

Got Questions – Is Easter Pagan?

What is Easter?

- Sadly, the meaning of this holiday has become largely unknown to the common person.
 - More tragically, to many Christians, the significance of this holiday has become widely forgotten.
- Christmas (celebrating the miraculous birth of Christ) is the major Christian (and American) holiday, but without Easter (Resurrection Sunday or Pascha), there would be no significance to Christmas.

Acts 5:33 - 40

33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.

34 But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while.

35 And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men.

36 For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.

37 After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered.

38 So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail;

39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice,

40 and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Concerns about Syncretism with Paganism

Romans 1:21 - 25

21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,

25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Observing Holidays, the Importance of Conscience, and the Principle of Love

Colossians 2:16 - 17

16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

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With these matters, there tend to be three primary positions:

1. It is more Christian and spiritual to abstain from anything that could be potentially conflated with paganism and idolatry.
2. It is more Christian and spiritual to participate because we don't want to be legalistic and should pursue our "freedom in Christ."
3. It is more Christian and spiritual to observe the ancient Hebrew festivals and holy days.

Romans 14:1, 4 – 10, 13 - 15

1 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

4 Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

6 The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

7 For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.

8 For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.

15 For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.

22 The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.

23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

If I celebrate Easter, am I worshipping a pagan goddess, and by proxy, Satan?

- The origin of the celebration is not Babylonian, but Hebrew – Passover.
 - Jesus, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (**John 1:29**), is the true and better and last Passover sacrifice provided by God for his people forever.

1st Corinthians 5:7 - 8

7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

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- The origin of the name is not Babylonian, but German.
 - Most Christians in most other languages call the holiday something more directly associated with Passover.
- The early Christians, speaking Greek, called it πάσχα - *pascha*
 - From the Hebrew word פֶּסַח - *pesah*
 - Today, Italian Christians call it *Pasqua*, Spanish: Pascua, French: Pâques, Portuguese: Páscoa, Norwegian: påske, Finnish: pääsiäinen
- Our English word Easter comes from the older German word "eostarun," which means "dawn."
 - The sun rises in the east, hence the association with "dawn."

It would perhaps not be inappropriate here again to discuss the Pascha, which was handed down long ago to the children of the Hebrews as an image. Now then, when the Hebrews, performing "shadows of things to come," first used to celebrate the festival of Phasek, they would take for themselves a young domestic animal (this was a lamb or a sheep). Next, they would sacrifice this animal themselves; and then, with the blood, everyone would first anoint the lintels and door-posts of their own homes, bloodying the thresholds and houses to ward off the destroyer... Hence, the passing over out of Egypt produced for them the name of the "Passover." But these things happened to them by way of a type; and they were written down for our sake. Indeed, Paul [implicitly] gives this interpretation, revealing the truth of the ancient symbols, when he says, "For indeed, Christ our Pascha has been sacrificed." And the reason for his being sacrificed is presented by the Baptist, when he says, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."... That is why Isaiah cried out clearly, "This one bears our sins, and suffers pain on our behalf." - Eusebius Of Caesarea (320 – 339 AD)



Any connection to "Ishtar" or "Ashtaroth" is an association fallacy. There is no historically credible relation between the English word "Easter" and any pagan deity: neither Ishtar (Babylonian), Astarte (Near East), Eostre (Germanic), or Ashteroth (Semitic)

Encyclopedia Britannica: "There is now widespread consensus that the word derives from the Christian designation of Easter week as *in albis*, a Latin phrase that was understood as the plural of *alba* ("dawn") and became *eostarum* in Old High German, the precursor of the modern

German and English term.

"Easter" likely comes from the 4th month of the old English calendar. The 4th month of the year is usually when the resurrection holiday of Pascha was celebrated (usually in April).

You can't accidentally worship the Devil or devils. Again, God looks at, and faith comes from the heart.

2nd Kings 5:15, 17 - 19a

15 Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant."

Anglo-Saxon Months

Anglo-Saxon	Translation	Equivalent
Æfterra	Later Yule	January
Solmonað	Sol-month	February
Hreothmonað	Hreth Month	March
Eastremonað	Easter month	April
Drimilce	Three-milkings	May
Ærra Liða	Earlier Litha	June
Æfterra Liða	Later Litha	July
Weodmonað	Weed-month	August
Haligmonað	Holy-month	September
Winterfylleð	Winter-full	October
Blotmonað	Blood-month	November
Ærra Geola	Earlier Yule	December

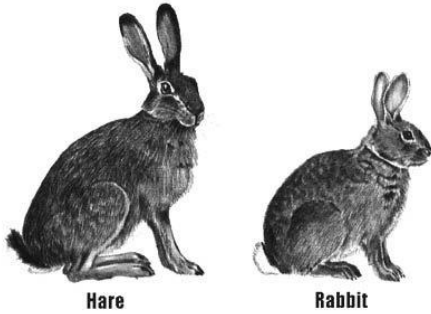
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17 Then Naaman said, “If not, please let there be given to your servant two mule loads of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the LORD.”

18 In this matter may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this matter.”

19a He said to him, “Go in peace.”

What about the Easter Bunny?



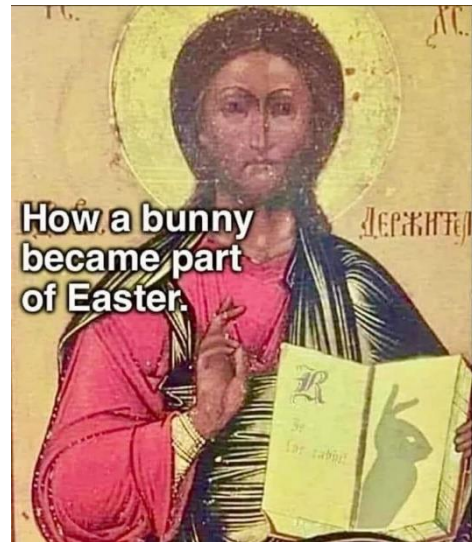
- The first record scholars can find is of the Easter Hare in Germany, printed in a book from 1572.
 - *Nowadays, many writers claim that hares were sacred to the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre, but there is no shred of evidence for this; Bede, the only writer to mention Eostre, does not link her with any animal.* (Dictionary of English Folklore, pg. 166)

- Hares and rabbits are different species and cannot interbreed.
 - Hares (not rabbits) are more solitary animals. They are not known for their breeding prowess and are not known in the regions of Germany where the Easter Hare originated as a symbol of fertility.

- Instead, they were a marker for the beginning of spring.

What About Painted Eggs?

- The first credible historical reference to Easter Eggs comes from 1290 AD when King Edward the First had 450 hard-boiled eggs decorated with golden leaves and given as gifts to his family members on Easter Sunday (*Encyclopedia of Easter, Carnival & Lent by Tanya Gulevich, pg. 104*)
- In medieval Europe, Christians often fasted during Lent from meat, dairy, and eggs for the forty days before Resurrection Sunday.
 - In pre-refrigeration times, eggs could be kept by hard boiling.
 - Children would be encouraged to decorate them in anticipation of the coming celebration.



Do YOU Believe this?

John 11:23 – 26

23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24 Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”