

Is Easter a Biblical Holiday?

by Les'a Cole

When asked about Easter, many reply that it is a fun holiday: Easter Bonnets, Bunnies, and Easter Egg Hunts. Others remark: "Easter, Christmas, and Mother's Day are the three days we always go to church." Still others reply, "We call it Resurrection Sunday, because that is when Jesus rose from the dead."

The tradition of celebrating Easter is honored by nearly all contemporary Christians. Most believe that Easter began with the resurrection of our Saviour and was instituted in the 1st century by His disciples. But, did it??

First, let's examine the historic roots of Easter and the main characters

Noah's great grandson was the mighty hunter Nimrod. He began the cities of Babylon and other great cities in the land of Shinar (between the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers). From Shinar, Nimrod went to Assyria and built Nineveh and other cities. (Genesis 10:10)

"Nimrod was the first king in the world to ever wear a crown: the horns of a bull. He was their lord because he was the supreme authority in all matters of spiritual and religious understanding, as well as maintaining his empire. Nimrod had managed to gather the people of the world under one ruler; with one philosophy, one mind and one language,ⁱ " Encouraged by his father Cush, Nimrod began polytheism, including human sacrifice, in the post-flood world.ⁱⁱ

After the death of Nimrod's father (Cush), Nimrod's mother (Semiramis) became Nimrod's wife and the Queen of Babylon. Among her titles are Goddess of Fertility, Love and War; Guidance Councilor for both Demons and humans; Ruler of 40 legions of spirits; Treasurer of Hell, and Beelzebub's granddaughter.ⁱⁱⁱ Semiramis is also known by many other names, including Ishtar, Aphrodite, Venus, Astarte, and Ashtaroth^{iv}, Astoreth, Astaroth, Asherah [the chief goddess in many areas and ancient cultures (Though her name took on various spellings, the demonic character traits remained the same.)

After Nimrod was killed, his body parts were spread throughout his kingdom. Semiramis told that he had ascended to the sun and that he would now be called Baal, the sun god. He would be present on earth in the form of a flame (candle or lamp) when used in worship. She also recounted that she had come to earth from the moon in a giant egg. Her moon egg became known as Ishtar's Egg, symbolizing the Goddess Easter. (Ishtar is pronounced: Easter.)^v

Semiramis (aka Ishtar, etc.) became pregnant and claimed it was the rays of the sun god, Baal (aka Nimrod), who caused her to conceive. Her son was named Tammuz. After he was killed by a wild pig, she asserted that Tammuz ascended to his father Baal. "The two of them would be worshippers in the sacred candle or lamp flame as Father, Son and Spirit."^{vi} (To be part of the godhead, the already deified Ishtar changed herself into a dove.^{vii})



Worshiped as the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven, Ishtar proclaimed a 40-day period of sorrow and fasting (no meat allowed) prior to the anniversary of Tammuz' death. The first Sunday, following the first full moon, after the spring equinox is the festivity. It is called Ishtar's Sunday and is celebrated with rabbits and



eggs. And because Tammuz was killed by a pig, ham must be eaten on Ishtar's Sunday. They also ate sacred cakes with the mark of a "T" or a cross on the top.^{viii}

It is interesting to note that Asherah (another name for Semiramis) is mentioned 40 times in the Bible. The verses below speak about the Asherah image being abominable, that it provoked Yahveh, and the prophets and the images of Baal and Asherah were often together.

- "He also removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother because she had made an abominable image for Asherah. And Asa cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kidron." 1Kings 15:13, ESV, NASB.
- "Ahab also made the Asherah. Thus Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him.," 1Kings 16:33, NASB, ESV.
- "Now then send and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." 1Kings 18:19, NASB, ESV, NIV.
- "They removed the image of Asherah from the house of Baal and burned it," 2Kings 10:26, NSB.

Queen of Heaven (Asherah) is mentioned in Jeremiah 7:18; and Jeremiah 44:15-25. People made fires, baked cakes, poured out drinks for other gods. This provoked YHWH to anger. (I encourage you to read these complete passages for more understanding.)

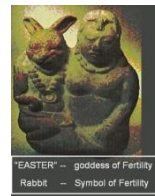
But, the Easter traditions are fun for the kids...

People often argue, "But, we are Christians. We don't do these things in honor of pagan gods; we honor Jesus."

Again, let us look at the origin of these traditions.

The Easter Egg^{ix}: Because dying or coloring eggs and hiding them has been part of many families' Easter traditions is there anything wrong with this Western tradition?

For thousands of years the egg has been a symbol of fertility. It also became a symbol the Goddess Easter (Ishtar/Astarte/Semiramis)^x, who was to have been hatched from the giant moon egg. Ishtar Eggs was even bear one of her names.



