

**DYNAMIC
MULTI DISCIPLINARY
JOURNAL OF NIGERIA**

ISSN: 2955-0564

VOL. 3 NO. 1, 2023

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EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT OF EASTER THEOLOGY CONTROVERSY WITH EMPHASIS ON THE END TIME CHURCHES

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Abstract

This paper examines the theological controversies surrounding the observance of Easter by the Roman Catholic Church with historical facts, the Orthodox Churches and the Protestant Churches. The paper views Easter as a resurrection from the German word 'ausferstehung'. Though the Greeks and Hebrews coin it from 'Pascha'/'Pesach' to mean Passover. The paper took guidance from the scriptures as to how, if at all, the Church is to celebrate the resurrection. The paper examines the controversies and the Nicaea council's ruling which had an ulterior motives of distancing the church from its Jewish roots as against the publicized motive of unity. The paper concludes that the church must not depart from Biblical truth in celebrating Easter and recommends accordingly that the end time churches should look at the Gospel and its history rather than the stars for its times of festival worship of Ishtar. Weeping for Tammuz for 40 days before the great festival of Ishtar/Easter was replaced by Christian 40 days to commensurate 40 days of Jesus Christ fasting/lent before Easter should be used to fast and seek the face of God for mercy. This paper admonishes Christians should allow the grant of a holiday by

the government of the nation in recognition of Jesus' resurrection should not go without good use of it for any spiritual retreat, since it has been governmentally approved.

Keywords: Christians, Celebration, Holiday, Easter, Gospel

Introduction

The prelude to the Easter celebration might be traced from the onset of the saviour's mortal ministry, even though His death and resurrection were certainly foreordained (Revelation 13:8, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"). As soon as his earthly ministry commenced, Jesus began to point toward his death and resurrection. John highlighted Jesus' first prediction of His Sacrifice and Resurrection. Jesus cleansed the temple of the money changers, after which a contingent of defiant Jews challenged His authority and power by asking Him for a sign. His metaphoric response - "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 1:19) - must have left them wondering. The Jews misinterpreted his comment as if it referred to Herod's monumental temple. John however, parenthetically inserted that Jesus' disciples remembered this prediction later after he had risen from the dead and had shown them his body. So from John, we receive a very early reference to the anticipated Easter event.

As the ministry of Jesus unfolded, so did the predictions of his death and Resurrection. Matthew records that during his Galilean teaching, Jesus fielded questions about signs twice (Matthew 12:39-45; 16:1-4). He answered his inquiries that no sign would be given to unbelievers except the sign that was given to Jonah of three days in darkness. Not long after this, He told His disciples twice that the son of man- a prophetic circumlocution that was unclear to some of those who heard it- would be killed and raised again on the third day (Matthew 16:21-

22; 17:22-23). At the Mount of Transfiguration, heavenly messengers spoke to Jesus of his death, and also his resurrection (Luke 9:31). John recorded that, following the feast of the Tabernacles, Jesus said that the Father loved the son because He offered His own life and that He had the power to take it up again (John 10:17-18). All the predictions preceded the final week of Jesus' life and directed His believers towards the Quintessential Easter morning. Yet these predictions were neither comprehensive nor comprehended by all. A few weeks before His resurrection, Jesus prefigured that miraculous moment. In a highly publicized miracle, Jesus raised a friend from death and commanded that his friend, Lazarus, to leave his tomb. During the process, He declared to all assembled; "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). The miracle had a magnetic effect upon His followers so that when Jesus later entered Jerusalem, they flocked to see him. Once again He taught them of His imminent death and resurrection after three days (Matthew 20:19). And finally, after the last supper, the Lord reminded His disciples that though He would be smitten, He would rise again. Although Peter presumably faltered during the difficult hours of Jesus' trial, it seems apparent that he and the other disciples were repeatedly taught of Jesus' death and resurrection. The first Easter thus did not occur unannounced.

And yet, when Easter morning dawned, the believers appear to have been stunned by the reality of the timing of the Resurrection. Both John and Luke recorded that as disciples encountered the risen Lord or evidence of his Resurrection with emotional resistance. Jesus' rebuke to them was pointed: "o' fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken I ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:25-26). As He revealed Himself to them and "their eyes were opened" (Luke 24:31), He commissioned them to carry forward the glorious news of that first Easter with the words: "as My father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). In another passage, He proclaimed; "Thus it beloved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day..... And ye are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:46, 48).

