



The Spring Festival of New Life!

The new shoots of springtime
witness an explosion of life
within the warming earth.

It is spring and everyone wants to celebrate...

The Sign of Spring

Passover ♦ Easter

The Passover was always a very wonderful family time since the days when the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt happened. It has been celebrated faithfully for centuries by people thankful for their deliverance from slavery. But it is no coincidence that the original Passover celebration coincided with the celebration of “Easter” later on in history. Today many Christians see the matza appear on the supermarket shelves near Easter time and never realize that the Jewish Passover has anything to do with their Christian “Easter Bunny” celebration. And the Jews take a look at all those chocolate Easter eggs and wonder what this has to do with anything of significance.

But the deeply significant Passover has everything to do with the celebration the Christians call Easter. It all happens in the time when the spring shoots are breaking through the long winter darkness... New life appears in the northern hemisphere bringing a great sign of something much deeper. The name Passover explains the celebration (as a name is supposed to do). It is a celebration of deliverance from bondage and death “passed over.” For the Christians, the meaning of “Easter” is a little less obvious. Though the name actually is that of an ancient “fertility goddess,” the celebration is actually supposed to be about a “resurrection” of their Savior to new life. But it practically works out to be an odd mixture of bunnies, and chocolate eggs... with a parade of pretty hats and dresses down the aisle at their Easter Sunday church gathering. To some this is a bit confusing. But spring is in the air, so

everyone seems content with just having a good time. Springtime does represent all these things. The land is fertile, the animals are fertile, and the result is new life, a type of “resurrection.” This is nature’s release from the bondage of winter and its death grip of the plants has “passed over.” The resulting “spring fever” causes us all to want to celebrate in a way that even the native in the deepest forest can relate to. But is there a deeper meaning?...

Unfortunately the amazing type seen in all this has been lost over the centuries, blurring for us the real significance of all these events. But a look into our history books can clear away the fog surrounding.

First we must understand the Passover. For this historic celebration is pregnant with types and signs which transform lifeless ritual into an incredible celebration for the cognitive. For actually at one time Passover and Easter were the same holiday....

The evolution of Easter

But unfortunately, because an ugly anti-Semitism was surfacing among them, the Christian leaders of the fourth century tried to disassociate themselves from their Jewish roots. Thus, they cut off the very source of their life. Like a tree robbed of its underground system of nourishment, this was a fatal error for these early believers. What formerly had been considered a Messianic/Jewish sect now tried to cut the ties to make their own new religion. Christianity tried to free itself from the restrictions of the laws of its founding Jewish fathers, including its wealth of festivals. They tried to hide their own Jewishness to make this new religion more appealing to the masses.

At that time the most important festival they celebrated each year was Passover (*Pesach* in Hebrew). But this holiday appeared too “Jewish”, so despite its vital significance to the whole message of the Messiah¹ the Christian leaders made some big changes in their calendar in order to remove Passover altogether.

They chose rather to merge their celebration of the death and resurrection of their Messiah which normally had been held on Passover, with a current festival of a more *fashionable religion* of the day. Joining with the secular leaders of the government, the Christians made a new holiday called *Easter* (named after a springtime fertility goddess, *Ishtar*).² In order to do this, they had to squeeze the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of their Saviour into a different time frame altogether. It must now fit the Friday-through-Sunday holiday of *Ishtar*. History records that two full days were cut off their own celebration by the Christian leader with no apology or explanation. A foolish move indeed, thus cutting off the whole significance of the death and resurrection of the Messiah at Passover.

