

Do You Observe Easter?

Dear Editor:
Do Churches of Christ observe the Holy Day of Easter? - NS

Dear N. S.:

To most people Easter is an integral part of Christianity. They may not know where to look, but they are sure it is in the Bible.

Consider the following quotations regarding this ancient Holy Day. "There is no trace of Easter Celebration in the New Testament" (International Standard Bible Ency. Vol. II, p. 889). "In any case... it must be admitted that... there is no conclusive evidence in the first century or more, of the keeping of the Pasch (Easter)..." (Catholic Ency. Vol. V, p. 229). "The Apostolic Fathers (earliest Christian writers) do not mention it" (Ibid. p.224). "At the end of the second century, the celebration of Easter as the feast of the resurrection of Christ was general among the Christians" (Ency. Of Religion by Ferm, p. 239).

The Bible does not mention an Easter celebration. The church of the first century did not observe it. True, the King James Bible has the word Easter in Acts 12:4. The original Greek term is pascha, rendered in all other places in the Bible as "Passover." All other versions translate it Passover.

Where then did Easter come from? It is a convergence of three traditions. (1) Pagan: The word is derived from the Norse Ostara or Eostre, meaning the festival of spring at the vernal equinox when nature is in resurrection after winter. (2) Hebrew: The Jewish Passover is celebrated at approximately the same season as Easter. (3) Christian: Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Americana Ency. Vol. 9, p. 506).

The first yearly festivals among the Christians originated with Jewish converts who "retained... all the Jewish festivals, although gradually they ascribed to them such Christian import as might naturally present itself... among Gentile Christians, there were probably from the first, no yearly festivals whatever..." (History of the Christian Religion and Church, Neander, Vol. 1, p. 297).

The Bible teaches that Christ died and was resurrected. The first Christians commemorated his death and resurrection each first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The highest authority for the Easter holy season is human tradition.

Our commitment is to follow Jesus in all things. He says, teach them to observe all things I have commanded you (Matthew 28:20). Again, he says, "In vain do they worship me teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Matthew 15:9).

To those Christians observing other special days, Paul wrote, "I am afraid for you lest I have bestowed upon you, labor in vain" (Galatians 4:11).

—John Waddey

Liledoun Road ANCHOR

April 11, 2004

Church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes – 10:00 am
AM Worship – 11:00 am
PM Worship – 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:30 pm

Elders

Fred Watkins
632-5542
Ralph Lowtharpe
632-6145

Preacher

Jonnie Hutchison
632-7344

Are You Ready for the Judgment? Jonnie Hutchison

There is coming a day of judgment for all of mankind. So say the scriptures in Acts 17:31, "Because he hath appointed **a day**, in the which he will **judge the world** in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." The Day of Judgment will be a day of separation. Jesus pictured this inevitable separation of the righteous from the wicked on that Judgment Day in Matthew 25:31-33, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall **separate** them one from another, as a shepherd **divideth** his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." The Judgment Day will be the day of eternal reward for both the righteous and the wicked. Jesus said, "And these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the right-

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News and Notes

To Our Visitors

It is always a joy to welcome visitors to our services. We are thankful for each one who has chosen to be present. A number of tracts and other materials are available in the lobby of the building. There is no charge for any of this material. If you would like to enroll in a free Bible Correspondence Course or an in home Bible study please mark that on your visitors card. We hope you will return and be with us at your every opportunity.



Remember In Prayer

 Alvin Bullington, Ethel Watson, Dena Bishop, Kris Koko, Hubert Keys, James Walker, Darcey Finn, Ken Koko, and Eva Parker. Continue to pray for the safety of Josh Philips who is now stationed in Iraq.

Upcoming Events

Gospel Meeting at the Elkin church of Christ in Elkin, NC with James Jones, April 23-25, 2004. Friday and Saturday services are at 7:00 pm.

Gospel Meeting at the West Jefferson church of Christ, May 16-21, 2004 with Ed Floyd. Monday-Friday services are at 7:00 pm.

Our Spring Gospel Meeting has

been scheduled for June 6-11, 2004 with Nelson Brockenborough preaching. Please mark this date and plan other events around it.

See the bulletin board for details concerning these events.

Lessons Today
Morning 11:00 am
“A Christians Response to Easter”
Evening 6:00 pm
“The Religion of Islam 4”

Out of Town

My family and I will be out of town next week. We will be traveling to Missouri where I will be conducting a gospel meeting. Please pray for us as we travel. Ken Koko will be presenting the lesson on Sunday in my absence.

There will be no bulletin next week.
—Jonnie

“The principle of obedience is that man must lovingly, completely, carefully, diligently and accurately obey God. To do otherwise is both folly and sin.”

—Philip Sanders from the book
“Let All the Earth Keep Silence”

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eous into life eternal.” (Matthew 25:46).

When the Judgment Day comes it will be too late for preparation. It will be too late to accept and obey the Lord. It will be too late to change ones attitude toward sin. It will be too late to cry for mercy. The Day of Judgment marks the end man’s earthly existence and the beginning of either an eternal existence in heaven or an eternal existence in hell.

There is no doubt that we need constant reminders of the fact of the approaching Judgment. The day God has appointed is unknown —

but it is certain! The certainty of the judgment should encourage our preparation for its coming. The Bible declares, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25:13). The word “watch” in this passage comes from the Greek word “gregoreuo” which means “to give strict attention to” (Thayer). There is more involved in giving strict attention to the second coming of Christ and the judgment than merely being aware that it will come. There is also the idea of making adequate preparation for His second coming and the judgment which, incidentally, will occur simultaneously (2 Timothy

4:1). Jesus further declared, Therefore be ye also **ready**: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 24:44).

That brings before you dear reader the most important question of “Are YOU ready?” Have you made preparation to be among those who will enter into eternal life? Are you able to approach the coming judgment with confidence? (1 John 4:17).

“When the Judgment Day comes it will be too late for preparation.”

There are countless souls who are completely unaware of the fact that they will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. There are others who will reject the clear teaching of the Bible

regarding the judgment of the last day. Yet the Bible makes it clear that whether we know it or not or accept it or reject it we will all make our appearance there. “For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Preparation for the coming judgment requires the forgiveness of sin. It is those who are cleansed of their sins by the blood of Jesus who are ready for His return and the Judgment Day. “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the