

THE ORIGIN OF EASTER

An extract from: TRUE ORIGIN OF EASTER, by David C. Pack

Does the following sound familiar? — Spring is in the air! Flowers and bunnies decorate the home. Father helps the children paint beautiful designs on eggs dyed in various colors. These eggs, which will later be hidden and searched for, are placed into lovely, seasonal baskets. The wonderful aroma of the hot cross buns mother is baking in the oven waft through the house. Forty days of abstaining from special foods will finally end the next day. The whole family picks out their Sunday best to wear to the next morning's sunrise worship service to celebrate the savior's resurrection and the renewal of life. Everyone looks forward to a succulent ham with all the trimmings. It will be a thrilling day. After all, it is one of the most important religious holidays of the year.

Easter, right? No! This is a description of an ancient Babylonian family — *2,000 years before Christ* — honoring the resurrection of their god, Tammuz, who was brought back from the underworld by his mother/wife, Ishtar (after whom the festival was named). As Ishtar was actually pronounced “Easter” in most Semitic dialects, it could be said that the event portrayed here is, in a sense, Easter. Of course, the occasion could easily have been a Phrygian family honoring Attis and Cybele, or perhaps a Phoenician family worshipping Adonis and Astarte. Also fitting the description well would be a heretic Israelite family honoring the Canaanite Baal and Ashtoreth. Or this depiction could just as easily represent any number of other immoral, pagan fertility celebrations of death and resurrection — including the modern Easter celebration as it has come to us through the Anglo-Saxon fertility rites of the goddess Eostre or Ostara. These are all the same festivals, separated only by time and culture.

If Easter is not found in the Bible, then where did it come from? The vast majority of ecclesiastical and secular historians agree that the name of Easter and the traditions surrounding it are deeply rooted in pagan religion.

Now notice the following powerful quotes that demonstrate more about the *true* origin of how the modern Easter celebration got its name:

“Since Bede the Venerable (*De ratione temporum* 1:5) the origin of the term for the feast of Christ’s Resurrection has been popularly considered to be from the Anglo-Saxon Eastrē, a goddess of spring... the Old High German plural for dawn, *eostarun*; whence has come the German *Ostern*, and our English Easter” (*The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967, Vol. 5, p. 6).

“The fact that vernal festivals were general among pagan peoples no doubt had much to do with the form assumed by the Eastern festival in the Christian churches. The English term Easter is of *pagan origin*” (Albert Henry Newman, D.D., LL.D., *A Manual of Church History*, p. 299).

“On this greatest of Christian festivals, several survivals occur of ancient heathen ceremonies. To begin with, the name itself is not Christian but *pagan*. Ostara was the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Spring” (Ethel L. Urlin, *Festival, Holy Days, and Saints Days*, p. 73).

“Easter — the name Easter comes to us from Ostera or Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, for whom a spring festival was held annually, as it is from this *pagan festival* that some of our Easter customs have come” (Hazeltine, p. 53).

“In Babylonia... the goddess of spring was called Ishtar. She was identified with the planet Venus, which, because... [it] rises before the Sun... or sets after it... appears to love the light [this means Venus loves the sun-god]... In Phoenicia, she became Astarte; in Greece, Eostre [related to the Greek word *Eos*: “dawn”], and in Germany, Ostara [this comes from the German word *Ost*: “east,” which is the direction of dawn]” (Englehart, p. 4).

As we have seen, many names are interchangeable for the more well-known *Easter*. Pagans typically used many different names for the same god or goddess. Nimrod, the Bible figure who built the city of Babylon ([Gen. 10:8](#)), is an example. He was worshipped as Saturn, Vulcan, Kronos, Baal, Tammuz, Molech and others, but he was always the same god—the fire or sun god universally worshipped in nearly every ancient culture.

The goddess Easter was no different. She was *one* goddess with *many* names — the goddess of fertility, worshipped in spring when all life was being renewed.

