

Should Christians Celebrate Easter?

Goals

1. Compare Easter's origin and customs to Scripture
2. Compare Easter's tradition to Scripture
3. Identify true and false worship
4. Exalt the importance of true worship
5. Warn God's saints against pagan worship
6. Magnify the Lord Jesus Christ

The Question

1. Easter is an important religious holiday to many people in the world.
2. Easter is assumed to be a Christian holiday.
3. Most Christians participate to some degree in its observance.
4. Easter observance is NOT taught in Scripture.
5. Easter has some very strange and ancient customs attached to it.
6. Easter claims definite timed historical events.
7. Should Christians celebrate Easter?

God's Warning #1 – Follow What He Says

- “32 **What thing soever I command you, observe to do it:** thou shalt **not add** thereto, **nor diminish from it.**” (Deuteronomy 12:32)
- “Ye shall **observe to do** therefore **as the LORD your God hath commanded you:** ye shall **not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.**” (Deuteronomy 5:32)
- “18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:** and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20)
- “6 ¶ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But **though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.** 9 As we said before, so say I now again, **If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.**” (Galatians 1:6-9)

There is to be no deviation from what God commands in Scripture.

No turning to one side or the other.

No additions to or subtractions from what He has said.

Anyone who deviates from God's Word is cursed.

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God's Warning #2 – Don't Copy Pagan Worship

- “29 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; 30 **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. 31 **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.” (Deuteronomy 12:29-31)
- “1 ¶ Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: 2 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. 3 For the customs of the people *are* vain: for *one* cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.” (Jeremiah 10:1-3)
- “As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; **Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.**” (Ezekiel 20:39)
- “6 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. 7 Howbeit **in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men**. 8 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. 9 And he said unto them, **Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition**. 10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. 12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13 **Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition**, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.” (Mark 7:6-13)

God forbids seeking to worship Him by following pagan practices.

God commands us not to follow pagan ways.

God would rather men become pagans than to mix pagan practice with His worship.

Adding man made tradition does not enhance God's worship. It nullifies it.

God's Warning #3 – Separate From False Worship

- “14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 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. 17 Wherefore **come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord**, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,” (2 Corinthians 6:14-17)
- “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people**, that ye **be not partakers of her sins**, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4)

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- “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the **friendship of the world is enmity with God?** whosoever therefore **will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.**” (James 4:4)
- “And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for **that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.**” (Luke 16:15)

**God calls His people to separate themselves from worldly, false worship.
God calls His people within false systems to leave them & their practices.
Friendship of the world shows you are an enemy of God.
What the religious world esteems, God hates.**

God’s Warning #4 – He Takes His Worship Seriously

1. Why did God accept Abel but reject Cain? (read Genesis 4:7)
 - a. Cain came to worship the right God.
 - b. Cain came to worship at the right time.
 - c. Cain came to worship at the right place.
 - d. Cain brought the wrong offering & God rejected him.
2. Why was Moses not allowed by God to go into Canaan? (read Numbers 20:12)
 - a. Wasn’t he a faithful man?
 - b. Didn’t he use God’s rod to smite the rock?
 - c. Didn’t he get good results, water came out for the people?
 - d. Is his one mistake (hitting, not speaking, to the rock) that important?
3. Why did Saul, the first king of Israel, lose the kingdom to David? (read 1 Samuel 15:22-23)
 - a. Saul had a good reason for saving the best of the flocks.
 - b. Couldn’t God appreciate Saul’s good intent?
4. Why did God kill Uzzah in David’s celebration in bringing back the Ark? (read 1 Chronicles 15:13)
 - a. Wasn’t David trying to honor the LORD?
 - b. Weren’t all of the people fervently worshipping the LORD?
 - c. Wasn’t Uzzah simply trying to keep the Ark from falling?
 - d. Is the “due order” (the Ark being carried on poles carried by the priests verses on a new ox cart) of worship really that important?