So the event and moment of Easter became the singular message of early Christianity. This paper, therefore, examines the controversies surrounding Easter theology with particular attention to the end-time churches. The paper is divided into five sections; the formation of Easter as a religious Holiday; guidance from the scripture as to how, if at all, the church is to celebrate the Resurrection; Easter controversies focusing on the Quartodeciman position in the context of the council of Nicaea and Nicaea's resulting decision concerning the need for a uniform date on which to celebrate Easter, the paper also examines the disputes that remained within the Church concerning the Observance of Easter after Nicaea, notwithstanding the attempt at reaching full unity on the issue, finally the paper looks at the impact of these disputes on the question of when to celebrate Easter on the End time Churches.

The Formation of Easter as a Religious Holiday

The early Christian Church developed many traditions and celebrations to commemorate the central event of that Easter morning (Keith, 2006). The first historical mention of Easter as an annual event did not occur until the late second century (Danbury, 2005). There is however, evidence from the New Testament that the Early Apostles shifted their Sabbath from the Seventh day to the first day of the week to commemorate the Resurrection on a weekly basis. Both John and Luke note that Christ's followers met together on "the first day of the week" (John 20:19; Acts 20:7; John 20:26). Luke also adds that the disciples were there to "Break Bread". The reason for this abrupt shift seems to be the miraculous Resurrection, each Sabbath day for those earliest Christians was either a commemoration of or a reflection on the Easter Miracle. Early Christian Apologists like Justin Martyr and Tertullian corroborate the celebration of Easter every Sunday in the Christian congregation of the second Century (Keith, 2006). Eventually, these weekly commemorations appear to have melded into one annual Easter celebration. Early Church Irenaeus

documented this annual celebration as he wrote against the dogmatic Position of Bishop Victor of Rome, who demanded that Easter be affixed to only one day (Irenaeus favoured a date that coincided with the Jewish Passover). The fallout from the exchange confirms that by about AD 160, the Christian community had adopted a single annual tradition (Keith 2006; Danbury 2005). The Christian community was however far from unified concerning the date of Easter.

In the 2nd and 3rd Centuries, controversies Surfaced over which day of the week and which calendar to prefer for situating the Easter Observance. In Rome, the first Sunday after Nisan 14 (Passover) became the Christian feast of Easter (Danbury, 2005). Others opted for a stronger paschal connection and insisted on the Jewish Passover as the exact date (these people were called “Quartodecimans”) finally, those in Syria and Mesopotamia insisted on following the Spring Equinox upon which the Jewish Passover was calculated, thereby removing the need to base Easter on the annual Jewish announcement of the date of Passover. The council of Nicaea Ostensibly settled the controversy when it decreed in AD 325 that Easter should be on the first Sunday after the Paschal moon, which could not precede the vernal Equinox. In Practical terms, this meant that Easter Sunday could fall on any one of the thirty-Six days between March 21 and April 25 (Keith 2006).

Overlooked in this fiat was a decision about which calendar would be the standard. Alexandria and the Eastern churches chose the Julian calendar, while Western Christians selected the Gregorian calendar. These differences have persisted for thousands of years and account for the modern discrepancies between Eastern and Western Christian dates for Easter. During the first few centuries of early Christianity, the term Easter did not yet exist. Early Christians referred to Easter simply as Paschal, the Greek term for the Hebrew word 'Pesach' or Passover. In Latin and Romance languages, the word for Easter is still a derivation of the Hebrew word Pesach. In the English and Germanic Cultures, the earliest mention of the word

Easter comes from the English historian Saint Bede the Venerable. Writing in the eighth century, Bede claimed the term Easter referred originally to a pagan holiday centred on the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre, celebrating both spring and fertility. He buttressed his account by citing a provocative letter from Pope Gregory I. In this letter, the pontiff suggested that missionary work among the heathens would improve if pagan holidays were synchronized with the Christian celebrations.

