

Is Easter Christian?

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Is Easter Christian?

To millions of Church going Christians, "Easter" is one of the chief annual religious holidays. We see during this time lots of bunnies and eggs, and new spring fashions that come around Easter time. Television ads shout out their bargains featuring chocolate bunnies, eggs and hot cross buns every single year. Huge stadiums are filled with people that attend the "Easter sunrise Services." Like Christmas, did you ever stop to think where it all came from? Most don't stop to think what are the origins of some of these holidays? Where did it all come from? Christianity? How can someone even dare ask that question? Of course Christianity right? WRONG! Flat out wrong!

The Origins of Easter

If not from Christianity then from where? First, the proof that Easter did not originate with Christianity.

Notice the words of a historian of the third century, Socrates Scholasticus, "Neither the apostles, therefore, nor the Gospels have anywhere imposed ..Easter" (*Ecclesiastical History*, volume 22).

History reveals that the first century church: "Easter: The English term, according to the Ven. Bede, relates Eostre, a Teutonic of the rising light of day and spring, which deity, *however is unknown...That the apostolic Fathers did not mention it, and that we first hear of it principally through the controversy of the Quartodecimans are purely accidental*" (The Catholic Encyclopedia, article "Easter," emphasis added).

Notice another source what it says: "...The name Easter (Ger. 'Ostern'), like the names of the days of the week, is a survival from the *old Teutonic mythology*...[and] is derived from Eostre, Ostara, the *Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring*, to the month answering to our April...*There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers...The first Christians continued to observe the Jewish Festival [Passover], though in a new spirit, as commemorating events which those festivals foreshadowed. Thus Passover with a new conception added to it of Christ as the true Paschal lamb and first fruits from the dead, continued to be observed, and became the 'Christian Easter'*" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, emphasis added). New Testament Church history reveals that the Christians continued in the *festivals of the Old Testament* with a new spirit, the truth of God in its full meaning, Jesus Christ!

Many historical sources admit that Easter was not celebrated in the New Testament Church during the early centuries of its growth; that it originated in *paganism*. History also reveals that all paganism can be traced back to the Babylonian Mystery religion, and the worship of Nimrod and his wife Semiramis. This source says: "Herodotus, world traveler and historian of antiquity, witnessed the mystery religion and its rites in numerous countries and mentions how Babylon was the primeval source from which ALL SYSTEMS OF IDOLATRY FLOWED. Bunsen says: '[The] Religious system of Egypt was derived from Asia and the primitive empire of BABEL'" (David Todd, *The Origin of Easter*, p.11, emphasis added).

Nimrod and his wife were the head of the first world Empire-Babel or Babylon and set up a system of worship which centered around them. Semiramis was known as the Queen of Heaven.

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Hislop, writes, "It is well known that the word 'Easter' is *not* a Christian expression-not in its original meaning. The word itself, as the dictionary and encyclopedia's explain, comes from the name of a pagan goddess-The Eostre, Oostera, or Astarte, Ishtar [is just] *another name for Semiramis as we pronounce Easter Today*" (Babylonian Mystery Religion, p.152, emphasis added).

Encyclopedia Britannica writes: "Semiramis appears as a goddess, the daughter of the fish Goddess Atargatis, and herself connected with the doves of ISHTAR OR ASTARTE" (11th edition, emphasis added).

There are many names in different languages for the same deity, "In the ancient world, some of the various incarnations of the great fertility goddess known as Ishtar (Babylonian), Astarte (Phoenician), Atargatis (Philistine), Ashteroth (Hebrew), Easte (Anglo-Saxon), Ostara (German) and Aphrodite (Greek)...*These goddesses are regarded as essentially the same deity...*" (Should You Observe Easter, or the Christian Passover? Dexter Wakefield, p.11, emphasis theirs).

So Easter, the pagan goddess-the Queen of Heaven *originates* in the Babylonian Mystery Religion. The worship of this goddess involved the celebration of the new season of Spring, and the pagans celebrated it: ".,,on the Sunday following the first moon after the spring equinox...[it] reflects the turning of the winter into spring" (Myth of the Goddess, p.359, emphasis added).

