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Who Was Really Born On December 25?

When Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, died, Semiramis told the people that her husband's spirit had taken possession of the sun. She encouraged the people to pay homage to her husband by worshipping the sun. Thus began the evil practice of sun worship. Later on when Semiramis gave birth to a son by the name of Tammuz, she hid her licentious form of living by lying to the people. She told them that she was miraculously overshadowed by the spirit of her dead husband, Nimrod, and it was in this way she was able to bring forth this so-called "son of god."

Semiramis also declared that her son, Tammuz, was in actuality the return or rebirth of her husband, Nimrod. Hence through this teaching the doctrine of reincarnation was born. And since Tammuz was born on December 25, this day was highly honored and recognized by Nimrod's supporters. Note, therefore, that this date (December 25) was observed in honor of the birth of Tammuz **long before** Christianity existed, and that it was not until many centuries later this pagan custom was "Christianized" as being the birthday of Christ (or Christmas day).

The similarity between some of the ancient pagan beliefs and the truth is notable. Those who existed after the Flood knew the true prophecies of God very well because the Creator had made His plans known unto all the descendants of Adam and Eve. Therefore, it was not difficult for Satan to counterfeit the truth with erroneous applications. The notable writer Alexander Hislop tells us:

"If there was one who was more deeply concerned in the tragic death of Nimrod than another, it was his wife Semiramis, who, from an originally humble position, had been raised to share with him the throne of Babylon. . . In life her husband had been honored as a hero; in death she will have him worshipped as a god, yea, as the woman's promised seed, 'Zero-ashta,' who was destined to bruise the serpent's head, and who, in doing so, was to have his own heel bruised." *The Two Babylons*, p. 58-59.

Of course, because of the deifying of her husband, it was not long before Nimrod's followers began to also worship Semiramis. And her son Tammuz (Zero-ashta) was worshipped as well. More and more Semiramis was revered by the people and was viewed by many as a priestess and goddess. Later on she also became known as "the queen of heaven." Thus began the awful practice of exalting human deities. These false beliefs have led up to the many different forms of idolatry that are still practiced by different people today. Yes, it was through the introduction of these satanic evils and the many sacrilegious practices of ancient Babylon that witchcraft, priestcraft, spiritualism, and other forms of paganism were born. Says the well-known author Ellen G. White:

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"The doctrine of man's consciousness in death, especially the belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism." *The Great Controversy*, p. 551.

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Are Christmas Day and Halloween Related to Sun Worship?

The worship of Nimrod became widespread when the builders of the tower of Babel were scattered throughout the earth. Along with them, the people carried all the satanic beliefs and practices that were introduced to them while dwelling on the plains of Shinar. With time, these views were remodeled to suit the different civilizations that peopled the earth; nevertheless, they all basically stemmed from the religious views started on the plains of Shinar. Thus we read:

"The Chaldean Mysteries can be traced up to the days of Semiramis, who lived only a few centuries after the flood, and who is known to have impressed upon them the image of her own depraved and polluted mind." *The Two Babylons*, p. 5.

In Egypt, although there were many gods, the three main deities were Osiris, Isis, and Horus. These were simply substitute names for Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz. In Rome they were known as Saturn, Venus, and Jupiter. While in Greece they were known as Kronos, Rhea, and Zeus. In other lands, such as in India and China, they were also known and worshipped under different names. Thus we see that following the fall of the tower of Babel the religion of Babylon continued to live on under many different disguises.

In many places, these original Babylonish practices were reintroduced and preserved through the historical records, myths, and religious teachings or customs of the people. So much so that even the first day of the week, Sunday, continued to be recognized as the day of the sun. Hence, in Rome, when Emperor Constantine issued his famous Sunday law of March 7, 321 A.D., he clearly and distinctly referred to Sunday as "the venerable Day of the Sun."

Following the scattering of the builders of the tower of Babel, many people throughout the earth were worshippers of the sun. In Britain, a religious sect called the Druids were greatly feared by the people. They, too, were known to worship the sun. The Druid priests were also known to offer human sacrifices to their god and they performed many supernatural feats. They were known to worship in small woods or groups of trees called groves.

In ancient times the Druids celebrated a festival in honor of their sun god, which today we call *Halloween*. The night of October 31, was a special night for them. But their idea of "trick or treat," as well as the use of the "jack o' lantern," was definitely not the very same as it is now. Gruesome and satanic activities were involved in these observances in ancient times. Yet, we now see these things as innocent, even though in the past they were all associated with pagan and spiritualistic rituals. Certainly there is nothing Christian whatsoever about little children dressing up like witches and warlocks. God's command unto the faithful is:

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"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God." Deut. 18:10-13.

Sun worship became popular worldwide. Even among the children of Israel the sun god Baal was worshipped. Such a practice was condemned by Jehovah, and drastic consequences were outlined by Him to all offenders.

"Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord. But go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by My name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim." Jer. 7:8-15.

"He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed." Ex. 22:20.

In ancient Rome the god Saturn was worshipped, and along with this idolatry the winter solstice was highly regarded. A week long winter festival called Saturnalia was celebrated by them in honor of the re-appearance of the sun in the northern hemisphere. The final day of this festival, Brumalia, fell on December 25. This was regarded as the day of "the invincible sun." During these festivals there was much gaiety, feasting, and even the exchanging of gifts, very similar to the manner in which Christmas is celebrated today. Yet all of these customs existed many years **before** the birth of Jesus Christ, and as we can see they were all in honor of false gods.

Surely, the activities involved in these ancient Roman festivals give us a good example of what obviously predominated the celebration of Tammuz's birth anciently. Thus we see that the date, December 25, was celebrated anciently by the Romans and other pagans who knew nothing about Jesus Christ. To them this date had nothing whatsoever to do with the birth of Christ.

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December 25 was a day of pagan origin in honor of the sun god. (It is also interesting to note that the name Saturn, from which Saturnalia derives, was another name for Nimrod.)

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What About Santa Claus and Christmas Trees?

The name Santa Claus is indispensably connected to Christmas, and especially with the practice of giving gifts on that day. Some believe that Santa Claus originated with a man known as St. Nicholas. He was a bishop in Asia Minor during the fourth century who did many charitable deeds in his time.

On the other hand, some are of the opinion that the name Santa Claus originated way back in the time of Nimrod. In some ancient drawings depicting this Babylonish ruler, he is shown wearing a long beard, carrying a spotted fawn or deer, and holding a fir tree in his hand (all symbols now employed in one way or another with Christmas and Santa Claus today).

Nevertheless, regardless of which origin of the name Santa Claus one chooses to believe, the concept of Santa Claus on a whole is totally fictitious. To tell children that Santa Claus is a man that lives in the north pole, rides a sled pulled by reindeer (one of which is called Rudolph who is known for his red nose), and that he, Santa, is responsible for bringing all the presents that are received on Christmas day, is totally untrue and should not be encouraged by true Christian parents.

All who desire to follow the example of our beloved Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, will always seek to live and speak only the truth. They will also earnestly seek to uphold the following words in their own lives and in the lives of their children:

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him **must** worship Him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24.

(It is interesting to note that when the letters of the name, Santa, are re-arranged, they spell the word--Satan. Surely this is not by chance!)

As to the origin of the Christmas tree the Bible declares:

"Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good." Jer. 10:1-5.

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Surely, none can deny that this decorated tree made mention of by Jeremiah the prophet answers to what is known today as the Christmas tree. Of course the trees of modern times are no longer decked only "with silver and with gold," but instead multicolored electric bulbs, tinsel, and various other objects. What we see today would certainly outdo the decorated trees of Jeremiah's day. Also, instead of the trees being fastened down "with nails and hammers," people now use many different kinds of sophisticated wooden stands, special pots, and metal holders.

Nevertheless, despite these technological changes the very same custom is still being followed in modern times. Therefore, despite these modifications God's original position regarding the observance of this "apparently innocent" practice is still very clear: "Thus saith the Lord, **Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain [of no value]**" (Jer. 10:2-3).

In many ancient civilizations trees were worshipped as gods. Sometimes people even carved trees into strange looking images which they bowed down to and worshipped as their deities. But the question is appropriately asked, "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?" Isa. 40:18. When these things are really considered, we can better understand why God prohibited His people from associating themselves with any practices that related whatsoever with pagan customs involving the use of trees, including decorating trees as it is still done today at Christmas time. Concerning the folly in using trees in this manner, the prophet Isaiah rightly declares:

"He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a **tree** that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved. . . . To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." Isa. 40:20, 25.

