

# PASSOVER vs. EASTER

Each year about this time *millions* flock to churches and cathedrals around the world for the *Easter* celebration. *Where* and *when* did this tradition start? *Who* decided Easter should replace the Biblical observance of *PASSOVER*?

**B**unny rabbits, Easter eggs, bright new Easter dresses and warm smiles from friends and relatives decorate homes and churches on Easter weekend.

Easter Sunday impassioned sermons claim Easter is *really* all about the resurrection of the Messiah of Scripture. Quoting Acts 12:4, "...intending after Easter to bring him forth...", some ministers' claim this gives Biblical evidence for Easter observance in the New Testament. But is this the Biblical truth?

Honestly, what do Easter eggs and "Peter cotton tail" have to do with the Bible? For that matter, what does *Easter* have to do with the Bible?

Actually, the word translated "Easter" in the New Testament (KJV) is the Greek "Pascha" (SEC 3957) meaning "Passover."

Have you ever stopped and asked why you accept your religious beliefs?

Perhaps, it is because you were taught from a child that Easter is Christian, that it truly celebrates Messiah's

resurrection.

Perhaps you were told that even though many of the trappings of Easter were really not in the Bible, it is actually the *attitude* of remembering and celebrating the resurrection that matters most.

Perhaps, because so many other people believe the same things, you are comfortable with hot cross buns, "Good Friday, "Holy Week," Lent and Easter sunrise service.

**"There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers..."**

*(Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed vol. 8, p. 828)*

Perhaps too, you have *not* been told the whole truth, the total Scriptural and historical truth, about Easter.

Most importantly, is the Creator, Yahweh, okay with these Easter traditions?

## The True Origin of Easter

The term "Easter" is of Anglo Saxon origin and is a slight variation of *Eastra*, the spring or dawn goddess (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 283; *Webster's Dictionary*). *Eastra* was the goddess of spring, the spring deity. When is the so-called "Christian" Easter celebration?

The word is also the modified English spelling of the goddess, *Ishtar*, worshipped by the ancient Assyrians. She is also associated with *Astarte*: "An ancient Semetic deity, goddess of *fertility* and *reproduction* worshipped by the Phoenicians and Canaanites, corresponding to the Hebrew *Ashtoreth* and the Babylonian and Assyrian *Ishtar*, and regarded as a moon goddess by the Greeks and Romans (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*).

"What means the term Easter itself? It 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 Ninevah*, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country (*The Two Babylons*, A. Hislop, p. 103)."

## The Apostles and Early Church Observed Passover

There is no Biblical basis for either the use of the term Easter or the celebration it supposedly commemorates. The Bible commands observance of the Passover, not the Messiah's resurrection. Where is the slightest hint the Bible *allows* the celebration of His resurrection?

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th edition, vol. 8, p. 828) corroborates this fact: "There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers..."

Further evidence from New Testament times is found in Eusebius Pamphilus' *Ecclesiastical History*. (A.D. 263?-c340). Eusebius was bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, A.D. 315-c340.

Here we find Eusebius' record that Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna (See Rev. 2:8-11) and disciple of the Apostle John, observed the Passover on the fourteenth of the first month as specified in the Law of Yahweh:

"...John, who rested upon the bosom of our Lord also, Polycarp of Smyran, both bishop and martyr, Thrasesas, also, bishop and martyr...**ALL** these observed the **fourteenth day of the Passover according to the GOSPEL**, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith...For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it [Passover on the 14th], because **HE HAD ALWAYS OBSERVED IT WITH JOHN** the disciple of our Lord [Yahshua], **and the rest of the apostles with whom he associated** (Book V, Chapter XXIV)."

These are the *historical FACTS*. Facts are stubborn things. They just will not go away.

### More Evidence from History

Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 104, says, "The festival, of which we read in Church history, under the name Easter, in the *third or fourth centuries*, was quite different from that now observed in the Romish Church, and *at that time* was not known by any such name as Easter. It was called *Pasch*, or the *Passover*...That festival agreed originally with the time of the Jewish Passover,

when Christ was crucified...*was very early observed by many professing Christians*...That festival was not idolatrous, and it was preceded by no Lent [emphasis mine]."