These assertions lead to the widespread conclusion that Easter had its origins in a Pagan fertility rite (Keith, 2006). In recent years, a number of alternative explanations to the Pagan theory have arisen. Among them is the notion that Easter is the abbreviated form of the German word for resurrection, 'auferstehung'. Still, another explanation is that the early Church referred to Easter Week as 'white week' because the newly baptized members dressed in white clothes. The plural of 'white week' was very similar to the old German word for dawn, Eostarum. When this was translated into English, it became the word Easter. While the etymology of the English term Easter remains uncertain, we have evidence that the annual Christian festival was firmly established by the second century (Danbury, 2005).

Easter Practices developed from theological or liturgical moorings, while others emerged from a purely cultural context. The Orthodox, Roman and Protestant branches of Christianity also heavily influenced the emerging traditions of Easter. As a result, there were traditions to mark Easter a period of fasting and penitence was instituted as early as the fourth century. Known as Lent, this period was intended to purify the believer before the actual celebration of Easter and to serve as a reminder of the saviour's forty day fast in the wilderness. Following Easter, a fifty-day period of celebration known as Eastertide commenced and concluded with Pentecost (Kirth, 2006)

In all, ninety days of the calendar year either anticipated or reminded the believers of this important day. Christian Churches

today usually begin the Lenten period of fasting with a celebration called Ash Wednesday. Ashes are placed on the forehead of believers to symbolize Penitence. Fasting has often given way to various forms of self-denial during these five weeks. The last week of Lent is called Holy Week.

The Sunday before Easter commemorates Jesus' triumphal return to Jerusalem before the Passover, known as Palm Sunday. Many Churches today re-enact His triumphal entry by bringing palm fronds to their services. Four days later many churches observe Maundy Thursday, also called Holy Thursday. This remembrance recalls the evening of the last supper and particularly emphasizes the washing of the disciples' feet. It was at that ancient event that Jesus commanded His Apostles to serve one another. The term 'Maundy' means "mandate" or "commandment"

For the end-time churches, the Friday before Easter is the most important pre-Easter event. Known as Good Friday, this day highlights the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Generally, there is a worship service at midday followed by a period of fasting and contemplation. Orthodox churches and many Spanish-speaking countries re-enact the procession of the cross. Often these same communities designate Good Friday as a public holiday. The day before Easter Sunday is called Holy Saturday. On this day, Catholics commemorate Jesus' death in the tomb with a worship service known as the Great Vigil or watch. The gathering occurs after nightfall and contrasts candlelight with darkness to symbolize the darkness of Jesus's death and the great light of His Resurrection. The services generally follow a precise schedule so that as midnight strikes all the candles are from one great paschal candle.

As was the custom from early times, modern Great Vigil services often include new baptisms and the dressing of cleansed individuals in white clothing. After the Easter mass, the service concludes with exultant music and celebrations (Hinckley, 2017). A common Easter greeting is then shared with fellow worshippers—"Christ is raised!"- To which the greeted individual

responds, 'He is risen indeed!' For Catholics, Easter culminates Sunday night at midnight. However, for Protestants, Easter means Sunday morning services. Many of these begin before sunrise on a hilltop and re-enact the New Testaments narratives of the empty tomb and the appearances of the resurrected Lord.

Protestants have generally been more conservative in their Easter celebrations. While wide variations of Easter celebrations exist, Protestants with Puritan roofs generally favour very modest expressions. On the other hand, the civil war elevated Easter Sunday among American protestants because it became customary to remember the casualties on this day (Shipps, 1998). In modern times, Easter commemorations have assumed an interdenominational nature.

