

SHOULD CHRISTIANS OBSERVE EASTER?



Should Christians Observe Easter?

**To millions of professing, churchgoing Christians,
“Easter”, is one of the chief religious festivals.
But what do eggs, rabbits, new clothing,
sunrise services, and hot cross buns
have to do with JESUS CHRIST?**

When was the last time you went to your public library, obtained one of the leading encyclopedias or histories, and studied an article on the subject of Easter?

If you're like the average person, the answer is probably *“never.”* Millions of sincere, churchgoing, professing Christians excitedly arise in the pitch-black hours well before dawn on Easter Sunday morning, hustle the kids out of bed, enjoy a quick breakfast, and bundle into the car for a drive to a nearby mountaintop, outdoor bowl, huge cathedral, or small countryside church. They are going to an “Easter sunrise service.”

At the precise moment of sunrise, the priest or minister may likely turn toward the *east*, extending both hands in a supplicatory gesture, heralding the dawn of “Easter Sunday,” and ask all of the audience to pray as they face the rising sun in the *east*.

While many of the less devout do not bother to arise early enough to go to an actual sunrise service, it is a well-known celebration, attended by *millions* in nations around the world.

Why?

These many professing Christians *suppose* they are gathering together to commemorate the anniversary of the precise moment Jesus Christ *rose from the dead!*

They believe they are celebrating the resurrection.

Of course, it is doubtful that even *one* of these sincere people has read what you are about to read in this article. Yet the information is *readily available* in any reasonably large public library.

Have you *ever* researched the question for yourself? Have you ever asked yourself why you do some of the things you do?

Have you ever looked up “Lent” in the history books or encyclopedias? Have you ever *wondered* why *fasts*, drunken ribaldry, drug-induced chaos, vandalism, and crime punctuate such pre-Easter celebrations as “Mardi Gras”?

Have you ever heard friends joke about their “Lenten fast,” giving up chewing gum or asparagus?

Surely you remember the gaiety of Eastertime; the projects you were given in the first elementary years of school, fashioning little gaily decorated baskets of paper and decorating them with paper “straw,” and jelly beans shaped like Easter eggs.

Probably, as a child, you dyed Easter eggs, engaged in Easter egg hunts, ate little chocolate

bunnies, and perhaps even gathered around a *bonfire*, singing and dancing in the streets.

Certainly you recall seeing old motion picture news reports or television coverage of the famous “Easter Parade” in New York City.

It’s *custom*. And is custom to be questioned?

What Does Easter Mean?

What is “Easter”? Is it the opposite of “Wester”? Does it have something to do with one of the points of the compass, or the Far East?

Let’s see what some of the historians tell us:

“*Easter*: The English term, according to the Van. Bede..., relates to Eostre, a Teutonic goddess of the rising light of day and spring, which deity, however, is otherwise unknown....

“That the *apostolic fathers do 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).

In a sense, we are dealing with a “hostile witness” in this quotation, for the Catholic Church fully supports Easter. Therefore, it is doubly important to note that

The Catholic Encyclopedia admits the “apostolic fathers” (including James, Peter, John, and the early apostles) *do not mention* EASTER.

As we will see later, it is equally important that they admit we first hear of it during a controversy of the “Quartodecimans.”

Now notice another important historical authority:

“EASTER: The annual festival observed through-out Christendom in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 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, or Ostara, the Anglo Saxon *goddess of spring*, to whom the month answering to our April, and called the ‘*Eostur-monath*,’ was dedicated. This month, Bede says, was the same as the Mensis Paschalis [which meant “*Passover*” month], ‘when the old festival was observed with the gladness of a new solemnity.’

“*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 festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed. Thus the *Passover*, with a new conception added to it of *Christ as the true paschal lamb and the firstfruits from the dead, continued to be observed*, and became the ‘Christian Easter’” (*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, eleventh edition, emphasis added).

Note well that this eminent history (the eleventh edition was the *last* edition of the *Britannica* to include theological history) admits that the celebration of Easter *is not mentioned* in the New Testament; that it *was not observed* by the early apostles, and was clearly a *later addition* to what has been *called* the “Christian church.”

