

EASTER

Easter is the Christian celebration of our Lord's resurrection, but where in the New Testament record is Jesus' command to celebrate His resurrection? Where, in fact, is the word even mentioned at all? The King James translators egregiously mistranslated *pascha*, which means Passover, and wrote in "Easter" in Acts 12:4, but other than that absurd and unfortunate dash of corruption, it is not mentioned. If we cannot find a command by Jesus and His apostles in the New Testament, then how can we take the liberty to do something He or they never sanctioned? Does the Bible limit our behavior as Christians, or does it not? Can we do as we wish because we've been doing it for a very long time? Does that make it okay? When Paul used his famous metaphor of the olive tree to explain the grafting in of the Gentiles, he gave us this principle:

"For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches." (Rom. 11:16)

If the root is holy, then so are the branches. I think it is fair to use this principle to ask this question: Is the root of Easter holy? Can we find the early Christian congregations setting aside a special celebration of the greatest event in all of history, the resurrection of Jesus? We loudly proclaim the "branch" of Easter is the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord, so surely the root of Easter must be planted deep in the Lord's Word. Is it? We shall see.

Easter falls on the Sunday following the first full moon following the vernal equinox. The vernal equinox is the signal that spring has arrived, that life is renewed, that resurrection from the dead is now upon the world, that it is time to celebrate the end of the cold, dark days of winter when death prevailed over the Earth. What better time of the year than around the vernal equinox is there to celebrate Jesus' resurrection? Surely that was the teaching of the early Catholics who were being shepherded by Constantine and the sycophantic bishops. He had a vital interest in mixing the Christian and pagan elements of worship, because he had the task of ruling over both in a single society. It would have been ore precise and scriptural had the early Christians chosen the day of celebration to be three days after Passover. But that would not have fit with the pagans and their diabolical superstitiuons.

The origin of the word is not difficult to find, because we only have to go back to Chaldea in ancient Babylon to find Nimrod's wicked wife and "mother," Semiramis, at the fountainhead of Satan's religious counterfeit. Among her many names from which Easter was derived was Ishtar, the goddess of fertility, war, love, and sex; and Astarte

(Ashtoreth), the Assyrian goddess identified with Semiramis, the Queen of heaven, the builder of the tower. In the passage of time, a Phrygian family worshiped Attis and Cybele, and a Phoenician family bowed to Adonis and Astarte. Pathetically, a heretic Hebrew family honored Baal and Ashtoreth. These pagan, springtime celebrations were not lost upon Christians trying to lure their neighbors into the faith; so it was fitting that the true resurrected One should take His place at the forefront of the false gods and goddesses. However, He never sanctioned such a mixing of heathen cultures and the truth. The result is serious confusion among the people, and God is not the author of confusion.

It is cruelly ironic that the Easter celebrated by Christians the world over is the very same goddess that led to the demise of the nation of Israel – Ashtoreth. If Israel lost her status as a nation to the conquering Babylonians, what will be the fate of Christians who persist in a cavalier treatment of this pagan goddess and all she represents, and make merry on her special day, all the while teaching their children that we are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus? This is the living, insidious element hidden in the truth of the Bible and the truth of Christ that infects and corrupts and destroys what is meant for the benefit of humanity. Shall we dare participate? Is adding these heathen elements to our lives tantamount to adding to the Scriptures what is not in the Scriptures?

W.E. Vine, a classical scholar and theologian said this about Easter: *"The term 'Easter' is not of Christian origin. It is another form of Astarte, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven. The festival of Pasch [Passover] held by Christians in post-apostolic times was a continuation of the Jewish feast . . . From this Pasch the pagan festival of 'Easter' was quite distinct and was introduced into the apostate Western religion, as part of the attempt to adapt pagan festivals to Christianity."* This is the vile mix of paganism and truth. And herein may be the whole matter. Corruption of the truth leads to confusion. Except for the most diligent seeker who refuses to come shy of the complete truth of Christ, His Body, and His Word, most people are apathetic when it comes to spiritual issues; especially when confusion is involved that requires thinking and analyzing and making decisions. When these things become complicated, most people, including sincere believers, turn aside rather than fight through. They would rather just go along with what the world does, or what tradition dictates, even if the traditions are rooted in abjection and idolatry. This is a serious offense to our holy Yahweh, and one He will bring to account. If we participate in these things, however innocuous we consider them, we perpetuate the confusion and rottenness, especially among the young people in our lives.

We must be a holy, sanctified, separated people in this dark and wicked world. How can we excuse ourselves if the Lord suddenly appeared among us (which He *does* everyday in

His Body!) if we are celebrating a day devoted to the goddess of fertility and new life, and attributing it to His resurrection; if we are, unwittingly, joining the pagans in worshipping the sun in our sunrise services; if we are ignorantly decorating eggs, symbols of “the cosmogenic egg from which the universe is born”, which are laid by the epitome of fertility, the Easter Bunny? We fancy that the egg is a type of tomb from which Jesus emerged as new life, just like spring emerges from winter. How demeaning can we get, and still expect the Lord’s blessing on our lives? How the satanic leaven has metastasized into vile rationalizations.!

Historian Will Durant wrote this about Easter, and it should put to rest all defense of the holiday by any self-respecting Christian: *“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.”* If we combine this knowledge with what we know about Lent – the forty-day period of abstinence in honor of Osiris, Adonis, and Tammuz and with the egg – symbol of new life, as in the hatching of Venus from the egg that fell from heaven into the Euphrates – and with the bunny – emblem of fertility because of its monthly gestation cycle matching the lunar cycle – and with Easter lilies long revered by ancient pagans as a phallic symbol, and with other emblems and practices too numerous to mention, we are faced with a decision as to what to do with this knowledge. What would the Head of the Body do? In our hearts we know, but too many of us dismiss the indefensible as unimportant and persist in keeping the holiday of the gods and goddesses of antiquity.