

Sermon – Easter – Is It Christian?

Some of you may know that I was raised a Roman Catholic. When I was a child, I used to go to church every Sunday. It was important, but especially important was Easter Sunday. We always had new clothes to wear. The men had nice suits and the women all had new hats. Services were longer than usual and the priests were decked out in very ornate vestments. After services, we would go home and hunt Easter eggs, supposedly laid by the Easter Rabbit. We would eat “hot cross buns” and always had an Easter ham for dinner – a nice change from the no-meat diet we endured during those forty days of Lent.

As I grew older, I began to wonder what eggs and rabbits had to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When I read the accounts of Christ’s sacrifice from the pages of my Bible, I had never seen the word Easter, though I supposed it had something to do with the resurrection.

Then in 1982, I came across a booklet that explained the true origin of Easter, Lent, Easter eggs, ham dinners and hot cross buns. It showed me how these strange customs crept into the Church. It opened my eyes to see the truth of God.

Today, I’d like to pass on to you the material that I learned from that booklet. I hope it will help you to understand why you do the things you do and where those customs came from.

Why do people believe the things they believe, do the things they do? What about you?

Most people never stop to ask themselves that question. Many have been taught since childhood to just accept Easter as the chief of the Christian holidays. They have supposed it is part of the true Christian religion to observe Lent, "Holy Week," "Good Friday," to buy hot cross buns at the bakery, to have colored Easter eggs, to dress up and go to church Easter Sunday -- perhaps to attend an Easter sunrise service!

But is it truly the day when Jesus arose from the dead? Where did all of the strange customs come from, which have nothing to do with the resurrection of our Saviour?

Because of the so-called “sheep instinct” in humans, most of us believe a lot of things that are not true. Most of us do a lot of things that are wrong, supposing these things to be right, or even sacred!

The first thing we must understand is that professing Christians were not the only ones who celebrated a festival called "Easter."

Many have been led to suppose the word means "resurrection of Christ." For over 1600 years the Western world has been taught that Christ was crucified on Friday, and that the resurrection occurred about sunrise on Easter Sunday morning. But that is merely one of the fables the Apostle Paul warned readers of the New Testament to expect. The resurrection did not occur on Sunday! Let’s prove this once and for all from our own Bibles.

Three Days and Three Nights

Now I already discussed the truth about the three days and three nights in a previous sermon, but there is much more regarding keeping Easter as compared to the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread.

Apostles Observed Passover, Not Easter

The World Almanac, 1968 edition, page 187, says: "In the second century A.D., Easter Day was, among Christians in Asia Minor [that is, in the Churches at Ephesus, Galatia, etc. -- the so-called "Gentile" churches raised up by the Apostle Paul] the 14th of Nisan, the seventh month of the Jewish [civil] calendar." In other words, the 14th day of the first month of the sacred calendar, and it was not then called by the name of the pagan deity "Easter," but by the Bible name "Passover."

As we will prove, Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and the holy days God had ordained forever were all observed by Jesus, and the early apostles, and the converted Gentile Christians. They never celebrated Easter, but followed Jesus' example and instructions to keep the annual observance of the Passover. Passover is a memorial of the crucifixion of Christ. Passover does not occur on any fixed day of the week, but on a calendar day of the year. The day of the week varies from year to year.

Easter is one of the pagan days Paul warned Gentile converts they must not return to observing

Galatians 4:9-10, *"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."*

How, then, did this pagan festival enter into and fasten itself upon a professing Christianity? That is a surprising story -- but first, notice the true origin and nature of Easter.

The Name "Easter"

Just what is the meaning of the name "Easter"? The name "Easter," which is merely the slightly changed English spelling of the name of the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian goddess Ishtar, comes to us from old Teutonic mythology where it is known as Ostern. The Phoenician name of this goddess was Astarte, consort of Baal, the sun god, whose worship is denounced by the Almighty in the Bible as the most abominable of all pagan idolatry.