Easter Bunny: The Easter Bunny is the oldest pagan symbol of fertility, a sexual symbol of fertility.^{xi}

Hot cross buns of Good Friday: The hot cross buns of Good Friday and dyed Easter eggs were part of Chaldean rites. The CEbuns [sacred bread offered to the gods] were used in the worship of the queen of heaven, the goddess Ishtar, as early as the days of Cecrops [the mythical king of Athens], the founder of Athens -- 500 years BEFORE the Christian era.^{xii}



Lent: Semiramis proclaimed no meat would be eaten during the mourning of Tammuz' death. This mourning lasted forty days, one for each year of Tammuz' life. The Bible relates, "Then he brought me to the entrance to the north gate of the house of the LORD, and I saw women sitting there, mourning for Tammuz," Ezekiel 8:14, NIV. In the next verse, we see the LORD viewed this practice as abominable: "He said to me, 'Do you see this, son of man? You will see things that are even more detestable than this.'" Today this is celebrated by people's giving up something. (For information about the dates, refer to the final paragraph on page 1 and **The Date of Easter** section on page 3.)

Sunrise Service: Services facing the sun in the east were practiced long before the resurrection of Jesus. "He then brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD, and there at the entrance to the temple, between the portico and the altar, were about twenty-five men. With their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, they were bowing down to the sun in the east," Ezekiel 8:16. Note: these men turning their backs toward the Temple and bowing down to the sun happened in 592 BC^{xiii}, hundreds of years before the birth of Christianity.

Furthermore, sunrise services are not commemorating Jesus resurrection because He arose while it was dark -- prior to sunrise. In fact, it was still dark when Mary Magdalene found the tomb empty. "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance," John 20:1, NIV.



The date of Easter: In 325 AD, the first Ecumenical Council was held at Nicea (or Nicaea), in present-day Turkey. It decreed Easter would be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon that occurred after the Spring Equinox.^{xiv} (Sound familiar? This is the same dating as Ishtar's Sunday; the conclusion of mourning for Tammuz.)

What does God say?

After studying this topic, we see that not only is God the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, but also the evil spirits that exerted influence in the early days of the Bible are still operative in our world today. They continually lure people into deception: a little Easter Egg Hunt here or an Easter Bunny there. "Every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes," Deut 12:8b, NASB. However, G-od very explicitly tells us that we are to observe His feasts. He tells us that Passover is:

"A festival to the LORD: a lasting ordinance for generations to come," Ex 12:14b; Lev 23:14, NIV.

Jesus said:

"I desire to eat this Passover with you," Luke 22:15, NIV. Furthermore, God tells us *when* and *how* we are to celebrate

"The LORD's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast," Lev 23:5-6, NIV.

God also explicitly instructs that his children are not to worship either at the places or in the manner in which the people of the world worship. We are to worship God's way.

²"You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. ³ You shall tear down their altars and smash their *sacred* pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. ⁴You shall not act like this toward the LORD your God." Deut 12:2-4, NASB.

Paul reinforces that followers of God are to worship His way when he asks: "What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?" 2Cor 6:16a, NIV.



Asherah Pole

What did the Puritans and Pilgrims do?

"Easter was not popular with the Puritans or the Pilgrim settlers in America. Neither Puritans or Pilgrims had use for ceremonies associated with religious festivals invented in either pagan history, or reinvented by Roman Catholicism. In actuality, here in the America's only after the bloodshed Civil War did Easter "begin again" to be accepted.

"The Puritans believed "there is no Scriptural command, approved example, or good and necessary inference, which warrants tying specific acts of redemption to 'holy' days of our own choosing." (Chris Coldwell, The Religious Observance of Christmas and 'Holy Days' in American Presbyterianism)^{xv}

What should we do?

When pondering what to do, a verse that comes to mind is *obedience is better than sacrifice*. (1Sam 15:22: "But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."). As Believers, we need to remember what God's Word warns of: "Every man doing whatever is right (even including Christianizing Resurrection Sunday, aka Easter) in his own eyes," Deut 12:8b, NASB. However, God tells us that we are to observe His Festivals as eternal memorials.

Consider: Do we commemorate Easter (the Fertility Goddess of Babylon) and try to cloak it in "Christian-ese" or do we celebrate the death and resurrection of our LORD and Saviour during God's appointed time of Passover?

Additional Sources:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQZDdHIOSmw&feature=related>

<http://www.apuritansmind.com/the-christian-walk/easter-the-devils-holiday-by-dr-c-matthew-mcmahon/>

http://www.snydertalk.com/?page_id=2719

<http://www.goodnewsaboutgod.com/studies/holidays2.ht>

Endnotes:

ⁱ <http://www.loveyah.com/nimrod.htm>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.mystery-babylon.org/originsofbabylontwo.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.angelfire.com/empire/serpentis666/Astaroth.html>

^{iv} <http://gatewaytoheaven.ning.com/profiles/blogs/ishtar-pronounced-easterthe>

^v <http://www.lasttrumpetministries.org>

^{vi} <http://www.lasttrumpetministries.org/tracts/tract1.html>

^{vii} <http://www.biblebelievers.com/babylon/sect32.htm>

^{viii} <http://www.lasttrumpetministries.org>

^{ix} <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t020.html>

^x <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t020.html#11>

^{xi} <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t020.html>

^{xii} <http://www.biblebelievers.com/babylon/sect32.htm>

^{xiii} NIV, 1985, preface to the book of Ezekiel.

^{xiv} http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_is_the_date_for_Easter_calculated_each_year; and

http://www.norcalblogs.com/watts/2007/04/calculating_easter.html; and

<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080303074630AA7wj26>

^{xv} <http://www.apuritansmind.com/the-christian-walk/easter-the-devils-holiday-by-dr-c-matthew-mcmahon/>