**God rejects worshippers who don’t come to Him His way.
God expects precise adherence to His instructions in His wordhip.
God accepts obedience to His commands, not good intentions.
God demands that men follow His order of things.**

Our Duty

1. Search the Scriptures.

“ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**” (Acts 17:11)

2. Prove All Things.

“ **Prove all things;**” (1 Thessalonians 5:21a)

3. Hold Fast To That Which Is Good.

“**hold fast that which is good.**” (1 Thessalonians 5:21b)

4. Hate Every False Way.

“ Therefore I esteem **all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.**” (Psalms 119:128)

5. Contend for the Faith.

“ Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that **ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**” (Jude 1:3)

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Origin of Easter

“**EASTER**. The name is derived from Eostre, 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

“Our name Easter comes from Eostre, and ancient Anglo-Saxon goddess, originally of the dawn. In pagan times an annual spring festival was held in her honor.”
Compton’s Encyclopedia (1978)

“According to the Venerable Bede, the name Easter derived from the pagan spring festival of the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre.”
Academic American Encyclopedia (1982)

- Easter is Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of the dawn.
- Eostre correlates with Ishtar, the Assyrian/Babylonian goddess of fertility.
- Ishtar correlates with Astarte, the Canaanite/Phoenician goddess of fertility.
- Astarte is also known as Ashtoreth, the goddess of fertility known as the queen of heaven (Jeremiah 7:8; 44:17-19, 25) and the female consort of Baal described in Scripture. (Judges 10:6; 1 Samuel 7:4; 1 Samuel 12:10)
- Whatever name is used, she was always associated with the goddesses Venus of the Romans and Aphrodite of the Greeks and their emphasis on the female principle, reproduction, sexual lust and love.
- Baal and Ashtoreth, gods representing the male and female principle in nature, were worshipped with the grossest sensuality and licentiousness.
- Objects and symbols incorporated in this worship included the sun and moon, the rabbit, the egg, the fish and special cakes.
- Pagans have always worshipped the sun as the source of natural life and light.
- Pagans have always worshipped the reproductive principle of nature as the source of creating life.
- Pagans have had spring festivals to celebrate the revival of the sun, reproduction and life.
- Pagans combined the worship of these objects at and around the vernal equinox.
- **Roman Catholicism** incorporated these practices into their worship and corrupted Christianity to appeal to the pagan mind.

“Furthermore, devotions of ancient date deeply rooted in the heart of the peasantry cannot be swept away without some measure of scandal and popular disturbance. To create this sensation seems unwise unless the proof of spuriousness is so overwhelming as to amount to certainty.” ([see The Catholic Encyclopedia on relics](#))

“Do not destroy the temple of the English gods; change them to Christian churches. Do not forbid the harmless customs which have been associated with the old religions; consecrate them to Christian uses.” Pope Gregory to Augustine (597)

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Easter In General

“Many of the customs associated with Easter are derived from various spring fertility rites of the pagan religions which Christianity supplanted.”

Encyclopedia International (1978)

“A great many pagan customs celebrating the return of spring gravitated to Easter.”

The Catholic Encyclopedia

“Christianity ... incorporated in its celebrations of the great Christian feast day many of the heathen rites and customs of the spring festival.”

Encyclopedia Britannica

“Some Easter customs have come from this and other pre-Christian spring festivals.”

Compton’s Encyclopedia (1978)

Key Question #1

What do colored rabbit eggs have to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Easter Rabbits

“The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility.”

The Catholic Encyclopedia

“The Easter rabbit, legendary producer of Easter eggs, was also a symbol of fertility and new life.”

Encyclopedia International (1978)

“The Easter hare came to Christianity from antiquity. The hare is associated with the moon in the legends of ancient Egypt and other peoples. Through the fact that the Egyptian word for hare, um, means ‘open’ and ‘period’, the hare came to be associated with the idea of periodicity, both lunar and human, and with the beginning of new life in both the young man and young woman, and so a symbol of fertility and of the renewal of life.”

Encyclopedia Britannica

Easter Eggs

“The egg as a symbol of fertility and of renewal of life goes back to the Egyptians and Persians, who had also the custom of coloring and eating eggs during their spring festival.”

Encyclopedia Britannica

“One of the best known Easter symbols is the egg, which has symbolized renewed life since ancient times. The egg is said to be a symbol of life because in all living creatures life begins in the egg.”

The New Book of Knowledge (1978)

“Eggs were a primitive symbol of fertility; but Christians saw in them a symbol of the tomb from which Christ rose, and continued the practice of coloring, giving, and eating them on Easter.”