Many of the popular Easter customs have become a blend of the sacred remembrances of Christ's Resurrection and the secular celebration of spring. Some of the more prevalent religious symbols are the empty cross, the lamb, and the Easter Egg (Shipps 1998). The empty cross often projects the protestant view that Jesus rose from His death; it symbolises His ultimate victory. The Lamb ties most Christians to both the Passover symbolism of the Pascal Lamb and the New Testament Appellation of Jesus as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29). Some Christians eat lamb as part of the Easter feast, while others hang up pictures of lambs or bake lamb-shaped cakes. Perhaps the most universal symbol of end-time Easter celebrations is the Easter egg. Distained by some as a pagan perversion and enthroned by others as a symbol of new life, the Easter egg probably had much milder origins. During the ancient practice of lent, eggs were one of the forbidden foods. So when Easter dawned and those proscriptions were lifted, early Christians greeted each other with an egg as a gift. By the 13th century, these eggs were war coloured and decorated; in imperial Russia, the egg custom was elevated to include precious objects decorated like eggs and adorned with jewels. While other explanations abound, such as the egg symbolising new life or the worship of spring, the Lent fasting explanation is well documented and appears to have a historical footing

(Shipps, 1998; Hickley, 2017).

On the other side the spectrum is those Easter symbols and customs with a definite secular flavour. Among these are the Easter bunny; Mardi Gras, or Shrove Tuesday, and Easter promenades. For many, the Easter bunny tops the list of secular and commercial Easter customs. As with most modern traditions, however, the Easter Bunny probably did have legitimate Easter roots. One plausible explanation ties this practice to Protestants in the 19th century Europe. As a reaction to the Catholic practice of fasting, and giving eggs as gifts, protestants supposedly created a rabbit that laid the eggs, decorated them, and hid them (Hinckley, 2017). Shrove Tuesday or “confession Tuesday” (Mardi Gras in French), stands as another example of a wandering tradition. To begin a forty-day period of fasting in preparation for Easter, Christians created a day to revel and party. The result was a non-religious week of revelry and licentiousness.

Finally, the Easter promenade has become a prominent walk on Easter Sunday to display the new clothes purchased especially for Easter (the most pretentious of these is the New York City around the Fifth Avenue area). Yet, this custom seems to have a religious heritage. In the early church, congregants baptised on Easter Sundays were dressed in new white clothes to symbolise their purity and rebirth. Quite likely, this practice merged with the commercialism of modern times to surface in the purchase of new clothes for Easter and the desire to display them. In some European countries, “these promenades are led by a person holding a cross or an Easter candle (Keith, 2006).

While many Easter traditions and customs seem far removed from Easter, most of them are a blend of religious traditions with modern culture. It is amazing how diverse Easter traditions have become. But considering their over two thousand years of historical development, perhaps these traditions demonstrate the deep need for devout Christians everywhere to remember the miracle of resurrection.

The Easter Festival from a New Testament Point of View

For the purposes of this paper: While the scriptures seem quite clear as to when the Resurrection occurred, the third day following Jesus' death during a Passover feast, it is remarkable that nowhere in the scriptures is the Resurrection and the Passover, enjoined upon the church as a separate festival, or feast day, to be observed indeed, Jesus only command to his disciples about a continuing observance of His directive that after His death, the disciples break bread and drink wine together "in remembrance of me" (Mathew 26:26-28). While the early church may well have observed some of all of these during the church's formative period when there were uncertainties as to which commandments of the law, if any, had continued validity (Bradshaw and Hoffman, 1999), the Jewish members of the church could defensibly continue to observe such feasts but as a matter of compulsion, but:

- i. With the enhanced perception that these prophetic feasts were fulfilled in Christ; and
- ii. As a testimony to their non-believing Jewish brethren.

Nicaea and The Separation of Easter from Passover

Among several controversies concerning the proper date on which to observe the Lord's resurrection as a Christian holiday, perhaps the most interesting is the so-called Quartodeciman controversy. The term "Quartodeciman" is simply the Latin word for the ordinal "fourteenth" (Bradshaw and Hoffman, 1999), and in this context refers to the 14th day of Nisan. Nisan, in turn, is the first month in the Jewish lunar calendar (Stewart-Skyes, 1998), and the day of that month ordained to Israel by God for the killing of the Passover Lamb, thus making the commencement of the Passover feast (Exodus 12:6; Leviticus 23:5-6; Exodus 12:18).

