

# פסח / Pesach / Passover

Shabbat Nissan 19, 5769, April 3, 2010  
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d  
<http://www.matsati.com> | [matsati@matsati.com](mailto:matsati@matsati.com)

5

## The Pagan Instruments of Pagan Worship

### השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 12:21-51, Leviticus 22:26-23:44  
הפטרה: Joshua 5:2-15, 6:1, 27  
הברית: Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22  
החדשה

### Table of Contents

10	1. Introduction.....	1
	2. Bunny Rabbits.....	3
	3. Bunny Eggs.....	3
	4. Pork.....	4
	6. Conclusion.....	7

15

### 1. Introduction

Last year I wrote a short paper titled "[Easter or Passover, What are we really celebrating?](#)" a discussion on the origins of Easter and the differences between Easter and Passover whereby Passover (Pesach) is the biblical holiday for celebrating the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. In the short paper we examined the origins of Easter and pondered the implications of celebrating Easter on the life and relationship of a believer with G-d. Is it ok to use a pagan fertility festival to worship and celebrate G-d's gift of redemption, salvation, and relationship with the Almighty G-d? Celebrating the resurrection of Yeshua with the rites and rituals of an ancient fertility festival (Easter) has dangerous consequences and knowing what we know now, this holiday becomes an act of intentional sin before G-d. This year, in our systematic approach for identifying the practices that stand contrary to the Word of G-d, I want to examine the "*Pagan Instruments of Pagan Worship*," specifically the use of the Easter egg, Easter bunny, and pork showing how these objects are instruments used for celebrating the ancient fertility religions such as that of Baal and Ashtoreth worship in the Bible.

Before we begin, if you have not read through last year's study I highly recommend stopping now and reading that study prior to reading the rest of this document. Let's begin by looking again at the etymology of the word "Easter." The term "Easter" itself is not a biblical term even though within some English

*Oxford's Concise Dictionary*

#### etymology

■ noun (plural etymologies) an account of the origins and the developments in meaning of a word.

translations of the Bible, such as the KJV, we find that the word for Pesach  
(Passover) is replaced with the word Easter. Based upon last year's study, on the  
40 the origin of the word "Easter," it is derived from Astarte which is one of the titles for  
the "queen of heaven" in the bible and the name is found in association with the  
Assyrian god (Ishtar). In Middle Eastern cultures, Astarte is associated with the  
worship of Baal. The origin of the story and its development originates from  
Noah's grandson Cush (and his wife Semiramis) and son Nimrod both of whom  
45 are mentioned in the bible (See *Bereshit / Genesis 10:8-9, 1 Chronicles 1:10, and  
Micah 5:6*) Note that Nimrod's kingdom was Babel. The legend of Nimrod and  
Semiramus has Nimrod known as Tammuz and Semiramus as Ishtar (see  
*Athenagoras in Legatio, vol. 2 page 179, and Lucian in De Dea Syria, vol 3, page  
382*). Many ancient cultures share this legend: (i) Babylonians (Tammuz and  
50 Ishtar), (ii) Egyptians (Osiris and Isis), (iii) Syrians (Bel and Astarte), (iv)  
Greek/Roman (Attis and Aphrodite/Cybele/Venus), and (v) Britain (Eostre, the  
dawn goddess). These cultures depict her (Ishtar) as a fertility symbol and  
"mother of the gods." According to the legend, Ashtaroth (Ishtar / Astarte /  
Eostre / Aphrodite, etc) was the harlot mother/wife and widow of Nimrod.

55 The Legend goes like this. Noah's grandson Cush and his wife Semiramis  
had a son named Nimrod. After Cush's death, Nimrod married his mother and  
became a mighty king. Nimrod was eventually killed so his mother/wife told the  
story that he had become a sun god (note the origin of the Easter sunrise services)  
and he was then to be called Baal which in Hebrew means husbandman. Baal was  
60 worshiped as a god of fertility and thus was always associated with sexual sin.  
Semiramis proclaimed that the people of Babylon must worship Baal (Nimrod)  
and that he was with them in the form of a flame. Semiramis then set herself up  
as a goddess calling herself "Ishtar." Semiramis' claim about her son Nimrod was  
that she had become pregnant and bore a son Tammuz (Nimrod) as a product of a  
65 sunray which caused her to conceive. Tammuz was a mighty hunter (which  
agrees with the biblical account in *Bereshit / Genesis 10:9-10*) but was later killed  
by a wild pig. Semiramis (Ishtar) then designated a 40 day period to mark the  
anniversary of Tammuz's death. During this time no meat was to be eaten and  
every year on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring  
70 equinox, a celebration was made called Easter. Semiramis (Ishtar) proclaimed  
that because a wild boar (pig) killed Tammuz, that a pig must be eaten on that  
"Sun"day.