Look up the word "Easter" in Webster's dictionary. You will find it clearly reveals the pagan origin of the name.

In the large five-volume Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, only six brief lines are given to the name "Easter," because it occurs only once in the Bible -- and that only in the Authorized King James translation. Says Hastings: "Easter, used in Authorized Version as the translation of 'Pascha' in Acts 12:4, 'Intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.' Revised Standard Version has substituted correctly 'the Passover.'"

Its Chaldean Origin

Easter, as Alexander Hislop says (The Two Babylons, p. 103), "bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven ..."

The ancient gods of the pagans had many different names. While this goddess was called Astarte by the Phoenicians, it appears on Assyrian monuments found by Layard in excavations at Nineveh as Ishtar (Austen H. Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, Vol. II, p. 629). Both were pronounced "Easter."

In the ancient Chaldean idolatrous sun-worship, as practiced by the Phoenicians, Baal was the sun god; Astarte, his consort or wife. And Astarte is the same as Ishtar, or the English "Easter."

Says Hislop: "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 Romish [and Protestant] Church, and at that time was not known by any such name as Easter. It was called Pascha, or the Passover, and ... was very early observed by many professing Christians That festival agreed originally with the time of the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified That festival was not idolatrous, and it was preceded by no Lent" (The Two Babylons, p. 104).

The point is that all pagan religions and mythologies are based upon the Chaldean and Babylonian originals and they are based upon real people such as Cush and Nimrod.

LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THE EASTER CUSTOMS

Where Did We Get Lent?

"Howbeit you should know," wrote Johannes Cassianus (John Cassian) in the fifth century, "that as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, this observance of Lent did not exist" (First Conference Abbot Theonas, chapter 30).

Jesus observed no Lent. The apostles and the early true Church of God observed no Lenten season. Then how did this observance originate?

"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 held in spring by the Pagan Mexicans Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt ..." (The Two Babylons, pp. 104, 105). In fact this Egyptian Lent of forty days was observed expressly in honor of Osiris, also known as Adonis in Syria and Tammuz in Babylonia (Sabeian Researches, by John Landseer, pp. 111, 112).

Ezekiel 8:14, *"Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for **Tammuz**."*

This is not Christian! It is pagan to the core! Yet millions are deceived into observing this form of heathen idolatry, under the delusion they are honoring Jesus Christ the Son of the Creator God!

Lent does not honor Christ! And yet, have you not been like a blind sheep, following the other millions in observing this custom? "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Dyed Eggs

But did you know that dyed Easter eggs also figured in the ancient Babylonian mystery rites, just as they do in Easter observance today? Yes, these are pagan, too.

It is recorded in Edward Davies' "The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids," page 210, that the ancient Druids bore an egg as the sacred emblem of their idolatrous order.

Eggs were sacred to many ancient civilizations and formed an integral part of the religious ceremonies in Egypt and in the Orient.

According to James Bonwick: "Eggs were hung up in the Egyptian temples. Bunsen calls attention to the mundane egg, the emblem of generative life, proceeding from the mouth of the great god of Egypt. The mystic egg of Babylon, hatching the Venus Ishtar, fell from heaven to the Euphrates. Dyed eggs were sacred Easter offerings in Egypt, as they are still in China and Europe. Easter, or spring, was the season of birth, terrestrial and celestial" (Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought, pp. 211-212).

Why do people who believe themselves to be Christians dye eggs at Easter? Do they suppose the Bible ordained, or commands, this heathen custom? There is not a word of it in the New Testament. Certainly Christ did not start it, and the apostles and early Christians did none of it!

Then why should you do it today? Why follow heathenism and try to call it Christian? God calls such things abomination!

