

# Easter vs. Passover

Which is the Correct Feast to Observe?



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*Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. - John 17:17*

Yahshua the Messiah said in John 17:17, “*Sanctify them in the truth your word is truth.*” This powerful statement sets the standard for all who would be true worshipers. They are the people who are sanctified, or set apart, by the truth of Almighty Yahweh’s pure word. They know the truth and have been set free by it, John 8:32. It is their goal to follow the narrow pathway of truth and righteousness and leave the broad way of lawlessness, sin and error. They follow the instruction of the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:17-18 where he said, “*Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Sovereign and Savior Yahshua Messiah. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.*”

As sincere seekers of truth, we must constantly be on our guard against the errors that have been put forth by lawless men. One such error that has caused many to lose their spiritually secure position is the doctrine of Easter. In this article we will examine the origin of this Christian holiday and compare it to the biblical observance of Passover, enabling us to ascertain Yahweh’s truth on this very important subject.

### **The Origin of Easter**

Surprisingly, Christian history is very candid about origin of Easter. The records clearly show that it originated from paganism and that it was substituted for the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread observance. Let’s take a look at some of the research.

**Nelson’s Bible Dictionary**, the article on Easter, states the following: “*Easter was originally a pagan festival honoring Eostre, a Teutonic (Germanic) goddess of light and spring. At the time of the vernal equinox (the day in the spring when the sun crosses the equator and day and night are of equal length), sacrifices were offered in her honor. As early as the eighth century, the name was used to designate the annual Christian celebration of the resurrection of Christ. The only appearance of the word Easter (KJV) is a mistranslation of pascha, the ordinary Greek word for “Passover” (Acts 12:4).*”

This information agrees completely with the article entitled “Easter” in the **Catholic Encyclopedia**. It states there: “[Easter] *The English term, according to the Ven. Bede (De temporum ratione, I, v), relates to Estre, a Teutonic goddess of the rising light of day and spring, which deity, however, is otherwise unknown, even in the Edda (Simrock, Mythol., 362); Anglo-Saxon, easter, eastron; Old High German, ostra, ostrara, ostrarun; German, Ostern. April was called easter-monadh.*”

There is no question that Easter is pagan in its origin and that it was substituted for Passover. We must ask ourselves when and why this occurred and who had the authority to make such a drastic change? When we look into the pages of the New Testament we find that the Apostolic Congregation in Jerusalem and all other locations observed Passover and not Easter. The Apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians wrote to them about the Passover observance exhorting them to keep the feast. “*Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Messiah, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*” (1 Cor. 5:7-8; NKJV) It is obvious from this quote that Paul had instructed the Corinthian brethren in the observance of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

We find that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE (AD) a controversy developed concerning when to observe Passover. The following quote comes from the **Catholic Encyclopedia** article on "Easter Controversy". It quotes Eusebius, a 4<sup>th</sup> century writer on church history. *"We read in Eusebius Hist. Eccl., V, xxiii): "A question of no small importance arose at that time [i.e. the time of Pope Victor, about A.D. 190]. The dioceses of all Asia, as from an older tradition, held that the fourteenth day of the moon, on which day the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the lamb, should always be observed as the feast of the life-giving pasch."* We see that the eastern believers were, at this time, still observing Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib (the first scriptural month). In a letter from Polycrates (the head of the eastern bishops) to Victor the bishop of Rome, Polycrates insisted that they observe the ancient tradition that was passed on to them by a long line of bishops all the way back to the Apostles. They refused to observe any other day for Passover other than the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib. For their refusal to break from observing Passover and keep the unscriptural Easter, Victor, bishop of Rome, excommunicated the eastern bishops.