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Was Christ Really a Winter Baby?

Many honest and faithful believers often ask, How could anyone say that it is wrong for Christians who love their blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to celebrate the glorious birth of their Master?

All Bible students agree that Jesus (the source of light and truth) spent His whole life seeking to uphold truth, and truth alone. He Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." John 14:6. Certainly, if it was the Saviour's will that His birthday be upheld by His followers from generation to generation, He would have indicated this somehow. However, He did not do so. In fact Jesus Christ never gave the slightest impression that He wanted His true followers to recognize and celebrate, as His birthday, a day that finds its basis and origin in the darkness and errors of paganism.

Actually, there is nowhere in the sacred scriptures that Christ declared or indicated to His followers that He wanted them to celebrate His birthday at all. The truth of the matter is, no one knows for certain the exact day of Christ's birth, and it is the belief of many true Bible-believing Christians that God deliberately left this date unknown to man for many, many reasons. One reason is that He knew it would be treated as a time for excessive feasting, frolicking, commercialism, and worldly display (things that Christ Himself shunned and taught His disciples to avoid). Over the years these very things have marked the celebration of Christmas, and we still see the very same kind of revelry today.

Contrary to the popular belief, Jesus Christ could not have been born during the winter season. The gospel-writer Luke wrote about events surrounding Christ's birth:

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." Luke 2:8.

Many tourists who visit the Middle East during the winter months are usually unprepared for the cold weather they often encounter. Today, as in ancient times, Jerusalem is a cold place during the winter season. Hence Jeremiah the prophet speaks about "the snow of Lebanon" (Jer. 18:14), and Jesus warned His followers in Judea, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." Matt. 24:20.

Surely, Christ's birthday could not be on December 25 or on any day during the month of December whatsoever. One does not have to be a born genius to conclude that shepherds, in their right senses, would not be found outside with their flocks on a cold winter night. The truth of the matter is, it has long been a practice among the shepherds of Judea to secure their flocks by removing them from the fields no later than around the end of October.

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When Was Christ Really Born?

The gospel of Luke tells us that at the time of Christ's birth "there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1). However, there is no record showing that the time of taxing took place in the month of December, or during any of the other winter months. It is more logical to conclude that this particular taxing period occurred sometime in the autumn.

Since the final harvest of the year took place in the fall, this would have been a most convenient time for the Jews to be able to pay their taxes. And the decree to pay taxes, would cause a great influx of travelers and visitors into Jerusalem, the holy city, and the surrounding towns, such as Bethlehem. This would even explain why it was that "there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7) when Mary and Joseph sought a place to stay on that notable night of Christ's birth.

Just as it is illogical for shepherds to be watching their flocks out in the fields on a cold winter night, certainly it is illogical to conclude that Mary and Joseph and all the other travelers would have made their way to the city on a cold winter night. Many of the travelers may have had to journey from very long distances to get to the city, and it is unlikely that they would have done so in the cold of winter. It is also unlikely that the Roman ruler, who would have been more concerned about receiving the taxes, would have taken the risk of trying to get all the Jews to make their way to their "own city" (Luke 2:4) during the winter season.

Therefore, we can safely conclude that Mary and Joseph were not refused lodging at the inn on a cold night in the month of December, as some may want us to believe, but instead sometime during the autumn season when many were assembled in the city for the payment of taxes.

There was a very good reason that the Most High allowed Caesar Augustus to issue his taxation decree around the autumn, which was the very season God had ordained, many years in advance, that His people should gather their final harvest and come together for the final Feast of the year. Both of these occasions fell within the comfortable climate of the autumn season. Thus our heavenly Father made it possible for all of Israel to be present for the birth of our Lord, if they so desired. But sad to say, the majority were blind to the sacred event and glorious opportunity.

Certainly if Mary and Joseph had a choice as to when their child should be born, they would not have chosen December or any other month within the winter season. They would have settled for a more suitable time, especially if they had to travel. If man is wise enough to consider these matters in light of his own convenience and what would be best overall, then certainly the Great I Am definitely took all of these things into consideration centuries ahead of time.

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The time of Jesus' birth can be greatly determined by the following events surrounding His life. Since it is widely known and accepted that our Saviour died in the *spring* during the time of the Passover (John 18:39), and since it is also known that He labored for three and a half years before He died, then it is clear that Jesus' baptism in the river of Jordan (three and a half years prior to His death) took place in the fall or *autumn*. The Bible also teaches that Christ's baptism and work began when He turned thirty years of age (Luke 3:23). Therefore, since Christ was baptized (in autumn) exactly thirty years after His birth, we can safely conclude that Christ was definitely born in the *autumn* and not in the winter.

(A careful examination of the experience of Mary's cousin Elizabeth, as well as the time her husband officiated as a priest in the Jewish temple, provide additional proof to the theory of Christ's autumn birth. Study Luke 1:5-38; 2 Chron. 23:8; 1 Chron. 24:10.)

Surely God took everything into consideration before sending His Son into the world. Our heavenly Father and all the inhabitants of heaven were, from the very beginning of time, looking forward to the appearance of the Son of God on earth as man's glorious deliverer and Messiah. Therefore, the most appropriate time and season was divinely appointed by our heavenly Father for such a momentous occasion involving the birth of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

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How Many Wise Men Visited Christ?

The Bible tells us that after the birth of Christ there came "wise men from the east" (Matt. 2:1) to visit Him. We have been led to believe that this caravan of wise men consisted of three individuals. But history shows that these wise men or magi never traveled very long distances in small groups because of the dangers they could encounter along the way. In addition, the magi were philosophers, rulers, or men of great nobility. Whenever men of such high rank made long journeys, they took their servants and many soldiers along with them, especially when they were carrying precious gifts of jewelry or wealth.

It is therefore inconceivable that there were only three individuals in this caravan who visited Christ following His birth. Many adhere to this false belief simply because the Bible states that the gifts presented to Christ were "gold, and frankincense and myrrh" (Matt. 2:11).

Furthermore, if only three individuals had made the long journey to visit the King of kings, surely the appearance of three individuals in Jerusalem would not have been unusual enough to attract the attention of Herod, the king, as well as the inhabitants of Jerusalem. However, "he [Herod] was troubled, and *all* Jerusalem with him" (Matt. 2:3).

Normally the impression is given that both the shepherds and the wise men visited Jesus at the very same time (supposedly Christmas day). However, these wise men did not visit Jesus Christ on the very same day that the shepherds found Him in a **stable** "wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12). No, indeed, it was some time after this that the wise men visited the Son of God. Hence the reason that the Scriptures do not indicate in any way that the shepherds were present when the wise men found Him. Furthermore, the Scriptures declare that Jesus was not found by the magi in a stable, as is often intimated, but instead we are told that "when they were come into the **house**, they saw the young child with Mary his mother" (Matt. 2:11).

As you can see dear readers, many inconsistencies exist between the popular concepts of the birth of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the Truth. Yet, all of these inconsistencies seem to be upheld only in an effort to promote the pagan festival of Christmas day. How sad, how very sad this is indeed! Shouldn't God's true and faithful children just settle for the truth instead of tradition? And has not this always been God's holy will?

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What About Celebrating Easter?

Even the practice of celebrating Easter, as it is done today, consists of many similarities to certain ancient pagan customs. While many make reference to the word "Easter," as found in Acts 12:4, it is important to note that this text is not speaking of the time of the resurrection of Christ as some seek to interpret it.

The word "Easter" in this text is specifically referring to the time of the Jewish Passover. This can be easily observed when viewed in its proper context. The previous verse states, "Then were the days of unleavened bread" (Acts 12:3). Careful biblical research will prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is speaking about the time of the Passover. (See: Lev. 23:5-6; Ex. 12:11, 17-18; 23:15; 34:18.)

Christ never told His disciples to observe His death or resurrection on any particular day. Instead, the holy Scriptures makes reference to how Christians are to observe the death and resurrection of Christ; and that is by showing everyone's need to go into the watery grave of baptism and resurrect into a new life, a sinless life, through the grace and power of Christ. (Read: Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:10-12.)

Furthermore, modern-day Easter falls right after the observance of the forty days of Lent. In ancient Babylon when Tammuz died, the followers of Semiramis joined her in mourning over the death of her son, Tammuz, for forty days. Thus the practice of mourning for the loss of this so-called "son of god" was adopted by many for centuries thereafter. This act was later "Christianized" under the name of Lent. But long before Christianity came into existence, even the children of Israel became victims of this pagan practice of mourning for Tammuz. Hence we read:

"Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz." Ezek. 8:14.