The Quardrodecimans were those who asserted that because Jesus was killed on a Passover, any church festival celebrating His death, and thus, upon breaking the fast, His resurrection, must be tied to the Jewish Lunar calendar as movable feasts. Accordingly, they looked to the date set each year by the Rabbis in Jerusalem for the commencement of the Passover and began their celebration of the passion at that time. Consequently, the passion celebration could fall on any day of the week, thus obviating the need to designate a “Maundy Thursday”, “Good Friday”, or even “Easter Sunday”. And if followed that when, overtime, a celebration of the passion and celebration of the Resurrection feast could fall on any day of the week, whether on the first day of the week, that is Sunday, or not. It is notable here that those holding to the so-called Quartodeciman view were not “Judaizers”, nor did they link their celebration of the Resurrection to the Jewish Passover as a basis for salvific justification or other legalistic reasons. Rather the Quatodeciman view as to when the Passion and Resurrection should be celebrated was the dominant view in the early church. This increases the number of Gentile members in the church, and alternative dates for the celebration of the Resurrection were advanced. The council of Nicaea condemned the view tying the celebration of the resurrection to the beginning at the Jewish Passover (Bradshaw of Hoffman, 1999).

There is no need for controversy as the date is clearly outlined in the law of Moses (Leviticus 23:4-8; Numbers 18:16-25; Deuteronomy 16:1-8). Moreover, the day Jerusalem celebrated its last Passover is equally not controversial (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16). When Jesus celebrated the Passover meals with His disciples; He shared that meal with them on 14 Nisan as the law also commanded. Similarly, there should be no controversy as the third day following His death, which the scriptures uniformly state fell on the first day of the week, i.e.; on the day we now call Sunday, in the particular year of His death (Matthew 28; Mark 16:1-2).

It is equally important to note here too that numbered Hebrew “days” were reckoned from twilight to twilight, not from midnight to midnight as we do. Thus Jesus ate the Passover meal in the evening- that is to say, at the start- of 14 Nisan; was betrayed

that same night; was tried and crucified the next morning; and died about the 9th hour, or 3:pm; of the daylight period of 14 Nisan. All these events, therefore, occurred during 14 Nisan itself because; they took place before the beginning of the twilight commencement of the next day, which were 15 Nisan.

Notwithstanding the clear language of the texts, the majority of Christians currently celebrate the last supper during the evening of the “Monday Thursday,” observe Jesus' death on “Good Friday”, and observe Fasting and Vigil on “Holy Saturday”. And celebrate the resurrection on “Easter Sunday”. They therefore apparently count “Good Friday” as the first of the “three nights”, on no calculation, however, can “three days and three nights” be found between Jesus' supposed death on a Friday and His resurrection on a Sunday (Brightman, 1924) There were several logical possibilities as how to observe a Death and resurrection feast as such, but three emerged initially as the principal options and each seemed to have some adherence at one time or another:

- i. Celebrating the resurrection as an integrated part of the sacrificial Passover meal on 14 Nisan;
- ii. Celebrating the resurrection as a separate event “on the third day” thereafter, regardless of the day of the week on which it fell; or
- iii. Celebrating the resurrection on the first still within the seven-day feast of unleavened bread begins on 15 Nisan and ending on 21 Nisan.

Since the Christian community-including both Gentiles and Jews-depended on the non-believing Jewish community to set the time for the church's central feast day, and that time was uncertain; apparently, none of this sat well with the ascendant authorities in the Roman church; and thus Constantine convened the first council of Nicaea in 325 AD to address, along with Arianism the differing times at which the paschal Passover was observed. They celebrated

in the churches of Asia on 14 Nisan to coincide with the Jewish Passover, it was celebrated in the churches of the west (centered then in Rome) on the Lord's Day following the Passover. To add to the complications, the relevant full moon, and hence the Easter Sunday to follow it, should not occur before the Vernal Equinox (Ferguson, 1993). While the nominal reason for fixing a single date for Easter was to achieve Unity in the church, the underlying motivation was plainly to distance the church from its Jewish roots.

Accordingly, the council did not limit itself to determining whether Easter should be observed the Sunday following the Passover rather than the Passover itself but further determined that Easter should not be linked to Passover at all. The council thus decreed that Easter should only be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon succeeding the Vernal Equinox (March 21), (Webster, 1995), and that it "should undergo no circumstances coincide with the Jewish Passover (And thus with the day of the paschal full or 14 Nisan happened to be on Sunday (Webster, 1995).

