

The Call of Spring: Rites for the Equinox

History, lore and rituals of the Vernal - or Spring - Equinox.

h, spring! The birds chirping, the warm winds blowing through the new grass... who doesn't long for the end of the long, cold season of winter? Believe it or not, the [Vernal Equinox](#) is March 20th. This [astronomical event](#) is the beginning of Spring, and the herald of warm weather and new beginnings.

The equinox actually occurs when the sun passes the [Celestial Equator](#) (a projection of the earth's equator into the heavens) moving northward. On both the equinoxes (vernal, or spring and autumnal, or fall) the length of day and night are nearly equal. The vernal equinox begins the warmer seasons in the northern hemisphere. In the southern hemisphere, it begins the cooler seasons of fall and winter.

Most religions celebrate the equinox in some way, either through festivals [directly related to the season](#) (such as the pagan Ostara festivals) or other holidays that incorporate [themes of rebirth](#) (the Christian holiday of Easter). The modern pagan name for the festival of spring comes from [Ostara or Eostre](#), the Norse goddess of fertility and springtime. She was celebrated with feasts, and her symbols, the egg and the hare, are used during the celebrations.

Many of the symbols and traditions associated with the festival of Ostara, as well as other ancient spring festivals, have [survived in the Christian customs of Easter](#). The [Elusinian Mysteries](#) of the Ancient Greek culture focused on the rebirth of Persephone as she returned from the Underworld. The [worshippers of Astarte](#), too, saw in the spring the beginning of new life. In their festivals surrounding the equinox, eggs were dyed red in honor of the goddess' fertility.

"Spring Cleaning" is also associated with the festival of Ostara, at least for many pagans. The removal of old energies (and dust bunnies) to make way for the new has ties to the ideas of birth and renewal found in the season. Scrubbing should be done in a clockwise direction, according to [The Witches Web](#), in order to bring helpful energies into the home.

Celebrating Spring Equinox

The spring equinox is one of the four great solar festivals of the year. Day and night are equal, poised and balanced, but about to tip over on the side of light. The spring equinox is sacred to dawn, youth, the morning star and the east. The Saxon goddess, Eostre (from whose name we get the direction East and the holiday Easter) is a dawn goddess, like Aurora and Eos. Just as the dawn is the time of new light, so the vernal equinox is the time of new life.

The New Year

In many traditions, this is the start of the new year. The Roman year began on the ides of March (15th). The astrological year begins on the equinox when the moon moves into the first sign of the Zodiac, Aries, the Ram. The Greek God Ares is equivalent to the Roman Mars for whom the month of March is named. Between the 12th century and 1752, March 25th was the day the year changed in England and Ireland. March 25, 1212 was the day after March 24, 1211.

I like to celebrate the festival of [Nawruz](#), Persian New Year, which falls on the spring equinox. We fix a special dinner of seven food dishes that begin with 'S.' Since we don't know the Arabic names for food, we use English words and eat salad, salami, soup, squash, etc. The table is decorated with a mirror, a bowl of water with one freshly-picked green leaf floating in it, a candleabra containing a candle for every child in the house, a copy of the Koran (or other sacred text), rose water, sweets, fruit, a fish, yogurt and colored eggs.

The Coming of the Spring

Although we saw the first promise of spring at Candlemas in the swelling buds, there were still nights of frost and darkness ahead. Now spring is manifest. Demeter is reunited with her daughter, Kore (the essence of spring), who has been in the Underworld for six months and the earth once again teems with life. The month of March contains holidays dedicated to all the great mother goddesses: Astarte, Isis, Aphrodite, Cybele and the Virgin Mary. The goddess shows herself in the blossoms, the leaves on the trees, the sprouting of the crops, the mating of birds, the birth of young animals. In the agricultural cycle, it is time for planting. We are assured that life will continue.

Gilbert Murray in *Five Stages of Greek Religion* writes about the passion behind the Greek celebration of Easter:

Anyone who has been in Greece at Easter time, especially among the more remote peasants, must have been struck by the emotion of suspense and excitement, with which they wait for the announcement, *Christos aneste*, "Christ is risen!" and the response *Alethos aneste*, "He has really risen!" [An old peasant woman] explained her anxiety: "If Christ does not rise tomorrow we shall have no harvest this year." We are evidently in the presence of an emotion and a fear which, beneath its Christian colouring and, so to speak, transfiguration, is in its essence - a relic from a very remote pre-Christian past.

Resurrection from the Dead

Murray then goes on to recount the myths of the Year Gods - Attis, Adonis, Osiris and Dionysus - who like Christ die and are reborn each year. These gods are always the son of a God and a mortal woman. The son is a savior who saves his people in some way, sometimes through sacrifice. He is the vegetation, dying each year (at harvest) to be reborn in the spring.

In ancient Rome, the 10-day rite in honor of Attis, son of the great goddess Cybele, began on March 15th. A pine tree, which represented Attis, was chopped down, wrapped in a linen shroud, decorated with violets and placed in a sepulchre in the temple. On the Day of Blood or Black Friday, the priests of the cult gashed themselves with knives as they danced ecstatically, sympathizing with Cybele in her grief and helping to restore Attis to life. Two days later, a priest opened the sepulchre at dawn, revealing that it was empty and announcing that the god was saved. This day was known as Hilaria or the Day of Joy, a time of feasting and merriment.

Sound familiar? Easter is the Christian version of the same myth. Even the name Easter is stolen. It comes from the Saxon dawn-goddess Eostre, whose festival was celebrated on spring equinox. The date of Easter is still determined by the old moon cycle. It is always the first Sunday on or after the first full moon after the spring equinox.

On Good Friday, Christ is crucified, a willing sacrifice. Altars are stripped, candles extinguished to represent the darkness of the grave. But on Easter, light springs from darkness, Christ rises from the tomb. If you've never attended an Easter vigil, I highly recommend it. (I usually go to a Russian or Greek Orthodox church, so I don't know what the ceremony is like in other

Christian churches.) Shortly before midnight all the lights are extinguished and the thronged church is dark and silent. Everyone is holding an unlit candle. The priest lights the Paschal candle, which has been ritually blessed and inscribed with the year. He then lights the candles of those nearby, who light the candles of their neighbors, until the church is ablaze with light and filled with song.

According to my Catholic missal, one of the prayers used during this part of the service (which is called the Service of the Light) goes like this:

We pray you, therefore, O Lord, that this candle, consecrated in honor of your name, may continue endlessly to scatter the darkness of this night. May it be received as a sweet fragrance and mingle with the lights of heaven. May the morning star find its flame burning, that Star which knows no setting, which came back from limbo— Christ is like the morning Star because he descended into Death (the Underworld) and emerged again, like Attis, like Kore, like Inanna and Ishtar.

Eggs and Seeds

Eggs are one of the symbols of this festival since they represent new life and potential. Folklore tells us (combining two themes of the season) (and Donna Henes has demonstrated in public egg-balancing ceremonies in New York City) that eggs balance on their ends most easily at equinox. Z Budapest in *Grandmother of Time* says that eggs were dyed red (the color of life) on the Festival of Astarte (Mar 17). The beautifully decorated eggs from the Ukraine (pysanky) are covered with magical symbols for protection, fertility, wisdom, strength and other qualities. They are given as gifts and used as charms.

Seeds are like eggs. While eggs contain the promise of new animal life, seeds hold the potential of a new plant. In ancient Italy in the spring, women planted gardens of Adonis. They filled urns with grain seeds, kept them in the dark and watered them every two days. This custom persists in Sicily. Women plant seeds of grains--lentils, fennel, lettuce or flowers--in baskets and pots. When they sprout, the stalks are tied with red ribbons and the gardens are placed on graves on Good Friday. They symbolize the triumph of life over death.

Celebrating

Blend ideas from the many traditions described above to create your own ceremony to honor the spring. Decorate with budding twigs, flowers, willow catkins, sprouting bulbs. Red and green are the colors of this festival. Red represents blood, the blood of sacrifice and life. Green symbolizes the growth of the plants. Honor various spring deities with their flowers: Narcissus and Hyacinth with those blooms, the red anemone for Adonis, violets for Attis, roses and lilies for the goddesses. This is the traditional time for a great spring feast and the decoration of the table is as important as the food. There are many traditions from which to choose: Nawruz, Passover, Easter, St Joseph's Day, Maimuna - all are variations on the theme of the spring feast, in which every item is symbolic.

Helen Farias in her seasonal newsletter, *Octava*, points out that certain foods are associated with springtime festivals: cheese, butter, eggs, pancakes, wheaten cakes, hot cross buns. Since this is a time when young animals are being born, milk is now available for making cheese and butter. In Poland, according to Dorothy Spicer in *The Book of Festivals*, a little lamb made of butter or sugar is placed in the center of the Easter table, which is laden with food and decorated with eggs, red paper cut-outs and festoons of green. Eggs symbolize new life, of course, and wheaten cakes, grain. In Italy, colored eggs are baked in braided loaves of bread on Easter, combining the two symbols. Hot cross buns, a traditional Easter food, may be very ancient. A wheaten cake marked with a cross was found in Herculaneum, preserved since 79, and may have been used in the spring rites.

Decorating Eggs

This is one of my favorite ways to celebrate spring. I've decorated eggs with nail polish, with food coloring and vinegar, with commercial egg dyes and with natural dyes. Pauline Campanelli in *The Wheel of the Year* describes many natural substances that dye eggs. One of my favorites is boiling a single onion skin with a few eggs to get a soft orange. A handful of onion skins produces rust, a half teaspoon of turmeric gives a sunny yellow and beet juice and vinegar make pink. If you boil eggs with vinegar and several of the outer leaves of cabbage and allow them to cool overnight, the eggs will be a bright robin's egg blue, but they must be handled carefully since the dye comes off easily.

A few years ago, I finally purchased the appropriate tool, a kitska (I got mine in the art supply department of our local university bookstore), and started making pysanky (Ukrainian Easter eggs). You place a bit of beeswax in the funnel of the kitska, then melt it over a candle flame and draw on the eggshell. It helps to have a lathe to hold the egg if you want absolutely even lines. Begin with a white egg and put wax on all the areas you want to stay white, then dye the egg yellow and cover all the areas with wax which you want to remain yellow, and so forth through orange, red and a dark color (brown, purple or black). When the egg is done, place it in a low temperature oven for a few minutes to melt the wax, which is then rubbed off to reveal the intricate designs and glowing colors of your egg. I love the delicacy of the designs, the smell of the wax and the candle, and the trance-like quality of the whole process.

This is a great project for doing with a group. In the Ukraine, only women created these special eggs and they did so at night, when the children were asleep. If you want to use the eggs as talismans, they should be raw and whole (not blown out). Decorate them with symbols of the qualities you wish for yourself and your family and friends in the coming year. For example, draw sprouting leaves on an egg and bury it in your garden to help stimulate your plants.

Blessing and Planting Seeds

Several years ago, my family celebrated with a very simple but effective ritual, based on the ceremony suggested by Nancy Brady Cunningham in *Feeding the Spirit*. Each person chose a seed or bulb that was meaningful to them. We blessed the seeds with a prayer from Campanelli: Now is the dark half of the year passing Now do the days grow light and the Earth grows warm I summon the spirit of these seeds Which have slept in darkness Awaken, stir and swell Soon you will be planted in the earth To grow and bring forth new fruit Blessed be! We sat quietly and visualized our plants in full bloom. Then we invoked each of the four elements necessary for the plants' growth. We placed the seed in a pot of soil and patted down the earth, poured water on it, breathed on it to represent air and held the pot over a candle (or up to the sun, if outside) to represent the element fire (the warmth of the sun).

Add another layer of meaning to this ceremony by choosing seeds which represent the things you want to grow during the new year--wisdom, understanding, patience, etc. Visualize those qualities coming into full bloom in your life as you plant your seeds.

From *Celebrating the Seasonal Holy-Days* by Waverly Fitzgerald, Priestess of Swords Press, 1991. To order a copy of the book which contains suggestions for celebrating the eight seasonal holy-days, send \$7 to Waverly Fitzgerald at 1463 E Republican #187, Seattle WA 98112.

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The world is mist on glass
Beeches and lanterns turned upside-down
Beneath a rose razor-silver of moon.
Spiderwebs of shadows lamp-cast
By trees yet-denuded of springtime
Mark tracings on the mind.
Young moon, young world,
Arising again of primordial grey-
The phantoms that walk across lakes
And the sprites of uneven breezes.
Stand forth- and watch the Sun reborn
Held in the gentle arms of Lady Moon
Antique-tinted Oestre who stands to dance
Upon the greening fields
Making joyful play among the puddle
Of winter's last frozen blood.
Sing out your silent songs of praise
As the demon-beast that swallowed down the Sun
Gives up at last to try another year.

[Back](#) to the Book of Shadows.

99 Names of Easter

The purpose of the fertility mission is Renewal of the world immortal epoch. This Renewal pivots upon Easter - the cosmic ovum of renewal and coincidentally Christ's resurrection. We all know that Easter is not named after the Christian Pieta and Exaltation, that the egg of Easter is the feminine symbol of resurrection of nature named after Oestre, or Ishtar - Queen of Heaven, and that its date is, to this very day, phased by her full moon. As gnostic 'Christos' I thus declare Easter to be the root fertility celebration of Renewal of the sustainable Feminine in all her forms.

Here follows a formal recitation of '99 names of God': 'Elohim in her Feminine face, in recognition of the theft of her identity by the patriarchs in 'my' name, and of the travail suffered by womankind from Eve, through the rape of the sanctuaries, jihad and the Inquisition, to the present, triggered by the disembowellings of pregnant women in Algeria, and Judith Miller's work on Islam "God has ninety-nine names" (see the Genesis excerpt).

I hereby return this root festival of immortality, in resurrection of all life, to the Feminine, Asherah, the Tree of Life, in opening the epoch of Parousia.

Please recite this 'calling of the names' on Eostre Monday (Moonday), day of resurrection, to remind yourself of this stolen heritage, and henceforth keep only the Epiphany in the name of the Lord. This is the Lord's day, turning back the 'solar dark season', not the lunar Easter of the Lady.

Enjoy your Easter eggs, while you ponder immortal life unfolding!

love Chris King (Good Friday NZ time 1998)

THE EASTER OVUM OF RENEWAL:

Ninety-nine names of the Feminine face of God.

Hail Eostre, Hare Ostaria.
Ave Astarte, adoration Ashtoreth.
A shalom, Asherah,
Verdant Tree of immortal life.
Radiate O Ishtar.
Abide Queen Esther.
All my love, Inanna.

Devotions to Dianna.
Fruitfulness O Marianna.
Curve the rib of life, O Ninti.
Descend dear Lilith to refresh the wild.
Endure for the immortal fruit, forebearing Eve.
A timbrel Miriam, for the oceans.
Divine inebriation, Hathor Kadesh,
sound your sistrum for the rains of plenty.
To Demeter and Persephone: Sustain!

Turn again, that the land shall flower.
Give us your sanctuary O Gaea.
Isis O Isis, Mater compassionata.
Ave María.

Circumcised Pieta, Mother superior.
Exaltations Magdalen!
Elizabeth Magnificent.
Shalom Salome.
Maranatha Anath.

Love almighty, Aphrodite.

To immortal wisdom, Hokhmah, from everlasting,
or ever Earth was, arise and illuminate,
Sapientia, humanity by name, Sophia by grace.

To Shekhinah in visionary fire,
envelop us with wings of Sakina.

Return al-Lat, ancient 'nameless' one.

Luna, power to al-Uzza, Phebe, and Tyche.

Compassionate fates, O Manat.

Fertile uterine darkness, Eresh-kigal.

Felicity and affection, Fatima.

Awaken freedom, Hind of Hinds.

Return O Shulamite Return, Return.

Return that we may look upon thee.

Thanks to all matriarchs:

To Sarah and Hagar,

Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

A blessing upon the maternal line.

To Ariadne, spin your web.

To Semele, seek the light.

To Brigit, Freya and Catherine. Blessings.

Your whole embodiment O Godiva.

Many thanks to the 'great whore of Babylon' - Barbara Walker, without whose work this would not have been possible.

An Easter Renewal Ceremony

Dearest Chris(t)-King,

Blessings and salutations to thee, dearly beloved Soul! I read your poem last night at our full moon meditation circle. There were four women present, and many tears flowed, but they were tears of joy and of remembrance. One had brought sacred oil imbued with flower essences from her own devic garden, so we anointed ourselves and slipped into the eternal waters of silence. There we floated, weightless and shimmering in the moonlight, sending and receiving light and love and divine inspiration.