By following this pagan practice anciently, God's chosen people invoked the displeasure of the Almighty. Therefore, why should this practice be even considered by Christians today? And why should Lent be preceded by the revelry involved in Carnival, which is still observed in some cultures today? Can Christians afford to uphold practices other than that which the Bible condones, especially when they are so directly linked with things that God did not want His people to recognize in any way?

Some say that the name Easter comes from the name "Eostre" (the Saxon goddess), while others believe that it is derived from the name "Ishtar" or "Astarte" (the Assyrian counterpart for

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Semiramis). Nonetheless, it is quite evident that in both of these views the origin of the name Easter comes from a pagan deity that can easily be identifiable with the wife of Nimrod.

The practice of using dyed eggs (Easter eggs) and buns (hot cross buns) during this festival was observed in certain pagan festivities of antiquity as well. In different ancient pagan rituals these items were offered up unto false gods. In China dyed or painted eggs are used during sacred festivals, and the Druids of Britain used an egg as the sacred emblem of their order.

As far as the buns are concerned, in ancient Greece on the festival of Astarte, buns were offered unto the queen of heaven. But the biblical record shows that Jehovah was sore displeased with His people, Israel, when they sought to follow this apparently innocent practice of the heathens in their day. In this regard we read:

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make **cakes to the queen of heaven**, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." Jer. 7:18.

None of these practices were endorsed by Jesus Christ, and were not therefore adopted by the early Christian church. But today many of these pagan practices have become so widespread that they are now accepted with open arms by many in the Christian faith. Yes, Easter has now been changed from the Passover celebration in the Bible usage of the word, and in its place the new application of the word Easter has given rise to a revival of many ancient pagan customs in a Christian setting.

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What Should We Do Now?

In light of all that has been considered, it should be quite clear to the true children of God what their stand should be in the face of all the "Christianized" pagan customs and practices observed today. All should be able to answer such questions as, Why can't we celebrate the birth of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, on December 25, or on any other day that is set aside to honor Him? How could it be wrong for me or my children to celebrate Halloween, Easter, or any other pagan custom, since today it may not be done for the very same reason that others celebrated it anciently? And why should anyone deprive themselves or their children from having "innocent" fun?

First of all, the origin and basic principle underlying all false worship needs to be understood. In order to identify this we need to remember the history surrounding Cain and Abel, the first two children of Adam and Eve.

When Cain and Abel were required to offer a sacrifice unto their Creator they were both fully aware of God's holy will. It was up to each of them to choose his own or God's will in this matter, and so they did. Concerning their eventual choices it is written:

"And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."
Gen. 4:4-5.

It is easy to understand why Christians consider Abel as being good and faithful, but Cain as being evil and unfaithful. Although both of these brothers offered up sacrifices unto God, only one was respected and accepted. Abel's offering was in harmony with God's will, but Cain's was not.

Cain's offering was really unto Satan and not unto God, for he knowingly offered up his sacrifice in direct opposition to God's will; and as a result, God could not accept Cain's offering. Thus Cain introduced false worship to the human race, but Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, introduced pagan customs and traditions, none of which could be accepted by God because they were all contrary to His will. In like manner today, those who do as Cain or Semiramis did are really presenting their offerings unto Satan instead of unto God. We are told:

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."
James 4:17.

"As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or

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in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." 1 Cor. 8:4-6.

Thus the worshipping of Nimrod, the leader of the rebellion in Babel, was in actuality the worshipping of Satan, the leader of the rebellion in heaven, for Satan was really the mastermind behind all these things. Satan not only inspired the minds of the Babylonians with all their false doctrines, but he also helped to promote their erroneous views by giving his satanic support to the magical feats and spiritualistic rituals of the priests and worshippers of the sun. This he still does in behalf of false teachers today through miracles and supernatural manifestations. We are therefore admonished:

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? **To the law and to the testimony:** if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:19-20.

Christ's prayer to His Father in behalf of His children is: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: **Thy word is truth.**" John 17:17.

God's true children cannot afford to follow after false teachings and practices, but instead only the principles and doctrines found in God's Word. Both in Christ's and the disciples days all were warned against following the customs and traditions of men, and today the true children of God are warned against this same danger in its present and varied forms.

"This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines **the commandments of men.**" Matt. 15:8-9.

"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." Col. 2:8. (Read also: 1 Tim. 4:1, 7, 16.)

Yes, dear reader, we should realize that just as in the case of Cain and Abel, God will not honor or accept offerings that are contrary to His holy will (which is clearly outlined in His inspired Word). He is always seeking to promote truth instead of men's ideas, customs, or traditions.

Thus, through the prophet Malachi He declares, "For I am the Lord, I change not." Mal. 3:6.

Therefore, even if men's offerings or forms of worship appear to be innocent or even if they provide great joy and pleasure to men, women, and children, it is God's will that His true followers always seek after truth, for it is **only truth** that sanctifies the soul. Error never

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sanctifies but instead defiles. Like the Psalmist David we too, therefore, must always be able to declare unto the Lord God:

"I will worship toward Thy holy temple, and praise Thy name for Thy lovingkindness and for **Thy truth**: for Thou hast magnified **Thy word** above all Thy name." Ps. 138:2.

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The 40 Days of Weeping for Tammuz (Lent)

Search the scriptures diligently, from Old Testament to New, and you will find no mention of Jews or Christians observing an annual period of 40 days of fasting and abstinence preceding the festival of the Passover, yet today most of the Christian world observes a 40 day period called Lent, which precedes the festival of Easter Sunday. A period of 40 days is rather common in scripture, however:

It rained 40 days and nights: Gen 7:4, 12.

Forty days after sighting the tops of the mountains, Noah set forth a raven and a dove: Gen 8:6-7.

Joseph mourned the death of his father Jacob for a period of 40 days: Gen 49:33 - Gen 50:3.

Moses on Sinai for 40 days: Exo 24:18, 34:28, Deu 9:9-11.

Moses pleads for Israel 40 days on Sinai: Deu 9:18-25, 10:10.

Canaan spied on for 40 days: Num 13:25, 14:34.

Goliath taunted Israel for 40 days: 1 Sam 17:16.

Elijah fasted and journeyed to Horeb for 40 days: 1 Kings 19:8.

Ezekiel bore the iniquity of Judah for 40 days: Eze 4:6.

Jonah warned Nineveh of judgment in 40 days: Jonah 3:4.

Jesus fasted in the wilderness for 40 days: Matt 4:2, Mark 1:13, Luke 4:2.

Jesus was seen for 40 days after His crucifixion: Acts 1:3.

So, if the Bible does not enjoin the Jew or the Christian to observe the 40 day period called Lent, then what is its origin? Can the answer be found in the Catholic Church?

540 ... "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without

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sinning" [Heb 4:15]. By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert.

Source: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, copyright 1994 by the United States Catholic Conference, Inc., published by Liquori Publications.

Lent is the 40-day period (Sundays excluded) prior to Easter, which the church observes as a penitential season. It begins on Ash Wednesday (which can occur any time between February 4 and March 11, depending upon the date of Easter), and it concludes with the Passiontide, the two-week period during which the church's liturgy follows Christ's activity closely through the final stages of his life on earth. These two weeks are called Passion Week and Holy Week. It was once claimed that the Lenten practice was of apostolic origin, but historians fix its establishment at a later date, probably the 5th century. Catholics are required to fast and are urged to adopt other penitential modes during the season.

The *Catholic Fact Book*, copyright 1986 by John Deedy, published by Thomas More Press, page 360.

Lent is the period of six and one half weeks from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. During Lent, for 40 days, excluding Sundays, fasting is recommended for all Catholics according to the laws of fast. This is reminiscent of the 40 days of our Lord's unbroken fast (Mt. 4:3-4). The entire period of Lent is also a time of spiritual preparation for the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. It is observed as a time of penitence other than fasting, and as a time of prayer. The Liturgy of the Church reflects the significance of this period of spiritual preparation: each day has a special Mass assigned to it; those Masses date back to the seventh and eighth centuries; there are no feasts observed on Sundays; purple vestments are the daily color...

It [Ash Wednesday] was established as the first day of Lent by [Pope] St. Gregory the Great (590 to 604).