The widely-known historian, Will Durant, in his famous and respected work, *Story of Civilization*, pp. 235, 244-245, writes,

“Ishtar [Astarte to the Greeks, Ashtoreth to the Jews], interests us not only as analogue of the Egyptian Isis and prototype of the Grecian Aphrodite and the Roman Venus, but as the formal beneficiary of one of the strangest of Babylonian customs... known to us chiefly from a famous page in Herodotus: Every native woman is obliged, once in her life, to sit in the temple of Venus [Easter], and have intercourse with some stranger.”

We must now look closer at the origin of *other customs* associated with the modern Easter celebration.

THE ORIGIN OF LENT

According to Johannes Cassianus, who wrote in the fifth century,

"Howbeit you should know, that as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, this observance of Lent did not exist" (*First Conference Abbot Theonas*, chapter 30).

There is neither biblical nor historical record of Christ, the apostles or the early Church participating in the Lenten season.

Since there is *no* instruction to observe Lent in the Bible, where did it come from? A forty-day abstinence period was anciently observed in honor of the pagan gods Osiris, Adonis and Tammuz (John Landseer, *Sabaean Researches*, pp. 111, 112). Alexander Hislops, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 104-105, says this of the origin of Lent:

"The forty days abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, in the spring of the year, is still observed by the Yezidis or Pagan Devil-worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a *Lent* of forty days was held in spring by the Pagan Mexicans... Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt..."

Lent came from paganism, not from the Bible!

EGGS, EGG HUNTS AND EASTER

Eggs have always been associated with the Easter celebration. Nearly every culture in the modern world has a long tradition of coloring eggs in beautiful and different ways. I once examined a traveling display of many kinds of beautifully decorated egg designs that represented the styles and traditions of virtually every country of modern Europe.

Notice the following:

"The origin of the Easter egg is based on the fertility lore of the Indo-European races... The egg to them was a *symbol of spring*... In Christian times the egg had bestowed upon it a

religious interpretation, becoming a symbol of the rock tomb out of which Christ emerged to the new life of His resurrection" (Francis X. Weiser, *Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*, p. 233).

This is a direct example of exactly how pagan symbols and customs are "Christianized," i.e., Christian-sounding names are superimposed over pagan customs. This is done to deceive — as well as make people feel better about why they are following a custom that is not in the Bible.

Notice:

"Around the Christian observance of Easter... folk customs have collected, many of which have been handed down from the ancient ceremonial... symbolism of European and Middle Eastern *pagan spring* festivals... for example, *eggs*... have been very prominent as symbols of *new life* and resurrection" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1991 ed., Vol. 4, p. 333).

Finally, the following comes from *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*, James Bonwick, pp. 211-212:

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

What could be more plain in showing the true origin of the "Easter egg"? An "Easter" egg is just an egg that pertains to Easter. God never authorized Passover eggs or Days of Unleavened Bread eggs, but there have been Easter eggs for thousands of years!

It naturally progressed that the egg, representing spring and fertility, would be merged into an already pagan springtime festival. Connecting this symbol to Christ's Resurrection in the spring required much creativity and human reasoning. However, even highly creative *human reasoning* has never been able to successfully connect the next Easter symbol to anything Christian, because there is not a single word about it anywhere in the New Testament!

THE EASTER BUNNY

Here are two additional quotes from Francis Weiser about the origin of the “Easter bunny”:

“In Germany and Austria little nests containing eggs, pastry and candy are placed in hidden spots, and the children believe that the Easter bunny, so popular in this country, too, had laid the eggs and brought the candy” (p. 235) and “The Easter bunny had its origin in pre-Christian fertility lore... The Easter bunny has *never* had religious symbolism bestowed on its festive usage... However, the bunny has acquired a cherished role in the celebration of Easter as the legendary producer of Easter eggs for children in many countries” (p. 236).

Here is further proof of the origin of Easter eggs and rabbits. It demonstrates how no one has ever been able to connect the Easter bunny to anything Christian, let alone to the Bible:

“The Easter bunny is not a true Christian symbol” (John Bradner, *Symbols of Church Seasons and Days*, p. 52), and “Although adopted in a number of Christian cultures, the Easter bunny has never received any specific Christian interpretation” (Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, p. 558).