It also involves bunnies and colorful eggs, which were symbols of sex and fertility.

Concerning eggs, the Encyclopedia Britannica 11th edition says: "...they brought to the table of Easter day, colored red [eggs] to symbolize Easter joy-THE CUSTOM MAY HAVE ITS ORIGINS IN PAGANISM, for a great many pagan customs *celebrated the return of the spring, gravitated to Easter*" (emphasis added).

It continues: "Like the Easter egg, the Easter HARE *came to Christianity from antiquity*. The hare is associated with the moon in the legends of ancient Egypt and other peoples-thus both the Easter Rabbit and eggs were symbols of SEXUAL SIGNIFICANCE, SYMBOLS OF FERTILITY" (ibid, emphasis added). The rabbit is the most pro-creative animal, and eggs the symbol of life, what better time celebrate it than the time of the spring when life begins to emerge from a dead winter.



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Hot Cross Buns

Easter also involved the making of cakes to the Queen of Heaven, in what we call today hot cross buns. The hot cross buns, believed by many to be a purely Christian emblem, were baked with crosses — a pagan symbol — long before it had any Holy Week significance.

Jeremiah 7:17-18 reveals that this practice of baking cakes to the pagan goddess was condemned by God, "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? "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."

The Hebrew word for "cakes" is "kavvan" and is also translated as "buns." Hislop says, "It is from the very word here used by the prophet that the word 'bun' seems to be derived. The Hebrew word, with the points, was pronounced Khavan, which in Greek became sometimes Kapan-os (PHOTIUS, *Lexicon Syttoge*); and, at other times, Khabon (NEANDER, in KITTO'S *Biblical Cyclopoedia*). The first shows how Khvan, pronounced as one syllable, would pass into the Latin *panis*, 'bread,' and the second how, in like manner, Khvon would become Bon or Bun." (Two Babylons, p.108).

This provokes God to anger, yet today everyone thinks it's Christian, and that God loves these types of practices. The Britannica says: "...[Hot Cross Buns] *are traceable to the remotest period of pagan history*...The Greeks offered such cakes to Astarte and other divinities...In time the Greeks marked these cakes with a CROSS, possibly an illusion to the four corners of the moon..." (emphasis added).

Diogenes Laerius, speaking of this offering being made by Empedocles, describes the chief ingredients of which it was composed, saying, "He offered one of the sacred cakes called *Boun*, which was made of fine flour and honey." (LAERTIUS, p. 227, B).

The word "Bouse" or "Boun" also comes from the Old High German that was the name of the old sun god Horus. The X was his symbol, and of course the cakes are shaped like the sun.

These "buns," known by that identical name, were used in the worship of the "queen of heaven," the goddess Easter, as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens, 1500 years *before* Christ. (see The Two Babylons, pgs. 107-108).

"One species of sacred bread," says Bryant, in *Mythology*, Vol. 1, p. 373, "which used to be offered to the gods, was of great *antiquity*, and called Boun."

Hot cross buns go back to pagan offerings on ancient holy days; then of course was adopted into the Christian religion, "As in so many other instances where pagan ritual was Christianized, nothing is more likely than that the Cakes used at pagan festivals became, by an easy transition, cakes associated with Christian festivals. Among cakes which may have had this history may be mentioned Yule cakes... hot cross buns on Good Friday, Easter cakes..." (Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. II, pp. 60-61).

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And Hislop concludes, "the 'buns' known too, *by that identical name*, were used in the worship of the Queen of Heaven, the goddess of Easter...The hot cross buns are not now offered, but eaten on the festival of Astarte [Easter]; but this leaves no doubt as to whence they have been derived." (Two Babylons, p.108, emphasis added).

The Christianization of Easter

How did this pagan festival come into the Christian Church?

Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, in its entry "Easter," states: "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*" (W.E. Vine, 1985, emphasis added). Notice what the author, W.E. Vine—a trained classical scholar, theologian, expert in ancient languages and author of several classic Bible helps—tells us: Apostate Christianity *adopted* the pagan festival.

British historian Sir James Frazer notes how Easter symbolism and rites, along with other pagan customs and celebrations, entered into the established Roman church: "Taken altogether, the coincidences of the Christian with the heathen festivals *are too close and too numerous to be accidental. They mark the compromise which the Church* in the hour of its triumph was compelled to make with its vanquished yet still dangerous rivals [the empire's competing pagan religions]."

"The inflexible Protestantism of the primitive missionaries, with their fiery denunciation of heathendom, *had been exchanged for the supple policy, the easy tolerance, the comprehensive charity of shrewd ecclesiastics, who clearly perceived that if Christianity was to conquer the world it could do so only by relaxing the too rigid principles of its Founder, by widening a little the narrow gate which leads to salvation*" (*The Golden Bough*, 1993, p. 361, emphasis added).

As Arthur Weigall wrote in "*The Paganism in our Christianity*," on page 209: "The policy of the Church is to adapt old pagan holy days to Christian ideas, and not to suppress them... **The festivals which we call Christmas and Easter are pagan, not Christian, in origin.**"

In conclusion Will Durant wrote, "Christianity DID NOT destroy paganism it ADOPTED IT" (vol. 3, p.595, emphasis mine).

This compromise is admitted by the scholar, Aringhus. He mentions that the church "found it necessary, in the conversion of the Gentiles, to dissemble and WINK AT many things, *and yield to the times*" (*Diegesis: The Discovery of the Origin of Christianity*, Robert Taylor, Boston, Mass., 1829, p. 237, emphasis added).

In fact many credible sources substantiate the fact that Easter became a *substitute* festival for the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, until eventually, those who insisted on continuing to

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observe God's annual holy days were PUT OUT of the Apostate church. This became known as the Quartodeciman Controversy.

The two protagonists of the controversy were Bishop Victor of Rome (A.D. 189-199) on the one side and Bishop Polycrates of Ephesus on the other. Bishop Victor championed the observance of Easter-Sunday.

Before Victor, Irenaeus's letter suggests that Easter-Sunday was introduced at Rome by Bishop Soter around A.D. 165. But the actual introduction into the church was due to the fact that,

"Emperor Hadrian ruthlessly crushed the Barkokeba revolt (A. D. 132-135) and rebuilt on the ruins of Jerusalem a new Roman city, *Aelia Capitolina*. At this time, *Hadrian promulgated the most repressive legislation, prohibiting the practice of Judaism, in general, and Jewish festivals, in particular. Jews and Jewish-Christians were expelled from the city and categorically forbidden to reenter it.*

"Eusebius informs us that as a result of Hadrian's edict, the Jewish-Christian members and bishops of Jerusalem *were replaced with Gentile Christian members and leaders: 'The Church there was now composed of Gentiles, the first one to assume the government of it after the bishops of the circumcision was Marcus.' This replacement suggests that a clear distinction was made at that time between Jewish-Christians and Gentile-Christians. Presumably, this distinction was not limited to the racial factor alone, but included also a new theological orientation, especially toward characteristic Jewish festivals such as Passover.*

"This hypothesis is supported by the Palestinian historian Epiphanius (ca A. D. 315-403), who in his lengthy report over the Passover controversy states: 'The controversy arose *after the exodus of the bishops of the circumcision [A. D. 135] and it has continued until our time.*' Epiphanius clearly says that the fifteen Jewish-Christian bishops who administered the Jerusalem Church until A. D. 135 had observed Passover on Nisan 14 in accordance with the so-called *Apostolic Constitutions*, where the following rule is given: *You shall not change the calculation of the time, but you shall celebrate it at the same time as your brethren who came out from the circumcision. With them observe the Passover.'*

