

**FORGIVE OTHERS
BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN
FORGIVEN**

2 CORINTHIANS 2

INTRODUCTION

- In this chapter, Paul challenges the church to forgive and restore a once divisive man.
- Paul then thanks God that he gets to be part of Christ's triumphant procession in the world.
- This is where the weak and the vulnerable are the most effective in spreading the Gospel.

CHRISTIANS LOVE WELL BY FORGIVING WELL

2 CORINTHIANS 2:5-11

GOOD NEWS

- The good news for Paul is threefold:
- The majority of the Corinthians repented of their opposition toward him.
- The church practiced biblical church discipline regarding the leader of the opposition against Paul, casting him out of fellowship until he repented.
- Following the discipline, the offender had clearly repented of his oppositional attitude.

GOOD NEWS

- Although these results are positive, there is a problem.
- They did not forgive the offender and had no desire to do so.
- They are not willing to practice the ultimate goal of discipline: biblical restoration.

GOOD NEWS

- They had been led astray and wounded by a leader.
- They were scared to let this overseer back in the fold.
- Paul uses verse 5 to empathize with them to a strong degree, stating that any one person's pain is really a church-wide pain.
- When one member of the body of Christ hurts, the whole body feels.

GOOD NEWS

- Paul does not linger in the idea of pain very long.
- He pushes the Corinthians past the wounds, urging them to forgive the repentant sinner (vv. 6–9).
- Paul's pastoral heart shines through in these verses, as he expresses two desires: unity for the Corinthian church and restoration for the sorrowful offender.

FORGIVENESS - SATAN

- According to Paul, the church's practice of forgiveness is so radical and potent that it has the power to outsmart Satan's schemes (verse 11).
- One of the enemy's most disastrous ploys is unforgiveness in the church.
- This creates division instead of unity.
- Paul says believers can be aware of this tactic and fight it head-on.

FORGIVENESS - SATAN

- How can we do this?
- We should be practicing forgiveness, knowing that we ourselves have been forgiven in Christ.
- Restoring a repentant offender is right thing to do.
- Especially, if believers want to abide in Christ and outsmart the Enemy.

WHEN WE FORGIVE, WE
DISPLAY GOD'S GRACE

2 CORINTHIANS 2:12-17

EXPLANATION

- These are Paul's final words on his recent conduct, proving once again to the Corinthians of his genuine love for them.
- Paul was anxious to hear how the tense situation in Corinth was going after the troubled congregation read his previous letter.
- Paul moved on to Macedonia where he could learn of the state of the Corinthians.

EXPLANATION

- These verses teach us two things about Paul:
- First, Paul had a pastoral heart. This account truly communicates just how much he loved the Corinthians.
- Second, Paul had a strategic mind. He knew what was at stake if this dispute did not get resolved soon. The future of the entire apostolic church was hanging in the balance.

TRIUMPH

- Paul uses the imagery of a “triumphal procession” in verse 14 to communicate how he viewed his current state and his ministry.
- In the Roman world, “triumphal processions” were public spectacles put on by victorious generals to show off their most recent conquests.
- The army general would lead the procession from the front. Surrounded by proud Roman soldiers, the vanquished prisoners of war would march behind.

TRIUMPH

- How did Paul see himself in relation to this analogy?
- Paul considered himself the vanquished captive in the scenario.
- Though he was once an enemy of Christ, harming His people and defaming His name, Paul considers himself now “conquered” by the grace of Jesus and follows him in his triumphal procession.

TRIUMPH

- In Paul's mind, his proclamation of the Gospel leads eventually to his death—ultimately dying for his faith or “dying daily” for the cause of Christ.
- In Paul's mind, the “sacrifice” of all that he has faced and will face is worth it.
- To be Christ's bondservant is the best place in the procession, even if it requires suffering and places one in the vulnerable position.

