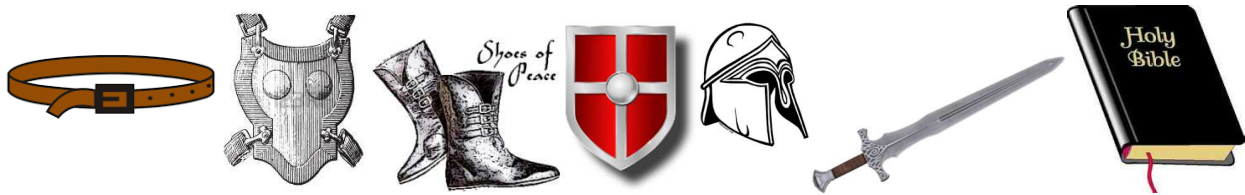


# Spiritual Strategic Warfare



*"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place" **Ephesians 6:14***

*"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" **Ephesians 6:15***

*"above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts (arrows) of the wicked one" **Ephesians 6:16***

*"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is *the word of God* ..." **Ephesians 6:17.***

*"For *the word of God* is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow (bone), and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart..." **Hebrews 4.12.***

*Zidkiyah Yisrael*

## What Day Was Jesus Crucified?

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus Himself said He would be in the grave for **'three days and three nights'**, And in the Gospel of Mark, **Jesus taught his disciples that He would rise from the grave 'after three days.'** **Even a child could tell you that between Friday evening and sunrise Sunday morning, you cannot count 'three days and three nights,' as well as 'after three days.'**

Many people also assume Jesus died on a Friday, because the Bible says the Savior died on a day before the Sabbath.

But what they don't often realize is that there are two different kinds of Sabbaths mentioned in the Bible. **Not only is there the weekly day of rest, but there are also annual days of rest, and those can fall on any day of the week, not just Saturday.**

The Bible actually tells you that the Sabbath day approaching as Jesus was dying **was an annual Sabbath, not the regular weekly Sabbath**. And as far as Jesus rising at dawn on Sunday, the first day of the week, people often forget that Jesus' followers only found an empty tomb that morning. Jesus came back to life at some point before that and was already gone.

## What Day Was Jesus Crucified?

**Matthew 12:39-40** But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: (**verse 40**) ***For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*** Most of us were taught Friday was the day Jesus was crucified and this has been widely accepted as the traditional day of crucifixion. But if Christ was crucified on Friday, how was He in the grave for three days and three nights as Jesus said in **Matthew 12:40**? Some people began to say that Jesus was the son of David, which is a term for **the Messiah**, after He had cast a demon out of a man. However, the scribes and Pharisees being alarmed that the people would think Jesus was the Messiah began to openly criticize Him saying He had cast the demon out by the power of Beelzebub meaning Satan. Jesus then rebuked them for their unbelief and blasphemy. **Blasphemy is attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to the Devil and that is what they did by saying that Jesus casting out the demon was the work of Satan.** They showed the hardness of their hearts by then sarcastically demanding that Jesus would give them a sign of who He was. They had just witnessed a sign in the casting out of the demon, but they would not accept it. The context in which Jesus Christ said these words is important. The scribes and Pharisees were demanding a miraculous sign from Him to prove that He was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. "But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah'" (**verse 39**).

This was the *only* sign Jesus gave that He was the promised Messiah: "**For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth**"

The traditional explanation mistakenly says that Jesus was crucified on Friday. Trying to justify that Friday was the day of the crucifixion, those that hold this view say that the Jews counted any part of a day as a full day. That is, part of Friday is day one; Saturday, day two; and He arose sometime Sunday morning - day three. **This explanation has some serious problems. The Jews did not calculate time the way we do. This is one of the first considerations.**

**1. The Israelite (Hebrews) day ended at sundown (6:00 PM) and the new day began at sunrise (6:00 AM). 2. Their Sabbath Day began at sundown Friday (about 6 PM) and ended at sundown Saturday.** In **Genesis 1:5** after the first day of creation, God said ". . . **the evening and the morning were the first day.**" After the completion of each day of creation the Lord states the ". . . **the evening and the morning were** the \_\_\_\_\_ day." **3. The word "day"** used by itself only refers to a period of time. The word has to be modified to specify what period of time it means. Example: **Acts 10:40** "Him God raised up **the third day**, and shewed him openly." The word day is modified by the word "third" and we know it refers specifically to only the third day. (See **Acts 20:7** which **refers to Sunday...the "first day" of the week.**) **Romans 2:16** "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (This refers to the judgment day). The modifier makes it specific as to the period of time. Grammatically **three days and three nights means three twenty four hour periods of time.** If Jesus was crucified on the traditional Friday and rose again anytime after 6 PM Saturday (the Hebrew Sunday) He could not have been in the tomb ("heart of the earth") three full days and three full nights as He said He would be. Some might try to dismiss the importance of Jesus' statement, but He said it would be a sign to the Jews that He was the Messiah. If He was not actually in the grave three full days and three full nights there would be no way to authenticate the sign, so He had to be in the tomb the full time as He stated. In the Hebrew way of reckoning time, from Friday at 6 PM to Saturday as 6 PM would have only been

twenty four hours if Jesus was buried before 6 PM. From Saturday at 6 PM until Sunday morning at day break would have been a maximum of twelve hours. That gives a total of only thirty six hours, not the seventy two hours the Bible records that He was in the grave. **Jesus said He would be in the grave for seventy two hours and therefore He could not have been crucified on Friday.**

Friday afternoon to Saturday 6 PM = 24 hours.

Saturday 6 PM to Sunday 6 AM = 12 hours.

Total 36 hours. (Not enough time)

Some mistakenly refer to the passage where in **John 11:9** Jesus asked, ". . . **Are there not twelve hours in the day**" to explain away the problem with the time. In creation God divided the day and night. The evening and the morning = 1 day. **If there were twelve (12) hours in a day then there must have been twelve (hours) in a night and the total would be twenty four hours.** Also, anytime in the Bible when the word "day" is preceded by a number, it means whatever number of days is denoted by that number. "Day" can also be used in the Bible to mean an unspecified period of days such as "Day of the Lord". Dr. Charles Halff, Director of the Christian Jew Foundation, in writing "The Fallacies of Easter" stated: "Sometimes people ask, 'Didn't the Jews count part of a day as a whole day or part of a night as a whole night?' Let me say this, beloved. Whenever you have the expression 'day and night' mentioned together in the Hebrew Scriptures, it always means a full day and a full night. . . For instance, if you will turn to **Esther 4:16; 5:1; 1 Samuel; 30:12-13**, and of course **Jonah 1:17**, you will find the expression 'three days and three nights.' And in every instance it means full days and full nights - not part of a day and part of a night." From Friday to Sunday is not three 24-hour days. Jesus said he would be resurrected after three (3) days. (**Mark 8:31**: "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief

priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."  
Counting backwards from Sunday three days, you will not arrive at Friday.  
Remember to count the way the Jews did.