"The fact that the Passover controversy arose when Emperor Hadrian adopted new repressive measures against Jewish religious practices suggests that such measures influenced the new Gentile hierarchy to change the date of Passover from Nisan 14 to the following Sunday (Easter-Sunday) *in order to show separation and differentiation from the Jews and Jewish-Christians.*

"Thomas Talley suggests that the Gentile bishops who caused the Passover controversy by introducing Easter-Sunday *had not observed Passover prior to that time (A. D. 135).* Their introduction of Easter-Sunday would then represent an accommodation 'to the vestiges of the observance of the annual festival by the Jerusalem community.' This may well be true. On the other hand, it would seem more likely that the accommodation of the Gentile hierarchy was based on their past observance of Passover at the traditional date of Nisan 14. It is difficult to imagine why they would accommodate the traditional Passover date if they had never observed it before. *At any rate, Easter-Sunday was soon adopted by many Gentile-Christian churches,*

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especially by the Church of Rome that became the champion of the new practice." (God's Festivals in Scripture and History, Samuele Bacchiocchi pp. 101-102, emphasis added).

So due to the Emperor and his policies, the gentile Christians began to take over and influence the church, and introduced Easter into the church. Their previous religion was paganism in which Easter came. They adopted it into the Church. Notice what the same source says about the gentile Christians:

"Donna and Mal Broadhurst rightly observe that 'Gentile Christians usually came from a background devoid of Scriptural knowledge. They did not have a natural appreciation for, allegiance to, or comprehension of the Scriptures, especially the Law and Prophets which they misunderstood, overlooked, or actually discarded in the early church struggle to break free from erroneous legalizers. They found it easy to disregard Passover and other major institutions of the Mosaic Covenant.' The problem with Gentile Christians was not only their lack of familiarity with Scripture, but also their excessive fascination with their Greek philosophical speculations, which conditioned their understanding of Biblical truths. While Jewish Christians often erred in the direction of legalism, Gentile Christians often erred in the direction of philosophical speculations which sundered Christianity from its historical roots.

"The detachment of Gentile Christians from their Jewish roots was influenced by the repressive policies adopted by Roman emperors against the Jewish people and religion as well as by the defamatory campaign waged by Jews against the Christians." (ibid, pp. 102-103, emphasis added).

Then from Rome, who championed the observance of Easter, Bishop Victor wanted the whole church to observe it, while Bishop Polycrates of Ephesus insisted the church observed the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, hence the name the *Fourteeners* (Quartodecimans).

"In accordance with Victor's instructions, Polycrates summoned the church leaders of his Asian province to consider Victor's request. *The Asian bishops, however, unanimously agreed to remain true to the apostolic tradition transmitted to them by the apostles Philip and John and refused to be frightened into submission by the threats of Victor of Rome.* Polycrates concluded his reply to Victor by saying: 'I, therefore, brethren, who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord, and have met with the brethren throughout the world, and have gone through every Holy Scripture, am not affrighted by terrifying words. For those greater than I have said, 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'

"Upon receiving this letter, *Victor issued letters to all the churches excommunicating the entire province of Asia.* Such an impulsive and ill advised action precipitated the reaction of many bishops, including Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon (from ca. A. D. 176), who intervened as peacemaker in the controversy. In his letter to Bishop Victor, Irenaeus urged the Roman Bishop to be more tolerant because the predecessors of Soter (A. D. 165), namely, 'Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus and Telesphorus, and Xystus, . . .' though 'they did not observe it, they were nonetheless at peace with those from the dioceses in which it was observed.'" (ibid, p.99, emphasis added).

Eventually this controversy ended, and it was due to the fact that the church became more gentile, and less Jewish, and Anti-Jewish sentiment continued to grow. By 325 A.D. in desiring

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to establish a religion completely free from any Jewish influence, the emperor wrote regarding Passover: “It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. . . . *Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd:* for we have received from our Savior a *different way*. . . . Strive and pray continually that the purity of your soul may not seem in anything to be sullied by fellowship with the custom of these most wicked men. . . . All should unite in desiring that which sound reason appears to demand, *avoiding all participation in the perjured conduct of the Jews.*” (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3, 18-19, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, vol. 1, p. 524-525. Emphasis added).