I will describe the altar I created for this night, around which we sat: Underlying was the cloth which woven means LOVE from the people in Ghana, colored in pinks and oranges primarily. At right angles was a peach brocade altar cloth I sewed by hand. At right angles to that, lining up with the Ghana cloth underneath, was a Tibetan brocade column from the Tibetan Children's Village in India, forming the upright pole of a cross, pointing through glass doors to the rising moon. This column is golden, with embroidered red and green symbols, and a Tibetan prayer inscribed along its length. At its head, the color image of the Peace Wheel (eight sectors of human endeavor and activity surrounding the earth surmounted by the double infinity symbol, standing for the building of cultures of peace) with a living white rose bush placed in its center. A mighty angel of compassion, with iridescent lavender wings, a dove of peace in each hand, and a rabbit before her, kneels behind the rose bush, facing inward, towards the southern pole, where sits the globe of Earth, swathed in white lace and purple silk, shafts of wheat and twigs of madrone from the sacred mountain issuing from her feet. On either side of the column, living white Oester lilies, and two smaller angels in front of them, holding a golden gossamer ribbon which crosses the center of the column. At the center, beneath the ribbon, a shallow white porcelain chalice surrounded by three cherubs, contains a large vermilion egg, resting upon a green ivy leaf. Quartz crystals abound at the four corners and along the length of the column, with green new leaves of ivy.

My friend, Christy, brought the egg unbidden, to place into the chalice waiting for it. She also brought communion of red wine in a silver chalice with silver cups and rye crackers to dip into it. I made sweet ginger barley cakes, and we toasted thee as Christ the King, and we toasted the Christos in every man. The women all wanted to know who you are, so I told them. They all asked for a copy of the poem, so I gave it to them, asking them to continue to invoke the 99 names out loud. We all felt the goddess present as the names were called. It was a very powerful meditation for all of us. Thank you, thank you, thank you, dearly beloved One.

Words are insufficient now.

Blessings on this Day.

Catherine

Free-fall into the Crucible: Illumination and Natural Renewal

This is a letter of sustenance, support and flames of wild transformation to awaken each of us to our cosmic potential to transform the living Earth.

We are all in this out of free-will. A secret lies before us which can fertilize a transformation of the planet that will stand for all time - the 'cosmic renovation' realized. We are drawn together, not by a movement or a fixed belief but by fate herself, paradoxically in complete free-choice. We are thus falling into freedom. Fate is never pre-destined but alive and prescient. This is the prison opened.

To queenly Guinivere and Albina, agape of the Alder.
To Helene, Elaine, Athena and Artemis. Protect.

Arise Aradia Queen of witches!

Resume your rightful place in nature,
lament for 'la Pucelle', beloved Joan,
and the suffocating holocaust of Inquisition.

To Tara, Kali, Coatlicue, Cybele and Hecate a warning:
Stem the flow, lest the blood spill again every which way.

To Pandora, Hel and Tefnet. Relent for life.

Hare Kali-ma of the Yuga,

love to Lakshmi, deference to Durga.

A Tantric dance for Nanda Devi, and Sita,
for Parvati, Sarasvati and Shakti.

Heal the nightmare Leucothea,
bridge the heavens peaceful Ma'at.

Lustre the half-shell Margaret

Refresh the enchanted net O Maya,
mother-queen and jewel of liberation.

To Medea, Medusa, Nemesis, and Nephys,
Hera, Iris, Nut and Olga. Salutation.

To Phaedra, Psyche and Rhea,

Tiamat, Panacea and Themis,
compassion for the ailing world.

Ola Oya! Scatter the winds with care.

A Way to the Valley, Hsi Wang Mu.

To Xochiquetzal, flowers of love.

Aroha to Hine nui te Po,

hind of darkness, vagina of the earth.

To Asherah alpha, and to Zoe omega.

Mazatec prophetess María Sabina,
how can we ever thank you enough?

The beautiful fractal called the Mandelbrot set has a very special nature. All its parts are each unique and individual and yet all these fit cohesively into the greater whole, a whole whose parts appear even more complex than the entire set. What I like about this is the image of autonomous freedom it evokes, while also realizing the cohesive thread linking each of these 'members' into the greater totality. We are however vastly freer than the deterministic Mandelbrot set. Free in will and free in spirit. Yet linked by implicate quantum reality.

It is my intuition that living prescient fate is drawing us together to perform a supreme creative act of free-will in which our individual imaginations and creativity will come crucially to the fore. This falls clean down the middle between the practicality (environmental activism, disarmament etc.) and spirituality (mysticism, meditation, religion) and thus forms an entirely new type of situation for humanity contained neither in traditional science nor archaic religious belief, nor even in the 'new age'.

The intuition briefly is this: History (or hystery if you prefer) is alive and prescient. What people have called "God and Goddess" is the universe coming to know itself in space-time, woven into unfolding history in the collective subconscious. It comes to the surface, expressed in our individual conscious experience and also in archetypal ways - a collective dream of existence. If we go with this 'force of nature' it realizes all the heroic sagas as passion dramas of existence - historical unveilings of the inner 'gnostic' reality.

For us, the most powerful and complete myth of origin is the Fall, because it truly captures the existential condition of all human culture, in subjugating nature, founding patriarchal civilization and reaping the consequences in alienation and separation from the enveloping natural divinity.

It seems an 'unholy' coincidence that the earth is coming to its evolutionary crisis of population, biodiversity genocide and gene tech utopia coincidentally with the end of the second Christian millennium. The reason for this is that the collective stream has dreamed the dream of the final epoch and we are now in supreme poetic irony converging on the resolution of this collective experience as a passion of requital. The coincidence is thus prescient.

The gnostic secret in this is that we are all aspects of the utterly ancient spirit of creation, manifest in the flesh, and here to play a key part in bringing this inner-knowing to the surface. The hard-to-handle reality here is that we are the very creative force of the universe moving on the face of the deep.

Could we then depart again as gypsy spirits and leave this pivotal encounter, in which the entire evolutionary history of earth through 3800 million years of evolution stands at stake? I can't, so I am calling to you as kindred spirits - as rainbow warriors. This is not just the millennial Kingdom of Jesus but the cosmic epoch - the epoch of the entire universe's creation, evolutionary sustenance, and culmination at stake.

In such an utterly awesome passion drama, we stand tiny and shining with potential to awaken humanity to a truth, so utterly inspiring that, once perceived, it becomes almost impossible to sleep or think. This is the abysmal vein of gold - the source mother-lode - that all mystics have witnessed. It IS the Kingdom come. It IS the grail overflowing.

Now we each can learn to come to terms with this in our own way as nodes on the 'net of Indra', but time is short. This is not just a matter of linking to form a millennial celebration. It IS the root world transformation dimly understood by the prophets as an age of Requital. Time is critically of the essence for all life. We have to catch fire NOW for the love of life itself in a way which will draw others to us in love of life. Illumination to realize root transformation. No fixed belief but intuition. No religion but passion. No law but truth. No way but love.

What I am trying to convey to you is something you already possess. I thus cannot give it to you. I can only ask you to realize it within yourselves. I am here to convey the gnostic essence back to you all so that you can each awaken yourselves: "That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves." Christ - Gospel of Thomas

If you do, you shall become a light to all life and a cool shadow of sanctuary to all who are in the crucible, as we all are.

Infectiously alive. Affectionately graceful. Calm, confident, certain even in the face of death.

The world is divided between cynical materialists who would happily rape the Earth and leave it devastated for all time to make a fast buck because they know no other way, and religious fundamentalists who would even kill to prevent the true light of gnosis shining before all humanity.

This transformation is critically one of nature as much of spirit, of the sustainable and biological feminine returning to her place of wisdom. It requires us to go further than religion and spirituality into the uncharted wilderness of cosmic becoming. It is a practical, natural and even scientific transformation.

If we can begin to let our gnostic illumination shine, we will each gain the confidence to assume responsibility and show others the awesome power of love, truth and wisdom that lies hidden within us. This is not just 'lightspeed meditation', it is biological.

Realization 'of the sap and of the dew'. But it is also transcendental, cosmic from before ever the universe was.

If we can link in true affection in our simple diverse meditations, in our fractal actions, and in our illumination, we shall become a light of infinitely many colours, which can form a nucleus for a real natural transformation of human consciousness. The key to synchronicity of gnosis is fractal realization. How to become the divine snowflake, the tree whose leaves are trees.

There are many, many practical things we can do now. We could work together to plan major funding proposals, head-hunt gnostic conference participants, contact ethnic minorities for the millennial gathering etc. etc. We can also begin to link to others in inspiration through our confidence that we are doing this freely to save unfolding life. By linking fractally we can begin to combine our energies creatively so that many many things can be done at once.

This is not just 'spring season' it is the spring-tide of human consciousness. What we do now is going to affect the lives of our descendents for countless generations to come. We may all really become the immortals if we do this right and take it all the way to the line. The transformation is practical. Sakina could become a watershed for genetic ethics and biodiversity. If we can almost single-handedly save the entire evolutionary heritage, our names will be sung through the endless ages. That is the way woman and man really, truly become Goddess and God manifest.

Easter

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Easter is the Christian celebration of the Death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter this year falls on April 4, 1999. Easter is the time of springtime festivals, a time to welcome back the Tulips, the Crocuses and the Daffodils. It's a time of new suits, new dresses and patent leather shoes. And a time of chocolate bunnies, marshmallow chicks, and colored eggs!

Easter is an English word derived from the name of a Germanic goddess. In the ancient Church, the celebration of the Resurrection was called Passover. Today, Orthodox Christians call this holiday Pascha (as in paschal lamb), which is the Greek word for Passover. In Anglican churches, the designation Sunday of the Resurrection is often preferred over Easter and in Lutheran liturgy, it is called The Resurrection of Our Lord. The current ecumenical trend in English-speaking countries is to use Easter for the fifty-day season and Easter Day for the day of the Resurrection. Aside from English and German, the words for Passover and Easter are the same in most languages.

According to the Venerable Bede, Christian historian and theologian, writing in the 8th century, the name "Easter" is from the festival of Oestre (sometimes spelled "Estre"), pronounced "Eestruh", the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Spring, Fertility and New Life. It is easy to see how "Eastre time" became "Easter time".

Since ancient times, pagans have worshipped rabbits as fertility gods, and have looked upon them as symbols of reproduction. In the traditions of Egypt and Persia there are such rabbit gods, and they were particularly honored in the Springtime. Likewise, eggs have been, since ancient times, symbols of fertility and new life. Eggs have always been an important feature of pagan Springtime celebrations of new life, fertility, etc. The Orphic legend of the origin of the Universe has the Earth being hatched out of an enormous egg (which is similar to the current evolutionary (pagan) theory of the "cosmic egg" origin of the Universe). In a broad range of pagan societies, from Egypt and Mesopotamia to the British Isles, brightly-decorated eggs were (and still are) presented as gifts and charms to bring (supernatural) fertility each Spring.

This all comes together in our Easter customs in the pagan tradition of Oestre (Estre), the Goddess of Spring, etc. In that pagan story, there was a great bird who intensely desired to be a rabbit. The Goddess Oestre (Estre) graciously turned the bird into a rabbit, and in gratitude the rabbit (who could still remember how to lay bird eggs) came each Spring, during the Festival of Oestre (Estre), and laid beautiful eggs for the benevolent goddess. This is exactly how we got a supernaural, egg-laying rabbit god in our Easter tradition.

Since the pagan Festival of Oestre (Estre) coincided each Spring with the time of Passover, it isn't difficult to see how these pagan beliefs and customs eased into the life of The Church and replaced the Passover.

I would like to preface the following study by saying, I'm absolutely convinced of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I'm convinced that He bodily rose from the dead, and was not found in corruption. I affirm, with all conviction and prompting from the Holy Spirit, that we must reverence and uphold the truth of the resurrection.

This study is not about proving or disproving the resurrection—it's about discovering the truth of a holiday that we have been deceived into believing is the "actual day" our Lord Jesus rose from the dead.

We have been told, and believed for hundreds of years, that "Easter" is a holiday celebrating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is it wrong to celebrate the resurrection, and call it Easter, during this time? Yes. Is it good to celebrate the resurrection? Yes.

Old Testament

In the Old Testament passages, looking forward to the resurrection, and its teaching are found in: Job 19:26; Ps. 16:10, 49:15; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2,13; Hos. 13:14; Ezek. 37:1-10; typified in Isaac Gen. 22:13 with Heb. 11:19; in Jonah 2:10 with Matt. 12:40.

The resurrection, especially of Christ, was an established fact in the Old Testament which had its fulfillment in the New Testament.

New Testament

Looking at the resurrection fulfilled in Christ, here are some of the many scriptures: Matt. 22:29-32, 20:19; Mark 9:9, 16:19; Luke 14:14, 24:45,46; John 5:28,29, 11:44, 2:19-22, 20:20; Acts 10:40, 13:33; Rom. 4:25; 1 Corin. 15:12-20.

The resurrection was fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, and established as a fact as presented in the New Testament. The true desire of all believers should be obedience to our Lord and His Word. Without the Bible's guidance, and instruction, we would be no example of the powerful transforming work of Christ in our lives. We're to follow our Lord and adhere to His Word without question.

In order to elucidate the topic of Easter we must go back and research information—to gain a complete understanding of it. For let it not be said we have not been thorough.

What's in a name?

The word "Easter" is used one time 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."

The problem is clearly a bias on the part of the King James translators in rendering the word as such. In the original Greek it reads: on kai piasaV eqeto eiV fulakhn paradouV tessarsin tetradiouV stratiwtwn fulassein auton boulomenoV meta to pasca anagagein auton tw law.

The word used by the original author was *pascha*. Which, in 28 out of the 29 times used in the New Testament, it's translated "Passover." However, in Acts 12:4 it's rendered "Easter" there is no good reason for this. We're not, nor would we, ever say that God's Word is in error; only that the translators "knew" it should have been "Passover" and rendered it "Easter." In our King James Bibles it must read "Passover" not Easter.

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 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. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Gal. 4:8-11)

The pagan year usually has four cardinal days, or periods, for celebration—fall, midwinter, spring, and midsummer.

The Vernal Equinox. This is the day (or period of days) in spring when the days and nights are again of approximately equal length. This is a time of celebrating new life, the resurrection of nature from the dead, and it has typically featured fertility rites,

merrymaking, and usually centers on orgiastic sexual activities. In ancient times there was the sacrificing of virgins, the worship of fertility gods and goddesses (Pan, Isis, Demeter, Ceres) and worship of the phallus. "May poles" almost certainly had their origin as phallic shrines, around which orgiastic celebrants danced to honor the male sex organ. Such practices are known to have been featured in spring festivals in ancient Egypt, Babylon, Greece and among the Druids in Great Britain and Europe. Eggs, as symbols of fertility and new life, have always been featured in such pagan festivals, as have rabbits (symbols of vigorous sexual activity and reproduction). Many of these practices continue today.

Since the Resurrection took place in the Spring, and since the pagans had for many centuries been celebrating new life, fertility and the return of growing things each year at the same time (the Vernal, or Spring, Equinox when day and night were of equal length), the old pagan practices eased their way into this part of the life of the Church. There was no Easter celebration, as such, in the Church in those early centuries. But the Springtime activities of paganism began to attach themselves to the annual time of the Passover, and slowly Easter grew, being finally embraced by the Church as an annual celebration of the Resurrection.

The name Easter is not Christian

One must remember it is wrongly translated in our King James Bibles from "Passover" to "Easter." According to the Venerable Bede, Christian historian and theologian, writing in the 8th century, the name is from the festival of Eostre (sometimes spelled "Estre"), pronounced "Eestruh", the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Spring, Fertility and New Life. It is easy to see how "Eastre time" became "Easter time".

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 Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in monuments, is Ishtar. The worship of Bel and Astarte was very early introduced into Britain, along with the Druids, "the priests of the groves." Some have imagined that the Druidical worship was first introduced by the Phenicians, who, centuries before the Christian era, traded to the tin-mines of Cornwall.

"The English name *Easter* is of uncertain origin; the Anglo-Saxon priest Venerable Bede in the 8th century derived it from the Anglo-Saxon spring goddess Eostre." (1994-1998 Online Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.)

"The term Easter... comes from the Old English *easter* or *eastre*, a festival of spring; the Greek and Latin *Pascha*, from the Hebrew Pesah, 'Passover.'" (ibid.)