Hot Cross Buns

Another custom closely associated with Easter is the baking and eating of Hot Cross Buns. These small sweet buns, marked with a cross of white icing, certainly have their origin in pre-Christian times. The Egyptians used small loaves, stamped with symbolic horns, in their worship of Isis, the Mother Goddess. Among the Greeks cross-marked cakes were associated with devotion to Diana. In the ruins of the Roman city of Herculaneum, near Pompeii, two whole loaves, five inches in diameter and utilizing the familiar cross, were unearthed.

The CROSS is the original SIGN OF THE GOD: TAMMUZ. The cross is the letter "T".

The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop on pages 197-200, gives us this information about the sign of the cross:

"The magic virtues attributed to the so-called 'sign of the cross', the worship bestowed on it, never came from (Yahshua or His Apostles). The same sign of the 'cross' that Rome now worships was used in the Babylonian Mysteries, and was applied by paganism to the same magic purposes (signing oneself, kissing the cross, holding the cross, wearing it as a charm), was honored with the same honors. That which is now called the 'Christian Cross' was originally no Christian emblem at all, but was the Mystic Tau of the Chaldeans and

Egyptians__the true original form of the letter “T”__the initial of the name of Tammuz...that mystic “Tau” was marked in baptism on the foreheads of those initiated in the Mysteries...The mystic “Tau”, as the symbol of the great divinity, was called “the Sign of Life”; it was used as an amulet (“good luck charm”) over the heart; it was marked on the official garments of the (Ancient Pagan) priests, as (now) on the official garments of the Priests of Rome (today)...The Vestal Virgins of Pagan Rome wore (the cross) suspended from their necklaces, as the Nuns do today...men as well as women wore earrings and they frequently had a small cross suspended to a necklace or to the collar of their dress...(the cross) was also appended to the robes of the “Rot-N-No” (Pagan Priests); and traces of it may be seen in the fancy ornaments of the “Rebo” (Pagan Priests), showing that it was already in use as early as Fifteenth Century before the Christian Era...”

“There is hardly a pagan tribe where the cross has not been found. The cross was worshiped by the pagan Celts long before the “incarnation” and death of Christ... The Druids in their groves were accustomed to select the most stately and beautiful tree as an emblem of the deity (god) they adored, and having cut the side branches, they affixed two of the largest of them to the highest part of the trunk, in such a manner that those branches extended on each side like the arms of a man, and, together with the body, presented the appearance of a huge cross, and on the bark, in several places, was also inscribed the letter “Thau”. It was worshiped in Mexico for ages before the Roman Catholic missionaries set foot there, large stone crosses being erected, probably to the “god of rain”. The cross thus widely worshiped, or regarded as a sacred emblem, was the unequivocal symbol of “Bacchus”, the Babylonian Messiah, for he was represented with a head-band covered with crosses.”

Hot Cross Buns therefore are in reality Tammuz cakes! These little magic Tammuz Cakes were made and used in the worship of ISHTAR-EASTER: THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN__for it was she who brought the god back to ensure their fertility. So, when the god returned to Fertilize The Mother, on the exact day of the Vernal Equinox, the people mystically held him in their hands and ate the god, mystically uniting with him and his mother in worship!

During the time that the Prophet Jeremiah was proclaiming God’s Laws to the people, God inspired him to rebuke the people for this PAGAN PRACTICE!

Jeremiah 7:17-18, *"Seest thou 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 gods, that they may provoke me to anger."*

Easter Sunrise Services

You think Easter sunrise services are beautiful? Many do and millions each year get up early and join others in a location that affords a view of the rising sun. The problem is that not all of these people are professing Christians! Many modern day pagans – druids, witches, Wiccans, etc. – also rise on this day to view the rising sun.

