

# The Real Meaning of Easter

## COMBINED SERVICE

1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-4

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The lines that surround Easter have always been blurry.

Early Christians called their weekly celebration of Jesus' resurrection "Pascha" (Passover).

It eventually became a yearly celebration and by 325 AD the Roman church declared that the celebration was to be connected to the spring equinox – making it a moving target – anywhere between March 22 and April 25.

The earliest mention of the word "Easter" appears in the 8<sup>th</sup> century in a work by English historian Saint Bede the Venerable.

He states that Easter was named after the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre.

To back up his claim, he cited a letter from Pope Gregory I, suggesting that missionary work among the heathen would improve if pagan holidays were synchronized with Christian celebrations.

In the modern world, Easter is synonymous with

spring,

bonnets,

egg hunts,

spending money - in 2021 it was estimated that 79% of Americans would celebrate Easter spending a collective \$21.6 BILLION –

and sugar. Walk down any "*seasonal*" aisle at the store and you will find:

- Creme Eggs
- Peanut Butter Eggs
- Marshmallow and Milk Chocolate Eggs
- Rice Cereal and Chocolate eggs
- Jelly Beans by the ton
- Milk Chocolate Bunnies
- Milk Chocolate and Peanut Butter Bunnies,
- Milk Chocolate and Carmel Bunnies
- Milk Chocolate Peanut Butter Carrots
- Hazelnut Chocolate Carrots

and my absolute favorite, Marshmallow PEEPS.

This is what Easter has become – a day to celebrate new life, consumerism and cavities.

But shouldn't there be more to it than that? Shouldn't there be something more to celebrate?

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Paul gives us the 3 reason why we should celebrate Easter – not just today, but every day:

- Christ died for our sins,
- He was buried,
- He was raised on the third day.

Easter is about the impossible becoming a reality.

Easter is about the Father doing the unimaginable in sending His son.

- **1 John 4:9-10** - By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

And the Son doing the unthinkable to win our hearts.

- **Isaiah 53:5** - But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

Easter is about a stone being rolled away - Jesus walking out of the tomb and death giving way to life:

- **Ellen White {DA 779.3}** - The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to the earth. The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, Son of God, come forth; Thy Father calls Thee. They see Jesus come forth from the grave, and hear Him proclaim over the rent sepulcher, "I am the resurrection, and the life." As He comes forth in majesty and glory, the angel host bow low in adoration before the Redeemer, and welcome Him with songs of praise.
- **Mark 16:5-6** - And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. <sup>6</sup> And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen - He is not here...."

Easter is about the worst tragedy melting into the greatest triumph:

- **Hebrews 12:2** - fixing our eyes on Jesus, the originator and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- **Revelation 5:4-5, 9** - And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>5</sup> And one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals...." <sup>9</sup> And they were singing a new song, saying, "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slaughtered, and bought *people* for God by your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation...."

The absolute brilliance of Easter is that our Savior lives – the Tomb is empty.