

# FROM THE BEGINNING

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The last newsletter sparked many questions and some wanted to hear more about the festivals so this newsletter gives you some more unique perspectives that will challenge your traditional thinking. Keep an open mind, and always measure truth according to the Scriptures. May God grant you knowledge that will cause you to grow closer to and in Him.

**IMPORTANT:** To keep our newsletter costs down we are asking the you send a postcard to let us know that you want to continue receiving these FREE of charge. Otherwise your name will be taken off of our list very soon.

## ROCKING YOUR WORLD WITH HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Easter has come and gone. A time to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and the life He has given us. However, did you know that Easter was celebrated for centuries even before Christ came to this earth? It wasn't started as a Christian holiday. In fact, it was a pagan one. It was celebrated by the Assyrians, Phoenicians and even the Philistines. Look it up in a larger dictionary or two and you will see that I am not making this up.

The festival involved the "Rites of Spring" near the Equinox of Venus when it was believed that the Earth mother was impregnated by the Sun (Go to Carlsbad caverns and you will hear the same thing). They engaged in ritual sex acts and used fertility symbols like eggs and rabbits and baked round cakes to the Queen of the Heavens. To ensure a good growing season, pagans then decorated eggs and hid them from the evil spirits. The main way of decorating these eggs was to sacrifice children and dip them in the blood of these infants to dye them red. According to the 1934 Britannica Encyclopedia under EASTER it says, "Ostara, or Eastre, was the goddess of Spring in the religion of the ancient Angles and Saxons. Every April a festival was celebrated in her honor. The word Easter also has its roots in the Biblical word, "Asherah."

However, with the beginnings of Christianity, the old gods were put aside. From then on the festival was celebrated in honor of the resurrection of Christ, but was still known as Easter after the old goddess. The question must be asked, Why did we add this pagan festival into Christianity when there was already one that celebrated the same thing; Passover?

God's Word says, "Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their *Asherah poles* in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and *wipe out their names* from those places" (Deut 12:3). How did this Asherah or Easter get into the church? It started with Constantine I in 325 A.D. when 220 bishops gathered to establish common practices in the Nicene Council and universalized the Roman

Catholic Church. However, it also rooted us in Paganism with a Christian twist. Constantine gave us the term "Sunday" which was also called *Sol Invictus Mithras* (the day of the unconquerable sun, Mithras). In 321 AD he made a decree that anyone working on the day of the Sun (Mithras) would be put to death. Monday was so named after the moon and really means the "day of the Moon." Tuesday is the "day of Tiu," a deity of war. Wednesday was "Woden's Day," a deity skilled in magic. Thursday was "Thor's day" a son of Woden and a deity of thunder. Friday was "Frey day," the wife of Woden. Saturday was the "Day of Saturn," a deity for agriculture. Even the pagan months were labeled by Constantine with March (Mars), April (Aprilis, the month of Venus), May (fertility god Maia), June (Juno, a female deity), July (named after Julius Caesar who was thought to be a god), August (named after Augustus Caesar, also viewed as a god). I think you get the picture. Again, we must ask why the Biblical days were renamed? Constantine allowed Paganism to infiltrate our society by "Christianizing" it. In order to unify the entire kingdom he allowed the Christians to "add" God to the pagan rituals and thereby pleased both sides. This may be very new to many reading this, but I ask that you do not take my word for it, check it out for yourself.

So what does this have to do with life? As Christians we do celebrate life during Easter, the question is why not celebrate it as the Bible instituted instead of how the pagans did. Exactly how and why do we celebrate life? The answer is in what the Bible calls Passover. Many think of this as a Jewish feast but it really is a Christian one. The Bible never refers to them as Jewish festivals, but rather the Lord's Festivals. Not only did Jesus celebrate this feast, but so did the disciples after His resurrection. In a sense, communion today was Passover yesterday. Looking carefully at the Scriptures we see the Lord's supper was the Passover meal done early for the sake of the disciples. We discussed this in our last newsletter in greater detail and you can find it on our website. I encourage you to read it again because it is an important piece of this puzzle.

Please, do not take me wrong. I am not trying to put you under the law and make this a salvation issue. It isn't! However, Jeremiah says, "The Gentiles shall come unto thee [Jews] from the ends of the earth, and shall say, surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit" (Jer 16:19). I must ask the question, have we inherited lies from our forefathers wherein there is no profit? Ultimately, God does want our hearts, however, He does want our obedience to His Word as well. My point is this: I see many taking secular movies that God would never have watched Himself, and give a Christian message from them. The Bible says, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Ps 101:3), yet as Christians we say, no, I will set wicked things before my eyes and justify it by adding God into it. Is this right? Absolutely not! It doesn't make one non-Christian, but it is disobedience. Likewise, it seems that the Christian church has done the same with the Biblical Festivals. We say no to them and yes to Christianizing pagan rituals. I believe it is important for truth to stand even when it is unpopular. Though we have inherited lies from our fathers and have changed the Biblical Festivals, God says "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal 3:6).