Listen! This kind of service does not honor God. As we’ve shown, Jesus did not rise from the dead at sunrise on an Easter Sunday morning. Let’s look at the book of Ezekiel. God was showing the Prophet Ezekiel the sins of His people in a vision -- a prophecy for today! Ezekiel had just been shown, in vision, idol worship among professing people of God

Ezekiel 8:15-18, *"Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen [this], O son of man? turn thee yet again, [and] thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, [were] about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen [this], O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose [play the flute]. Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, [yet] will I not hear them."*

This is the identical thing millions are doing every Easter Sunday morning -- the sunrise service -- standing with their faces toward the east, as the sun is rising, in a service of worship which honors the sun god and his consort, the goddess Easter. Yes, deceived into believing this is Christian, millions practice every Easter the identical form of the ancient sun worship of the sun god! Throughout the Bible this is revealed as the most abominable of all idolatry in the sight of the Eternal Creator!

Other Pagan Symbols

There are other minor symbols associated with Easter, such as Easter lilies and Easter candles. All such symbols can be traced back to ancient pagan fertility rituals. So let's look and the true history and origin of these symbols.

The True History of Easter

"Ishtar", which is pronounced "Easter" was a day that commemorated the resurrection of one of their gods that they called "Tammuz", who was believed to be the only begotten son of the moon-goddess and the sun-god.

In those ancient times, there was a man named Nimrod, who was the grandson of one of Noah's son named Ham. Ham had a son named Cush who married a woman named Semiramis. Cush and Semiramis then had a son named him "Nimrod."

After the death of his father, Nimrod married his own mother and became a powerful King.

The Bible tells of this man, Nimrod, in **Genesis 10:8-10** as follows: *"And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."*

Nimrod became a god-man to the people and Semiramis, his wife and mother, became the powerful Queen of ancient Babylon.

Nimrod was eventually killed by an enemy, and his body was cut in pieces and sent to various parts of his kingdom. Semiramis had all of the parts gathered, except for one part that could not be found.

That missing part was his reproductive organ. Semiramis claimed that Nimrod could not come back to life without it and told the people of Babylon that Nimrod had ascended to the sun and was now to be called "Baal", the sun god.

Queen Semiramis also proclaimed that Baal would be present on earth in the form of a flame, whether candle or lamp, when used in worship.

Semiramis was creating a mystery religion, and with the help of Satan, she set herself up as a goddess.

Semiramis claimed that she was immaculately conceived. She taught that the moon was a goddess that went through a 28 day cycle and ovulated when full. She further claimed that she came down from the moon in a giant moon egg that fell into the Euphrates River. This was to have happened at the time of the first full moon after the spring equinox.

Semiramis became known as "Ishtar" which is pronounced "Easter", and her moon egg became known as "Ishtar's" egg."

Ishtar soon became pregnant and claimed that it was the rays of the sun-god Baal that caused her to conceive. The son that she brought forth was named Tammuz. Tammuz was noted to be especially fond of rabbits, and they became sacred in the ancient religion, because Tammuz was believed to be the son of the sun-god, Baal. Tammuz, like his supposed father, became a hunter.

The day came when Tammuz was killed by a wild pig. Queen Ishtar told the people that Tammuz was now ascended to his father, Baal, and that the two of them would be with the worshippers in the sacred candle or lamp flame as Father, Son and Spirit.

Ishtar, who was now worshipped as the "Mother of God and Queen of Heaven", continued to build her mystery religion. The queen told the worshippers that when Tammuz was killed by the wild pig, some of his blood fell on the stump of an evergreen tree, and the stump grew into a full new tree overnight. This made the evergreen tree sacred by the blood of Tammuz.

She also proclaimed a forty-day period of time of sorrow each year prior to the anniversary of the death of Tammuz.

Ezekiel 8:13-14, *"He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, [and] thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which [was] toward the north; and, behold, there sat women **weeping** for Tammuz."*

During this time, no meat was to be eaten. Worshippers were to meditate upon the sacred mysteries of Baal and Tammuz, and to make the sign of the "T" in front of their hearts as they worshipped. They also ate sacred cakes with the marking of a "T" or cross on the top.

Every year, on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, a celebration was made. It was Ishtar's Sunday and was celebrated with rabbits and eggs. Ishtar also proclaimed that because Tammuz was killed by a pig, that a pig must be eaten on that Sunday.