Encyclopedia International (1978)

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Key Question #2

What is the clear impression given by a group of people standing together on a hill facing the east and singing as the sun comes up?

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 (1978)

“15 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. 16 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.** 17 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.” (Ezekiel 8:15-17)

Key Question #3

Why is it a tradition to eat fish on Friday?

Fish On Friday

- Friday is the Germanic translation of the Latin “dies Veneris” or “Day of Venus”.
- Venus, the Roman goddess of sexual fertility, and her Greek counterpart Aphrodite were descendants of Ashtoreth, Astarte, and Ishtar – the great Semitic goddesses representing the female principle.
- A fertility symbol associated with Venus is the fish.
- Fish reproduce more rapidly than any other animal. A single cod can spawn 9,000,000 eggs in a year.
- Eating fish on Friday is an act of adoration to Venus and her cohorts, and celebrates by sympathetic magic the principles of fertility and reproduction.

Key Question #4

What is Lent and what does it have to do with Easter?

Lent

- It is 40 days of fasting prior to Easter mandated by the Roman Catholic Church.
- Catholic fasting allows one full meal, two small meals, and other eating and drinking throughout the day. [see The Catholic Encyclopedia on "Lent"](#)
- This practice has nothing to do with Jesus Christ, for He never taught such a ritual, and He ate nothing when He fasted.
- The original meaning of the word lent is “season of spring”. [see The Catholic Encyclopedia on "Lent"](#)
- Pagans observed a forty day fast long before Christ to remember the death and resurrection of Ishtar’s lover and son, Tammuz.

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“13 ¶ He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, *and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do*. 14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD’S house which was toward the north; and, behold, *there sat women weeping for Tammuz*.” (Ezekiel 8:13-14)

“1 ¶ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall *depart from the faith, giving heed to* seducing spirits, and *doctrines of devils*; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, *and commanding to abstain from meats*, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

Hot Cross Buns

Though not practiced as much as rabbits and eggs in this country, these are a definite part of the Easter tradition in other countries.

“ 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 unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.” (Jeremiah 7:18)

Is Easter Christian?

	Pagan?	Christian?
The name “Easter”	Yes	No
The origin of Easter	Yes	No
The authority for Easter	Yes	No
The date of Easter	Yes	No
The use of colored eggs	Yes	No
The emphasis of eating fish during	Yes	No
The date of Friday	Yes	No
The use of a sunrise service	Yes	No
The use of hot cross buns	Yes	No
Lent	Yes	No
The use of rabbits	Yes	No