But this dark plot is exposed when you look at the calendar with just a little common sense. The Bible makes it very clear that the Messiah was to be killed at the time of Passover. The Son of God Himself said that He would die and stay in death for “three days and three nights.”³ It was no coincidence that His death perfectly coincided with the time of the killing of the Jewish Passover lamb as a sacrifice. It happened at this very time to validate His claim to be the sacrificial “Passover” lamb that would save men from death (the death angel of the Passover). From sundown when He died, a full three days and

three nights had to pass. Then, if He was true to His word, the Savior promised to rise from this state of death. In this perfect progression of time many other *types* in our Jewish heritage were fulfilled to verify that He truly is the Messiah. The organized church of the fourth century thus altered the order of events, losing the deep significance of Passover altogether.⁴ They were able to cut themselves off totally from the holy root of their faith, substituting the pagan spring festival into the place of the *Jewish* Passover. Finally they could stand on their own as “*Christians*,” and no longer be under the shadow of their Hebrew ancestors.⁵ This was a very sad choice. Without the deep significance of a holiday, men resort to all sorts of silly, empty traditions that leave our culture looking trite and shallow. The Easter bunny becomes our standard bearer and we march in parades with our Easter baskets and no one knows why.

Profound Types

Should the one they called the Son of God truly be the “Messiah” they claim Him to be, there would need to be undeniable truths represented in His life. Well, the whole progression of Passover and His relationship to it was just that proof. By disassociating themselves with Passover this has all been lost. For Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread that begins the next day are the fertile soil that the new springtime life of the Messiah burst forth from. “A seed must fall to the ground and die in order to bear much fruit...”⁶ Without these significations the whole scenario is reduced to a fairytale of sorts with little to make it believable.

The real story goes like this: After a gruesome capital punishment on a Roman cross (the popular method of

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“Catch anything, boys?”



Through the early morning mist, a lone figure could be seen preparing a fire and laying out his freshly caught fish to cook. The wholesome aroma filled the cool beach air, and the warm glow could be seen a from afar.

A solitary fishing boat was visible through the fog, slowly heading in to shore. The water magnified the deep friendly voice of the stranger on the sand as he called to the weary ones in the boat. “Did you catch anything, boys?”...

A normal scene one might see on an early morning when devoted fishermen make their sacred trek to the waterside. But the circumstances of this scene portray much more than meets the eye.

For the men in that boat are men who have walked with the Son of God and know a great secret that few others know at this point. They are men who have seen their resurrected master and have put their lives on the line for Him. But here we find them, back at their old jobs. They have slipped back into the comfortable pattern their lives had been in before they met this most awesome Character in human history. And though very experienced fishermen, their reply to this probing question was a chagrined “No!” They had caught nothing. And that was quite odd. For they had been out all night fishing... This was a sign for them that their lives would never be the same again.

And now they see their Master again. They recognize that kind voice. His question brings them to shame... “Did you catch anything...?” A question that probed their consciences... He told them to cast out their nets on the other side of the boat and they were immediately filled with fish... He had done that, not they, in their own wherewithal.

Later, sitting on the beach as they sat warming themselves after their long fruitless night, they ate warm fish prepared for

their Master's hand. It tasted good. And then came the next probing question; motioning to their nets and boat He asked, "Do you love Me more than these?"

Do you love me more than your old resources, your own ambitions, your own self-confidence? Those proved unreliable to them that long, cold futile night of fishing. "Do you love me more than these?" The answer from his friends was, "Yes, we love you..." "Then feed my sheep," he replied warmly...

The resurrected Master repeated this sequence of question and reply three times, and gave them a clear message. They were no longer fishermen but shepherds, who would love their Master more than their own lives and busy themselves with what was most on His heart, caring for people... They would be men resurrected like He had been, to new lives.... This is life from the dead....

(story taken from the gospel of John chapter 21)

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executing criminals in those days), Messiah *was* put into the tomb. This took place on a Wednesday, just before dark. It was at that time that the lambs were being sacrificed in the temple at the beginning of Passover to save the people from the *Death Angel*. The Messiah rose from the dead 72 hours later — exactly three days and three nights — just at sundown, as the first day of the Jewish week began.⁷ Scholars within Christianity⁸ are even forced to agree that the events of that extraordinary week follow this time line if taken "literally." By examining other historic writings (Didascalia Apostolorum, Epiphanius, Victorinus of Petau) from before 300 AD, the changes made by the compromises of the early Christians are confirmed.