This later addition is reflected in Acts 12:4 of the King James Version, where the term *pascha* is erroneously translated “Easter.” The term means PASSOVER, not “Easter,” and is so

rendered by all modern English translations.

Just *how* Easter was adopted into the visible church, and *how* it became called “Christian,” we shall see.

Now, notice what an American high school-level encyclopedia has to say:

“Easter is a Christian festival that celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the most important holy day of the Christian religion. People attend churches and take part in religious ceremonies.

“In most countries, Easter comes in early spring, at a time when green grass and warm sunshine begin to push aside the ice and snow of winter. Its name may have come from *Eostre*, a Teutonic goddess of spring, or from the Teutonic festival of spring, *Eostar* [pronounced “Easter”].

“Christians everywhere celebrate Easter with great rejoicing. In many areas, children collect candy and chocolate bunnies, and hunt colorful Easter eggs. Many persons wear new spring clothes to church on Easter” (*World Book* encyclopedia, article “Easter,” emphasis added).

The *Encyclopedia Americana* says: “Easter is a convergence of three traditions, (1) *Pagan*. According to the Ven. Bede, English historian of the early eighth century, the word is derived from the Norse *Ostara* or *Eostare*, meaning the festival of spring, at the vernal equinox, March 21, when nature is in resurrection after winter. Hence, the rabbits, notable for their fecundity, and the eggs colored like rays of the returning sun, and the northern lights, or *aurora borealis*. The Greek myth, *Demeter* and *Persephone*, with its Latin counterpart, *Ceres* and *Persephone*, conveys the idea of a goddess returning seasonally from the nether regions of the light of day.”

Very early after being rescued from slavery and established as a new nation under God’s own laws, the Israelites turned to the idolatrous customs and practices of neighboring nations.

“And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Eternal, and served *Baalim* [which means “many gods”; the term *baal* merely meant “lord”]: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the Eternal and served Baal and Ashtaroth” (Judges 2:11-13).

The pagan Zidonians, the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and other surrounding tribes served the same gods and goddesses—sometimes manifested in different ways.

One of the prominent features (also adopted by sinning Israelites) was the worship of the goddess “Ishtar” in *groves*, called “asherim.” This is merely the *plural* word for “Asherah,” which meant an upright pale, or the *trunk of a tree*, stripped of its branches and leaves, and worshiped in the setting of a *grove of trees*, usually on a hilltop, representing *life*. (It was a phallic symbol.)

Notice: “The children of Israel...*sinned* against the LORD their God and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of

the kings of Israel, which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God and they set them up *images* [Hebrew, *asherah*] and *groves* [Hebrew, *asherim*] in every high hill, and under every green tree: And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, ye shall not do this thing” (2 Kings 17:7-11).

The worship of the upright pales, or phallic symbols, was closely associated with the worship of other forms of the procreation of *life*.

The whole festival at springtime, in the minds of the ancient pagans, was closely allied to the midwinter festivals when-pagans implored their sun god to begin his northern journey once again, bringing back the warming rays of the sun and hastening spring, when new *life* would once again spring forth.

When this was an accomplished fact, the heathens used the symbols of *eggs*, which they worshiped as a miraculous source of *life*; *rabbits*, as the most rapidly procreating domestic animal; and lit *fires* in order to bake cakes in sacrifice to the “queen of heaven” (Semiramis), the “Diana of the Ephesians,” who was viewed as the goddess of *sex* and *fertility*.

Almighty God said He *hated* this imagery and idolatry, and called all such ceremonies of the pagans great *abominations!*

Read Ezekiel 8! In this shocking chapter of the Bible, Ezekiel, in spirit, is shown the horrifying *abominations* of the sinning Israelites who had made an “image of jealousy” which “provoked to jealousy” the Eternal God (verses 3,4)!

Showing Ezekiel, in spirit, even “greater abominations” (verse 6), Ezekiel said he “went in and saw; and behold every form of *creeping things* [the pagans always used snakes, lizards, crabs, frogs, flies, and so on, in their imagery], and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth” (verses 10-12).

And is that not *precisely* what *millions* of churchgoing Christians believe today?