**From Wednesday 6 PM to Thursday 6 PM = 1 day.**

**From Thursday 6 PM to Friday 6 PM = 1 day;**

**From Friday 6 PM to Saturday 6 PM = 1 day;**

**Total 3 days.**

## **HOW COULD WEDNESDAY BE THE DAY BEFORE THE SABBATH?**

But if He was crucified the day before the Sabbath, how could He have been crucified on Wednesday? The answer lies in the fact that **the Jews celebrated more Sabbaths than just the weekly Sabbath. They had a number of feast days that were "High Sabbaths," or high days.** He arose on the first day of the week after the Sabbaths\* (plural). Sometime after 6 PM Saturday, end of the Hebrew day, in **Matthew 28:1** 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 sepulcher." The Schofield Reference Bible (1917 ed.) has a center column note which reveals that **"Sabbath" in this verse is plural; from the Greek word "sabbata."** (Also in Young's Analytical Concordance) The day after the crucifixion was not the regular (**Saturday**) Sabbath but a Special ("**High**" - Greek, "**me-gas**", large) **Sabbath. John 19:31** states, "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross 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."

The Jews observed several "high" Sabbaths ("holy convocations") in their seasons. **Leviticus 23:3-6**; "***Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.***" The first Hebrew month (Nisan or Abib) is our April. **The Feast of the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (high Sabbath)** were celebrated on April 15th.

Most people fail to note that John explicitly tells us that the Sabbath that began at sundown immediately after Jesus was entombed was one of these annual Sabbath days. Notice in **John 19:31** his explanation that "**that Sabbath** was a "**high day**" —" **high day**" being a term used to differentiate the seven **annual Sabbaths** from the regular **weekly Sabbath days**. So what was this "**high day**" that immediately followed Jesus Christ's hurried entombment? **The Gospels tell us that on the evening before Jesus was condemned and crucified, He kept the Passover with His disciples (Matthew 26:19-20; Mark 14:16-17; Luke 22:13-15).** This means **He was crucified on the Passover day.** **Leviticus 23**, which lists God's festivals, tells us that **on the day after the Passover a separate festival, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, begins (verses 5-6).** The first day of this Feast is "**a holy convocation**" on which "**no customary work**" is to be done (**verse 7**). **This day is the first of God's annual Sabbaths.** This is the "**high day**" of which John wrote. **Several Bible commentaries, encyclopedias and dictionaries note that John is referring to an annual Sabbath here rather than the regular weekly Sabbath day.**

**Passover** began at sundown and ended the following day at sundown, when this **annual Sabbath** began. **Jesus kept the Passover with His disciples, then was arrested later that night. After daybreak the next day He was questioned before Pontius Pilate,**

**crucified, then entombed just before the next sunset** when **the "high day,"** the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, began.

**Leviticus 23** tells us the order and timing of these days, and the Gospels confirm the order of events as they unfolded. Can we find further proof of this in the Gospels? Yes, indeed we can!

Let's turn to a seldom-noticed detail in **Mark 16:1** "***Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.***"

**In that time, if the body of a loved one was placed in a tomb rather than being buried directly in the ground, friends and family would commonly place aromatic spices in the tomb alongside the body to reduce the smell as the remains decayed.**

Since Jesus' body was placed in the tomb just before that high-day Sabbath began, the women had no time to buy those spices before the Sabbath. Also, they could not have purchased them on the Sabbath day, as shops were closed. Thus, Mark says, they bought the spices *after the Sabbath*—"when the Sabbath was past."

But notice another revealing detail in **Luke 23:55-56**: "***And the women who had come with [Christ] from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.***"

Do you see a problem here? Mark clearly states that the women bought the spices *after* the Sabbath—"when the Sabbath was past." Luke tells us that the women prepared the spices and fragrant oils, after which "*they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.*"

So they bought the spices *after* the Sabbath, and then they prepared the spices *before resting on* the Sabbath. This is a clear contradiction between these two Gospel accounts—unless *two* Sabbaths were involved!

Indeed when we understand that *two different Sabbaths* are mentioned, the problem goes away.

Mark tells us that after the "high day" Sabbath, which began **Wednesday evening at sundown and ended Thursday evening at sundown, the women bought the spices to anoint Jesus' body. Luke then tells us that the women prepared the spices—activity which would have taken place on Friday—and that afterward "they rested on the Sabbath [the normal weekly Sabbath day, observed Friday sunset to Saturday sunset] according to the commandment."**

By comparing details in both accounts, we can clearly see that two different Sabbaths are mentioned along with a workday in between.

The original Greek in which the Gospels were written also plainly tells us that **two Sabbath days were involved in these accounts.** In **Matthew 28:1**, where Matthew writes that the women went to the tomb "after **the Sabbath**," the word *Sabbath* here is actually *plural* and should be translated "**Sabbaths**." Bible versions such as Alfred Marshall's Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Green's Literal Translation Young's Literal Translation and Ferrar Fenton's Translation make this clear.

## When was Jesus resurrected?

We have seen, then, that Jesus Christ was crucified and entombed on a Wednesday, just before an *annual* Sabbath began—not the weekly Sabbath. So when was He resurrected?

### **John 20:1**

as noted earlier, tells us that "on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, *while it was still dark*, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb." The sun had not yet risen— "*it was still dark*," John tells us—when Mary found the tomb empty.

Obviously, then, Jesus was not resurrected at sunrise on Sunday morning. So when did this take place? The answer is plain if we simply read the Gospels—and Jesus Christ's own words—and accept them for what they say.



"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, *so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,*" said Jesus (**Matthew 12:40**).

As we have proven, **Jesus was entombed —placed "in the heart of the earth"—just before sundown on a Wednesday.** All we have to do is count forward. One day and one night brings us to Thursday at sundown. Another day and night brings us to Friday at sundown. A third day and night brings us to Saturday at sundown.

