

Easter 2017

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Given 15-Apr-17; Sermon #1373c

Tomorrow, Sunday, April the 16th, 2017, the world's Christians will celebrate Easter, their commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From Scripture, though, we understand that things happened just a little differently, nearly 2,000 years ago, from what they say, when Jesus died and was placed in a new tomb, and was later raised from the dead by the Father.

We believe that He rose from the grave three days and three nights *exactly* to the minute after He was placed in the tomb, just as He said He would in His prophecy about His death and burial and resurrection in Matthew 12:40. The world's Christians, though, have concocted instead an unscriptural 1½ day burial story, cramming Jesus' three days and three nights into one day and two nights.

They justify their reasoning, as they always do by one thing or another, but in this particular case they say, "Well, it fulfills Jesus' prophecy, because it covers parts of one day, two days and three days—parts of all those three days. It did not really mean three days and three nights [like is actually the wording that He used]; it means that all it had to do was cover parts of those three days."

One of the reasons why they do this is they do not understand—and they purposely disregard—the holy days and the Sabbath and the meanings of them. They do not want to give those things—those "Old Testament" holy days, that "Old Testament" Sabbath law—any credence in their reconstruction of what they call "holy week." They do not want Jesus to rise from the dead on a Sabbath, a day of rest and freedom, a day of when our minds are to be focused on God and all of His glory, but instead they want Him to rise at dawn on the first day, *Sun-day*, the first day of the week, which *they* have deemed holy strictly in their own minds and contrary to God's commandments. Really, within their carnal hearts, they still want to worship the creation rather than the Creator.

But at least this year they have calculated Easter within the Feast of Unleavened Bread. At least they got that part right. But of course they put it on Sunday, which is the day of the wavesheaf offering, which we understand from God's Word is when the resurrected Christ was accepted as the firstfruits from the dead, and ascended to heaven in glory to sit at the Father's right hand. By doing so—by confusing the wavesheaf with Easter—they have done themselves a grave disservice (pun intended), and they have lost a great deal of understanding of God's plan.

Tomorrow morning, before the dawn, many—and it is probably becoming fewer and fewer; as the years go by, this world becomes more secular—but many will still dress up in their new Easter finery, women perhaps donning their new Easter bonnets. I do not know if that is quite the thing anymore, but it is part of the Easter celebration. These people will drive to a church or they will drive to some outdoor area to observe the dawn with a resurrection Sunday service. They will then spend the rest of the day doing whatever it is they do. Many of them will be rolling eggs or hunting Easter eggs. They will be eating chocolate bunnies, enjoying an Easter meal, which usually centers around a ham.

None of what I just mentioned is found at all in Scripture. You will not find bunnies and chocolate and bonnets and new finery and going out and having a service at dawn. And, of course, eating ham is right out. These things are, instead, hand-me-down traditional practices of various non-Christian and—dare we say in this PC age—pagan religions. Even the name "Easter" most probably derives from a Germanic goddess spelled *Eoster*, also spelled in other places *Ostara*, who were told by Jacob Grimm, an entymologist and storyteller from the last century. You know Grimm's fairytales—he and his brother did those. But Jacob Grimm informs us that this goddess Easter "seems to have been the divinity of the radiant dawn, of up-springing light, a spectacle that brings joy and blessing, whose meaning could be easily adapted by the resurrection day of the Christian's God."

The name Easter can also be regarded to have origins even further back in the Middle Eastern goddess called by various names like Ishtar and Ashura, Astarte, Isis, Aphrodite, Venus and others. This goddess is thought to have been modeled after the wife of Nimrod, who you can find in Genesis 10. The Greeks were the ones that named this wife of Nimrod "Semiramis." We do know that Ishtar and her counterparts—Isis and all the rest—were goddesses of fertility and all that that entailed, whether it was love, sex, power—they were even thought of as goddesses of war, because of what "love" and sex cause. They often cause conflict.

Also, after that, in the first millennium of this present age, the Catholic Church allowed pagan Easter traditions to be incorporated into its "Feast of the Resurrection." So, we have associated with this supposedly "Christian" holiday these eggs and bunnies, which, throughout the 6,000 years of mankind's history, have been associated with fertility. Even chocolate is associated with "love" and sex, because many people believe that it is an aphrodisiac.

The original Easter bonnet, if you were not aware, was a circle of leaves and flowers,

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and the circlet was placed on the head. It symbolized the cycle of the seasons and the coming of spring. Even the Easter ham may go back to a legend that Ishtar proclaimed, that a pig should be eaten on the anniversary of Tammuz' death, because he was slain by a boar. So they are going to get back at all the pigs by eating them.

Yet we believe none of this claptrap. We believe Jesus rose from the dead as the Sabbath came to a close, and early the next morning, after the women had come to visit this the empty tomb, and He later then revealed himself to Mary Magdalene, that He ascended to heaven about the same time as the wavesheaf was being offered in the Temple. He became then the firstfruit from the dead, the trailblazer of eternal glory, so that we could follow Him through the means of the resurrection of the dead when He returns, in that first resurrection—what is called the better resurrection.

He also, in doing so, became our High Priest and Mediator, and because of these things (as Romans 5:10 says), because we have been reconciled through Him, we shall be saved by His life, because He lives now and forever, and by Him we too can live. Though we have no biblical command to commemorate the true resurrection and ascension of Christ, we can at least remember it—the true one. What really happened, what the Bible tells us actually occurred. We can ponder it and its meanings, and we can thank God for it—for what it means to us. And we do not need any bunnies or ham.