Something vital was lost when the Christian leaders attempted to mask their Jewish origins by disassociating themselves from Passover and by compromising a foundational aspect of the message of their

Jewish Savior. This is just another blatant contradiction of a church gone haywire. History tells the whole story for those who care enough to investigate.

The Passover Lamb who was sacrificed to save us from death, three days later became the wonderful first barley sheaf of the Festival of Unleavened Bread that rose above the other ripe grains in the field just after the Sabbath. This is another type fulfilled by this authentic Jewish Messiah. His resurrection speaks volumes about fulfilled prophetic promises throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. For, very significantly, the priests and leaders were sent out early on the morning after the sabbath of the Passover celebration to pick the first ripe grain to be waved before their God in the temple, signifying that the whole harvest would soon be ready. It would be gathered in by the First Fruits Festival 49 days later, which we now call Pentecost.⁹ This is actually the day when the first community of believers started. For it is recorded that a harvest of men and women experienced a resurrection to new life in the first mass baptism of the first church on Pentecost. This is another fulfillment of a "type," for this reveals the deeper meaning of the next Jewish festival, Feast of Weeks. These things were no mere coincidence, but were carefully planned events to give us a clear sign of who this amazing man really was. The Messiah died on Passover, rose as the first ripe barley sheaf, and began His community on the Feast of Weeks forty nine days later. If we cut off the roots of these events, we try to celebrate them without the understanding to make our festivities meaningful.... May our joy in these festive days be full of meaning for you... Happy Springtime...?



¹ properly named *Yahshua* (whom they also now began to call by the Greek name *Jesus* to make His own Hebrew heritage less obvious)

² *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1957, vol. 7, p. 859, article on Easter.

³ Matthew 12:40

⁴ Luke 1:77; Hebrews 9:14,22; 10:17; Revelation 18:5

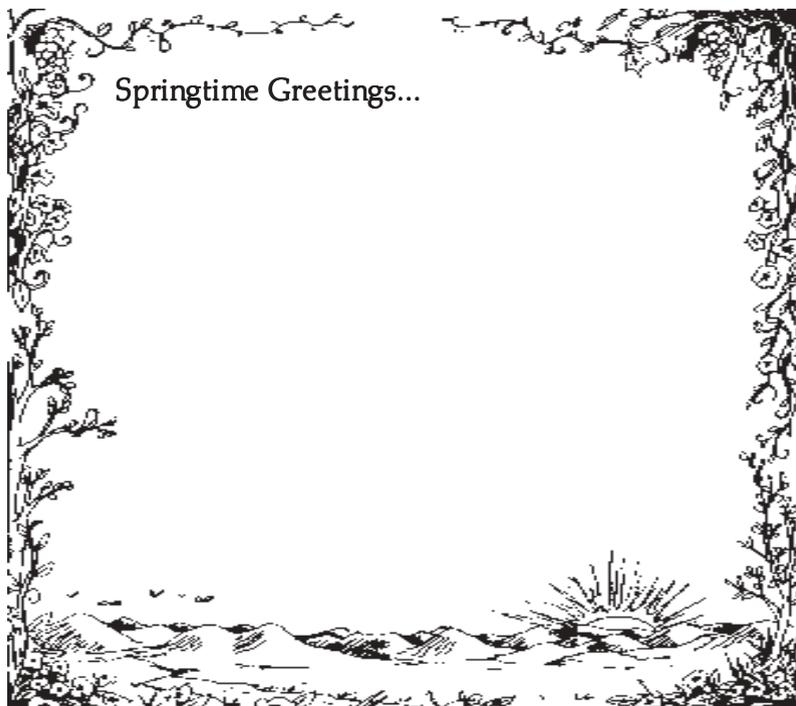
⁵ Galatians 3:29

⁶ John 12:24

⁷ John 20:1-2; 19:38-42

⁸ See the *Companion Bible, authorized King James Version of 1611 with Structures*, Zondervan Publishers.

⁹ The word "Pentecost" is another Greek insertion into this Hebrew story to cover their Jewish roots.



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