We see from this example how the Roman Church took a sharp turn off of the narrow way of truth and started down the slippery slope of the broad way to destruction. Those who made this change had no authority to do so. The word of Yahweh tells us that the Passover observance is everlasting. *"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to Yahweh; throughout your generations **you shall observe it as an ordinance for ever... You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and for your sons for ever.**"* (Exodus 12:14, 24: RSV)

Apparently, the opinion of the eastern bishops, and the truth put forth in the sacred Scriptures, had no effect upon those who favored the pagan Easter over Passover. The controversy continued for the next 135 years when, at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE (AD), Emperor Constantine imposed his view that all the various congregations should observe Easter, on Sunday, in opposition of the Jews whom he held responsible for the Messiah's death. Once again we look in the **Catholic Encyclopedia** in the article on "Easter Controversy" where we read: *"The text of the decree of the Council of Nicaea which settled, or at least indicated a final settlement of, the difficulty has not been preserved to us, but we have an important document inserted in Eusebius's "Life of Constantine" (III, xviii sq.). The emperor himself, writing to the Churches after the Council of Nicaea, exhorts them to adopt its conclusions and says among other things: "At this meeting the question concerning the most holy day of Easter was discussed, and it was resolved by the united judgment of all present that this feast ought to be kept by all and in every place on one and the same day. . . And first of all it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin. . . for we have received from our Saviour a different way. . . And I myself have undertaken that this decision should meet with the approval of your Sagacities in the hope that your Wisdoms will gladly admit that practice which is observed at once in the city of Rome and in Africa, throughout Italy and in Egypt. . . with entire unity of judgment."* It should be pointed out, that at this time in his life, Constantine was a sun worshiper. That being the case, it is understandable that he would give support for the observance to be on Sunday.

The evidence overwhelmingly proves the pagan origin of Easter and that its observance was a huge deviation from what is taught in the Bible and what was observed during the time of the Apostles. It is obvious, from the facts, that the Roman Church leaders were interested in embracing pagan customs as a way of gaining new converts. Their disdain for anything which they deemed as being Jewish is obvious as well. Apparently they forgot that Yahshua the Messiah and all the Apostles were Jewish. Because Passover is linked to Judaism they choose to go the way of paganism and rejected it. They had forgotten what Yahshua told the Samaritan woman in John 4:22, *"You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, **for salvation is from the Jews.**"*

### Easter's Pagan Practices

As has already been shown, the Easter celebration was originally a pagan fertility rite for the worship of the female deity Eostre or Estre. The pagan celebrations attached to this deity were quite offensive to true worshipers. In the book "The Two Babylons" by Alexander Hislop some rather astounding information is recorded in regard to Easter and its pagan practices. In chapter three, section two, we read, *"Then look at Easter. What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar. The worship of Bel and Astarte was very early introduced into Britain, along with the Druids, "the priests of the groves." Some have imagined that the Druidical worship was first introduced by the Phoenicians, who, centuries before the Christian era, traded to the tin-mines of Cornwall. But the unequivocal traces of that worship are found in regions of the British islands where the Phoenicians never penetrated, and it has everywhere left indelible marks of the strong hold which it must have had on the early British mind. From Bel, the 1st of May is still called Beltane in the Almanac; and we have customs still lingering at this day among us, which prove how exactly the worship of Bel or Moloch (for both titles belonged to the same g-d) had been observed even in the northern parts of this island."*

Hislop links Easter to Astarte, Beltis (the queen of heaven), Ishtar and Bel (or as known to the Israelites, Baal). Astarte and Baal were two of the most reprehensible idols that the Israelites worshiped. These idols competed with Yahweh as Elohim. In 1 Kings Chapter 18, the story of the Prophet EliYah and his competition with the priests of Baal and Asherah shows how serious a threat they were to the true worship of Yahweh. Ancient Israel's proclivity for leaving the worship of Yahweh for the reprehensible worship of Baal and Asherah continues in our time with the origins of Easter.