A day-by-day, close *awareness* of the immediate presence of God; the fact that He watches and clearly sees every human act and deed; that He is immediately available through *prayer*; that He is not only our God, but our *Judge*, and *our* RULER-this concept of a living, ruling, Creator God is lost to the minds of millions! They do not *know* the living God!

Rather, they think of God in vague, unreal terms. It is as if He has truly “gone way off somewhere” into the blackness of the “other side of the universe.” Few really believe that Almighty God *does* see through the rooftops, sees in the dark, and literally *beholds* the deeds (good or evil) of humankind.

Later Ezekiel was shown “women weeping for Tammuz” (verse 14). *Tammuz* was their

name for *Nimrod*, who made himself into “a mighty hunter BEFORE [*in place of*] the LORD (Genesis 10:9)!

Next, read on in Ezekiel 8 as he was shown even greater abominations: “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 WERE TOWARD THE EAST: and they worshiped the sun TOWARD THE EAST” (verses 15,16).

The sun is in the east at *its rising!*

This is a *sunrise service*, a pagan, idolatrous worshiping of the *rising sun*, in connection with pagan idols of “creeping things and abominable beasts,” with women wailing and weeping for Tammuz!

“But, *so what?*” some will ask. “What’s the big deal?” some may complain. Are we to take away such innocent-appearing things as cute little chicks, chocolate bunnies, jelly beans, and dyed eggs; the excited, happy looks on the faces of our children as they search about the lawn for hidden Easter eggs?

“We’re not doing it with all of these pagan things in mind,” some might reason. “We’re doing it as a Christian ceremony—and it is only something to get the children to look forward to Easter!”

Consider what God told Ezekiel concerning ancient Israel’s practices: “Then He said unto me, hast thou seen this, 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 eyes *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” (verses 17,18).

The Annual Holy Days of God

When God first called His nation Israel out of captivity in Egypt, He had to reveal unto them the months of the year; reveal to them once again the *weekly Sabbath*, and wean them away from the pagan, idolatrous customs of the ancient Egyptians, who worshiped Isis and Osiris.

Prior to the exodus, God began revealing to the Israelites the PASSOVER (see Exodus 12).

Directly connected with the Passover were the Days of Unleavened Bread. Later, in the land of Sinai, *before* the giving of the Ten Commandments, God revealed to them His *weekly Sabbath*, and *enforced* the observance of God’s holy Sabbath day by showing the Israelites that sin required the *death penalty* (Exodus 16:4-30).

Later God revealed to them the remainder of His *annual holy days* (Leviticus 23), consisting of the Feast of Firstfruits (Pentecost), the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day, coming right at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles.

God revealed to them the *beginning of months*, or the “sacred year,” which commenced in the *spring* with the month of Nisan (also called Abib).

The Israelites were commanded to take an unblemished lamb from their flocks on the *tenth* of Nisan; to keep it unto the evening of the fourteenth, and then to slay it as the “LORD’S Passover.”

By striking the blood of the slain, unblemished lamb on the doorposts and lintels of their houses in *Goshen*, they would be under the sign of “the blood of the lamb,” and the death angel, who was to kill the firstborn of the Egyptians in the final and greatest plague, would “*pass over*” the homes of the Israelites.

That ceremony was to be conducted “with their staff in their hand,” and by a meal of roast lamb and the “bread of affliction” (unleavened bread), signifying the great *haste* with which God was going to deliver them out of the land of Egypt, out of *slavery*.

The spiritual types are set forth very clearly by Jesus Christ in the New Testament, and by the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 11).

The paschal lamb was symbolic of Jesus Christ; the blood on the doorposts and lintels of the houses is symbolic of the blood of Jesus Christ to atone for our sins; the escape from Egypt is symbolic of our escape from the clutches of Satan the devil and sin; the passage through the Red Sea was symbolic of *baptism* (1 Corinthians 10:1-4); the land of Sinai, and the forty-years wandering prior to entering the promised land, are symbolic of the trials, testing, and tribulation which come upon every Christian; and the entrance into the promised land, across the River Jordan, is symbolic of finally leaving this human, physical life and entering the very *Kingdom of God*.

There are many other biblical types which come clear in one’s thorough *study* of the deep symbolism of the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread.

