



EASTER

The Fertility of it All

A YRM PUBLICATION





Egg-laying rabbits; hot cross buns; Lent and ham dinners; sun-centered worship — why the strange customs? Why the strange name, “Easter”?

On an early Sunday morning in April dad gets up and stumbles in the darkness searching for his best suit.

He swallows a quick juice and heads off to the church. There he joins 20 of his friends gathered outside. As they look to the eastern sky they become enraptured by the brilliance of the dawning sun. Someone begins to sing a hymn. Others join in, faces glowing as they respond in adoration to the warming rays of the yellow orb.

Back home mother drives the chill from the house as she warms the oven. The smell of baking dough will spread to the bedrooms, beckoning awakening children to join her in making sugary crosses on toasty cakes.

A fat ham roasts in the oven. Dad’s mouth waters as he anticipates returning home and dining on the ritual offerings he has come to savor each spring. But first one more prayer with hands stretched upward in praise as the vernal sun rises to jumpstart the life-cycle of another new year.

As he heads home he notices many others celebrating the return of spring in groves of trees that line the road.

The year is 500 years before the Messiah. Prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah conveyed Yahweh’s disdain for a celebration that not only has survived millennia, but even blossomed into one of the major celebrations of Christianity today—Easter.

Easter takes its name from a deity of the Chaldeans known as Astarte or Ishtar. “Her presence was thought to guarantee fertility, and in her absence the land, humans, and animals could not reproduce,” *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

Easter a Phantom Observance

But where in the Bible can we find the word Easter? Only in Acts 12:4 in the King James Version. It is a mistranslation of the Greek *Pasch* or Passover.

Barnes Notes says about the KJV's changing the term Passover to Easter: "There was never a more absurd or unhappy translation than this. The original is simply after the Passover."

Here's how other versions translate Acts 12:4:

New Living Translation:

"... Herod's intention was to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover."

International Standard Version

"...planning to bring him out to the people after Passover season."

New American Standard Bible

"...intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people.

American Standard Version

"...intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people.

Bible in Basic English

"...his purpose being to take him out to the people after the Passover.

Douay-Rheims Bible

"...intending, after the pasch, to bring him forth to the people.

English Revised Version

"...intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people.

World English Bible

"... intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover.

Young's Literal Translation

"... intending after the passover to bring him forth to the people.

New International Version

"...Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover."

New King James:

"... intending to bring him before the people after Passover."

New Living Translation:

"... Herod's intention was to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover."

Notice the preceding verse 3 of Acts 12: "These were the days of unleavened bread." What connection does the Feast of Unleavened Bread have with Easter? None. What does Easter have to do with the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Nothing. But the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread have a lot to do with each other. In the law the Feast follows the Passover on the 15th of Abib.

The early New Testament believers in Acts were still observing the Old Testament's Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread! Never did Yahshua the Messiah or His apostles or any of the Jews of their day observe Easter.

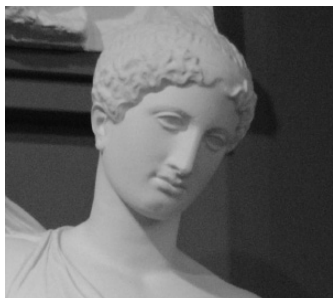
Easter today is known in other languages by words that link it directly to Passover: French-*Paques*; Italian-*Pasqua*; Spanish-*Pascua*; Dutch-*Pasen*. The word for Easter sounds similar in each of these languages. The problem is, it doesn't sound at all like "Easter" but like the original and Scriptural "Passover."

Its absence in the ancient manuscripts shows that the Easter celebration was completely missing in New Testament worship. This fact has not escaped even secular sources. The *New Werner Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica* says, "There is no trace of the celebration of Easter as a Christian festival in the New Testament or in the writings of the apostolic fathers," vol. VII, p. 531.

It wasn't until 800 years after Yahshua that an observance of His resurrection was ever called Easter.

Nelsons Illustrated Bible Dictionary says on p. 317, "Easter was originally a pagan festival honoring Eostre, a Teutonic [Germanic] goddess of light and spring. At the time of the vernal equinox, sacrifices were offered in her honor. As early as the 8th century the name was used to designate the annual Christian celebration of the resurrection of Messiah."

The word "Easter" is a renaming and completely unauthorized replacement of the Passover. *The Eleventh Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica* makes this short and eye-opening statement: "The name Easter (German Ostern) like the names of the days of the week, is a survival from the old Teutonic mythology.



Aphrodite

According to Bede, it is derived from Eostre or Ostara, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, to whom the month answering to our April, and called Eostur-monath, was dedicated."

Historically, Easter is the celebration of the ancient queen of heaven, Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of fertility, love,

war, and sex. Her beau was the Babylonian Tammuz (Greek Adonis). She is the same goddess worshiped throughout the Near East and Mediterranean worlds almost from the beginning of recorded history. She was variously known as Inanna, Innin, Astarte, Ashtar, the Greek Aphrodite, and the Roman Venus.