The Council of Nicea (A. D. 325) put an end to the controversy over the date of Passover by decreeing that it should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring. To ensure that Easter-Sunday would never be celebrated at the same time as the Jewish Passover, the council decreed that if the 14th of Nisan fell on a Sunday, then Easter was to be celebrated on the following Sunday.

Nicea represents the culmination of the Passover controversy initiated two centuries earlier and motivated by strong anti-Judaic feelings. Unfortunately, the controversy was “settled” at Nicea, *not Biblically but politically*. It was settled by suppressing the traditional observance of Passover and by adopting instead Easter-Sunday as championed by the church of Rome.

“As far as Christian Passover is concerned,” write Donna and Mal Broadhurst, “the beginning of the Dark Ages can be set at 325 A. D. with the Council of Nicea. *Along with turning their back on Jews, the Gentiles turned their back on the Jewish Scripture. They disallowed Jewish input to their faith, life-style, and worship. They became persecutors of the Jews. In place of the Exodus Passover story to inspire a sense of justice and freedom for all men, the Gentile church had the words and example of power-hungry leaders who taught oppression.* It took a major reformation centuries later to begin to undo the horror and destruction the church brought on the world when the Gentiles at Nicea formally adopted the policy of having ‘nothing in common with the Jews.’” (God's Festivals in Scripture and History p.104, emphasis added).

By the time of Constantine in A. D. 325, church leaders were able to influence the emperor to pass a decree forcing all within the empire to keep this Sunday resurrection.

Simultaneously, it was strictly forbidden for any Christian to continue keeping the New Testament Passover. It was considered Jewish. Pagans, now professing to be Christians, developed a "Christian" philosophy of their own.

In the following centuries, as the culture of the Roman Empire expanded into Central Europe, the religion of the Roman Empire also spread into these areas. The policy of converting pagans continued. Whole tribes were forced into accepting Christ and into accepting what was claimed to be his religion.

Today most churches celebrate Easter when they should be celebrating the Passover as it clearly instructs us to do in the Bible! (*Read our booklet Passover is it for Christians?*)

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The Origin of Lent

Let's now look at the celebration of Lent, since it comes before Easter. Lent is merely the introduction to Easter. Easter is the climax to Lent.

Notice Colliers Encyclopedia: "Lent in the Christian Church...marked especially by forty days of fast in memory of the forty days fast of Christ in the desert. Admittedly not of Apostolic origin" (emphasis added). If these are not from the Apostles tradition, then where did it come from?

Again from Socrates Scholasticus, in his Ecclesiastical History , just as many other customs have been established in individual localities according to usage, so also the feast of Easter CAME TO BE OBSERVED IN EACH PLACE ACCORDING TO THE INDIVIDUAL PECULARITIES OF THE PEOPLES inasmuch as none of the apostles legislated on the matter. And that the observance originated not by legislation, BUT AS A CUSTOM the facts themselves indicate" (chapter 22).

Did you notice that? Easter originated as a custom of the people! And so did Lent. Lent is merely the introduction to Easter. Easter is the climax to Lent.

But from what city did the celebration of Lent really begin to spread throughout the professing Christianity of the Roman World?

The Catholic Encyclopedia records: "In any case it is certain from the 'Festival Letters' of St. Athanasius that in 331 [he] enjoined upon his flock a period of FORTY DAYS of fasting preliminary to . . . Holy Week, and second that in 339 *after having travelled to Rome* and over the greater part of Europe, [he] wrote in the strongest terms to urge this observance"-Lent-upon the people under his jurisdiction. Athanasius was influenced by Roman custom. It was *at Rome* that not only Easter, but also Lent, entered the Christian Church.

