

The Counterfeit Called Easter

Sunrise worship services, Easter eggs in the vestibule, Easter ham and hot cross buns at the church social. Is this honoring a resurrected Savior- or is this resurrected mystery worship. Here are some hare-raising facts about the Easter bunny, eggs, and many of the other trappings that go with a great counterfeit celebration supposedly honoring the Savior's death and resurrection.

Most people are born into their beliefs and rarely question what they have been taught from childhood. Societal traditions themselves have a powerful pull on what the majority of people do—with the force of religious passion.

If the tradition is to watch football on Monday nights, attend Fourth of July parades, or exchange Xmas presents, that is what the majority will do. If we teach our children from infancy to look for colored eggs on Easter Sunday morning, that is what they will grow up doing and teach to their own children as well.

In addition to the secular traditions of Easter unquestionably practiced in society at large, Easter is also an orthodox belief accepted automatically by the religious sector.

This observance is one of the holiest days of the year in Christianity. Few Christians will doubt its authenticity. So let's ask the critical question: is Easter Biblical? Is it a holiday that should be observed by a True Believer?

Easter is made to appear Scriptural in a very clever way, but when one searches into the literal and spiritual truth of the matter one finds that Easter has nothing to do with the true Messiah. Any related religious connotations are found outside the Bible and are unscriptural.

These statements may seem like blasphemy to today's Christian, but if he truly has his heart set on proving his beliefs right out of the Bible, then he will find the ensuing study to be true. This treatise is prepared for those who are willing to prove all things, accept the truth, turn from falsehood and deceit, and hold fast to that which is true and good.

The World Book Encyclopedia under "Easter" says, "Easter is a Christian festival that celebrates the resurrection of J-sus Christ. It is the most important holy day of the Christian religion. People attend churches and take part in religious ceremonies.

"In most countries, Easter comes in early spring, at a time when green grass and warm sunshine begin to push aside the ice and snow of winter. Its name may have come from Eostre, a Teutonic goddess of spring, or from the Teutonic festival spring, Eostar [pronounced 'Easter'].

"Christians everywhere celebrate Easter with great rejoicing. In many areas, children collect candy and chocolate bunnies, and hunt colorful Easter eggs. Many persons wear new spring clothes to church on Easter."

Easter: a.k.a. Ishtar, Astarte

Let us first focus on the name "Easter." Where does it come from and what does it mean? You may be surprised to learn that many customs associated with the Easter celebration had been observed by pagans centuries before the Savior came to earth and was put to death, to rise three days later. The worship of pagan deities continued within Christianity, but with a new meaning and a different interpretation—thus making it more palatable.

In *The Roots of English, A Reader's Handbook of Word Origins*, by Robert Clainborne, we find that Easter means "to shine, whence Germanic East (where the dawn light shines from), and also Austron, the Germanic goddess of dawn; she was worshiped at the spring equinox—now the

Easter season. (The first Christian Missionaries in England shrewdly combined their celebration of the Resurrection with the older, pagan festival.)" (p. 55).

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary has this to say: "Easter was originally a pagan festival honoring Eostre, a Teutonic (Germanic) goddess of light and spring. At the time of the vernal equinox (the day in the spring when the sun crosses the equator and day and night are of equal length), sacrifices were offered in her honor. As early as the eighth century the name was used to designate the annual Christian celebration of the resurrection of Chr-st" (p.317).

In *The Two Babylons*, Alexander Hislop says that Easter is "Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven." Her name appears on the Assyrian monuments as Ishtar, which carries the same pronunciations as that of Easter in today's language, (Section II, "Easter," p. 103).

Ishtar was a goddess of Babylon whose consort was Tammuz. She was known in various other nations as Asherah of the Canaanites whose consort was Baal; Isis of Egypt whose consort was Osiris; Aphrodite of Greece whose consort was Adonis, and Venus in Rome whose consort was Mars.

All of these goddesses were goddesses of fertility, fecundity, love, and sensual pleasure. Ishtar was served in her temples by prostitutes with immoral rites performed by bands of men and women.

