

GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER

If the day of Christ's passion and disgraceful death is a "good day", why do churchgoers indulge in fasting, wearing black robes, and other ceremonies suggestive of mourning on "Good Friday"? Why do they not go about merry-making? And do you know that Easter was derived from paganism and that it has no connection whatsoever with Christianity?

"Good Friday" is the Friday before Easter Sunday which is observed in Christendom to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. It is a day of fasting, abstinence, and repentance, and there is the religious view that "it is the only day of the year upon which Mass may not be said".

On this occasion, the observers hold a protracted three-hour service with ceremonies expressing intense feelings of the agonies suffered by Jesus Christ. The altars are stripped of decorations, the candles are unlit and the priests are dressed in black robes. Yet, this is said to be a good day!

The only reason that has been given for identifying this bloody day with the grand appellation of Good is that the death of Christ has brought redemption to mankind. This sounds quite plausible but viewed against the background of the Scriptures it is unjustifiable!

To those who were the enemies of light – the light of which Christ was and is the very embodiment, that day of his crucifixion was good and pleasant because it was the day their evil desire, conspiracy, and machinations against the man whom they branded as a "deceiver" was accomplished. It could therefore be understandable why they reveled in their acts of atrocity while Jesus Christ and his disciples were grief-stricken.

Before the crucial hour of the supreme test, Jesus Christ had forewarned his disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." – Read John 16:16-20

When the time came for him to bear the griefs of mankind he showed his preparedness to submit, as a loyal Son, to his Father's will though he was fully aware of his foes' evil motives to do the worst imaginable. Yet in an outburst of human feeling, he said to Peter, James, and John: "...My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." (Matthew 26:38) He was in such great agony of spirit that his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. His disciples were exhausted from grief and they remained under the grip of sorrow until the gladsome news of his resurrection was broken to them. – Luke 22:45, Mark 16:9, 10

In the light of these scriptural facts about the painful experience of Jesus Christ and his disciples, it does not stand to reason nor is it spiritually convincing for those who take sides with Christ to call or regard that day of his anguish and inglorious death as good.

The churches have no scriptural authority whatsoever for their mourning, abstinence, and dreary ceremonies on "Good Friday". Jesus Christ had long been resurrected and glorified, never to die again. He did tell his disciples that their sorrow would be turned to joy, and added, "... your joy no man taketh from you." (John 16:19-22) And so to continue to mourn every year for the risen and glorified Jesus is most unnecessary and very unscriptural.

Moreover, concerning the dead, Paul the apostle admonished the Christians; "...that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14) If Christians are not to mourn for the dead because of the hope of resurrection, why should the churches mourn for the Star of that hope who had long ago been raised to glory eternal in heaven?

It is most unsafe to rely on men's traditions at the expense of scriptural truth. And it is only when men apply their heart to reason; to accept the truth of Christ, that they can be free indeed. – John 8:32, 36

Easter

Easter was a pagan festival originally celebrated by the Anglo-Saxons in the spring equinox in honour of a Teutonic goddess known as Astarte or Eostre.

The word "Easter" appears once in the Holy Bible in Acts 12:4. All scholars of credit agree that it was a wrong translation of a Greek word for Passover. In the Bible Students Companion, William Nicholson wrote: ÉASTER – An improper translation; for the feast of the Passover is meant, Acts xii. 4. Easter was the name of a Pagan festival observed in spring by our ancestors, in honour of the goddess Astarte or Eostro, a Saxon goddess, the Ashtaroth of Syria. In all other places, pascha is rendered Passover, the true meaning."

Concerning Easter, the Westminster Dictionary of the Bible states that it was; "originally the spring festival in honour of the Teutonic goddess of light and spring known in Anglo-Saxon as Eastre. As early as the 8th century the name was transferred by the Anglo-Saxon to the Christian festival designated to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. In A. V. it occurs once (Acts 12:4), but it is a mistranslation. The original is pascha, the ordinary Greek word for Passover. R. V. properly employs the word Passover." – Page 145

Alexander Hislop, in his book The Two Babylons, commented: "Every one knows that the name "Easter", used in our translation of Acts xii. 4, refers not to any Christian festival, but to the Jewish Passover. This is one of the few places in our version where the translators show an undue bias." – Page 104

Further information may be obtained from the Encyclopedia Britannica, which states; "The English name Easter is of uncertain origin; Bede in the 6th century derived it from that of the Anglo-Saxon spring goddess Eostre... Around the Christian observance of Easter as the climax of the liturgical drama of Holy Week and Good Friday folk customs have collected, many of which have been handed down from the ancient ceremonial and symbolism of the pagan spring festival brought into relation with resurrection theme." – Vol. 7, pp. 864-866. And what is more, The American Peoples Encyclopedia" has this to say: "Many of the popular observances of Easter are pagan in origin. Some may be traced to the feast of goddess Eostra..."—Vol. 7, page 483.

The celebration of Easter is not authorised scripturally. Neither the Passover feast nor Easter has anything to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In light of the above disclosures about “Good Friday” and Easter, no one can remain in doubt of the fact that many “churches” have long gone astray. The mere fact that professed Christians associate Easter with the resurrection of Christ without the authority of the Scriptures does not in any way alter its paganish image or make it receive the blessing of the Lord.