

# EASTER

## The Pagan Origin of the Word "Easter"

**Easter** is not a Christian word or name. Easter is derived from Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the *Queen of Heaven*. The pagan festival of Easter was celebrated in the spring in honor of **the resurrection of the pagan god Tammuz**. The word "Easter" was derived from "Ishtar" the ancient pagan goddess of the Babylonian and Assyrian cultures, also known to the Phoenicians as "Astarte" - one of the titles of Beltis the queen of heaven - the wife of the sungod Baal. Both "Ishtar" and "Astarte" are pronounced the same as "Easter" today. Beltis or Bel was also known as Molech, and is referred to in the Old Testament. I Kings 11:1-11 records Solomon's sacrifices to Molech and it's consequences.

**1KI 11:1** But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, [and] Hittites; 2 Of the nations [concerning] which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: [for] surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, [that] his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as [was] the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as [did] David his father. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that [is] before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. 9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, 10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. 11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

According to Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary. Easter was called by the Saxon's, **Eostre**, denoting a goddess of the Saxons, in honour of whom sacrifices were offered about the time of the Passover. Hence the name came to be given to the festival of the Resurrection of Christ, which occurred at the time of the Passover

### Easter Eggs

In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* we read: The egg as a symbol of fertility and of renewed life goes back to the ancient Egyptians and Persians, who had also the custom of colouring and eating eggs during their spring festival. (article Easter)

Jeusit author Francis X. Weiser in *The Easter Book* writes: Just as many Christian customs and similar observance had their origin in pre-Christian times, so, too some of the popular traditions of ...Easter date back to ancient nature rites...The origin of the Easter egg is based on the fertility lore of the Indo-European races...The easter bunny had its origin in pre-Christian fertility lore. Hare and rabbit were the most fertile animals our forefathers knew, serving as symbols of ... new life in the spring season. (pages 15, 181, 188)

### The Change from Passover to Easter

How did this change from Passover to Easter come about, and by whose authority was it made? Do we find any instruction in the Bible to celebrate Christ's resurrection? We do find Easter mentioned in the Bible in **Acts 12: 4 "And when he had apprehended him, he put [him] in prison, and delivered [him] to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."**, but only in the King James version. The New King James and almost all other versions correctly translate the word as Passover. However even in the King James there is no indication in this passage of the celebration of an Easter Festival in commemoration of Christ's resurrection

The early Christians observed the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the third month (which could occur on any day of the week) in honor of the resurrection. It was not until the second century that **Sunday** was chosen as the day to celebrate Christ's resurrection. Eusebius, a church historian who wrote in the fourth-century, says: There was a considerable discussion raised about this time, in consequence of a difference of opinion respecting the observance of the paschal [Passover] season. The churches of all Asia, guided by a remoter tradition, supposed that they ought to keep the fourteenth day of the moon for the festival of the Saviour's Passover, in the which day the Jews were commanded to kill the paschal lamb...it was not the custom to celebrate it this manner in the churches throughout the rest of the world...Hence there were synod and convocations of the bishops on this question; and all unanimously...communicated to all the churches in all places that the mystery of our Lord's resurrection should be celebrated on no other day than [Sunday]. (Ecclestial History, book 5, chapter 23).

### Easter Established

In A.D. 325 Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea. The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology in the article "Easter" has this to say concerning the Council of Nicaea: ...despite the efforts in Asia Minor to maintain the Jewish Passover date of 14 Nisan for Easter (hence the name Quartodecimans), the Council of Nicaea adopted the annual Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox (March 21).

**This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honourth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. MAT 15:8-9**