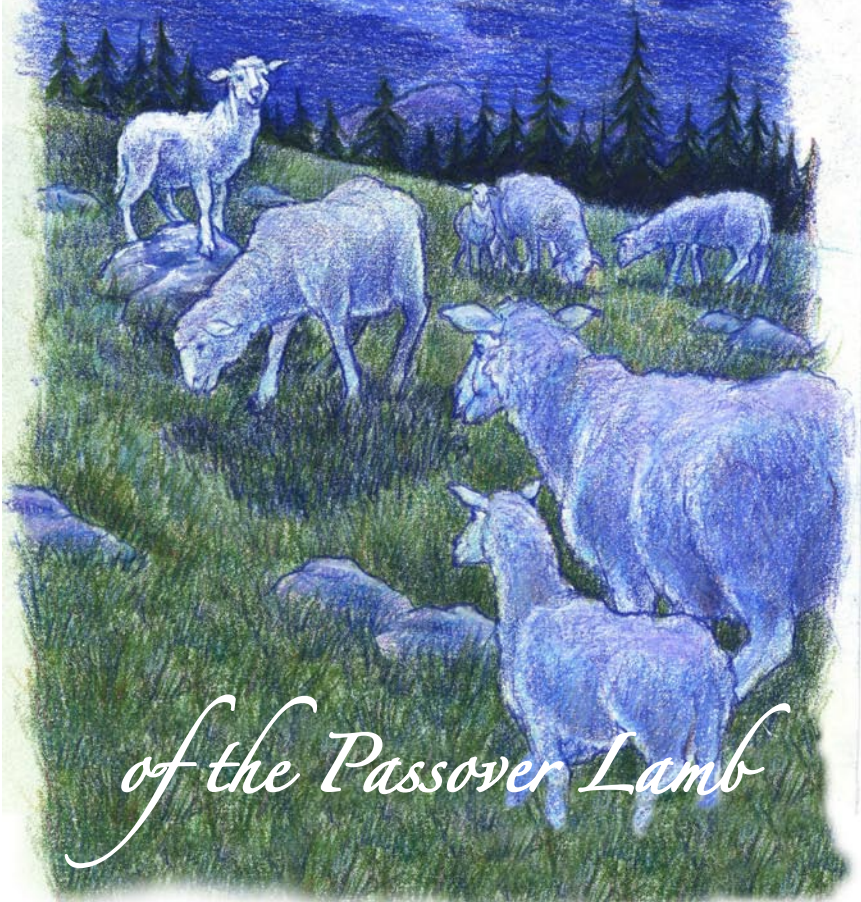


The Resurrected Life



of the Passover Lamb

The sweet celebration of the death and resurrection of our Savior is held in springtime when the Passover celebration of old Israel was also taking place. Since the crucifixion of the Son of God happened at the exact time when the Passover Lamb was being sacrificed in the Temple in Jerusalem, only a stone's throw away, the correlation between the two events was blatantly clear. Just as the Passover Lamb in ancient times had saved those who covered their door posts with the blood, so the blood of the Messiah was the salvation of those who received His sacrifice. The connection between these two events is startling and undeniable in all of their aspects. Thus, the believers in the First Church celebrated the Passover each year with a dual meaning. Their Passover Lamb was also their Messiah. They no longer had the need to kill the perfect lamb from their flock as a sacrifice because their Passover Lamb had been sacrificed "once for all."

As the Scriptures record:

1Pet. 3:18 For Messiah died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous...

1Cor. 5:7 For Messiah, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Passover Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth...

So the Scriptures make it abundantly clear that the Son of God, the Messiah, came to His own people, the Jews, 2000 years ago, and at exactly the time of the sacrifice of their Passover Lamb He died purposefully as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

What a joyful reason to celebrate this festive event! The Passover Lamb was the Messiah. And not only did He die for their sins as a perfect, sacrificial lamb, but He also resurrected from the dead to give them life eternally.

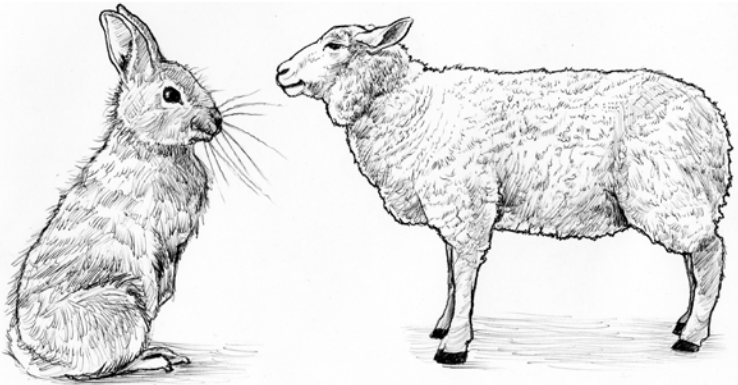


***From lambs to bunnies...
The odd evolution of Easter***



Yet as time passed a very odd change happened. The Passover Festival celebrating their deliverance by the sacrifice of the perfect Passover Lamb, and expanded to incorporate the death and resurrection of the Lamb of God, now took a dramatic shift. Somehow the precious Passover Lamb evolved into a bunny rabbit. Now that is a strange twist in the “theory of Evolution,” isn’t it?

Yet it was done so quietly and subtly that most of us have not noticed the switch from lamb to bunny. Not that there is anything wrong with a bunny, but somehow it does not fit into the story. If this is the celebration of Passover and of the resurrection of our Savior, how did this bunny hop onto the scene?



Well, a little study into your handy encyclopedia will reveal to you the whole dark tale. It tells of a scheme concocted during fourth century as the newly-organized “state religion” of Christianity tried to lump together the more popular spring fertility festivals of the pagans with that of the Jewish/Christian celebration of Passover. Though the Christians still called their springtime celebration “Passover” after the Jewish pattern, they had enriched the celebration with the double meaning of the sacrifice of their Savior. Yet, this was much too restrictive a celebration to include the huge pagan population of the Roman Empire. So including the bunny and all the fertility rituals, such as eggs, the celebration could now suit the needs of everyone.

Yet, sadly, in allowing the evolution of our sweet lamb into a bunny, the deep significance of the meaning of Passover was permanently lost amongst the yellow ribbons, chocolate bunnies and Easter baskets. Our little Passover Lamb who should have occupied the

central position in our celebration has been put out to pasture, as we rush off on our Easter egg hunt. Fertility has become the focus and not deliverance. Or worse than that, in our lethargy, many of us do not care if it is a bunny, a lamb, or a grizzly bear we are celebrating... and may be offended at even the suggestion that we may have somehow gone off course from the original purpose of this festive day.

But, hopefully, you along with us will rejoice in the wonderful and deep meaning of this special Springtime celebration!

Easter is a time of springtime festivals. The celebrations of Easter have many customs and legends that are pagan in origin and have nothing to do with Christianity...

Scholars, accepting the derivation proposed by the 8th-century English scholar St. Bede, believe the name Easter is thought to come from the Scandinavian "Ostra" and the Teutonic "Ostern" or "Eastre," both Goddesses of mythology signifying spring and fertility whose festival was celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox.

Traditions associated with that 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....

(A short stroll through the sites on the Internet quickly give a clear account about the beginning of "Easter")

Let us take the time to remember the deep meaning of this wonderful celebration, for the meaning of the Easter celebration is Passover. Our Passover sacrifice sets us free from the bonds of slavery that hold us captive in so many ways.

As the Scriptures say: "Let us celebrate the festival... with sincerity and truth."