Christmas is no different. Everyone knows that Jesus was not born on December 25<sup>th</sup>. So why do we celebrate it then? Constantine changed this at the same time he changed Passover. Jesus was actually conceived during Hanukkah and born 9 months later on the feast of Tabernacles. This is why John wrote, "And the Word was made flesh, and **dwelt** among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The word dwelt is literally "Tabernacled" among us. The reason we celebrate this feast on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December is because this is the date that the pagan sun gods were worshipped all throughout ancient history. Tammuz (the reincarnated Nimrod), Ra (Egyptian sun god), Zeus (Greek sun god), and Mithras (Roman sun god) all had a birthday celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Tammuz was

worshipped by taking the testicles of a boar, dipping them in gold and then hanging them on trees. Even our Christmas tree has pagan roots. People say, well I don't think of these things when I decorate a tree or dye Easter eggs. Does it matter what you think? What does God think of these traditions? "And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel" (1 Kings 14:24; see also 2 Kings 17:8, 2 Chron 17:4, 33:2, 36:14, Ezra 6:21, Ezek 20:4). In God's eyes pagan practices are an abomination. We aren't worshipping you, we are worshipping God as instructed by His Holy Word and Spirit.

It isn't the first time God's people have tried to worship Him using pagan traditions. Remember the golden calf? In Exodus we read, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD" (Ex 32:4-5). Note that the Israelites were attempting to worship the LORD, the god that brought them out of Egypt. The Hebrew for this word is Yahweh. They were celebrating a feast to Yahweh, the true God, but with pagan rituals and idols. Where did the golden calf come from? Egypt. Today, the Christian church is trying to worship Jesus, the God that brought them out of their slavery to sin, not by celebrating the Biblical feasts, but ones from pagan traditions. Does this sound like a golden calf to you? It didn't matter what the Israelites saw in the calf, it mattered what God saw in the calf, which was an abomination. God told them how to worship and celebrate, and this didn't fit the bill.

Many will try and use Colossians to say the feasts are no longer applicable because Jesus fulfilled them. First of all, He didn't fulfill all of them because the fall feasts tell of His second coming. Besides, this is a poor interpretation of these verses: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of

Christ" (Col 2:16-17). The KJV italicized the word "is" to show that it is not in the original. The last part really says, "but the body of Christ." In other words, don't let the unbelieving people judge you if you celebrate the feasts but only the true, one bodied, Bible believing and following church has the right to judge. Secondly, in context we see this is dealing with laws that were used to earn salvation. We have been freed from the bondage of law and now the law is in our hearts so that we *want* to obey the law, we don't *have* to obey it. It doesn't mean these shouldn't be done, it simply means we should want to do them. After all, Colossians states that no one should judge us about a Sabbath day. Do you believe in the Ten Commandments or only nine? One of the Ten Commandments is to honor the Sabbath and keep it holy. Should we want to actually follow this commandment? I should hope so. Can you imagine how much we would be blessed if we spent a day in the Scriptures and in prayer every week?

Traditions are hard to break. You were born into the tradition of Christmas, Halloween and Easter. Ask yourself, "where did these traditions come from?" Just because you have always done it, does it make it good? Is there something better, more Biblical? What did Jesus do? Why would we celebrate Jesus birth on a day that He wasn't born if it isn't founded upon a lie? Paul said, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:8).

As discussed briefly in my previous newsletter, there is no question at all that the Biblical festivals all had important meaning that the Christian church is missing out on today. Jesus died on the very day of **Passover**. Jesus rose from the dead on the very day of the feast of **First Fruits**. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit on the very day of **Shavuot** (Greeks call it Pentecost). The spring Feasts were all fulfilled in Jesus' first coming to the very day and hour. How do we dare say that these were or are unimportant? (As noted in the last newsletter, Passover still isn't technically

complete). The fall feasts will all be fulfilled in His second coming. This is why the Lord returns at the seventh trumpet (1 Cor 15, 1 Thess 4) which will be at the time of the Feast of Trumpets. Some may be thinking, well then we know when He will return. No! Even the Jews argue over their calendar and its accurate dates. Not to mention the fact that we don't know what year etc. The point isn't in date setting, but rather that God has a purpose for these festivals and we are missing out on blessings, prophecy, and Biblical understanding if we don't celebrate and study them.

Some have warned that I shouldn't discuss such matters as it only causes controversy but those who know me know that I cannot keep quiet when it comes to sharing the truth of Scripture. Why are we so afraid of these festivals? Why do they offend us? Is there anything unbiblical about them? Just because it goes against tradition I guess. It seems to me that when Jesus came He bucked the traditions of the Pharisees because they were unwilling to look at truth apart

from their traditions. Don't fall into the same trap. Be honest with yourself and look at the Scriptures. Again, I reiterate that this is NOT a matter of salvation but is one of truth, and by following truth you will be blessed. There is so much more that could be written on this topic and if your family is interested in learning more we have a wonderful book entitled: The Family Guide to the Biblical Holidays available through our ministry. Also, we are finishing up 16 to 18 hours of video and DVD's of my presentations. About an hour and a half will be on the Biblical Festivals. It should be finished by Mid June and you can contact me to have it sent to you. The cost will be \$18 individually or \$15 a piece for the entire set of 8 or 9 DVD's each two hours long. Shalom!

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