Source: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, revised and updated, edited by Robert Broderick, copyright 1987, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers

The reasons for celebrating our major feasts when we do are many and varied. In general, however, it is true that many of them have at least an indirect connection with the pre-Christian [pagan] feasts celebrated about the same time of year — feasts centering around the harvest, the

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rebirth of the sun at the winter solstice (now Dec. 21, but Dec. 25 in the old Julian calendar), the renewal of nature in spring, and so on.

Source: *The New Question Box - Catholic Life for the Nineties*, copyright 1988 by John J. Dietzen, M.A., S.T.L., ISBN 0-940518-01-5 (paperback), published by Guildhall Publishers, Peoria Illinois, 61651., page 554.

The observance of Lent dates back to the Apostles.

MYTH ... In the fifth century, some Fathers claimed that Lent was of apostolic institution, but the claim is doubtful. From the earliest Christian times everyone agreed that a penitential season should precede the solemnities of Easter, but for at least three centuries there was no agreement over how long that should be. Saint Irenaeus, writing around the year 190, clued to the diversity of opinion, saying: "some think they ought to fast for one day, others for two days, and others even for several, while other reckon forty hours both of day and night to their fast." Apparently he knew nothing about any Lent or pre-Easter fast of forty days, else he would have mentioned it.

In the fourth century Saint Athanasius enjoined the people of Alexandria to observe a forty day period of fasting prior to Easter, indicating that this was the mode now practiced throughout Christendom." ... [W]hile all the world is fasting, we who are in Egypt should not become a laughing stock as the only people who do not fast but take pleasure in those days." Athanasius wrote. The year was 339, and Athanasius was recently back from a trip to Europe, including Rome.

Some sources allege that the forty-day Lent was not known in the West until the time of Saint Ambrose (c339-397). The date of Athanasius' letter would seem to negate that theory.

So, no, our Lent does not date from the time of the Apostles. But apparently it was observed before the year 339. That's early enough.

Source: *Facts, Myths & Maybes (Everything You Think You Know About Catholicism But Perhaps Don't)*, by John Deedy, copyright 1993, published by Thomas More Press, page 235.

So according to Catholics, Lent is derived from the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness, but it is admitted that the observance of Lent was unknown to the disciples and it did not find its way into the church until several centuries after the time of Christ. It should be noted that the 40

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days of fasting in the wilderness preceded the earthly ministry of Jesus, which lasted some three and a half years, and was not connected in any way to His crucifixion or the Passover.

Note that Lent is a moveable observance, connected to and preceding the festival of Easter. Easter is celebrated on a day specified only by the Roman Catholic Church, and not the Bible, and is fixed based on the sun and the Spring or Vernal equinox.

Now from non-Catholic sources, a little more information:

"It ought to be known," said Cassianus, the monk of Marseilles, writing in the fifth century, and contrasting the primitive Church with the Church in his day, "that the observance of the forty days had no existence, so long as the perfection of that primitive Church remained inviolate."

Source: Gieseler, vol. ii. p. 42, Note. Cited in *The Two Babylons*, by Alexander Hislop, page 104.

Many Christians had already reserved a period prior to Easter for fasting, confession, and schooling candidates for baptism on Easter Eve. But the time frame was never fixed, rules never formalized. Different groups of Christians followed different customs—some fasted for several days, others several weeks. Some observed a total fast for exactly forty days (minus the Lord's day, Sunday), a feast called *Quadragesima*, which would evolve into Lent.

Thus, by mid-fourth century, the duration of Lent—the word itself means "lengthening spring days," from the Indo-European *langat-tin*, "long"+ "day" — became more or less fixed at forty days, less Sundays; the time frame did not become official, though, until the eighth century.

In the Western Church today, Lent begins six and a half weeks before Easter, providing forty fast days when Sundays are excluded. In the Eastern Church, however, Lent begins eight weeks before Easter, since fasting is excluded on Saturdays and Sundays. Today, too, a fast can be as slight an inconvenience as abstaining from chocolate or ice cream for the duration. A token fast.

Source: *Sacred Origins of Profound Things*, by Charles Panati, copyright 1996, published by the Penguin Group, page 206.

Whence, then, came this observance? The forty days abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess [Astarte / Ishtar]. Such a Lent of forty days, "in

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the spring of the year," is still observed by the Yezidis or Pagan Devil-worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians.

Such a Lent of forty days was held in spring by the Pagan Mexicans, for thus we read in Humboldt, where he gives account of Mexican observances: "Three days after the vernal equinox began a solemn fast of *forty days in the honour of the sun.*"

Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt, as may be seen on consulting Wilkinson's *Egyptians*.

Among the Pagans this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz, which was celebrated by alternate weeping and rejoicing, and which, in many countries, was considerably later than the Christian festival, being observed in Palestine and Assyria in June, therefore called the "month of Tammuz;" in Egypt, about the middle of May, and in Britain, some time in April. To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals amalgamated, and, by a complicated but skillful adjustment of the calendar, it was found no difficult matter, in general, to get Paganism and Christianity—now far sunk in idolatry—in this as in so many other things, to shake hands.

Originally, even in Rome, Lent, with the preceding revelries of the Carnival, was entirely unknown; and even when fasting before the Christian Pasch was held to be necessary, it was by slow steps that, in this respect, it came to conform with the ritual of Paganism. What may have been the period of fasting in the Roman Church before the sitting of the Nicene Council does not very clearly appear, but for a considerable period after that Council, we have distinct evidence that it did not exceed three weeks. The words of Socrates, writing on this very subject, about A.D. 450, are these: "Those who inhabit the princely city of Rome fast together before Easter three weeks, excepting the Saturday and Lord's day." But at last, when the worship of Astarte was rising into the ascendant, steps were taken to get the whole Chaldean Lent of six weeks, or forty days, made imperative on all within the Roman empire of the West. The way was prepared for this by a Council held at Aurelia in the time of Hormisdas, Bishop of Rome [514-523], about the year 519, which decreed that Lent should be solemnly kept before Easter. It was with the view, no doubt, of carrying out this decree that the calendar was, a few days after, readjusted by Dionysius.

Source: *The Two Babylons*, by Alexander Hislop, second American edition, 1959, published in America by Loizeaux Brothers, pages 106, 107.

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Legend has it that Tammuz was killed by a wild boar when he was forty years old. Hislop points out that forty days—a day for each year Tammuz had lived on earth—were set aside to "weep for Tammuz." In olden times these forty days were observed with weeping, fasting, and self chastisement—to gain anew his favor—so he would come forth from the underworld and cause spring to begin. This observance was known not only at Babylon, but also among the Phoenicians, Egyptians, Mexicans, and, for a time, even among the Israelites.

Source: *Babylon Mystery Religion*, by Ralph Edward Woodrow, Copyright 1966, 1992 printing, page 139.

So the 40 days of Lent is connected with the Babylonian goddess Ashtoreth / Astarte / Ishtar (the origin of the word Easter), and the worship of Tammuz. Unlike Lent, both of these can be found in scripture:

Ezek 8:14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women **weeping for Tammuz**. Ezek 8:15 Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

Ezek 8:16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and **they worshipped the sun toward the east**.

2 Ki 23:5 And he [King Josiah] put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, **to the sun**, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

2 Ki 23:11 And he [King Josiah] took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given **to the sun**, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots **of the sun** with fire.

2 Ki 23:12 And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

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2 Ki 23:13 And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for **Ashtoreth** the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

Baal, Tammuz, Ashtoreth, Astarte and Ishtar are all connected with pagan sun worship. Note that Lent is a moveable observance, connected to and preceding the festival of Easter. Easter is celebrated on a day specified only by the Roman Catholic Church, and not the Bible, and is fixed based *on the sun* and the Spring or Vernal equinox.

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All About Lent

by James Akin

Q: What is Lent?

A: Historically, Lent is the forty day period before Easter, excluding Sundays, it began on Ash Wednesday and ended on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Sunday). In recent years, this has been modified so that it now ends with evening Mass on Holy Thursday, to prepare the way for Triduum.

Q: Why are Sundays excluded from the reckoning of the forty days?

A: Because Sunday is the day on which Christ arose, making it an inappropriate day to fast and mourn our sins. On Sunday we must celebrate Christ's resurrection for our salvation. It is Friday on which we commemorate his death for our sins. The Sundays of the year are days of celebration and the Fridays of the year are days of penance.

Q: Why are the forty days called Lent?

