

## *The Israel of God Bible Study Class*

2515 E. 75<sup>th</sup> Street

Chicago, IL 60649

(773) 374-6413 or (800) 96-BIBLE

### **Easter**

### **A Pagan Holiday NOT Christian**

It has been taught that Jesus died on Good Friday and rose early Sunday morning. As a result of this teaching, man instituted the holiday called Easter. On Easter Sunday you have Christians, world wide paying tribute to a day, in which they believe Jesus, was resurrected. In researching the scriptures one will find that the whole concept of Jesus dying on a Friday and being resurrected on Sunday is contrary to the bible itself. In other words, this tradition directly contradicts the word of God. This lesson will examine the history of Easter, and then investigate the Bible concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus.

#### **Easter Created By Man**

Before we get into the death and resurrection of Jesus we need to address history of Easter itself. We will also take a look at the symbols of Easter: rabbits and eggs. What does rabbits and eggs have to do with the birth of Jesus? Furthermore, when did rabbits start laying eggs? Additionally, we will look at the history of Easter sunrise service, lilies, candles, and hot crossed buns. If you research Easter in most encyclopedias, you will see that Easter has many customs and legends that are pagan in origin and have absolutely nothing to do with Christianity.

Easter was named after Eostre (sometimes spelled Eastre), the great Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, fertility, and new life. Similar Teutonic dawn goddesses of fertility were known variously as Ostare, Ostara, Ostern, Eostra, Eostur, Eastra, Eastur, Austron and Ausos. Her name was derived from the ancient word for spring: "eastre." Thus it is easy to see how "Eastre time" became "Easter time".

Easter Sunday falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 20th, the nominal date of the Vernal (sometimes referred to as spring) Equinox. This is the day (or period of days) in spring when the days and nights are 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 were the sacrificing of virgins, the worship of fertility gods and goddesses.

#### **The Mystery Of The Egg Laying Easter Rabbit**

Since ancient times, pagans have worshipped rabbits as sex and fertility gods, and have looked upon them as symbols of lust, sexual vigor and reproduction. Let's take a look at some examples.

In the traditions of Egypt and Persia there are such rabbit gods and they were particularly honored during spring. The symbols of the Norse Goddess Ostara were the hare and the egg. Both represented fertility. Dyed eggs also formed part of the rituals of the Babylonian mystery religions. Eggs were sacred to many ancient civilizations and formed an integral part of religious ceremonies in Egypt and the Orient. Dyed eggs were hung in Egyptian temples, and the egg was regarded as the emblem of regenerative life proceeding from the mouth of the great Egyptian

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god. The Orphic legend of the origin of the Universe has the Earth being hatched out of an enormous egg. 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 (supernaturally) fertility and sexual success each spring.

### **Easter Sunrise Service**

The Easter sunrise service, that is practiced in many Christian churches, can be traced back to the ancient pagan custom of welcoming the **sun god** at the vernal **equinox** - when daytime is about to exceed the length of the nighttime. It was a time to celebrate the return of life and reproduction to animal and plant life as well. Worship of the sun god at sunrise is the religious ritual condemned by the Lord as recorded in Ezekiel 8:15-18.

### **Ezekiel 8:15-18**

*Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.*

*And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and **they worshipped the sun** toward the east.*

*Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. 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.*

### **Other Easter Symbols**

The **Easter lily** has long been revered by pagans of various lands as a holy symbol associated with the reproductive organs. It was considered a phallic symbol. **Easter candles** are sometimes lit in churches on the eve of Easter Sunday. However, this practice can be directly linked to the pagan customs of lighting bonfires at this time of year to welcome the rebirth/resurrection of the sun god. During Easter, some eat **hot crossed buns** during meals. At the feast of Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon fertility goddess, an ox was sacrificed. The ox's horns became a symbol for the feast. They were carved into the ritual bread. Thus originated hot cross buns. The word "buns" is derived from the Saxon word "boun" which means "sacred ox." Later, the symbol of a symmetrical cross was used to decorate the buns; the cross represented the moon, the heavenly body associated with the goddess, and its four quarters.

### **Is The Word Easter In The Bible?**

Now that we have firmly established the pagan history of Easter, we will look at it from the perspective of the bible. The scriptures will show that Easter is a tradition implemented by man. The word Easter appears in the bible one time and one time only. The following verse is the one that makes reference to Easter.