As we continue on with the quote, Hislop describes how these ancient pagan traditions became part of the Easter celebration. *"Such is the history of Easter. The popular observances that still attend the period of its celebration amply confirm the testimony of history as to its Babylonian character. The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Pasch or Easter Sunday, figured in the Chaldean rites just as they do now. The "buns," known too by that identical name, were used in the worship of the queen of heaven, the g-ddess Easter, as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens--that is, 1500 years before the Christian era. "One species of sacred bread," says Bryant, "which used to be offered to the g-ds, was of great antiquity, and called Boun." Diogenes Laertius, speaking of this offering being made by Empedocles, describes the chief ingredients of which it was composed, saying, "He offered one of the sacred cakes called Boun, which was made of fine flour and honey." The prophet Jeremiah takes notice of this kind of offering when he says, "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven (Jeremiah 7:18)." He then goes on to describe in more detail the pagan practices which have been attached to Easter.*

These pagan customs are admitted by the Roman Catholic Church without even the slightest admission of wrong doing. Once again we quote the **Catholic Encyclopedia** in the article entitled "Easter." *"Because the use of eggs was forbidden during Lent, they were brought to the table on Easter Day, coloured red to symbolize the Easter joy. This custom is found not only in the Latin but also in the Oriental Churches. The symbolic meaning of a new creation of mankind by J-sus risen from the dead was probably an invention of later times. The custom may have its origin in paganism, for a great many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter."*

Concerning the Easter Rabbit the **Catholic Encyclopedia** says in the same article: *"The Easter Rabbit lays the eggs, for which reason they are hidden in a nest or in the garden. The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility (Simrock, Mythologie, 551)."*

How sad it is that mainstream Christianity has left the truth to follow the fables of ancient paganism. The Apostle Paul warns Timothy of such happenings in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, *"For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."* The facts speak for themselves. The Easter celebration has more to do with pagan fertility rites than it does with Yahshua's death and resurrection as the Son of Yahweh.

### **Understanding Yahweh's Plan of Salvation**

Observance of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread holds the key to understanding Yahweh's plan of salvation. It was never Almighty Yahweh's intention to link His Son's death and resurrection to a pagan festival observed to honor a fertility idol. Instead, Almighty Yahweh ordained the observance of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread to point towards the salvation that comes through His Son. By dying on Passover day and being resurrected during the Days of Unleavened Bread, these feast days of Yahweh fulfill their intended meaning by establishing Yahshua as the Savior of mankind. As true worshipers, we must do as the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, *"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Messiah, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (NKJV)*

### **Choosing Passover and the Passover Lamb**

As sanctified true believers, we must choose Yahshua as our Passover lamb. In order to find salvation we must recognize him as the Lamb of Yahweh who takes away the sin of the world, John 1:29. Without Passover, Yahshua could not have fulfilled the scriptures which pertain to His Messiahship. To reject Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread is to reject Yahshua as the Messiah. Let us look at some of the critical scriptures that prove this point.

First, it should be understood that as the Lamb of Yahweh, Yahshua fulfilled the scriptures in regard to the first Passover observance in Egypt. The Passover Lamb of Exodus Chapter 12 prophetically points towards our Savior as the Lamb of Yahweh. Let us look at this passage and learn how Yahshua fulfilled it. *"Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat."* (Exodus 12:3-4)

Just as the lamb was selected on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, so the Lamb of Yahweh was selected by the Jews to be their offering on the same day. In Christianity this is referred to as Palm Sunday. This event actually took place on the weekly Sabbath that preceded the Passover. We read about this in Matthew 21:6-11, *"The disciples went and did as Yahshua had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Yahshua sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh!" "Hosanna in the highest!" When Yahshua entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Yahshua, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."*

The people were totally unaware that they were in fact choosing Yahshua as their Passover Lamb. Four days after this occurred some of the same people who heralded Yahshua's entrance into Jerusalem were crying out for His death. How truly ironic!

We next learn how the Passover lamb was to be killed on Passover day (Abib 14) and how its blood was to be applied to the lintel and side posts of the door of the house where the lamb was eaten (Exodus 12:5-7). Prophetically this points to Yahshua's suffering and death on Passover day. Let us consider Yahshua's suffering.

Yahshua began the day (scriptural days begin at sundown) by gathering with the Apostles to eat the Passover. *"They left and found things just as Yahshua had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When the hour came, Yahshua and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."* It was at this time that he humbled Himself as a servant and washed His disciples feet thereby giving us the example of humility (John 13:1-20).