Pharaoh is a type of Satan the devil; his two magicians, Janes and Jambres, are symbolic of the beast and the false prophet; Moses and Aaron, who continually say, “Let my people go,” are symbolic of the prophesied “two witnesses” (Revelation 11), who will warn the beast and the false prophet just prior to Christ’s second coming.

Leaven is used as a type of sin; the eating of “unleavened bread” for seven days signifies taking Jesus Christ into our lives, and overcoming our carnal human nature by the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

Thus, in this first important holy day season of the sacred year, God revealed to the ancient Israelites *rich symbolism* which has great meaning to the very purpose of *human* life-and which reveals, in large measure, what is our final, glorious DESTINY!

But, instead of remaining *faithful* to these deeply significant annual holy days of God, the Israelites quickly descended back into *idolatry*.

Idolatry, condemned of God in the *first two* of the Ten Commandments, is evil and a horrible *abomination* in God’s sight for *several reasons*.

First, it puts inanimate, nonexistent, pagan “gods” (which are nothing more than the figment of the imagination of demented, ignorant, savage peoples) *in place of God!*

Such imagery blots out from superstitious minds the truth of God!

It is a substitute, a counterfeit, which God calls the “image of jealousy.”

As the Creator, as well as our Protector and Provider, like a *husband* to the church (described as His *bride*), God is “very jealous” over His people.

The reason our English words *idolatry* and *adultery* are so similar is because they stem from the same original word.

God terms idolatry “spiritual adultery.” In many analogies in the Bible, imagery and worship are directly spoken of as “adultery.”

Read Revelation 17 and 18, where the great fallen woman (symbolizing a great, universal *false church*) is said to be “committing fornication” with the kings and rulers of the world!

The Pagan Holidays

Today, millions upon millions of professing Christians gaily go about the business of observing so-called Christian holidays, not realizing they are nothing but modern versions of ancient, pagan idolatries!

As the *millions* celebrate these days, they do so in abysmal ignorance of their origin, their true *symbolism*, and ignorant of the fact that such days OBSCURE God’s annual holy days.

How Was Easter

Substituted for the Passover?

Believe it or not, it was *many centuries* before the apostate church was finally able to *stamp out* the celebration of the PASSOVER and the Days of Unleavened Bread!

Actually, they *never* succeeded in stamping it out *entirely*, and history proves there were scattered remnants of God’s true church observing the Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, and the other annual days all down through the centuries—just as there are latter-day remnants of God’s true church observing those days today!

Do you remember our earlier quotation from *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, in which they mentioned the “controversy of the Quartodecimans”?

The Quartodeciman controversy raged throughout the Mediterranean world for literally *centuries*.

“Quartodeciman” is merely another word for “*fourteenth*”! The controversy stemmed from the insistence that the early New Testament Church of God ought to follow the *custom of Jesus Christ of Nazareth* in observing the *Passover on the fourteenth of NISAN*, the first month of the year, according to God’s sacred calendar.

The “universal church” gradually began *adopting* pagan customs and traditions, and began insisting upon standardizing the date for the observance for the *spring festival*.

The masses of pagans who were being “converted” into this new religion brought with them their ancient customs of the celebration of *life*, sexual reproduction, fertility and worship of the sun. Their gods and goddesses were Isis, Osiris, Astarte, Ashtaroath, Ishtar, Tammuz, and others. Apostate church leaders reasoned these pagans *had to be accommodated*.

History *absolutely proves* that pagan customs and ceremonies were *allowed* and merely

given Christian names.

Finally, those who *insisted* on continuing to observe *God's annual holy days* were *put out* of the apostate church!

Notice! "The first council of Nicza (325) decreed that the Roman practice should be observed throughout the church. But even at Rome the Easter term was changed repeatedly.

Those who continued to keep *Easter with the Jews* were called Quartodecimans (14 Nisan) and were excluded from the church" (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, article "Easter," emphasis added).

Interestingly, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* subtly inserts the word *Easter* in its article under that term, even though the writer of the article *knew* NO ONE would keep "*Easter with the Jews*," for the Jews NEVER recognized this pagan custom. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* continually refers to the *Passover* as "Easter." Note some further quotes from the same source:

"*Easter eggs*:...The symbolic meaning of a new creation of mankind by Jesus risen from the dead was probably an invention of later times. The custom may have its origins in *paganism*, for a great many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring, *gravitated to Easter*. The egg is the emblem of the germinating life of early spring...