According to Jesus Christ's own words He would have been resurrected three days and nights after He was entombed, at around the same time—near sunset. Does this fit with the Scriptures? Yes—as we have seen, He was already risen and the tomb empty when Mary arrived "while it was still dark" on Sunday morning.

The words of the angel of God, who so startled the women at the empty tomb, are proven true: "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; *he has risen, just as he said*" (**Matthew 28:5-6, New International Version**).

Let's not cling to religious traditions and ideas that aren't supported by Scripture. Be sure that your own beliefs and practices are firmly rooted in the Bible. Are you willing to make a commitment to worship God according to biblical truth rather than human tradition?

### **The Timing of Events Surrounding Jesus' Death and Resurrection**

<b>Hebrew Calendar</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Modern Day of Week</b>
<b>13th Nisan</b>	Peter and John prepared the room for the Passover meal <b>Luke 22:8</b> This is traditionally the time when the dwelling is searched to ensure that all leaven has been removed.	<b>Tuesday before 6:00 PM</b>

**14th Nisan**

Jesus and disciples ate the “Last Supper,” which was not the Passover meal. He desired to eat the Passover with His disciples, because He knew what lay ahead, but openly declared that He would “no more no not eat” (an emphasized double negative – *ouketi ou me phago*) of the Passover “until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God”

**Tuesday after 6:00 PM**

**Luke 22:14-16**

**John 18:28**

**14th Nisan (1st Hour)**

**Matthew 27:1-2**

**Wednesday 6:00AM**

indicates that the leaders of the Jews delivered Jesus to Pilate “when morning was come,” which would have been the beginning of the business day, or about 6:00 AM.

**14th Nisan (3rd to 6th Hour)**

Jesus is crucified.

**Wednesday 9:00 AM – 12:00PM**

**Mark 15:25, John 19:144**

**14th Nisan (6th to 9th Hour)**

Darkness came over the land until the 9th hour. **Matthew 27:455**

**Wednesday 12:00 – 3:00 PM**

<b>14th Nisan (9th Hour)</b>	Jesus died as the fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice, at the prescribed time of the killing of the Passover lamb. <b>Matthew 27:46,50</b>	<b>Wednesday 3:00 PM</b>
<b>14th Nisan (11th Hour or so)</b>	Jesus was buried before the end of 14th Nisan; sunset was the beginning of 15th Nisan, a holy day, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread ( <b>John 19:31; Leviticus 23:5-7</b> ).	<b>Wednesday before 6:00 PM</b>
<b>15th Nisan Sunset to Sunrise</b> – this is a holy day, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a day kept like unto the Sabbath	Jesus in the tomb – <b>1st night</b>	<b>Wednesday 6:00 PM to Thursday 6:00 AM</b>
<b>15th Nisan Sunrise to Sunset</b> – still a holy day, like unto the Sabbath	Jesus in the tomb – <b>1st day</b>	<b>Thursday 6:00 AM to Thursday 6:00 PM</b>
<b>16th Nisan, Sunset to Sunrise</b> , this was a day like unto any other day	Jesus in the tomb – <b>2nd night</b>	<b>Thursday 6:00 PM to Friday 6:00 AM</b>
<b>16th Nisan, Sunrise to Sunset.</b>	Jesus in the tomb – <b>2nd day</b>	<b>Friday 6:00 AM to Friday 6:00 PM</b>
<b>17th Nisan, Sunset to Sunrise</b> – this is a holy day, the regular Sabbath	Jesus in the tomb – <b>3rd night</b>	<b>Friday 6:00 PM to Saturday 6:00 AM</b>
<b>17th Nisan, Sunrise to Sunset</b> – the regular Sabbath	Jesus in the tomb – <b>3rd day</b>	<b>Saturday 6:00 AM to Saturday 6:00 PM</b>
<b>18th Nisan Sunset</b> – after the end of the Sabbath day	Jesus rose from the dead “early the first <i>day</i> of the week” ( <b>Mark 16:9</b> )	

# DID JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES CELEBRATE EASTER?

WHY DO you believe the things you believe, do the things you do?

**Because of the "sheep" instinct in humans, most of us believe a lot of things that are not true. Most of us do a lot of things that are wrong, supposing these things to be right, or even sacred!**

For millions of people Easter Sunday is the most important religious holiday of the year. But if Jesus walked the dusty roads of Galilee today, would He observe Easter?

Each spring the excitement of Easter fills the air. Many churches prepare special Easter programs about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At home mothers color eggs, and parents hide the brightly colored symbols of Easter around the house and lawn so that, come Easter morning, their children can excitedly hunt for them.

Stuffed Easter bunnies and chocolate rabbits are seen everywhere in the weeks leading up to this major religious observance. Then there are the Easter sunrise services, where churchgoers gather to hear about Jesus' resurrection and honor that miraculous event by watching the sun come up in the east.

But what do colored eggs and the Easter Bunny have to do with Jesus Christ's resurrection? How did these seemingly irreligious symbols come to be associated with that event?

Can we find any historical or biblical record of Jesus or His disciples observing Easter or teaching parents and children to dye eggs and display bunnies on this holiday? Did Jesus or His apostles instruct any of His followers to meet to honor His resurrection at sunrise on Easter Sunday—or at any other time, for that matter?

If Easter was not sanctioned by Jesus or instituted by His apostles, then where did Easter come from? In other words, if Jesus were living among us

as a flesh-and-blood human being, would He celebrate Easter or encourage others to do so?

Answers to these questions are readily available. Some may take a little research, but they become clear when we look into history and the Bible.

## The apostles' record on Easter

As surprising as this may sound, nowhere in the New Testament can you find any reference to Easter. In the King James Version of the Bible (**in Acts 12:4**) you do 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 as "**Passover**" in virtually every modern version of the Bible everywhere it appears in the Scriptures. It refers to the biblical Passover originally instituted when God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt (**Exodus 12:1-14**).

The original apostles, from the inception of the New Testament Church to near the end of the first century, when the apostle John died, left absolutely no record of observing Easter or teaching others to do so. From Jesus to John, not one of the apostles gave even the slightest hint of celebrating or advocating the observance of what we know today as Easter Sunday.

However, that doesn't mean the early Church did not hold to specific religious observances. **The apostle Paul, some 25 years after Jesus' death and resurrection, plainly told members of the church at Corinth that they should continue to observe the *Passover* as Christ commanded.**

Paul wrote: "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is

the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'

"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (**1 Corinthians 11:23-27**).

