

The Camden Companion



"COME LET US REASON TOGETHER, SAYS THE LORD"

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A Brief History of Easter

Today the religious world is celebrating a holiday called Easter in honor of the Lord's resurrection from the dead. Perhaps a brief history of this practice is in order to help us understand the truth on this matter. And Easter bunnies and colored eggs have nothing to do with it either. We are strictly addressing the "religious" holiday

Early Christians did not observe any special celebrations like Easter. Neither Jesus nor the apostles commanded such religious celebrations. In fact, Paul seems to condemn such as he says "*You observe days and months and season and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain*" (Gal. 4:10-11.) He was talking about Jewish holidays of course, but the point is well taken. The early church was not and did not get involved in such things. But as time went by, many customs and traditions sprang up not known by the first century Christians. Second and third century churches began to incorporate many Jewish holidays into their religious practices, among them - the Jewish Passover. Many Christians of that time began to associate the Lord's death with the Jewish Passover feast and it seemed natural to them to create a yearly celebration of the resurrection as well.



You won't get to heaven by luck.

It takes preparation!

Welcome

Camden Avenue Church of Christ
Versailles, KY

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Sadly, by the second century, the church was headed for apostasy and many rituals and "special" days were established. Around 155 AD the Easter celebration was in full swing. However, there was a problem with WHEN to hold the celebration of the Lord's resurrection.

The Old Testament Passover meal was to be done on 14 Nisan (our April 12) according to Leviticus 23:5. According to the gospel accounts Jesus was eating the Passover meal with His disciples when He instituted His memorial feast. This would have been Thursday night and thus made the crucifixion occur on Friday, 15 Nisan (our April 13) and the resurrection of Jesus happen on 17 Nisan (our April 15.) Nisan is the Jewish name for our month of April.

The problem was this: the Passover was on a fixed day - 14 Nisan, and that date could occur on any day of the week year after year. For example, today is Sunday, April 8 but next year April 8 will be on a Monday. This threw the whole time line off for those trying to determine a date to celebrate Easter and the Passover. Easter had to be on the first day of the week as that is the day Jesus rose from the dead. With Passover occurring on a different day each year, something had to change. The problem caused much controversy so they moved both.

Since around the 6th century, the determining factor as set by "church leaders" has been that Easter will be on the Sunday after the first new moon on or after the day of the vernal equinox (spring - Mar. 21). I suppose it makes no difference since it is a man-made, unauthorized event. Christians should celebrate the Lord's resurrection EVERY 1st day of the week (Acts 20:7) as the Lord's supper is observed and "we show forth the Lord's death, **until He comes**" (1 Cor. 11: 26.) See how easy the Lord makes everything?