

Bunnies, Eggs, and "Easter"

Normally around this time of year people say something about Easter. But celebrating Easter isn't talked about in the Bible. We try our best to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus every Sunday.

VBS "20-20 Vision"
Meeting to be determined



Why? When Jesus declared "***This do in remembrance of Me***" His words meant something very special. In more recent years, a growing chorus of Christians say and do things differently. These Christians have learned that the "pagan origin" surrounding Easter is not entirely accurate. They've seen the devotion of people to Jesus and His resurrection at Easter-time and ask, "How can this be a bad thing?" They turn to Romans 14, a passage which discusses the observance of special days in private and extrapolate (somewhat contrary to the text) that "special days" could, in liberty, be observed publicly. Let's pause a moment to say that observing the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a good thing. The world turns to my resurrected Lord once (or twice?) a year. Yes, it's better than not at all. However, before we change our practice or uphold any "changes," there's something "a bit odd" about this whole "Easter" thing performed by the "world." Take a look...

Different Easters? Yes Indeed! If we were to go somewhere dominated by the Orthodox faith, say, Russia or Greece, and look at a calendar, the date of Easter would be different than the rest of the world. Why? The difference in date relates in part to the fact that much of the world celebrates Easter based on the Gregorian calendar while the Orthodox Church uses the Julian calendar. The Gregorian calendar is the most commonly used calendar in the world today. While not a perfect calendar (off by one day in 3236 years), it's more accurate than the Julian calendar (off by 1 day in 128 years). So why would the Orthodox Church use a less accurate calendar? It was ordered into usage by Julius Caesar in 45 B.C. Most of the world gave up on it over 300 years ago. Well, since the Gregorian calendar was ordered into existence via papal "bull" (decree) by Pope Gregory XIII, that's a legitimate reason for not using it...right? The Orthodox Church would rather use a less accurate calendar created by a pagan than a more accurate calendar decreed by a pope. Division and animosity reflects a major part of the different date equation. Though they worked together sporadically for over a millennium after Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, until the Great Schism of A.D. 1054, the Western (Catholic) Church and the Eastern (Orthodox) Church have rarely seen eye-to-eye. And one of the things that divided these religions long before Gregory XIII's new calendar decree was the date of "Easter."

Examining Easter's Origins – Probably Neither Pagan Nor Biblical! The history of Easter is not as straightforward as some think (much is unknown). It's not uncommon for non-denominational Christians and atheists alike to say that Easter was a Christian accommodation to the pagan world. They'll cite examples of *supposed* pagan influence, one of which tends to be the term "Easter" itself. Easter, they argue, was derived from the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre (aka Eastr or Oostra). However, there's probably a better argument to be made. The term relates etymologically (study of the origins of words) to an old German word for "resurrection" (may or may not have anything to do with any goddess). Either way, it doesn't really matter: the first time "Easter" appears in literature is in the 8th century, six centuries *after* people began celebrating it. People originally used the Greek term *pascha*, a term frequently translated "Passover," as their word for the holy day. This makes sense because Christ IS our "Passover" (see 1 Corinthians 5:7) and because our Lord was crucified on "Passover" (according to the Hebrew way of reckoning days as - starting with nighttime and ending with daytime). Historically, Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper weekly. The actual timeframe of Jesus' death (and subsequent resurrection) eventually came to prompt reflection, sometimes fasting, and an observance of the Supper that was in some way very special. It's difficult to say if "*Pascha*" originally meant anything more than that, and without a doubt, all of the things people use to form a "pagan link" (bunnies, eggs, etc.) came *after* Easter was an established practice in the world.

Did you do your math earlier? Learn about the origin of the church. In case you didn't and/or don't know, 8 (as in "the 8th century") minus 6 (as in "six centuries") equals 2 (as in "the 2nd century"), and the 2nd century is NOT when the church began! The church began on Pentecost around A.D. 30, the early part of the 1st century. In the entire inspired record of its history (the New Testament) as well as in what little records we have outside of the Bible from the century after the church's establishment, there is NO mention whatsoever of "Easter" and NO evidence that Christians celebrated it. Understand? This doesn't mean that early Christians didn't care about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul said, "**...if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty**" (1 Corinthians 15:14). We could accurately say that the death, burial, and resurrection is actually much too important to early Christians for them to emphasize it only once a year! Christians met on Sunday to observe the death, burial, and resurrection via Communion, the Lord's Supper. In this specific activity they made sure they honored and memorialized Christ.

We may lovingly say "The fact is...we try our best to follow only the Bible, and the celebration of Easter simply isn't in the Bible. If you'd like to know more about this and why we do what we do, I'd love to tell you about it."

More to the Article by Patrick Swayne... adapted from practicallyexegetical.com/2020/04/05/exegeting-easters-origins-neither-biblical-nor-pagan-but-important-to-consider/

Bday/Anniv Lunch: ... when we can!
Bible Study: Consider your study of God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15) Is it being done daily? Take time to learn...really learn.
NMCCH: collecting aluminum foil and kitchen trash bags (pick up is later...)
* —THANK YOU for reading this! *Please* provide a one-time gracious reply by Email, text, Facebook message, or telephone call. Thanks!. God bless you!
(week one, *no reply yet...*)

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