"*The Easter rabbit* lays the eggs, for which reason they are hidden in a nest or in the garden. The *rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been* an emblem of fertility (Simrock, *Mythologie*, 551)....

"*The Easter fire* is lit on the top of mountains (Easter mountain, Osterberg) and must be kindled from new fire, drawn from wood by friction..., this is a *custom of pagan origin* in vogue all over Europe, signifying the victory of spring over winter. The Bishops issued severe edicts against the sacrilegious Easter fires..., but did not succeed in abolishing them everywhere. *The Church adopted the observance into the Easter ceremonies*, referring it to the fiery column in the desert and to the Resurrection of Christ; a new fire on Holy Saturday is drawn from flint, symbolizing the Resurrection by the Light of the World from the tomb closed by a stone" (ibid).

What a shocking admission! Notice that even the Catholics admit that the origins of Easter, and even the *name itself*, are totally PAGAN! The rabbit is a PAGAN symbol! It is an emblem of FERTILITY!

Easter fires, lit on the top of mountains, are "customs of *pagan origin*"

"The church adopted the observance into the Easter ceremonies"! Could anything be plainer? Let's continue with the same source:

"*First phase* [of the Easter Controversy]: .The *dioceses* of all *Asia*, as from an *older tradition*, held that the *fourteenth day of the moon*, on which day the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the lamb, *should always be observed* as the feast of the life-giving pasch [Passover]..., contending that the fast ought to end on that day, whatever day of the week it might happen to be. However, it was not the custom of the churches in the rest of the world to end it at this point, as they observed the practice, which from apostolic tradition has prevailed to the present time, of terminating the fast on no other day than on that of the

resurrection of our Saviour. Synods and assemblies of bishops were held on this account, and all with one consent through mutual correspondence drew up an ecclesiastical *decree* that the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord should be celebrated on no other day but the Sunday and that we should observe the close of the paschal fast on that day only. [No such fast is mentioned in the Bible.]...

“A letter of Saint Irzneus is among the extracts just referred to, and this shows that the diversity of practice regarding Easter had existed at least from the time of Pope Sixtus (c. 120). Further, Iræneus states that St. Polycarp, who, like the other Asiatics, *kept Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon*, whatever day of the week that might be, *following the tradition which he claimed to have derived from St. John the apostle*, came to Rome (c. 150) about this very question, but could not be persuaded by Pope Anicetus to relinquish his Quartodeciman observance., .The question thus debated was therefore primarily whether Easter was to be kept on a Sunday, or whether Christians should observe the holy day of the Jews, the fourteenth of Nisan, which might occur on any day of the week. Those who kept Easter with the Jews were called *Quartodecimatzs...*” (ibid., emphasis added).

Again, it must be noted in this lengthy quotation from *The Catholic Encyclopedia* that they have subtly *substituted* “Easter” for the “Passover.” What Polycarp observed “like the other Asiatics” was not EASTER! It was the PASSOVER, on the fourteenth of Nisan, as all the apostles had kept it.

That they admit he kept a great event “on the fourteenth day of the moon, whichever day of that week that might be, *following the tradition which he claimed to have derived from St. John the apostle*” -absolutely proves that the festival Polycarp (who was a student of John) kept was not “Easter,” but THE PASSOVER!

In the final paragraph of the quotation, the distinction is subtly drawn between “Christians” and “Jews.” Another obvious and flagrant misapplication of terms is the final quote: “Those who kept Easter *with the Jews* were called Quartodecimans....” Nonsense! They were called Quartodecimans because they kept the Passover—and absolutely shunned the pagan “Ishtar” (pronounced “Easter”) being adopted by an apostate, increasingly pagan church!