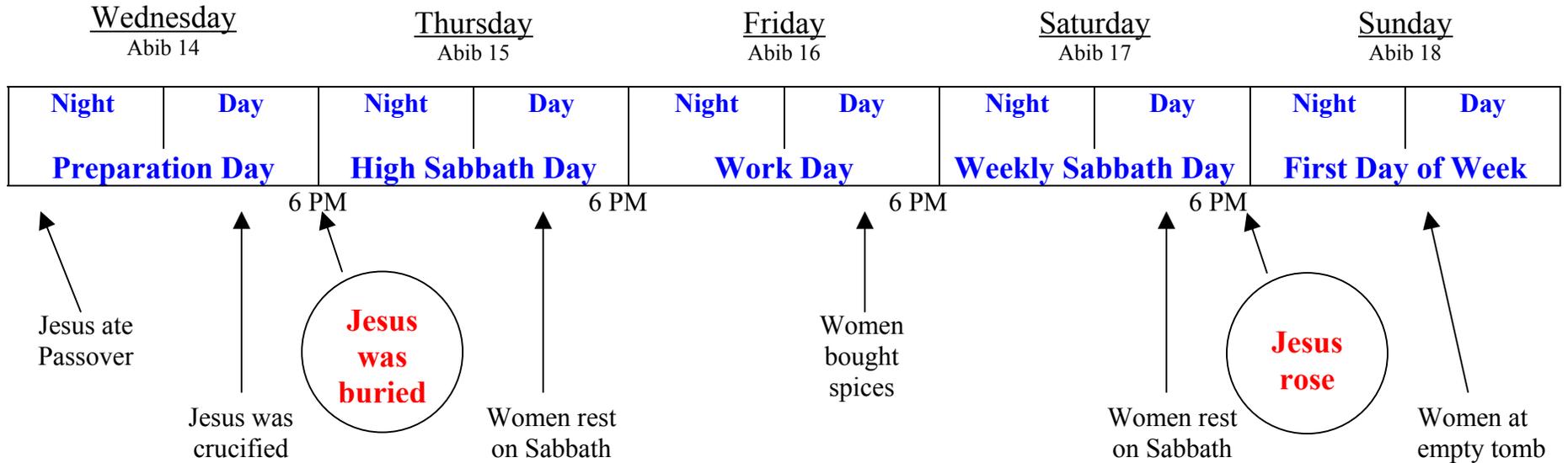
Conclusion

- **Easter is pagan** in name, origin, and customs.
- **Scripture does not** direct us to observe Easter or any other spring holy day, nor does it direct us to observe the resurrection of Jesus Christ by any such means.
- **Scripture positively commands** us to **avoid** any and all association with false worship, regardless of what meaning is attached to that worship.
- **A Christian cannot observe Easter and please God.**
- Any person that has examined this situation is under greater obligation.
- **Christ’s resurrection is properly observed** in the preaching of the Gospel and in believer’s baptism.
- Christians should **earnestly contend for the truth** of Scripture against the lie of Easter.

Three Days and Three Nights

1. The greatest fact of the Bible is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God (John 20:30-31; Acts 8:36-37; I John 5:4-5).
2. The gospel is the good news that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, according to the Scriptures (I Cor 15:1-4).
3. Scripture states that Jesus rose THE third day, IN three days, and AFTER three days (Matthew 16:21; 26:61; 27:63).
4. Only three full days – seventy-two full hours – will satisfy all the numerous statements of the New Testament.
5. Jesus gave only one sign to prove He was truly the Son of God – the time He would be dead (Matt 12:38-40; 16:4).
6. Jesus knew there were twelve hours in a day; therefore He prophesied seventy-two hours in a grave (John 11:9-10).
7. Satan is at war against Jesus Christ and wants to deny His gospel by any lies that He can (II Cor 11:3-4; Gal 1:6-8).
8. Easter tradition has Jesus dying on Good Friday afternoon and rising Sunday morning – one day and two nights.
9. Easter tradition denies the gospel and the very sign that Jesus Christ gave of His identity as the Son of God.
10. If He was not in the ground three days and three nights, then He is a liar and not truly the Son of God. God forbid!
11. Rome has perpetrated this fraud on the churches of Jesus Christ. It is time for you to come out of her (Rev 18:4).
12. God the Father is seeking worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24; II Tim 4:3-4).

Three Days and Three Nights



1. Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples on the evening of the fourteenth by Moses' law (Ex 12:6-8; Matt 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17; Luke 22:7-15).
2. The crucifixion began at 9:00 AM, and Jesus died after the darkness ended at 3:00 PM (Matthew 27:45-50; Mark 15:25,33-37; Luke 23:44-49).
3. Jesus was buried hurriedly as the preparation day ended and the high Sabbath day was about to begin (Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14,31,42).
4. The women who followed Jesus rested the high Sabbath day of the Passover before buying and preparing their spices (Mark 16:1 cp Exodus 12:16).
5. The women bought their spices and prepared them on the regular workday between the two Sabbaths days this week (Mark 16:1 cp Luke 23:55-56).
6. The women rested during the weekly Sabbath day after buying and preparing their spices the previous workday (Luke 23:55-56 cp Exodus 20:10).
7. Jesus rose from the dead as the weekly Sabbath ended – three days and three nights after burial – as prophesied (Matthew 12:39-40; Mark 8:31).
8. While it was still dark, the morning of the first day of the week, the women found the tomb already empty (Matt 28:1-6; Luke 24:1-3; John 20:1).
9. The gospel record of Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection prove His identifying sign of three days and three nights (Matthew 12:39-40).
10. Anyone holding to a Friday crucifixion and/or a Sunday morning resurrection is denying the very sign Jesus gave to prove He was the Son of God.