A: They are called Lent because that is the Old English word for spring, the season of the year during which they fall. This is something unique to English. In almost all other languages its name is a derivative of the Latin term *Quadragesima*, or "the forty days."

Q: Why is Lent forty days long?

A: Because forty days is a traditional number of discipline, devotion, and preparation in the Bible. Thus Moses stayed on the Mountain of God forty days (Exodus 24:18 and 34:28), the spies were in the land for forty days (Numbers 13:25), Elijah traveled forty days before he reached the cave where he had his vision (1 Kings 19:8), Nineveh was given forty days to repent (Jonah 3:4), and most importantly, prior to undertaking his ministry, Jesus spent forty days in wilderness praying and fasting (Matthew 4:2).

Since Lent is a period of prayer and fasting, it is fitting for Christians to imitate their Lord with a forty day period. Christ used a forty day period of prayer and fasting to prepare for his ministry, which culminated in his death and resurrection, and thus it is fitting for Christians to imitate him with a forty day period of prayer and fasting to prepare for the celebration of his ministry's climax, Good Friday (the day of the crucifixion) and Easter Sunday (the day of the resurrection).

Thus the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states:

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" For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sinning' [Heb 4:15]. By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert." (CCC 540).

Q: When does Lent begin?

A: Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is the day on which the faithful have their foreheads signed with ashes in the form of a Cross (see piece on Ash Wednesday). It is also a day of fast and abstinence.

Q: What is a day of fast and abstinence?

A: Under current canon law in the Western Rite of the Church, a day of fast is one on which Catholics who are eighteen to sixty years old are required to keep a limited fast. In this country, one may eat a single, normal meal and have two snacks, so long as these snacks do not add up to a second meal. Children are not required to fast, but their parents must ensure they are properly educated in the spiritual practice of fasting. Those with medical conditions requiring a greater or more regular food intake can easily be dispensed from the requirement of fasting by their pastor.

A day of abstinence is a day on which Catholics fourteen years or older are required to abstain from eating meat (under the current discipline in America, fish, eggs, milk products, and condiments or foods made using animal fat are permitted in the Western Rite of the Church, though not in the Eastern Rites.) Again, persons with special dietary needs can easily be dispensed by their pastor.

Q: Is there a biblical basis for abstaining from meat as a sign of repentance?

A: Yes. The book of Daniel states:

"In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia . . . 'I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.' " (Daniel 10:1-3)

Q: Isn't abstaining from meat one of the "doctrines of demons" Paul warned about in 1 Timothy 4:1-5?

A: Short answer: Not unless Daniel was practicing a doctrine of demons.

Long answer: When Paul warned of those who "forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods" he has in mind people with the Manichean belief that sex is wrong and

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certain foods, like meat, are intrinsically immoral. (Thus the spiritual ideal for many modern New Agers is a celibate vegetarian, as in the Eastern religions.)

We know that Paul has in mind those who teach sex and certain foods are intrinsically immoral because he tells us that these are "foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:3b-5).

Sex and all kinds of food are *good* things (which is why the Catholic Church has marriage for a sacrament and heartily recommends the practice eating to its members), and this is precisely why it is fitting for them to be given up as part of a spiritual discipline. Thus Daniel gave up meat (as well as wine, another symbol of rejoicing) and Paul endorses the practice of temporary celibacy to engage in a special spiritual discipline of increased prayer (1 Corinthians 7:5). By giving up good things and denying them to ourselves we encourage an attitude of humility, free ourselves from dependence on them, cultivate the spiritual discipline of being willing to make personal sacrifices, and remind ourselves of the importance of spiritual goods over earthly goods.

In fact, if there was an important enough purpose, Paul recommended permanently giving up marriage and meat. Thus he himself was celibate (1 Corinthians 7:8), he recommended the same for ministers (2 Timothy 2:3-4), and he recommended it for the unmarried so they can devote themselves more fully to the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:32-34) unless doing so would subject them to great temptations (1 Corinthians 7:9). Similarly, he recommended giving up meat permanently if it would prevent others from sinning (1 Corinthians 8:13).

Thus Paul certainly had nothing against celibacy or giving up meat -- even on a permanent basis -- so long as one wasn't saying that these things are intrinsically evil, which is what he was condemning the "doctrines of demons" passage.

Since the Catholic Church only requires abstinence from meat on a temporary basis, it clearly does not regard meat is immoral. Instead, it regards it as the giving up of a good thing (which in less economically developed regions -- including the whole world until very recently -- was expensive and thus eaten at festive occasions, making it a sign of rejoicing) to attain a spiritual goal.

Q: On what basis does the Church have the authority to establish days of fast and abstinence?

A: On the authority of Jesus Christ.

Jesus told the leaders of his Church, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19, 18:18). The language of

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binding and loosing (in part) was a rabbinic way of referring to the ability to establish binding *halakah* or rules of conduct for the faith community. It is thus especially appropriate that the references to binding and loosing occur in Matthew, the "Jewish Gospel." Thus the *Jewish Encyclopedia* states:

"BINDING AND LOOSING (Hebrew, *asar ve-hittir*) . . . Rabinnical term for 'forbidding and permitting.' . . .

"The power of binding and loosing as always claimed by the Pharisees. Under Queen Alexandra the Pharisees, says Josephus (*Wars of the Jews* 1:5:2), 'became the administrators of all public affairs so as to be empowered to banish and readmit whom they pleased, as well as to loose and to bind.' . . . The various schools had the power 'to bind and to loose'; that is, to forbid and to permit (*Talmud: Chagigah* 3b); and they could also bind any day by declaring it a fast-day (. . . *Talmud: Ta'anit* 12a . . .). This power and authority, vested in the rabbinical body of each age of the Sanhedrin, received its ratification and final sanction from the celestial court of justice (*Sifra, Emor*, 9; *Talmud: Makkot* 23b).

"In this sense Jesus, when appointing his disciples to be his successors, used the familiar formula (Matt. 16:19, 18:18). By these words he virtually invested them with the same authority as that which he found belonging to the scribes and Pharisees who 'bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but will not move them with one of their fingers'; that is 'loose them,' as they have the power to do (Matt. 23:2-4). In the same sense the second epistle of Clement to James II ('Clementine Homilies,' Introduction [A.D. 221]), Peter is represented as having appointed Clement as his successor, saying: 'I communicate to him the power of binding and loosing so that, with respect to everything which he shall ordain in the earth, it shall be decreed in the heavens; for he shall bind what ought to be bound and loose what ought to be loosed as knowing the rule of the Church.'" (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 3:215).

Thus Jesus invested the leaders of this Church with the power of making *halakah* for the Christian community. This includes the setting of fast days (like Ash Wednesday).

To approach the issue from another angle, every family has the authority to establish particular family devotions for its members. Thus if the parents decide that the family will engage in a particular devotion at a particular time (say, Bible reading after supper), it is a sin for the children to disobey and skip the devotion for no good reason. In the same way, the Church as the family of God has the authority to establish its own family devotion, and it is a sin for the members of the Church to disobey and skip the devotions for no good reason (though of course if the person has a good reason, the Church dispenses him immediately).

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Q: In addition to Ash Wednesday, are any other days during Lent days of fast or abstinence?

A: Yes. All Fridays during Lent are days of abstinence. Also, Good Friday, the day on which Christ was crucified, is another day of both fast and abstinence.

All days in Lent are appropriate for fasting or abstaining, but canon law does not require fasting on those days. Such fasting or abstinence is voluntary, like a freewill offering.

Q: Why are Fridays during Lent days of abstinence.

A: This is because Jesus died for our sins on Friday, making it an especially appropriate day of mourning our sins (just as Sunday, the day on which he rose for our salvation is an especially appropriate day to rejoice) by denying ourselves something we enjoy. During the rest of the year Catholics in this country are permitted to use a different act of penance on Friday in place of abstinence, though all Fridays are days of penance on which we are required to do something expressing sorrow for our sins, just as Sundays are holy days on which we are required to worship and celebrate God's great gift of salvation.

Q: Are acts of repentance appropriate on other days during Lent?

A: Yes. Thus the *Code of Canon Law* states:

"All Fridays through the year and the time of Lent are penitential days and time throughout the universal Church" (CIC 1250).

Q: Why are acts of repentance appropriate at this time of year?