Solar Survivals a Heathen Legacy

Virtually all heathen religions of antiquity worshiped the sun. In Ezekiel's day Judah had incorporated sun worship into their own worship of Yahweh. Yahweh was no more happy with their doing that than He is with admixing the same practices today and calling it a "Biblical" observance. We have no authority to make our own worship. Doing so is making Yahweh into our image.

We read that this idolatry consumed ancient Judah in Ezekiel 8: "Then he brought me to the entrance to the north gate of the house of Yahweh, and I saw women sitting there, mourning for Tammuz. He said to me, 'Do you see this, son of man? You will see things that are even more detestable than this.'

"He then brought me into the inner court of the house of Yahweh, and there at the entrance to the temple, between the portico and the altar, were about twenty-five men. With their backs toward the temple of Yahweh and their faces toward the east, they were bowing down to the sun in the east."

The sun-worship services of the backslidden Israelites, with their women participating in the rites of Astarte worship (Easter) and weeping for Tammuz was detestable to Almighty Yahweh. Little angers our Father in heaven more than embracing the idolatry of the heathen nations.

No Commemoration for the Resurrection

Nothing about memorializing Yahshua's resurrection is commanded anywhere in the Bible. The proper observance of Yahshua's death is the Passover, for which we have plenty of commands and examples in both Old and New testaments. Yahweh instructs, "These are the feasts of Yahweh, even holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is Yahweh's

Passover,” Leviticus 23:4-5. Nowhere is man given authority to alter this observance or morph it into something else.

Early believers observed the Passover according to the command. Ultimately the Roman church instituted Easter. “The Passover, ennobled by the thought of [the Messiah] the true Paschal Lamb, the first-fruits from the dead, continued to be celebrated, and became the Christian Easter” (Britannica).

In the Passover-to-Easter transformation, the first act was to change the day on which Passover was observed. The Britannica notes, “A difference as to the time of its observance speedily sprang up between Christians of Jewish and Gentile descent, which led to a long-continued and bitter controversy, and an unhappy severance of Christian union.”

Some of the early churches stuck with the Biblical command for the 14th of Abib. They were called Quartodecimani and were regarded as heretics.

Others couldn’t decide which day of the week they would observe the “holy day” and did as they saw fit. “In the words of Epiphanius, ‘Some,’ he writes, ‘began the festival before the week, some after the week, some at the beginning, some at the middle, some at the end, thus creating a wonderful and laborious confusion,’ ” Ibid.

It finally took a papal decree of Pius I to settle the issue. And thus we have the modern Easter falling on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox.

They Couldn’t Stick with Scripture

It would be bad enough to keep an arbitrary day named and observed for a pagan deity in honor of the Savior. But the atrocity doesn’t stop there.



The many trappings of the Easter rite sank the participant further into the abyss of idolatry. As the Roman Church grew it encountered heathen nations who held tenaciously to their idol worship and man-made customs. The Roman church recognized that to

amalgamate these peoples into its church-state, it would need to make an easy crossover for them. Rather than forcing the pagans to drop their worship altogether, the church found it expedient to recognize as much as possible their heathen rites in its own ecclesiastical calendar.

This blending of beliefs is explained by James G. Frazer in his book, *The Golden Bough*: “Taken altogether, the coincidences of the Christian and the heathen festivals are too close and too numerous to be accidental. They mark the compromise which the church in the hour of its triumph was compelled to make with its vanquished yet still dangerous rivals. The inflexible protestantism of the primitive missionaries, with fiery denunciations of heathendom, had been exchanged for the supple policy, the easy tolerance, the comprehensive charity of shrewd ecclesiastics, who clearly perceived that if Christianity was to conquer the world it could do so only by relaxing the too rigid principles of its founder, by widening a little the narrow gate which leads to salvation.”



With those carryovers came the inclusion of the idol-rooted customs of eggs, rabbits, hot cross buns, ham dinners, bonfires, lent, and sunrise services all used in pagan worship. Each of these was related either to sun worship, fertility worship of pagan deities and worship of life itself or, as in the custom of eating swine, a snub of the Jews they disdained.

Easter hams get their origin from the corn goddess and counterpart to Astarte, Demeter, whose mascot was the pig.

The heathens believed that by eating what represented their god, in this case swine, that they were literally partaking of their god.

What does Yahweh think of those who practice such things each year? Note Isaiah 65:3-5. “A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine’s flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire

that burneth all the day.”

None of Easter’s traditions can be found in connection with pure worship of the Bible. Not Lent. Not Good Friday. Not Easter itself. It is no coincidence that Easter involves symbols of eggs and rabbits, historically representing fruitful reproduction. Consider Easter’s bizarre melding of two powerful symbols of fertility — eggs and rabbits. It’s a powerful example of the whole absurdity of using this observance to celebrate Yahshua’s resurrection.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1909 ed., has the following admission: “A great many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter. The egg is the emblem of the germinating life of early spring... The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been a symbol of fertility.”