Provocative Queen of Heaven

Easter or Ishtar is also known as the Queen of Heaven. What does Yahweh say concerning this Queen of Heaven?

"See you not what they do in 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 elohim, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger? Says Yahweh: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore, thus says Yahweh El, Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched," Jeremiah 7:17-20.

Yahweh was so greatly angered by the people's service to the Queen of Heaven that He overthrew them, carrying many of the survivors into Babylon.

Some of the survivors escaped to the land of Egypt where they continued in their practice of worshiping the "Queen of Heaven." He inspired the prophet Jeremiah to warn the people away from such practices, but the people adamantly refused, saying,

"As for the word that you have spoken unto us in the name of Yahweh, we will not hearken unto you. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goes forth out of your own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then had we plenty of food, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we ceased to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have lacked all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our husbands? Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people who had given him that answer, saying, The incense that you burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of

Jerusalem, you, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not Yahweh remember them, and came it not into his mind? So Yahweh could no longer bear, and because of the abominations which you have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an horror, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day. Because you have burned incense, and because you have sinned against Yahweh, and have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies, therefore, this evil happened unto you, as at his day," Jeremiah 44:16-23.

Jeremiah went on to prophesy that all those in Egypt who had burned incense to the Queen of Heaven would be destroyed along with the Egyptians when the Babylonians invaded that country. Only a small remnant of that group ever survived to return to the land of Israel.

The worship of the Queen of Heaven brought terrible disaster and destruction to those of Judaea and Egypt. This is a warning to us today.

The worship of Ishtar (Easter) and Tammuz is none other than sun, nature, and earth worship. Tammuz, the Resurrected Son

Tammuz was a consort of the Queen of Heaven. Who was Tammuz? The Encyclopedia Britannica, Fourteenth Edition, has this to say about Tammuz: "A Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian god, who died and rose annually with dying and reviving vegetation, originally *Dumuzi*, 'the son who rises, goes forth (from the nether world),' but generally interpreted 'faithful son.'

"...he represents the mystery of life and death, as seen in the withering vegetation of the hot Mesopotamian summer, and the rapid renewal of its life at the season of the spring rains... .

"There is a strange inconsistency in the hymns of the wailings concerning the relaxation of the mother goddess to her lover, Tammuz. In the early Sumerian texts she (Ishtar) is his sister, but soon the Semitic view that she is his mother prevails. The two theories appear inconsistently together throughout the entire history of the cult. He is, however, invariably the husband and lover of the otherwise consistently described virgin goddess of love, Innini (Ishtar), Gestinanna, Belitseri (queen of the field of the lower world), and the cult is particularly associated with the great city Erech [built by Nimrod, Gen. 10:10], home of the cult of Anu, the heaven god, and Innini (Ishtar).

"In astrology Tammuz was identified with Aries; in the magic rituals he is symbolized by a white kid, and he is also connected with the ram, which led to this astral identification. Under the title *Sibzianna*, 'faithful shepherd of heaven,' he was identified with Orion. During the period of the deified king worship in the Dungi period of Ur, and in the time of the Isin dynasty, the deified kings habitually identified themselves with Tammuz and were worshipped as husbands of the mother goddess....He was held to be a god of healing, bestower of health, and one who, like all other deities, had power over the demons.

"It is obvious that a cult which is based upon the death and resurrection of a propitiating god, and upon the love of a divine mother who wails for her son, has direct connection with the facts and the theological views based upon them, which gave birth to Christianity. But the form occult which apparently most directly affected the origins of Christianity is that in which Marduk of Babylon was identified with Tammuz. At the Nisan or new year festival at Babylon, Bel (Marduk) was said to have been imprisoned in the lower world, and the priestess weeps at his sepulchre. A malefactor was slain with Bel and they descend together to the land of darkness. Beltis, his wife, descends to hell to seek him, and Bel's garments are given Ishtar (mother of Tammuz). Bel was laid in a sepulchre, from which he soon comes forth. This Marduk transformation of the national Tammuz cult is only another effort of the priesthood of the capital

to enlarge the worship and importance of the local cult...That the cult had direct influence upon the ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY cannot be denied, and the Greek cult of Adonis owes its essential content to the Sumerian Tammuz." (vol. 21, pp. 776-777).