“Easter” is not Christian!

By now, you should get the idea that that paganism has infiltrated the contemporary "Christian" churches. The truth is that Easter has nothing whatsoever to do with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How Easter Crept Into the Church

How, then, was this pagan festival injected into professing Christian religion, as a substitute for an ordinance of God?

Before we discuss this, we must fix two facts firmly in our minds.

First, Jesus and the apostles foretold, not a universal, widespread popular growth of the true New Testament Church, but a falling away from the truth on the part of the great majority. Prophesying a popular, universal falling away from the faith once delivered, to the Thessalonians Paul stated,

2 Thessalonians 2:7 *“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work...”*

"The mystery of iniquity" was at work only some 20 years after the Church began! He referred to the very "Chaldean Mysteries," of which Easter and Christmas were the two chief festivals!

Second, although Jesus said the gates of hell would never prevail against His church, yet it is prophesied in the New Testament to be the "little flock" never as a great, large, popular universal church.

Luke 12:32 *“Fear not, **little flock**; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”*

This is the very fact the world does not realize today!

TWO Churches -- One False, One True

In New Testament prophecy **two** churches are described.

One, the great and powerful and universal church, a part of the world, actually ruling in its politics over many nations, is described in **Revelation 17**.

This church is pictured with great pomp, ritual and display, decked in purple, scarlet and gold -- proud, worldly, boastful. She is pictured as a universal deceiver -- all the Western nations spiritually drunk with her false doctrines, their spiritual perception so blurred by her paganized teachings and practices they are unable to clearly distinguish truth! She boasts she is the true Church, yet she is drunken with the blood of the saints she has caused to be martyred!

But how could she have deceived the whole world, as foretold in God's Word? Surely, the Protestant world isn't deceived!

Oh, but it is! Notice, verse 5, she is a mother church! Her daughters are also churches who have come out of her, in protest, calling themselves Protestant -- but they are fundamentally of her family in pagan doctrines and practices! They, too, make themselves a part of this world, taking active part in its politics -- the very act which made a "harlot" out of their mother!

The entire apostate family -- mother, and more than 700 daughter denominations, all divided against each other and in confusion of doctrines, yet all united in the chief pagan doctrines and festivals -- has a family name! They call themselves "Christian," but God calls them something else -- "Mystery, Babylon the Great"!

"Babylon" means confusion! God always names people and things by calling them what they are! And here are the identical ancient Babylonian Mysteries now wrapped in the false cloak labeled "Christianity" -- but in fact it is the same old "Babylonian Mystery System."

But where, then, was the true Church?

TRUE Church Small -- Scattered

Did the true Church of God, of which Jesus Christ is the living, directing Head, become perverted -- did it merely apostatize into the system described above?

No! The gates of hell have never prevailed against the true Church of God, and never will! The true Church has never fallen! It has never ceased!

But the true Church of God is pictured in prophecy as the "little flock"! The New Testament describes this Church as continually persecuted, despised by the large popular churches because it is not OF this world or its politics, but has kept itself unspotted from the world! It has always kept the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev. 12:17). It has kept God's Festivals, not the pagan holidays. It has been empowered with the Spirit of God!

That Church never became the great popular church at Rome, as the Protestant world supposes! That Church has always existed, and it exists today!

Then where did it go?

First, remember this Church was never large, never politically powerful, or a world-known organization of men. It is a spiritual organism, not a political organization. It is composed of all whose hearts and lives have been changed by the Spirit of God, whether visibly together, or individually scattered.

Under the lash of continual persecution and opposition from the organized forces of this world, it is difficult for such a people to remain united and organized together.

Daniel prophesied the true people of God would be scattered (**Dan. 12:7**). Jeremiah, too (**Jer. 23:1-2**). Jesus foretold it (**Matt. 26:31**). The apostolic Church was soon scattered by persecution (**Acts 8:1**).

