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## Easter

What is Easter? It is the resurrection of the fertility god or goddess after the day of the carnival Mardi Gras. Where did it originate? Easter was the name of the virgin goddess of spring. New life was said to begin at this time in the ancient world. This was a time when trees begin to bud, and flowers bloomed after a long and severe winter. The hope of the ancient pagans was that they would survive a cold, hard winter, and that the gods would bless them as they resurrected nature's crops in the spring.

A thousand years before the birth of Jesus, the gods of nature resurrected at this time of the year. This goddess (Easter), had many names in the different cultural societies; Ostara, Ishtar, Estera (the goddess of the east of the Saxons), Ostern (German), Ashtarte of the Syrians, which was a Greek form of Asherah (the grove of the Hebrews), and Ashtoreth (the female deities of the Mediterranean including Venus, Aphrodite, Diana, Ceres, Cybele, Isis, Mylitta, the female mediatrix called "Queen of Heaven").

These female deities were all forms of the 'tree goddess' of Jeremiah 10, Isaiah 44, and Jeremiah 44. It all goes back to "Babylon, the mother of harlots" (Rev. 17:5). This system began at Babel in Genesis 11. It was the deification of Semeramis, the mother of Nimrod. The male deities were the mythological incarnation of Nimrod as the virgin-born sons Tammuz, Mithra (whose birthday was Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>), Hercules, Baal, Attis, Thor, Osiris, etc. These male deities were said to be the heirs of the sun god. They were all deified in the stars as variations of the sun.

These deities were said to die in the winter, (the crops die in the winter - the Celtic end of the harvest was Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>, called "all hallows eve or 'halloween'"), and resurrect every spring. The celebration of the spring equinox (equal night and day) came at the same time of year as the Hebrew Passover. The resurrection celebrated every year at this season was not the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It was the celebration festival of the resurrection of the male "sun gods" who had brought nature and their crops back to them, which they feared they had lost through the dead of winter. Let me give you a few illustrations (of which there are many) from James George Frazer's book "*The Golden Bough*" (paraphrased):

*The god with whose death and resurrection we have been chiefly concerned, has been the tree-god, but the custom of killing the god and his resurrection, originated in the hunting and pastoral stage of society when the slain god was an animal and survived in the agricultural stage. The slain god would be the corn to resurrect in the spring and summer.*

*(Easter, the goddess of spring, the goddess of vegetation) – Perhaps the best proof that Adonis was a diety of vegetation and especially of corn, is furnished by the gardens of Adonis, as they were called (the various fertility gods were both male and female in*

different societies). At the festival of Adonis in western Asia and Greek lands, the death of the god was "annually" mourned.

At this annual festival, he was ceremoniously thrown into the sea or springs, and his revival (resurrection) was celebrated on the following day. In Sicily, gardens of Adonis are still sown in spring and summer. Syria celebrated of old a vernal (spring) festival of the dead and rising god.

Easter celebration of the dead and the risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis, which as we have seen reason to believe, was celebrated in Syria at the same season. The pagan festivals of Adonis, the sun god, are the patterns that the Roman Church used to pollute Christendom. Before the birth of Christ, the ancient Adonis was said to have been born of a virgin in a cave near Bethlehem (the Saturnalia festival of Rome – Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, the birthday of Mithra). If Adonis was the spirit of corn (the fertility god of spring), a more suitable name for his dwelling place could hardly be found than Bethlehem, "the house of bread". He was worshiped there long ages before the birth of Him, Who said, "I am the bread of life!"

Another of these gods of fertility whose supposed death and resurrection had deep roots in the faith and ritual of western Asia, was Attis. He (Attis) was to Phrygia what Adonis was to Syria. Like Adonis, he was the god of vegetation, and his death and resurrection was "annually" mourned and rejoiced over at the festival in the spring.

Attis as a tree spirit – The bringing in of the pine tree (evergreen – Isa. 40:18-20) from the woods, decked with violets and woolen bands (Jer. 10:1-4), is like bringing in the May tree or summer tree (in the spring – Easter) in modern folk custom.

The effigy which was attached to the pine tree (Attis hung on a tree) was only a duplicate representative of the tree spirit Attis.

Frazer, speaking of the supposed virgin-born Osiris in Egypt, and his son, Horus says, "the death and resurrection of the god were celebrated in many cities of Egypt".

The resurrection of the gods and goddesses of vegetation, i.e.: Easter, Adonis, Attis, etc., was about food and feasting. The greatest concern of the year's problems in the pagan world was how they were going to get through the dead of winter (at harvest's end) till the 1<sup>st</sup> harvest in the spring of the following year. They had a few primitive methods of storing food (drying, smoking, salting). If crops in the spring and summer were bad, their greatest fear was how to get through the winter without starving to death.