Notice further: “*Second Phase*: The second stage in the Easter controversy centers round the council of Nicæa (A.D. 325)....The emperor himself [Constantine], writing to the churches after the council of Nicæa, exhorts them to adopt its conclusions and says among other things: ‘At this meeting the question concerning the most holy day of Easter was discussed, and it was resolved by the united judgment of all present that this feast ought to be kept by all and in every place on one and the same day...And first of all 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...for we have received from our Saviour a different way... and I myself have undertaken that this decision should meet with the approval of your sagacities in the hope that your wisdoms will gladly admit that practice which is observed at once in the city of Rome and in Africa, throughout Italy and Egypt....with entire unity of judgment.’ From this and other indications.. .we learn that

the dispute now lay between the Christians of Syria and Mesopotamia and the rest of the world. The important Church of Antioch was still dependent upon the *Jewish calendar* for its Easter” (ibid., emphasis added).

Remember, these lengthy quotations are from *The Catholic Encyclopedia!* Constantine was a reformed *sun-worshiper!* When he embraced “Christianity” he embraced the so-called Christianity of the leading bishops who had already gone apostate! He did not embrace the Christianity practiced by those who were “holding fast to the faith once delivered to the saints,” and who tenaciously refused to change the observance of one of the most important annual holy days Jesus Christ ever hallowed, the Passover!

Notice, in the quotation above of Constantine’s exhortation to the churches after the Council of Nicæa, that he, too, showed disdainful contempt for “the Jews” (who are accused of having “impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin”) and repudiates the “practice of the Jews,” meaning the observance of the Passover (the Lord’s Supper, as the apostle Paul began to refer to it) on the fourteenth of Nisan, as it had been observed for centuries!

At the end of the quotation concerning the development of keeping Easter in the Catholic Church, the encyclopedia admits “the important Church of Antioch was still dependent upon the Jewish calendar for its Easter.” Again, a confusion of terms may be misleading to readers.

By no stretch of the imagination were the converted brethren in Antioch, in Syria, who were dependent upon “the Jewish calendar” (meaning Abib, or Nisan, 14), keeping “Easter.” By tenaciously adhering to the fourteenth of Nisan, it is clear they were observing the Passover!

Notice now the next quotation: “Third Phase: It was to the divergent cycles which Rome had successively adopted and rejected in its attempt to determine Easter more accurately that the third stage in the paschal controversy was mainly due. The Roman missionaries coming to England in the time of St. Gregory the Great found the British Christians, the representatives of that Christianity which had been introduced into Britain during the period of the Roman occupation, still adhering to an ancient system of Easter-computation which Rome itself had laid aside” (ibid., emphasis added).

What a fantastic admission!

Here we read of “Roman missionaries” arriving in the British Isles from Rome, yet discovering Christians in the British Isles adhering to the very same system of determining the date for the Passover as had always been observed by the early New Testament church!

Few have stopped to speculate on *where* all the other apostles mentioned in the Gospels *went*. Most disappear from sight, and the Bible quickly begins concerning itself with the ministries of, first, the apostle Paul, and then to some extent Peter and John. But what ever happened to Thomas, Simon the Canaanite, Mathias (who replaced Judah Iscariot), Andrew (Peter’s brother), James the son of Alphæus (not the son of Zebedee), Bartholomew, and others?

Jesus plainly said He would “send them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”! Is it strange, then, that peoples in faraway lands had been converted to true Christianity, and

were observing God's annual holy days on precisely the correct dates, which actually created a controversy with Roman missionaries?

Now, under the article "Councils" in The Catholic Encyclopedia, notice one of the most important purposes for the Council of Nicæa:

"The First Ecumenical, or Council of Nicæa (325) lasted two months and twelve days. Three hundred and eighteen bishops were present. Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, assisted as legate of Pope Sylvester. The Emperor Constantine was also present. To this council we owe the Creed.. of Nicæa, defining against Arius the true divinity of the Son of God and the fixing of the date for keeping Easter (against the Quartodecimans)."

Hot-Cross Buns

Have you ever eaten a "hot- cross" bun?

At Easter one may go to the local bakeries, or the bakery counters of supermarkets, and see them by the dozen. They are served in restaurants and cafeterias.

The little rounded buns, with their quaint little sugar-coated crosses, evoke memories of childhood; and to unsuspecting crosses are *believed* to represent the "cross of Christ."

