

When is Easter? Well, it depends...

Video transcript: A movable feast narrated by Dr Robert Beckford

Easter. The oldest Christian festival and the holiest in the Christian Calendar celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after his crucifixion.

It's at the very heart of the Christian faith, and is celebrated by billions. And yet Easter falls on a completely different date every year.

Why is it such a movable feast?

The answer is loaded with controversy, and is still dividing the Church to this day.

Even the earliest accounts of the life and death of Jesus, the gospels, disagree over the precise date on which he died.

All four of the gospels Mathew, Mark, Luke and John - report his death at the time of the Jewish Passover, but differ over the date.

John puts the crucifixion on the day of the Passover itself, on the 14th day of the first spring moon, according to the Hebrew calendar.

But the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke record that Christ ate the Passover meal and was crucified on the following day, the 15th day after the first spring moon.

So just a few generations after the death of Jesus differences have already emerged about when to mark his death and resurrection.