Famine was one of their greatest fears. Like modern man who fears being alone and facing darkness and hopelessness, they lit bonfires (turn on the lights) and partied all winter long. They called these festivals, memorials and sacrifices to their gods. The last of these was called Fat Tuesday, or Shrove Tuesday. The French word is Mardi Gras. The carnival, a type of visitation of their sun god in winter, had to die on the last day of the festival (carnival, Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday). He would die at Mardi Gras. Mourning for the god would begin the next day on Ash Wednesday, and last for forty (40) days. The Roman Catholics adopted this and renamed it "lent". (Notice the parallels – Moses was on the mountain for 40 days, it rained 40 days for Noah, and Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days). During that forty-day period, the worshipers would fast forty days. Then on the day of annunciation, March 25<sup>th</sup>, he would rise from the dead as the fertility god of vegetation. This was at the same time of the year as the Jewish Passover. Jesus was the Passover lamb of the Christian world, resurrecting at the Passover.

Giesler, speaking of the Eastern Church in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and in regard to Paschal (Passover) observances, says, "There is no trace of a yearly festival of a resurrection among them (speaking in reference to the Christians) for this was kept every Sunday (1<sup>st</sup>

day of the week). One secular writer put it this way: "The 'day of the Lord' marked the weekly return of the day of the resurrection".

How did this shift of a yearly celebration of the resurrection in spring end up in the church? Listen to the words of Alexander Hislop in his book, "The Two Babylons":

*"Among the pagans, this 'lent' (40 day mourning for the sun god) seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz, which was celebrated by alternate weeping and rejoicing and which in many countries, was considerably later than the Christian festival being observed in Palestine and Assyria in June – therefore called "the month of Tammuz". In Egypt about the middle of May, and in Britain sometime in April, to conciliate the pagans (pacify them) to nominal (a minimum) Christianity, Rome pursuing it's usual policy to take measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals amalgamated (blended or woven), and by a complicated but skillful adjustment of the calendar, it was found no difficult matter, in general, to get paganism and Christianity, now far sunk into idolatry in this and so many other things, to shake hands. This change of the calendar in regard to Easter brought into the church the grossest corruption and the rankest superstition in connection with the abstinence of lent".*

Death in the ancient world was identified with winter (as the crops were dead). The reason of the festivals in winter, it appears, had several purposes. The people did not want to face a dark and gloomy winter without any happiness and good cheer. They desired to offer sacrifice in order to appease their gods. The festivals (carnivals) were a prelude to the death of their gods, which was followed by a 40-day mourning season (lent).

The carnival, meaning "farewell to the flesh", is exactly what the pagans celebrated in the festival before the death of their god in late winter. Mardi Gras is the French word 'Shrove (Fat) Tuesday'. During the carnival the people ate all of the "fat" and goodies they could consume, hence the name; Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras). Shrove Tuesday was the last day of the festival before Ash Wednesday, when mourning for their god began. The Roman Catholics brought this into their church, calling it a 'holy' festival. At the end of the 40 day mourning period, the spring goddess of vegetation, Easter, rose from the dead.

It was all a picture of the gods answering the prayers of their adherents. To the pagans, the resurrection of the tree goddess (the goddess of vegetation) meant a horn of plenty from springtime till harvest. When the first crops began to sprout, trees began to bud, and the bees began to pollinate the flowers; the pagans wanted to recognize and pay tribute to their god who brought them through winter. They venerated him by going to their pagan temples before dawn and watching the sunrise, worshiping him / her in this manner.

We see the first record of a sunrise service in Ezekiel 8:14-16:

*14 - Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. (the women were weeping over the death of Tammuz – the sun god of Babylon, who must die before spring)*

*15 - Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.*

16 - *And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.*

This is a sunrise service in Israel for the sun god Tammuz. The women were apparently in mourning for the dead god Tammuz in the 40-day period (lent). After this period the sun god / goddess of spring would resurrect, hence the worship of this god of the east (Easter), as the sun was rising (the sunrise service).

When spring brought new buds as nature began to bloom, the pagans felt they must further honor the sun. Since the trees and the flowers had new 'clothes', they would all come to the sunrise service in new Easter clothes. This is where we get the new Easter outfits that have become a fixture in America.

