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EASTER RELATED CHURCH TRADITIONS: LENT

We will come back to the study of Passover and how it related to Jesus in a later article. For now, I wish to look at some man-made church traditions not found in the Bible. The traditions were started by the roman Catholic Church in 325 A.D. at the Council of Nicaea called by the converted Roman emperor Constantine. Several traditions resulted from this, including Lent, Easter, Good Friday, and Christmas.

Lent is the period of 40 days before Passover. It starts with Ash Wednesday, the placing of ashes upon one's body representing repentance. This reflects an Old Testament practice of "sackcloth and ashes" as a serious act of repentance to God due to some specific event.

During the 40 days of Lent, a person is to do some form of fasting, giving up something they normally do. It includes eating no red meat on Fridays. Various forms of penance are done. It is a time of austerity to demonstrate one's devotion to God.

When the Protestant Reformation emerged, some of the resulting early denominations continued the practice of Lent, including Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists and some others. Newer denominations mostly did not practice Lent since it was not a biblical practice.

Being as Lent is non-biblical, it is up to the individual whether to practice the various traditions involved with lent. There is nothing wrong with it since it is an act of devotion. There is no biblical reason to practice it. It is your personal choice, or the choice of the church with which you are affiliated.

I personally do not observe Lent, but I certainly have no problem with those who do, especially if they do it out of devotion to God and not just because it is their tradition. When done for the right reasons it can be a good thing.