Yahweh Condemns Worship of Tammuz, Ishtar

Yahweh took the prophet Ezekiel in the land of Babylon where he had been taken captive, in vision to the land of Judah to witness what was going on in the temple among the priesthood and the men and women who were worshiping there. Ezekiel was shown the image of jealousy in 8:5 and he was then taken into a room where there were images of every form of creeping thing, while abominable creatures were depicted on the walls all around (vv. 6-10).

Seventy men of the ancients of Israel were burning incense to the images (v. 11). Then Yahweh said to Ezekiel, "*Son of man, have you seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say, Yahweh sees us not; Yahweh has forsaken the earth. He said also unto me, Turn yet again, and you shall see GREATER ABOMINATIONS that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of Yahweh's house, which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz,*" vv. 12-13.

The Israelite women were weeping for the Assyrian, Sumerian, Babylonian deity of vegetation which was a great abomination to Yahweh. Hislop identifies this period of weeping with the 40 days of the Lenten season, a time of mourning and fasting for the dead or dying god Tammuz (pp. 104-106). It was the forerunner of today's 40-day Lenten season observed prior to Easter. Easter ends the period of fasting.

Tammuz is identified with Marduk by the Encyclopedia Britannica. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Revised) says, "Marduk's origin was unclear. His name appears to have a Sumerian etymology (amar-utu-k) and may mean 'young calf of the sun.' Some have suggested Marduk was originally a sun-god" (vol. 4, p. 87).

This all coincides to reveal that the worship of Ishtar and Tammuz is none other than sun, nature, and earth worship. Ishtar was the dawn goddess. Tammuz was the young calf of the sun. They were especially worshiped around the spring equinox when the days not only became equally divided between day and night, but a type of annual day had begun, composed of spring and summer, when the earth would spring to life and bring forth its flora and fauna, producing life-giving food. It was the dawning of the annual day. The earth's inhabitants would rejoice at the increasing strength of the sun and its ability to produce warmth, longer days, and food.

Egg-laying Rabbits?

The Easter egg hunt is a tradition in this country and around the world. Rabbits are also historically linked with Easter. There is even a traditional egg roll at the White House every year. What is this all about?

The rabbit or hare was only one of the animals associated with the pagan goddess of Ishtar in her capacity as Aphrodite. It was a symbol of productivity and fertility. At times she was portrayed as riding on a goat, which was symbolical of wantonness (Britannica, 14th Ed., vol. 2, pp. 97-98).

The egg also was a symbol of productivity and fertility, but there are more mystical meanings assigned to this item included in her worship. Hislop says,

"An egg of wondrous size is said to *have fallen from heaven* into the river Euphrates. The fishes rolled it to the bank where the doves having settled upon it, and hatched it, out came

Venus, who afterwards was called the Syrian Goddess, that is Astarte. Hence the egg became one of the symbols of Astarte or Easter; and accordingly, in Cyprus, one of the chosen seats of the worship of Venus, or Astarte, the egg of wondrous size was represented on a grand scale" (p. 109).

Albert Pike adds even more information as to the mystical meanings of the egg in his book *Morals and Dogma*. He writes, "The relations of the human soul with the rest of nature were a chief object of the science of the mysteries. The man was there brought face to face with entire nature. The world, and the spherical envelope that surrounds it, were represented by *a mystic egg*, by the side of the *sun-god* whose mysteries were celebrated. The famous *Orphic egg* was consecrated to Bacchus in his mysteries. It was, says Plutarch, an image of the universe, which engenders everything, and contains everything in its bosom. 'Consult', says Macrobius, 'the initiates of the mysteries of Bacchus, who honor with special veneration *the sacred egg*.' The rounded and almost spherical form of its shell, he says, which encloses it on every side, and confines within itself the principles of life, is a symbolic image of the world; and the world is the universal principle of all things.

