

Easter

Today is Easter Sunday. Many religious groups will meet today to have a special service of remembering the resurrection of our Lord that no doubt will include plays, skits, and dramas. Is this proper? Is that what God wants from us today?

People, with good intentions, believe that Easter has always been observed and is authorized in the scriptures. Unfortunately, neither of those things are true. There is no place indicated in the New Testament that a *yearly* celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was ever practiced.

The observance of Easter as a religious holiday is of pagan origin. The word "Easter" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word Eostre, the name of the goddess of Spring. Sacrifices were offered in her honor at the first full moon that came at the time of the vernal equinox. Unfortunately, religious people have appropriated pagan holidays and rituals throughout time and have made them into religious holidays. The earliest recorded observance of an Easter celebration was in the second century, and celebrating the holiday didn't become universally accepted until around the seventh century. There was much dispute about what day this celebration should occur. The agreed-upon time is now the first Sunday following the full moon that comes on or after the vernal equinox and that date was set as March 21st. This is why there is a variation in Easter dates from March 22nd through April 25th. The other traditional things associated with the holiday, such as Easter bunnies and eggs, were added in over time, resulting in the modern holiday we have today.

The word "Easter" does appear one time in the King James Version of the Bible. Herod (Agrippa I), having killed James with the sword, imprisoned Peter, "intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people" (Acts 12:4). The Greek word, "Pascha," appears twenty-nine times in the Greek New Testament, twenty-eight times it is translated "Passover," but this one time, the translators render it as "Easter." Unfortunately, the translators may have been influenced to mistranslate this word to give credence to a holiday not observed in the first century.

We are grateful for Jesus, for his death, burial, and resurrection. We celebrate his death today by taking the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). We are thankful for Jesus' resurrection and victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:12-17). Because of his resurrection, we can have great hope! This question is, if the Lord wanted us to celebrate his resurrection once per year on Easter, wouldn't he have told us? There is no Bible authority to celebrate Easter, therefore, the Lord's church does not do so.

- by Josh McCord

Should Christians Observe The Sabbath?

The sabbath was first made known to Moses at Mt. Sinai (Neh. 9:13-14) and was given to the nation of Israel as a sign (Ex. 31:12-17) of their deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 5:12-15). It means no more to a modern Gentile than does the 4th of July to a Frenchman.

The Law containing the sabbath has been blotted out (Col. 2:14-17). If we attempt to be justified by that Law, we will fall from grace (Gal. 5:1-4). The sabbath law is not for us today.

Removal of the Ten Commandments does not mean we can live immoral lives. Every one of them is either repeated or strengthened in the New Testament except the sabbath.

Christians are taught to come together on the first day of the week to eat the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26) and to contribute to the church (1 Cor. 16:1-2). The first day of the week is not the sabbath, but it is the day Christians must assemble to worship the Lord.

- by Keith Sharp

"I Lost It!"

I had it for a long time and used it all the time. But I never really thought much about it. It was just ... there. Then one day, it was gone.

I looked everywhere. I checked all the usual spots. I retraced my steps. And as the search went on, something became very clear - I really needed that thing. What I had treated as unimportant suddenly seemed very valuable. But it was too late. I had lost it.

That happens more often than we'd like to admit. Not just with things - but with people: good

friends, family, brothers and sisters in Christ. We assume those relationships will always be there. We fail to nurture them. We let little problems go unresolved. We don't say the kind words that should be said.

God's word urges us to be "kind... tenderhearted" (Ephesians 4:32). There's a reason for that. Relationships don't survive neglect.

But there's something even more serious. Salvation can be lost the same way. Hebrews 2:3 warns about "neglecting" our salvation. Notice, it is not rejected - just neglected. This is manifested in: a little less prayer, a little less interest in God's word, a little less commitment. And over time, something incredibly valuable can slip away. Don't let that happen.

If you've ever said, "I lost it!" you know the regret that follows. Make sure you never have to say that about your soul. Think!

- by Greg Gwin