Obviously, for over **300 years after** everything was supposedly "nailed to the cross" at the crucifixion, the **Passover** was still being observed by the true church! *Another fact* that will not go away!

Gradually over time, the apostasy grew and the pagan Easter celebration replaced Passover observance in many quarters.

### WHO Changed the Passover Observance to Easter Worship?

How many professing Christian church-goers know *why* Easter is observed on the calendar date commonly used or *who* sets that date?

Lemming-like they follow the crowd to Easter services.

As apostasy grew, a split arose between those of the true church of Yahweh and false teachers who had gradually gained control of the church at Rome.

In 159 A.D., Polycarp [see earlier reference] visited Rome "...to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject, [of Passover] and urged the tradition which *he had received from the apostles of observing the 14th day*. Anicetus declined..."

In 197 A.D. the matter was again discussed this time between Polycrates [from churches in Asia: See Rev. 1] and Victor, bishop of Rome.

The result? "...Victor demanded that all should adopt the usage prevailing at Rome. This Polycrates firmly refused to agree to...whereupon Victor proceeded to excommunicate Polycrates and the Christians who continued the Eastern usage...[Passover on the 14th]. A final settlement of the dispute was one among the other reasons which led Constantine to summon the council of Nice in 325 [See inset above]...The few who afterward separated themselves



### Easter-day.



**A**t the General Council of Nice, held A.D. 325 (from the 19th of June to the 25th of August), in the presence of Constantine the Great, son of Constantius, Emperor of the East,—the question, touching the day for the celebration of the Feast of Easter, was settled. It was to be kept on the first Sunday after the first "Calendar" full moon, happening upon, or next after, the 21st of March; and if the full moon happened on a Sunday, Easter-day was to be the next Sunday following.

from the unity of the church, and continued to keep the 14th day, were named '*Quarto-decimani*,' and the dispute itself is known as the '*Quartdeciman controversy*' (*Encyclopedia Britannica* [11th edition, vol. VIII, pp. 828-829], as quoted in *The Plain Truth About Easter*, H. Armstrong, 1973, p 17).

Eventually the majority followed the apostasy of their leaders and joined with the pagan adoption of Easter at the Council of Nice in 325, "The decision of the council was unanimous that Easter [now *Easter* not Passover!] was to be kept on Sunday...and that 'none hereafter should follow the blindness of the Jews [meaning should not observe Passover on the 14th] (ibid, p. 829)."

The reason the Council of Nice placed Easter on the first Sunday after the full moon on or after March 21 (the vernal equinox), was to make sure it would *never fall on Passover*, which is the day before the full moon. This is why Easter falls a week or so after Passover.

Despite the total lack of Biblical support for Easter observance, the apostate bishops of the Nicene Council opted to abandon the Scripturally ordained Passover. **To this day, virtually ALL professing Christians (Protestants, Catholics, etc.) dutifully comply with this unscriptural and heretical edict!**

Why? Why do so few ever question the beliefs they follow, or their loyal allegiance to religious creeds?

How could it be that so many doc-

trines pawned off as Biblical are in fact *nowhere* to be found in Scripture?

Part of the answer is that the human heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). The other part of the answer is that there *really is* a master deceiver, Satan the adversary, who deceives *the world* (Rev. 12:9).

The deceit does not, however, end with Easter. There is more, *much more*, that masquerades as Biblical truth, but in fact is not.

## Easter Eggs

Note the reference to Astarte above included "...goddess of fertility and reproduction..." This, in part, explains the association with eggs and the rapidly reproducing rabbits.

Did you know the ancient Druids used the egg as a sacred emblem of their worship (*The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*, E. Davies, p. 210)?

