebration, which was held in the evening beginning Nisan 15." (Global Church of God web site)

So if we desire to reckon a day for Jesus' resurrection its like this:

- Last supper (Passover) on the evening of the 14th
- Is arrested, tried, and crucified on the morning and late morning of the 14th.
- Is buried the afternoon of the 14th, is in the grave that evening the day of the 15th and resurrects on the day of the 16th—a Sunday.

The day of the resurrection is Sunday a fixed day, no matter what the date:

*In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first [day] of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (Matt. 28:1)*

This year, 1999, the 14th Nisan falls on a Wednesday the 31st of March. The 16th--- the day Jesus would have rose-- falls on a Friday. The point is, it's impossible to correctly observe the "actual" date Jesus rose. What we do know is, He rose 2000 years ago on a Sunday the Jews 16th Nisan. Moreover, the most exciting part is the fact that He did raise from the dead conquering death and giving us justification (Rom. 4:25).

He rose on the 16th. In Biblical numbers 1 is the number of God, and 6 is the number of man, what this means is that the "Godman" (theanthropos) rose from the dead!

Three times we are told that the Passover belonged to the "Jews" –in John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55. Some have suggested we keep Nisan 14 every year in observance of Jesus' last supper. However, seeing the Passover is "a feast of the Jews," and Jesus said He would build His Church (Matt. 16:18) not continue Judaism, we would not observe this holiday.

Jesus, by His work and sacrifice, built something new—His Church in which He is the "new" Passover Lamb:

*Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth. (1 Corin. 5:7,8)*

*Jesus said His work was, "...my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." (Mark 14:24)*

We are told, not to just keep the supper of the memorial on the 14th Nisan, but "as often as we drink and eat" the supper:

*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the [same] night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake [it], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also [he took] the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink [it], in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (1 Corin. 11:23-26)*

## **This "often" when would that be?**

*Now in this that I declare [unto you] I praise [you] not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, [this] is not to eat the Lord's supper. (1 Corin. 11:17-20)*

## **And what day would this be?**

*And upon the first [day]of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. (Acts 20:7)*

*Upon the first [day]of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. (1 Corin. 16:2)*

## **Its Resurrection Day: not Easter**

We get our text from Matthew chapter 28:1-8.

I chose Matthew for it gives a clear account of the events, not that the others are not clear, but for the text today this is what I chose.

Before we begin let's look at the Last Supper. I want you to notice Matthew 26:20,34 the last supper took place in the evening. Did the Passover of Egypt also take place at evening? Yes, Exodus 12:1-12 esp. verse eight. We should conduct the Lord's supper/Passover day in the evening on the date specified in scripture.

In verse one, it's talking about the end of Saturday. In the Jewish tradition this is evening and then the beginning of the first of the week—Sunday. Mark and Luke say very early in the morning. John says when

it was yet dark. From all of the information, it was very early the morning.

Something to note, the subject of the resurrection is it just a New Testament concept? No, it's in the Old Testament as well. It's God's fulfillment of predictive prophecy.

*"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"*  
(Ps.16:10)

*"For I know [that] my redeemer liveth, and [that] he shall stand at the latter [day] upon the earth: And [though] after my skin [worms] destroy this [body], yet in my flesh shall I see God."* (Job 19:25,26)

*"But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah."* (Ps. 49:15)

*"Thy dead [men] shall live, [together with] my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."* (Isa.26:19)

The day is called Resurrection day Sunday Not Easter the word Easter is used one time in the Bible. Found in Acts 12:4 in the KJV the Greek word is "*Pascha* pas'-khah" it's of Aramaic origin. It's translated in 26 verses as Passover even the Spanish and French versions have Passover. "*Pascha, pasca,*" the Greek spelling of the Aramaic word for the Passover, is from the Hebrew "*pâsach*" to pass over, to spare.

Well, why not call it Easter? Why make a big deal over it? Because it is God's Passover day and it is clear, for true Christians, the day our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead! So what is Easter? Let's look.

**EASTER** The term Easter is not of Christian origin. Its another form of "Astarte" one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess; the queen of heaven. The festival of "Pasch" held by Christians in post-apostolic times was a continuation of the Jewish feast, but was not instituted by Christ, nor was it con-

nected with Lent. From this "Pasch" the pagan festival of Easter was quite distinct. It was introduced into the apostate Western religion as part of the attempt to adapt pagan festivals to Christianity.

