

## **WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EASTER**

### **I. The Origin of Easter**

“The ancient Saxons celebrated the return of spring with an uproarious festival commemorating their goddess of offspring and of springtime, Eastre. When the second-century Christian missionaries encountered the tribes of the north with their pagan celebrations, they attempted to convert them to Christianity. They did so, however, in a clandestine manner.

It would have been suicide for the very early Christian converts to celebrate their holy days with observances that did not coincide with celebrations that already existed. To save lives, the missionaries cleverly decided to spread their religious message slowly throughout the populations by allowing them to continue to celebrate pagan feasts, but to do so in a Christian manner.

As it happened, the pagan festival of Eastre occurred at the same time of year as the Christian observance of the Resurrection of Christ. It made sense, therefore, to alter the festival itself, to make it a Christian celebration as converts were slowly won over. The early name, Eastre, was eventually changed to its modern spelling, Easter.”<sup>1</sup>

### **II. The Date of Easter**

Prior to A.D. 325, Easter was variously celebrated on different days of the week – Friday, Saturday and Sunday. In 325 AD, the Council of Nicaea was convened by emperor Constantine. It issued the Easter Rule which states that Easter shall be celebrated on the first Sunday that occurs after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox. The vernal equinox is always on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Therefore, Easter must be celebrated on a Sunday between the dates of March 22 and April 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **III. The Easter Bunny**

“The Easter Bunny is not a modern invention. The symbol originated with the pagan festival of Eastre. The goddess, Eastre, was worshipped by the Anglo-Saxons through her earthly symbol, the rabbit.

The Germans brought the symbol of the Easter rabbit to America. It was widely ignored by other Christians until shortly after the Civil War. In fact, Easter itself

was not widely celebrated in America until after that time.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jerry Wilson, [www.wilstar.com/holidays/easter](http://www.wilstar.com/holidays/easter), March 19, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

#### IV. **The Easter Egg**

“As with the Easter Bunny and the holiday itself, the Easter Egg predates the Christian holiday of Easter. The exchange of eggs in the springtime is a custom that was centuries old when Easter was first celebrated by Christians.

From the earliest times, the egg was a symbol of rebirth in most cultures. Eggs were often wrapped in gold leaf or, if you were a peasant, colored brightly by boiling them with the leaves or petals of certain flowers.

Today, children hunt colored eggs and place them in Easter baskets along with the modern version of real Easter eggs -- those made of plastic or chocolate candy.<sup>3</sup>

#### V. **Is the Word “Easter” found in the Bible?**

In the King James Version of the Bible (in Acts 12:4) you do not find the word *Easter*, but it is a blatantly erroneous mistranslation that has been corrected in virtually every other Bible translation. The original Greek word there is *pascha*, correctly translated Passover in virtually every modern version of the Bible.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.