Then Yahshua instituted the new Passover meal and emblems. He gave His disciples unleavened bread to represent His Body and the juice of the grape to represent His shed blood. *"While they were eating, Yahshua took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of Yahweh."* (Mark 14:22-25) After discoursing and praying with His disciples, they all departed to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Here is where His suffering as the Passover Lamb began.

He was under so much pressure from the agony of what He was facing that He began to sweat drops of blood as He prayed (Luke 22:44). With these drops of blood the offering of the Lamb of Yahweh had begun. When He had finished praying, then came the betrayal by Judas (John 18:2-12). A long night of agony was ahead of Yahshua as He was taken before Annas (John 18:13-24), and then Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53-65). There he was falsely accused of blasphemy. They spat upon Him. They beat Him with their fists and slapped Him. All through the night he was subjected to violence and humiliation. Then, in the morning, He was taken by the chief priests to Pilate. There He was interrogated by Pilate. Pilate reported to the chief priests that he found no guilt in Yahshua (Luke 23:4). The chief priests demanded yet the more that Yahshua was guilty as they cried out against Him before Pilate (Matthew 27:12-14). Pilate ordered that Yahshua be taken before Herod Antipas. There He was treated with contempt, mocked, and dressed in a royal robe (Luke 23:6-12). For the final phase of His trial He was again brought before Pilate. Pilate tried to convince the chief priests to have Yahshua released. He offered Barabbas to the crowd but they cried out for Yahshua to be put to death (Matthew 27:17-21). Pilate had Yahshua scourged after which the soldiers made a crown of thorns which they pushed down into His head, and then they mocked Him and beat Him in the face (John 19:1-3). Once again Pilate made an attempt to spare Yahshua as he brought Him out before the people. The sight of the beaten and scourged Yahshua arrayed in a royal robe caused the crowd to cry out even more against Him and demand His death (John 19:4-8). Pilate had his final conversation with Yahshua (John 19:9-11) and then made his last attempt to have Him released, but once again was thwarted by the chief priests and the crowd who demanded His death (John 19:12-15). Pilate then had water poured over his hands as he declared his innocence in putting Yahshua to death and the crowd claimed responsibility (Matthew 27:24-25). They then released Barabbas and Yahshua was delivered up to be impaled (Matthew 27:26).

As they mocked Him, Yahshua was forced to carry the stake on which He was to be impaled. He began the trip to Golgotha but had to be relieved of the torture stake and it was carried for Him by Simon of Cyrene (Matthew 27:31-32). He finally arrived at Golgotha and about the third hour (9:00 am) they impaled Him by nailing His hands and feet to the torture stake (Mark 15:22-25). There He hung as the people hurled insults at Him and the chief priests, scribes, and elders mocked Him (Matthew 27:39-44). At the sixth hour (12:00 noon) darkness came upon the land (Matthew 27:45). Then about the ninth hour (3:00 pm) Yahshua cried out, "My El, My El, why have you forsaken me?" He then breathed His last words, "It is finished," (John 19:30) and bowed His head and gave up His spirit. Later, to make sure He was dead, a soldier thrust a spear into His side and out came blood and water (John 19:31-37). Late in the afternoon Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate for permission to bury Yahshua (Mark 15:42-45). He and Nicodemus anointed Yahshua's body with spices, wrapped it in a linen cloth and placed the body in a new garden tomb (John 19:39-42).

All of these events took place on Passover day. From the time that Yahshua began to sweat drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane, until His death on Golgotha, Yahshua shed His blood as atonement for sin. He fulfilled the scriptures regarding the Passover Lamb and proved Himself to be the Lamb of Yahweh who takes away the sin of the world. His blood was upon the torture stake just as the blood of the Passover lamb was placed upon the side posts of the Israelite's dwellings. To separate Yahshua's sacrifice from Passover and to link it with Easter is a sacrilege of immense proportion and an insult to Yahshua. The observance of the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread was ordained by Almighty Yahweh in perpetuity as the memorial of Yahshua's death and resurrection. *"So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to Yahweh throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance... So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance... And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever."* (Exodus 12:14, 17, 24; NKJV) Through Yahshua's sacrifice we are freed from the bondage of Egypt (Sin—Hebrews 11:25). Yahshua ordained that His followers observe Passover with the new emblems of His body and blood. *"For I received from the Master what I also passed on to you: The Master Yahshua, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Master's death until he comes."* (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

