

Happy Easter?

Should Christians Celebrate Easter?



Did the Lord Jesus Christ - the Son of the living God - leave His throne in heaven, come to earth as the scapegoat for our sins, and allow himself to be beaten and killed so that we could go around celebrating a holiday in honor of a pagan fertility goddess named Eastre? I don't think so. But many professing Christians don't seem to have a problem with this "holiday". Some even look at it as an "opportunity" to witness to the lost in their neighborhoods by conducting Easter bonnet contests, Easter egg coloring events and Easter egg hunts. Why stop there? Why not witness to the lost on Halloween by hosting a haunted house in your church basement? Just be sure to give out candy and some gospel tracts. Or host a Ramadan dinner for your Muslim neighbors, followed by a showing of the "Jesus" film while serving dessert. Or how about a pot luck dinner on December 8th for Catholics who want to celebrate Mary's (the queen of heaven) immaculate conception on that day. Just be sure to have an "altar call" after the meal. Giving out a free set of rosary beads is optional. And let's not forget the atheists in our community. We can attract them by hosting a birthday party and free cake to honor the evolutionist Charles Darwin and give out "loot bags" filled with evangelistic DVDs and gospel tracts.

As praiseworthy as this idea of using *whatever means possible to evangelize people around us may seem*, it is not biblical. God wants His people to be his witnesses all the time, on a regular basis, on the highways and byways of life, not just when we can utilize worldly methods to "lure" people to our religious buildings for some kind of staged event.

The name "Easter" has its roots in ancient pagan religions, which is a point on which most if not all scholars of religion agree. This name is never used in the original Greek or Hebrew scriptures, nor is it ever associated with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ anywhere in the Christian Bible. A Christian scholar named Bede, (672-735 AD) first stated in his book "*De Ratione Temporum*" that Easter was named after the goddess Eostre (also known as Eastre). Eostre was the Great Mother Goddess of the Saxon people of northern Europe. Similarly, the Teutonic dawn goddess of fertility was known by a variety of names including Austron, Ausos Eostra, Eostre, Eostur, Eastr, Eastur, Ostare, Ostara and Ostern." Her name was derived from the ancient word for spring: "eastre."

Where in the Bible are God's children encouraged to celebrate pagan holidays? Where in scripture is this practice ever looked upon with anything but condemnation? Doesn't God command His followers to distinguish between the holy and the profane and doesn't He warn them against doing the contrary?

"Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things:

they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.” - Ezekiel 22:26

Do we as Christians really want to be like Cain in Genesis chapter 4, doing things our way rather than God’s way? And expecting God to be pleased with us for worshipping Him the way we want to worship Him rather than the way He wants to be worshipped?

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” - Genesis 4:3-5

Part of our witness to the world around us includes preaching against sin and teaching the people around us about the “unknown God”, the God of the Bible who is unknown to the lost sinners we come into contact with. Do we want to give people the impression that pagan gods are as valid as our God? We are doing that when we act as if pagan holidays and customs are worthy of our participation. And to the atheists, agnostics and others who are familiar with the pagan origins of Easter, we are advertising to them that we are either ignorant of what we are celebrating or we are hypocrites who are aware of the paganism behind the holiday but we just don’t care, so long as it serves our purposes, our end goals.

“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” - Ephesians 5:11

When we are in a sinful environment for a very long period of time and exposed to specific unbiblical practices over and over again, what can happen to us? We can become **desensitized** to those sins to the point of not even recognizing them as sins. We may even find ourselves and others in the Church using the Bible to excuse our sin, such as those who quote verses like *“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike”* (Romans 14:5). It is a big stretch to go from esteeming one day above another to where you are celebrating pagan holidays and customs. But such is the tendency of fallen mankind, wanting to do what he wants to do and then seeking justification for his rebellion against God and God’s commands. Another passage that people like to use to justify their sin is Romans 6:14 - *“ye are not under the law, but under grace”*. But we dare not ignore the very next verse in that passage in Romans: *“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid”* (Romans 6:15). To the believer, to the person in whom the Spirit of the living God dwells, God’s commands are not supposed to be burdensome. The genuine Christian is supposed to be constantly seeking how to please his or her Lord and Master, searching the scriptures daily to determine *“how should we then live”* (Ezekiel

33:10).