How *shocking* to discover that hot-cross buns find their origins in *paganism!*

Notice what history has to say about the origin of "hot-cross buns":

"It is quite probable that it [the word *bun*] has a far older and more interesting origin, as is suggested by an inquiry into the origin of hot cross buns. These cakes, which are *now* solely associated with the Christian Good Friday, are traceable to the remotest period of *pagan history*. Cakes were offered by ancient Egyptians to their moon goddess; and these had imprinted on them a pair of horns, symbolic of the ox at the sacrifice of which they were offered on the altar, or of the horned moon goddess, the equivalent of *Ishtar* of the Assyro-Babylonians. The Greeks offered such sacred cakes to Astarte [Easter] and other divinities. This cake they called *bous* (ox), in allusion to the ox-symbol marked on it, and from the accusative *boun* it is suggested that the word 'bun' is derived....Like the Greeks, the Romans eat cross-bread at public sacrifices, such bread being usually purchased at the doors of the temple and taken in with them,—a custom alluded to by St. Paul in I Cor. x.28. At Herculaneum two small loaves about 5 in. in diameter, and plainly marked with a cross, were found. In the Old Testament are references made in Jer. vii.18-xliv.19, to such sacred bread being offered to the moon goddess. The cross-bread was eaten by the pagan Saxons in honor of *Eoster*, their goddess of light. The Mexicans and Peruvians are shown to have had a similar custom. The custom, in fact, was practically universal, and the early church adroitly *adopted the pagan practice, grafting* it on to the Eucharist. The *boun* with its Greek cross became akin to the Eucharistic bread or cross-marked wafers mentioned in St. Chrysostom's *liturgy*. In the medieval church, buns made from the dough for the consecrated Host were to be distributed to the communicants after mass on Easter Sunday. In France and other Catholic countries, such blessed bread is still given in the churches to communicants who have a long journey before they can break their fast" (*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, eleventh edition, article "bun").

Interesting reading, isn't it? But *how many* of your friends and relatives have ever taken the time and trouble to simply go to a public library and *read* such *shocking admissions!*

Remember, this is not someone's "church doctrine" you are reading; it is not the clever arguments of someone trying to confuse your mind and "trap" you into observing some strange customs! Instead, you are reading direct quotations from historians!

That certain Easter customs have pagan roots is a matter of authoritative, historical fact! Almighty God soundly condemns the entire practice in the Bible!

Of course, if there is no God the plaintive cries of "I don't see what difference it makes," or "Why should we take away such joyous occasions from the children?" seem to make sense.

But, since there is a God, and since that Eternal Creator God is righteously angry at instilling pagan customs in the minds of our children—it does make a difference!

God says: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, it is a sin." *Once you know the truth, you become responsible for it.*

It is knowledge that, while readily available in any number of historical sources, *is not known* by the vast majority of humankind!

Millions of churchgoing professing Christians are blissfully ignorant of these startling facts!

Now, *you* know!

God, from heaven, wants to know what you are going to do with this knowledge. Write for and study the free materials offered in this brochure: *Facts You Should Know About Christmas, God's Seasonal Plan, and Sunday, Saturday...What Difference Does It Make?*

About the Church of God International

This literature is published by the Church of God International, based in Tyler, Texas. Incorporated in 1978, the CGI has ministers and congregations scattered throughout the United States and Canada. We also have churches in Jamaica, the Philippines, and Australia.

The CGI's mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world (Matthew 28:19). We are blessed with four basic tools to accomplish this:

- 1. Personal and local church evangelism.*
- 2. Television and radio broadcasting.*
- 3. Booklets, brochures, and study tapes.*
- 4. The Internet.*

How You Can Help

All our materials and services are offered to the public free of charge. Many naturally ask us how we can afford to send out thousands of booklets and study tapes each month. The answer is simple.

On a regular basis, prayerful friends and members of the Church of God International voluntarily support us with tithes and offerings to further the advancement of the gospel to the world. No financial obligation is ever demanded, but if you are moved to support this work of God, donations are gratefully accepted at the addresses listed. (Contributions in the United States and Canada are tax deductible.) Giving to and through us is an effective way for people like you to help spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For Further Information

If you would like to visit a CGI congregation, or if you would simply like to speak with a CGI minister or representative with any questions you may have, feel free to write or call us. We will be delighted to serve you in any way possible.

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Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!