**Paul was concerned that the Church members in Corinth observe the Passover in the right way, with reverence and proper comprehension of its meaning.**

**The writings of Paul and of Luke, his traveling companion and author of the book of Acts, regularly mention keeping the weekly Sabbath day and the biblical festivals listed in Leviticus 23. But Easter is conspicuously absent (**1 Corinthians 5:6-8; 16:8; Acts 2:1-4; 13:42, 44; 17:1-3; 18:4; 20:6, 16**).**

Since Easter wasn't introduced by Jesus or the apostles, where did it come from, and how did it come to be such an accepted part of traditional Christianity?

## The origin of Easter

It's not that difficult to trace the surprising origins of Easter and what it really represents. Many scholarly works show that Easter is a pre-Christian religious holiday, one that was created and developed long before Jesus' time and carried forward to the modern era through such empires as Babylon, Persia, Greece and finally Rome.

***Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* notes: "The term 'Easter' is not of Christian origin. It is another form of *Astarte*, one of the titles of the Chaldean [Babylonian] goddess, the queen of heaven. The festival of *Pasch* [*Passover*] held by Christians in post-apostolic times was a continuation of the Jewish feast . . . From this *Pasch* the heathan festival of 'Easter' was quite distinct and was introduced into the apostate Western religion, as part of the attempt to adapt pagan festivals to Christianity" (W.E. Vine, 1985, "Easter").**

Alexander Hislop, in his book *The Two Babylons* (1959), explores the origins of Easter. He discovered that a form of Easter was kept in many nations, not necessarily only those that professed Christianity: **"What means the term Easter itself? . . . 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 of Nineveh, was . . . Ishtar" (p. 103).**

The ancient gods of the pagans had many different names. **While this goddess was called Astarte in Babylon, it appears on Assyrian monuments found by Layard in excavations at Nineveh as Ishtar (Layard's Nineveh and Babylon, page 629).** Both were pronounced "**Easter**." Likewise, **Beltis**, or **Bel** (referred to in the Old Testament) also was called **Moloch**. It was for sacrificing to Moloch (**I Kings 11:1-11**, especially **verse 7**, where Moloch is called an abomination) and other pagan gods that the Eternal condemned Solomon, and rended away the Kingdom of Israel from his son.

In the ancient Chaldean idolatrous Sun-worship, **Baal** was the sun god, **Astarte** his consort, or wife. And Astarte is the same as Ishtar, or the English Easter.

**Easter** and the practices associated with it can be traced back to various heathen rituals. Hislop explains that **"the forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess" (p. 104).** In Egypt a similar 40-day period of abstinence **"was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god" (p. 105).**

## **A pre-Christian spring festival**

How, then, did 40 days' abstinence come to be associated with a resurrection? Hislop continues: **"Among the heathen this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz, which was celebrated by alternate weeping and rejoicing" (p. 105).**

**Tammuz** was a chief Babylonian deity and husband of the goddess Ishtar. Worship of Tammuz was so widespread in ancient times that it even spread into Jerusalem. In **Ezekiel 8:12-18**

God describes that worship and calls it an abomination—something repugnant and disgusting to Him.

The Babylonians held a great festival every spring to celebrate Tammuz's death and supposed resurrection many centuries before Christ walked the earth (see "The Resurrection Connection" on page 18). **Hislop comprehensively documents evidence showing that Easter's origins precede the modern Christian holiday by more than 2,000 years!**

Hislop cites the fifth-century writings of Cassianus, a Catholic monk of Marseilles, France, on the subject of Easter's being a heathen custom rather than a New Testament observance. **"It ought to be known," the monk stated, "that the observance of the forty days [i.e., the observance of Lent] had no existence, so long as the perfection of that primitive Church remained inviolate" (p. 104).**

Sir James Frazer describes Easter ceremonies entering into the established church: **"When we reflect how often the Church has skillfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith on the old stock of heathenism, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis [the Greek name for Tammuz], which . . . was celebrated in Syria at the same season" (*The Golden Bough*, 1993, p. 345).**

**The Encyclopædia Britannica** comments: **"There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the apostolic Fathers. The sanctity of special times was an idea absent from the minds of the first Christians."---** (1910), Vol. VIII, p. 828.

The Catholic Encyclopedia tells us: **"A great many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter. The egg is the emblem of the germinating life of early spring. . . . The rabbit**



is a heathen symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility. "--(1913), Vol. V, p. 227.

## Why eggs and rabbits?

What about other customs associated with Easter? **One Catholic writer explains how eggs and rabbits came to be connected with Easter. You will quickly notice an absence of any link or reference to the Holy Bible when it comes to these rituals:**

**"The egg has become a popular Easter symbol. Creation myths of many ancient peoples center in a cosmogenic egg from which the universe is born. In ancient Egypt and Persia friends exchanged decorated eggs at the spring equinox, the beginning of their New Year.**

**"These eggs were *a symbol of fertility* for them because the coming forth of a live creature from an egg was so surprising to people of ancient times. Christians of the Near East adopted this tradition, and the Easter egg became a religious symbol. It represented the tomb from which Jesus came forth to new life" (Greg Dues, Catholic Customs and Traditions, 1992, p. 101; emphasis added throughout).**

Like eggs, rabbits came to be linked with Easter because they were potent symbols associated with ancient fertility rites. **"Little children are usually told that the Easter eggs are brought by the Easter Bunny. Rabbits are part of pre-Christian fertility symbolism because of their reputation to reproduce rapidly. The Easter Bunny has never had a religious meaning" (p. 102).**

**Honest Bible scholars freely admit that Jesus never sanctioned this pre-Christian holiday, nor did His apostles. In the centuries to follow among those who called themselves Christian, **Easter** eventually supplanted the **Passover**, the biblical ceremony Jesus and the apostle Paul told Christians to observe.**

This came to a head with the Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nicaea—almost three centuries after Jesus was killed and rose again.

Says *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "A final settlement of the dispute [over whether and when to observe **Easter** or **Passover**] was one among the other reasons which led Constantine to summon the council of Nicaea in 325 . . . The decision of the council was unanimous that **Easter** was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world, and 'that none should hereafter follow the blindness of the Jews'" (11th edition, pp. 828-829, "Easter").

Constantine 's decision was a fateful turning point for Christianity. Those who remained faithful to the instruction of Jesus and the apostles would be outcasts, a small and persecuted minority (John 15:18-20). A vastly different set of beliefs and practices—recycled from ancient pre-Christian religions but dressed in a Christian cloak—would take hold among the majority.