The name Easter comes from Eostre, an ancient Anglo-Saxon goddess, originally of the dawn. In pagan times an annual spring festival was held in her honor. (Compton's Encyclopedia and Fact-Index., Vol. 7., Chicago: Compton's Learning Company, 1987, p. 41)

It's called Easter in the English, from the goddess Eostre, worshipped by the Saxons with peculiar ceremonies in the month of April. (Encyclopædia Britannica., Vol. II., Edinburgh: A. Bell & C. Macfarquhar, 1768, p. 464)

EASTER: This is from Anglo-Saxon Eostre, a pagan goddess whose festival came at the spring equinox. (Dictionary of Word Origins, Shipley, Joseph T., New York: Philosophical Library, MCMXLV., p. 131)

EASTER: Old English Eastre, goddess of spring. (Funk & Wagnal's Standard Desk Dictionary, New York: Funk & Wagnal, 1979)

The word Easter comes from the Old English word eostre, the name of a dawn-goddess worshipped in the Spring. (Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia, London: Odhams, 1957., p. 123)

EASTER: from Old English eastre, name of a spring goddess. (The Columbia Encyclopedia, Fifth Edition, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995)

Old English eastre, originally, the name of a dawn goddess. (Gage Canadian Dictionary, Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1983)

The pagan festival held at the vernal equinox to honor Eastre, the goddess of dawn, was called Eastre in Old English. Since the Christian festival celebrating Christ's resurrection fell at about the same time, the pagan name was borrowed for it when Christianity was introduced to England, the name later being changed slightly to Easter. (The Facts on File Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins, Hendrickson, Robert, New York: Facts on File, 1987., p. 177)

EASTER: The name was derived from Eastre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring. (New Standard Encyclopedia, Vol. 6., Chicago: Standard Educational, 1991. p. E-25-E-27)

EASTER: West Germanic name of a pagan spring festival. (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1976)

The English word Easter comes from the goddess Eastre, whose festival was celebrated at the vernal equinox, and who presided over the fertility of man and animals. (Celebrate the Sun, Nickerson Betty, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969, p. 38)

EASTER: Bæde Temp. Rat. XV. derives the word from Eostre (Northumb. spelling Éastre), the name of a goddess whose festival was celebrated at the vernal equinox; her name . . . shows that she was originally the dawn-goddess. (The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)

Before Christ was born the people living in northern Europe had a goddess called Eostre, the goddess of the spring. Every year, in spring the people had a festival for her. The name of our spring festival, Easter, comes from the name Eostre. (The Easter Book, Milan: Macdonald Educational, 1980, p. 5)

Eostre Saxon and Neo-Pagan goddess of fertility and springtime whom the holiday Easter was originally named after. (The Concise Lexicon of the Occult, Dunwich, Gerina, New York: Citadel Press, 1990, p. 54)

As with the other Christian holidays, there was also a holiday in ancient times that was celebrated at about the same time. In this case, it was the celebration of the vernal equinox-the tribute to the goddess of spring, Eastre. Eastre was an Anglo-Saxon goddess who is reputed to have opened the gates of Valhalla for the slain sun god, Baldrun, thereby bringing light to man. Easter also refers to the rising of the sun in the east. (Encyclopedia of Superstition, Potter, Carole, London: Michael O'Mara Books, 1983, p. 69)

"The origins of pre-Christian Easter festivals in pagan cultures are well-known in history. In the ancient world, some of the greatest female deities were the various incarnations of the great fertility goddesses known as Ishtar (Babylonian), Astarte

(Phoenician), Atargatis (Philistine), Ashtoreth (Hebrew), Eastre (Anglo-Saxon), Ostara (German) and Aphrodite (Greek). These goddesses are regarded as essentially the same deity due to the similarities of their names, mythologies, worship and festivals. These factors are what define a deity as its worship moves between cultures. The primary fertility festivals for these deities--and their associated male gods--were in the spring, a time of renewal and birth." (1996, Global Church of God)

"Easter - originally a Saxon word (Eostre), denoting a goddess of the Saxons, in honor 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. In the early English versions this word was frequently used as the translation of the Greek *pascha* (the Passover). When the Authorized Version (1611) was formed, the word 'Passover' was used in all passages in which this word *pascha* occurred, except in Act 12:4." (Easton's Bible Dictionary)

"Easter middle English *estre*, from Old English *Eastre*; akin to Old High German *Ostarun* (plural) Easter, Old English *East*." (Webster's Dictionary)

"Thus much already laid down may seem a sufficient treatise to prove that the celebration of the east of Easter began everywhere more of custom than by any commandment either of Christ or any Apostle." (Socrates, Hist. Ecclesiast., lib. v. cap., 22.)

Every one knows that the name "Easter," used in our translation of Acts 12:4, refers not to any Christian festival, but to the Jewish Passover. This is one of the few places in our version where the translators show an undue bias.

Gieseler, speaking of the Eastern Church in the second century, in regard to Paschal observances, says: "In it [the Paschal festival in commemoration of the death of Christ] they [the Eastern Christians] eat unleavened bread, probably like the Jews, eight days throughout... There is no trace of a yearly festival of a resurrection among them, for this was kept every Sunday." (Gieseler, Catholic Church, sect. 53, p.178, Note 35)

We know of, "The Syrian goddess with her consort Adonis whose death was mourned and resurrection celebrated each year..." (Stambaugh, The New Testament in its Social Environment, p.136)

"The name, strangely enough, comes from the name of a Teutonic goddess, Ostera, for whom a solemn feast was observed at about the same season of the year..." (M.F. Essig, The Comprehensive analysis of the Bible, p.180)

Some will say, "so the Old Testament book of Esther is named after a Jewish heroine who bore the name of the goddess Ishtar," true; however, Esther was not her true name it was *Hadassah* (Esther 2:7) her Jewish name. Most likely Esther was given to her in the same manner Daniel was changed to *Beltshazzar* (Dan. 1:7).

Who is this figure, and what rites were connected with her?

Easter comes from the pagan Oestre (Estre) and other names as we will see she was believed to be the goddess of Spring, etc. The pagan Festival of Oestre (Estre) coincided each Spring with the time of Passover, it isn't difficult to see how these pagan beliefs and customs eased into the life of The Church and replaced the Passover. In that pagan story, there was a great bird who intensely desired to be a rabbit. The goddess Oestre (Estre) graciously turned the bird into a rabbit, and in gratitude the rabbit (who could still remember how to lay bird eggs) came each Spring, during the Festival of Oestre (Estre), and laid beautiful eggs for the benevolent goddess. This is exactly how we got a supernatural, egg-laying rabbit god in the Easter tradition.

Easter 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 Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in monuments, is Ishtar. The worship of Bel and Astarte was very early introduced into Britain, along with the Druids, "the priests of the groves." Some have imagined that the Druidical worship was first introduced by the Phenicians, who, centuries before the Christian era, traded to the tin-mines of Cornwall.

It will not be difficult to believe that his consort Astarte was also adored by our ancestors, and that from Astarte, whose name in Nineveh was Ishtar, the religious solemnities of April, as now practiced, are called by the name of Easter - that month, among our Pagan ancestors, having been called Easter-monath. 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 Church, and at that time was not known by any such name as Easter.

The Pagan Easter enforced by Rome, at the time of its enforcement, was a whole month; and it was only by violence and bloodshed, at last, that the Festival of the Anglo-Saxon or Chaldean goddess came to supersede that which had been held in honor of Christ.

At Easter, popular customs reflect many ancient pagan survivals--in this instance, connected with spring fertility rites.

The Anglo-Saxons had little girls performing dances at Easter in which a phallus was carried in front of them.

Many of the customs associated with Easter are derived from various spring fertility rites of the pagan religions which Christianity supplanted. (Encyclopedia International, China: Lexicon Publications, 1973, P.190)

Easter is connected in many ways with early pagan rituals that accompanied the arrival of spring. (Merit Students Encyclopedia, New York: P. F. Collier, 1983, pp.167-68)

Both of these festivals [Easter and Christmas] have roots in old pagan rituals that they have superceded. (Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy, MacGregor, Gedded, New York: Paragon House, 1991, p.207)

Even though it [Easter] has stood for over fifteen hundred years as the symbol of the resurrection of Jesus to members of the Christian Church, it is not entirely a Christian festival. Its origins go far back into pagan rites and customs. (Easter Idea Book, Adams, Charlotte, New York: M. Barrows and Company, 1954, p.11)

Many of the customs associated with Easter originate in pagan celebrations of spring. (New Standard Encyclopedia, Vol., 6, Chicago: Standard Educational, 1991, pp. E-25-E-27)

There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the [so-called] apostolic fathers. The sanctity of special times was an idea absent from the mind of the first Christians. (The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., Vol. VIII, Cambridge: The University Press, 1910, p.828)

Around the Christian observance of Easter as the climax of the liturgical drama of Holy Week and Good Friday, folk customs have collected, many of which have been handed down from the ancient ceremonial and symbolism of European and Middle

Eastern pagan spring festivals brought into relation with the resurrection theme. (The New Encyclopædia Britannica, 15th ed., Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1992, p.333)

When Christians first spread across Europe, believers in the new faith changed many of the older rites and ceremonies, adapting them to fit with the life and teaching of Jesus. They did not try to stop people from having a great spring festival for their old pagan goddess, Eostre. (Easter, Fox, Julian, Vero Beach: Rourke Enterprises, 1989, p.11)

Thus, throughout the customs associated with Easter, there is a blending or interplay of symbols of spring with the religious significance of the resurrection. (The Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition, Danbury: Grolier, 1991, p.561)

The origins of pre-Christian Easter festivals in pagan cultures are well-known in history. In the ancient world, some of the greatest female deities were the various incarnations of the great fertility goddesses known as Ishtar (Babylonian), Astarte (Phoenician), Atargatis (Philistine), Ashtoreth (Hebrew), Eastre (Anglo-Saxon), Ostara (German) and Aphrodite (Greek).

These goddesses are regarded as essentially the same deity due to the similarities of their names, mythologies, worship and festivals. These factors are what define a deity as its worship moves between cultures. The primary fertility festivals for these deities--and their associated male gods--were in the spring, a time of renewal and birth.

"Aphrodite is primarily a descendant of the Mesopotamian Goddess Inanna-Ishtar, who became Astarte in Phoenicia and was called Atargatis by the Philistines, and Ashtoreth by the Hebrews. Inanna's consort, Dumuzi, and Ishtar's Tammuz became, in the Greek tradition, Aphrodite's Adonis, the dying and resurrected son-lover of the goddess in a new form. (Church of God)

Easter - originally a Saxon word (Eostre), denoting a goddess of the Saxons, in honor of whom sacrifices were offered.

Over 2000 years ago, before the time of Christ, people decorated eggs believing that great powers were embodied in the egg. To them, eggs symbolized the release of the earth from the shackles of winter and the coming of spring with its promise of new hope, new life and prosperity.

"The aphrodite Urania (celestial) of the Greeks was no other than the Phoenician celestial goddess, Astarte, held in special reverence at Carthage, where the Romans called her the Virgo Coelestis." (Salomon, Orpheus, A History of Religions, p.42)

"Adonis the beloved of, Astarte (Easter, Ishtar), was killed and bemoaned by his mistress...and after a few days celebrated his resurrection...the true sacred name of Adonis was Thamuz, the husband of the Babylonian Ishtar" (Ibid.)

"Artemis, like Astarte, was celebrated in the worship of trees and sacred pillars..." (Salomon, Orpheus, A History of Religions, p. 82)

"The great goddess Ishtar...was a female deity. goddess of love and fertility...she could be addressed with prayers and votive offerings. In astrology she is linked with the evening and morning star (Venus)." (Parrinder, World Religions, p.117)

"The Phoenicians [called her] earth-mother goddess called Ashtart...with her son Adonis whose yearly death and resurrection reflected the annual cycle of the seasons...young children were sometimes killed, evidently by cremation, to satisfy the deities." (Time-Life, TimeFrame 1500-600 B.C., pp. 106,107)

What does God's Word say about this practice, and its continuation cloaked under the guise of a "Christian" holiday?

Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. (Jere. 10:2)

And they shall teach my people [the difference] between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. (Ezek. 44:23)

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 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. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Gal. 4:8-11)

Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.

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. (Deut. 12:2-4, 30,31)

If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. (Deut. 17:2-5)

Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. (Josh. 24:14)

And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroath from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. (1 Sam. 7:3)

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Luke 4:8)

But I [say], that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? (1 Corin. 10:20-22)

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. (Eph. 5:11)

When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not

worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. (Deut. 12:29-32).

This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men. (Mark 7:6-8).

c.f. Deut. 18:9-13; Josh. 7:11-13; 24:15; John 2:6; 14:23,24; 1 Corin. 10:20,21; 2 Corin. 6:17, 7:1; Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 4:1-3; 1 John 2:6.

God speaks volumes of warning to His people not to be involved in any pagan practices, and also commands them not to become idol worshippers of any kind! He told Israel to destroy the "groves"--*asherah, asheyrah*, groves (for idol worship) a Babylonian (Astarte)-Canaanite goddess (of fortune and happiness), the supposed consort of Baal. Remember we traced, easily I might add, the name of asherah, astarte, and so on, to Easter? It all ties in. God says:

But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [is] Jealous,[is] a jealous God. (Ex. 34:13)

But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou [art] an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that [are] upon the face of the earth. (Deut. 7:5,6)

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. (Judges 3:7)

c.f. 1 Kings 14:15,23; 18:19; 2 Chron. 17:6; 24:18; 33:3; Jer. 17:2; Micah 5:14, and so on.

How did it spread?

We must understand the very early Church was never instructed to celebrate "Easter." There is no command to celebrate such a holiday in the Scriptures. Observe and remember Jesus' death and resurrection, yes. However, Easter and all its festivities? No.

"The term Easter, commemorating the Resurrection of Christ, comes from the Old English *easter* or *eastre*, a festival of spring; the Greek and Latin Pascha, from the Hebrew Pesah, "Passover." The earliest Christians celebrated the Lord's Passover at the same time as the Jews, during the night of the first (paschal) full moon of the first month of spring (Nisan 14-15). By the middle of the 2nd century most churches had transferred this celebration to the Sunday after the Jewish feast. But certain churches of Asia Minor clung to the older custom, for which they were denounced as "Judaizing" (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book V, chapters 23-25). The first ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that all churches should observe the feast together on a Sunday. Yet many disparities remained in the way the several churches calculated the date of Easter. Today the Eastern churches follow the Julian calendar, the Western churches its correction by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, so that in some years there may be a month's difference in the time of celebration." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

"In 679 he was elected abbot of Iona, the ninth in succession from St. Columba, the founder. While on a visit to Northumbria, he adopted the Roman rules on the tonsure and for determining the date of Easter that had been accepted for England at the Synod of Whitby in 663/664. He failed, however, to enforce the changes at Iona. He then traveled much in Ireland to promote the observance of the Roman Easter, but he was never able to persuade his own community." (Saint Adamnan)

"Most of the churches decided to observe the Lord's Passover (Easter) always on a Sunday, after the Jewish feast was over." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

"A new focus of celebration, to commemorate the birthday of Christ, the world Redeemer, was instituted at ancient winter solstices (December 25 and January 6) to rival the pagan feasts in honor of the birth of a new age brought by the Unconquered Sun." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

"It is called Easter in the English, from the goddess Eostre, worshipped by the Saxons with peculiar ceremonies in the month of April." (Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol. II., Edinburgh: A. Bell & C. Macfarquhar, 1768, p.464)

"At the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, it was agreed that Easter would be linked to the full moon on or following the spring equinox." (The Macmillan Compact Encyclopedia, Aylesbury: Market House Books, 1994, p.175)

"...a view commonly held among modern, secular historians that there was a significant continuity in "Christianized" Gentile cultures with their pagan past. They had a tendency, over time, to superimpose Christian themes as a veneer over their existing pagan practices, which were already deeply ingrained in their societies and psyches. They are saying that in history, the Christian version of Easter as a memorial to Christ's resurrection is essentially a modification of an earlier pagan resurrection festival. The practice did not originate in Christianity.

By the time of Christ and the early Christian Church, the Gentile cultures of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean already had ancient cultural roots involving spring festivals associated with fertility, rebirth and resurrection. These fertility festivals occurred around the time of the Passover when the paschal lamb was sacrificed by Jews as a memorial of the Exodus. But when Christ instructed His followers to keep the Passover with a new, Christian meaning, it became a memorial to *His sacrifice* as the Lamb of God--*not* a memorial to His resurrection. Christ avoided confusing the meaning of His memorial with the well-known pagan customs of His time and antiquity.

The Roman church, which advocated the observance of Easter, labeled those who continued the practice of observing a Christian Passover on Nisan 14 as "Quartodecimans"--from the Latin for "four and ten." The eastern or Asiatic churches, however, insisted on continuing in the faith delivered to them by the apostles.

Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John and Bishop of Smyrna, debated the issue with Pope Anicetus (c. 155 A.D.) and asserted that he had been personally taught the proper observance by the Apostle John.

Later, "an attempt by Pope Victor I (189-198 A.D.) to impose Roman usage [Easter] proved unsuccessful in the face of a determined opposition led by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus [a church founded by the Apostle Paul].... All accepted the Roman practice except the Asiatic bishops.