"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 Koodistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the BABYLONIANS. Such a Lent of 40 days was held in the spring by the Pagan Mexicans...[and] in Egypt" (ibid, pp.104-105, emphasis added). In fact John Landseer, in Sabean Researches, pp.111-112 says that, "this Egyptian Lent of 40 days was observed expressly in honour of OSIRIS, also known as Adonis in Syria, and TAMMUZ IN BABYLONIA" (emphasis added). The pagan customs of the people, the Apostate gentile Christian church, because of their former backgrounds, and their anti-Jewish feelings, made it ripe for them to *adopt* paganism, and call it Christian.

The Sunrise Service

Every single year at Easter in huge stadiums sometimes, and in all churches all over our lands, the Easter sunrise service takes place. Everyone faces the east at the rising of the sun. What is the origin of this custom?

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Notice Ezekiel 8:14-16: "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*.

"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.*"

The Soncino Commentary says the worship of Tammuz "came from Babylonia." "...The pagan MITHRAS OF ROME met together at dawn in honour of the sun god" (Mystery Babylon Religion, p.156, emphasis added). The Romans, like the ancient Babylonians were sun worshippers. Tammuz, Mithra are one and the same deity, Nimrod of Babylon!

In the latter part of verse 17 of Ezekiel, it talks about putting the branch to their nose.

The JFB Commentary writes: "Rather, they held up a branch or bundle of Tamarisk (called Barsom) to their nose *at daybreak*, while singing hymns to the *rising sun*." (emphasis added). The Easter sunrise service is derived from the ancient pagan practice of welcoming the sun on the morning of the spring equinox, marking the beginning of spring.

Sir James Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough*, adds this: "The sorrow of the worshippers was turned to joy.... The resurrection of the god [Tammuz] was hailed by his disciples as a promise that they too would issue triumphant from the corruption of the grave." (Frazer, James, *The Golden Bough*, p. 350). This is the whole reason for the sunrise service, to celebrate the rising of the sun, as commemoration of the risen sun god Tammuz or Nimrod.

The legends say that after he was slain, he went into the underworld. But through the weeping of his 'MOTHER' Ishtar (Easter), he mystically was revived. This sign of his supposed coming to life again, was represented in the new vegetation and life that occurred at Spring time. We read this from the book 'Man and His Gods' p,86, "The resurrection of Tammuz through Ishtar's grief was dramatically represented annually in order to insure the success of the crops and the fertility of the people Each year men and women had to grieve with Ishtar over the death of Tammuz and celebrate the god's return, in order to win anew her favor and her benefits."

Ezekiel describes women "weeping for Tammuz." These woman are perpetuating the custom of ancient Babylon, of Nimrod's wife weeping because of his death, and then celebrate the gods return, and the celebration of new life in the spring, at the rising of the sun at Easter time. And, "... all events [are] connected with the east and sunrise..." (History of the Church (Schaff).vol.1, p.373).

It is *Christians* arising early before dawn, going atop some high place, or grave yard, on the east side of some church and face the east to await sunrise in order to pay tribute to the resurrection of Christ, sing songs, and pray. This amounts to sun worship, *not* Christ Worship.

The sunrise service actually stems from the pagan rite of Spring that was held during the vernal equinox to welcome the coming sun. According to pagan tradition, when the sun would rise on

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Easter morning, it would dance in the heavens, so, those who would congregate, would dance in honor of the sun. - *Controlled by the Calendar* p 47

The Easter Lily

One of the most prominent symbols associated with Easter is the lily. This beautiful flower adorns the altars of virtually thousands of Christian churches every Easter. But what does this symbol have to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and when did the custom of using this flower as an ornament of faith originate? As surprising as it may seem, this too has its roots in the pagan world. According to *Grolier's Encyclopedia*, the Easter lily is a symbol of spring, when everything becomes new.