## What would Jesus do?

Since Easter (with all the pagan symbols that have come with it) was adopted by the Catholic Church centuries after Christ's ascension, should Christians observe this heathen holiday and encourage others to do so?

To answer that question, ask yourself would Jesus Christ Celebrate **Easter**? He certainly could have told us to. So could the apostles, whose teaching and doctrine are preserved for us in the book of Acts and the epistles written by Paul, Peter, James, Jude and John. But nowhere do we find a hint of support for Easter or anything remotely resembling it. **What we do find, as pointed out earlier, is clear instruction from Jesus and Paul to keep the Passover and other biblical—and truly Christian—observances.**

Holy Scripture does not support this pre-Christian holiday and, in fact, condemns such celebrations. Because Scripture condemns heathen practices and the worship of false gods (**Deuteronomy 12:29-32**), we know that God the Father and Jesus His Son have no interest in **Easter** and do not approve of it.

Jesus, in fact, is diametrically opposed to religious rituals that supposedly honor Him but in reality are rooted in the worship of false gods. He makes clear the difference between pleasing God and pleasing men: "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: *'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men . . . All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition'*" (Mark 7:6-9).

**Easter is a tradition of men, not a commandment of God.** But it's more than that. It is a heathen tradition of men that, like other traditions involved in the worship of false gods, is abhorrent to the true God. Jesus and His apostles would never sanction its observance because it mingles paganism with supposedly Christian symbolism and ritual. It is rooted in ancient pre-Christian fertility rites **originating in Babylon** which have nothing to do with Jesus!

In reality, most of the trappings associated with **Easter** reveal that the holiday is actually a fraud pawned off on unsuspecting and well-intentioned people. **God wants us to worship in spirit and truth** (John 4:23-24), not to recycle ancient customs used to worship other gods.

Even the timing of the events used to justify celebrating Jesus' resurrection on a Sunday morning—that He was crucified on the afternoon of "**Good Friday**" and resurrected before dawn on Sunday morning—are extremely false, as an examination of the Scriptures shows.

For those who want concrete proof that He was indeed the Messiah and Savior of mankind, Jesus made a promise: "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be *three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*" (Matthew 12:39-40).

Try as some might, **there is no way to calculate three days and three nights from late Friday afternoon to Sunday morning before daylight. At most, this amounts to barely more than a day and a half. Either Jesus was mistaken, or those who say He was**

**crucified on a Friday and resurrected on a Sunday are mistaken. You can't have it both ways.**

## **Jesus' instructions remain consistent**

If Jesus walked the dusty roads of Galilee today, would He celebrate Easter? Certainly not. But He would be consistent because He does not change (**Hebrews 13:8**). For instance, He would keep the annual Passover in the same manner as He instructed His followers to keep it (**1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:15-17**). And Jesus would observe the Days of Unleavened Bread in the way He inspired Paul to instruct early Christians (**1 Corinthians 5:6-8**).

God Almighty commanded His people to observe the PASSOVER forever! (**Exodus. 12:24**).

Jesus did not abolish Passover. He merely CHANGED the emblems, or symbols used. All the apostles of Christ, and true Christians of the first century true Church observed it, on the 14th day of the first month of the sacred calendar. It is now a MEMORIAL of Christ's death, reaffirming, year by year on its anniversary, the true Christian's FAITH in the blood of Christ for the remission of his sins, and the broken body of Christ for his physical healing.

All nations have been deceived into dropping the festival God ordained forever to commemorate the death of the true Saviour for our sins, and substituting in its place the **HEATHEN** festival in commemoration of the counterfeit "saviour" and mediator of **Baal, the SUN GOD**, named after the mythical **Ishtar, his wife** actually none other than **the ancient, Semiramis** who palmed herself off as the wife of the sun god, the idolatrous "**QUEEN OF HEAVEN**."

**THIS is not Christian! IT IS PAGAN (HEATHENISM) TO THE CORE!**

Yet scores of millions of Americans are deceived into observing this form of heathen idolatry, under the delusion they are honoring Jesus Christ the Son of the Creator GOD!

Easter does not honor Christ! And yet, have you not been, like a blind sheep, following the other millions in this custom? "***The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth to come to repentance***" (**Acts 17:30**).

Jesus and the apostles foretold, not a universal, widespread popular growth of the true New Testament Church, but A FALLING AWAY FROM THE TRUTH on the part of the great majority. Prophesying a popular, universal FALLING AWAY from the faith once delivered, to the Thessalonians, Paul stated, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work," (**2 Thessalonians. 2:7**), only some 30 years after the Church began! He referred to the very "Chaldean Mysteries," of which **Easter** and **Christmas** were the two chief festivals!

Second, although **Jesus said the gates of hell would never prevail against His Church, yet it is everywhere prophesied thru the New Testament as the "Little Flock" Never as a great, large, popular universal church.** This is the very fact the world does not realize today!

## **TWO Churches One False, One True**

In New Testament prophecy TWO CHURCHES are described.

One, the great and powerful and universal church, a part of the world, actually ruling in its politics over many nations, and united with the "Holy Roman Empire," is brought to a concrete focus in **Revelation 17.**

This church is pictured with great pomp, ritual and display, decked in purple, scarlet and gold, proud, worldly, boastful. She is pictured as a universal DECEIVER. **The whole world spiritually DRUNK with her false doctrines, their spiritual perception so blurred by her HEATHEN teachings and practices they are unable to clearly distinguish TRUTH!** She boasts she is the true Church, yet she is drunken with the blood of the saints she has caused to be martyred! (**Killed or Persecuted**)

But how could she have deceived the whole world, as foretold in God's Word? Oh, but she has! Notice, **verse 5**, she is **a MOTHER church! Her daughters are also churches who have come out of her**, even in protest, calling themselves Protestant, but they are fundamentally of her family in pagan doctrines and practices! They, too, make themselves a part of this world, taking active part in its politics, the very act which made a "whore" out of their MOTHER!

The entire **apostate family;Mother**, and more than 500 daughter denominations, all divided against each other and in CONFUSION of doctrines, yet all united in the chief pagan doctrines and festivals has a family NAME! They call themselves "Christian," but God calls them something else. **"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT!"**

**"Babylon"** means confusion! God always names people and things by calling them what they are! And here is the same identical ancient BABYLONIAN MYSTERIES now wrapped in the false cloak labeled "Christianity" but, in fact, it is the same old "CHALDEAN MYSTERIES"! THUS GOD NAMES THIS RELIGIOUS SYSTEM!

But where, then, was the TRUE Church?

