

Easter - The Counterfeit Passover  
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Every year some good Believers celebrate holidays which, although they seem to glorify *Elohim*<sup>1</sup>, are instead bad counterfeits originating in paganism and anti-Semitism. The purpose of this paper is to educate fellow believers about the pagan "holiday" of "Easter."

## **Pagan Origins**

The name "Easter" is the name of a pagan goddess variously called "Eostre", "Eastre", "Ishtar", "Ostarun" or "Ostera." Easter is the old Teutonic pagan Anglo-Saxon goddess of the spring. She is also referred to as "the goddess of fertility." Her name is the source from which the medical term "Estrous Cycle," which is associated with female biology, has been derived. This pagan goddess Easter then is associated with the giving of life, the regeneration of life in the spring, the giver of the fertile state to all creatures, etc.

For all these "gifts" given by this false goddess, a full month of feast and celebration was dedicated in the Spring of each year during the month of April (which was also called "Eostur-monath"). This feast and celebration was established and practiced long before the resurrection of Messiah *Yeshua* occurred in 33 C.E.

## **History**

During the fourth century, after the Emperor Constantine came into power, he found himself at war with rival Roman candidates for the rank of Caesar. He thought it wise to incorporate into the Roman populous the support of the suppressed Christian church rather than to alienate it. So he had a plan. He claimed that while on a military campaign at Susa and Turin, he had seen in a vision: a cross in the sky surrounded by the words "in this sign shalt thou conquer." As a result Emperor Constantine declared both himself and all of his armies to be Christians. This was a "conversion by imperial decree." Another decree from Constantine was that nobody could hold a major position in the government who was not a Christian. When these jobs were threatened, suddenly many more people became "believers."

Prior to this, saints of *Elohim* "became" believers by trusting the Messiah *Yeshua*, confessing Him with their mouth, repenting of their sins, and receiving the gift of the *Ruakh HaQodesh* (Holy Spirit). The "Church" was pure through persecution, as only true believers in the Messiah were willing to lay down their lives for His name. They lived in caves, were killed by the edge of the sword, crucified (upside down), fed to lions, burned alive, bludgeoned to death, drawn and quartered. Yet they held fast to the name of *Yeshua* of Nazareth, faithful unto death.

When *HaSatan* ("The Devil") saw that he could not stop these true believers with terror and physical death, he did the most effective thing he could to slowdown the spread of the Good News of Messiah. He joined "The Church." Now instead of having to risk one's

life to be a true believer, it was quite fashionable to be a pseudo-Christian. And with this onslaught of "in name only" believers, came a multitude of pagan practices.

The feast of "Easter" is one of these pagan practices. It had nothing to do with Messiah. In 325 C.E. the now infamous "Council of Nicea," also referred to as the First Ecumenical Council, was called by Constantine. It was at this council over which Constantine himself presided, that it was established that the resurrection of *Yeshua* would be celebrated on the already established pagan feast called "Easter." Why? Two reasons. First, because the day on which the resurrection of *Yeshua* was being celebrated was a "Jewish" festival (Passover). It is actually a Biblical "festival of *YHVH*," but at that time anything considered Jewish was treated as poison. Although the early gentile believers (Christians) were happy to be associated with the religion of *Yeshua* and His disciples because Rome allowed the Jews relative independence, by this time the Jews were being heavily persecuted, and there was a desire among "Christian" leadership to distance themselves from the root of the faith.

The second reason was that among the pagans that Constantine needed to draw into his new "state religion," Easter was a very popular feast. Instead of trying to get an entire empire of "instant Christians" to forsake their wicked ways and repent --i.e., give up one of their favorite "holidays," the council simply substituted the pagan holiday of Easter for the correct celebration of the resurrection of Messiah. They substituted the pagan feast of Easter for the Biblical feast of Passover, while having the audacity to keep the same name of a pagan goddess! Under this convenient arrangement, no repentance was necessary, no one was unhappy, no waves were stirred, and *YHVH* was ignored.

Proof of this pagan link is that the determination of when "Easter" will occur has nothing to do with the resurrection of the Messiah! Easter is determined (per the Council of Nicea, 325 C.E.) to occur on the first Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox. This is because "Easter" was and is directly associated with the "birth of spring," not the resurrection of *Yeshua*. Further proof is the presence of the pagan rituals of "Easter eggs" and bunnies, which are both fertility symbols.