"The symbol was borrowed from the Egyptians, who also *consecrated the egg to Osiris, gem of light*, himself born, says Diodorus, from that famous egg. In Thebes, in upper Egypt, he was represented as emitting it from his mouth, and causing to issue from the first principle of heat and light, or the fire-god, Vulcan, or Phtha. We find this egg even in Japan, between the horns of the famous Mithraic bull, whose attributes Osiris, Apis, and Bacchus all borrowed.

"Orpheus, author of the Grecian mysteries, which he carried from Egypt to Greece, consecrated this symbol: and taught that matter, uncreated and informous, existed from all eternity, unorganized, as chaos; containing in itself the principles of all existences confused and intermingled, light with darkness, the dry with the humid, heat with cold; from which, it after long ages taking the shape of an immense egg, issued the purest matter, or first substance, and the residue was divided into the four elements, from which proceeded heaven and earth and all things else. This grand cosmogonic idea he taught in the mysteries; and thus the hierophant explained *the meaning of the mystic egg*, seen by the initiates in the sanctuary" (p. 400).

Albert Pike goes on to say that this mystic Orphic egg was held in all of the paganistic religions of the world: Greece, Egypt, Persia, Phoenicia, India, Babylon, Japan, etc.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Fourteenth Edition, vol. 16, pp. 936-937, the name "Orpheus" is possibly linked with *orphne*, signifying darkness. Orpheus was represented as a seer, a founder of mystic rites, particularly Dionysiac, a magician, and later an astrologer.

The mystery of the egg, as we have seen from Albert Pike, is that the creation has inherent life within itself and developed without and apart from an everliving Creator. It is the beginning stages of the evolution theory, taught in our schools and colleges as fact today, rather than the abominable lie that it really is. It turns darkness into light in a perverted twist. Is it any wonder that the egg is associated with a pagan goddess of light, which is worshiped through spring sunrise services?

Pike also has this to say about the egg on page 496, "The *serpent* entwined round an egg, was a symbol common to the Indians, the Egyptians, and the Druids. It referred to the creation of the universe. *A serpent with an egg in his mouth was a symbol of the universe containing within itself the gem of all things that the sun develops*. The property possessed by the serpent, of casting its skin, and apparently renewing its youth, made it an emblem of eternity and immortality.

The egg is a symbol of serpent worship! It is a symbol of self creation apart from Yahweh. It is symbol of darkness and deceit rather than light and truth.

According to author Ralph Woodrow (Babylon, Mystery Religion) and others, both the egg and its hatching predate the resurrection of the Messiah by more than 2,000 years, eliminating any connection between eggs, Easter, and the resurrected Savior. Mankind has taken the Biblical significance of the occasion of the resurrection and added symbols and customs that originate from ancient peoples who serve pagan deities.

Note this candid statement from the Catholic Encyclopedia, 1909 Edition, "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."

We also find this in Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend: "Children roll pasch eggs in England. Everywhere they hunt the many-colored Easter eggs, brought by the Easter rabbit. This is not mere child's play, but the vestige of a fertility rite, the eggs and the rabbit both symbolizing fertility. Furthermore, the rabbit was the escort of the Germanic Goddess Ostara who gave the name to the festival by way of the German Ostern" (1949 ed., vol. 1, p. 335).

Finally, the Dictionary of Christian Lore and Legend notes this about the Easter egg: "The Easter egg, pagan symbol of rebirth, was given a Christian meaning when it became the practice to bring eggs, forbidden during Lent, to be blessed in church on Easter Sunday," p. 89.

The rabbit or hare was only one of the animals associated with the pagan goddess Ishtar in capacity as Aphrodite.

Easter Sunrise Worship

We all know that sunrise services are associated with Easter. Easter was the name of the goddess of dawn, and therefore would naturally be worshiped at the dawning of the sun.