## **TRUE Church Small Scattered**

Did the true Church of God, of which Jesus Christ is the Living, Directing Head, become perverted. Did it merely apostatize into the system described above?

**NO! The gates of hell have never prevailed against the true Church of God, and never will! The true Church has never fallen! It has never ceased!**

But **the true Church of God is pictured in prophecy as the "Little Flock"**! The New Testament describes this Church as continually persecuted, despised by the large popular churches because it is not OF this world or its politics, but has kept itself unspotted from the world! **It has always kept the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus.** It has kept **God's festivals**, not the heathen holidays. It has been empowered with the Spirit of God!

That Church never degenerated into the great popular church at Rome, as the Protestant world supposes! That Church always has existed, and it exists today!

Then where did it go? Where was it during the Middle Ages?

First, remember this Church was never large, never politically powerful, or a world-known ORGANIZATION OF MEN. **It is a SPIRITUAL ORGANISM, not a political organization.** It is composed of all whose hearts and lives have been CHANGED by the Spirit of God, whether visibly together, or individually scattered.

Under the lash of continual persecution and opposition of the organized forces of this world, it is difficult for such a people to remain UNITED and ORGANIZED together.

Daniel prophesied the Isrealite people of God would be scattered (**Daniel. 12:7**). **Ezekiel** foretold it (**34:5-12**). **Jeremiah**, too, (**23:1-2**). Jesus warned persecution of those who follow him (**Matthew. 26:31**). The Apostolic Church was soon scattered by persecution (**Acts 8:1**). James addresses his letter to Christians scattered abroad (**James. 1:1**).

## **Ignored by Most Histories**

You don't read much of this true Body of Christ in the secular histories of this world! No, the world little notes, nor long remembers, the activities of this "LITTLE FLOCK," hated and despised by the world, driven to the wilderness by persecution, always opposed, usually scattered! But there are enough references to it in authentic histories to show that it has continued thru every century to now!

The prophecies bring this Church into concrete focus in the 12th chapter of Revelation. There she is shown spiritually, in the glory and splendor of the Spirit of God, but visibly in the world as a persecuted, Commandment-keeping Church driven into the wilderness, for 1260 years, thru the Middle Ages!

Even in Paul's day, many among those attending at Antioch, at Jerusalem, at Ephesus, at Corinth, and other places, began to apostatize and turn

away from the truth. Divisions sprang up. Those individuals, unconverted, or turned from God's TRUTH and WAY OF LIFE, were no part of God's true Church, tho visibly assembling with those who were. The "mystery of iniquity" was already working, INSIDE these visible Churches. This apostasy increased! By the year A.D. 125 the majority in most churches, especially those Gentile-born, were continuing in many of their old pagan beliefs and practices, tho professing to be Christian! Gradually, a smaller and smaller portion of the VISIBLE churches going by the name "Christian" remained truly yielded to God and His Truth, and led of His Spirit. After Constantine took virtual control of the visible, professing Church in the early fourth century, this visible organization became almost wholly pagan, and began ex-communicating and persecuting all who held to the true WORD OF GOD! Finally, it became necessary for real Christians, who, even as a scattered people, alone composed the TRUE Christian Church, to FLEE from the jurisdiction of Rome in order to worship God! Thus, the visible, organized Church which rose to power was the FALSE Church, **the "Great Whore"** of **Revelation 17**.

## Injected into the Church

Nothing illustrates this very fact more vividly, than the actual history of the injecting of Easter into the Churches all around the world.

Here is the quick, brief history of it, from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, **11th edition, article on "EASTER"**:

**"There is no indication of the observance of the **Easter** festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. . . . The first Christians [the original TRUE Church] continued to observe the Jews [that is, GOD'S] festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed. Thus the **Passover**, with a new conception added to it, of Christ as the true **Paschal Lamb** and **the first fruits from the dead, continued to be observed."****



**"Although the observance of **Easter** was at a very early period in the practice of the Christian Church, a serious difference as to the day for its observance soon arose between the Christians of Jews and those of Gentile descent, which led to a long and bitter controversy. With the Isrealite Christians . . . the fast ended . . . on the 14th day of the moon at evening . . . without regard to the day of the week. The Gentile Christians on the other hand [that is, the beginning of the Catholic church, now substituting pagan (heathen) for true Christian doctrines] . . . identified the first day of the week with the resurrection, and kept the preceding Friday as the commemoration of the crucifixion, irrespective of the day of the month."**

**"Generally speaking, the Western Churches [Catholic] kept **Easter** on the 1st day of the week, while the Eastern Churches [containing most of those who remained as part of the TRUE Christian church] followed the Isrealite rule." (That is, observing **Passover** on the 14th of the first sacred month instead of the pagan **Easter**.)**

"Polycarp, the disciple of John the Evangelist, and bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome in 159 to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject, and urged the tradition which he had received from the apostle of observing the 14th day. Anicetus, however, declined. About forty years later [197], the question was discussed in a very different spirit between Victor, bishop of Rome, and Polycrates, metropolitan of proconsular Asia [the territory of the Churches at Ephesus, Galatia, Antioch, Philadelphia, and all those mentioned in **Revelation 2 and 3** the churches established thru the apostle Paul]. That province was the only portion of Christendom which still adhered to the Jews [the writer should have used the words "true Christian" instead of "Jews"] usage. Victor demanded that all should adopt the usage prevailing at Rome. This Polycrates firmly refused to agree to, and urged many weighty reasons to the contrary, whereupon Victor proceeded to excommunicate Polycrates and the Christians who continued the Eastern usage [that is, who continued in GOD'S way, as Jesus, Peter, Paul, and all the early true Church had done]. He was, however, restrained [by other bishops] from actually proceeding to enforce the decree of excommunication . . . and the Asiatic churches retained their usage

unmolested. We find the Jews [true Christian Passover] usage from time to time reasserting itself after this, but it never prevailed to any large extent.

**"A final settlement of the dispute was one among the other reasons which led Constantine to summon the council at Nicaea in 325 A.D. At that time the Syrians and Antiochenes were the solitary champions of the observance of the 14th day. The decision of the council was unanimous that Easter was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world, and that 'none hereafter should follow the blindness of the Jews'. [That is, in plain language, the Catholic church now decreed that none should be allowed to follow the ways of JESUS CHRIST of the TRUE Christian Church!]"**

**". . . The few who afterwards separated themselves from the unity of the church [Roman church], and continued to keep the 14th day, were named 'Quarto-decimani,' and the dispute itself is known as the 'Quartodeciman controversy'."**

Thus you see how the politically organized church at Rome grew to great size and power by adopting popular heathen practices; how she gradually stamped out the true teachings, doctrines, and practices of JESUS CHRIST, and the true Church, so far as any collective practice is concerned.