TRIUMPH

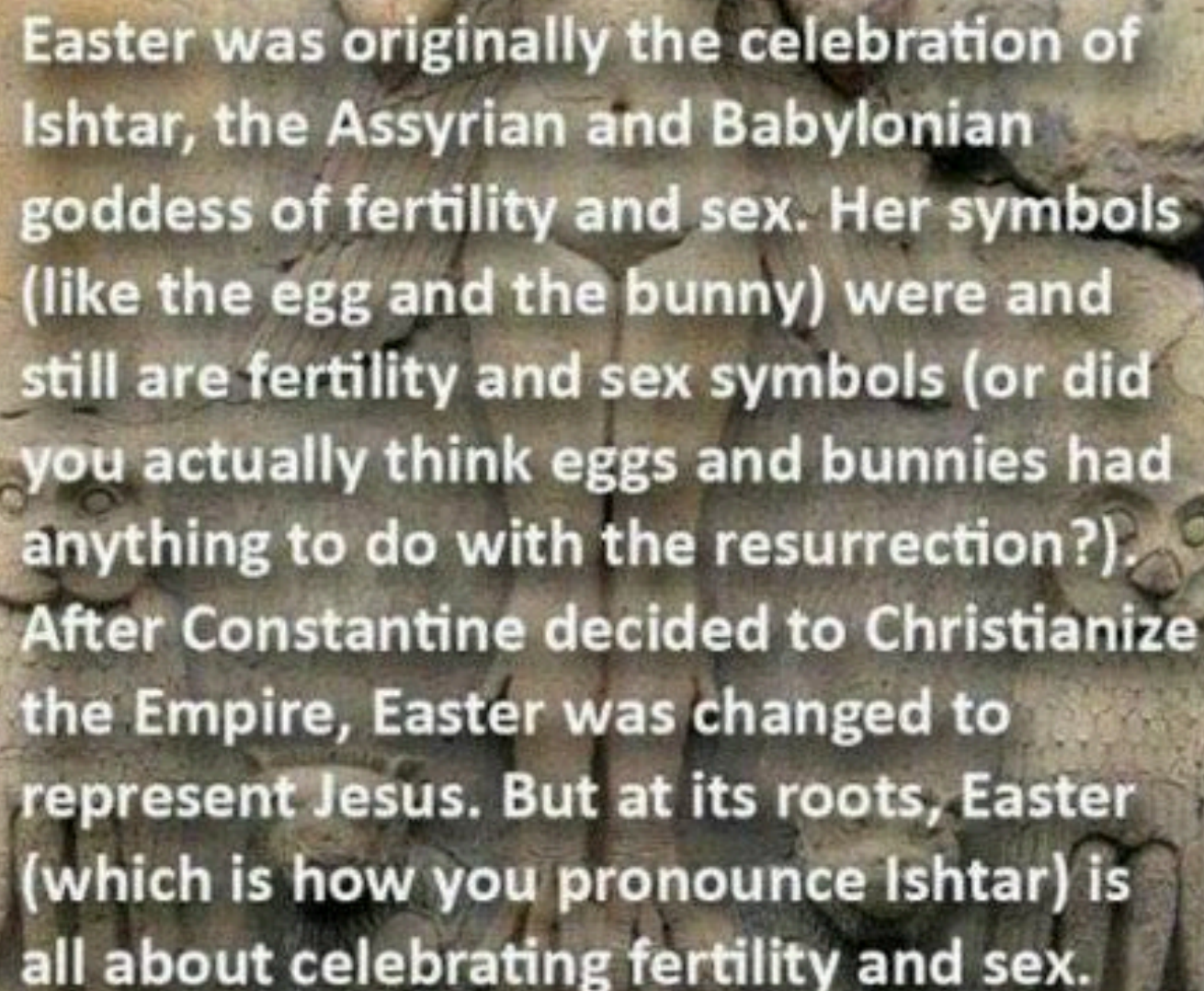
- Paul presents a final analogy.
- This one harkens back to the sacrificial system (v. 15).
- Paul's life was a sacrifice; he refers to himself as the aroma of Christ (Romans 12:1).
- As Paul preached the Gospel, it became the fragrance of life to those who accepted Christ and the stench of death to those who rejected him.

