

# EASTER

"Pastor, I've always wondered where the word Easter comes from." There are various explanations concerning the origins of the word Easter, however, we should remember to focus on what this special day signifies in the Christian calendar and not on the meaning of the word. To answer your question... The most common belief is that the modern term Easter came from an Old English word which probably referred to the name of the Anglo-Saxon dawn goddess, Ēastre or Ēostre. In most of the non-English speaking countries Easter is known by the name derived from Greek and Latin - Πάσχα. And Pascha in turn is derived from the Hebrew term Pesach, known in English as Passover, which originally denoted the Jewish festival commemorating the story of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.

Easter is therefore linked to the Passover (which represents the Exodus), through the Last Supper and crucifixion that preceded Christ's resurrection. According to the New Testament, when Jesus prepared Himself and His disciples for His death in the upper room during the Last Supper, He gave the Passover meal a new meaning. Jesus identified the *matzah* (the bread) and cup of wine as His body soon to be sacrificed and His blood soon to be shed. He was to become the Passover Lamb that was sacrificed for the sins of the world! Therefore, the timing of Easter in relation to the Passover is no coincidence.

The New Testament teaches that the resurrection of Jesus, which Easter celebrates, is a foundation of our Christian faith. The resurrection established Jesus as the powerful Son of God and is cited as proof that God will judge the world in righteousness. God has given us all **"a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"**. Through faith in Christ, and His resurrection from the dead, we are spiritually born again so that we may walk in a new way of life. This brings to mind the lyric of the song... *"Because He lives, I can face tomorrow; because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know, yes I know He holds the future. And life is worth the living just because He lives."* The end of the verse before says, *"An empty grave is there to prove My Saviour lives."*

This simple yet powerful lyric accurately describes the meaning of Easter. If Christ did not rise to new life, we could not rise with Him, and we would have no future. But because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ we no longer fear the future, and life is truly worth living because He lives! Meditate on this truth over the Easter celebration... Your future is totally secure, and therefore, there is no need to fear. What's more, your life has great value and is worth living – living life to the full! And all because, Jesus Christ lives! All because, He is alive forever more! Glory to God!