It was only by violence and bloodshed, at last, says Hislop (*The Two Babylons, p. 107*), that the idolatrous festival of **the Chaldean goddess Easter** came to supersede that which God had ordained to be observed forever!

## **True Christians Kept PASSOVER**

The New Testament reveals that Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament Church, both Jews and Gentile-born, observed God's Sabbaths, and God's festivals weekly and annually! Take your Bible and carefully read **Acts 2:1, 12:3-4 (the word "Easter" here is a flagrant false translation in the "King James" version originally inspired "Passover," and so corrected in the Revised version); Acts 18:21; 20:6, 16; I Corinthians 16:8.**

Eusebius, historian of the early centuries of the Church, speaks of the true Christians observing Passover on the 14th of Nisan, first month of the sacred calendar.

The historian Gieseler wrote that "the Gentile Christians observed also the Sabbath and the Passover," during the latter half of the first century.

But **as the false paganized Church grew in size and political power, decrees were passed by A.D. 363, imposing the death sentence upon Christians found keeping God's Sabbath, or God's festivals.**

Finally, in order to keep the true Way of God, a large portion of the true Christians (composing the true Church) "fled into the wilderness," as foretold in **Rev. 12:6**, where they were fed on the pure Word of God 1260 long years!

But another large portion of the TRUE Church of God, failing to flee, yet remaining true to God's Truth, paid with their lives in martyrdom (**Revelation 6:9; 13:15; 17:6; 18:24**). History records that more than 50 million were martyred! **READ John Foxes book "Fox's Book Of Martyrs"**. Fox's famous **book** detailing the lives, sufferings and triumphant deaths of the early Christian and the Protestant **Martyrs**. In providing evidence of the persecution of Christians the bible has been a historical reference, but after the bible no book has documented a volume of records of Christian execution such as Fox's Book of Martyrs.

They loved obedience to God more than their lives! DO YOU? But through all generations, thru every century, though persecuted, scattered, unrecognized by the world, many true Christians have kept alive the TRUE CHURCH OF GOD. The Church composed of those Satan cannot deceive! (**Matthew. 24:24**)

## Easter Sunrise Services

You think **Easter** sunrise services are beautiful? LISTEN! **God was showing the prophet Ezekiel the sins of His people in a vision. A prophecy for today! "Turn thee yet again," said God, "and thou shalt see greater abominations than these [Ezekiel had just been shown, in vision, idol-worship among professing people of God].**

And **He brought me [in vision] into the inner court of the Eternal's house, and behold . . . between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with . . . their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east.** Then He said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing . . . that they commit the **ABOMINATIONS** which they commit here? . . . Therefore, will I also deal IN FURY: Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in Mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them" (**Ezekiel 8:15-18**).

Do you grasp what this most abominable thing is?

It is the same identical thing millions are doing every **Easter** Sunday morning. The sunrise service standing with their faces toward the east, as the SUN is rising, in a service of worship which honors the SUN GOD and his mythical idolatrous consort goddess **Easter**. Yes, deceived into believing this is Christian, millions practice every **Easter** the identical form of the ancient SUN-WORSHIP of the sun god BAAL! Throughout the Bible this is revealed as THE MOST ABOMINABLE of all idolatry in the sight of the Eternal Creator!

Do you think this makes no difference, today? It makes all the difference between life and death, between being SAVED and LOST!

It is a serious thing to write to you, my readers, these truths for now you have the KNOWLEDGE of the TRUTH! And ***"if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a CERTAIN fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries"*** (**Heb. 10:26-27**).

Yes, it makes a difference! Thousands had to flee the jurisdiction of "civilization" to keep God's ways! Other thousands paid with their lives for obeying God, but they shall LIVE forever, in the Resurrection!

This world's ways have brought only sorrow, suffering, chaos, death! GOD'S WAYS are the only ways that lead to Peace, lasting Prosperity, Happiness, Joy, Eternal Life! If Baal is god, then go serve him; but if the ETERNAL is your God, then SERVE HIM!

**1 Kings 18:21** And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

the Old Testament account of Elijah on Mt. Carmel, where he rebuked the children of Israel for worshipping and following the idol Baal. Israel wanted to worship and serve the true God of Heaven and the gods of the heathen at the same time. But Elijah told them that they just couldn't do that and get by with it. The true God of Heaven (Israel's God) does not permit His people to worship idols at all (**Exodus 20:1-5**).

The story continues with the contest between Israel's God and the false god Baal, in which Israel's God proved Himself to be the true and living God when He consumed Elijah's sacrifice with fire from heaven. Baal, on the other hand, was unable to answer the prayers of his prophets to consume their sacrifice, because Baal was just a god of their imagination and of their own making.

## **What it means to halt between two opinions.**

**The word "halt" in our text is important. It means to be undecided as if to hop back and forth from one opinion to the other. It also means to be lame or crippled on one's feet. To be undecided about who the true God is, is to be spiritually lame or crippled. Such a spiritually lame condition, when added to man's natural depravity, leaves unregenerate man all the more helpless and hopeless of recovery.**

On the other hand, many professing Christians today are also halting between two opinions. They pretend to worship the God of the Bible, but they also worship the gods of the heathen at the same time. Like Israel, they don't realize that God is displeased and angry with them. He doesn't accept the worship of those who practice idolatry and polytheism. Instead

of a pleasing God their worship is a sin to them. Instead of reaping God's blessings, they will reap His judgment and His curse.

## **What is meant by "opinions"?**

**The Hebrew word rendered "opinions" in our text is also rendered "thought" elsewhere in Scripture, which suggests that these Israelites' spiritual convictions were based on their own thoughts or opinions about God, which they conceived in their own minds. People have a natural tendency to form opinions in their own imaginations about who or what God is, rather than learning about God from the Bible, which is His Holy Word.**

**My friends, you can't know God any better than you know Him in His Word. People who claim they know God and understand His will (and so on), yet they have never read or studied His Word, are only fooling themselves. The fact is all they really know about God is what they make up in their own depraved hearts and minds. Most people would be totally surprised if they would take the time to read the Bible. They would find God to be entirely different than what they imagined Him to be. And this includes many professing Christians, who never read or study their Bibles! Of the myriad of truths concerning the God of the Bible, I have provided just a small sample below as food for thought:**

**1. God is the living God (Jeremiah 10:10). In fact, He is life (John 1:4), and He is the Creator and Giver of all life (Acts 17:25).**

**2. God is a Holy God (Isaiah 6:3, 57:15; 1 Peter 1:16). There is no sin or imperfection in Him (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5).**

3. **God is omnipotent, or all-powerful (Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Matthew 19:26; Revelation 1:8)**. There is nothing that He cannot do. He is limited only by His own Holy nature and perfect will.
  