In all events, based on the council ruling, Easter would always occur at some point after the Jewish Passover; for example, if the full moon occurs on a Sunday, Easter is the Sunday after. By this arrangement, Easter may take place as early as March 22 or as late as April 25 (Webster, 1995). Because the Jewish Passover is keyed to a Lunar rather than Solar calendar, the church's Good Friday/Easter celebrations would henceforth only irregularly coincide with the Jewish Passover (Webster, 1995). The net result was that those who had previously focused their celebrations of the Lord's Death and Resurrection on 14 Nisan and/or the Sunday immediately following.- i.e, the Quartodecimans and Quasi-Quartodecimans were condemned as heretics by the council; and their practices essentially faded away (Ferguson, 1993). It would thus be fair to mark the decision of the Council of Nicaea as among the church's most purposeful and indefensible separations from its Jewish roots.

THEORY OF EASTER

For Christians, the origin of Easter is simply the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ about 2,000 years ago. According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus Christ, the true Messiah promised in the Old Testament, was crucified and resurrected at the time of the Jewish Passover. Since that awesome event took place, those who believe Christ as their Messiah have honoured that day and often celebrated it with the traditional Passover. As the Gospel of Christ spread throughout non-Jewish nations, among people who did not have a history of celebrating the Passover, the pagan rites of Easter gradually became assimilated into what the Christian church called "Resurrection Day." Compromising the commandments of God with the comfort of the world is as old as the nation of Israel itself. American history teaches us that Easter was dismissed as a pagan holiday by the nation's founding Puritans and did not begin to be widely observed until just after the Civil War. Those interested in a Christian view of American history and the gradual compromise of America's Biblical foundations may wish to read books such as *The Light and the Glory* by Peter Marshall and David Manuel

ORIGIN OF EASTER

The origin of Easter, a holiday associated with the observance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is based on an ancient pagan celebration. Christians recognize this day as commemorating the culminating event of their faith, but like many other "Christian" holidays, Easter has become commercialized and mixed with non-Christian traditions like the Easter Bunny, Easter parades and hunting for Easter eggs. How did this happen?

Easter is a day that is honoured by nearly all contemporary Christians and is used to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Easter holiday often involves a church service at sunrise, a feast which includes an "Easter Ham", decorated eggs and stories about rabbits.

Those who love truth learn to ask questions, and many questions must be asked regarding the holiday of Easter. Is it truly the day

when Jesus arose from the dead? Where did all of the strange customs come from, which have nothing to do with the resurrection of our Saviour?

The first thing we must understand is that professing Christians were not the only ones who celebrated a festival called "Easter". "Ishtar", which is pronounced "Easter" was a day that commemorated the resurrection of one of their gods that they called "Tammuz", who was believed to be the only begotten son of the moon-goddess and the sun god.

In those ancient times, there was a man named Nimrod, who was the grandson of one of Noah's sons named Ham. He had a son named Cush who married a woman named Semiramis. Cush and Semiramis then had a son named "Nimrod." After the death of his father, Nimrod married his mother and became a powerful King. The Bible tells of this man, Nimrod, in Genesis 10:8-10: "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Nimrod became a god-man to the people and Semiramis, his wife and mother, became the powerful Queen of ancient Babylon. Nimrod was eventually killed by an enemy, and his body was cut in pieces and sent to various parts of his kingdom. Semiramis had all of the parts gathered, except for one part that could not be found.

That missing part was his reproductive organ. Semiramis claimed that Nimrod could not come back to life without it and told the people of Babylon that Nimrod had ascended to the sun and was now to be called "Baal", the sun god.

Queen Semiramis also proclaimed that Baal would be present on earth in the form of a flame, whether candle or lamp when used in worship. Semiramis was creating a mystery religion, and with the help of Satan, she set herself up as a goddess.

Semiramis claimed that she was immaculately conceived. She taught that the moon was a goddess that went through a 28-day cycle and ovulated when full. She further claimed that she came down from the moon in a giant moon egg that fell into the Euphrates

River. This was to have happened at the time of the first full moon after the spring equinox.