None of this will stop scores of millions of professing Christians from decorating their lawns and houses with Easter bunnies each spring.

Consider this last quote:

“The hare, the symbol of fertility in ancient Egypt, a symbol that was kept later in Europe... Its place has been taken by the Easter rabbit” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1991 ed., Vol. 4, p. 333).

Even in modern times, rabbits have remained common symbols of fertility. While their rapid rate of reproduction is well known, another problem arises with rabbits—they do not lay eggs! While both are clearly fertility symbols, there is no logical way to connect them. In a world filled with pagan tradition, truth *and* logic can be lost. Merging these symbols with Christianity makes an already idolatrous practice worse.

There is nothing Christian about *any* of these symbols. The true history of these fertility symbols, rabbits and eggs, is completely unknown to all the unsuspecting children who have been led by adults to think them so special.

The entire concept that these are Christian is a *lie* foisted on innocent children who will believe that “the moon is made of cheese” just because someone tells them so. While these are shocking facts, they are true nonetheless.

SUNRISE SERVICES

Sunrise services *are* mentioned in the Bible. But what God says about this custom is not what you expect. Notice these astonishing verses. The prophet Ezekiel was being shown, in vision, an important prophecy concerning the sins of God’s people in our time.

The entire context of these verses needs to be examined carefully to understand the heightening condemnation toward which God builds in His conclusion:

“...Turn you yet again, and you shall see greater abominations that they do... and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz... And He brought me into the inner court of the LORD’S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their *faces toward the east*; and they *worshipped the sun toward the east*. Then He said unto me, Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a *light thing*...that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they... have returned to provoke Me to anger... Therefore will I also deal in fury: Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in Mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them” ([Ezek. 8:13-18](#)).

Observing sunrise services is serious to God! He so hates this vile practice that He will ultimately destroy all who persist in it ([Ezek. 9](#))!

It is no “light thing” to God that many millions do this every Easter! It may seem “beautiful,” “religious,” and “deeply moving” to those participating in it, but God has forbidden His true people to devise their own religious customs and ideas. He is not interested in what *people* may personally *feel* or *think* is right. He is interested in those who care about what *He thinks!* As far as God is concerned, ancient sun worship, dressed up in Easter finery and bonnets, is just modern packaging of a very old, idolatrous pagan custom.

Consider God’s own words in [Deuteronomy 12:28-32](#) (NKJ):

“Observe and obey all these words which I command you... When... you... dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them... 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... Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.*”

God tells Christians to never mix what is godly with what is pagan — or the true with the false! Do not let men tell you that what God says makes no difference. *It does!*

HOT CROSS BUNS

Notice **Jeremiah 7:18**:

“The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the *queen of heaven*, and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.”

The cakes offered to the queen of heaven were these same hot cross buns that millions of children sing about today (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 107). What seems so innocent is not innocent at all.

Who is the “queen of heaven”?

ASHTAROTH — THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

Astarte (Easter)-worship was always associated with the worship of Baal or sun worship. Astarte was Baal’s wife. Notice that another name for Astarte was Ashtaroth. The following quote makes this point clear:

“What means the term Easter itself? It 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*... Now, the Assyrian goddess, or Astarte, is identified with Semiramis by Athenagoras (*Legatio*, vol. ii. p. 179), and by Lucian (*De Dea Syria*, vol iii. p. 382)... Now, no name could more exactly picture forth the character of Semiramis, as queen of Babylon, than the name of ‘Asht-tart,’ for that just means ‘The woman that made towers’... Ashturit, then... is obviously the same as the Hebrew ‘*Ashtoreth*’” (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 103, 307-308).

Notice this conclusive quote from *Microsoft Encarta Multimedia Encyclopedia*:

“Ishtar was the Great Mother, the goddess of fertility and the QUEEN OF HEAVEN.” So, in actuality, Ashtaroth (Ishtar) was Nimrod’s harlotrous, mother/wife widow, Semiramis, as many other ancient historians attest! Easter is now established as none other than the Ashtaroth of the Bible! We can now examine the scriptures that show how God views the worship of this pagan goddess — by any name!