This is why God was very angry at the Israelites in Jeremiah chapter 7:18

*"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead [their] dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger."*

We do not hunt Easter eggs, look for bunny rabbits, or teach others to do so. If you are a true believer honor God the right way on His Resurrection Day/Passover day!

And Mary to see the sepulcher... is there any more to this? Yes. Mark and Luke give more clues they report they came bringing spices...to anoint Him. We are also told they were thinking who would roll away the stone? See they believed in Jesus, but did not believe he was too, or did, rise from the dead!

*"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."  
(Rom.10:9)*

In verse two, after they see the angel and stone rolled away, Mary Magdalene runs to tell Peter and John (John 20:2).

In verse eight, on the way to tell the other disciples, Jesus appears to Mary and the women. We are given the historical account of the events that took place. I would that you read all four gospel accounts, today or tonight, its good to have it wash over your mind.

We noticed in verse one they were coming to the sepulcher bringing sweet spices to anoint Him. Notice they were coming to Him in His

death, we to need or needed to come to Him because of His death. This is how we are saved In His death was our life!

They were bringing spices do you notice when they got there they had no need of them? You cannot, if you are not a Christian, bring anything to Him for your salvation. It's not by any work you can do. It's what He will do for you!

Verse two says the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door. You cannot set Christ free. It was not meant for man to roll away the stone, but God! In doing so, God removes all doubt as to who rolled away the stone. The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a fact! The evidence is here before you. We take it in faith not actually being there 2000 years ago. There is both internal evidence (Bible) and external evidence (historical accounts) as to the truth of the Resurrection!

It's not fiction. It's not what some liberal theologian thinks. Its not some twisted interpretation of those who think they are more intelligent than God it is a fact! Listen, if you flat out do not at all believe the resurrection of the Lord Jesus the scriptures say you are not a Christian!

In verse six we hear for He is risen, as He said Believe Him.

Verse seven And, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him. He does you know, go before you, will you let Him in your problems, and in the things that concern you?

Do you see Him? Do you see Him in His Resurrection Glory? Look to Him in the Last days.

*"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."  
(John14:7)*

Verse eight and did run to bring his disciples word. This is what God has raised up this ministry for; this is what we must be busy doing in these very last days giving out the truth of the word of God.

## **So what is the Resurrection?**

The Greek word is "*Anastasis*" which signifies "a raising up." Its used in Scripture to designate the "future general raising, by the power of God, of the bodies of all men from the sleep of death. those who do evil to the resurrection of damnation and eternal hell, those who have done good ( receiving Christ ) to the resurrection of life!"

## **So what happens at the Resurrection?**

*"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality." (1 Corin.15:52)*

## **What is the purpose of Jesus' Resurrection?**

*"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom.4:25; 5:1)*

He was crucified for our offenses; He was raised for our justification!

Today, I would that you leave here knowing two things (1) the resurrection is a fact. It's the headstone of the faith. It's the undeniable proof of Christ's claims; the foundation of Christianity. Believe it look for it (2) Jesus was raised for our justification. That is, you are by the work of Christ made right in the sight of God. This is what resurrection day is all about? our Lord Jesus died for our offenses and raising for our justification.

Do you see this? It's a travesty to call this day after a heathen queen and do things that water down His glorious work. The enemy wants more than anything to remove in the minds of people, including Christians, the truth of the meaning of this day. Do not fall victim to his plots!

# What do we say to these things?

We discovered Easter is pagan and heathen. God would not have us practice such holidays and the things that go along with it.

*Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. (Jere. 10:2)*

*Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Gal. 4:8-11)*

*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Corin. 6:16-18)*

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days]: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ. (Colo. 2:16,17)*

To try and "date" this pagan holiday is confusing and silly. We must flee from such a practice. We are to honor Christ and His resurrection "as often" as we would.

Some say that celebrating Easter in honor of Christ makes it ok. God's Word says no!

*When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. (Deut. 12:29-32)*

*He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with [their] lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, [as] the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. (Mark 7:6-8)*

*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Rom. 6:16)*

*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27)*

Our counsel? Stop observing this heathen holiday, and honor Christ every day.

For more information on heathen holidays, and how it crept into the church we recommend the following books:

"The Two Babylons" by Alexander Hislop, Loizeaux Brothers, 1916.

"Babylon, Mystery Religion" by Ralph Woodrow, 1966.