



Easter

(Should we celebrate it?)

Introduction:

1. "Easter Sunday" is an annual holiday celebrated by many.
2. For some, it marks the only time they attend church services.

I. History of Easter

- A. The word "Easter" is found only once in the KJV Bible (Acts 12:4).
- B. The word in the Greek is actually "Passover".
- C. The word "Easter" actually comes from "EASTRE", the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility.
- D. To her was dedicated a month corresponding to our April.
- E. Many of the customs associated with Easter illustrate this and other pagan connections?
 1. "The rabbit was sacred to the Germanic goddess 'Eastre', the goddess of fertility and springtime.
 2. "It appears there was a custom among ancient Egyptians and Romans to give eggs as presents at this time of year. That was intended to insure that the recipient would have a very fertile or productive year."
- F. The practice began early, in the form of a "Christian" Passover
- G. The yearly "Christian Passover" soon included other observances as well:
 1. Palm Sunday, the day Jesus made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem prior to His death.
 2. Good Friday, the day He was crucified.
 3. Resurrection Sunday, the day He arose and which came to be known as "Easter".
- H. The introductions of pagan customs:
 1. Many would not discourage the local residents to discard their pagan rituals. Instead, they would attempt to give such customs a "Christian" flavor
 2. "With the advent of Christianity, the egg, still taken as a symbol of life, was simply borrowed to be a symbol of the Christian holiday."
 3. "The earliest Easter eggs were dyed red to represent the blood shed by Christ."
 4. "Many cultures celebrated the advent of spring down through history. When Christianity came along about 2,000 years ago, there were already a number of pagan celebrations in place."

II. Looking at Easter from a Biblical Perspective

- A. Paul gave warning regarding feast days:
 1. Paul expressed his concern for the churches in Galatia (Galatians 4:8-11)
 2. Jesus warned of the danger of human traditions:
 - a. He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for their use of traditions (Mark 7:1-13).
 - b. They made their traditions necessary for all to observe (Mark 7:7)
 - c. In keeping their traditions, they laid aside the commands of God (Mark 7:8-9)
 3. Traditions of men are wrong, then, when they:

- a. Become matters of doctrine or required practice, bound upon all
Displace the commands of God by the very keeping of the traditions.

III. What Should Christians Do?

- A. The Bible is silent regarding any yearly observance of Christ's resurrection.
- B. Any yearly observance is based upon human tradition, not God's Word.
 - 1. As a human tradition, we must be very careful (Mark 7:7-9).
 - 2. An annual observance by the church is unwise, if not wrong.
 - a. It intertwines human traditions with God's commands for His church.
 - b. It forces people to observe what is a human tradition.
 - c. On an individual basis, however, if one wishes to esteem one day above another:
 - (1) It is between him and the Lord (Romans 14:5-6).
 - (2) Be careful not to condemn those who differ (Romans 14:4,10-12).
 - (3) Be sensitive to the convictions of others (Romans 14:13-19).

IV. Do Christians Already Look At The Resurrection of Christ?

- A. (1 Corinthians 15)
 - 1. The resurrection is a part of the gospel. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)
 - 2. Without the resurrection of Christ, Christ would have been a liar.
 - a. Christ's resurrection was foretold. (Psalms 16:10, 11; Isaiah 53:10-12)
- B. While we proclaim the good news (gospel) the resurrection is a part of that.
 - 1. It is not a one day thing, but an everyday thing.
- C. Christians are to remember the death of Christ every Lord's day. (1 Corinthians 11:23-29; Acts 20:7)

Conclusion:

- 1. As we have looked at several holidays over the past few weeks, let us always look to the Scriptures for all that we need. (2 Peter 1:3)
- 2. Search, examine, pray and practice what the Bible teaches and it only and it will make us complete. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)