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**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.

Now an individual may see this, as the legitimizing of the holiday Easter. After all one sees it being referred to in the bible. However, if we look at the verse directly above this one, it points to the fact, that **the period being referred to is actually the Passover.**

**Acts (12:3)** And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

Verse (3) states that when Peter was taken it was the days of unleavened bread. One can determine that the time they were going to bring forth Peter was the Passover, by looking at the following verses. In them one will see that the Passover is the day preceding the **Feast of Unleavened Bread not Easter.** In addition the verse in John, states that it was a Jewish custom that the Romans would deliver unto them one at the time of the Passover.

**Leviticus (23:5)** In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the **Lord's passover.**

**(23:6)** And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the **feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord:** seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

**John (18:39)** But you have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the **passover:** will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

One will not find that its observance is supported by the bible. And that is because, Easter itself is supposed to be a commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus. **And Jesus told us to commemorate His death, not His resurrection.**

**Luke (22:19)** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: **this do in remembrance of me.** In reading chapter 22 of the Gospel of Luke one will find that Jesus asked this of His disciples during the Passover meal. The Passover is what Jesus asked us to observe to remind ourselves that He died for us not Easter. Jesus asked us to commemorate the Passover. He was not only to die on the Passover, He became our Passover. For a more through explanation on the Passover please view the lesson [Is This Not The Passover?](#) or [Ordinance of the Passover.](#)

### **Jesus Gives A Sign**

Jesus was always being inquired of by the Jews for a sign. He gave them one in reference to His death and resurrection. **He told them that just like Jonas, He would be in the earth 3 days and 3 nights.** In the Gospel of John Jesus again gave the Jews a sign by telling them if this temple was destroyed He would raise it up in 3 days. Jesus was referring to His body.

**(Matthew 12:38)** Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

**39** But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign;

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and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

**40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

**(John 2:18)** Then answered the Jews and said unto him, "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?"

**(19)** Jesus answered and said unto them, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**

**(20)** Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

**(21)** But he spake of the temple of **his body**.

Jesus makes it clear the time between His death and resurrection would be **3 days and 3 nights**.

### Cannot Get 3 Days And 3 Nights

Now despite the fact that Jesus Himself said that He would be in the grave 3 days and 3 nights, man has come up with the **tradition** of Jesus dying on Good Friday and rising early Sunday morning. In following this tradition, not only does one not observe one of God's **Holy Days, which is the Passover**, they directly deny the words of Jesus. It was Jesus who gave the sign of being in the grave 3 days and 3 nights. The tradition of Good Friday and Easter clearly does not line up with scripture. Because following this tradition the maximum one has **Jesus in the grave is 1 day and 2 nights**.

According to **tradition, if Jesus had died on Friday**, He would have been **in the grave Friday night, Saturday day and Saturday night**. One would not count Sunday because in **John (20:1)** it states that the **1st day of the week which is Sunday**, Mary came to the grave site when it was still dark. In **Luke (24:1-6)** They find that the stone which was placed in front of the sepulchre had been removed and an angel tells them that **Jesus had already risen**.

### How They Say It Happened

#### Tradition of Man - Good Friday & Easter

	SU	M	T	W	TH	F	S
Days	1					1	
Nights				1	1		

**(John 20:1)** The **first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene** early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

**(2)** Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, **They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre**, and we know not where they have laid him.

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**(Luke 24:1)** Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

**(2)** And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

**(3)** And they entered in, **and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.**

**(4)** And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

**(5)** And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

**(6) He is not here, but is risen:** remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

### **When Did Jesus Die?**

The following verses will serve to show that Jesus died on the Passover. It states in **Mark (15:42-45)** that on the evening of the preparation day, which is the day before the Sabbath, Joseph a counsellor asked for the body of Jesus. Once Pilate determined Jesus was dead, he gave him the body.