QUESTIONS ABOUT EASTER

EASTER - ISHTAR

- Question: Doesn't Easter have pagan origins?
- It is true that some of the trappings of Easter (eggs, bunnies) have nothing to do with the resurrection.
- But skeptics of Christianity go much further and argue that Easter comes from the word Ishtar, the Babylonian fertility goddess.
- Even the words "Easter" and "Ishtar" sound the same.

This is Ishtar:
pronounced "Easter".



Easter was originally the celebration of Ishtar, the Assyrian and Babylonian goddess of fertility and sex. Her symbols (like the egg and the bunny) were and still are fertility and sex symbols (or did you actually think eggs and bunnies had anything to do with the resurrection?). After Constantine decided to Christianize the Empire, Easter was changed to represent Jesus. But at its roots, Easter (which is how you pronounce Ishtar) is all about celebrating fertility and sex.

EASTER - ISHTAR

- First, this is a picture of Ishtar. You can find it in the British Museum in London.
- Second, is this how you pronounce “Ishtar”? No, this is not how you pronounced “Easter.” The etymology isn’t the same.
- Third, are her symbols the egg and the bunny? No, the symbols of Ishtar were the lion, the gate, and the eight-pointed star.

EASTER - ISHTAR

- Fourth, are eggs and bunnies symbols of fertility and rebirth? Yes, nearly every culture views eggs as a sign of birth and fertility (because that's what they are).
- Fifth, did Constantine created Easter to represent Jesus? The word "Easter" did not exist at that time.
- He may have used the word "Pascha" which is similar to the Hebrew word of Passover (*Pesach*) that in Greek became *Pascha*.

THE WORD EASTER

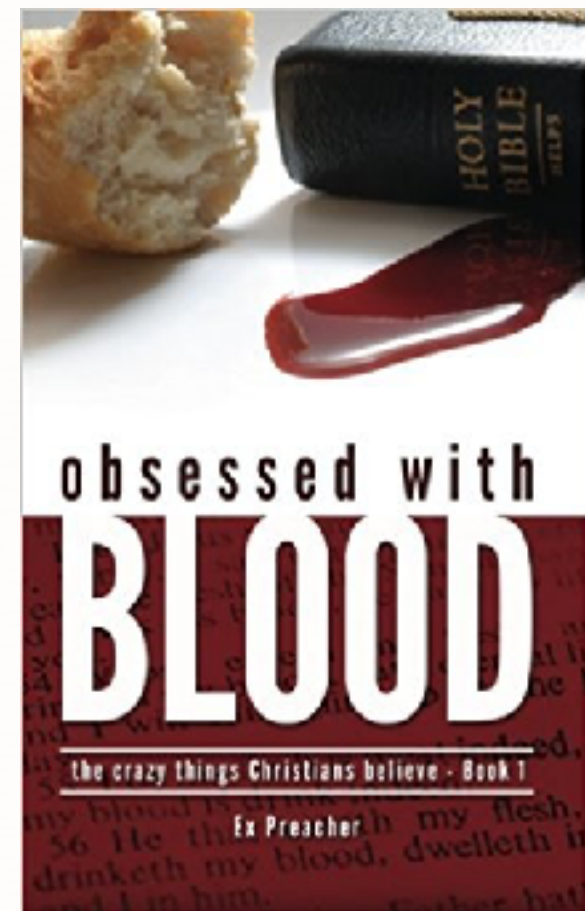
- How did the word Easter originate?
- One theory is that the English word “Easter” comes from an older German word for “east” which comes from an older Latin word for “dawn.”
- Easter is the beginning of spring, when the days are longer than the nights.
- Essentially, dawn erupts in the east each morning.