The question now is what does G-d think about the fertility deity  
(Ashtaroth, Ishtar, Astarte, Eostre, etc)? G-d calls "Easter" evil according to the  
75 Scriptures in *Mishpatim / Judges 2:10-14*.

***Mishpatim / Judges 2:10-14***

*2:10 All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there  
arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet  
80 the work which He had done for Israel. 2:11 Then the sons of Israel did  
evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals, 2:12 and they forsook  
the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of  
Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who  
were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they*

85 *provoked the Lord to anger. 2:13 So they forsook the Lord and served*  
*Baal and the Ashtaroth. 2:14 The anger of the Lord burned against*  
*Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered*  
*them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so*  
90 *that they could no longer stand before their enemies. (NASB)*

95 The worship of the fertility god Baal involved sexual sin and so understandably  
the worship of Baal and Ashtaroth was very appealing and a significant  
temptation for the men and women of Yisrael. With this background information  
let's next look at the instruments in today's modern Easter holiday one by one, the  
Easter bunny, Easter eggs, and eating pork that are used in celebration of the  
resurrection of Yeshua.

## 2. Bunny Rabbits

100 According to the book "*American Book of Days*" by Christianson and  
Hatch (H. W. Wilson; 4 Sub edition, 2000) the rabbit or hare is a pagan symbol of  
fertility and new life. The egg laying bunny rabbit is derived from a pagan  
tradition of a bird who wanted to be a rabbit. The goddess Eostre turned the bird  
105 into a rabbit which still had the ability to lay eggs as a bird. Each spring during  
the festival dedicated to Eostre (Easter) the rabbit would lay beautiful colored  
eggs for the goddess. Another tradition coming from Germany says that during a  
famine a poor woman dyed some eggs and hid them in a nest, as Easter presents  
for her children. When the children found the nest a large rabbit leapt away and  
as the story goes the rabbit brought the eggs.

110 Bede, the eighth century English monk and scholar, wrote about the  
Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility (Eostre) which used the rabbit (hare) as  
her symbol of fertility. The relationship of the rabbit to the goddess Ishtar is the  
result of the rabbit's ability to reproduce so quickly. If you still question whether  
the rabbit is really connected as a sexual symbol in these fertility religions, then  
115 ask yourself this one question: "Why did Hugh Hefner, the publisher of Playboy  
magazine use the bunny head as his main logo representing his empire of  
pornography and sex" if the bunny is not a sexual symbol?

## 3. Bunny Eggs

120 The egg is a sacred symbol of rebirth and fertility amongst the  
Babylonians, Druids, Egyptians and other pagan cultures. In fact, the egg was  
used as a symbol of the goddess Eostre / Ishtar in various cultures according to  
the *Encyclopedia Britannica, topic: Babylon Mystery Religion*. The catholic  
125 Encyclopedia suggests that the egg was found in pagan fertility religions which  
celebrate the return of spring (Easter). The egg is the emblem of germinating life  
of early spring. According to Egyptian mythology a very beautiful egg fell from



130 heaven into the river Euphrates. The fishes rolled it to the bank, where the doves sat upon the egg. The egg hatched and out came Venus who was called the Syrian goddess (Astarte). Thus, part of the worship of the fertility goddess was the ritual involving the egg of Astarte. In ancient times, the egg was viewed as a mystical symbol in these pagan fertility religions.

