



BRIDGES

A Newsletter of New Baptist Church - March 2024

The Arrival of Spring

With the coming of March, winter is over. Have you ever considered the historic importance of March?

- Where I grew up (Eastern Oregon), March was when the ground had thawed out from winter and was ready to be worked and planted.

- March also lines up (mostly) with the Jewish month of Nisan, the religious new year as counted from when the nation was birthed out of the Exodus.

- March 4th was considered the birthday of the United States because it is the date the US Constitution became effective.

- March 20th is when the spring equinox occurs. The equinox is when the earth's equator is aligned with the sun according to its orbit. March 20th marks the moment in the year when the Northern Hemisphere begins to receive more sun than the Southern Hemisphere.

- And, as strange as it sounds, the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox is Resurrection Sunday (Easter). This year, the first full moon (called the Paschal or Passover moon) after the Spring Equinox will occur on March 25th (a Monday). Thus, Resurrection Sunday will be celebrated on the following Sunday, March 31st, the last day of March.

I do not think it is a coincidence that Resurrection Sunday falls where it does. Historically speaking, this decision to set Resurrection Sunday on

the Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox was brilliant. Though this sounds complicated to us, it was a workable formula in a day without calendars and poor long-distance communication. When do you celebrate the resurrection? When the days start getting longer, the resurrection is celebrated on the first Sunday after the full moon.



*“He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”
(Matthew 13:31–32)*

Theologically speaking, though, Resurrection Sunday, which takes place in either late March or early April, reminds me of when I worked on farms in Eastern Oregon. In February, the ground is still frozen, and nothing can be planted, but come March, the rains have come, and the ground is soft, allowing the soil to be broken and the seed to be planted. This makes me think of Jesus's death and Him being planted (placed in the grave) at just the right time. Just as a seed must be planted in order for it to grow into a mighty tree where all the birds of the air can find shelter (Matthew 13:31-32), so too does the Son of Man need to die so that eternal life may be available to

all. It is good and fitting to celebrate the Resurrection in the season when we see life budding forth from trees and fields, for creation itself points us to the new life each person can have in the Son who has defeated death.

Therefore, as we near the celebration of the Resurrection (March 31), may your heart be like a farmer's field in spring. May it be broken and stirred so that the Word of God that is planted in you may grow.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Trent Eastman