THE WORD EASTER

- Another theory is that Christians took a holiday at that time that celebrated a goddess named “Eostre” and replaced it with a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus.
- The pagans celebrated her in a month known as Eostermónath that corresponds to the month April.
- This goddess of fertility would involve eggs and bunnies.

THE BLOOD

- Question: Why the talk about the blood and cross?
- Skeptics say that Christians are obsessed with the blood of Jesus.
- This book says “they sing about it, they declare that they were washed in it, they even drink it.”
- They serve “a bloodthirsty God.”



THE BLOOD

- Christians do emphasize the blood of Christ because the Bible teaches this in the atonement.
- There is a “Crimson Thread through Scripture.”
- But this is not the same as pagan gods who demanded human sacrifices. God sent His Son to pay a penalty He did not owe so we could be saved.
- Romans 8:32 explains that God did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all.

THE CROSS

Sections 

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Opinions

Five myths about the cross



THE CROSS

- Myth #1: Jesus may have been crucified on a horizontal beam rather than the traditional cross.
- Myth #2: Jesus was nailed to the cross (Psalm 21) and we have archaeological evidence it was done.
- Myth #3: Simon of Cyrene helped carry the cross.
- Myth #4: Early Christians did emphasize the crucifixion, and so did Paul and others writers.

THE CROSS

- Myth #5: The response in *Washington Post* is true. The cross was NOT adapted by Christians from older symbols.
- Jehovah's Witnesses - various authorities "have linked the cross with nature worship and pagan sex rites."
- The cross is a distinct symbol in Christianity and a distinct feature of Christian art.

GENESIS QUESTIONS

SATAN - SERPENT

- Question: How did Satan get into the garden in the form of a serpent? Was the serpent in somewhat different form after his deception? He was cursed: “on your belly shall you go.”
- We learn from 2 Corinthians 11:14 that Satan disguises himself. So it is reasonable that he came in the FORM of a snake for his purposes.
- It appears from the passage that snakes did not crawl the bellies before God cursed them.

SATAN - SERPENT

- Why did God curse the snake?
- First, the snake would forever be a symbolic reminder of the Fall. Humans are to have dominion and rule over the animal kingdom, yet it was an animal that led them astray.
- Second, the snake becomes a symbolic reminder of Satan's destruction (Genesis 3:15) - "he will crush your head and you will strike his heel."

120 YEARS?

- Question: Why does God say He will number man's days to 120 in Genesis 6:3, yet we read that many lived more than 120 years?
- First, this verse does not teach that our lifespan is limited to 120 years, even though some teach that.
- Second, the context is crucial. Genesis 6 explains the need for the Flood (decadence was polluting the human seed, threatening the seed of the Messiah).

ONLY SON?

- Question: Why did God call Isaac the ONLY son of Abraham? Was it because Ishmael was illegitimate?
- Jews and Christians not only ask this question, but Muslim apologists argue this shows that Genesis was doctored by the Jewish people to make Isaac the chosen heir of Abraham rather than Ishmael.
- In Genesis 21, we find that Hagar and Ishmael are legally separated from Abraham.

ONLY SON?

- God then tells Abraham that through Isaac shall your descendants be named. Ishmael had no contact with Abraham until his burial in Genesis 25:5.
- Hebrews 11:17 refers to Isaac (in some translations) as “his only begotten son.”
- This implies that Isaac was special and unique.
- This is actually what the Hebrew word (*yachiyd*) for “only” actually means.

OUT OF SIGHT?

- Question: Why did Abraham say that he wanted Sarah to be buried out of his sight?
- He said this (23:4,8) to make the point that her body (and our bodies) are not to be be venerated or treated like some kind of sacred object.
- The dead body is only the shell in which the soul has lived. Paul calls it a tent (2 Corinthians 5:1).
- The body should be laid aside, put out of sight.