**Things Associated with the Easter SEASON**

**Reading – Galatians 4:1-11**

**LENT** or ``Lenten'' is the name applied to the forty days of fasting preceding Easter Sunday.

1. Our word ``Lent'' signifies the Spring-fast for ``Lenten-tide.''

2. It is observed in commemoration of Jesus' fast in the wilderness for a period of forty days.

3. It begins on Ash-Wednesday which is forty days before Easter (with Sundays excluded).

4. It is supposed to be a time of penitence where one shows sorrow for sin and their need to seek forgiveness.

5. It is a time its observers prepare for Easter by abstaining from certain foods and activities.

6. I challenge you to produce a command, apostolic example or necessary inference to give this practice our consideration.

7. Here’s the only passage I found in relation to this practice ***(Matthew 15:9) And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"***

**ASH-WEDNESDAY** is the first day of Lent.

1. It came from a custom observed by people expressing their humiliation at this time by appearing in sack-cloth and ashes.

2. In some churches, ashes burned from the preceding years Palm Sunday would be blessed by the priest and used to mark a cross on the foreheads of the members of the congregation.

3. This reminds the people to begin their Lenten penance in a humble spirit.

**PALM-SUNDAY** is the last Sunday before Easter and marks the beginning of what most call the ``Holy Week'' or ``Passion Week.''

1. Palm-Sunday is supposed to honor Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem as described in John 12:12-15, where the people spread palm branches in his path.

2. The first celebration of this was not known until the fourth century----more than 300 years after the revelation of God's word was complete!

**MAUNDAY-THURSDAY** (also called Holy Thursday) is the Thursday before Easter and is supposed to recall to one's mind Jesus' last meal with the twelve apostles in the upper room.

1. In some places, the priest will wash the feet of twelve members of the congregation to show that Jesus washed his disciples' feet.

**GOOD FRIDAY** (the Friday before Easter) is supposed to observe the death of Jesus on the cross and his suffering for our sins.

**HOLY SATURDAY** (the day before Easter) is a day of solemn vigil.

1. Some churches hold vigil services which often include the baptism of new members.

2. Many times this leads up to a dramatic moment in which all the lights are put out leaving everyone in the dark.

3. The priest will light a tall candle that represents the risen Christ.

4. He then lights the members' candles, which is supposed to symbolize the light of Jesus going out into the world.

5. Many vigils last until dawn that ends in a ``sun-rise service.''

6. This no doubt is where the practice of many religious groups came from in having special sunrise services on Easter morning.

**WEARING NEW CLOTHING** on Easter Sunday is a well-established tradition.

1. It originated from the old practice of having newly baptized Christians wear new white robes for Easter.

2. The new clothes represented the new life offered through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

**EASTER EGGS** have always been a part of the Easter Season.

1. The egg has always been a symbol of life and creation.

2. The giving of multi-colored eggs was a custom throughout the East.

**RABBITS** are associated with the fertility of Spring because of their ability to produce many young.

**PRETZELS** were originally a Lenten food.

**HOT CROSS BUNS**, which are now eaten throughout the Easter season, were made with a cross of icing on top.

**WHIT-SUNDAY** is sometimes called Whitsuntide, White Sunday or Pentecost Sunday.

1. It comes fifty days after Easter and marks the end of the joyous Easter season.

2. It is in commemoration of the Pentecost day we read of in Acts two when the Holy Spirit descended upon the twelve apostles.

Ishtar .... Easter... Ishtar ....Easter

See any resemblance?

Ishtar A Mesopotamian goddess of fertility and war. In her role as goddess of fertility, Ishtar was associated with Tammuz, the god of vegetation. Ishtar was sometimes identified with the planet Venus and was designated "Mistress of Heaven" in the Amarna tablets. The goddess is perhaps the "Queen of heaven" of Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-19,25; Ezekiel 8:14. **See Fertility Cults; Astarte; Tammuz; Babylon**..... *Holman Bible Dictionary*

Ishtar, chief goddess of the Babylonians and the Assyrians and the counterpart of Astarte, a Phoenician goddess. The name appeared in different forms in every part of the ancient Semitic world; thus it was Athtar in Arabia, Astar in Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), and Ashtart in Canaan and Israel. The sex of the divinity also varied: Athtar and Astar were male deities. Ishtar of Erech (in Babylonia) was a goddess worshiped in connection with the evening star, but Ishtar of Akkad (also in Babylonia) was a god identified with the morning star. As a goddess, Ishtar was the Great Mother, the goddess of fertility and the queen of heaven. On the other hand, her character had destructive attributes; she was considered, especially by the Assyrians, a goddess of hunting and war and was depicted with sword, bow, and quiver of arrows. Among the Babylonians, Ishtar was distinctly the mother goddess and was portrayed either naked and with prominent breasts or as a mother with a child at her breast. As goddess of love she brought destruction to many of her lovers, of whom the most notable was her consort Tammuz, the Babylonian counterpart of Adonis.

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