Semiramis became known as "Ishtar" which is pronounced "Easter", and her moon egg became known as "Ishtar's" egg." Ishtar soon became pregnant and claimed that it was the rays of the sun god Baal that caused her to conceive. The son that she brought forth was named Tammuz.

Tammuz was noted to be especially fond of rabbits, and they became sacred in the ancient religion because Tammuz was believed to be the son of the sun-god, Baal. Tammuz, like his supposed father, became a hunter. The day came when Tammuz was killed by a wild pig. Queen Ishtar told the people that Tammuz was now ascended to his father, Baal and that the two of them would be with the worshippers in the sacred candle or lamp flame as Father, Son and Spirit.

Ishtar, who was now worshipped as the "Mother of God and Queen of Heaven", continued to build her mystery religion. The queen told the worshippers that when Tammuz was killed by the wild pig, some of his blood fell on the stump of an evergreen tree, and the stump grew into a full new tree overnight. This made the evergreen tree sacred by the blood of Tammuz.

She also proclaimed a forty day period of time of sorrow each year prior to the anniversary of the death of Tammuz. During this time, no meat was to be eaten. This was where the idea of refusal to eat meat on Good Friday mixed with the Friday that Jesus died. Worshippers were to meditate upon the sacred mysteries of Baal and Tammuz, and to make the sign of the "T" in front of their hearts as they worshipped. They also ate sacred cakes with the marking of a "T" or cross on the top.

Every year, on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, a celebration was made. It was Ishtar's Sunday and was celebrated with rabbits and eggs. Ishtar also proclaimed that because Tammuz was killed by a pig, that a pig must be eaten on that Sunday. by Rev. Aaron Eime 2018; CMJ Isreal 2020

The truth is that Easter has nothing whatsoever to do with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We also know that Easter can be as much as three weeks away from the Passover, because the pagan holiday is always set as the first Sunday after the first full

moon after the spring equinox.

Some have wondered why the word "Easter" is in the King James Bible. It is because of Acts 12:1-4. Tells us that it was the evil King Herod, who was planning to celebrate Easter, and not the Christians. The true Passover and pagan Easter sometimes coincide, but in some years, they are a great distance apart.

So much more could be said, and we have much more information for you if you are a seeker of the truth. We know that the Bible tells us in John 4:24, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth."

The truth is that the forty days of Lent, eggs, rabbits, hot cross buns and the Easter ham have everything to do with the ancient pagan religion of Mystery Babylon. Satan is a master deceiver and has filled the lives of well-meaning, professing Christians with idolatry.

These things bring the wrath of God upon children of disobedience, who try to make pagan customs of Baal worship Christianity. You must answer for your activities and for what you teach your children.

These customs of Easter honour Baal, who is also Satan, and is still worshipped as the "Rising Sun" and his house is the "House of the Rising Sun". How many churches have "sunrise services" on Ishtar's day and face the rising sun in the East? How many will use colored eggs and rabbit stories, as they did in ancient Babylon.

These things are no joke, any more than Judgment day is a joke. I pray to God that this book will cause you to search for more truth. We will be glad to help you by providing more information and by praying for you.

These are the last days, and it is time to repent, come out and be separate.

LESSON FROM EASTER

If King Herod celebrates Easter and the Jewish equally celebrate Passover, the celebration of King Herod is of idol worshipping of istar that is pronounced to be Easter in other of historical facts of Semirammis and the death of Tammuz which was considered to be an act of idol worship.

While the Jewish celebration of Passover is after the order of Moses and Israelite deliverance from King Pharaoh which are to be

celebrated by Jewish costume in remembrance of their great deliverance based on religious rites. The usual date of the celebration of Passover and Easter is usually and occasionally fell with each other time and period.

The Christians of the old usually celebrate resurrection Sunday with the belief that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Passover festival; a celebration of Jewish.