When Victor attempted coercion by excommunication, St. Irenaeus of Lyons intervened to restore peace (Eusebius, *History Ecclesiastical*, 5. 23-25). During the 3rd century Quartodecimanism waned; it persisted in some Asiatic communities down to the 5th century" (New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967, vol. 5, p.8; vol. 12, p.13)." (Church of God web-site)

"Easter is of Saxon origin, Eastr, the goddess of spring,...by the 8th century Anglo-Saxons had adopted the name to designate the celebration of the resurrection." (Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 283)

"...used in the Germanic languages to denote the festival of the vernal equinox." (New Bible Dictionary, p. 294)

"...derived by Bede (8th century) from the name of a goddess whose feast was celebrated at the vernal equinox." (Hoad, English Etymology, p. 140)

"In England and Wales the Saxon invaders gradually won the upper hand. The British Christians became divided...by the end of the sixth century the pagan kingdom of Kent, with its capitol at Canterbury, dominated most of England south of the Humber...but it was an evident practical necessity that the Celtic and Saxon churches inhabiting the same island should be in harmony with one another and with the continent on so important a matter as Easter." (Chadwick, The Early Church, p.256)

"Later the monk "Bede" (8th century) derived the name, Easter, of a goddess whose feast was celebrated at the vernal equinox. This from a man that believed, "The British Isles...can remain united in itself only with the leadership from St Peter's successor in Rome...." (Chadwick, The Early Church, p. 257)

We hold to what Scripture teaches us not what a heathen Romanist teaches.

"Easter is not a Christian term but is of Chaldean origin. The name of Easter is found on Assyrian monuments as Ishtar. In Phoenicia it is the goddess Astarte which was one of the titles of Beltis, the Queen of Heaven. The worship of Astarte and Bel was introduced into Briton very early along with the Druids. The Druids were the priests of the groves. The Easter egg was one of the symbols of Astarte...." (Author Unknown)

Easter Customs?

Many of the customs associated with Easter are derived from various spring fertility rites of the pagan religions which Christianity supplanted. (Encyclopedia International, China: Lexicon Publications, 1973, p.190)

Easter is connected in many ways with early pagan rituals that accompanied the arrival of spring. (Merit Students Encyclopedia, New York: P. F. Collier, 1983, pp.167-68)

Both of these festivals [Easter and Christmas] have roots in old pagan rituals that they have superceded. (Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy, MacGregor, Gedded, New York: Paragon House, 1991, p.207)

Even though it [Easter] has stood for over fifteen hundred years as the symbol of the resurrection of Jesus to members of the Christian Church, it is not entirely a Christian festival. Its origins go far back into pagan rites and customs. (Easter Idea Book, Adams, Charlotte, New York: M. Barrows and Company, 1954, p.11)

Many of the customs associated with Easter originate in pagan celebrations of spring. (New Standard Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, Chicago: Standard Educational, 1991, pp. E-25-E-27)

There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the [so-called] apostolic Fathers. The sanctity of special times was an idea absent from the mind of the first Christians. (The Encyclopædia Britannica, 11th ed., Vol. VIII, Cambridge: The University Press, 1910, p.828)

Around the Christian observance of Easter as the climax of the liturgical drama of Holy Week and Good Friday, folk customs have collected, many of which have been handed down from the ancient ceremonial and symbolism of European and Middle Eastern pagan spring festivals brought into relation with the resurrection theme. (The New Encyclopædia Britannica, 15th ed., Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1992, p.333)

When Christians first spread across Europe, believers in the new faith changed many of the older rites and ceremonies, adapting them to fit with the life and teaching of Jesus. They did not try to stop people from having a great spring festival for their old pagan goddess, Eostre. (Easter, Fox, Julian, Vero Beach: Rourke Enterprises, 1989, P.11)

Thus, throughout the customs associated with Easter, there is a blending or interplay of symbols of spring with the religious significance of the resurrection. (The Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition, Danbury: Grolier, 1991, p.561)

Easter eggs

Eggs were a primitive symbol of fertility; but Christians saw in them a symbol of the tomb from which Christ rose, and continued the [pagan] practice of coloring, giving, and eating them at Easter. (New Age Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, China: Lexicon Publications, 1973, p.190)

The Persians and Egyptians colored eggs and ate them during their new year's celebration, which came in the spring. (The New Book of Knowledge, Danbury: Grolier, 1991, p.44)

Since man's earliest time, the egg, symbolizing the universe, figures in creation mythologies including those of China, Japan, Finland, Siberia and parts of Africa. . . . When today's children hunt for Easter eggs they are re-enacting one of man's oldest rituals. (Celebrate the Sun, Toronto: Nickerson, Betty, McClelland and Stewart, 1969, p.38)

The exchange of Easter eggs, which symbolize new life and fertility, is one of the oldest traditions. Rabbits and flowers are also pagan fertility symbols. (New Standard Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, Chicago: Standard Educational, 1991, pp. E-25-E-27)

Easter bunny rabbits

Nobody seems to know precisely the origin of the Easter bunny, except that it can be traced back to pre-Christian fertility lore. It has never had any connection

with Christian religious symbolism. (Easter the World Over, Sawyer, Priscilla, and Daniel J. Foley, Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1971, p.104)

The Easter hare was no ordinary animal, but a sacred companion of the old goddess of spring, Eostre. (Easter, Fox, Julian, Vero Beach: Rourke Enterprises, 1989, p.11)

Like the Easter egg, the Easter hare, now an accepted part of the traditional Easter story, came to Christianity from antiquity. The hare is associated with the moon in the legends of ancient Egypt and other peoples. (Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol. 7, Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1955, p.859)

The hare, the symbol of fertility in ancient Egypt, a symbol that was kept later in Europe, is not found in North America. Its place is taken by the Easter rabbit, the symbol of fertility and periodicity both human and lunar, accredited with laying eggs in nests prepared for it at Easter or with hiding them away for children to find. (The New Encyclopædia Britannica, 15th ed., Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1992, p.333)

The white rabbit of Easter, beloved of small Americans, comes hopping down to us from eras when the sun and the moon were gods to men. (The Book of Religious Holidays and Celebrations, Ickis, Marguerite, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966, p.133)

Easter fires

Pagan festivals celebrating spring included fire and sunrise celebrations. Both later became part of Easter celebrations. (The New Book of Knowledge, Danbury: Grolier, 1991, p.44)

The Easter Eve bonfires predate Christianity and were originally intended to celebrate the arrival of spring. (Merit Students Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, New York: P. F. Collier, 1983, pp. 167-68)

Fire, once part of the pagan spring festival, is now a Christian Easter symbol. (The New Book of Knowledge, Danbury: Grolier, 1981, p.41)

Spring fire rites to honor the sun god were forbidden until the year 752 A. D. By that time the pagan fires had changed into Easter fires. (Lilies, Rabbits, and Painted Eggs: The Story of the Easter Symbols, Barth, Edna, New York: Seabury Press, 1970, p.15)

Bonfires on Easter Eve are particularly common in Germany, where they are lighted not only in churchyards but upon hilltops, where the young people gather around and jump over them, dance, and sing Easter hymns. These are remnants of pagan and sacrificial rites in which quantities of tar-soaked barrel staves, branches and roots of trees were burned. (Easter the World Over, Sawyer, Priscilla, and Daniel J. Foley. Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1971, p.103)

Sunrise services

The custom of a sunrise service on Easter Sunday can be traced to ancient spring festivals that celebrated the rising sun. (The New Book of Knowledge, Danbury: Grolier, 1981, p.41)

Easter parades & wearing of new clothes

The Easter Parade which is held after church services in many cultures is another survival from long ago. Before there were courtiers or fashion pages there was a lively superstition, dear to princesses and peasant maidens alike, that a new garment worn at Easter meant good luck throughout the year. (The Book of Religious Holidays and Celebrations, Ickis, Marguerite, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966, p.133)

For centuries, even in pagan times, it had been the custom to put on new clothes for the spring festival. (Easter the World Over, Sawyer, Priscilla, and Daniel J. Foley. Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1971, p.134)

Hot-cross buns

The hot-cross bun, for example, is pagan in origin. The Anglo-Saxon savages consumed cakes as a part of the jolity that attended the welcoming of spring. The early missionaries from Rome despaired of breaking them of the habit, and got around the difficulty at last by blessing the cakes, drawing a cross upon them. (The Book of Religious Holidays and Celebrations, Ickis, Marguerite, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966, p.134)

Lent

The celebration of Lent has no basis in Scripture, but rather developed from the pagan celebration of Semiramis's mourning for 40 days over the death of Tammuz (cf. Ezek 8:14) before his alleged resurrection-another of Satan's mythical counterfeits. (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians, MacArthur, John Jr., Chicago: Moody, 1984)

The word Lent is of Anglo-Saxon origin, meaning spring. (The Book of Religious Holidays and Celebrations, Ickis, Marguerite, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966, p.114)

Easter, Passover, which?

1998 4/12; 1999 4/4; 2000 4/23; 2001 4/15; 2002 3/31; 2003 4/20. The so-called date for Easter never falls at the same time.

" Western Christians celebrate Easter on the first Sunday after the full moon (the paschal moon) that occurs upon or next after the vernal equinox (taken as March 21). If the paschal moon, which is calculated from a system of golden numbers and epacts and does not necessarily coincide with the astronomical full moon, occurs on a Sunday, Easter day is the succeeding Sunday. Easter, therefore, can fall between March 22 and April 25." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

" Hebrew *Pesah*, 'Passover.' The earliest Christians celebrated the Lord's Passover at the same time as the Jews, during the night of the first (paschal) full moon of the first month of spring (Nisan 14-15). by the middle of the 2nd century most churches had transferred this celebration to the Sunday after the Jewish feast. But certain churches of Asia Minor clung to the older custom, for which they were denounced as 'Judaizing' (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book V, chapters 23-25). The first ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that all churches should observe the feast together on a Sunday." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

" In the Christian Church, disputes concerning the correct date for observing Easter (Greek *Pascha*). The earliest controversy was over the question of whether Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday or on the actual day of the Jewish lunar month (14th of Nisan) on which the Paschal lamb was slaughtered. The latter practice, followed by the church in the Roman province of Asia, was generally condemned at the end of the 2nd century because it meant celebrating Easter when the Jews were keeping Passover." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

Notice, in the following quote, how the date and easiness of changing it proves it was not commanded by our Lord. " In the West the subject has ceased to be a matter of dispute, and the Second Vatican Council stated in 1963 that there was no objection in principle to observing Easter on a fixed Sunday (probably early in April)." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

"The churches of Asia Minor continued to celebrate Easter on the same date (the 14th of Nisan) as the Jews celebrated Passover, whereas the Roman Church maintained that Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday (the day of the Resurrection of Christ)." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

" The establishment of Christianity as a state religion, following the conversion [so called]of the emperor Constantine (AD 312), brought new developments. The Paschal season was matched by a longer season of preparation Lent. [The celebration of Lent has no basis in Scripture, but rather developed from the pagan celebration of Semiramis's mourning for 40 days over the death of Tammuz (cf. Ezek 8:14)]" (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

"At the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, it was agreed that Easter would be linked to the full moon on or following the spring equinox." (The Macmillan Compact Encyclopedia, Aylesbury: Market House Books, 1994, p.175)

"The Julian calendar year of 365.25 days was too long, since the correct value for the tropical year is 365.242199 days. This error of 11 minutes 14 seconds per year amounted to almost one and a half days in two centuries, and seven days in 1,000 years. Once again the calendar became increasingly out of phase with the seasons. From time to time, the problem was placed before church councils, but no action was taken because the astronomers who were consulted doubted whether enough precise information was available for a really accurate value of the tropical year to be obtained.

By 1545, however, the vernal equinox, which was used in determining Easter, had moved 10 days from its proper date; and in December, when the Council of Trent met for the first of its sessions, it authorized Pope Paul III to take action to correct the error. Correction required a solution, however, that neither Paul III nor his successors were able to obtain in satisfactory form until nearly 1572, the year of election of Pope Gregory XIII. Gregory found various proposals awaiting him and agreed to issue a bull that the Jesuit astronomer Christopher Clavius (1537-1612) began to draw up, using suggestions made by the astronomer and physician Luigi Lilio (also known as Aloysius Lilius; died 1576).

The papal bull appeared in March 1582. First, in order to bring the vernal equinox back to March 21, the day following the Feast of St. Francis (that is, October 5) was to become October 15, thus omitting 10 days. Second, to bring the year closer to the true tropical year, a value of 365.2422 days was accepted. This value differed by 0.0078 days per year from the Julian calendar reckoning, amounting to 0.78 days per century, or 3.12 days every 400 years. It was therefore promulgated that three out of every four centennial years should be common years, that is, not leap years; and this practice led to the rule that no centennial years should be leap years unless exactly divisible by 400. Thus, 1700, 1800, and 1900 were not leap years, as they would have been in the Julian calendar, but the year 2000 will be. The bull also laid down rules for calculating the date of Easter." (1994-1998, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

Was that confusing or what? How silly and carnal to go through all these gymnastics to determine a holiday. It's ridiculous and confusing at best, and God's Word says:

For God is not [the author] of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. (1 Corin. 14:33)

Let me outline some things to help us understand. When Israel was in Egypt, and the plagues were about to end, deliverance was at hand. God was going to "Passover" those that placed the blood of a lamb on the door posts.

And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike [it] on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. (Ex. 12:6,7)

God called this "Passover."

And thus shall ye eat it; [with] your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it [is] the LORD'S passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I [am] the LORD. (Ex. 12:11,12)

The institution of the Passover was to take place on the night of what God called the 14th day of the first month.

And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. (Ex. 12:6)

Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it. (Num. 9:2,3)

And in the fourteenth day of the first month [is] the passover of the LORD. (Num. 28:16)

The first month was originally called "Abib."

And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this [place]: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib. (Ex. 13:3,4)

Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty. (Ex. 23:15)

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. (Deut. 16:1)

Later it was called "Nisan."

In the first month, that [is], the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that [is], the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, [to] the twelfth [month], that [is], the month Adar. (Esther 3:7)

The naming of "Nisan" remained through Jesus' time until the present. When Jesus had the last supper it was the first month (Jewish calendar) Nisan the 14th day. The fact that the Passover is celebrated on the 14th day of the first month Nisan has never changed.

We know Jesus kept the Passover as appointed—the 14th day of the first month Nisan (Abib).

Now the first [day] of the [feast of] unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. (Matt. 26:17-19)

c.f Mark 14:12-14; Luke 22:7-11; John 13:1,2.

We know after this Passover He endured suffering and crucifixion. According to scripture, Jesus rose from the dead on the first Sunday following Passover. See Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1-3, Luke 23:56-24:3, and John 20:1. That is the first Sunday after the Jewish Passover, which is 14 Nisan on the Jewish calendar. No one in ancient times denied that the Resurrection took place on a Sunday.

To simplify, Jesus kept the Passover on the 14th day of the Jewish first month Nisan (Abib).

" Now notice on what day of the Hebrew calendar these events took place. It is important to note that by Israelite reckoning, a day begins at sunset and ends with sunset the next day.

The Jewish Passover, which is a high day and a Sabbath, falls on Nisan 15 of the Hebrew calendar and begins at the evening ending Nisan 14 (Lev. 23:5-6). In the time of Christ, the Jews killed the Passover lamb the afternoon of Nisan 14 at about the hour Christ, the Lamb of God, died at the hands of the Romans.

Christ's last supper took place at the *beginning* of Nisan 14, on the evening *before* the crucifixion. That night He was betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter and beaten before the high priest (Matt. 26:30-75; John 18:1-27).

The following morning--still Nisan 14--He was tried by Pilate, condemned, scourged and crucified (Matt. 27; John 18:28-40).

Notice in John 19:31 that Christ had to be buried before evening "because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day)." These scriptures show conclusively that the Passover memorial that Christ ordained was on the evening that *began* Nisan 14. This was the evening before the Jewish Passover celebration, which was held in the evening beginning Nisan 15." (Global Church of God web site)

So if we desire to reckon a day for Jesus' resurrection its like this: last supper (Passover) on the evening of the 14th, is arrested, tried, and crucified on the morning and late morning of the 14th, is buried the afternoon of the 14th, is in the grave that evening the day of the 15th and resurrects on the day of the 16th—a Sunday.

The day of the resurrection is Sunday a fixed day, no matter what the date:

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first [day] of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (Matt. 28:1)

This year, 1999, the 14th Nisan falls on a Wednesday the 31st of March. The 16th—the day Jesus would have rose-- falls on a Friday. The point is, it's impossible to correctly observe the "actual" date Jesus rose. What we do know is, He rose 2000 years ago on a Sunday the Jews 16th Nisan. Moreover, the most exciting part is the fact that He did raise from the dead conquering death and giving us justification (Rom. 4:25).

He rose on the 16th. In Biblical numbers 1 is the number of God, and 6 is the number of man, what this means is that the "Godman" (*theanthropos*) rose from the dead!

Three times we are told that the Passover belonged to the "Jews" —in John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55. Some have suggested we keep Nisan 14 every year in observance of Jesus' last supper. However, seeing the Passover is "a feast of the Jews," and Jesus said He would build His Church (Matt. 16:18) not continue Judaism, we would not observe this holiday.

Jesus, by His work and sacrifice, built something new—His Church in which He is the "new" Passover Lamb:

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth. (1 Corin. 5:7,8)

Jesus said His work was, "...my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." (Mark 14:24)

We are told, not to just keep the supper of memorial on the 14th Nisan, but "as often as we drink and eat" the supper:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus 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. After the same manner also [he took] the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink [it], in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. (1 Corin. 11:23-26)

This "often" when would that be?