### **More Evidence Against the Easter Observance**

One of the main arguments put forth to support Easter is the erroneous belief that the Messiah was resurrected at sunrise on Easter Sunday morning. The truth is revealed by a close examination of Matthew 28:1-2. Here we read, *"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of Yahweh descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it."* (KJV) Notice the underlined words in the passage. In the Strong's Concordance Greek lexicon this is #2020—epiphosko (ep-ee-foce'-ko); a form of NT:#2017; to begin to grow light: It has been translated in the KJV as: begin to dawn, draw on. This word is used twice in the New Testament, here and in Luke 23:54. There we read, *"And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on."* (KJV) Again it must be pointed out that the scriptural (Jewish) day begins and ends at sundown. In Luke 23:54 the statement "and the Sabbath drew on" obviously means that it was close to sun down.

The same thing can be said about Matthew 28:1, “as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.” Once again, this would refer to sundown. That being the case, Yahshua was resurrected when the earth quake took place at the end of the weekly Sabbath and not Sunday morning at sunup.

This is very significant because it further proves that we must observe the Days of Unleavened Bread. Concerning Yahshua’s resurrection, we read in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, *“But Messiah has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Messiah all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Messiah, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.”* The Messiah is the first of the first fruits of the resurrection from the dead. As such, by being resurrected at the end of the weekly Sabbath, He was presented to Almighty Yahweh as the first fruit wave sheaf. The wave sheaf of cut barley was waved, as an offering, by the priest on the day after the weekly Sabbath which fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Consider Leviticus 23:9-14, *“Yahweh said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before Yahweh so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to Yahweh a lamb a year old without defect, together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil — an offering made to Yahweh by fire, a pleasing aroma — and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your Elohim. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.””*

Yahshua the Messiah is our spiritual, first fruit, wave sheaf offering. After His resurrection from the tomb, He presented Himself to Almighty Yahweh on the day after the weekly Sabbath and thus gave new significance to the wave sheaf offering. As the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:15-17; Psalm 110:4), Yahshua also would have offered a physical wave sheaf to Yahweh. He must have still been holding it when He was met by Miriam Magdalene, as she assumed that He was the gardener. *“But Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Yahshua’s body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Master away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” At this, she turned around and saw Yahshua standing there, but she did not realize that it was Yahshua. “Woman,” he said, “why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” Yahshua said to her, “Miriam.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). Yahshua said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my Elohim and your Elohim.’” Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Master!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.”* (John 20:11-18) Yahshua would not let Miriam touch Him at this time because he had not yet ascended to His Father to present Himself as the first fruits offering.

Once again, the scriptures are very clear in showing the significance of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. Yahshua, as our spiritual first fruits wave sheaf, presented Himself to Almighty Yahweh as our offering. Because He has been resurrected from the dead, we have hope for our own resurrection when Yahshua returns.

The Apostle Paul declared this in Romans chapter 6 verses 3 through 11: *“Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Messiah Yahshua were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was impaled with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin- because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Messiah, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Messiah was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to Yahweh. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to Yahweh in Messiah Yahshua.”*

It is obvious from these scriptures that Yahshua was not resurrected on Easter Sunday morning. He was resurrected at the end of the weekly Sabbath just before sundown. As the first day of the week began, He cut the first fruits wave sheaf and, as Yahweh's High Priest, He offered it. Then, He ascended up into the heavens and presented Himself as our spiritual wave sheaf, the first of the first fruits of the resurrection, before Almighty Yahweh our Father. To reject the Days of Unleavened Bread, and especially the wave sheaf offering day, in favor of Easter is to reject Yahshua as our resurrected Messiah. Our hope of the resurrection lies in Yahshua's fulfillment of the scriptures in regard to the Lamb of Yahweh that takes away the sins of the world.

