

PASSOVER vs EASTER

[Boyne, Ian](#). [The Weekly Gleaner](#), North American ed.; Jamaica, N.Y. [Jamaica, N.Y.]25 Mar 2010: E7

TODAY, MILLIONS of Christians around the world celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ during this season of Easter. But perhaps most don't realise that it was not until the fourth century that Easter was uniformly observed by Christians.

What the earliest Christians observed in memorial of Christ was the Passover, which occurs at this time of the year on Nisan 14 on the Jewish calendar. The Palestinian historian Epiphanius (AD 315-403) said that the 15 Jewish Christian bishops who administered the Jerusalem Church until AD 135 observed the Lord's death on Nisan 14. In the Apostolic Constitutions, an early Christian document, the following rule is laid out: "You shall not change the calculation of the time, but you shall celebrate it with the same time as your brethren who came out of the circumcision (the Jews). With them observe the Passover."

It was anti-Semitism - racism against the Jews, which was responsible for the Christian church's adoption of Easter over the Passover which has Old Testament (Jewish) roots. A brutal and vicious persecution against the Jews had started from early under Emperor Hadrian who outlawed Jewish practices and customs. Jews and Jewish Christians were expelled from Jerusalem after Hadrian had crushed The Bar Kokhba revolt of the Jews (AD 132-135). With that eviction of the Jews and Jewish Christians came the increasing non-Jewish influence on Christianity, and a rabid anti-Semitism whose relic is still with the Church today. The rejection of the Passover and the substitution of Easter is a manifestation of this malice against the Jews as well as poor hermeneutics of Scripture.

An early Christian controversy was the Quartodeciman Controversy between Christians of the East and the West. The eastern Christians insisted that Jesus should be memorialised by the observance of the Passover on Nisan 14, while those in the West felt that an independent festival not connected with the Jews should be adopted to celebrate His death and resurrection.

NO PRETENCE

Emperor Constantine settled the issue at the Council of Nicea in 325. He made no pretence of his motives for doing so. The following could not be plainer as at the reason for adopting Easter over Passover.

"It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin and are therefore deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul.

Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd! Strive and pray continually that the purity of your soul may not in anything be sullied by fellowship with the custom of these most wicked men (We must) avoid all participation in the perjured conduct of the Jews".

There you have it. With that Easter was imposed on the eastern Christians who were threatened with expulsion if they continued to meet on the same date that the Jews kept their Passover.

But there are a number of reasons why Christians should celebrate the Passover over Easter. First, the Easter ritual has pagan roots and the Scripture is replete with warnings, especially in the Old Testament, against syncretism.

In their work Passover : Before Messiah and After Donna and Mal Broadhurst trace the origin of Easter to Ishtar the Sumerian goddess of love and war who, in Canaan, evolved into a moon goddess and wife of Baal.

Sidebar

"It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin and are therefore deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul."

AuthorAffiliation

IAN BOYNE

Contributor