## **The Legacy**

Why then, would a born-again believer in *Yeshua*, a *Ruakh*-filled man or woman of *YHVH* take part in a feast to a pagan goddess? We as believers in the one true *YHVH* read the account in Exodus of the Israelites who were delivered through the Passover, saw the miracles of Moses in Egypt, walked through the Red Sea on dry ground, were fed Manna from heaven, then, astoundingly enough, after a temporary separation from Moses, built a golden calf to be a "tangible" representation of their god in direct violation of *YHVH*'s command. For this they met a grievous fate. But as we read this account we shake our heads and wonder, "How could this be? How could they worship a golden calf? How could they be so foolish?"

Today, 5000 years later, we ask the same question. How dare some believers lift up the name of another god(ess) above the name of *YHVH*? How can they post the name of

"another goddess" on their congregation's display boards, on their announcement bulletins? Why do they sing "Easter" cantatas?

It is written in 2 Kings 1:16:

He told the king, "This is what *YHVH* says: 'Is it because there is no *Elohim* in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult *Baal-Zebub*, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!'" (NIV)

Is there no *Elohim* in Israel that we say, "Happy Easter?" Is there no *Elohim* in Israel that "Easter bunnies" are visited by our children? Is there no *Elohim* in Israel that we teach our children to hunt for "Easter eggs", pagan symbols of fertility associated with the pagan goddess Eastre? Some say, "we're just celebrating the resurrection of Messiah." Shall we do that under the name of another god?

It is written in 2 Corinthians 5:10:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. (NIV)

This Judgment seat of Messiah is for believers only and is not to be confused with the Great white throne Judgment of Revelation chapter 20. Every one at the judgment seat of Messiah is saved. Yet still *YHVH's* word declares in 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 that:

... his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

## **The Real Thing**

It should be obvious to any student of the Illustrative Scriptures ("New Testament") that *Yeshua's* students never celebrated "Easter." It was a pagan holiday! Why would they? They followed *YHVH's* word, and they followed His commands. They celebrated Passover as *YHVH* had commanded! The one mistranslation in the King James Version Bible which uses the word "Easter" is the Greek word *paskha*, which is the direct transliteration from the Hebrew word *pesakh* (Passover).

*Yeshua's* followers celebrated *YHVH's* deliverance of the nation of Israel from slavery. It was during His last Passover *Seder* that *Yeshua* gave his students the final "piece of the puzzle." He showed them that He is *YHVH's* eternal Passover Lamb sacrifice -- that the unleavened bread represented His body, and the wine represented the blood sacrifice which ratifies the New Covenant.

It was in connection with the Passover that *Yeshua* experienced death and defeated it. It was in the context of the redemption of sin through the sacrifice of the paschal lamb that *Yeshua* defeated death and rose again to sit at the right hand of our Heavenly Father.

## **Conclusion**

The celebration of "Easter" is an affront to *YHVH* as it was in the time of the Prophets. It is written in Jeremiah 7: 18:

The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough and make cakes of bread for the [Chaldean] Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger.(NIV)

As Messianic Believers, knowing the jealousy and anger of *YHVH*, should we provoke him to wrath against us for participation in a "holiday" edifying the Chaldean Queen of Heaven? Should we stand idly by as our brothers and sisters in Messiah are led down this path towards darkness?

Some might argue that they are not celebrating a holiday to a Pagan god, but rather celebrating the resurrection of *Yeshua*. The Lord does not accept this practice any more than He did when the people of Israel made a golden calf to be used to worship Him. They took a pagan practice and attempted to use it to glorify *YHVH*, and it angered Him, so that Moses had to beg the Lord not to erase his people from the face of the earth! *YHVH* has already ordained a festival for this purpose, whose meaning was completed in the sacrifice of *Yeshua*.

With this knowledge, should we today use pagan emblems of fertility to glorify the Lord? It is written in Ephesians 5:10,11

...and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. (NIV)

Amen.

1. *Elohim* is the Hebrew word which is usually translated "God" in English. Due to the connections of this word to Germanic paganism, we use the original word untranslated.

2. *YHVH* is the true name of the Creator as given to Moses to be used by the people.