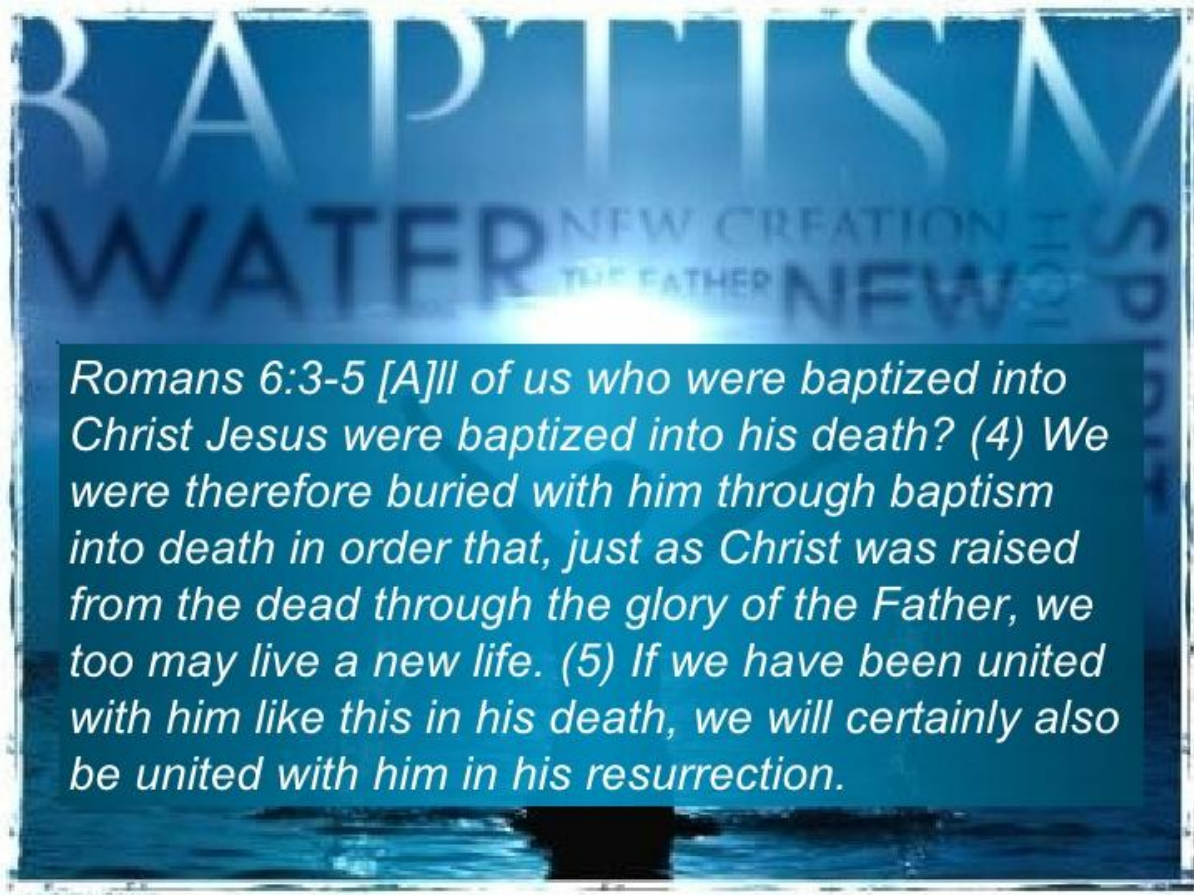


Is Easter Mentioned in the Bible?



If one were to search for the word "Easter" you could find its mention in the King James Bible, Acts 12:1-4. "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."

Did the Early Apostles Historically Celebrate Easter?

Well, we must first look in-depth at the history of Easter and the details mentioned above to gain some understanding. Herod Agrippa I who ruled from 37 AD to 44 AD put James to death in the last year of his reign. When one thinks of Easter throughout history and in the 21st century, what day do we think of? Sunday, most likely. However, what day did Easter fall on in 44 AD? Thursday.

When we look at the history of Easter we will find that the word Easter was substituted for the word "Pesach" which really is more correctly translated as Passover. For centuries, Passover foreshadowed the death of Jesus. Easter mentioned here in Acts 12 had nothing to do with Sunday. Passover is actually tied to a calendar day in the year, not a specific day of the week. Much like one's birthday, or wedding anniversary, or Fourth of July. You celebrate the date, not the day. Independence Day is not held on Thursdays every year even though it was a Thursday in 1776

What Else Does the Bible Say About Easter?

Throughout the New Testament after the resurrection, Sunday is simply called the “First day of the week” as opposed to the “day of the Resurrection.” Which leads one to wonder, if God placed no significance on the day, wherein did Sunday become viewed as the weekly memorial of the resurrection? A topic for another time.

What should be noticed is that the Jews did not have a ceremony for remembering the future resurrection Jesus. The focus was on the great sacrifice God would make on that particular Passover day of the future. Not only that, there is no Biblical command to commemorate or memorialize the day of His resurrection. The silence of the New Testament on this topic should be noted, considering most of its books were written many years after Christ’s death and resurrection.

What is the True Meaning of Easter?

Let's look at the Bible to find the meaning of Easter and how it relates to the resurrection of Jesus. Romans shows us that baptism instead of Easter was given as a symbol of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.

Romans 6:3-5 says, *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection”*

What we see is that the true meaning is more than just a memorial for the resurrection one day a year with a church service. We can even celebrate the resurrection as we allow Christ’s resurrection to become a reality in our lives as we live anew victoriously. Christ's death and resurrection is a **daily** hope of how the good will of God can overcome the forces of evil, of how truth will prevail and unmask the lie, of how love will triumph over sin, and how the blessed hope of eternal life will even put an end to death one day.

Is It Wrong to Celebrate Easter?

Let’s make a clarification. Is it wrong to remember the resurrection? No. It would be wrong to not remember it. Is Easter observance the way to do so? It would be remiss to not admit there is certainly a lot of pagan influence that has become tied to the resurrection in Easter. Nowhere are bunnies, chicks, or eggs mentioned in the Bible or in connection with Christ’s resurrection.

However, where there is opportunity to share the message and gospel of Christ without compromising the biblical truth, the “wise as serpents, harmless as doves” counsel of Christ is appropriate. How to observe it should be considered carefully allowing Bible study and prayer to guide our decisions.