

# WHY EASTER IS UNKOSHER

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I get asked a lot what my plans are or if I would like to participate in activities for certain holiday's. Most people are shocked when I politely say no thanks, but when Easter comes around, people are even more shocked at my response. "I do not celebrate Easter; I celebrate Pesach."

Pesach is the Hebrew word for Passover. Some give me funny looks but others wonder why. Well, I am here to answer all those questions as to why I do not celebrate Easter. Let me show you the history of Easter.

What is the definition of the word Easter? Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines it this way:

Main Entry	:	Easq·ter
Pronunciation	:	'E-st&r
Function	:	Noun
Etymology	:	Middle English estre, from Old English Eastre; akin to Old High German Ostarun (plural) Easter, Old English East east
Date	:	Before 12th century : a feast that commemorates Christ's resurrection and is observed with variations of date due to different calendars on the first Sunday after the paschal full moon

None of this may appear evil or unkosher (I use that word Kosher as synonymous with scriptural) to you, however, I submit that a closer look at the etymology section will reveal something that begins to get a bit fishy, no pun intended. We begin to see how the word Easter has changed forms over the years.

What is particularly intriguing is the word eastre. That word is the name of a Germanic fertility goddess. How does that even fit in to the modern day Easter? Here is what the Encarta Library on-line has to say about this very subject:

Easter, a Christian festival, embodies many pre-Christian traditions. The origin of its name is unknown. Scholars, however, accepting the derivation proposed by the 8th-century English scholar St. Bede, believe it probably comes from Eastre, the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility, to whom was dedicated a month corresponding to April. Her festival was celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox; traditions associated with the festival survive in the Easter rabbit, a symbol of fertility, and in colored easter eggs, originally painted with bright colors to

represent the sunlight of spring, and used in Easter-egg rolling contests or given as gifts.

Such festivals, and the stories and legends that explain their origin, were common in ancient religions. A Greek legend tells of the return of Persephone, daughter of Demeter, goddess of the earth, from the underworld to the light of day; her return symbolized to the ancient Greeks the resurrection of life in the spring after the desolation of winter.

Many ancient peoples shared similar legends. The Phrygians believed that their omnipotent deity went to sleep at the time of the winter solstice, and they performed ceremonies with music and dancing at the spring equinox to awaken him.

The Christian festival of Easter probably embodies a number of converging traditions; most scholars emphasize the original relation of Easter to the Jewish festival of Passover, or Pesach, from which is derived Pasch, another name for Easter. The early Christians, many of whom were of Jewish origin, were brought up in the Hebrew tradition and regarded Easter as a new feature of the Passover festival, a commemoration of the advent of the Messiah as foretold by the prophets.

A Christian tradition embodying many pre-Christian traditions. This is the part that is cause for concern. We even have a quote from a person the "Church Fathers" apparently called a saint and this person confirms that it was a pagan goddess who was worshipped during this time. Also, this can be traced back to the Greek goddess of the earth, Demeter. Does any of this sound familiar? I present another such illustration of the Easter name and history:

The name "Easter" originated with the names of an ancient Goddess and God. The Venerable Bede, (672-735 CE.) a Christian scholar, first asserted in his book *De Ratione Temporum* that Easter was named after Eostre (a.k.a. Eastre). She was the Great Mother Goddess of the Saxon people in Northern Europe. Similar "Teutonic dawn goddess' of fertility [were] known variously as Ostare, Ostara, Ostern, Eostra, Eostre, Eostur, Eastra, Eastur, Austron and Ausos." Her name was derived from the ancient word for spring: "eastre." Similar Goddesses were known by other names in ancient cultures around the Mediterranean, and were celebrated in the springtime.

Some were:

- Aphrodite from Cyprus
- Astarte, from Phoenicia
- Demeter, from Mycenae
- Hathor from Egypt
- Ishtar from Assyria
- Kali, from India
- Ostara, a Norse Goddess of fertility.

Anything strike you as familiar? Istar and Astarte (Ashteroth) are both named in this illustrious family of pagan names. Why does this sound so familiar? Here is what Easton's Bible Dictionary has to say about this goddess:

- the moon goddess of the Phoenicians, representing the passive principle in nature, their principal female deity; frequently associated with the name of Baal, the sun-god, their chief male deity (Judges 10:6; 1 Samuel 7:4; 12:10). These names often occur in the plural (Ashtaroth, Baalim), probably as indicating either different statues or different modifications of the deities.

This deity is spoken of as Ashtoreth of the Zidonians. She was the Ishtar of the Accadians and the Astarte of the Greeks (Jeremiah 44:17; 1 Kings 11:5, 33; 2 Kings 23:13). There was a temple of this goddess among the Philistines in the time of Saul (1 Samuel 31:10). Under the name of Ishtar, she was one of the great deities of the Assyrians. The Phoenicians called her Astarte. Solomon introduced the worship of this idol (1 Kings 11:33). Jezebel's 400 priests were probably employed in its service (1 Kings 18:19). It was called the "queen of heaven" (Jeremiah 44:25).

The Word of Yahweh tells us that this goddess and all its followers are evil. We are told to not put any other god or goddess before Adonai. We are not to even put them equal to Adonai. Why? Because He is the Great Creator of the Universe. There is none like our G-d. There is none like our L-rd. There is none like our King. There is none like our Saviour. Who is like our G-d? Who is like our L-rd? Who is like our King? Who is like our Saviour? Give thanks to our G-g. Give thanks to our L-rd. Give thanks to our King. Give thanks to our Saviour. Blessed be our G-d. Blessed be our L-rd. Blessed be our King. Blessed be our Saviour. Some of you will recognize the Ayn Keloheynu. We can see that the Adversary is trying to link the pagan goddesses to our Saviour!