Ignored by Most Histories

You don't read much of this true Body of Christ in the secular histories of this world! No, the world little notes, nor long remembers, the activities of this "little flock," hated and despised by the world, driven to the wilderness by persecution, always opposed, usually scattered! But there are enough references to it in authentic histories to show that it has continued through every century to now!

The prophecies bring this Church into concrete focus in the 12th chapter of Revelation. There she is shown spiritually, in the glory and splendor of the Spirit of God, but visibly in the world as a persecuted Commandment keeping Church driven into the wilderness, for 1260 years, through the Middle Ages!

Even in Paul's day, many among those attending at Antioch, at Jerusalem, at Ephesus, at Corinth, and other places, began to apostatize and turn away from the truth. Divisions sprang up. Those individuals, unconverted or turned from God's truth and way of life, were no part of God's true Church, though visibly assembling with those who were. The "mystery of iniquity" was already working inside these visible churches. This apostasy increased! By the year A.D. 125 the majority in most churches, especially those Gentile-born, were continuing in many of their old pagan beliefs and practices, though professing to be Christian! Gradually, a smaller and smaller portion of the visible churches going by the name "Christian" remained truly yielded to God and His truth, and led of His Spirit. After Constantine took virtual control of the visible, professing Church in the early fourth century, this visible organization became almost wholly pagan, and began excommunicating and persecuting all who held to the true Word of God! Finally, it became necessary for real Christians, who, even as a scattered people, alone composed the true Christian Church, to flee from the jurisdiction of Rome in order truly to worship God! Thus, the visible, organized Church which rose to power was the FALSE Church -- the "Great Whore" of Revelation 17.

Injected Into the Church

Nothing illustrates this very fact more vividly than the actual history of the injecting of Easter into the Western Church.

Here is the quick, brief history of it, from the Encyclopedia Britannica (11th edition, Vol. VIII, pp. 828-829):

"There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers The first Christians [the original true Church] continued to observe the Jewish [that is, God's] festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed. Thus the Passover, with a new conception added to it, of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb and the first fruits from the dead, continued to be observed.

"Although the observance of Easter was at a very early period in the practice of the Christian Church, a serious difference as to the day for its observance soon arose between the Christians of Jewish and those of Gentile descent, which led to a long and bitter controversy. With the Jewish Christians ... the fast ended ... on the 14th day of the moon at evening ... without regard to the day of the week. The Gentile Christians on the other hand [that is, the beginning of the Roman Church, now substituting pagan for true Christian doctrines] ...

identified the first day of the week with the resurrection, and kept the preceding Friday as the commemoration of the crucifixion, irrespective of the day of the month.

"Generally speaking, the Western Churches [Catholic] kept Easter on the 1st day of the week, while the Eastern Churches [containing most of those who remained as part of the true Christian Church] followed the Jewish rule. [That is, observing Passover on the 14th of the first sacred month instead of the pagan Easter.]

"Polycarp, the disciple of John the Evangelist, and bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome in 159 [sic] to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject, and urged the tradition which he had received from the apostles of observing the 14th day. Anicetus, however, declined. About forty years later (197), the question was discussed in a very different spirit between Victor, bishop of Rome, and Polycrates, metropolitan of proconsular Asia [the territory of the Churches at Ephesus, Galatia, Antioch, Philadelphia, and all those mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 -- the Churches established through the Apostle Paul]. That province was the only portion of Christendom which still adhered to the Jewish usage. Victor demanded that all should adopt the usage prevailing at Rome. This Polycrates firmly refused to agree to, and urged many weighty reasons to the contrary, whereupon Victor proceeded to excommunicate Polycrates and the Christians who continued the Eastern usage [that is, who continued in God's way, as Jesus, Peter, Paul, and all the early true Church had done]. He was, however, restrained [by other bishops] from actually proceeding to enforce the decree of excommunication ... and the Asiatic churches retained their usage unmolested. We find the Jewish [true Christian Passover] usage from time to time reasserting itself after this, but it never prevailed to any large extent.