Albert Pike admits that the worship of the sun became the basis of all the religions of antiquity (p. 593). He also writes, "To conceive of G-d as an actuality, and not as a mere nonsubstance or name, which involved nonexistence, the Kabala, like the Egyptians, imagined him to be 'a most *occult* light,' AUR; not our material and visible light, but the substance out of which light flows, the fire, as relative to its heat and flame. Of this light or ether, the sun was to the Tsabeans the only manifestation or out-shining, and as such it was worshipped, and not as the type of dominion and power. G-d was the *PhosNeoton*, the light cognizable only by the intellect, the light-principle, the light-ether, from which souls emanate, and to which they return" (p. 740).

The Jewish people of Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's day had incorporated sun worship into the worship of Yahweh. We have already read of their worship of the Queen of Heaven and Tammuz, but Yahweh also showed Ezekiel other abominations that were going on.

After showing the women weeping for Tammuz, Yahweh said to Ezekiel, "*Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn yet again, and you shall see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of Yahweh's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of Yahweh, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of Yahweh, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east,*" Ezekiel 8:15-16.

As the sun rose in the east the Jewish leaders were turned to face the east, worshiping the rising sun. Judah was corrupting the true worship of Yahweh by introducing false, paganistic sun worship into their fellowship.

Yahweh's temple was built facing eastward just as the tabernacle in the wilderness faced east. This positioning was for a purpose. As Albert Pike pointed out, all religions of antiquity worshiped the sun. The sun worshipers would begin their daily worship by facing the rising sun in the east. Yahweh's temple and tabernacle faced the east so that a True Worshiper would turn away from the rising sun in the east to face the temple or the tabernacle in the west. This was a symbol of repentance. One had to turn away from sun worship to the True Worship of Yahweh. Such is the status of those steeped in paganistic Easter sunrise worship today. One must turn, repent of such things, and shift to the True Worship of Yahweh.

"Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals amalgamated." *The Two Babylon's*

Hot Cross Buns

Alexander Hislop has this to say about the traditional hot cross buns associated with Easter: "The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Pausch or Easter Sunday, figured in the Chaldean rites just as they do now. The 'buns,' known too by that identical name, were used in the worship of the queen of heaven, the goddess Easter, as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens—that is, 1500 years before the Christian era. 'One species of sacred bread,' says Bryant, 'which used to be offered to the gods, was of great antiquity, and called Boun.' Diogenes Laertius, speaking of this offering being made by Empedocles, describes the chief ingredients of which it was composed, saying, 'He offered one of the sacred cakes called Boun, which was made of fine flour and honey,' " (*The Two Babylon's*, pp. 107-108).

The "buns" described here are the "cakes" that earlier were denounced by the prophet Jeremiah. The ingredient of honey in the "cakes" was another violation of the commands of Yahweh for He had charged the Israelites to offer neither leaven nor honey in any offering made by fire to Him (Lev. 2:11).

Because these cakes were made to the Queen of Heaven, they were marked with a cross, symbol for woman and also signifying life in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Easter Hams

Sacrificial cakes were the offering of choice for those pagans who were too poor to offer a pig at the festival honoring the Queen of Heaven.

The pig was sacred to the goddess Demeter, the corn goddess, a deity of abundance and fertility—a counterpart of Astarte or Easter. We learn this from *The Golden Bough*, by James Frazer:

"The pig was sacred to her; in art she was represented carrying or accompanied by a pig; and the pig was regularly sacrificed in her mysteries...originally the pig was an embodiment of the corn-goddess herself," ch.3, p.44.

Pigs and cakes of dough were traditionally thrown into the chasms of two similar gods, Demeter and Proserpine, which appear to have been sacred caverns or vaults. The heathens believed that by eating what represented and embodied their god—in this case swine—they were literally partaking of their god (Frazer, p. 45).

