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Subject: Easter

Easter is almost here! A day full of eggs, baskets, and bunnies; is it innocent fun? A celebration of the resurrection of Jesus? Or ^{is it} an ancient pagan holiday?

I can still remember receiving an Easter basket as a young boy. A big basket full of chocolate bunnies and other little "goodies," then there was the "quality time" I spent with my Mom coloring boiled eggs different colors.

I wasn't raised in a Christian home so I was never told about the "connection" between Easter and Jesus; although there are many people who would boast that they were taught about this supposed "connection." When I learned the truth about the origins of Easter I thought about how foolish I had been; but even worse, are those who have fallen for the lie that this is a Biblical holiday.

Haven't you ever wondered what's with the eggs and bunnies, and just what in the world do they have to do with Jesus? Jesus didn't celebrate Easter. None of His early Apostles celebrated Easter. So where did it come from? and how is it connected to Jesus' resurrection?

I. A Mistranslation Brings Misunderstanding

"Now about that time Herod the King stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) 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 King James Version

Some people think Easter is Biblical because of its mention in Acts 12:4 in the King James Version Bible; however, this is a very bad translation as all Bible dictionaries (that I have seen), lexicons, and even other Bible translations show. Only the KJV has "Easter" anywhere!

"Easter" was translated from the Greek word "pascha" which is found in the New Testament a total of 29 times. "pascha" never means "Easter"; instead, it means "Passover" and is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word, "pesach."

"Easter. This word appears only once in the KJV (Acts 12:4). It is used there as a translation of the Gr. word pascha, which is translated

"correctly as 'passover' in the 28 other places where it occurs in the N.T. Revisions of the KJV consistently translate pascha as 'passover' in all passages, including Acts 12:4 (cf. ASV, RSV, NEB). The English word 'Easter' is thought to be derived from the name of a Teutonic goddess of spring, Eastre, and to have been adapted by Christians to its present usage about the 8th cen. after Christ."

So if "Easter" shouldn't have been translated into the Bible, and if it has pagan origins, how is it that so many Christians celebrate Easter? Let's look at what another Bible dictionary says about "Easter":

"Pascha... mistranslated 'Easter' in Acts 12:4, KJV, denotes the passover... 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 pascha [Passover] held by Christians in post-apostolic times was a continuation of the Jewish feast... From this pascha

¹ Wycliffe Bible Dictionary, 1975, 2008; page 486

"[Easter] 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."²

The truth is, Easter celebration has definite pagan origins and is a violation of God's Word.

"When Yehovah your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship Yehovah your God in that way; for every abomination to Yehovah which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it." Deuteronomy 12:29-32

² Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, 1985, p. 192.

God absolutely hates being worshipped as if only a false god. He is the true God, the only living God who created the heavens and earth and everything in them. Would a man like for his wife to show affection to another man and then come and show the same affection to her husband? Definitely not! Well how much more does God want His bride to worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (cf. Jn. 4:23)

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul wrote about in Galatians 4:8-10

"But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years."

Unfortunately, many churches are teaching their congregations that the "weak and beggarly elements" are the laws of God in the Old Testament. God forbid!! The "weak and beggarly elements" are the pagan rituals these Galatians were doing when they "did not know God" (vs. 8).

Eggs and Rabbits were used as symbols of fertility by pagans thousands of years ago. They have absolutely nothing to do with Jesus Christ and the Gospel of salvation. The fact is, we as Christians, have strayed from the original teachings of Jesus and His Apostles and it's time for us to return.

We should never adopt a "care-free" attitude, as if, "I'm saved, I believe in Jesus therefore I can do anything I want." Such thinking comes from an either unsaved heart or an immature knowledge of God.

Beloved, God has given us every incentive to search our hearts and want to do those things which please God. We should never settle for being a "D" Christian (just passing). Let's thank God for giving us the gift of His Holy Spirit who encourages and inspires us to continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Move over Easter - Passover is back!

Shalom,

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