

Are Easter Celebrations OK?

We are rapidly approaching that time of the year known to many as “Easter” but to those of us in the Church as Passover season. Many professing Christ believe that God is pleased with the keeping of Easter. Indeed, some of us in the Church see no harm in keeping it. But, is that really what God expects from His people? And, a better question might be whether or not we care enough about what God thinks to conform our acts of worship to His will?

To answer these questions we must first learn exactly where the Easter traditions come from. The word “Easter” comes down to us from the celebration honoring the goddess of Spring, Eastr. However, many scholars recognize that the rites and ceremonies adopted in today’s Easter celebrations have descended to us from ancient times where the celebration was to honor pagan gods Tammuz and Ishtar.

Another tradition is the painted eggs and chocolate left in a basket filled with fake grass by an alleged “Easter bunny.” Eggs have long been symbols of fertility in pagan religions. Rabbits are well known for their own penchant for reproduction.

Another tradition is the Easter sunrise service. This tradition also is derived from the ancient pagan custom of worshipping the sun god rising. It is not the commanded worship of Abraham’s God.

Passover, on the other hand, is a reminder that our Lord and Savior suffered torture and death to remove the veil that separated us from God through the forgiveness of our sins. Although the word “Easter” does appear in the King James version of the bible, it is a mistranslation of the Hebrew “Pascha,” or Passover. Otherwise, like Christmas in the winter, there is no support for engaging in any of the activities surrounding Easter for the bible believing Christian.

Many find the practice harmless. In truth, eggs, bunnies, hot cross buns and the other silliness sur-

rounding Easter can’t harm anyone. But, the real question is whether God wants us to be involved in these things.

Some say, “I use Easter as a reminder of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.” Or, “That day is a day of worship for what Jesus did for us.” And, let’s face it, watching little ones scramble around seeking treats can be great fun to watch. But is this reasoning acceptable to God? If we care about what God thinks then we ought to be concerned about things as to whether they are acceptable to God, shouldn’t we?

What, then, *DOES* God have to say about using pagan practices to worship Him? Some would say that God does not care as long as we worship Him. That same “some” would be ignoring the truth of the bible in saying such.

Notice what God has to say, “*take heed to yourself that you do not become snared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods, that I too may do likewise? You shall not do so to Jehovah your God. For every abomination to Jehovah, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods.*” Deu 12:30-31.

There are many rationalizations one can use to come up with “permission” to engage in Easter celebrations. In truth, God lets us choose what we will do. But that is not the same thing as saying doing such is right in God’s eyes. The simple truth of the matter is that God wants us focusing on our Savior’s sacrifice and resurrection using the days He prescribed for His people, not days that were used to honor pagan gods in antiquity.

As Christians, we came up out of the watery grave of baptism saying to God that we wanted to do what He wants us to do. Justifying doing something otherwise isn’t responsive to our promise to God, and I think that must sadden Him deeply.