4. **God is omniscient, or all knowing (Isaiah 40:28)**. He knows everything there is to know about everything and everyone. He knows every thought and every motive of the hearts of men.
  
5. **God is omnipresent. He is everywhere present at the same time (Psalm 139:7-9)** therefore **He is infinite**.
  
6. **God is eternal (Psalm 90:2)**. He had no beginning and shall have no end, therefore **He is unaffected by time**.
  
7. **God never changes (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8)** therefore **His promises and His judgments never fail**.
  
8. **God is sovereign over all (Psalm 115:3; Daniel 4:35)**. He works all things after the council of His own will (**Ephesians 1:11**). None can prevent His work or thwart His will. **He is sovereign over the salvation of sinners and the eternal destinies of the souls of all men (John 6:37-40, 44, 65)**.
  
9. **God is able to save the souls of men (Hebrews 7:25)**. He is able to give salvation and eternal life to as many as He shall call (**Acts 2:39**); to as many who repent and believe the gospel of His Son (**Mark 1:15**).

10. **God will judge the souls of men (Hebrews 9:27). All men will stand before Him in judgment on the appointed day. The lost will give an account of their sins and be sentenced to eternal punishment at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15), while the saved will give account of their works and receive or lose rewards accordingly at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10)**

Are you halting between two opinions? How long will you continue to do so? If the true God of Heaven is God, then serve Him. If the idols of this world be god, then serve them. My friends I implore you by the mercy of God to forsake your idols. They are less than useless. They are powerless. They cannot help you, much less save your soul from eternal death. And worst of all, they will bring the judgment of God upon all who worship and serve them.

The Bible tells us to "...come out from among them..." **(2 Corinthians 6:16-18)**. Put them far away from you. Repent of your sin of idolatry and trust in the only true and living God. He can save you. The Bible tells us to "...believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...". Believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day for you. All who believe this gospel shall be eternally saved.

But what about the other "opinions" of **Baal** and all the other so-called gods? How can we know if they are worthy of our worship and our devotion to them? The same Bible that teaches about the true God of Heaven also teaches about the other gods of this world. All of these gods have several things in common, ten of which are provided below:

1. They are dead. That is, they were never alive **(Habakkuk 2:18-19)**. They may be a rock or a tree, or perhaps a theory or philosophy of science.
2. They cannot see, talk, hear, smell, or move **(Psalm 115:4-8)**. They may have eyes, mouths, ears, hands and feet, but these do not work.



3. They are products of men's imaginations. They were created by men, which makes them inferior to men (**Psalm 135:18**).

4. They are like unto the people who made them. The nature and attributes ascribed to them are like those of the men who created them, therefore they are inherently sinful and unholy.

5. They are temporal. Unlike the true God of Heaven, their existence had a beginning and will have an end (**Jeremiah 50:2**).

6. They cannot hear or answer your prayers. It is vain and useless to pray to them (**1 Kings 18:26-29**). Therefore they cannot help you in times of trouble. In times when you need God to help you, these idols are less than worthless.

7. They are powerless to save your soul. Being without life themselves they cannot give spiritual life to the souls of lost and dying men, much less forgive your sins.

8. They exist in opposition to the true God of Heaven. They were made by men who despise the true and living God, who would not worship and serve their Creator (**Romans 1:20-25**).

9. They bring judgment from the true God of Heaven. All those who worship and serve them shall be punished by the living God, except they repent (**Leviticus 26:30; Revelation 21:8**).

**1 Thessalonians 1:9-10** *"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; 10 And to wait for his*

*Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come”.*

**Revelation 21:8** *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*

there are only two kinds of people with God, believers and unbelievers. They experience two different lifestyles on earth and go to two different eternal destinies. Believers go to "eternal life" while unbelievers experience "the second death," which is the lake of fire. **Second Death**

**Fear** is not of God. Fear is the opposite of faith. In fact, it is mentioned twice here by saying "fearful and unbelieving". Jesus cannot be someone's Savior, unless they believe that He is their Savior.

**Abomination**, meaning vile, polluted, detestable, wholly caught up in wickedness and evil. Here, we see those who do abominable things taking part in the second death.

Notice here this says "**murderers**" not accidental killing. This is premeditated murder, or those who hate their neighbors.

We see here "**whoremongers**" (this means not only in the physical but also in the spiritual practicing idolatry).

**Sorcerers**" has to do with the occult and also drugs.

**Idolaters**" has to do with anything or anyone you put ahead of God.

**Liars**" can do more harm than you can imagine. Many have a tendency to tell little "white lies", but any untruth is a lie.

Those whose lives are characterized by such things give evidence that they are not of God and **will not** enter into the heavenly kingdom of God.

After we are forgiven of our sins and born again, we must practice salvation. **We must not have the habit of sinning. We may slip and sin, but if we do, we have an advocate with the Father. Repent**

**and ask forgiveness**, and then as Jesus told the woman who the Pharisees had caught in the act of adultery, **John 8: 3-11** "***Go and sin no more***". This mean do not **practice sin**. The horror of it all if you do not change from these evils, is that you will be thrown into the lake of fire.

**John 4:24** "***God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth***".

Anyone who wants to be right with God, who wants to be a true disciple of Christ, the Master Teacher, will carefully examine his beliefs and practices to see whether they agree with the Bible. Such a person will not try to honor God with ancient idolatrous practices, violating His explicit commands (**Deuteronomy 12:29-32; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 7:1**). **Easter**, as we have seen, is filled with idolatrous trappings.

**Simply claiming that something is Christian or is done to honor God doesn't make it acceptable to God. Easter doesn't represent a resurrected Jesus Christ. Rather—difficult as it may be to admit—it merely continues the practices heathens followed thousands of years ago to honor their nonexistent gods.** If we are to escape the calamities prophesied to come on those who place the ways of this world ahead of God, then **we must repent of following traditions that dishonor Him (Revelation 18:1-5).**