A: Because it is the time leading up to the commemoration of Our Lord's death for our sins and the commemoration of his resurrection for our salvation. It is thus especially appropriate to mourn the sins for which he died. Human have an innate psychological need to mourn tragedies, and our sins are tragedies of the greatest sort. Due to our fallen nature humans also have a need to have set times in which to engage in behavior (which is why we have Sundays as a set time to rest and worship, since we would otherwise be likely to forget to devote sufficient time to rest and worship), it is appropriate to have set times of repentance. Lent is one of those set times.

Q: What are appropriate activities for ordinary days during Lent?

A: Giving up something we enjoy for Lent, doing of physical or spiritual acts of mercy for others, prayer, fasting, abstinence, going to confession, and other acts expressing repentance in general.

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Q: Is the custom of giving up something for Lent mandatory?

A: No. However, it is a salutary custom, and parents or caretakers may choose to require it of their children to encourage their spiritual training, which is their prime responsibility in the raising of their children.

Q: Since Sundays are not counted in the forty days of Lent, does the custom of giving up something apply to them?

A: Customarily, no. However, since the giving up of something is voluntary to begin with, there is no official rule concerning this aspect of it. Nevertheless, since Sundays are days of celebration, it is appropriate to suspend the Lenten self-denial on them that, in a spiritual and non-excessive way, we may celebrate the day of Our Lord's resurrection so that that day and that event may be contrasted with the rest of the days of Lent and the rest of the events of history. This heightened contrast deepens the spiritual lessons taught by the rest of Lent.

Q: Why is giving up something for Lent such a salutary custom?

A: By denying ourselves something we enjoy, we discipline our wills so that we are not slaves to our pleasures. Just as indulging the pleasure of eating leads to physical flabbiness and, if this is great enough, an inability to perform in physically demanding situations, indulging in pleasure in general leads to spiritual flabbiness and, if this is great enough, an inability to perform in spiritual demanding situations, we when the demands of morality require us to sacrifice something pleasurable (such as sex before marriage or not within the confines of marriage) or endure hardship (such as being scorned or persecuted for the faith). By disciplining the will to refuse pleasures when they are not sinful, a habit is developed which allows the will to refuse pleasures when they are sinful. There are few better ways to keep one's priorities straight than by periodically denying ourselves things of lesser priority to show us that they are not necessary and focus our attention on what is necessary.

Q: Is the denying of pleasure an end in itself?

A: No. It is only a means to an end. By training ourselves to resist temptations when they are not sinful, we train ourselves to reject temptations when they are sinful. We also express our sorrow over having failed to resist sinful temptations in the past.

Q: Is there such a thing as denying ourselves too many pleasures?

A: Most definitely. First, God made human life contingent on certain goods, such as food, and to refuse to enjoy enough of them has harmful consequences. For example, if we do not eat enough food it can cause physical damage or (in the extreme, even death). Just as there is a balance

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between eating too much food and not eating enough food, there is a balance involved in other goods.

Second, if we do not strike the right balance and deny ourselves goods God meant us to have then it can generate resentment toward God, which is a spiritual sin just as much as those of engaging in excesses of good things. Thus one can be led into sin either by excess or by defect in the enjoyment of good things.

Third, it can decrease our effectiveness in ministering to others.

Fourth, it can deprive us of the goods God gave us in order that we might praise him.

Fifth, it constitutes the sin of ingratitude by refusing to enjoy the things God wanted us to have because he loves us. If a child refused every gift his parent gave him, it would displease the parent, and if we refuse gifts God has given us, it displeases God because he loves us and wants us to have them.

Q: Is that balance the same for all people?

A: No. For example, with the good of food, people who are by nature physically larger need more food than people who are physically smaller. Similarly, people who have higher metabolisms or who do manual labor for a living need more food than people with slower metabolisms or who have less active lifestyles. The same is true with regard to other goods than food. The St. Paul speaks of this in regard to the good of married life:

"I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion" (1 Corinthians 7:7-9).

Thus some are given the gift of being able to live without the good of married life in order that they may pursue greater devotion to God (1 Cor. 7:32-34) or to pursue greater ministry for others (2 Timothy 2:3-4), as with priests, monks, and nuns. God gives these people special graces to live the life which they have embraced, just as he gives special graces to the married to live the life they have embraced.

Q: Aside from Ash Wednesday, which begins Lent, what are its principal events?

A: There are a variety of saints' days which fall during Lent, and some of these change from year to year since the dates of Lent itself change based on when Easter falls. However, the Sundays during the Lenten season commemorate special events in the life of Our Lord, such as his Transfiguration and his Triumphal Entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, which begins Holy

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Week. Holy week climaxes with Holy Thursday, on which Christ celebrated the first Mass, Good Friday, on which he was Crucified, and Holy Saturday -- the last day of Lent -- during which Our Lord lay in the Tomb before his Resurrection on Easter Sunday, the first day after Lent.

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Pagan Sun Worship and Catholicism Celebrating The Risen Sun

Every Spring, thousands of Christians get up very early in the morning to attend special sunrise services in celebration of the resurrection on "Easter" morning. Have you ever wondered about the origin of the word Easter? Believe it or not, it actually can be found in the King James Bible:

Acts 12:4 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 to bring him forth to the people.

The word in the Greek translated as Easter is *pasha* which Strong's defines as follows:

Strong's #3957. pascha, pas'-khah; of Chald. or. [comp. H6453]; the Passover (the meal, the day, the festival or the special sacrifices connected with it): --Easter, Passover.

Pascha is most commonly translated as Passover, and of the 29 times this word appears in the New Testament, only on this one occasion is it translated as Easter. Today Easter is by far the most commonly used term for the day of the resurrection, but would the disciples have recognized the term and used it in connection with the resurrection of Christ? Just where does the word Easter originate from?

The origin of Easter

The English word Easter and the German Ostern come from a common origin (Eostur, Eastur, Ostara, Ostar), which to the Norsemen meant the season of the rising (growing) sun, the season of new birth. The word was used by our ancestors to designate the Feast of New Life in the spring. The same root is found in the name for the place where the sun rises (East, Ost). The word Easter, then, originally meant the celebration of the spring sun, which had its birth in the East and brought new life upon earth. This symbolism was transferred to the supernatural meaning of our Easter, to the new life of the Risen Christ, the eternal and uncreated Light. Based on a passage in the writings of Saint Bede the Venerable (735), the term Easter has often been explained as the name of an Anglo-Saxon goddess (Eostre), though no such goddess is known in the mythologies of any Germanic tribe. Modern research has made it quite clear that Saint Bede erroneously interpreted the name of the season as that of a goddess.

Source: Francis X. Weiser, Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1958), p. 211. Copyright 1952 by Francis X. Weiser.

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What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears the Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Ninevah, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments is Ishtar.

Source: *The Two Babylons*, by the Rev. Alexander Hislop, published 1943 and 1959 in the U.S. by Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, New Jersey, page 103

The word Easter, which comes from the Anglo-Saxon, is a term derived from the pagan goddess of the dawn.

Source: The Catholic Encyclopedia, Revised and Updated, Copyright 1987, Robert C. Broderick, Editor, Thomas Nelson Publishers, page 177.

So, there is no doubt that the word Easter is not Christian, but pagan in origin. Now as to the date itself, anyone who has studied the Bible knows that the crucifixion and resurrection happen during the Jewish festival of the Passover, which began on the 14th of Nisan. For millennia the Jews have observed this festival week of Passover / Feast of Unleavened Bread beginning on the 14th of Nisan. Since Jesus died on the 14th of Nisan, then the resurrection happened on the 16th of Nisan.

Ever notice how your birthday falls on different days of the week, from one year to the next? One year it might be on a Monday and the next on a Wednesday. Such is the case with Passover. That being true, then why is the resurrection day always celebrated on a Sunday? Each year, if you were to follow the Bible, it should fall on a different day of the week and only occasionally on a Sunday. In the early church this issue caused quite a controversy.

Easter not appointed by the Apostles

[p. 130] The aim of the apostles was not to appoint festival days, but to teach a righteous life and piety. And it seems to me that just as many other customs have been established in individual localities according to usage. So also the feast of Easter came to be observed in each place according to the individual peculiarities of the peoples inasmuch as none of the apostles

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legislated on the matter. And that the observance originated not by legislation, but as a custom the facts themselves indicate. In Asia Minor most people kept the fourteenth day of the moon, disregarding the Sabbath: yet they never separated from those who did otherwise, until Victor, bishop of Rome, influenced by too ardent a zeal, fulminated a sentence of ex-communication against the Quartodecimans in Asia... [p. 131] The Quartodecimans affirm that the observance of the fourteenth day was delivered to them by the apostle John: while the Romans and those in the Western parts assure us that their usage originated with the apostles Peter and Paul. Neither of these parties however can produce any written testimony in confirmation of what they assert.