What does the Almighty Yahweh think of honoring pagan gods with rites like these? He inspired the prophet Isaiah to write:

"A people that provokes me to anger continually to my face; that sacrifices in gardens, and burns 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 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 burns all day." (Isa. 65:3-5)

Lent: On Loan from Ancient Paganism

The word "Lent" derives from the Old English *lencten*, meaning spring. Today it is the 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday until Easter, reserved in churchianity for penitence and fasting.

The self-denial aspect of fasting during Lent has mostly been dropped in favor of "giving up" something—which usually means a bad habit like smoking that should be given up anyway.

The True Worshiper wonders, where did this custom of Lent originate? Was it with the early "church"?

Hislop's *The Two Babylon's* explains, "The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshipers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, 'in the spring of the year' is still observed by the Yezidis or Pagan Devil-worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians....Such a lent of forty days was observed in Egypt...held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god," pp. 104-5.

Osiris's counterpart is the Greek Demeter and the Babylonian Tammuz—both deities of fertility and life. As *The Two Babylon's* observes, "Among the Pagans this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz, which was celebrated by alternate weeping and rejoicing...To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals amalgamated, and, by a complicated but skillful adjustment of the calendar, it was found no difficult matter, in general, to get Paganism and Christianity—now far sunk in idolatry—in this as in so many other things, to shake hands," p. 105.

How Good is Good Friday?

Held as the day of crucifixion by the Christian church, observance of Good Friday resulted from the development of the calendar in the fourth century, according to *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, by J.D. Douglas. This reference notes, "Holy Communion was not usually celebrated on Good Friday. When weekday masses began in the sixth and seventh centuries, Friday was already a special fast day with Bible readings and prayers, and this tradition was left undisturbed," p. 422.

The problem is, in Matthew 12:40 Yahshua said just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, so would He be in the tomb for three days and nights. The best one can do in counting from a Friday afternoon impalement to a Sunday morning resurrection is three days and two nights—providing one takes just a sliver of two daylight portions (late Friday afternoon and early Sunday morning).

But this does not hold with Scripture. Luke 24:1 shows that the women came to the tomb at deep dawn (Gr. *Orthos bathus*), while it was still dark, and the Savior had already risen, v. 3. In fact, He had already risen by sundown Saturday night, according to Matthew 28:1-6. "The end of the Sabbath" in verse 1 derives from the Greek *opse*, which means late in the day, at the back end. Not Sunday morning. (Write for the free booklet, *He Arose...But When?*)

For Him to rise by sundown Saturday, He had to have been impaled on Wednesday afternoon, not Friday.

Passover in the New Testament

Some might turn to Acts 12:4 to show that Easter is mentioned in the New Testament. Most Bibles with any good notation system at all, however, will clarify that the literal word should be "Passover" instead of Easter (the Greek means TO PASCHA, ie. the Passover).

Herod had decided to trouble some in the assembly and had James, John's brother, slain with a sword. When he saw that this pleased the Jewish leaders, he also took Peter prisoner and was intent on treating him in the same manner once the Passover and days of Unleavened Bread were past.

This brings us to another important point. The New Testament assembly continued to observe the Sabbath and holy days just as the Jewish people did. Many historians and commentaries admit in their writings that such is the case.

Yahweh had commanded that Israel observe the Passover memorial (ex. 12, Lev. 23). (Write for our free booklet, Passover: A Memorial for All Time.)

Yahshua and his disciples observed the Passover. Yahshua was slain on the Passover, which is the anniversary of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. He instituted the bread and cup as symbols of His flesh and blood, which were sacrificed and poured out to Yahweh as our "Passover" (1Cor. 5:7). He is the Lamb of Elohim, slain without blemish (1Pet. 1:19;Rev.5:12).

Yahshua commanded us to observe the Passover in memorial of Him (Luke 22:19-20; 1Cor.11:23-25). Paul writes, "For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Sovereign's death till he come," 1Corinthians 11:26. And now we begin to get to the heart of the matter. We are commanded to observe Yahshua's death, the Passover memorial. Nowhere are we commanded to observe His resurrection as a great celebration.