The egg became associated with Astarte or Venus, when she hatched from a giant one that fell from heaven. The egg to the ancient represented the entire universe, which engenders everything. It is round, like the world, and is the universal principle of new life. The mystic egg was venerated in most paganistic nations of the world: Greece, Egypt, Persia, Babylon, India, Japan, and Phoenicia.

Lent on Loan from the Ancients

The 40-day, pre-Easter “fast” known as Lent is an appendage of the mythologies of Greece and Rome. But as with much of false worship, the custom of Lent was original with Babylonian paganism.

“From Arnobius we learn that the fast which the pagans observed, called ‘Castus’ or the ‘sacred’ fast, was, by the Christians in his time, believed to have been primarily in imitation of the long fast of Ceres, when for many days she determinedly refused to eat on account of her ‘excess of sorrow,’ that is, on the account of the loss of her daughter Proserpine, when carried away by Pluto, the god of hell,” Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 105.

Because the early Roman church had no direction from Scripture on the observance of Lent, its first steps with the custom were faltering. “Originally, even in Rome, Lent with the preceding revelries of the Carnival, was entirely unknown; and even when fasting before the Christian Pasch was held to be necessary, it was by slow steps that, in this respect, it came to conform with the ritual of paganism,” *The Two Babylons* p. 106.

At first, Lent was only half as long as the present 40 days. Hislop explains, “But at last, when the worship of Astarte was rising into the ascendant, steps were taken to get the whole Chaldean Lent of six weeks, or forty days, made imperative on all within the Roman Empire of the West,” pp. 106-107.

Each year before Easter we see people walking around with palm ash in the shape of a cross smudged in the middle of their foreheads. They are marking the 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter. It’s a time supposed to be spent in penitence and fasting, and is a practice completely missing from the Scriptures.

Cakes for a Pagan’s Deity

Mother’s making of hot cross buns for Easter traces to worship of the goddess Astarte or Easter. Jeremiah the prophet underscored this abomination in speaking Yahweh’s denunciation of these same heathen practices of his day: “See not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 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 deities, that they may provoke Me to anger,” Jeremiah 7:18.

In Jeremiah 44:19 is another stinging rebuke of those who offered to the pagan goddess. The prophet says in one of the succeeding verses, “Yahweh could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which you have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day,” verse 22. He continues, that because His people rejected His laws and statutes, a curse would befall them.

Various pagans have depicted Astarte differently, but always in

connection with procreation. Her worship is alive and well today in the symbols and customs of Easter.

Passover: the Right Observance for Today

Yahweh tells us in Proverbs 14:12 that even if we think we are serving Yahweh in ways that seem okay to us, that those ways are still wrong and carry an ultimate penalty. “There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

The masses just blindly fall into this observance each year because everyone else is just blindly falling into it. Unless something drastic happens to a person, he will continue traditional ways just as his parents did and their parents did and their parents did. And he won’t ever question why! We truly are slaves to habit, to custom, to routine, to convention and to blind ritual.



Our Creator has prescribed the only way He wants to be worshiped, and we as His creation have no authority to change anything. “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways,’ says Yahweh.”

Passover is the memorial commemorating the death of the Savior for the sins of mankind. Through His death, which paid the ultimate penalty for us, we can have everlasting life. That is the message Yahweh wants us to hold on to. And we do so every year when we

partake of the Passover memorial emblems.

Easter has nothing in common with the Passover. We find no command anywhere in the entire Bible to observe the resurrection of the Savior. We are enjoined to remember the day of His death, however, with Passover. At its core Easter is nothing more than the perpetuation of the practice of pagan rites and rituals. And Yahweh warns not to learn such ways.

In 1Corinthians 10:14-22 is the apostle’s warning against profaning the Passover and its significance by other practices and other symbols not given in the Word:

“Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to

wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of the Messiah? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of the Messiah? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to Yahweh: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of Yahweh, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of Yahweh's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Sovereign to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"

Now that you know the truth, you have a decision to make. Continue on in ways of ultimate destruction or return to the faith once delivered to the saints, Jude 3. That faith includes the true days commanded in the Word – His Feasts and Sabbath. You are being called to make a choice, which is truly a life or death decision. Choose life.

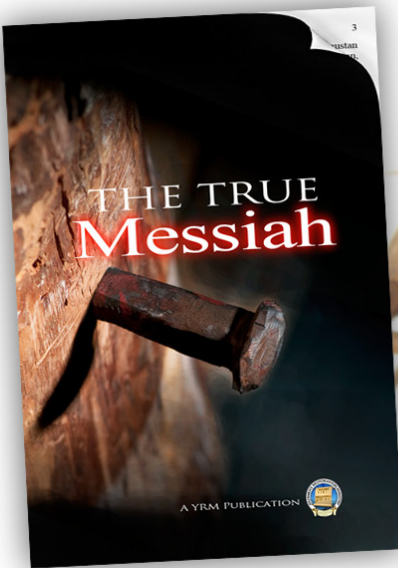


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