"A final settlement of the dispute was one among the other reasons which led Constantine to summon the council at Nicaea in 325. At that time the Syrians and Antiochenes were the solitary champions of the observance of the 14th day. The decision of the council was unanimous that Easter was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world, and that 'none hereafter should follow the blindness of the Jews.' [That is, in plain language, the Roman Church now decreed that none should be allowed to follow the ways of Christ -- of the true Christian Church!]

"... The few who afterwards separated themselves from the unity of the church [Roman Church], and continued to keep the 14th day, were named 'Quarto-decimani,' and the dispute itself is known as the 'Quartodeciman controversy.'"

Thus you see how the politically organized church at Rome grew to great size and power by adopting popular pagan practices and how she gradually stamped out the true teachings, doctrines, and practices of Christ and the true Church, so far as any collective practice is concerned.

True Christians Kept Passover

The early Church of God in New Testament times was taught that Jesus was in the grave three days and three nights -- that He arose at the close of the third day after the crucifixion. The crucifixion occurred upon a Wednesday, April 5, A.D. 30.

The Passover was observed annually, on the eve of Christ's death, on Nisan 14 of God's Sacred Calendar. This New Testament practice was followed in the West universally until

shortly after the death of the Apostle John. In the Eastern Roman Empire the true practice continued even longer.

The New Testament reveals that Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament Church, both Jewish- and Gentile-born, observed God's Sabbaths, and God's Festivals weekly and annually!

Jesus desired to keep the Passover with His disciples

Luke 22:7-15, *"Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the **passover** must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the **passover**, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the **passover** with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the **passover**. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this **passover** with you before I suffer: "*

He gave instructions that we should continue to keep the Passover, now with the new symbols of bread and wine, instead of the body and blood of the lamb, as a yearly memorial to show His death until He returned. He, as the Lamb of God, is our Passover. Notice in **I Corinthians 5:7-8**:

I Corinthians 5:7, 8, *"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven ... but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."*

By following the example of Jesus in observing this sacred ordinance at the same time He did -- the very same time the Passover was forever commanded to be observed -- we continue to remember His death, annually, on the eve of the crucifixion.

Conclusion

So what does the celebration of Easter have to do with honoring our Lord, Jesus Christ?

The truth is that the forty days of Lent, eggs, rabbits, hot cross buns and the Easter ham have nothing to do with Christ and everything to do with the ancient pagan religion of Mystery Babylon. These are all antichrist activities!

Satan is a master deceiver, and has filled the lives of well-meaning, professing Christians with idolatry.

Revelation 12:9, *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which **deceives** the whole world:"*

These customs of Easter honor Baal, who is also Satan, and is still worshipped as the "**Rising Sun**" and his house is the "**House of the Rising Sun**." Do you want to worship Satan or God?

Obedience or idolatry?

Traditions like Easter's eggs and bunnies, hot cross buns and sunrise services are well known to be of pagan, that is, non-Christian origin. Observances that are rooted in paganism break the first two of the Ten Commandments. Is God pleased when people claim to worship Him by adopting celebrations of pagan gods and goddesses in man-made holidays while they ignore His commanded days and ways of worship?

Inventing religious feasts to replace those given by God contradicts His teaching. Substituting pagan customs and practices for what God has commanded – regardless of how well intentioned it might be – is wrong.

Deuteronomy 12:29-32, *"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."*

Why has man added the idolatrous trappings of the pagan Easter and taken away the beautiful symbolism of God's commanded Passover? What can you do about it? If you have been deceived into believing that Easter honors God and this sermon has convinced you otherwise, then stop doing what you've always done and start doing what God commands you to do!

To put it another way, let's follow the advice of the brother of Jesus – please turn to **Jude 1:3**:

Jude 1:3, *"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."*