Again I ask who is like our Saviour? We allow the Adversary to come in and take over our celebration of our Saviours death and resurrection. Why do you have Easter eggs on Easter and what does a rabbit have to do with Easter?

This is why: Easter Rabbit and Eggs: The symbols of the Norse Goddess Ostara were the hare and the egg. Both represented fertility. From these, we have inherited the customs and symbols of the Easter egg and Easter rabbit. Dyed eggs also formed part of the rituals of the Babylonian mystery religions. Eggs "were sacred to many ancient civilizations and formed an integral part of religious ceremonies in Egypt and the Orient. Dyed eggs were hung in Egyptian temples, and the egg was regarded as the emblem of regenerative life proceeding from the mouth of the great Egyptian god."

Why do you have hot cross buns on easter?

Hot Cross Buns: At the feast of Eostre, the Saxon fertility Goddess, an ox was sacrificed. The ox's horns became a symbol for the feast. They were carved into the ritual bread. Thus originated "hot cross buns". The word "buns" is derived from the Saxon word "boun" which means "sacred ox." Later, the symbol of a symmetrical cross was used to decorate the buns; the cross represented the moon, the heavenly body associated with the Goddess, and its four quarters.

Why do you have an Easter Sunrise Service?

Easter Sunrise Service: This custom can be traced back to the ancient Pagan custom of welcoming the sun God at the vernal equinox - when daytime is about to exceed the length of the nighttime. It was a time to "celebrate the return of life and reproduction to animal and plant life as well." Worship of the Sun God at sunrise may be the religious ritual condemned by Jehovah as recorded in: Ezekiel 8:16-18: *"...behold, at the door of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of Jehovah, and their faces toward the east; and they were worshipping the sun toward the east. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen (this), O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have turned again to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in wrath; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them."* (ASV)

What is an Easter Lily and why is it special to easter?

Easter Lilies: "The so-called 'Easter lily' has long been revered by pagans of various lands as a holy symbol associated with the reproductive organs. It was considered a phallic symbol!"

What does lighting of candles have to do with Easter?

Easter Candles: These are sometimes lit in churches on the eve of Easter Sunday. Some commentators believe that these can be directly linked to the Pagan customs of lighting bonfires at this time of year to welcome the rebirth / resurrection of the sun God. Here is another thing that should alarm many as it does me. Ever wonder how the date of Easter is determined?

Let us see:

Date of Easter. Western Christians celebrate Easter on the first Sunday after the full moon (the paschal moon) that occurs upon or next after the vernal equinox (taken as March 21). If the paschal moon, which is calculated from a system of golden numbers and epacts and does not

necessarily coincide with the astronomical full moon, occurs on a Sunday, Easter day is the succeeding Sunday. Easter, therefore, can fall between March 22 and April 25. This rule was fixed after much controversy and uncertainty, which lasted in various parts of the church until the 8th century. In the Eastern Orthodox church, however, a slightly different calculation is followed, with the result that the Orthodox Easter, although sometimes coinciding with that of the West, can fall one, four, or five weeks later.

In the 20th century, the possibility of a fixed date for Easter has been discussed and supported among some Christians; adoption would depend on agreement being reached among the various churches. The second Sunday in April has been proposed.

Now let us see when the scriptures say the dates of Yeshua's crucifixion and resurrection is. To give us a little background, I will tell you that Passover was for one day. The next day began the Feast of Unleavened bread. This lasted for seven days. Now let us see when all this took place.

#### Matthew 26

*1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, 2. Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. 3. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4. And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. 5. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.*

.....

*17. Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? 18. And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. 19. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. 20. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve."*

Here we see that Yeshua sat down on the second day of the Feast of Unleavened bread (the evening was the beginning of the Hebrew day). Three days later Yeshua arose from the grave. The year He did this in, it was on a Sunday. If we, however, take an arbitrary year, such as the year of 2001, we will see that Passover begins the evening of the Saturday, April 7th. The second Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is on Monday evening, April 9th. The next day (after midnight) Yeshua was crucified, so that would be Tuesday, April 10th. He was in the grave three days and arose on the morning of third day. That would be Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>.

When is easter in the year of 2001? Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. It does not match up with scripture. The Jewish calendar has different amount of days in it to

the Gregorian Calendar. So Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread would be on different dates each year. It was not always on the same day of the week even in the Jewish calendar. And when you take a look back at the piece about the dating of Easter and read that the Orthodox Easter can be anywhere from one to five weeks after the traditional Easter, this is getting close to Pentecost, you begin to see that it really has nothing to do with when Yeshua actually died and arose.

I am sorry, but I have a hard time celebrating Yeshua's death and resurrection when there are all those goddesses and their items of worship thrown in. As we all will agree, when Yeshua rose from the grave, there were angels there but no goddesses standing around holding hands with Him and each other singing, "Kum Ba Yah!" However, the "church fathers" saw fit to include all of this into the celebration.

This is why I celebrate it the way that Yeshua and His Apostles celebrated it - during Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread - and not the pagan way. So I close with a few verses to remind us to not go and do what the pagans do either from the land we came, or where we have come to.

#### Leviticus 18

*1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God. 3. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. 4. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. 5. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord.*

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