### **The Sign of Yahshua's Messiahship—The Three Days and Three Nights**

It is truly ironic how mainstream Christianity has in fact rejected Yahshua's Messiahship by embracing the observance of Good Friday and Easter. Despite all the great miracles that our Savior preformed that proved He was the Messiah, He stated that there was only one sign that would prove Him to be the Messiah. That sign was that He would spend three days and three nights in the grave. Let's consider this as found in Matthew 12:38-40: *“Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.” He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. “*

No matter how you count it, it is impossible to get three days and three nights from a late Friday afternoon death and burial, to a Sunday morning resurrection. Appendix #144 of Dr. Bullinger's **The Companion Bible** states the following: *“The fact that “three days” is used by Hebrew idiom for any part of three days and three nights is not disputed; because that was the common way of reckoning, just as it was when used of years. Three or any number of years was used inclusively of any part of those years, as may be seen in the reckoning of the reigns of any of the kings of Israel and Judah. But, when the number of “nights” is stated as well as the number of “days”, then the expression ceases to be an idiom, and becomes a literal statement of fact.”* This is an astounding statement in light of what is taught in Christianity. All of this confusion comes about because Christianity has mistakenly believed that the day after the Passover (Abib 14) was the weekly Sabbath. It wasn't! It was the first high holy day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This can be verified in John 19:31, *“ The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the torture stake on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”*( KJV) The confusion of this being the weekly Sabbath disappears after examining Yahweh's command concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Leviticus 23:6-8,

*"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to Yahweh; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it."*  
(NKJV)

How clear things become when you understand that the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a high holy day just like the weekly Sabbath. We have already learned that, according to Matthew 28:1-2, our Savior was resurrected at the end of the weekly Sabbath. Now, by counting backwards three days and three nights, we learn that Yahshua died on a Wednesday afternoon and was placed in the tomb just before sundown. Wednesday at sun down would have begun the first high holy day of the feast. Friday was the preparation for the weekly Sabbath and the weekly Sabbath was a holy day. We can count the three days and the three nights as follows: Wednesday just before sundown to Thursday just before sundown—day one, Thursday just before sundown to Friday just before sundown—day two, and Friday just before sundown to Sabbath just before sundown—day three. This totally agrees with what is found in Matthew 28:1-2. Yahshua was resurrected from the tomb when the earthquake took place toward the end of the weekly Sabbath.

### **Knowing the Truth Will Set You Free**

When it comes to Easter versus Passover the facts speak for themselves. Christianity openly admits to having taken an ancient pagan fertility celebration and applied its meaning and customs to the resurrection of the Messiah. This is totally contrary to what is found in the Bible and goes against what was taught and observed by our Savior, the Apostles, and the saints of the New Testament.

After examining the Scriptures concerning Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, it is obvious that Almighty Yahweh intended for these days to be celebrated by all true worshipers in remembrance of Yahshua's death and resurrection as the Lamb of Yahweh. The true meaning of the plan of salvation can only be fully understood by the observance of Yahweh's sanctified feast days. Yahshua is the first of the first fruits. Because He died and was resurrected according to the Scriptures we have a hope of being in the first resurrection when He returns at His second coming. *"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the good news I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this good news you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) *"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality."* (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

Those who believe in Yahshua as the Messiah will remain in the truth of His word and will qualify as His disciples. All sincere seekers of truth will be in the first resurrection when Yahshua returns. They have gained freedom from the false teachings of this world. Because they have chosen to follow the teaching of Yahshua, they observe Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread rather than the pagan feast of Easter. *"To the Jews who had believed him, Yahshua said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:31-32)

As true worshipers we must hold to the teachings of our Savior. Yahshua's life, death, and resurrection are based upon the truth of Yahweh's Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread and not upon the pagan festival and customs of Easter. Now that you know the truth you can be set free from the false teaching of the pagan Easter celebration. Choose Yahweh's truth! Choose freedom through Yahshua!

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