Source: Socrates Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, bk. 5, chap. 22, trans. in NPNF, 2d series, Vol. 2, pp. 130, 131.

The Quartodecimans excommunicated

[p. 211] It is probable that the primitive Christians kept the Pasch on the [p. 212] 14th of Nisan as determined by the Jewish authorities, and regarded it as the anniversary of the crucifixion. But they also observed the first of every seven days, the Jewish week, as a holy day in commemoration of the resurrection. It would seem that gradually a shifting of emphasis took place until in the second century it was generally accepted that the great annual solemnity of the Pasch was the commemoration not of the crucifixion but of the resurrection. Accordingly the majority of Christians celebrated the Pasch not on the 14th of Nisan but on the Sunday which fell on, or first after, that date. The churches of the Roman province of Asia, however, followed the older custom, keeping the Pasch on the 14th of Nisan, whatever the day of the week. The controversy became acute towards the end of the second century, and the observance of the 14th of Nisan, hence called Quartodecimans [Fourteenthers], were finally excommunicated.

Source: James F. Kenney, The Sources for the Early History of Ireland, Vol. 1, pp. 211, 212. Copyright 1929 by Columbia University Press, New York.

So the church of Rome, which was keeping Sunday, excommunicated those who observed the 14th of Nisan. To try and settle the issue, the Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that the resurrection should be observed, and that on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox (March 21). This places the earliest possible date as March 22, and the latest at April 25th. This formula is completely unbiblical! Following the Jewish lunar calendar, as specified in the Bible and previously mentioned, the date would fall on a different day of the week every year, that would coincide precisely with a full moon every single time (14 Nisan being the middle of the lunar month). The date that Christianity observes however, as one of the

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most holiest of the year, is not even recognized by God in scripture! It has its origin in nothing more than paganism and the decrees or Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church! In fact, should the Jewish Passover and Easter just happen to coincide on the same Sunday, the Council of Nicaea decreed that the church of Rome would observe Easter on the *following* Sunday, so as to distance themselves from the practice of the Jews as much as possible.

The Tomb empty at sunrise

One might respond, oh, but the Lord was risen on a *Sunday* and that is why we keep it so. That sounds fine, but where does the Bible anywhere proclaim Sunday as a day to be observed for its holiness? And what of the sunrise service on this unbiblical day of *Easter Sunday*?

John 20:1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

The Bible tells us the tomb was empty *before* sunrise! The resurrection had already occurred, perhaps *hours* before. Yet thousands of people gather each year, facing East, to the rising of the Sun, as an integral part of their resurrection service, as a pagan sunworshipper would. Now clearly these people are not consciously worshipping the Sun, yet their actions would be indistinguishable from a pagan, were one present at the same time. They both would be rejoicing at the moment of the rising of the Sun.

The Vernal Equinox

The pagan at this time of year would be celebrating the increasing of the Sun following the spring (vernal) equinox. That is the day on which the amount of darkness and daylight are the same in duration. Following that day the amount of daylight would steadily increase, a little each day. This increase of daylight in the spring brings about summer and makes crops thrive, thus the association with fertility (eggs, rabbits, chickens). Hence the association always to Sunday, to celebrate the increasing of the God of the Sun on the Sun Day.

One might respond with- well, yes this is all true, but we have "baptized" this admittedly pagan day and made it holy to God, so there is really no problem. Please note the following:

Exo 32:4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Exo 32:5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.

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Exo 32:6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Aaron made a pagan golden calf, and then declared a festival to the Lord! The people brought offerings, had plenty to eat and drink, and made merry in celebration. Was God pleased by all this? Better yet, *was God pleased by any of this?* NO! Their feast was an abomination before the Lord. (Moses ground up the golden idol to powder and made the people drink it, Exo 32:20.)

Today many of God's professed people turn themselves East to the rising Sun, on a Pagan Sun Day that has no biblical foundation what-so-ever, have Easter egg hunts, baskets full of candy, and sumptuous meals (usually including a ham, a biblically unclean and forbidden food) and call it a festival to the risen Lord. Just what do you think Moses would have to say to us today about all of this? Can you picture Moses joining in the fun and festivities? Aaron maybe, Moses... I think not.

So in conclusion, it should now be quite plain that the day of the year celebrated by Christianity as "Easter" is based only on nothing more than Sun worshipping paganism and unbiblical decrees of the Roman Catholic Church. Why then, does the "Bible Only" Protestant Christian observe it at all? Is this not a contradiction between profession and practice of truly monumental, ... nay, stupifying proportions? Indeed, I believe it is. Despite their good intentions, and mostly in ignorance, they are in fact celebrating the risen Sun, not the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Blessing of the New Fire

Easter Vigil, called by St. Augustine the "Mother of All Vigils, " [occurs] the night before Easter. Ceremonies: blessing of new fire, procession with the Easter Candle, ...

Source: A Concise Guide to the Catholic Church, by Felician A. Foy, O.F.M. and Rose M. Avato, Copyright 1984 and published by Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, Indiana, 46750.

1. The Service of Light

No lights are on in the church; a fire is prepared outside the church or, if not possible, inside the vestibule. After greeting the congregation the priest blesses the new fire, symbolic of Christ's Resurrection, coming forth from the tomb and giving light to the world. On the Paschal Candle the priest traces a cross and the numerals of the current year. Finally the priest lights the candle from the new fire and the deacon or, if there is no deacon, the priest lifts the Paschal candle and sings *Christ is our Light*.

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After walking halfway into the church, he sings the same acclamation, after which the people light their candles from the Easter Candle. Upon arriving at the altar, the acclamation is sung the third time and the lights in the church are put on. Immediately thereafter follows the *Exsultet*, the Easter Proclamation, sung while all stand and hold lighted candles. It honors the night on which Christ redeemed us.

Source: The Dictionary of the Liturgy, by Rev. Jovian P. Lang, OFM, published by Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, copyright 1989, page 173.

So what exactly, is the *real* relationship between lighting a "new fire" on the evening before Easter Sunday, and then using it to light candles?

SECTION V. --- LAMPS AND WAX-CANDLES.

Another peculiarity of the Papal worship is the use of lamps and wax-candles. If the Madonna and child are set up in a niche, they must have a lamp to burn before them; if mass is to be celebrated, though in broad daylight, there must be wax-candles lighted on the altar; if a grand procession is to be formed, it cannot be thorough and complete without lighted tapers to grace the goodly show. The use of these lamps and tapers comes from the same source as all the rest of the Papal superstition. That which caused the "Heart," when it became an emblem of the incarnate Son [Bel / Tammuz], to be represented as a heart on *fire*, required also that burning lamps and lighted candles should form a part of the worship of that Son; for so, according to the established rites of Zoroaster, was the sun-god worshipped. When every Egyptian on the same night was required to light a lamp before his house in the open air, this was an act of homage to the sun, that had veiled its glory by enshrouding itself in a human form. When the Yezidis of Koordistan, at this day, once a year celebrate their festival of "burning lamps," that, too, is to the honor of Sheikh Shems, or the Sun. Now, what on these high occasions was done on a grand scale was also done on a smaller scale, in the individual acts of worship to their god, by the lighting of lamps and tapers before the favorite divinity. In Babylon, this practice had been exceedingly prevalent, as we learn from the Apocryphal writer of the Book of Baruch [Chapter 6, verse 18]. "They (the Babylonians)," says he, "light up lamps to their gods, and that in greater numbers, too, than they do for themselves, although the gods cannot see one of them, and are senseless as the beams in their houses." In Pagan Rome, the same practice was observed.

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Source: *The Two Babylons*, by the Rev. Alexander Hislop, published 1943 and 1959 in the U.S. by Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune New Jersey, page 191.

So in a Catholic Bible, if you look in the 6th Chapter of Baruch, you will find confirmation that the Pagan Babylonian practice was to light lamps or candles before the idols of their gods. I would venture to say that if you enter virtually any Catholic Church, you will find statues of Mary, Jesus or various saints that have candles lit before them. This practice has no Christian or Jewish origin, it is strictly pagan, and honors the sun god. Wax candles are not Christian in origin, they are Pagan, and have no place in true Christian worship.

