

Defense of Easter?

Commentary for May 17, 2010 — Does Dr. Martin Hate Easter?

Comment and Question

A while back we received this comment and question from T_____:

“Ernest L. Martin, it really must be a terrible burden for you to know so much and have to hate so many haters. No divine guidance for you. Heck, as cocksure as you are, I expect you have had to get God in line on occasion too.

Okay, now that you “know” Easter is an abomination worthy of your contempt, what is the next evil outing you are working on?

May God have mercy on you.

T_____”

My response

My actual response was shorter than what I present here. I have expanded it here.

Dr. Ernest L. Martin died in January 2002.

As a biblical scholar and as a historian for most of his adult life, Dr. Martin wrote extensively about God's love to mankind. The concept of hate was rather far from Dr. Martin's mind, except for a hatred for evil and evil doers who injure others. In that vein he was pretty much in line with God who also hates those same things. Dr. Martin certainly did not dwell much on such things, but dealt with them appropriately.

As you will note from a short Commentary Dr. Martin wrote, [“Should Christians Celebrate Easter?”](#), the very idea of Ishtar (oops, sorry, I mean Easter; Ishtar is a pagan goddess) was conceived in hate. The separation of the pagan day from Passover had little to do with biblical exegesis and much to do with Roman imperial suppression of the Jews. In fact, hate is part of the origins of Easter:

“What we discover is the fact that ‘Easter’ has as its very basis in Christian theology a hate motif that the Christian hierarchy wished to show toward the Jewish people and to the biblical festival called the Passover.”

• ***“Should Christians Celebrate Easter?”***

Traditions of men are unimportant except that they lead men astray from God and His word, the Bible (Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:3-13).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

• ***Colossians 2:8***

Ishtar (oops, again sorry, I mean Easter, Ishtar is a pagan goddess) is such a **“tradition of men,”** developed long after New Testament times. It was not a tradition that Paul taught (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

Nowhere in Scripture is it commanded to keep a celebration of Ishtar (oops, Easter; Ishtar is a pagan goddess) which did not exist in the time of the apostles. Jesus fulfilled the keeping of the Passover completely. It is neither necessary nor useful for us to keep Passover.

Furthermore, if we were to keep any days, understand that the apostle Paul still would not have us keep Passover (and certainly not a pagan festival like Easter). After all, Paul makes it clear who He is: **“Christ our Passover”** (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus is called the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36) because He completely fulfilled the symbolic function of the passover lamb (1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6-9, 5:12).

The entire Gospel of John is designed to show that Jesus was the Passover, the Lamb of God. See this explained by Dr. Martin’s presentation [“The Passover Contradiction.”](#) It is a fascinating study of the differences between the Gospels and their emphasis.

None of the holy days of Moses is necessary or useful any longer (Colossians 2:16–17). It is truly useful to study them from the Bible as shadows of things to come in Christ’s fulfillment. Why would anyone stare at or interact with the shadow of the reality, the shadow events that were fulfilled by Christ? The holy days inaugurated by God are all fulfilled by Christ.

Note carefully what Paul is saying to the Corinthian *ekklesia*:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

• **1 Corinthians 5:7-8**

Paul is speaking about the Lord’s Supper, not Passover. How do I know? It is because the Law of Moses was given to the nation of Israel only. It did not apply to the Gentile nations. (Jeremiah 31:31–34). See Dr. Martin’s explanation of this in his article [“The Law of Moses, the Passover, and the Lord’s Supper.”](#) Keeping Passover would signify that Christ’s sacrifice is not sufficient, that you do believe that Him being **“our passover”** only as vain words, and that we must “keep” or observe the day. Passover recognized what God did for Israel in Egypt, a mere shadow leading to Christ. Christ has come and fulfilled the Passover.

You close with the statement, “May God have mercy on you,” meaning Dr. Martin and by extension me, the current Director of ASK. Thank you for that thought. I accept that in the best possible way.

Indeed, God has done much more than have mercy on us (and you), He has justified me and you by the faith of Christ (Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16-17, 3:22-24; Philippians 3:9) and not merely by faith in Christ (which also comes from God, Acts 24:24; Galatians 3:26; Colossians 1:4, 2:5; Titus 3:7).

If you do not understand what I mean by these sentences or what it means to be justified, I invite you to read Dr. Martin’s article, [“What Is Justification?”](#)

To close, the apostle Paul encourages us all:

“that we henceforth be NO MORE CHILDREN, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”

• **Ephesians 4:11–15**

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