

## Should Christians Celebrate Easter?

**Commentary for March 15, 2025 — by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, April 2001**

This title may appear to be strange to some readers because if there were ever a festival that has all the trappings of being Christian in origin, it would seem that Easter (and the week preceding it from Palm Sunday until Easter Sunday) would be the paramount celebration of the Christian community. Indeed, upon analysis, the rite of Easter would appear to be of greater importance than the happy time of Christmas because Easter commemorates the central doctrine of all Christendom — that Christ Jesus was certainly resurrected from the dead to become the Savior of the world. If there was ever a festival one could call “Christian,” then Easter appears to be a chief candidate.

Yet there was an official ruling by Christian authorities in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD that shows a dark side to the origin of the festival in its present form. Instead of provoking an intense and understandable happiness to the Christian believer in the knowledge that Christ has risen from the dead (which is a wonderful fact to commemorate and to foster), there is an underlying “dark side” to the Easter celebration that needs to be jettisoned from Christian worship.

### **Background on the Day Christians Celebrate Easter**

Before I mention that element of shame, it should be recognized that the word “Easter” does not occur in any part of the Old or the New Testament. That is, the word does not occur when one surveys the teaching of the original languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek. It is a fact that the venerable King James Version, which so many Christians hold dear as their favorite version or translation, DOES contain the word in Acts 12:4 even through in its numerous editions up to the present. In fact, the use of the word represents a flagrant mistranslation.

**“And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter [Greek τὸ πάσχα, “the Passover”] to bring him forth to the people.”**

• **Acts 12:4 KJV**<sup>1</sup>

The actual Greek that the evangelist Luke used was “Passover” and this referred to a chronological period of time known and supervised by the Jewish authorities that had nothing to do with any so-called “Easter celebrations.”

Easter itself did not even get official sanction within the Christian community until the time of the Nicaean Council in 325 AD. Even then the Christian festival was still called “Passover.” In fact, it can be abundantly proved that a cardinal rule for the celebration of Easter is the deliberate attempt to hold the Passover of the Holy Scriptures in contempt because the Jewish people continued to observe the period as they had since their Exodus from Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup> “... whom, arresting also, he placed in jail, giving him over to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to lead him up to the people” (Acts 12:4 CLV).

To prevent an association, there was a concerted demand by the theologians at the Council of Nicaea that the Catholic Church was NOT to observe their Passover (which was later changed in Anglo-Saxon countries to the name "Easter") on a Sunday that the Jews would ordinarily keep their Passover. [ See Dr. Martin's article "[The Passover Contradiction.](#)" DWS ]

Under normal astronomical circumstances, the Christian "Easter" services on a Sunday following the Vernal Equinox and the Full Moon, could occur in certain years when the Jews celebrated their Passover on a Sunday. This is the very case this year of 2001.<sup>2</sup> Easter (according to astronomical reasons) should have occurred on April 8<sup>th</sup>. But this was the same day that the Jews celebrated their Passover.

So, a rule was devised by Christian theologians in the 4<sup>th</sup> century that had nothing to do with astronomical or liturgical reasons in order to prevent the celebration of the two festivals on the same Sunday. The rule was this: If the astronomical "Easter" happened to fall out on a Sunday that was identical in time to the Jewish Passover, the Christian "Easter" would be postponed until the following Sunday.

### **What Is the "Dark Side" of Easter?**

The Nicaean theologians did this for one reason and one reason only. This was to promote their own disdainful opinions concerning Jewish practices. To do this, they required all Christendom when "Easter" occurred on the Jewish Passover to postpone the Christian "Easter" to the following Sunday in order to have, as stated by the Roman Emperor Constantine's letter to the assembled Nicene Bishops: **"nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd."**<sup>3</sup> That is their exact determination and their reason for the rule.

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. This official wordage in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD is not only unfortunate, but also downright hateful and it is contemptuous for a people who have a different faith. It was included in the official determination of the Christian "Easter" in order to foster and perpetuate hate and revenge.

And indeed, look what has happened in this very year of April 2001. Since the Jewish Passover fell on Sunday, April 8, the date of Easter should have been at the same time (for astronomical reasons) but the rule of postponement (sanctioned by Constantine and the Christian hierarchy in the fourth century) was brought into play. The "hate clause" in the Christian "Easter" motif caused all Christendom to make their "Easter" to occur on the following Sunday, which is our next Sunday, April 15.

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Martin published this Commentary on April 12, 2001, four days after the Passover of Sunday, April 8. The next Sunday Passovers were in 2005, 2008, 2019, and 2021. **The next future Sunday** Passover will be on April 13, 2025. After that, the next Sunday Passover will not occur until 2044. DWS

<sup>3</sup> Click to view "[Constantine's Letters, Book 2](#), (search for the terms **"Nothing in common"** in the online text). The quote is below the subtitle in bold: **"(323 or 324 AD), Letter of Constantine to Alexander the Bishop and Arius the Presbyter."** DWS

This procedure is a pure hate element in Christian theology sanctioned by the Nicaean Council against **"the detestable Jewish crowd."** This comment (and the rule of determining "Easter" which stems from it) is a sure and undeniable disgrace to the Christian faith and the true motives of New Testament teaching which commands all of us Christians to love and respect every person, whether Jew or Gentile (Galatians 3:28). In a word, the rule for "Easter" is an unbelievably bad one.