On Easter people go to church services and delight in the sight of great masses of Easter lilies that decorate the altars. For the Chinese the peony is the king of flowers and symbol of spring. But to the people in church on Easter Day, the fragrant lily with its trumpet shaped blossoms is the symbol of purity and the welcome harbinger of spring. (1966, Vol. 17)

But from where did this symbol come and when was it embraced as a symbol of worship? *Unger's Bible Dictionary* provides some extraordinary insight concerning this question. It characterizes this symbol as typical of that which was embraced by pagan worshipers in the Canaanite world. Characteristically Canaanite, the lily symbolizes grace and sex appeal and the serpent fecundity. (p. 412).

Is Friday Good?

The accepted belief that Jesus died on Good Friday, and resurrected on Sunday morning has never been put to the test, just accepted as the dogma of the church (Read our booklet *Christ's Sabbath Resurrection* for details).

But let's look at Good Friday and see how it fits in with Lent and Easter.

"Certainly, the scriptures never associate fish with Friday. On the other hand, the word 'Friday' comes from the name 'Freya,' who is regarded as the goddess of peace, joy, and fertility, the symbol of her fertility being a fish. The goddess of sexual fertility among the Romans was called VENUS...Friday is regarded as her sacred day because it was believed that our planet Venus ruled the first hour of Friday...the fish was also regarded as being sacred to her...The fish was regarded as sacred to ASHTORETH...In ancient Egypt, Isis was sometimes represented with a fish on her head...Considering that Friday was named after the goddess of sexual fertility, Friday being her sacred day...Catholics have been taught that Friday is a day of abstinence from meat, A DAY TO EAT FISH" (Two Babylons, pp.142-143, emphasis added). When I was a Catholic my mother always warned me on Good Friday not to eat meat. When I came to the knowledge of the truth I would purposely eat meat in front of my mother to see what kind of reaction I would get out of her. It wasn't pleasant. Then I would ask her where it is in the Bible that you can't eat meat on Good Friday? She just told me to shut up and follow the Catholic traditions. This is basically what religions are based on, traditions of men and not God.

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A Mistranslation

Some argue that the Apostles did Keep Easter in the verse in the book of Acts: "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" (Acts 12:1-4). This deliberate insertion into the King James Translation of the Bible is utterly fraudulent, and those who collaborated in its insertion knew it was. The Diaglott, which is a transliteration directly from the original Greek, says, "...and having seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him, intending after the PASSOVER to lead him out to the people."

Here is the New International version of the same verse: "After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover."

The New Revised Standard has it: "When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover."

Here is each word from the fourth verse in Greek, with the accompanying number from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. Notice carefully the word Pascha for "Passover": ". . . piazo:G4084 . . . tithemi:G5087 . . . phulake:G5438 . . . paradidomi:G3860 . . . tessares:G5064 . . . tetradion:G5069 . . . stratiotes:G4757 . . . phulasso:G5442 . . . bouleuo:G1011 . . . meta:G3326 . . . **pascha:G3957** . . . anago:G321 . . . laos:G2992."

Now, notice the definition of the word from Strongs G3957: "3957. pascha, pas'-khah; of Chald. or. [comp. H6453]; the *Passover*."

Now, notice the marginal notes from Dr. Bullinger's Companion Bible: "Gr. To Pascha, the Passover."

Thus you see how the politically organized church at Rome grew to great size and power by adopting popular pagan practices and how she gradually stamped out the true teachings, doctrines, and practices of Jesus Christ and the true Church, so far as any collective practice is concerned.

Argument:

Some argue, "Well even though this is all from paganism, today we use these festivals and rites to worship Christ, so it's ok." What does God say? If God is the one that is to be worshipped and venerated then he should have a say in the whole thing, Right?

God says, "Learn *not* the way of the heathen... For the customs of the people *are* vain..." (Jeremiah 10:2, 3). God says *not* to learn the ways of the pagans-they are vain, empty, and they don't mean a thing when it comes to worshipping God.

Is Easter Christian?

God also told the Israelites, "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.*

"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.

"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." (Deut 12:30-32). God told them not to enquire after the gods of the heathen and worship *God in that way!* Whatever God commands we ought to observe. We must do it HIS WAY NOT OUR WAY!