



EASTER REVISITED

There is no complete agreement on the origins of the holiday of Easter and its symbols. In non-English speaking countries the holiday is called Pascha, referring to the Jewish holiday of Passover. Christians celebrate it as the resurrection of their crucified messiah which they say took place during Passover. But "Easter" is not in the Bible. It appears to be the name of a pagan fertility goddess, often said to be "Eostre" though it seems fatuous to make distinctions on spelling when referring to a deity that was worshipped in an age before spelling had been standardized. The Easter Bunny, eggs, jelly beans, chocolate and so on similarly have nothing to do with Christian theology.

Considering the absolutely fundamental importance of the resurrection of Jesus for Christians, it is astonishing that even believers do not know when it happened beyond, approximately, somewhere around 29-34 C.E. Of course, if the date were known then it could be commemorated every year. As it is, Easter falls on different dates every year. One might think that Christians would at least agree that their savior died on Friday, since they observe that day as such, but many Christian scholars say that it actually happened on a Thursday or even a Wednesday, this to satisfy the prophecy of Jesus that he would be "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." [Matthew 12:40] One might also think that with all the stupendous events that took place at the time – earthquakes and lots of dead people getting out of their graves and walking around – a real "night of the living dead" – that these would have been noticed and remembered. But there is no account of any such thing outside of the New Testament.

Even the four Gospels differ even with respect to how events unfolded. Dan Barker, former Christian minister and now a leader of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, challenges Christians to "tell me what happened on Easter" and relates that no one has been able to do so and that he tried and failed, himself, to do so. The facts about who went to discover the allegedly empty tomb, when, and for what purpose, what they found, what supernatural message(s) were received by whom and to whom they then conveyed the information, how and to whom the reanimated Jesus first appeared and many additional elements of the story simply do not agree or hang together. And while even a coherent story need not be true, an incoherent story clearly cannot be true.

Meanwhile, the supposedly overwhelming and conclusive nature of the evidence for Christian claims about Jesus stand controverted by the continued existence and vigor of the Jewish religion, the holy texts of which Christianity claims to be erected upon. How can this be? Well, it is not for lack of effort on the part of Christians to exterminate the Jews. For related reasons, the Jewish side of things is seldom heard. They have long said, simply, that their Torah has been misunderstood and misinterpreted, that Jesus did not fulfill its prophecies about the Jewish Messiah, and that the New Testament simply does not cohere with itself, with the facts, or with their Torah. To cite one of many examples, it seems that roosters were not allowed in the city of Jerusalem at the time of the events described in the NT so that the famous story of Peter's denial of Jesus followed immediately by a cock crowing could not have happened. [and see [Faith Strengthened](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B009A765E4/northtexaschurch) by Isaac ben Abraham of Troki available on Amazon at <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B009A765E4/northtexaschurch> ; also <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/159102384X/northtexaschurch>]

There is more to Easter than most people suppose. And much of what most people suppose about it is wrong. Understandably, most people appear to be more interested in other things. That's a good thing, unless they have an unthinking commitment to theological nonsense. But it is enough to enjoy family, friends, eggs and other good food, the rejuvenation of the spring season and the promise of the rest of the coming year. That's the basis of an enduring holiday!

BUY THIS BOOK!

In 2010, Marie Alena Castle spoke at the Texas Freethought Convention to a rapt audience about the immorality of supernatural religious doctrines. She also announced that she was beginning work on a book about how such doctrines have shaped and continue to guide public policy. That book, Culture Wars: The Threat to Your Family and Your Freedom, will be released any day now.

This book is unlike others on the subject. In fact, it is not primarily an attack on religion as much as it is an eye-opening account of how religions like Catholicism, fundamentalist Christian sects and Christian Science have worked successfully to undermine state-church separation. Even well-informed Freethinkers will find many things here that they did not know about.

Castle begins by discussing the role that courts and legal institutions, and, more importantly, those in charge of them, play in determining whether Americans' rights are protected or denied. Subsequent chapters deal with state-church entanglement on issues of sex, gender, reproductive rights and other healthcare matters, education and the conflict between scientific fact and theological fictions, tax preferences and subsidies for religious "charity," as well as outright endorsement of theological doctrines. A closing chapter suggests what might be done about it. Castle is engaging and entertaining, pulling no punches while remaining factual and polite.

This book is well-written, well-referenced, and well-worth reading for any unbeliever or believer interested in state-church separation and religious liberty. The author is an experienced leader in this cause, both in Minnesota and nationally and a founder and current communications director of Atheists For Human Rights in Minneapolis. [BUY AT <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1937276473/northtexaschurch>]

YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS TO THE NTCOF ARE NEEDED, APPRECIATED, AND TAX-DEDUCTIBLE!!

**PLANNED FOR NEXT MONTH:
RAISING FREETHINKING CHILDREN!**

**>>> Sunday, May 5th, 2013 <<<
SHERATON GRAND DFW AIRPORT
SE CORNER OF 114 AND ESTERS**

All NTCOF events can be found through our website calendar , or through our meetup page, from which you can RSVP, at: - www.meetup.com/church-of-freethought -
JOIN THE NTCOF MEETUP GROUP !!!

Social Luncheon: Today, immediately after our Service, join us for lunch and discussion at the Golden Corral Buffet and Grill in Grapevine, located just across from the Grapevine Mills Mall, at 2605 E. Grapevine Mills Circle, phone (972) 874-7900. To reach Golden Corral from the Sheraton, cross over the freeway and make a left onto John W. Carpenter Freeway (114) going west. Then take the first exit RIGHT onto International Parkway (121), then Grapevine Mills Parkway exit. Turn LEFT on Stars and Stripes Way, continuing on to E. Grapevine Mills Circle.

Freethought Salon: Get together to discuss today's service topic or other conundrums of interest for Freethinkers. Most Sundays, over breakfast, at the Hilton Vineyard in Grapevine beginning 10:30 AM; see the meetup site!

Game Night: The regular game night crew meets nearly every Friday night at the IHOP on 2310 Stemmons Trail (I-35), near Northwest Highway (Loop 12). Plan to arrive at about 7:30 PM, and stay late playing Risk, Rummikub, and other fun games!

Secular Singles: Freethinkers have met their life-partners through the Secular Singles group. Check the meetup site for the next date, time and location!

THE NATIONAL DAY OF REASON is coming this May 2nd. This day is in opposition to the unconscionable Congressionally-mandated National Day of Prayer held the same day that endorses a specific religious practice of god-believers in violation of the First Amendment. nationaldayofreason.org



DFWCOR

Dallas-Fort Worth Coalition of Reason

The North Texas Church of Freethought
The Fellowship of Unbelievers

Presenters: David Burgess
Tim Gorski
Welcome Coordinator: Mark Barnick
Videographer: John Gauthier
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