When Christians today participate in all the parts of the "Easter" celebrations, this hate clause hangs over the entire period of time. It is there at Easter morning sunrise services. It is there at Easter mass in the Roman Catholic Church, and it rings loud and clear even in Protestant services that follow the same decision of Nicaea. And to further alienate the Jews from any participation in any of our "Easter" services, numerous pagan symbols have also been adopted by Christians that they knew the Jews would hold in disdain. These include heathen practices such as bunny rabbits, egg hunts, and other equinox customs of the Gentiles that would irritate what they called the "detestable Jewish crowd."

Frankly, I think the Christian community (starting with all the hierarchies of the various denominations) and going down to the ordinary laity should offer the Jewish people an apology for designing a cardinal feature of their "Easter" determination as a device simply to irritate and to show hate to **"the detestable Jewish crowd."**

This rule needs to be abandoned. We need to foster a determined act of repentance and forgiveness for the display of such hatefulness in the calculation of a festival that has as its very apex of Christian theological teaching a supposed love and respect for all people in the world (including the Jewish people). The fact is: "Easter" was created in a climate of hate.

There is no reason to hold a despicable attitude toward the Jewish people as our forefathers did who enacted the "Easter" rules that determined the time of the festival. What gives those people some 1,600 years ago the authority to legislate for me (and for all Christendom today) what we should be doing to honor and adore Christ Jesus, when I cannot believe Christ would be party to such hatefulness?

That is why I will NOT attend such celebrations no matter if the people are doing their celebrations without the historical knowledge that we theologians have. The fact is, though, we theologians do have the truth and most hide it under the rug of tradition that has lost its meaning. But this is not a true excuse for its retention. Education and knowledge of the facts should lead the way in reclaiming these hateful doctrines concocted in what many people call the refined "Dark Ages" of late antiquity.

It is time to tell the ordinary public about these hateful and contemptible customs that disgrace the very august celebrations that we mistakenly call "Christian" today. I am a professor of history, and I DO KNOW the reason for keeping Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup> rather than keeping Easter on the previous Sunday (at the time of the Jewish Passover) on April 8, 2001.

The simple fact is, we need a brand-new Nicaean Council to get rid of this hateful type of "Easter" (with its many pagan and heathen customs disgracing its celebrations) and substi-

tute it with the simple rule that existed since the time of Moses (and that Christ celebrated with His disciples the night before He was crucified).

- If anyone wishes to honor the resurrection of Christ, let them do so on the Sunday following the Jewish Passover.
- And, if the Jews wish to celebrate their Passover on this new Christian time of reflection, then let them do so with our approval and with a joy and alacrity of a common celebration for the fact of Christ's resurrection.

But for this present era, it is time to get rid of this "hate clause" that the Bishops and Presbyters of Nicaea agreed upon, with the strong approval of Emperor Constantine, that disgraces the very name of "Easter" in our contemporary Christian calendar.

This is the principal reason I refuse to celebrate "Easter" because it promotes the historical rule of hate and contempt, and it exalts a group of theologians in the fourth century with a mantle of authority that they do not deserve. They have caused the whole Christian community to perpetuate rules of hate in the most sublime of Christian festivals.

It is time the world community of Christians convene another "Nicaean Council" and this time utterly condemn — and then eradicate entirely — this festival of "Easter" borne out of hate and disdain and replace it (if people wish to celebrate the time of the resurrection of Christ Jesus) with the simple Passover celebrations that Acts 12:4 spoke about in the first place. That was before the erroneous theologians of the King James Version put in their false and vindictive translation instead of what the evangelist Luke clearly wrote in Greek.

This is the principal reason I will NOT bow the knee to the theologians of the Nicaean Council. It was their outlandish propagation of hatefulness in the name of Christianity, along with the newly accepted pagan customs of the equinox, which need to be condemned and jettisoned from Christian liturgy.

This is why I am on a campaign to free the Scriptures from these false opinions made by the early Councils and with their false translations, and especially to discourage festivals engendered primarily out of hate for other people. If people truly wish to honor the resurrection of Christ, then they (and I mean the whole of Christendom) should immediately abandon such disdainfully interpreted festivals of our "Dark Age" mentality that often motivated the early ecclesiastics. They should get back to the celebration of the simple Passover of the Holy Scriptures that Acts 12:4 was referring to.

For me, our present Christian authorities need to repent of devising their "Easter" against what they called **"the detestable Jewish crowd"** and ask God to forgive their creation and perpetuation of such a hatefully motivated festival designed to antagonize another part of the human race. [ See Dr. Martin's other 1980 article "[The Passover/Easter Controversy.](#)" DWS ]

Dr. Ernest Martin, 2001  
David Sielaff, edited March 2025  
[david@askelm.com](mailto:david@askelm.com)