Now in this that I declare [unto you] I praise [you] not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, [this] is not to eat the Lord's supper. (1 Corin. 11:17-20)

And what day would this be?

And upon the first [day]of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. (Acts 20:7)

Upon the first [day]of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. (1 Corin. 16:2)

What do we say to these things?

We discovered Easter is pagan and heathen. God would not have us practice such holidays, and the things that go along with it.

Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. (Jere. 10:2)

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 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. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Gal. 4:8-11)

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Corin. 6:16-18)

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days]: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ. (Colo. 2:16,17)

To try and "date" this pagan holiday is confusing and silly. We must flee from such a practice. We are to honor Christ and His resurrection "as often" as we would.

Some say that celebrating Easter in honor of Christ makes it ok. God's Word says no!

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. (Deut. 12:29-32)

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with [their] lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, [as] the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. (Mark 7:6-8)

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Rom. 6:16)

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27)

Our council? Stop observing this heathen holiday, and honor Christ everyday.

For more information on heathen holidays, and how it crept into the church we recommend the following books:

"The Two Babylons" by Alexander Hislop, Loizeaux Brothers, 1916.

"Babylon, Mystery Religion" by Ralph Woodrow, 1966.

May God bless your obedience to Him, and may His grace come to you.

Amen?

Questions about this message? [E-mail us](#)

CONTROLLED BY THE CALENDAR: THE PAGAN ORIGINS OF OUR MAJOR HOLIDAYS

CHAPTER FOUR

EASTER: WHAT DO BUNNIES AND EGGS HAVE TO DO WITH THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS?

Rethinking Easter

Easter is probably the holiest day of the year for Christians because it celebrates the day Jesus conquered death and arose from the grave in fulfillment of prophecy. But, is that what we're really honoring, as we get caught up in all the festivities? Not really. Since I am covering the subject in this book, it's obvious that there is a lot of pagan influence associated with the observance of this day.

So much so, that there are a couple Scriptures which are appropriate warnings for the deception that has taken place here. Isaiah 5:20 says: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness..." Paul, in 2

Corinthians 6:14, echoed the same thoughts when he said: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

When Jesus ate the Passover meal, which has come to be known as the "Last Supper," he said that it was to be done in remembrance of him. So, we were given a mandate to observe his death, but he said nothing about his resurrection. Neither was anything written by the apostles, that would give us any indication that we should celebrate his resurrection. (1)

It wasn't until after the death of John, the last of the twelve apostles, that the Good Friday and Easter doctrine took hold. (2) The Resurrection has been used to justify the celebration of a pagan holiday; and it was used by the Roman Catholic Church to turn Sunday, a pagan worship day, into the Lord's Day. (3) In an 1884 lecture, T. Enright said: "I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is the law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic Church says 'No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church." (4)

The Debate on the Holy Sights

In order to deal with pagan celebrations and observances, we have looked at their roots in order to see the actual intent. This entails looking at all sides of the issue to get a full picture. So, I want to digress a bit here so you can see some pagan influence as far as the location of the sites of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

From the seventh century to the first century B.C., the area identified as Golgotha, where Jesus would be crucified, was a limestone quarry. It was filled in, covered with soil, and became a garden where cereals, fig trees, carob trees, and olive trees grew. It later began to be used as a cemetery. Though it originally was the location of many tombs, of the four found, one a Kokhim (recessed area hewn out of rock) has been identified as the tomb of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; while another, an arcosolium (cut lengthwise into the side of the cave, with an archway over the opening), has been identified as belonging to Jesus; and as such, much of the rock has been plundered for souvenirs. (5)

In A.D. 132, after the Romans quashed the Second Jewish Revolt, the Roman emperor Hadrian (117-138), banned Jews from Jerusalem, and renamed it Aelia Capitolina; and changed the name of the country from Judea to Palaestina (Palestine). He began to paganize various holy sites. Such was the case with Golgotha, the traditional location of the crucifixion, which he tried to erase. In an attempt to duplicate the walls built by Herod around the Temple mount, he built a giant platform, and on top of that a smaller platform, upon which he built a temple dedicated to the goddess Venus/Aphrodite, the goddess of love. (6)

In 325, at the Council of Nicea, Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem convinced Constantine to begin restoring the holy sites. (7) The following year, the emperor's mother, Queen Helena, went to Jerusalem, where she was shown the area. Christians removed the pagan temple, the fill, and enclosure; and Constantine had a marble basilica erected around Golgotha, as well as a separate rotunda around the tomb. (8) These buildings were later enclosed into a single complex. (9)

The structure stood until the Persian invasion of 614, when it was damaged by fire, but not destroyed. However, in 1009, El Khakim (also appearing as Al Hakem), the Fatimid Caliph of Cairo, ordered the site to be razed. Between 1042-1048, the

Byzantine emperor Constantine IX Monomachus, began a limited restoration; and during the Crusader's rule, 1099-1187, they rebuilt it, and enclosed the top of the mount. (10)

Known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, it stands in the middle of Jerusalem's Christian Quarter, and is said to contain the tomb of Jesus under its largest dome. (11) According to another source, this was the same spot that some Jewish historians claimed that they found the cave tomb and skull of Adam. (12)

Based on its present location, it seems unlikely that this could be the actual burial site of Jesus, because human interment was not allowed within the walls of the city. John 19:20 said that Jesus was buried "nigh(near) to the city." Plus, the crucifixion and burial sites are only about fifty yards apart, which seems too close. A partial explanation came after the 1967 excavations by Kathleen Kenyon, who uncovered a quarry south of the Church, which indicated that this area was originally outside the walls of Jerusalem, (13) about 500 feet to the south and 350 feet to the east. (14)

Where Catholics have supported the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, despite the absence of any substantive evidence, or the fact that it was a pagan worship site; Protestants have recognized another location. (15)

In 1883, a British General, Charles George Gordon, identified a skull-shaped cliff overlooking the Damascus Gate of Jerusalem, as the hill of Golgotha, which he believed to be the true site of the crucifixion. (16) The hill, which is today called El-Edhemiyeh, contains a large underground cemetery, (17) which was part of the northern cemetery of Jerusalem dating back to the seventh century B.C., and reused during the Byzantine period(5th-7th century A.D.). (18)

In 1867, a peasant, who was cutting into the western side of this hill to make a cistern, discovered a tomb, outside the old city walls, about 850 feet north of the Damascus Gate. (19) Gordon claimed that it was the tomb of Jesus. (20) It has come to be known as the Garden Tomb, and its authenticity has been widely accepted because it more closely fits in with John's observation that it was near the city, and in a garden(John 19:11). (21)

However, archaeological experts feel that the tomb was probably dug out around the 7th century B.C., because its style matches others excavated in the area, where they have found artifacts dating back to that time, which is known as the Iron Age II or First Temple period. Tombs from the Second Temple period have been found, but are located in other areas of Jerusalem. (22)

This rationale may have changed, in light of excavations that began in January, 1979. Ron Wyatt, an archaeologist, sightseeing near the Damascus Gate, was walking near an ancient stone quarry on the northern extension of Mt. Moriah, that is sometimes referred to as the "Calvary Escarpment"(because it contains the skull face configuration that has been connected to the Golgotha site). At an area being used as a refuse dump, he received a divine word of knowledge that this was the location of Jeremiah's Grotto, believed to contain the Ark of the Covenant. (23) Contrary to what some moviegoers may think, the Ark is not in some U.S. Government warehouse.

With the authorization of the Israeli Department of Antiquities, Wyatt began digging straight down along the cliff face. Over 38 feet below ground level, he discovered a grain storage bin that dated back to the Jebusite period(pre-King David). He continued to tunnel through the Roman level and found the remains of a structure, the foundations of which were still intact. Laying against the cliff face was a flat cut stone, which he felt was an altar stone. Below, and to the front of this stone, was a 13" square stone, that, when lifted, seemed to be covering a hole that had been chiseled into the bedrock. To the front of this platform, and four feet down, he hit a lower platform, which contained three more of the square holes. (24)

Wyatt concluded that these holes were used to hold crucifixion crosses in place, and that the one on the upper platform was the one which held the cross of Jesus. As this was the case, he believed this was the reason that a Christian church was built on the site. Based on the area's history, and coins that were found, he thinks that it was probably built between 70-135. (25)

Wyatt also believes that the Garden Tomb is the one which had been owned by Joseph of Aramathea. The group of tombs northwest of this one were cut into the cliff face of the dry moat splitting Mount Moriah into two sections. They belonged to wealthy families, and were believed to have been dug during the First Temple period. Where the Garden Tomb is located, would have been the next available area for interment at the time of Christ. (26)

On the face of the tomb are chisel marks that indicate a removal of a stone slab that seemed to indicate it would be fashioned into a 13' seal for the doorway of the tomb; and also the remains of a sheared-off iron shaft on the left-side, that the Roman soldiers had driven into the face to prevent the stone from being rolled away to open the tomb. (27) In the excavation of the church on the crucifixion site, he found a 2' thick(the same size as the groove in front of the tomb), 13' round stone slab, which Wyatt believes was the stone that had been used to seal the tomb. Since it seemed to have been incorporated into the structure of the church, he thinks that it is a good indication that the two sites are connected. (28)

These archaeological findings have not been reported in mainstream Christian circles, and as such, you may not have heard about it. Therefore, you may be skeptical. Before I tell you the primary discovery in connection with archaeological dig, let me make a personal observation about Mr. Wyatt.

Considered by some scholars to be a renegade in the field, Wyatt has been responsible for other major Biblical discoveries, including Noah's Ark, Sodom and Gomorrah, Mount Sinai, the Red Sea crossing site of the Israelites, and the most recent, the Tower of Babel. These are incredible archaeological finds, and yet, you probably haven't heard about them. His work to uncover Noah's Ark was enough to convince the Turkish government to officially recognize the site, and build an observation center there. I attended a presentation made by Mr. Wyatt, spoke to him, read his material and documentation, and watched videos presenting visual evidence of his finds. They are very convincing. But more important than that, is the man himself, and the passion he has for the Lord. He definitely is not in it for the money, because it is a struggle for him to raise the funds necessary to continue his work. He is not in it for the glory, because his work has received very little attention. But what he is trying to do, is to use his archaeological proofs of the Bible to present a message of salvation. And because of that, I believe that we can trust, and believe in the integrity of his work.

Without going into too much detail, after much excavation and exploration, on January 6, 1982, he made a stunning discovery in a 22' long cave below the area of the cross hole which he believed held the cross of Jesus. He found the Ark of the Covenant, as well as other items from the Temple. Just as amazing, was the discovery that the blood of Jesus flowed down the cross, onto the rock, and into a crack that branched out from the cross hole, where it dripped onto the Ark. It was a divine recreation of the blood sacrifice. (29)

The discovery was reported to the Israeli government, who have chosen not to acknowledge it because of the turmoil in the region. It will probably not be removed until political tensions ease, and they have a secure location. Those who study Bible prophecy know that when its discovery is announced, it will lead to the prophetic fulfillment of Temple worship being initiated, and that will be the trigger that sets into motion the events foretold in the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, Revelation.

When Did These Things Actually Happen

When I was growing up, Good Friday was a school holiday, and being raised in a Christian home, I wondered how many of my classmates actually understood the significance of this day, or was it just a day that they didn't have to go to school. Also, I always thought, why was it called "Good", if Jesus was crucified that day. Good Friday is a mistranslation of "Gott Friday", which is German for "God's Friday." (30)

Another thing. If Jesus was crucified on Friday, and rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, how do you get three days and three nights out of that period of time. There seemed to be a contradiction here. Yet, no one seemed to question it. Jesus himself said in Mark 8:31 (and John 2:19-21) that he would be killed, and that he would rise from the dead in three days. Matthew related that Jesus would be dead for three days and nights, just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for the same amount of time. (Matthew 27:63) So, if he was crucified, and buried on Friday evening, three days would not transpire until Monday night.

First of all, to fully understand the concepts of time in this regard, you need to know that the Biblical day was calculated a little differently than ours today. Where our day begins at midnight, in the middle of the night; the Jewish day begins in the evening, running from sunset to sunset, as set forth in Genesis 1:5 which says: "And the evening and the morning were the first day." Other references that attest to this can be found in Leviticus 22:6-7, Leviticus 23:31-32, Judges 14:18, and Nehemiah 13:15-22. (31)

Let's look at the events which occurred during what is now called Holy Week:

Nisan 9 (Also referred to as the month of Abib, Thursday sunset to Friday sunset): Jesus traveled through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, so he could be in the city a full six days before his crucifixion. This would fulfill Leviticus 22:27, which said that the sacrificial lamb had to be separated from its parents for seven days prior to its death. When he got to Jerusalem, he sent two of his disciples to procure a donkey and a colt, so he could ride into the city in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. After cleansing the Temple (Matthew 21:12-16), he went over the Mount of Olives to Bethany, to stay at the home of Mary and Martha (Matthew 21:17). (32)

Nisan 10 (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset): Jesus spent the day with Mary and Martha, then had dinner with Lazarus. It was on this day that Mary anointed the feet of Jesus. (John 12:3) Jesus responded to their protests by saying: "For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." (Matthew 26:12) This is a reference to Exodus 12:3 when the sacrificial lamb is chosen (Revelation 13:8 identifies Jesus as the lamb). (33)

Nisan 11 (Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset): Jesus rode into Jerusalem as the people spread palm branches before him, and hailed him as the King. It was on this day, now known as Palm Sunday, that Jesus made a legal claim to the throne of David. But, realizing that the people were reacting that way for the wrong reasons, caused him to weep over the city. He returned to Bethany. (Luke 19:41-44; Mark 11:11) (34)

Nisan 12 (Sunday sunset to Monday sunset): Jesus chased the merchants out of the Temple, then taught there on the grounds. The chief priests were a little disturbed about this. Jesus returned to Bethany. (Mark 11:12-19; Luke 19:45-48) (35)

Nisan 13 (Monday sunset to Tuesday sunset): Jesus taught at the Temple and prophesied eight woes upon that generation, and again wept over the city. (Matthew 23) He delivered what has come to be known as the Olivet Discourse. (Luke 21, Matthew 24, Mark 12) He revealed when he would be crucified. (Matthew 26:1-2) Meanwhile, the Sanhedrin knew, that in order to do something about Jesus, they would have to do it before the beginning of Passover week. (Matthew 26:3-5) Jesus and his disciples returned to Bethany and had dinner at the home of Simon the leper. (36)

Nisan 14 (Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset): This was the preparation day before the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 14 to 20). After sunset, on Tuesday night, as mandated by God in Exodus 12:6, Jesus and his disciples gathered in the Upper Room to eat the Passover meal. (37) This meal consisted of wine, sop, and unleavened bread. There was no lamb, since Jesus was to be the Passover lamb. The next morning (9-11 AM) was the traditional time to kill the Passover lamb. (38)

After this meal, which lasted about an hour, Jesus and his disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:30-46); Mark 14:32-42) It was there that he was arrested (9 PM), and taken to the house of Caiaphas for questioning. Around 6 AM, he was taken to see Pilate, and then judged. (Matthew 26:57; Matthew 27:26; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54 - 23:23; John 18:12) Jesus was crucified around 9 AM. Around 12 PM, the land fell under the shadow of an unusual darkness. At 3 PM, at the time of the evening sacrifice - he died. (39) Since he died, the soldiers didn't have to break his legs in order to bring about a quick death, which fulfilled the requirements of the Passover lamb. (John 19:36) He was buried right before sunset (Luke 21:54), or before 6 PM, and the start of the annual Sabbath. (40)

Given this time scenario, the resurrection had to take place three days later at sunset. When the women came to the tomb, early Sunday morning, the angel said that he had already risen. (Mark 16:6) This means that the resurrection would have been no later than sunset on Saturday night. (41)

The key to understanding this whole matter is the realization that there were two different and separate Sabbaths that week- an annual one, and a weekly one. In Matthew 28:1, it says: In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." The original Greek actually says "sabbaths," because it is referring to both Sabbath days. (42)

Nisan 15 (Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset) would have been the first day of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, and was the annual Sabbath (which could occur on any day). John chose to call it a "high day." (John 19:31) Mark's narrative augments John's account by saying that after the sabbath, or high day (Nisan 16, Thursday sunset to Friday sunset), the women bought the spices necessary to prepare for the ritual anointing of the body. This would have been Friday, but with the commencement of the weekly Sabbath on Nisan 17 (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset), they would not be permitted to administer them until afterward. So, the next opportunity would have been on Sunday morning (Nisan 18, Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset). (43)

Also, even the phrase "in the end of the sabbath," refers to Saturday, before sunset. Dr. George Ricker Berry's Interlinear Greek-English New Testament translation reads: "Now late on the sabbath, as it was getting dusk toward the first day of the week..." The words "in the end," was translated from the Greek "opse" (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3796), which is related to "opiso" (Strong's #3694), or "late in the day"; which in the other two places it is used, Mark 11:19-20 and Mark 13:35, is more accurately translated as "even" or evening. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon(pg. 471) said of the word: "Opse followed by a genitive seems always partitive, denoting late in the period specified by the genitive (and consequently still belonging to it)." (44)

Also, the word "dawn" is translated from the Greek word "epiphosko"(Strong's #2020) and is related to "epiphaino" (Strong's #2014), meaning "to shine upon." The only other place "epiphosko" appears, is in Luke 23:53-54, where it is translated as "and the sabbath drew on." So, this word would have been the one to more accurately indicate the period of dusk, right after sunset, when the new day began, had Jesus risen from the dead at that time. (45)

Of course, the proponents of a Sunday resurrection have their Scriptural documentation. It says in Mark 16:9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene..." The wording implies that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday morning, when in fact it is a translation error. Commas were not used in the Scriptures until 1400 years after the original manuscripts. So, to make this verse accurate, a comma should be placed after the word "risen." (46)

There also seems to be a contradiction when two particular verses are compared. Luke 24:1 says: "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning they came upon the sepulchre..." But when you look at John 20:1, it says: "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre..." The reason for this, is because the phrase "in the morning," in Luke, can not be found in the original text, so it can be plainly seen that both Mary's went to the tomb, before the Sabbath was over, to see if the soldiers were still stationed at the tomb, and to get ready for the embalming ritual. (47)

We looked at the phrase "the end of the sabbath," which is used in Matthew 28:1. There is a school of thought that says that the line was a translation error, and should have actually been put at the end of Matthew 27:66, because it deals with the sealing and the guarding of the tomb.(48)

Luke 24:21 indicates that Jesus met and talked to two of his disciples during the latter part of Sunday, and made a reference that "today is the third day since these things were done." This seemingly indicates a Thursday afternoon crucifixion, and validates the tradition of a Sunday morning resurrection. (49) However, it should also be noted, that Luke, when making any references to time, always discussed it inclusively. Evidence of that can be found in Luke 9:28, when he gave a time frame as eight days; while Matthew(Matthew 17:1) and Mark(Mark 9:2) both gave an indication of six days. If this is the case, then his writings tend to imply a Friday crucifixion. (50)

Another interesting, but unproven theory, concerns the Feast of Firstfruits(also known as the Wave Offering), referred to in Leviticus 23:10-12, which occurred during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It occurred on the "first day" after the Sabbath, that came after the Passover. So, this would have been on Saturday, after sunset, the first day of the week. Some Biblical scholars have indicated that the Jewish feast days have prophetic symbolism to them. The apostle Paul seemed to imply that the Feast of Firstfruits was fulfilled when Jesus was resurrected. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:20: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (51)

Even though the Wednesday crucifixion, and Saturday(sabbath) resurrection (which in my opinion is accurate), seems to be getting more and more recognition; there are many other Scriptures which could be discussed to imply various other scenarios here. However, the bottom line is to show that at least one of these days has to be incorrect, as far as historical accuracy. You shall soon see why.

Since we have dealt with the actual day when these events occurred, I'm sure you'll forgive my digression into the actual year that they occurred. The Passover took place on the following dates:

Saturday, April 16, 29 A.D.
Wednesday, April 5, 30 A.D.
Wednesday, April 25, 31 A.D.
Monday, April 14, 32 A.D.
Friday, April 3, 33 A.D.

As you can see, in both 30 and 31, the Passover occurred on Wednesday, but the correct year for these events is said to be 31, because the year of 30 had 356 days in it, and therefore was not a common year(which has 353, 354 or 355 days in it). (52)

Let me run down some of the calculations that seem to prove this. Confirmation seems to come from the Old Testament. The date that Artaxerxes issued his order to restore Jerualem(Ezra 7) was in the seventh year of his reign. His first year began in September, 464 B.C.; thus, his seventh year began in September, 458 B.C. to September, 457 B.C. According to Daniel's prophecy(Daniel 9:25-26), 69 prophetic weeks(69 X 7= 483 years) would pass before the Messiah would be revealed. Adding 483 years to the decree would bring us to the fall of 27 A.D. (53)

Daniel prophesied that the ministry of Jesus would be half of a prophetic week of seven years, and then he would be "cut-off." (Daniel 9:26-27) This seems to indicate that his ministry would last 3 1/2 years. We can see how long his ministry was by counting the number of Passovers the gospels refer to. The first Passover took place in 28 A.D. (John 2:33), the second occurred in 29 (Luke 6:1), the third in 30 (John 6:4), and the final one was mentioned in all four gospels, and took place in the Spring of 31, thus indicating a 3 1/2 year ministry. (54)

Luke said that Jesus began his ministry when he was "about thirty," so his first Passover would have been in the Spring of 28, and it was at this time that Jesus was told that the Temple was in its 46th year of construction. (John 2:20) History shows, that after three years of planning, building began after the Passover in 19 B.C., which when added to the 46 years, indicates the year 28 A.D. (55)

Then there is Luke (Luke 3:1) saying that John the Baptist began to preach during the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. In order to calculate when the year was, there must be a reckoning between the dates of when he was made co-ruler with Augustus Caesar around the end of 11 A.D.; or when his sole reign began in August of 14 A.D. It is believed that he used the date of 11/12 A.D., when he gained authority, which would make the first year of his reign as April, 12 A.D. to April, 13 A.D. So, his 15th year, when John started preaching, would have been April, 26 A.D., to, April, 27 A.D. (56)

Luke also said that Pontius Pilate was the Governor of Judea. His administration lasted ten years, and is commonly given as being from 26 A.D. to 36 A.D. But he had been dismissed before the Passover of his tenth year, and he went to Rome to appeal the decision, but Emperor Tiberius died before he got there (March, 37 A.D.). Therefore, he began his reign as Procurator in 27 A.D. This also points to the fact that John began his ministry in 27 A.D., and Jesus began his in the Autumn of 27 A.D. (57)

It is common for some people to be apprehensive when attempts are made to pinpoint actual dates because of so much time being elapsed, and the accuracy of historical records being questioned. And this may be one of those times. Since there was a Wednesday Passover also in 30 A.D., we have to consider that date. It just so happens, that information regarding his birth (which I will deal with in the next chapter) neatly dovetails with this date. So, we may have to reevaluate the year 31 A.D. which has been commonly accepted. Also, I am more concerned, not in the year, but in showing what the actual day is, in order to illustrate the point of how there is pagan influence.

The Pagan Origins of Easter

At the end of the winter, the season changes because the earth tilts as it rotates on its axis. Spring arrives when the sun is over the equator. On the first day of Spring, known as the vernal equinox (which means "spring equal night"), both day and night are an equal twelve hours long. Which meant that the long winter nights were over, and that the sun again began to take control. This time was marked by celebrations and festivals to thank the pagan gods. (58) These ancient rituals were fertility festivals, observed in hopes that the gods would bless them with fertile flocks and fields. Animal and child sacrifices were offered to the gods to receive this favor. (59)

Venerable Bede, an eighth century Christian historian, indicated that the name Easter came from the festival of "Oestre" (also found as "Ostere", "Ostara", the Anglo-Saxon goddess of Spring and fertility. (60) There was also a Teutonic (Germanic) goddess known as "Eostre" (also found as "Eastre", "Estre"), who was the goddess of dawn and light, fertility, and Spring. It is from these deities where the name Easter actually originates. (61) The festival in her honor, was held during the vernal equinox. (62) The name can be traced back to the name "Astarte", the Syrian sun goddess, known as the "queen of heaven" (the consort of the Chaldean sun god Baal) who is mentioned in connection with the Canaanites (where she was known as Asherah), (63) and in Jeremiah 7:17-20 and Jeremiah 44. (64) God was so upset about the people's worship of her, that he allowed Babylon to take them captive. (65) Some escaped to Egypt where they kept the practice alive. The worship of this goddess of love and fertility, (66) who was actually a representation of the previously mentioned Semiramis (or Beltis), spread into various cultures, under different names: Isis (Egypt), Ishtar (Babylon), Athena (Athens), Minerva and Aphrodite (Greece), (67) Diana (Ephesus), Cybele and Venus (Rome), (68) and Ashtoreth (Israel). (69)

The early Christians celebrated the Resurrection on the same day that the Jews observed Passover. The Passover is the feast that commemorates the night the angel of death passed over those homes that were "under the blood of the Lamb," and slew the first born of the Egyptians, while the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt. (70) As they stayed inside and prepared for the journey home, they ate unleavened bread and roasted lamb, which had been killed to supply the blood needed. The Feast of the Passover, which began on the 14th day of the month of Nisan (also known as Abib), was celebrated for eight days. (71) The Israelites were commanded to commemorate this event "forever." (Exodus 12:24) Jesus did not eliminate the Passover, he merely changed the elements, and the new focus was identified as the "Lord's Supper" or "Communion." The blood of the lamb, was represented by the cup of wine, and symbolized the shedding of his blood for our sins; and the eating of the unleavened bread symbolized his body, which was sacrificed for our sins. From that point on, this tradition was to be carried on in remembrance of him. The Passover Lamb, which prophetically symbolized the Messiah, was no longer to be killed. (72)

Eusebius, a Church historian, said that the early Christians observed the Passover on Nisan 14 (which is the seventh month of the Jewish civil calendar and the first month of the sacred calendar); and Gieseler, another early historian, wrote that "the Gentile Christians observed also the Sabbath and the Passover" late in the first century. (73) However, with the influx of Gentiles, they began to celebrate the day on Sunday. (74) History tells us, that early in the second century, Bishop Xystus (also found as "Sixtus") of the church of Rome, was the first to disregard the actual day for the observance of the Passover, and to celebrate it on Sunday. Irenaeus wrote that this doctrine was in direct conflict with the church, and the teaching of Paul. (75)

When the Easter observance was introduced to Rome around 160, it was celebrated the Sunday after the Jewish Passover. (76) Polycrates, the leader of the new Christian churches in Asia, wrote to Victor, who became Bishop at Rome in 190: "We, therefore, observe the genuine day; neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom... All these (early Christians, Philip, and the apostle John) observed the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith." (77) After heated debate, Constantine's Nicaean Council in 325 officially ruled that Easter was to be held on the Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox, which, because of the difficulty in correlating it with the Jewish calendar, gives us a date variation from March 22nd to April 25th. (78) You have to ask yourself- why was there such a debate on the matter if it was passed down according to Scriptural tradition. Easter was never seen as a Christian holiday until the fourth century. In Acts 12:4, the word "Easter" is translated from the Greek word "Pascha" (or in Hebrew "Pesach"), which means "Passover", but it is not another name for the Passover (which begins on the first full moon after the vernal equinox), since the dates for the two observances are usually far apart. (79) Today, the holiday of Easter continues to be celebrated at a different time than the Biblically mandated observance of the Passover.

In the fourth century, Socrates Scholasticus wrote in his Ecclesiastical History: "Neither the apostles, therefore, nor the Gospels, have anywhere imposed... Easter... The Saviour and his apostles have enjoined us by no law to keep this feast (Easter). (80)

Spring celebrations continued to be held at Easter to honor various fertility goddesses until 399, then the Theodosian Code banned the observance of pagan rituals during the holy days of Easter and Christmas. However, pagan worshipers were able to continue worshipping Isis, by calling their feast by another name- Easter. Saltman, in his book On Roman Time: The Codex Calendar of 354 AD said that the rituals connected with Isis became part of the Easter holiday. (81) By 752, the Church had totally given up fighting the pagans, and Christianized the elements of this pagan celebration. (82)

The Puritans who founded this country were against the Catholic Church, and did not celebrate Easter or Christmas; (83) however, after the Civil War, the Protestant churches began to observe them as special days. (84)

The warnings against idolatry are numerous in the Bible, but in 1 Timothy 1:4, Paul specifically made an attack against these pagan gods: "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions..." The word "fables" is translated from the Greek "muthos" (which was a legendary story that was told, as opposed to one of historical fact), which is where we get our word "mythology." (85) As we look at the pagan traditions of Easter, that predate the Resurrection of Jesus by more than 2,000 years, (86) we can see why Paul said this.

The Traditions of Easter Easter Eggs

During the rule of Caesar Augustus, Hyginus, an Egyptian who was the librarian at the Palatine library in Rome, wrote: "An egg of a wondrous site 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 (Astarte)." (87) Part of their worship to this goddess was the ritual involving the "golden egg of Astarte." This was where we got the tradition of the Easter egg. (88) Albert Pike, an Illuminati member, in his Masonic treatise Morals and Dogma, indicated that the egg was a mystical symbol to the pagan religions of Egypt, Japan, Greece, Persia, Phoenicia, India, and Babylon. On page 496, he wrote: "The serpent entwined round the 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 germ 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." Thus, we see an indication that the egg initially represented serpent worship, and, by extension, Satan worship. (89) The most common Easter custom is the brightly colored Easter egg. Eggs, the origin of life, have always been considered as symbols of fertility, and represented renewal. (90)

The ancient Persians believed that the earth was hatched from an egg during the Spring equinox. (91) The ancient Egyptians believed that the universe was created from a huge egg from the god of the sky, out of which came the sun-bird which ruled over the earth and sky. They hung eggs in their temples, as did the Greeks. The Hindus and early Phoenicians taught that an immense egg split, and formed heaven and earth. In Rome, pregnant women wore eggs around their necks to protect them from evil. They were planted with seeds, in hopes of having a productive harvest. (92) A procession in honor of the Roman goddess Ceres was always preceded by an egg. (93)

As far back as 722 B.C., the Chinese colored eggs for their Spring observance, as did the Egyptians and Persians. (94) A grave excavated in Germany, which dated back to 320 A.D., contained two goose eggs that had been decorated with stripes and dots. (95)

Pope Gregory (590-604), forbid the followers of the Catholic Church to eat eggs during Lent, so they became a treat at Easter. The people in Poland said that the Virgin Mary dyed eggs in various colors for Jesus to play with when he was a child. The Ukrainians incorporated blue dots in the design of their eggs, which they say represent the tears of Mary. They believe she took a basket of colored eggs to Pontius Pilate as a gift, in hopes of convincing him to have mercy on Jesus. As she was making them, she began crying and the tears fell on the shells, making the dots. The orthodox of Romania dyed their eggs red, because they believed Mary left a basket of eggs at the cross during the crucifixion to appease the soldiers so they would treat Jesus better. They were not accepted, and his blood dripped on them. In Russia, there is a tradition that Mary Magdalene gave an egg to the Roman emperor as a symbolic token of the resurrection of Jesus. (96)

The Rabbit

To begin with, it is actually the hare, and not the rabbit which is Easter's main character, because according to ancient tradition, the hare was a symbolic representation for the Moon, since they only came out at night to eat. Also, the Egyptian name for the hare was "Un" (which means "open"), because they are born with their eyes open, while a rabbit's are not. Legend has it, that the hare never blinks or closes its eyes. (97) To some pagan cultures, the Moon was the "open-eyed watcher of the skies." (98) The hare is associated with the goddess Ishtar, and was the symbol of fertility because they reproduce so quickly. (99) There is also a pagan tradition concerning a bird who wanted to be a rabbit, so the goddess Oestre turned the bird into a rabbit, who could still lay eggs. Every Spring, during the festival dedicated to Oestre, the rabbit laid beautiful colored eggs for the goddess. (100) This tradition is exemplified in the Cadbury television commercial for the filled chocolate eggs. Another tradition, which has been passed down, comes from Germany. According to the legend, during a famine, a poor woman dyed some eggs and hid them in a nest, as Easter presents for her children. When the children found the nest, a big rabbit leaped away, the story that the rabbit brought the eggs. (101)

Lent

The word "lent" comes from the old English "lencen", which means "Spring". Created by the Catholic Church around 525, under the guidance of Abbot Dionysus, the Little, Lent is the 40-day period from Ash Wednesday until Easter, that is set aside for fasting and seeking repentance. The observance is not found in the Bible, so it was not recognized by Jesus, the apostles, or the early Christian Church. (102) However, now-a-days, it usually just means "giving-up" something, usually some bad habit, or even just cutting back, in order to please God. This period of abstinence actually originated in Babylon, as a preliminary to the annual day that honored the death and resurrection of Tammuz; (103) and later was observed in Egypt to honor Osiris, the son of Isis, who was the counterpart of Tammuz. (104)

When Nimrod died, and was made the sun god, Semiramis then had an illegitimate son called Tammuz, who she claimed to be the son of Nimrod. She said that he was the "promised seed of the woman," (Genesis 3:15) and demanded that both her and Tammuz be worshipped. He became symbolized by the golden calf. (105) She became known as the "queen of heaven," and was the prototype from which all other pagan goddesses came. Her representation can be seen in the Roman Catholic Church's worship of Mary, who is called the "Mother of the Church", the "Queen of Heaven and Earth", and the "Queen of the Universe." These titles can not refer to Mary, the mother of Jesus, because nowhere in the Bible does it talk about Mary's role in such a way. (106) According to Babylonian tradition, when Tammuz was killed, his mother cried so much, that he came back to life. The manifestation of this was the rebirth and blooming of all vegetation in the Spring, which came to symbolize his resurrection, and why Tammuz is honored in the Spring. (107) Very similar, is the story in the ancient writings of the Sumerians, in Mesopotamia, which said that Tammuz was married to the goddess Inanna (Ishtar), the "mother goddess." When he was killed, she was so

overcome with grief, that she followed him to the underworld, and in her absence, the earth began dying, crops stopped growing, and animals stopped mating. Ea, the god of water and wisdom, sent a message that Inanna was to be brought back. This messenger sprinkled both Inanna and Tammuz with the water of life, and they were given the power to return to the light of the sun for six months of the year. Then Tammuz would again have to return to the underworld, prompting Inanna to seek him, and again, Ea would have to retrieve them. (108)

Ezekiel 8:12-13 talks about the women weeping for Tammuz and this actually refers to what became the 40-day Lenten period. (109)

Easter Sunrise Worship

The Jews during the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel had blended sun worship with the worship of God, as we can see in the Scriptural references in regard to the "queen of heaven." Ezekiel 8:15-16 talks about men standing with their backs to the Temple of God, facing the east and worshipping the sun. Albert Pike wrote that all pagan religions worshipped the sun. Whether they knew it, or not, they were actually worshipping Satan, because, as an angel, he was known as Lucifer, or the "bearer of light." The Jewish Temple faced the east, so that when they worshipped God, they would be turned away from the rising sun in the east. (110)

The sunrise service actually stems from the pagan rite of Spring that was held during the vernal equinox to welcome the coming sun. (111) According to pagan tradition, when the sun would rise on Easter morning, it would dance in the heavens, so, those who would congregate, would dance in honor of the sun. (112)

The verse found in Mark 16:2 is given to justify the promotion of sunrise services: "And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising sun." (113) While it has been a long-standing tradition that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, a Scriptural study of the matter seems to indicate that he was resurrected on Saturday. Millions of people all over the world who attend sunrise services on Eastern morning are actually keeping alive a ritual of worshipping the sun god Baal, and his consort, the queen of heaven.

Easter Candles

Fire ceremonies had also become a part of Springtime pagan celebrations. In Europe, Easter was celebrated by lighting large bonfires to commemorate the renewal of Spring. A doll, said to symbolize winter, was sometimes burned, which was called "burning the Judas." (114) Teutonic tradition called for new fires to be ignited during the vernal equinox. (115)

The Celts had a May Day celebration for their sun god, because they believed that he had been held prisoners through the winter months by evil spirits, and every year, on May 1st, he escaped, bringing with him sunlight to warm the earth. So, to help him escape, giant bonfires were built on the highest hills in an attempt to scare the evil spirits into freeing the Sun. Some Germans, Dutch, and Swedes still burn these Springtime fires. (116) The tradition of burning special Easter candles is directly connected with these fire rituals. (117)

Easter Hams

The pig was sacred to the Greek goddess Demeter, the corn goddess, who represented fertility and abundance, and is another counterpart of Astarte. In various depictions of her, she is either shown carrying, or being accompanied by a pig. So, pigs were regularly sacrificed to her, and it was believed, that by eating what they felt, represented and embodied their goddess, they were in fact, eating of her body. The prophet Isaiah warned of this in Isaiah 65:3-5. (118) Another source says that the pig represents the wild boar that killed Tammuz, and eating ham was done in remembrance of him.

The tradition of the Easter Ham evolved from an English tradition of eating a gammon of bacon to show their resentment and contempt for the Jewish custom of not eating pork. (119)

The Easter Lily

The Easter Lily, the flowery symbol of Easter, which turns up at church altars everywhere that day, is actually not a Spring flower. (120) It was a pagan phallic symbol that represented a sexual reproductive organ. (121) It obviously reflected on the fertility aspect of the celebration.

Hot Cross Buns

The history of the hot cross bun goes back to the Babylonian queen of heaven(Ishtar), and a reference to it is made in Jeremiah 7:18, which talks about making "cakes to the queen of heaven." The Hebrew word for "cakes" is "kavvan" and is more properly translated as "buns." (122)

An Athens, about 1500 years before Christ, these buns or sacred bread, were used in the worship of the goddess. They were called "boun." (123) Egyptians made buns inscribed with two horns in honor of the moon goddess, and the Greeks changed it to a cross, so it could be easily separated. The Angle-Saxons made buns with a cross on them in honor of their goddess of light. (124)

Easter Clothing

Everyone knows that Easter is the day that everyone has to wear their new Easter clothing. This mentality stems from the pagan tradition that it was unlucky not to wear some sort of new clothing or personal adornment, because it symbolically signified the end of the old, and the beginning of the new. (125)

What You Can Do

The substantial amount of evidence that I have presented, proves the pagan origin of what is probably considered the holiest of Christian observances. Yet, most aspects of it, do more to honor pagan gods, and I don't think that is pleasing to the one, true God, that, as Christians, we claim to serve. This is one example of why the Body of Christ needs to get back to a Bible-backed fundamentalism that seems to be slowly slipping through the cracks of the churches.

As a Christian, it is important that the pagan aspect of Easter is eliminated. And if you decide to do that, you may feel that a gradual weaning from all of its trappings is necessary, to prevent culture shock. We need to emphasize that Jesus died for our sins, so that we may have everlasting life; and that he rose from the grave, just like he said he would. Wouldn't it be nice to rename the day to reflect its true meaning. How about "Resurrection Day." Again, even though this is a day that the Bible doesn't tell us to observe, it should be understood that the intent of the day is to celebrate a risen and living Saviour; and that it has nothing to do with chocolate candy, jelly beans, Easter eggs, and bunnies.

LOST AT THE MANGER
by Brian Shertzer

There are those who are trying to fly,
Although they have no wings.

And some who'd like to die,
Because they have no dreams.

They all are trying to fill,
 The void down deep inside.
 But the more they try to run,
 There's nowhere else to hide.
 Remember the story you heard,
 As a child at Christmas time.
 About the birth of Jesus and the Star,
 Which above Bethlehem did shine.
 Have you every gotten past that,
 Or did you think you were in danger.
 Did you shy away from Easter,
 And stay lost at the manger.
 There are those who can fly,
 When they found they do have wings.
 And some who choose not to die,
 Because they dared to dream.
 They have all become complete,
 By God's mercy and his grace,
 Because they left the manger,
 And at the cross they have stayed.

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125) # 119 Pg 11 "EASTER - WHY YOU SHOULD NOT BE OBSERVING IT"

PALM SUNDAY

It was originally to commemorate Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Later on it was combined with pagan activities; today the palm and willow are blessed and carried in the procession. It is ascribed to a pagan holiday where olive and willow are blessed. Powers attributed to the palm are exorcising evil spirits, healing diseases, warding off devils, protecting homes from lightning and fire, and protecting fields against hail and storms. The olive has had healing powers attributed to it since antiquity.

EASTER SUNDAY

I always thought it was strange that Easter came on a different day each year. If Christ arose on March 10, that would be the anniversary every year. But I found that Easter's date is established by astrology according to the vernal equinox. The spring festival of pagan worship of the sun and the renewed season was also set on the same date. The Druids had a sacred symbol - an egg. The word Easter comes from the name of a pagan goddess - goddess of rising light of day and spring. Easter is the modern form of Eastre, Oстера, Astarte or Ishtar. Another name for Astarte is Diana of Euphrates. Easter in the King James Bible means pascha or Passover. Astarte was hatched from a big egg which fell from heaven. Druids (satan worshipers) in Europe used eggs as symbols of goddess of spring. The rabbit is associated with the moon in ancient Egypt. It is a fertility symbol of sexual significance. Hot cross buns are raisin cakes with a "T" on them baked for the queen of heaven, Tammuz, (Jer. 7:18). God talks about sun worship in Ezekiel Chapter 8. The SUNrise service was a part of ancient sun worship. Baal was the sun god and still is today. Shinto pilgrims pray to the sun as they climb the mountain sides. Mithrists meet together at dawn and honor the sun god. At

the time of the Old Testament, the Jews got into practices of picking up sticks and feathers to build fires, making raisin cakes, and crying for Tammuz (Josh. 23:7 and Eze. 8:14). Don't mix with these heathen practices; don't even mention the names of their gods!"

MORE ON EASTER

Easter is celebrated by most Christians. Yes, JESUS did in fact rise from the dead, but not on this pagan celebration. The early Christian church never celebrated Easter, but celebrated "Passover". The term "Easter" comes from the festival of Oestre (or Estre), the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Spring, Fertility and New Life. An egg laying rabbit? Pagans have worshiped rabbits as sex and fertility gods, and have looked upon them as symbols of lust, sexual vigor and reproduction. Eggs also have been symbols of fertility, sex and new life, also with celebrations in the Springtime. The egg was a sacred symbol among the Babylonians. The ancient Druids (noted more for Halloween) bore an egg as the sacred emblem of their idolatrous order. The pagan tradition said Estre, the goddess of spring turned a bird into a rabbit. In gratitude, the rabbit came each Spring, during the Festival of Estre and laid beautiful eggs for the goddess (remember it use to be a bird). Are you coloring your eggs in different colors for Easter? The origin of the Easter celebration is what makes it so bad. It doesn't matter if you think you are just doing it for your kids. What you are doing is lying to your kids about a supernatural Easter bunny who lays eggs. Churches hide Easter eggs for the kids, and many hold Easter SUNrise services. This pagan celebration was to worship the SUN, not THE SON. It too crept into the Christian celebration known as Easter. The sun rises in the EAST -- EASTER -- not a coincidence! Tammuz (a pagan god) was slain, legend has it, and because of the weeping of his mother Ishtar (Easter), Tammuz was mystically revived in Springtime, and was celebrated every year. As it is written in the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Catholic church is the one who brought about all these changes to be celebrated in a "Christian" fashion. You need to ask the Lord to forgive you for this ungodly practice, break some curses placed on you, and get or do some DELIVERANCE.

Easter update

"Easter candy sales continue to soar" with expected sales to top \$837 MILLION this year (1997) - 13.5 BILLION jellybeans. "If the jellybeans were lined up end-to-end, they would circle the earth nearly three times. 55 MILLION chocolate bunnies will be produced this Easter." Did you ever notice that jellybeans are shaped like EGGS? "US farmers sell about 50 million dozen more eggs than average during the two weeks before Easter." More people thought of candy than of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, JESUS Christ.

SCRIPTURE ABOUT IDOL WORSHIP Read the whole chapter of Ezekiel 8. Ezekiel in a vision of God at Jerusalem is shown the image of jealousy, the chambers of imagery, the mourners for Tammuz, the worshippers towards the sun and God's wrath for their idolatry. "Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eyes 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" (vs. 18).

II Cor. 5:17 (A new creature in Christ.)

II Cor. 6:16-17 (What agreement can there be between the temple of God and idols? Leave idolatry and heathen worship; touch not any unclean thing!)

Eph. 4:25 (Reject all falsity.)

I Thess. 1:9 (Ye turned from idols to God.)

I John 5:21 (Keep yourself from idols.)

SCRIPTURE ABOUT SO-CALLED CHRISTIAN HOLIDAYS

Certain holidays got into the Christian church by way of the Catholic Church. To keep the country united, Roman emperors began to give Christian meaning to pagan rituals.

Ex. 22:18 (Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.)

Ex. 23:13 (Make no mention of the name of other gods.)

Lev. 19:31 (To be defiled by familiar spirits and wizards)

Duet.18: 9-14 (The abominations of the nations are to be avoided.)

Jos. 23:7 (Neither make mention of the name of their gods.)

I Sam. 28:7-28 (The witch raised Samuel; Saul fainted.)

Micah 5:12-13 (Cut off witches, soothsayers, and images.)

Acts 13:6-11 (Elymas the sorcerer was struck blind.)

Acts 16:16-19 (Casteth out a spirit of divination.)

Romans 12:2 (And be not conformed to this world.)

Gal. 5:19-21 (He reckoneth up the works of the flesh.)

Eph. 6:12-13 (He sheweth what they intend that preach circumcision.)

II Tim. 1:7 (For God hath not given us a spirit of fear.)

James 4:4-10 (God resisteth the proud.)

The following information came from an email from a ministry in New Zealand:

Which rendering?

In order for man to subtly switch the final authority in the Holy Book to himself, one of the cleverest ways is to play with words. If just one word in the scriptures is a wrong rendering then is our foundation is flawed, and who gets the final say? The scholar above the written word of course!

Following, I have chosen three words out of many (for lack of space) that have been used to undermine the scriptures, justifying a human agency, replacing the sole agency of the Holy Ghost as the one who leads us into all truth:

Easter - the pagan connection:

Is. 2:6. "Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers."

Just as it was with the children of Israel who borrowed pagan ideas from the east, so it is with the children of God today, who have borrowed pagan ideas from the east, namely eastern mysticism and new age ideologies.

The sun rising in the east stole the hearts of the children of Israel as they adopted the worship of Tammuz the sun-god. Babylon was to the east of Israel and everything 'eastern' (spiritually speaking) has connotations of introducing mixtures to the pure faith. Much in Christendom today has not been replenished from above, but by importing christianized pagan content to avoid embarrassment and repercussions from the world. Especially if we have the responsibility of raising our own children or are still tied to our families of birth. Hence, Christmas - the Roman Catholic "Christ" of the mass, and Easter - the Roman Catholic perversion of passover.

However, Easter (as well as Christmas - Child's Day) goes back a lot further than the Roman Church:

Acts 12:4 ... "intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."

This passage in the KJV, which critics love to use, is the only verse referring to Easter, and the Authorized Version is the only bible where you find the word Easter used just once. The argument the critics love to use is Easter should have been translated Passover in Acts 12:4, as it has been in other modern bibles. This remark has thrown heaps of doubt on the sincere overly clever, and the wishy washy, who choose not to check out what man has to say along side the word of God:

Again let's repeat the argument ... "Easter is translated wrong because the Greek is translated passover!"

My reply ... fiddle-de-dee!!

Fact: Over a year ago we had a teacher stay with us from Athens who taught languages. One evening I just had to ask our non-Christian friend what the word pascha (the original Greek) meant. Without hesitation she said straight out ... "Easter!!" Just recently when I was in hospital a Greek man shared the same room as myself as his bed was opposite mine. The day he was discharged I just had to ask him the same question what the Greek word pascha meant in English. Again, one word was his reply ... "Easter!"

Unrefutable really!! Don't believe me then check out these Greek Orthodox Church sites?

<http://members.aol.com/johnd3/ONE/DateofPascha0593.html>

<http://203.20.104.37/~corners/Mar98/Pascha.htm>

Fact: You don't have to be a well groomed Bible Scholar to know by simply checking out the Greek word pascha used in this passage (and used 28 other times in the New Testament) can mean either Passover or Easter where the Authorized has correctly translated the other verses as passover. King James critics love words (whether they be English or Greek) with dual meanings, to dazzle the unsuspecting. This way they can use the ignorance of the undiscerning masses (who choose not to check things out and follow things through) by only emphasizing one meaning of the word and not mentioning the other. This is called a half truth, or partial truth, and can be used to divide and conquer the naive. Here's just one example of undermining the Authorized Bible found in Gen. 2:24:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall become one flesh."

Mundanely, some King James critics point out how the Authorized Bible is once again wrong because the word cleave means "to split apart". So the King James is wrong they say, as it indirectly encourages divorce.

Now aint that clever! Another play on words. As a lost and rebellious college pupil I walked out of High School not long after turning 16, with no credentials for a career, and could not even quote the alphabet from a to z until two years after I joined the work force. But now, as a born again 'uneducated nincompooop' can I go to my dictionary and quote two meanings of the word cleave, just as I can rattle of the top of my head two or more meanings to the words knot, key, jam, yoke, tip, pound, page, and of course radical.

The other meaning for de word cleave in de English is "clinging to something". Good thing for hubbies and wives don't you think! Just like Acts 11:23:

... "with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

(Must I also add; when this Book use to be honoured marriages stayed intact, unlike today!)

Therefore argument one is dismantled as pascha means either Passover or Easter!

Argument two: "This still does not prove Easter is the correct rendering in Acts 12:4, does it?"

Acts 12:1- 4. "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. (2) And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. (3) And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) (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. (5) Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."

Let's look at the whole picture: The Serpent used partial truth in the Garden to deceive Eve, did he not? Whereas God always deals with the whole truth and nothing but the truth ... "If it was not so I would have told you."

Verse three: Herod looks to arrest Peter because he wants to try him, prove him guilty, and put him to death, as he did with James (v. 1- 2), satisfying the Jews.

Now Herod being a man pleaser was a pawn set up by Rome to rule over the Jews. You see his job was to keep law and order in the land, all in Rome's favour. This meant pleasing both the Jews (v.3), by letting them keep their religion with its ceremonies and Passover observance, at the same time accommodating Rome's pagan practices; a biggie being Easter observance, the worship of the fertility goddess Ishtar.

So during the days (present tense) of unleavened bread (now this is the key, V. 3- 4) he arrested Peter. This was a time beyond half way through April (Abid) the fourteenth day. Therefore, Passover had already come and gone as it was now during the seven day period which followed Passover ... "then were the days of unleavened bread." Simple eh!

In verse four, after being arrested, he is then imprisoned waiting for Easter to come and go (future tense) so that he could then be tried. Peter therefore was kept in prison (v. 5) as Herod did not want to interfere with the Roman holiday and jeopardize his love affair with the pagan occupiers.

Therefore, the facts are plain to see:

The Passover is first (the fourteenth day) ...

followed by the days of unleavened bread (the fifteenth day and onwards) during a time when Peter is arrested ...

waiting for Easter to arrive and pass so that Peter could be put on trial (bearing in mind both are celebrated in the same month, Easter floating on various dates whereas Passover is always fixed to the 14th).

Therefore, the Passover cannot apply to verse four as it has already come and gone.

Lastly, the word Easter is the only word left to use in verse four, as it is the only other English word that can be translated from the Greek pascha.

Clear and straight to the point! Nothing to do with feeding an audience half truths, opinion, misquotes, clerical theology, church dogma, misinterpretations, misrepresentation, waffle, mumbo jumbo, or religious hotchpotch! After all the facts, some still argue, insisting Passover was and still is both the name and the evening meal commemorating the deliverance from Egypt, and the entire eight day period.

In the end I don't really care what this or that commentary says, nor the Most Reverend Credentialed. Again, let's prove scripture by using scripture to prove itself:

Num. 33:3. "And they departed from Rameses in the first month on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians."

In God's calendar the beginning of the forth month (now April) was the first month (Abid), the beginning of the year. Today, it is still recognized by the business world, however, outside of being branded an April Fool. Therefore, the days after the 15th of the first month are not referred to in God's word as the passover.

Lev. 23:5-6. "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover (first occasion). And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast *of unleavened bread unto the LORD (second distinct occasion) ...

No argument really! Acts 12:3 ... "then were the days *of unleavened bread" is bang on!! Passover (the 14th day according to scripture) had come and gone!

Conclusion: The argument Easter is not found in the Book of Life is cut to pieces bearing no substance. Therefore, if you still want to argue please take it up with the Author of the Book.

May I add: If you remove Easter from the Bible you camouflage the Devil's plan of paganizing Christianity. This way the "christianized" Easter can fit the same slot, and be observed today as Jesus' death and resurrection dates (supposedly coinciding with passover and contrary to the three days and three nights in the belly of the earth sign), with all it's pagan trappings (Babylonian / Egyptian bunnies, hot cross buns, and decorated eggs) by both Heathen and Christians alike as one happy universal family, removing any definition between the two, therefore rendering the offence of the cross to no effect.

By marrying the two (paganism and Christianity) you destroy two vitally important truths:

One: You neutralize the gospel by taking away it's saving power. Ever heard of any one being saved by Easter, or Christmas for that matter? Or Lent? Or Lady Day? Or Palm Sunday? Whether we're singing "Rudolph the red nose Reindeer" or "Jingle Bells" or "Batman Smells", it will never convict or reprove anyone of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

And two: You remove the vital spiritual link between Christianity and it's Jewish Messianic link (Jesus the rock of offence and block of stumbling), breaking the seed line back to Abraham. This allows Rome to sneak into Israel's place carrying out the Devil's agenda replacing Jesus with a convenient substitute. Because everything scriptural in Christianity is from the Jewish link ... Jesus the Messiah. Whereas everything Roman in Christianity is imported paganism derived from it's Babylonian link.

Satan has an agenda; a new age "initiated" people, who will be conditioned by their relative new age bible/s redefining Christianity in the New Millennium to fit in with the New World Order, seating himself on the throne through an impostor called anti-christ. 'Revelation' and 'taking heed' will never come about by celebrating any pagan feast masquerading as Christian. Only by making the word of God our source and base in all things pertaining to faith and life can we see this and avoid bondage to the world, and being snared by the religious hype of Beyond Year 2000.

Soon, and very soon our King is coming, and his name is called The Word of God.

The sword is about to fall. Why settle for a mixture?

JESUS IS THE DELIVERER "HOLIDAYS" AND "HOLY DAYS"

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. Patron saint: a saint that is supposed to protect and promote the welfare of a particular person, community, state or institution. Jehovah-Jarieh, the Lord will provide (Gen. 22:14). Casting the whole of your care upon Him (I Peter 5:7). Don't worry, God knows what you need even before you ask (Luke 12:22-31. So, St. Patrick is an idol you are depending on. We are told not to try to communicate with the dead - necromancy (Deut. 18:11).

ORTHODOX LENT

The forty days abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from worshipers of the Babylonian goddess, Ishtar or Eastre. Such a fast is still observed in the spring of the year by pagan Devil worshipers of Koordistan. Pagan Mexicans, three days after the vernal equinox, begin a solemn fast of forty days in honor of the sun. In 519 A.D. the council held at Aurelia in the time of Hormisdas, Bishop of Rome, decreed that Lent should be kept before Easter. Three days after the vernal equinox began, a solemn fast of forty days was held in honor of the sun. The sun god has many names: Adonis, Asiris, Bacchus, Liber and Tammuz. Lent was brought into the church to keep the pagans from leaving it. The church said the fast was for Christ's crucifixion. In reality it has been in effect before Christ was born in the heathen spring festivals. Ash Wednesday is celebrated on the first day of Lent.

PALM SUNDAY

It was originally to commemorate Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Later on it was combined with pagan activities; today the palm and willow are blessed and carried in the procession. It is ascribed to a pagan holiday where olive and willow are blessed. Powers attributed to the palm are exorcising evil spirits, healing diseases, warding off devils, protecting homes from lightning and fire, and protecting fields against hail and storms. The olive has had healing powers attributed to it since antiquity.

EASTER SUNDAY

I always thought it was strange that Easter came on a different day each year. If Christ arose on March 10, that would be the anniversary every year. But I found that Easter's date is established by astrology according to the vernal equinox. The spring festival of pagan worship of the sun and the renewed season was also set on the same date. The Druids had a sacred symbol - an egg. The word Easter comes from the name of a pagan goddess - goddess of rising light of day and spring. Easter is the modern form of Eastre, Oстера, Astarte or Ishtar. Another name for Astarte is Diana of Euphrates. Easter in the King James Bible means pascha or Passover. Astarte was hatched from a big egg which fell from heaven. Druids (satan worshipers) in Europe used eggs as symbols of goddess of spring. The rabbit is associated with the moon in ancient Egypt. It is a fertility symbol of sexual significance. Hot cross buns are raisin cakes with a "T" on them baked for the queen of heaven, Tammuz, (Jer. 7:18). God talks about sun worship in Ezekiel Chapter 8. The SUNrise service was a part of ancient sun worship. Baal was the sun god and still is today. Shinto pilgrims pray to the sun as they climb the mountain sides. Mithrists meet together at dawn and honor the sun god. At the time of the Old Testament, the Jews got into practices of picking up sticks and feathers to build fires, making raisin cakes, and crying for Tammuz (Josh. 23:7 and Eze. 8:14). Don't mix with these heathen practices; don't even mention the names of their gods!"

MORE ON EASTER

Easter is celebrated by most Christians. Yes, JESUS did in fact rise from the dead, but not on this pagan celebration. The early Christian church never celebrated Easter, but celebrated "Passover". The term "Easter" comes from the festival of Oestre (or Estre), the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Spring, Fertility and New Life. An egg laying rabbit? Pagans have worshiped rabbits as sex and fertility gods, and have looked upon them as symbols of lust, sexual vigor and reproduction. Eggs also have been symbols of fertility, sex and new life, also with celebrations in the Springtime. The egg was a sacred symbol among the Babylonians. The ancient Druids (noted more for Halloween) bore an egg as the sacred emblem of their idolatrous order. The pagan tradition said Estre, the goddess of spring turned a bird into a rabbit. In gratitude, the rabbit came each Spring, during the Festival of Estre and laid beautiful eggs for the goddess (remember it use to be a bird). Are you coloring your eggs in different colors for Easter? The origin of the Easter celebration is what makes it so bad. It doesn't matter if you think you are just doing it for your kids. What you are doing is lying to your kids about a supernatural Easter bunny who lays eggs. Churches hide Easter eggs for the kids, and many hold Easter SUNrise services. This pagan celebration was to worship the SUN, not THE SON. It too crept into the Christian celebration known as Easter. The sun rises in the EAST -- EASTER -- not a coincidence! Tammuz (a pagan god) was slain, legend has it, and because of the weeping of his mother Ishtar (Easter), Tammuz was mystically revived in Springtime, and was celebrated every year. As it is written in the Catholic Encyclopedia, the Catholic church is the one who brought about all these changes to be celebrated in a "Christian" fashion. You need to ask the Lord to forgive you for this ungodly practice, break some curses placed on you, and get or do some DELIVERANCE.

Easter update

"Easter candy sales continue to soar" with expected sales to top \$837 MILLION this year (1997) - 13.5 BILLION jellybeans. "If the jellybeans were lined up end-to-end, they would circle the earth nearly three times. 55 MILLION chocolate bunnies will be produced this Easter." Did you ever notice that jellybeans are shaped like EGGS? "US farmers sell about 50 million dozen more eggs than average during the two weeks before Easter." More people thought of candy than of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, JESUS Christ.

HALLOWEEN

October 31 is the highest satanic holy day referred to as the devil's birthday. Did you have a party for the devil at your home by giving out candy or tracts? Did you observe his birthday by having a party at your church? Some churches even sponsored haunted houses, had beer, and had fortune tellers available.

THANKSGIVING DAY

Did you think Thanksgiving day was started by the Pilgrims in 1621? Nope! According to a Public Broadcast program I saw, the Indians taught the Pilgrims that this special Indian day was to give thanks to their "god". You may need some DELIVERANCE in this area. .

CHRISTMAS

THE BIG ONE-- Many of you will be paying for it in cash most of the year. The stores complained that business was down, but still in the Billions. Did you know that Christmas wasn't practiced as we know it until about the year 300. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Check out the "CHRISTMAS" Article on the INDEX page, and get some DELIVERANCE.

NEW YEARS DAY

At least Catholics have a ROMAN connection to celebrate this one.

The next biggie will cause most of the people to jump up and down, scream and yell, swaying their bodies with arms raised in the air, working themselves into a frenzy. Sounds like a church service, but I'm referring to the SUPER BOWL. Nothing wrong with sports, I don't believe, unless you make it a god. Do you just HAVE TO see every game? Do you tape it if you can't see it live? You might qualify as an idolater. See the "Idols" Article.

May as well mention next month when the Valentine day lures all the sexual and lustful demons on the world. See the "Valentine" Article.

DELIVERANCE is the only thing that can break you loose from these and all holidays that are ungodly. When people find out you don't observe "normal" holidays, they can be very nasty to you. If you don't eat certain kinds of food made from a pig or seafood, people can be very nasty to you also. Oh well, JESUS said, "well done thou good and faithful servant".

Revelations 22:21 - "The grace (blessing and favor) of the Lord JESUS Christ (The Messiah) be with all the saints (God's Holy people, those set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively His). AMEN (so let it be)!"

JESUS IS THE DELIVERER

Happy Easter

Easter Sunday! This is the day that Christians celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the celebration of the day that Jesus obtained the victory over the grave, and by virtue of that victory, the victory of His children is

made sure. But what actually is "Easter"? What does it mean? Where did it originate? Is it Biblical? In answer to the last question - No! Actually, the origin of Easter is to be found in paganism, long before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. But let me hasten to add at this point that all the folks in christendom that are celebrating the Lord's resurrection ARE NOT PAGANS!!! Since there's no command in the Bible to either celebrate the Lord's resurrection on a specific day or not, we can celebrate this wonderful truth and honor it any time we desire. It just so happens that the Roman Church regulated the holiday for it to fall on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. While this may belie the pagan origins of Easter, I, personally do not hold that christians who love Jesus and are celebrating His resurrection today are pagans. I am just explaining the origins of the holiday for those that may not be aware of it.

Now what does the Easter Bunny have to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ??? Nothing!!! Then where did this tradition come from???

The fact of the matter is, that the hare, or rabbit was the was the symbol of Estre, the ancient false goddess of fertility. Pagans regarded rabbits as an emblem of fertility because of the number and frequency of offspring they produced. Instead of giving the glory to the creator God, who created the rabbit, glory is given to the false goddess of fertility, Estre. Now, what do easter eggs and coloring easter eggs have to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ??? Nothing!!! Then where did this tradition come from???

Eggs have an interesting history. In her book, *Holidays of Legend* - by Mildred H. Arthur, there are people who once worshipped eggs. She says, "Archaeologists tell us that on Easter Island in the South Pacific Ocean a sacred village called Orongo was once inhabited by a race of egg worshippers." Most definitely Easter has nothing to do with egg worship but "Eggs were colored and eaten during spring festivals as far back as the time of ancient Egypt" one reference book said. Further, the giving of eggs as gifts was also common. "The Persians gave eggs as presents at the time of the vernal equinox." And, Greeks and Romans continued to dye eggs and give them as gifts. In fact, in celebration of the spring equinox Romans would run races. Guess what prize the winner got -- eggs! John MacArthur says "There were other ancient Easter rites attached to the worship of the sun and worship of certain gods of fertility that predate Christianity also. That's where the Easter egg came from. In ancient times the egg was a symbol of fertility and a symbol of the sun because of the color of the yoke." In another book I read, "The egg also came to be regarded as symbolic of the resurrection, as it holds the seed of a new life." At first reading you think this is a reference to Christ's resurrection, but not so. Most cultures hoped their loved ones would live again. Egyptians buried eggs in their tombs. Greeks placed eggs atop graves. Romans coined a proverb -- *Omne vivum ex ovo*-- which means "All life comes from an egg." The egg in all these cultures was symbolic of birth and resurrection before the resurrection of Christ. The custom of Christians dyeing eggs and giving them as gifts at Easter came to Western Europe in the 1400's. Likely knights brought the idea home from the Crusades. Red was the popular color for early Easter eggs symbolizing the blood of Christ.

In actuality, easter is not a christian word. But some may have noted that the word "easter" is to be found in the Bible. In the KJV version.

Acts 12:4 says, "And when he had apprehended (Peter), 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." The Greek word translated "easter" is the word "pascha" which is the "passover". The fact of the matter is that easter is a pagan ritual feast. The name EASTER came from an occultic pagan feast that is a derivation of the Teutonic, Anglo-Saxon goddess Eastre. There are a variety of spellings--Eostre, Estera Ostrae and Oestre, Ishtar. Estera was the goddess of sex (fertility) and spring. Pagan worshippers honored their false goddess by naming a month after her, Eoster-Monath, which is roughly equivalent to our April. Her deceived followers gathered around the Spring (vernal) equinox, which is about March 21, and honored their pagan goddess by blood sacrifices and frenzied sexual rituals. Much like the prophets of Baal mentioned in the Bible, the priests would cut themselves, splattering their blood on their altars and dance around. Since they erroneously believed she was responsible for the "rebirth" of plants and the fertility of animals and humans they wanted her blessing, therefore they offered these bloody and perverted rituals. How sad that they did not realize that the Lord God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, ordained the seasons. The non-existent goddess Estera had nothing to do with it. As Christianity spread throughout the world, the name Easter continued to be used by "converted" pagans to identify the time of the Resurrection of Christ. Now what about the easter celebration? How did this get started? What's the history behind this? Actually, it was not until the second century that the church began to celebrate the resurrection of Christ with any regularity. As the Roman Empire expanded it's world wide power and dominion and adopted "Christianity" as the official religion, some unfortunate things began to happen. Churches were forced to take in people who were not true Christians. Along with them they brought their old pagan traditions. By the time of the Protestant Reformation many of the "Holy Days" were so far removed from biblical Christianity that Protestants quit celebrating Easter, Christmas or any other of the church festivals. They had become excuses to gluttony, drunkenness and riotous behavior.

It was not until during the Civil War that the nonritualistic churches began to observe Easter. It began in the Presbyterian churches first. So many men had been killed that they wanted to point the grieving mothers, widows and orphans to the promise of the resurrection in the biblical account of the risen Christ. Other churches soon followed suit, focusing biblical things. As you can see from history sometimes the churches celebrated Easter and sometimes it hasn't. Biblically speaking it is not what you celebrate that is important but how you celebrate that is important. Colossians 2:16-17 says "Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however is found in Christ." Romans 14:5-6 "One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats so to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God." I also must hasten to add that the above Scripture is NOT referring to God's moral ten commandment law. The sabbaths that are being referred to are the yearly sabbaths and Jewish practices that met their fulfillment in Jesus.

So, to those who are truly remembering the resurrection of Christ, may your day be filled with blessings as you contemplate these things.

Peace!

Lou