

## Concerning Easter

1. Easter is a Christian festival which embodies many pre-Christian traditions.
2. The origin of its name is unknown.
3. Scholars tend to accept the derivation proposed by the 8th-century English scholar St. Bede who believe it probably comes from *Ēastre*, the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic (German) goddess of spring and fertility, to whom was dedicated a month corresponding to April.
4. Her festival was celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox.
5. Traditions associated with the festival survive in the Easter rabbit, a symbol of fertility, and in colored easter eggs, originally painted with bright colors to represent the sunlight of spring, and used in Easter-egg rolling contests or given as gifts.
6. Such festivals, and the stories and legends that explain their origin, were common in ancient religions.
7. The Christian festival of Easter probably embodies a number of converging traditions; most scholars emphasize the original relation of Easter to the Jewish festival of Passover, or Pesach, from which is derived *Pasch*, another name for Easter.
8. The early Christians, many of whom were of Jewish origin, were brought up in the Hebrew tradition and regarded Easter as a new feature of the Passover festival, a commemoration of the advent of the Messiah as foretold by the prophets.

## Concerning Pagan Days

- Sunday. Its English name and its German name (*Sonntag*) are derived from the Latin *dies solis*, “*sun's day*,” the name of a pagan Roman holiday.
- Monday. The name is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *monandaeg*, which means “*the moon's day*.” Its Latin equivalent is *dies lunae*, “*day of the moon*.” For the Anglo-Saxons the second day was sacred to the goddess of the moon.
- Tuesday. It is named for the Norse god of war, Tiu, or Tyr, the son of Odin, or Woden.
- Wednesday. Wednesday is named to honor Odin, or Woden, chief god in Norse mythology.
- Thursday. Thursday is named for Thor, Norse god of thunder.
- Friday. Friday was held sacred to Venus, the goddess of love, by the Romans, who called it *dies veneris* (“*day of Venus*”).

- Saturday. Saturday is named in honor of the Roman god Saturn.