

How Strange that Easter should be called Easter

by BHW

Some modern churches prefer not to use the name Easter, and refer instead to Resurrection Sunday. This is because the name is said to be based on that of an English goddess of Spring or of the dawn, Eostre (according to an ancient Christian monk, Venerable Bede around 800 A.D.), or alternatively to a Mesopotamian goddess Astarte.

In fact, the word Easter, or Oster in German, both derived from 'East', is of Anglo-Saxon Christian origin. Other aspects of Easter that are old Christian practices, include decorated eggs (signifying new life, i.e. resurrection, in the Northern Spring, the opening of Christ's tomb signified by cracking open the egg), likewise bunnies (or hares). William Tyndale introduced the word Easter into his New Testament translation from the original Greek.

Hot cross buns are for Good Friday (God's Friday), but now they are on sale immediately after Christmas, such is the commodification of our Christian festivals. The Sunday before Easter, known as Palm Sunday in many churches, especially the Eastern churches, begins the week properly called Holy Week. Thus, the Saturday before Easter Day is Holy Saturday, not Easter Saturday, despite what the media will tell us this week. Easter Saturday is the Saturday after Easter Day

Easter Sunday was set at the Council of Nicea in the 4th century as a Spring holiday, immediately after the first full moon after the Spring equinox as calculated with remarkable (but not total) accuracy then by Alexandrian astronomers.

The use of "Resurrection Sunday", though, ignores the fact that the days of the week are also named after pagan gods, from the time of the Babylonians, the seven planets of the ancient world which are the seven celestial bodies that wander across the skies relative to all other stars which are fixed in relation to each other (Latin, *planetare* = to wander). Sunday is the Sun, an ancient god in many cultures. Monday is the Moon, likewise. Tuesday is Tiw, a Norse equivalent of Mars (note, *Mardi* in French). Wednesday is Wotan (Mercury, *Mercredi* in French). Thursday is Thor (Jupiter). Friday is Freya or Frigga (Venus). Saturday is Saturn.

So we'll have to rename Easter Sunday as 'Easter Day' or 'Resurrection Day' to avoid pagan associations. Good Friday will be harder to rename so I won't go there.

For a very interesting article on all this in the Creation.com website, click [here](#).