Yes, we do confess that He was slain, buried and resurrected, but it is not a matter to be celebrated after the ways of the pagans.

The resurrection is not justification for devising our own celebration, nor is it grounds for Sunday worship. The way we remember the Savior's resurrection is through our own baptism. Paul wrote in Romans 6:3-5:

"Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Yahshua the Messiah were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Messiah was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the LIKENESS of his death, we shall be also in the LIKENESS of His resurrection."

Paul adds in Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of Elohim, who has raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12).

As we come up out of the watery grave into a new life in the Savior, we portray His rising from the tomb and changing to spirit.

Sleuthing the Counterfeit

It is freely admitted by many modern-day Christians that Christianity has been shrewdly and cleverly paganized down through the ages. The pagans worshiped through a counterfeit religion that paralleled the true religion and beliefs but in a false way. Easter is one of those counterfeits. A counterfeiter can counterfeit a \$100 bill, which to the untrained person is not easily detectable. However, someone who handles money every day, like a bank or savings and loan employee who is instructed in what to look for, can easily spot the counterfeit. Integral to their training is a laborious examining of the real thing, which will make the forgery more obvious. Let's train ourselves to detect the counterfeit by studying the real observances and other truths directly from Yahweh's Word.

- The first fact that should alert us to the counterfeit is the name itself. "Easter" is the obvious name of a pagan goddess. It has nothing to do with Yahweh, Yahshua, the Passover, or Yahshua's resurrection.
- The next fact that warns us to the counterfeit is the Easter eggs and rabbits tradition. Eggs and rabbits are fertility symbols. There is no command to use them in service to Yahweh anywhere in His Word.
- Another sign of a counterfeit is revealed in the worship of Tammuz. Just as two malefactors were slain with the true Messiah, one malefactor is slain with Tammuz. This, of course, is not common knowledge, but is obtainable with a little research once one realizes that Tammuz and Ishtar are cohorts.
- Evidence of a counterfeit is also discovered through the time that the Messiah was to be in the heart of the earth or in the tomb. Yahshua said that He would be "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:38-40). The paganistic messiah of traditional Easter is in the grave only from Friday sunset to Sunday morning, a full day and two nights. That is only half of the actual time that Yahshua said would be THE proof that He was the true Messiah. Much of paganism is just like the counterfeit \$100 bill, it is close, but still falls short of the actual requirements to be valid.
- Counterfeited also is the very name of the Messiah Himself. The pagan messiah is named Jesus or Hesus, while the true Messiah is named Yahshua. Even the name falls short of its true value and distinction.
- Finally, the best way to gauge a counterfeit is to compare it with the truth. No lie is of the truth (1John 2:21). If it can't be proven Biblically, then it simply isn't true or genuine.

The Quartodeciman Controversy

In the fourth century B.C.E. a controversy arose as to when the Passover should be observed. At first the quarrel was whether to observe the Passover on the 14th or 15th. Eusebius points out that the assemblies of Asia followed a more distant tradition of observing the Passover on the 14th of Abib. Those in favor of the fourteenth were called the Quartodecimen while those in favor of the fifteenth were called the Quintodecimen (Britannica, 14th Ed., Vol 7, p. 859).

Polycrates, a bishop of the Asian assemblies, maintained that the apostle Philip and his daughters, the apostle John and other great lights, had all observed Passover on the 14th. He himself came from a family line of bishops, being the eighth (Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, pp. 207-209).

Another scholar points out, "The churches of Asia Minor had preserved the most ancient of all methods of determining the date of Easter: they simply kept it at the same time as the Jewish passover, on the fourteenth day of the Jewish month Nisan whenever that might fall. When Easter was introduced at Rome (c. 160) the feast, as, being the eighth (at Alexandria, was celebrated on the Sunday following the Jewish passover...." The Early Church, by Henry Chadwick (p. 84).