The Easter parade in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in America was a procession of woman in large cities, particularly in New York City. They would put on their Easter bonnets (hats) with large plumes possessing of many bright and vivid colors, and parade up and down the main avenue (5<sup>th</sup> Ave. in New York) on Easter Sunday, showing off their new Easter clothes. They were parading in their pride.

Babylon mothered all idolatry (Rev. 17:5) on this doctrine: "Let us make us a name (pride)". Irving Berlin, the famous songwriter of the early 1900's, wrote a song to this custom in New York City, called "The Easter Parade".

All of our pagan customs date back to sun (fire) and moon (tree) worship of antiquity. Here are God's words concerning these pagan rituals:

*Lev 18:30 - Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.*

*Jer 10:1-4*

- 1 - *Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel:*
- 2 - *Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.*
- 3 - *For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.*
- 4 - *They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. (This is the Christmas tree or the tree goddess of vegetation).*

*Deut 4:2 - Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

*Deut 12:32 - What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*

*Prov 30:5-6*

- 5 - *Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*
- 6 - *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*

You will notice that the tree god is androgynous – sometimes male, sometimes female. It had many different names in different cultures. The yearly celebration of the resurrection was not about Jesus, but about the resurrection of spring vegetation, which was transformed into a god in the minds of the people.

The resurrection of Jesus was celebrated every week on the first day of the week (Sunday). The early church would meet together in what they termed the 'Agape love feast'. The Bible refers to this 1<sup>st</sup> day fellowship:

*Acts 20:7 - And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*

*2 Peter 2:13 – (speaking of natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed – vessels of wrath) Spots they are (on the love feast), and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;*

We meet today on the first day of the week in a spiritual love feast – eating of the word of God. When the bible speaks of resurrection in the English, it is not talking about the resurrection of Jesus from a tomb. The common word for 'resurrection' in the Greek is *anastasis* (Strong's # 386). This Greek word, *anastasis*, is always in the feminine gender. Since Jesus is not a female, it cannot be speaking of Him. The answer is in the definition of the word.

*Anastasis (resurrection) means to come to life after dying. This is talking about the wife (bride of Christ), the church (feminine gender). We must take our cross and die daily (Luke 9:23 – 1 Cor. 15:31). This means that we must resurrect (as the church / bride / female) daily. The following are verses concerning the resurrection (feminine gender):*

*John 11:25 - Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

*Acts 1:22 - Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. (one must witness with us of the resurrection of Christ in us daily)*

*2 Tim 2:16-18*

*16 - But shun profane and vain babblings, (kenophobia - empty sound, fruitless discussion) for they will increase unto more ungodliness.*

*17 - And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; (two young preachers at Ephesus preaching error)*

*18 - Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.*

These two young preachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus, were saying that the resurrection (fem. Gender) of Christ in His church was one time in the past. The Greek word for 'past' is *ginomai* (Strong's # 1096) meaning, 'to cause to be' or 'become or come into being' Past is an infinitive (verbal noun). It has verbal character, and it is perfect tense. This means that the present condition is due to a past action or happening.

Paul is saying that when these two young preachers preached that the resurrection of Christ in His people was one time in the past, and therefore produced the resurrection in the present (having only happened one time), Paul said this eats like a gangrene (a cancer), and overthrows the believer's faith.

This word 'resurrection' is also feminine gender, speaking not of Christ's resurrection from the grave, but rather Christ resurrecting in the believer daily. Once again, the word resurrection (anastasis) means to come to life after dying. Since we die daily (1 Cor. 15:31), we resurrect daily by His Spirit. Paul said, "the life of Christ is made manifest in our mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4:11), and also said, "God shall quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you (Rom. 8:11).

Notice that in these verses Paul is not saying that our bodies are changed here, but rather our fleshly mortal bodies will die to self over and over, and thus we will be quickened daily in Christ. Men will persecute us and try to destroy us, but the Spirit of Truth will daily resurrect in us as we bear our daily cross and die daily (Luke 9:23). Paul said again, "If Christ be not raised (present tense – even at this moment), your faith is in vain and ye are yet in your sins (1 Cor. 15:17).

John gives the account of Lazarus' resurrection in John 11:25:

*John 11:25 - Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

This is feminine gender. Jesus is in effect saying, "I am always the resurrection, daily, in my wife, the church, the body of Christ".

Resurrection (feminine gender), meaning to come alive after death, is daily in the life of the believer, since we die daily (Luke 9:23, 1 Cor. 15:31). When men preach that resurrection (feminine gender) was one time in the past, they preach that a person 'got saved' one night in the past, and they resurrected once in the past. This is the (false) doctrine of Hymenaeus and Philetus.

**Easter is without a doubt, paganism.**