**Mark (15:42)** And now when the even was come, because it was **the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath,**

**(43)** Joseph of Aarimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

The above scriptures are where the problem lied with the early church trying to interpret the events of the bible. One should take note, that what the majority of modern day Christians practice or follow come directly from the Roman Catholic Church. You had non spiritual people trying to decipher events that were spiritual. Since the scriptures stated, that the preparation day, was the day before the Sabbath, they automatically assumed this event took **place on a Friday, because they knew the Lord's Sabbath was from Friday evening to Saturday evening. That is how they came up with the concept that Jesus died on Friday and He rose early Sunday morning. What they failed to take into account were the Lord's Holy Days or as they are also called High Sabbaths. There are seven yearly Sabbaths, and they, with the exception of Pentecost, can fall on any day of the week.** At the beginning of this lesson, it was explained in **Leviticus (23:4)** that the **Passover which is the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, is the day before the feast of Unleavened Bread, which is a Holy Day or A High Sabbath. The Passover is sometimes referred as the preparation day because they used this day to prepare for the feast. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is the Sabbath** which was being refereed to in **Mark 15:42)** when it was stated that Joseph craved the body of Jesus. **Jesus had been crucified on the Passover and the next day was the Feast of Unleavened Bread.**

Jesus foretold when His death would occur.

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**(Matthew 26:1)** And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

**(2)** Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Now remember **God's days start at evening and end the next evening**. Keep that in mind as you view the next set of scriptures. Jesus had been betrayed by Judas the evening of the Passover. **John 13** tells how Jesus and His disciples, that evening, were sharing the Passover meal. **John (18:3)** shows that same evening; Jesus was betrayed and taken away. It was still **nighttime when they took Jesus, because the men that came and took and bound Him had lanterns and torches**.

Jesus was crucified the next day but it was still the Passover. **Remember God's days run from sundown to sundown. Jesus had been taken into custody the night of the Passover and the next morning which is the day of the Passover, He was condemned and crucified**. The following verses demonstrate how Pilate was willing to release Jesus the morning after he had been taken in to custody. It was still the Passover. We all know the Jews refused and Jesus was crucified.

**(John 18:39)** But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

**(40)** Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Remember **Mark (15:42)** Joseph craved the body of Jesus the evening of the Passover. Now one can see that this was towards the end of the Passover.

### 3 Days And 3 Nights

The scriptures explain how Jesus was in the earth 3 days and 3 nights just as He had foretold.

### How It Really Happened

#### 3 Days And 3 Nights

	SU	M	T	W	TH	F	S
Days				1	1	1	
Nights			1	1	1		

In looking at the previous scriptures one should now have a better understanding, as to what took place. Remember Mary did not come to the **Grave site until the first day of the week which is Sunday. (John 20:1)** "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher", And it was early in the morning and it was still dark. But **Jesus had already risen. That's because Jesus went into His grave right before the end of the Passover**

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**or Wed. evening. The passing of the Passover brought in the Feast of the Unleavened Bread.** So Jesus would Have been in the Grave **Wednesday night, Thursday daytime and Thursday night, Friday daytime, Friday night, Saturday daytime and Jesus rose right before the sun went down on Saturday.** Hence one has the 3 days and 3 nights which Jesus prophesied.

His death Wednesday night is consistent with the comment of the prophet Daniel, stating the Messiah would be cut off (killed) in the midst of the week.

### **Daniel 9:26-27**

**26** And after threescore and two weeks **shall Messiah be cut off**, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

**27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the **midst of the week** (Wednesday is the middle of the week) **he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease**, (Remember, Jesus is the sacrificial Passover Lamb).

I am sure there will remain those who feel that there is nothing wrong in observing Easter, because they believe that it is the spirit in which one does something that is important. Again my purpose is not to antagonize. It is only to cause you, to carefully examine the doctrine and practices, which you are following. By researching the scriptures one can ensure, that their doctrine lines up with the word of God. Having said that, Jesus told us to worship in spirit and the Lord gave everyone specific instructions how to do that. Those instructions are contained in the Holy Bible, for it contains the word of God. If any one follows a doctrine or operates in a spirit that is contrary to the scriptures, that doctrine and spirit they are following, are contrary to God.

In **I John (4:1)** it tells you to try the spirits. How does one try the spirits? By the word of God. By operating in the so called spirit of things, people worship God in ways that can not be supported or substantiated by the bible. They do this while still not observing God's commandments. Observing the Passover is a commandment from God **Leviticus (23:5)**. People world wide observe so called religious holidays in the name of Christ but none of these are supported by the bible. This lesson hopefully showed that one of them, Easter, is no more than a tradition established by man. Again try the spirits, for if one can follow practices not supported by the bible, yet not do what is written in scripture, they are operating under a strong spirit. And that spirit is contrary the word of God.

Peace to all who seek the truth in Jesus name.