#### 135 4. Pork

135 According to the Babylonian myth, Tammuz was killed by a wild boar and thus Ishtar proclaimed that pork is to be eaten in remembrance of his death on Easter Sunday. In addition to this, according to the book "*American Book of Days*" by Christianson and Hatch (H. W. Wilson; 4 Sub edition, 2000), and the  
140 book "*Curiosities of popular customs and of rites, ceremonies, observances, and miscellaneous antiquities*" by William Sheppard Walsh (Gale Research Co, 1966) eating pork on Easter also comes from eating a side of bacon on that day (Easter) to show contempt for the Jewish custom of not eating pork. It is well known that  
145 swine is held as an unclean animal according to the Bible and the flesh was forbidden to be eaten by Moshe. Our English forefathers loved to show their abhorrence of Judaism by eating bacon/ham/pork on the day on which Yeshua the Messiah was triumphant over his enemies during Pesach (Passover). It is interesting how many Americans have ham for dinner on Easter without being aware of the origin and history behind the custom.

150 Did you know that eating Ham was also considered an act of consuming a sacrifice unto a fertility deity? Another example of the historical nature of eating ham as a religious symbol is found in the works of Shakespeare. Robert Bell in his book "*Shakespeare's Puck and his Folk-Lore*" (AMS Press, New York, 1971) cites a passage from Spence's Polymetics "*Alba Longa is the place where Æneas met the white sow and thirty pigs; and here was a very fine flitch of bacon kept in the chief temple even in Augustus's time, I find recorded in that excellent historian, Dionysius Halicarnassus.*" The "flitch of bacon" has a significant role in the rites of consuming a sacrifice in pagan religions. In sacred pagan texts such as (*FRIEDRICH, Symb. der Natur, p. 124. TEMME, Volksagen v. Pommern und Rogen, p. 125*) Tettan and Temme's "*Volksagen*" (1837) it is said, "*A mighty deity of the heathen Prussians was Percunnos. An eternal fire was kept burning before him, fed by oak billets. He was the god of thunder and fertility, and he was therefore invoked for rain and fair weather, and in the thunderstorms the flitch of bacon was offered to him. Even now when it thunders, the boor in Prussia takes a flitch of bacon on his shoulder, and goes with his head uncovered out of the house and carries it into the fields, and exclaims, 'O god, fall not on my fields, and I will give thee this flitch.'* When the storm is passed he takes the bacon home and consumes it with his household as a sacrifice."

165  
170 Ham has been used by ancient cultures in their fertility religions for thousands of years. One of the difficulties for Jews living in Rome dealt very specifically with the problem of not coming into contact with unclean meats and idols. In the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) *Romans 14-15* Rav Shaul



(Paul) has a discussion over this very topic concerning the laws of Halachah governing the kosher preparation of meats. Paul writes that “One man regards one day above another, another regards every day” is a scripture that is used often in regards to honoring the Shabbat (see *Romans 14-15*). If we study the context of these verses, it appears that Paul is addressing differing opinions for example in *Romans 14:1* “Now accept that one who is weak in the faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.” Notice how Paul is not giving an opinion here but restating something that is concerning the difference in opinion of other believers. Reading through these chapters in Romans it appears that Paul is not siding with anyone, he is unwilling to take a side with either opinion suggesting that both are equally valid. Note that the context suggest that Paul is greatly concerned with the opinion of the “one weak in faith” and that this person’s opinion be honored by those who are apparently stronger in their faith. (look at *Romans 14:1* again) In addition to that, Paul addresses those stronger in the faith and admonishes them to not judge the opinion of the weak in faith. That is to say that the opinion of the one weak in the faith is still to be considered valid. The argument of those who say that the Torah is abolished in favor for us being allowed to do whatever we want to do with respect to the kosher laws usually say that the basis for this change is the cross, that the death of Yeshua changed the emphasis from Torah to redemption. If the change away from the Torah is based upon the redemptive work of Messiah in His sacrificial death, then what He abolished cannot be in any manner valid for those who are saved by his death (i.e. sin is defined by the Torah and His sacrificial death frees us from sin). The problem is we are saved by His blood and His blood is valid for us because of the Torah. What I feel Paul is speaking of is one of halachic differences, not one of theological progression from established Torah to the abolishment of the Torah. The illustration that is given by Paul is that of food. “One man has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables.” (See *Romans 14:2*). Note how Paul elaborates on this issue, later on in the text of Romans, of eating by identifying the conflict as a matter of impurities (See *Romans 14:14-15*). When it comes to understanding the Scriptures, we must consider the context, thus, when Paul writes that one may “eat all things” he is talking about food within the context of the purity laws (again see *Romans 14:14-15*). This is not the abolishment of the kosher laws given in the Torah. The argument that Paul is trying to make is that the clean/unclean is a greater issue than what is allowed/forbidden to be eaten. According to the scriptures, and according to our historical understanding on the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews, purity comprised one of the primary issues for the halachic authorities. The bulk of the material written in the Mishnah is on purity. This suggests that in that time (the 1<sup>st</sup> century) the question of eating and purity existed in the synagogue at Rome. This was related to eating meat offered to idols, and is related to what we are trying to see here in this study on Pesach (Passover) and eating ham/pork. Is meat offered to an idol impure? What if gentiles had handled the food is it unclean? Can a Jew eat the meat that was slaughtered by a gentile? These were the issues that were important to the Roman Jewish believer that dealt with clean and unclean foods and appears to be the one that Paul is addressing in these chapters in Romans. Paul is essentially saying that one person could eat meat that was handled and sold by the Gentiles,