The fact remains that in order to eradicate Ishtar and Jewish Passover the actual date approved by the State Government for celebrating Easter and Jewish Passover is replaced by Christians of the old to celebrate the Resurrection Sunday festival called Easter. Since it is the name that is retained but the activities of celebrating are after JESUS' resurrection it should not be considered idol worshipping.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that no ultimate doctrine turns on whether Jesus died on a Thursday or a Friday; whether the Resurrection should be celebrated once a year or every time communion is served; or whether, if celebrated once a year in a special way, that celebration must be tied to a third day following a celebration of the Passover by ancient, medieval or modern-day Jews; and nothing in this paper is designed to suggest otherwise. The relevance of the kind of divergence from the scriptural texts noted above, however, is that it demonstrates that the church has departed from a reasonably clear Biblical interpretation of these events, and in particular from their historic and calendrical ties to the Jewish Passover

This historical record described above, measured against the scriptures, thus lays bare a series of errors in the early church. Not only did the council of Nicaea depart from what was in the early church the dominant time for the observance of the Lord's death and resurrection, it did so out of hostility to the Jews, thus doubly depriving its decision on that issue of any validity. Therefore, the church by persisting in the council's error and distancing itself from a Passover-linked festal calendar, at a minimum diminished, and for

some most likely lost, the historical and theological mornings of the resurrection. Further, while purporting to seek unity among the churches in the observance of the Resurrection, the council failed to achieve even that much, with the unjustifiable that the Western and Orthodox observances still diverse on the question, while deeply spiritual traditions such as those of the cats were suppressed and submerged.

Recommendations

1. As long as the celebration thought about the image of Christ it should be celebrated.
2. As long as the celebration is not done in the way Gentiles use to do it, is worthy of celebration.
3. Christians should allow the grant of a holiday by the government of the nation in recognition of Jesus's resurrection and should not go without good use of it for any spiritual retreat, since it has been governmentally approved.
4. Whether we approve of it or not, the world will always celebrate Easter religiously, so ministers of the gospel should use the occasion to win souls and build people for the kingdom of God.
5. Whether by pretence or sincerity, the worlds acknowledge the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. God allows the world to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a divine medium to preach the gospel so that nobody will be guiltless before Him.
6. Weeping for Tammuz for a period of 40 days prior to the great festival of Istar/Easter was replaced by Christian 40 days to commensurate 40 days of Jesus Christ fasting/lent before Easter should be used to fast and seek the face of God for mercy.
- 7 Let us take advantage of both Christmas and Easter celebrations to preach the Gospel of the kingdom to the world for their salvation. And spiritual retreat that will perfect the saint for better, excellent preparation and readiness to meet our Lord of glory
8. The water baptism introduced by John the Baptist is an ancient practice of ritual and mystery of Babylonian idols, religions and

traditions But God commanded it as an ordinance for Christianity.Math:21:25

9. Salvation by countless sacraments is also associated with sun god worship but again it became Jesus' commandment to all Christians to be observed as ordinances Math:26:26-26, Luke:22:19

10. Start Easter family traditions. Many families have Easter lunch together, but I'm thinking of more than that. Read the Easter story on Sunday morning, just as you do the Christmas story. Use old photographs to remember loved ones, and talk about the importance of resurrection hope. Bake Easter cookies for your neighbours. Serve a meal at a homeless shelter. Make holiday memories that your children will want to duplicate in their own families.

11. Send Easter cards or an Easter letter. We expect cards or family letters at Christmas, but not at Easter. This year, send a resurrection card to everyone on your Christmas card list. If you send an Easter family letter, focus more on Jesus than on your family. Talk about his love, his grace, his forgiveness, and his victory over death. Be sure to write about the hope you have in Christ.

12. Reach out to others who buried a loved one in the past year. Churches usually do well in ministering to grieving families at the time of death, but that ministry is not always lasting. Eventually, the loving crowds return to busy lives.

13. Learn about and pray for a people group who know nothing about Jesus' resurrection. Missionaries tell us that 2.8 billion people have little access to the gospel. They do not know the name of Jesus, much less the story of his conquering death. Learn about one of these people groups at www.joshuaproject.net, teach your children about them, and then pray they will hear the Easter story

14. Tell somebody what Jesus means in your life. As Christians, we know we need to be telling the gospel story. Why not tell others during the Easter season? Maybe you can approach someone this way: "I know a lot of folks think about going to church on Easter. May I have five minutes to tell you why this holiday is so important to me?" You might find somebody who has been waiting for some good news! Easter is about celebrating victory so honour God by celebrating what He's done through someone else's life.

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