The western assemblies, which were swinging to more Greco-Roman beliefs, reasoned that since their fast (Lent) ended on the day of the resurrection, that Easter Sunday should be the day of observance. When Victor, Bishop of Rome, saw that he could not prevail over Ploycrates, he promptly endeavored to cut off all assemblies of Asia (Middle East) and any others in the neighboring assemblies, proclaiming them to be heterodox (ibid).

Who was correct? We need only search Yahweh's Word for the answer. When Yahshua appeared to the Apostle John giving him the Book of Revelation, Yahshua sent the message only

to the assemblies in Asia, not to the west! The west cut off the Asian assemblies as being heretics for maintaining the 14th Passover, while Yahshua cut off the west for their apostasies! The west cut off the Asian assemblies as being heretics for maintaining the 14th Passover, while Yahshua cut off the west for their apostasies!

Human Traditions Bring Yahweh's Judgement

While Moses was yet on mount Sinai where he received those commandments on two tables of stone, the Israelites began to mix symbols of Egyptian religion with their worship of Yahweh. After collecting gold earrings from people, Aaron fashioned a golden calf. The people then proclaimed this calf to be "Your Elohim, O Israel Who led you up out of the land of Egypt."

Aaron went along with the multitude and proclaimed, There is a festival to Yahweh tomorrow. They began offering burnt offerings and sacrifices, Exodus 32: 1-6. Israel contended they were worshipping their Mighty One, Yahweh. They associated Yahweh with their golden calf. Yet, they were prancing around a pagan replica of a calf from Egypt (Apis?), claiming to worship Yahweh in a way He had never commanded.

The whole nation of Israel was in great peril for their presumptuous sins, Exodus 32:7-10. Only the intervention of Moses averted their punishment. Let us consider this account and have nothing more to do with Lent, Good Friday and Easter, none of which is based on the Bible.

The Jewish leaders of Yahshua's day complained because His disciples were transgressing the traditions of their elders by eating with unwashed hands (Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13). Yahshua countered by saying that they were rejecting and transgressing the commandments of Yahweh by their traditions.

An example that He used was the command to honor father and mother. However, they had circumvented the command to honor and care for mother and father by proclaiming possessions as corban, or dedicated to the temple. By virtue of their mere tradition they eluded the necessity of caring for mother and father.

Easter is also a tradition—a pagan one at that—originally consecrated to the worship of the goddess of Ishtar and her son Tammuz. Yahweh had commanded that the Passover be observed (Ex. 12; Lev. 23, etc.). Yahshua observed the Passover and commanded that the Passover memorial continue to be kept in remembrance of Him. Easter had circumvented the Passover resulting in the rejection and transgression of the commandments of Yahweh.

Truly, Paul writes that we are to observe Yahshua's death until He comes again. Easter is a shrewd blending of paganism into what is supposed to be the true faith, producing disastrous results. It is a counterfeit of the true Passover, causing those steeped in such worship to fail, to fall short of the expected goals of inheritance of the kingdom and everlasting life.

Nowhere are we told to remember the resurrection of the Savior. The Bible knows nothing about a celebration over the Savior's coming forth from the grave. Paul tells us that Passover is to recall the death of the Savior:

"For I have received of the Savior that which also I delivered unto you, That the Master Yahshua 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." (1Cor. 11:23-24)

Contact us for more information on observing the Passover, the proper memorial of our Savior's death. Passover was kept by the Savior, the early believers, and will be kept in the Kingdom (Eze. 45:21), where Yahshua will observe it again with His people, Luke 22:15-18. If

it will be kept in the future under Yahshua's command and direction, should it not be kept today—under the New Covenant in Yahshua?

Passover: The Real Communion

If Easter is one of the great holy days of the church, why can't we find it in the Bible? The Savior and His disciples always kept Passover. He told them that He would keep Passover again with them in the Kingdom. He became the New Testament Passover sacrifice.

Isn't it time you looked into this most important observance—one that memorializes the Savior's ultimate sacrifice for sin? After all, if we don't recognize the Passover, how can we acknowledge His paying the death penalty for our sins?

Send for the FREE booklet, Passover, A Memorial for All Time

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