

“The Truth As We Know It”
Faith of God Review Continued
Easter, Rapture
4/5/15

For several weeks now we have been talking about the Faith of God, taken from Rom 3:1-4 and we quote, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles (or teaching) of God. For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar;.."

In simple terms, God authored Judaism at Sinai and perfected it at the cross. In the Apostle Paul's statement in Romans 11:17-18 and I quote, "if some of the branches are broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the (Tame, Jewish) olive tree; don't boast against the branches. .. You don't bear the root, but the root bears you." In other words, we, the gentiles, don't establish truth, God does through Judaism.

Today I want to talk about a custom that has become common in the Christian community. Very early in Christian history the western (Roman) Christians began to abandon Passover for the Easter celebration. Perhaps we should take a look at where Easter came from. Did it come from Jewish (biblical) heritage, or did it come from pagan origins? The Roman (Gentile) Christians had a practice of incorporating pagan festivals—of pasting “Christian” names over them and calling them “Christian.” This was done to make “Christianity” more palatable and familiar to heathen worshippers, whom the Church was trying to attract. How did such a state of affairs develop?

Easter has its origins very early in human history and can be traced all the way back to the Tower of Babel. It was called by many names such as Astarte, Ashtaroth, Beltis and other names but they all have reference to the goddess of fertility. Hence the practice of the colored Easter eggs and the Easter Rabbit. My question is, "What does the Easter Bunny and the Easter egg have to do with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

Quoting from the book, *The Two Babylons*, by Alexander Hislop, "Astarte

(Easter)-worship was always associated with the worship of Baal or Sun worship. Astarte was Baal's wife." Notice that another name for Astarte was Ashtaroth. Quoting from the book, "What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. *Easter* is nothing else than *Astarte*, one of the titles of Beltis, the *queen of heaven*..."

Certainly we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus! Without it we have no hope! It is the great promise that as He arose from the dead, being the first fruit of the resurrection, we too will one day arise from the dead, or be changed in the rapture! And live forever with Him in Glory! But should we as Christians let ourselves take part in something that is obviously of Pagan origins. Something that has been hated by God through the ages, the worship of the Sun god Baal and the goddess of fertility, (Ashtaroth.)

Once again, it was the anti-Semitism of the period that forced the early Christians to abandon Passover for Easter. Quoting from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th Edition, we have the story of how Easter slowly came to replace the Passover by A.D. 325 within visible, organized "Christianity": Quoting, "Although the observance of Easter (Or Passover) was at a very early period in the practice of the Christian Church, a serious difference as to the day for its observance soon arose between the Christians of Jewish and those of Gentile descent, which led to a long and bitter controversy... The Jewish Christians...(observed) the 14th day of the moon at evening... without regard to the day of the week. The Gentile Christians ...identified the first day of the week with the resurrection, and kept the preceding Friday as the commemoration of the crucifixion, irrespective of the day of the month."

Let us now consider God's own words in **Deuteronomy 12:28-32** (NKJ):
"Observe and obey all these words which I command you... When... you... dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them...and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' *You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way*; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods...*Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.*"

My question is, "At what point in history did God change His mind about these pagan practices and start to love them?" Remember the guiding principle from Romans 11:16 and we quote, "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches." In other words, 'If a teaching has its roots in Judaism, God's preferred faith, then it can be trusted to be solid truth, but the opposite is also true, If a teaching has its roots in paganism, then it must be considered not a true biblical teaching.' Much more could be said about this subject, but I will leave it for another time.

I also want to review the teaching on the Pre-tribulation rapture. There is a lot of confusion about this subject and great arguments have been made by well meaning theologians. In any doctrine that looks to future events, we look through a glass darkly as spoken by Paul the Apostle. But I want to express my view on this as well. In 1Co 15:51-52 we read, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Notice that it specifies the last trump which implies there are more than one trump of God. More on that later as this broadcast develops.

We, at The Church of God, do not subscribe to a Pre-tribulation rapture. We do not believe it can be supported by sound scripture analysis. There are many reasons why we believe that this doctrine is very dangerous to the average Christian because it gives hope of a miraculous deliverance from God's wrath that is not going to happen. God has always warned and delivered His people from major trouble that was in the future. But He always requires His people to follow His word in obedience and heed His warnings.

One divine principle we can rely on is that God does not change. What He did once he will do again. This principle is established in Ecclesiastes 3:15 which reads, "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requires that which is past." and in Isaiah 46:10 we quote, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done,"

Will God count us different and exceptional and allow us to escape any trouble or persecution when the faithful of every generation have had to make these very hard choices? I think not! In fact right now as this broadcast is going out, Christians are giving their lives rather than deny their Lord! God help us to have that same kind of faith! This we know, His grace is sufficient for us regardless of the cost!

No! We believe that we as believers will be here and have to endure severe persecution for three years and six months during the seven years of tribulation/indignation period, at which time God will come to our rescue in some way and will take care of us as He did the children of Israel in the land of Goshen.

Yes! There will be a rapture! At the last or seventh Trump of God! At the end of the wrath of God poured out! Jesus will return with ten thousands of His Saints with their new bodies and all those who have endured to the end and remain alive will be caught up and be with Jesus as goes and sets His feet on the Mount of Olives! Glory be to God! What a Hope!

Listen again next week.

This we do know, The Bible is God's Word, God's word is true, Jesus Christ is God's son, Jesus died to save us from our sin, Without Jesus we are eternally lost. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we might be saved. Atheism is a temporary condition for every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! Jesus stands ready to save you now, Will you call on Him today?

Until next week, God bless.