220 while another would avoid it altogether preferring a vegetarian meal instead of  
having a wounded conscience because the person felt that the meat would have  
been unclean. I would contest that neither Paul nor any Jew of the 1<sup>st</sup> century  
would question whether or not G-d's Torah was valid for their lives and  
especially that of the kosher laws on eating pork/ham. The Scriptures in no way  
225 allow us to eat pork/ham as the church suggests today. Before I finish this section  
on Ham, I would like to take this discussion a little bit further and discuss *Acts*  
*11:4-11* with regard to ham/pork and clean/unclean meats.

The next most quoted scriptures on eating pork/ham comes from  
that of the vision of Peter as recorded in *Acts 11:4-11* of the sheet that was let  
230 down from heaven. This is most often naively interpreted by the Church to say  
that we may eat anything; G-d has cleansed all foods. The text indicates that there  
were 4-legged animals, crawling creatures (insects) and birds, and Peter  
comments that he has never eaten anything "unholy or unclean." From this text it  
is assumed automatically that the sheet contained only "unholy and unclean"  
235 animals; the kind which are prohibited by the Torah. For Peter however, "unholy  
and unclean" may have meant "not conforming to rabbinic Halachah,"  
specifically that on the preparation of the foods. For some sects of Judaism of the  
1<sup>st</sup> century, to eat meat from a clean animal which was not rabbinically  
slaughtered would still have been considered eating meat that was unclean<sup>1</sup>. G-d  
240 commanding Peter to "kill and eat" where the Greek word here for kill is "thuno"  
indicates sacrifice and must have seemed strange to Peter since such an activity,  
by rabbinic standards would need to be carried out by either a priest or a certified  
butcher. Too quickly we assume that G-d is commanding Peter to eat meat that  
was earlier forbidden in the Torah when in fact He was most likely commanding  
245 Peter to eat meat which did not conform to rabbinic Halachah<sup>1</sup>. The further  
context of Acts shows that the Gentiles were going to receive the Holy Spirit and  
this was something that was totally unheard of from a Jewish perspective. The  
Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> century did not believe that salvation was available to the Gentiles  
and especially that one would receive the Holy Spirit of G-d. G-d was showing  
250 Peter that the Gentiles would also partake in the blessing of Avraham. The  
context of the verses with respect to this interpretation is completely consistent  
with the entire biblical story and appears to be very consistent with what is taking  
place here in Acts. Consider how often Yeshua rejected the traditions and ways  
of the Pharisees including their rabbinic dictates, Paul's argument over a man of  
255 weak faith, and the calling of the gentiles to the body of believers by faith in  
Yeshua the Messiah; understanding the big picture it is really quite clear that  
these scriptures cannot really be interpreted to mean that G-d has cleansed all  
meats. It just doesn't make sense biblically and would be completely inconsistent  
with *Revelation 21:27*.

260 We see here in our study, that eating pork/ham, especially on Easter, is a  
blatant rejection of G-d's Torah (Law / instruction) for living regarding clean and  
unclean meats. Eating pork/ham was historically done out of a rejection and  
mockery of the traditions held by Judaism on this very special holiday, the Pesach  
(Passover) which reveals to us the great love of G-d sending His only son to die  
265 for our sins. Eating pork/ham was also done as a religious rite in numerous pagan

Note: <sup>1</sup> Tim Hegg,  
[www.torahresource.com](http://www.torahresource.com)

fertility religions. It doesn't take much effort to realize that we should not be eating pork/ham and especially not during the Pesach (Passover) holiday.

