

Easter

Is Easter Really Christian? You should know!

The Bible does not once command us to observe Easter

Let us go back to the year 8 B.C. - four years before the birth of Christ. Let us see what was taking place amongst all the non-Christian population in Europe - the Northern and Central European people.

It was customary in the Spring each year, on the first Saturday after March 21st, called "Sunnabend", that the people congregated outside their villages and all the able ones gathered wood, placed it around an oak tree and set it alight. As the people encircled the fire, they would kneel and beseech "Sunna", their goddess of the dawn, to bring again the awaited Spring days. This was the time of the vernal equinox when the Winter ended and the warm Spring months began. (As a matter of interest, the German word for Saturday - "Sonnabend" - has a direct link to the Saturday night on which the goddess Sunna was worshipped).

After having offered sacrifices to the goddess of Spring on this Saturday evening, the people retired till early the following morning. Then, at some time before dawn, everyone would again meet outside with their faces to the East, toward the rising sun, giving thanks to their goddess Sunna for bringing the Spring days back again.

This day, the first Sunday after March 21st, was a holiday - a day of joy with many celebrations and games. One such game was to search for hidden coloured eggs. Although egg colouring varied, the main colours were red and gold symbolising the sun's rays. Many eggs were given as an offering to the Spring goddess and others were eaten. The egg was regarded as the emblem of the germinating life of Spring. Hot-cross buns were also baked and offered to the goddess.

Why is this period called Easter?

If we go forward in history some centuries after the birth of Christ, we find the heathen populace of Europe still observing this Spring festival to the goddess of the dawn, but now known by another more general name, "Eostre", which replaced the more localised German name "Sunna".

During previous centuries, large numbers of people from Persia and Assyria settled on the European mainland. These Eastern peoples also worshipped a Spring goddess in celebrations which took place at the beginning of Spring. It is interesting to note that coloured eggs were associated with their celebrations too. The ancient Persians, for instance, kept the festival of the solar new year in March and presented each other with such gifts. The festivals of all these peoples were much the same. One difference was that the Persians and Assyrian peoples' goddess was Ishtar where the Germans worshipped Eostre. However, the connection is quite evident between both these words and our own Easter.

And so, settlers from the East caused the local population to alter the name of their goddess (Sunna) to that of Easter. But - it was still the same festival, still the same goddess, and the festival of her worship continued through the centuries. With the coming of Eastern tribes, it became even more generally celebrated than before.

How Did Christianity become involved with this Pagan Festival?

The true church of the Bible was established in 31 A.D. - It never observed Easter! The first Christians continued to keep the Jewish festivals (which God gave to Israel as we are told in the Old Testament), though in a new spirit, as a commemoration of the events those festivals foreshadowed. There was never a holiday celebrated by God's true church to remember the Resurrection, only a festival (the New Testament Passover) commemorating Christ's death.

At the beginning of the second century, another church, claiming to represent Christ's true church, introduced a new festival in place of the Passover called the "Feast of the Resurrection".

During the first and second centuries, people from Syria, Persia and Babylon came as slaves, gained their freedom and settled in Italy. Philosophers from the East moved westward and brought their doctrines of sun worship with them. These powerful doctrines influenced and changed the religion of the Roman populace. One celebration they observed was a Resurrection Festival in the Spring. The professing Christians tried to build up their numbers at the expense of the pagan religions, so they brought in the Feast of the Resurrection on the same day these Eastern peoples worshipped - Sunday - not to the literal sun, but supposedly in honour of the true son, Christ. This festival was introduced during the second century. It was originated by men - Not by God! There is no basis for it in His Word, the Bible!

Introducing this new festival on the pagan Sunday was successful. The heathen people of Rome noticed the likeness of the festival with their own Spring celebration, and many took on this form of Christian-like worship. The church of Rome grew speedily - but paganised! Simply to gain numbers, the so-called Christian church allowed the former Easterners to retain their heathen practices and beliefs as long as they did so under a form which appeared to be Christian. This was compromise and God will not have this! When Constantine became Emperor in 325 A.D., church leaders were able to influence him to pass a decree enforcing all within the Roman Empire to keep this festival of the Resurrection, and thus the pagan Christian worship spread even further.

At this time, it was strictly forbidden for a Christian to continue keeping the New Testament Passover. It was considered "Jewish". The Roman Empire continued to expand and so did its pagan festivals. It spread throughout Western Europe. The former pagans became influential and changed the name from "Feast of Resurrection" to "Easter". Then everywhere the pagan tradition of egg hunting spread, and the Easter rabbit continued to be a symbol of fertility.

How Far Christianity has strayed and is Caught up in Pagan Festivals!

Perhaps you are saying to yourself: "I don't really take much notice of Easter, but it is good for the children; it's a harmless celebration".

We claim we are a Christian nation and a Christian people; then we should know that God speaks to us in His Word:

"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,... 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..." (DEUTERONOMY 12:29-31)

WHICH COURSE DO YOU CHOOSE - WILL YOU OBEY MEN OR GOD?

God does not compromise. His Word says to repent, be baptised and you will receive the Holy Spirit (with the sign of speaking in tongues).

THE BIBLE has been proven infallible, perfect and inspired in its entirety in the following subjects:- Mathematics, History, Archaeology, Geology, Geography and others.

Little wonder God warns us man will be judged by His every word: John 12:46-49.

We are told not to change one word of the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2; John 10:35; Revelation 22:18-21),

BUT to ACT on it, and we will be saved with the miraculous signs following all Bible-believing Christians (Acts 2:37-39; John 3:1-7; Mark 16:15-20).

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