GOD CALLS EASTER EVIL

Now that we know that Easter is the goddess Ashtaroth, we need to look into the Bible and see what God thinks of her. Look at this verse:

“And the children of Israel did *evil* in the sight of the LORD... And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and *Ashtaroth* [Easter]” ([Jdg. 2:11, 13](#)).

The context shows that God allowed His people to be taken from their land into captivity as a result of *this sin!* It continues, explaining how God delivered His people over and over again through a series of judges. After each deliverance, Israel returned to the same false gods, which in turn brought *another* captivity, via conquest by the nations around them. They never seemed to learn, as [verse 19](#) makes clear:

“And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves... *in following other gods*... and... they ceased not from *their own doings*, nor from *their stubborn way*.”

In chapter 10, [verse 6](#), Israel repeats this pattern of stubbornness. And God, just as stubbornly, still calls it evil.

Baal and Ashtaroth worship reappeared during Samuel’s time. Samuel told Israel,

“...*put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth* from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the *LORD*, and serve *Him only*... Then the children of Israel *did* put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and *served the LORD only*” ([I Sam. 7:3-4](#)).

Later, in [I Samuel 12:10-11](#), Samuel publicly recounted Israel’s history to them. He reminded them that they continually returned to obeying God, only to fall backwards into idolatry again and again!

It has been said that “The only thing man has learned from history is that no one learns from history.” George Santayana took it further, saying, “Those who do not learn the lesson of history are *doomed to repeat it.*”

This lesson describes ancient Israel — but it also describes today’s modern world. Because Israel could not stay on track, they were eventually taken into captivity, becoming lost to history! One more time of captivity and punishment is foretold to happen again soon.

ONE FINAL EXAMPLE

The Bible states that King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. Yet, he made a mistake that God considered so great that, after his death, He punished Solomon by removing the kingdom from his son.

His mistake?

He married a woman who led him into the worship of Easter (Ashtaroth). Notice [**I Kings 11:4-6**](#):

“For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods... For Solomon went after Ashtaroth the goddess of the Zidonians... And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.”

[**Verses 11-12**](#) demonstrate that the kingdom *was* taken from his son.

TWO CHURCHES: THE GREAT SWITCH

There are two completely different “churches” pictured in the New Testament. One, the true Church that Jesus built, is described as **the bride of Christ**, forsaking involvements with this world and its customs in order to be pure when He comes for her. But, throughout the New Testament, it was prophesied that false teachers would creep in and gain control of the church organization. True Christians would have to flee from many of their original congregations to continue to obey God. They would, therefore, be a “little flock,” often scattered, never having political power in this world.

The world has kept little track of this small, scattered, persecuted Church, but Christ promised that He would never leave or forsake it and that “the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it” ([**Matt. 16:18**](#)). Though it has periodically had to scatter for its life ([**Acts 8:1**](#); [**Dan. 12:7**](#)), Christ has faithfully kept His promise to remain with it, empowering and strengthening it through His

Spirit. Despite continual persecution — even during periods of great martyrdom by the large popular churches that have always sought to destroy it — a remnant has always remained throughout the last nearly 2,000 years. It has continued to “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” ([Rev. 14:12](#)).

God has always commanded His People not to keep pagan festivals! These People of Rev. 14:12 have been willing to obey Him. The inset 12th chapter of Revelation gives a brief overview of its history, including God’s promise to protect it through future, horrific world punishment.

Paul warned the Thessalonian congregation, “... the mystery of iniquity [lawlessness] does already work” ([II Thes. 2:7](#)). This mystery was already having an influence within the true Church just twenty years after Christ established it in 31 AD. It was the very **Chaldean Mystery**, embodied in Christmas and Easter — its two greatest festivals! Invariably, the arrival of these false pagan celebrations required true Christians to flee.

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