## 6. Conclusion

270

According to our study thus far on the instruments of pagan worship, the bunny rabbit, the egg, and pork, it is apparent that these are in fact the instruments for pagan worship found within the Easter holiday. If you are like me, you should have a burning desire to distinguish between what is holy and what is profane.

275

This desire has become more intense as I begin to realize how much paganism is intertwined with the religious rituals of the Christian Church and the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. As a result of the pagan nature of the Easter holiday, the scrutinizing of these rituals that are done to celebrate the resurrection of Yeshua in the Easter holiday needs to be considered. It is obvious that the celebration of

280

Easter has been born out of pagan practice. What has happened is the Church has adopted a pagan holiday (including all of the pagan instruments of worship) and given it a new meaning, specifically that of the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. This can be described by the word "syncretism" which means the amalgamation of different religious, cultures, or schools of thought where one

285

merges different religious practices together that essentially differ. This is exactly what has happened with the Easter holiday and the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. This is a very spiritually dangerous festival since Easter is not simply a harmless holiday; rather, it is a reworking of a pagan ritual that stands contrary to the Word of G-d. G-d condemns the practice of syncretism in the Scriptures. Is there any wonder why believer's struggle today the way they do and why it appears G-d isn't moving as He once did or as He should be according to the scriptures? The unknowing spiritual adultery that has been taking place has had devastating consequences for believers today.

290

295

We need to divest ourselves of this holiday and move to the holiday of Pesach (Passover) where G-d has shown us His ways of worship and which truly represent the sacrificial nature of Yeshua's death, burial, and bodily resurrection. We need to stop borrowing from the world of the demons. Easter conflates a celebration of Yeshua's resurrection with the worship of Eostre, a goddess of the Saxons who was likewise connected with the fertility and reincarnation myths of ancient religions such as Baal and Ashtoreth from which the symbol of the Easter Egg and the bunny rabbit are derived and pork/ham is consumed. In addition to that, the eating of pork (ham) was done out of a blatant rejection of the Torah of G-d.

300

305

So what should we as followers of Yeshua do with the Easter holiday? What do the Scriptures say?

310

### ***2 Corinthians 6:14-18***

*6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with*

315 *Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (KJV)*

320 The adopting of pagan practices is absolutely ruled out by *2 Corinthians 6:15 and what fellowship to light with darkness? and what concord to Christ with Belial? or what part to a believer with an unbeliever? (YLT)* What portion does G-d's temple (our bodies) have with idols? The Scriptures say to come out from among them, separate ourselves and do not touch the unclean thing. (Note that the  
325 Ketuvei Shelachim is saying not to touch the unclean thing, according to the church these are done away with right?) Godless paganism is part of this unclean world, why should you continue to celebrate the resurrection of Yeshua using a pagan fertility festival and these horrible instruments of pagan worship?

330 When you celebrate Easter, think about the Easter bunny, the Easter egg, and eating pork/ham. Can these things be used to represent the work that Yeshua did for us during the Pesach (Passover) holiday and bring glory to G-d's name? As I said last year, understanding the historical origins of Easter we know that  
335 Easter does not reveal the Messiah Yeshua in any way. In fact, Easter is a syncretism, a combination of what is sacred (Yeshua and His resurrection) with the profane (the fertility religions). The implications for us today is that continuing to celebrate Easter instead of Pesach (Passover) and neglecting the origins of the fertility religions, you are intentionally rebelling against a Holy G-d and against what Yeshua the Messiah stands for. Celebrating the resurrection of  
340 Yeshua in the Easter holiday, with the bunny rabbit, the egg, and eating pork is a rejection of the Torah of G-d that is committed in direct and deliberate defiance of G-d and His Holy Word. With that in mind, I strongly advise against celebrating Easter and highly recommend obeying G-d and His Holy Word as the Bible instructs in the Pesach (Passover) feast.

345

350

### **Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!**

355 \* \* \* \* \*

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever