

Easter: Human Holiday, Not Holy Day

- What Easter Is
- It's History
- The Problem

The lesson is entitled, “**Easter: Human Holiday, Not Holy Day**”.

Some ask,

- “Why is it, that we do not have special Easter services?”
- “Don't we believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?”
- “Don't you want to honor Him, for that great and blessed event?”

Notice with me,

I. **What Easter Is To Many People**

To "Christendom", or to the Religious Society at large, who claim to be a Christian (scripturally or not) Easter is the Celebration, of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

However,

A. **Belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, & the Celebration of Easter, are not Same Thing!**

Early Christians firmly believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Bible says,

- “...that Christ **DIED** (death) for **OUR sins** according to the scriptures;
⁴ and that He was **BURIED** (burial), and that He **ROSE** (resurrection) again the third day, according to the scriptures.” ([1Cor.15:3-4](#))
- “Now if Christ be preached, that He **ROSE** from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?
¹³ But IF there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:
¹⁴ and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. ([1Cor.15:12-14](#))

The biblical text goes on to say,

- ¹⁵ Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that He **RAISED** up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.
¹⁶ For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:
¹⁷ and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.
¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep **IN** Christ, are perished.
¹⁹ **IF** in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are, of all men, most miserable.
²⁰ But now is Christ **RISEN** from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” ([1Cor.15:15-20](#))
- “Who was delivered for our offences, and was **RAISED** again for our justification.” ([Rom.4:25](#))

But, an "Easter" celebration, was unknown to the early christians of the first century.

Yes, early christians firmly believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and...

B. The First Day of the Week Worship, Honors the Resurrection of Christ

Notice these Bible passages...

- “Now when Jesus was **RISEN** early, the **FIRST DAY** of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.” ([Mk.16:9](#))
- “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord, in one place.” ([Acts 2:1](#))

The Bible says of Jesus,

- “Whom God hath **RAISED** up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. ²⁵ For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: ²⁶ therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: ²⁷ because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. ²⁸ Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

²⁹ Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

³⁰ Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would **RAISE** up Christ to sit on His throne; ³¹ he seeing this before, spake of the **RESURRECTION** of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. ³² This Jesus hath God **RAISED** up, whereof we all are witnesses.” ([Acts 2:24-32](#))

Peter said,

- “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have **CRUCIFIED**, both Lord and Christ.” ([Acts 2:36](#))

- “Then they that gladly **RECEIVED** His Word were **BAPTIZED**: and the same day there were **ADDED** unto them about three thousand **SOULS**.” ([Acts 2:41](#))
- “praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord **ADDED** to the church daily, such as should be **SAVED**.” ([Acts 2:47](#), references Acts 2:41)

Concerning the spiritual practice of remembering the Lord’s Death, Burial and Resurrection, Through the Lord’s supper (“break bread”), which was not a physical meal, The bible says it was,

- “upon the **FIRST DAY** of the week, when the **DISCIPLES** came together to **BREAK BREAD**, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” ([Acts 20:7](#))

A question, that all should ask themselves,

C. Is Easter from Heaven, or From Men?

That same question was asked regarding the subject of circumcision (Matt.21:25) But still a valid question, regarding the tradition of easter.

Consider with me, some thoughts concerning the,

II. History of Easter, as a Religious Holiday

Notice,

A. The Origin of the Name "Easter" or Eostre

In the past, there were various pagan spring festivals celebrated by different cultures. One of the most significant influences on the human tradition of Easter, is the Anglo-Saxon pagan festival of Eostre, dedicated to the spring goddess Eostre, whose symbols were the hare and the egg, representing fertility and rebirth. Some customs associated with Easter, such as the Easter bunny and egg hunts, originated from these pagan traditions.

B. Easter Represents the Convergence of Several Jewish and Pagan Festivals And Modifies Them as a protestant "Christian Tradition".

For example,

1. Lent

- Means "Spring", and is borrowed from the feast of weeks and Passover
- The Catholic church enforced observance of LENT after 800 AD.

2. Ash Wednesday

- Begins the forty-day Lenten season.

3. Palm Sunday

- Is the last Sunday before Easter, and the beginning of the so-called "holy week". I say, so-called because it is not found in scripture.
- It began to be practiced in the 4th century.

4. Maundy Thursday (or Holy Thursday)

- Is the foot-washing ceremony, which commemorated what Jesus did to His apostles, the night before His crucifixion.
- It began to be practiced in the 4th century, and is the Thursday before Easter.

5. Good Friday

- Originally referred to as "God's Friday", and is the Friday before Easter Sunday.
- According to human tradition, Good Friday refers to the day of Jesus' crucifixion, and marks the culmination of Jesus' earthly ministry, and the beginning of the Easter Triduum, which is a period of three days, and includes Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday.

6. Holy Saturday

- A day of waiting and anticipation, symbolizing the time between Jesus' death and resurrection.

7. Easter Sunday

- Is celebrated, as Christ's day of Resurrection.
- In A.D. 325, the Council of Nicaea set the date to the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the Spring Equinox.

The Problem with Easter is,

III. The Lack of Bible Authority

...Which means it was,

- From men, and NOT from Heaven ([Matt.21:25](#))

The Bible says that the spirit of lawlessness was “already at work” in the 1st century (read [2Thess.2:1-12](#)).

Easter is,

A. A Man-Made Religious Holiday

As Paul was **AFRAID** for the adoption of other days and times, by christians, **we should be also**.

- Paul said, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **ANOTHER** gospel: ⁷ which is not another; but there be some that **TROUBLE** you, and would **PERVERT** the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But though **WE** (the apostles of Christ in the 1st century) , or an **ANGEL** from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be **ACCURSED**.

⁹ As we said before, so say I now again, If any **MAN** preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be **ACCURSED**.

¹⁰ For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?

for **IF** I yet pleased **MEN**, I should **NOT** be the servant of **CHRIST**.” ([Gal.1:6-10](#))

- “Howbeit then, when ye knew **NOT** God, ye did service unto them which by nature, are **NO** gods. ⁹ But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage (of sin)? ¹⁰ Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. ¹¹ I am **AFRAID** of you, lest I have bestowed upon you, labour IN VAIN.” ([Gal.4:8-11](#))

And so, Paul, warned them to,

- “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. ([Gal.5:1](#))
- ⁵ For we through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. ⁶ For **IN** Jesus Christ, **NEITHER** circumcision availeth any thing, **NOR** uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. ([Gal.5:5-6](#))

To borrow from the language of Paul, one might rightly say that,

- “IN Christ, the human tradition of Easter, does not availeth any thing.”

Paul goes on to say,

- ⁷ Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should **NOT OBEY** the **TRUTH?**” ([Gal.5:5-7](#))

The problem with easter, is the Lack of Bible Authority.

B. The World does Not Dictate to the Lord's church, When the Resurrection will be Celebrated.

The early church did not wait till the next year's Passover.

- The Bible says, "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread (Lord's Supper), and in prayers." ([Acts 2:42f](#))

Nor did the early church wait until Passover, to celebrate the significance of His death.

The early church acted under the authority of Christ, to celebrate the blessings of His death, each and every first day of the week.

- God The Father, "hath put all things under His feet (that is, Christ), and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church," ([Eph.1:22](#))
- It was "upon the **FIRST DAY** of the week, when the **DISCIPLES** came together to **BREAK BREAD**..." ([Acts 20:7](#); read also [1Cor.11:23-33](#))

The priests, that offered gifts according to the old law, they served,

- "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou **make all things according to the pattern, shewed to thee** in the mount." ([Heb.8:5](#))

Paul said,

- "whatsoever ye **DO** in **WORD** (that is, do in teaching) or **DEED** (that is, do in practice), **DO** all **IN** the **Name** of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." ([Col.3:17](#))

To do something "In the Name of the Lord Jesus", is to do it by His authority (read [Acts 4:7](#); [Matt.28:18](#)).

- "Wherefore **IF** ye be **DEAD** with **CHRIST** (through Baptism – Rom.6:3-5), from the rudiments of the world, **WHY**, as though living in the world, are ye **subject** to **ORDINANCES**,²¹ (touch not; taste not; handle not; ²² which all are to perish, with the using;) **AFTER** the **commandments** and **doctrines** of **MEN**?" ([Col.2:20-22](#))

Jesus said regarding some,

- "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their **HEART IS FAR FROM ME**.⁹ But **in vain, they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**" ([Matt.15:8-9](#))

Easter is,

C. Calling on the Name of the Lord, Without His Approval

The Bible says that,

- “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:
¹² so that from his body, were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons,
and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

¹³ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists,
took upon them, to call over them, which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying,
We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

¹⁴ And there were seven sons, of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

¹⁶ And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them,
and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

¹⁷ And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus;
and fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.” (Acts 19:11-17)

May we learn from the things written aforetime (Rom. 15:4),
By remembering the mistakes of “the vagabond Jews”,
And the mistakes of the son’s of Aaron (Nadab and Abihu),
When they did that which God “Commanded them NOT” (Lev. 10:1-3).

IV. IN-CLOSING

The Lord’s church, will continue to celebrate the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus,
just as strongly **THIS Sunday** and **NEXT Sunday**.

From the Old Testament,

- “Remember the Sabbath” (Exodus 20:8-10)
- meant **EACH** and **EVERY** Sabbath.

Likewise in the New Testament,

- breaking bread on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7),
To Remember our Lord’s Death till He comes (1Cor. 11:23-33),
- means **EACH** and **EVERY**, first day of the week.

God forbid, that we let it become only, an annual tradition.

You know, the Bible says that all spiritual blessings are **IN** Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3).

Rom. 6:3-5 tells us that is accomplished, **IN** the likeness of HIS **Death, Burial, and Resurrection.**

- “Know ye not, that so many of us **AS** were **baptized INTO** Jesus Christ, were **baptized into** his **DEATH?**
⁴ Therefore we are **BURIED with** Him, by **baptism into DEATH:**
that like **AS** Christ was **RASIED** up from the **dead**, by the glory of the Father,
even so **we also** should **WALK** in **newness** of **LIFE.** ⁵ For **IF** we have been **planted TOGETHER**
IN the **likeness** of His **DEATH**, we shall be also **IN** the **likeness** of His **RESURRECTION:**”
(read also, Col. 2:12-13)

If you have a spiritual need, the Lord Invites you, and we await to assist you.
Don’t delay, come now, while together we stand and sing.

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