"In the Dionysiaca or mysteries of Bacchus, as celebrated in Athens, one part of the nocturnal ceremony consisted in the consecration of an egg...Hindu fables celebrate their mundane egg...the people of Japan make their sacred egg...In China... dyed or painted eggs are used on sacred festivals...(*The Two Babylons*, A. Hislop, pp. 108-109)."

"With the Greeks the Orphic Egg is described by Aristophanes and was part of the Donysiac and other mysteries, during which the Mundane Egg was consecrated...This 'first born...' was Dionysos, with some Greeks; the god who sprang from the mundane egg..." (*The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky, Vol. I-Cosmogogenesis, 1909, pp. 359-360).

"An egg...is said to have fallen from heaven...doves settled upon it, and hatched it, out came Venus [Astarte or Ishtar] (Hislop, p. 109)."

Colored Easter eggs, the Ishtar egg or Mundane Egg, are definitely NOT Scriptural.

Such Easter fables and the Easter egg itself are rank paganism and found nowhere in Scripture. They should be found nowhere in our religious celebrations.

## The Practice of The True Church: Then and Now

The true church of antiquity continued to observe Passover on the 14th day of the moon as set by the Law of Scripture (Ex. 12:6; *Eusebius, Lightfoot; Hislop*). This day was counted from the day of the conjunction, from the new moon. Few today realize the Biblical day of the new moon is *not* the day the first visible crescent appears but the *day of the conjunction*. (This is proven in our booklet *The Scriptural New Moon*; write for your copy).

As we have shown, history records that long after the Messiah's death despite rebuffs, excommunication, and martyrdom (Polycrates, Polycarp, et.al.), the true disciples of Yahshua steadfastly kept the Passover on the 14th day of Abib, the first month (approximately the 14th of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar).

History further proves the churches of Asia (the Eastern churches) mentioned in Revelation chapters one through three,

continued this Scriptural tradition. These facts of history are beyond dispute.

Another fact is the *true* disciples of Yahshua *still* observe the Passover on the fourteenth day following His example.

The Passover was never rescinded nor exchanged for a day supposedly celebrating the Messiah's resurrection. About this the Scriptures could not be more certain.

For example, the New Testament clearly shows Yahshua kept the Passover, so it must be right to do so: "Now the first of unleavened bread the disciples came to Yahshua, saying to him, Where will you that we prepare for you to eat the Passover?...And as they did eat...(Matt.26:17,19; See also Mk. 14:12, Lu. 22:7-15)." The Passover lamb was killed the fourteenth day of the first month of the Scriptural calendar (Ex. 12:2, 6) and eaten that night (v. 8).

The Scriptures also conclusively show the Apostles and early church followed that same example *after* Yahshua was killed. Notice Paul's example in the letters to the church at Corinth (A.D. 59): "...Therefore,

let us keep the Feast [of Passover; see context] not with old yeast; not with yeast, evil, and wickedness, but with unleavened bread [...bread that has no yeast..." GNB], sincerity, and truth (I Cor. 5:8)." [The preposition 'of' often included in this verse is *not in the Greek*.]

Note that Yahshua himself, upon breaking the unleavened bread during the Passover meal, said, "...This do in remembrance of me (Lk. 22:19)." Yahshua left us the example we are to follow (Jn. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:21).

Did not Paul say, "But this I confess to you [Ananias] that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the Elohim of my fathers, believing ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW AND PROPHETS (Acts 24:14)?"

It is also a definite Biblical fact that the Passover meal was not a Protestant-Catholic styled "Eucharist" snack of unleavened bread and a taste of wine. It was a supper, a major meal. The word "supper" (Jn. 13:2,4) used in reference to the Passover meal, was the main meal and is correctly translated *feast* in Matt. 23:6 and Lk. 20:46. Why would Yahweh's Passover be like the apostatized Eucharist? It is not.

The *true* church, now as in the days of the Apostles, still observes Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Sacred calendar. It never observed Easter and never will. Did you observe Passover this year? -ICY

*"...the apostasy spread until the pagan Easter observance was unanimously adopted at the Council of Nice in A.D. 325..."*

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