And what of the Catholic "blessing of the new fire" on the evening before Easter Sunday, from which so many candles are lit? Is it not now obvious that its origin is not in the celebration of the risen Son of God, but rather idol worship and the pagan Babylonian god of fire, and sun-god, whose emblem is a *flaming* heart, and whose name is Baal or Tammuz? The "blessing of the new fire" actually honors the new strength of the Sun as evidenced by the increasing daylight and lessening night after the Spring Equinox. It is clearly derived from a pagan celebration of the risen Sun, and not the risen Christ.

"The Easter Fire is lit on the top of mountains from new fire, drawn from wood by friction; this is a custom of *pagan* origin in vogue all over Europe, signifying the victory of spring over winter. The bishops issued severe edicts against the sacrilegious Easter fires, but did not succeed in abolishing them everywhere." So what happened? Notice this carefully. "The church *adopted* the observance into the Easter ceremonies, referring to the fiery column in the desert and to the resurrection of Christ"! Were pagan customs adopted into the Romish church and given the appearance of Christianity? This is plainly admitted.

Source: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.5, page 227, article "Easter" as quoted in *Babylon Mystery Religion*, by Ralph Edward Woodrow, Copyright 1966, 1992 printing, page 137.

Fire and Pagan Zoroastrian Worship

Zoroastrian worship involves prayers and symbolic ceremonies said before a sacred fire. This fire, which was a God-symbol even before Zarathushtra, was used by the Prophet and by his followers ever after as the ideal sign of God, who is light, warmth, energy. Zoroastrians do NOT worship fire, as some people believe. They use Fire as a symbol, or an icon, the focus of their worship.

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Hot Cross Buns

Among people of Western Europe, it is traditional to eat hot cross buns on Easter Sunday morning. These small, sweet buns are usually decorated with equal armed, or solar crosses made of white icing; but the Pagan Greeks also made offerings of cakes inscribed with the solar cross to several Goddesses. Eos, the Goddess of the Sunrise, was probably among these. Anglo-Saxons too make offerings of cakes incised with solar crosses, and they were worn as amulets and hung in the homes for protection and prosperity.

Source: Ancient Ways - Reclaiming Pagan Traditions, by Pauline Campanelli, Copyright 1991, Llewellyn Publications, A Division of Llewellyn Worldwide, Ltd., P.O. Box 64383, St. Paul, MN 55164-0383, page 45.

The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Pasch or Easter Sunday, figured in the Chaldean [Babylonian] rites just as they do now. The "buns" known too by that identical name, were used in the worship of the queen of heaven, the goddess Easter [Ishtar/Astarte], as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens - that is, 1500 years before the Christian era. "One species of sacred bread," says Byrant, (1) "which used to be offered to the gods was of great antiquity, and called the Boun." Diogenes Laerius, speaking of this offering being made by Empedocles, describes the chief ingredients of which it was composed, saying, "He offered one of the sacred cakes called Boun, which was made of fine flour and honey." (2) The prophet Jeremiah takes notice of this kind of offering when he says, "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven." The hot cross buns are not now *offered*, but *eaten*, on the festival of Astarte; but this leaves no doubt as to whence they have been derived.

(1) *Mythology*, vol. i, p. 373.

(2) (2) LAERTIUS, p. 227, B.

Source: *The Two Babylons*, by the Rev. Alexander Hislop, published 1943 and 1959 in the U.S. by Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune New Jersey, pages 107-108.

Jer 7:18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.

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Jer 7:19 Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?

Jer 44:19 And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?

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Medieval Sourcebook: Constantine I: On the Keeping of Easter

ON THE KEEPING OF EASTER.

From the Letter of the Emperor to all those not present at the Council. (Found in Eusebius, Vita Const., Lib. iii., 18-20.)

When the question relative to the sacred festival of Easter arose, it was universally thought that it would be convenient that all should keep the feast on one day; for what could be more beautiful and more desirable, than to see this festival, through which we receive the hope of immortality, celebrated by all with one accord, and in the same manner? It was declared to be particularly unworthy for this, the holiest of all festivals, to follow the custom[the calculation] of the Jews, who had soiled their hands with the most fearful of crimes, and whose minds were blinded. In rejecting their custom,(1) we may transmit to our descendants the legitimate mode of celebrating Easter, which we have observed from the time of the Saviour's Passion to the present day [according to the day of the week]. We ought not, therefore, to have anything in common with the Jews, for the Saviour has shown us another way; our worship follows a more legitimate and more convenient course(the order of the days of the week); and consequently, in unanimously adopting this mode, we desire, dearest brethren, to separate ourselves from the detestable company of the Jews, for it is truly shameful for us to hear them boast that without their direction we could not keep this feast. How can they be in the right, they who, after the death of the Saviour, have no longer been led by reason but by wild violence, as their delusion may urge them? They do not possess the truth in this Easter question; for, in their blindness and repugnance to all improvements, they frequently celebrate two passovers in the same year. We could not imitate those who are openly in error. How, then, could we follow these Jews, who are most certainly blinded by error? for to celebrate the passover twice in one year is totally inadmissible. But even if this were not so, it would still be your duty not to tarnish your soul by communications with such wicked people[the Jews]. Besides, consider well, that in such an important matter, and on a subject of such great solemnity, there ought not to be any division. Our Saviour has left us only one festal day of our redemption, that is to say, of his holy passion, and he desired[to establish] only one Catholic Church. Think, then, how unseemly it is, that on the same day some should be fasting whilst others are seated at a banquet; and that after Easter, some should be rejoicing at feasts, whilst others are still observing a strict fast. For this reason, a Divine Providence wills that this custom should be rectified and regulated in a uniform way; and everyone, I hope, will agree upon this point. As, on the one hand, it is our duty not to have anything in common with the murderers of our Lord; and as, on the other, the custom now

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followed by the Churches of the West, of the South, and of the North, and by some of those of the East, is the most acceptable, it has appeared good to all; and I have been guarantee for your consent, that you would accept it with joy, as it is followed at Rome, in Africa, in all Italy, Egypt, Spain, Gaul, Britain, Libya, in all Achaia, and in the dioceses of Asia, of Pontus, and Cilicia. You should consider not only that the number of churches in these provinces make a majority, but also that it is right to demand what our reason approves, and that we should have nothing in common with the Jews. To sum up in few words: By the unanimous judgment of all, it has been decided that the most holy festival of Easter should be everywhere celebrated on one and the same day, and it is not seemly that in so holy a thing there should be any division. As this is the state of the case, accept joyfully the divine favour, and this truly divine command; for all which takes place in assemblies of the bishops ought to be regarded as proceeding from the will of God. Make known to your brethren what has been decreed, keep this most holy day according to the prescribed mode; we can thus celebrate this holy Easter day at the same time, if it is granted me, as I desire, to unite myself with you; we can rejoice together, seeing that the divine power has made use of our instrumentality for destroying the evil designs of the devil, and thus causing faith, peace, and unity to flourish amongst us. May God graciously protect you, my beloved brethren.

EXCURSUS ON THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE EASTER QUESTION

. (Hefele: Hist. of the Councils, Vol. I., pp. 328 et seqq.)

The differences in the way of fixing the period of Easter did not indeed disappear after the Council of Nicea. Alexandria and Rome could not agree, either because one of the two Churches neglected to make the calculation for Easter, or because the other considered it inaccurate. It is a fact, proved by the ancient Easter table of the Roman Church, that the cycle of eighty-four years continued to be used at Rome as before. Now this cycle differed in many ways from the Alexandrian, and did not always agree with it about the period for Easter--in fact(a), the Romans used quite another method from the Alexandrians; they calculated from the epact, and began from the feria prima of January.(b.) The Romans were mistaken in placing the full moon a little too soon; whilst the Alexandrians placed it a little too late.(c.) At Rome the equinox was supposed to fall on March 18th; whilst the Alexandrians placed it on March 21st.(d.) Finally, the Romans differed in this from the Greeks also; they did not celebrate Easter the next day when the full moon fell on the Saturday.

Even the year following the Council of Nicea--that is, in 326--as well as in the years 330, 333, 340, 341, 343, the Latins celebrated Easter on a different day from the Alexandrians. In order to put an end to this misunderstanding, the Synod of Sardica in 343, as we learn from the newly discovered festival letters of S. Athanasius, took up again the question of Easter, and brought the two parties(Alexandrians and Romans) to regulate, by means of mutual concessions, a common

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day for Easter for the next fifty years. This compromise, after a few years, was not observed. The troubles excited by the Arian heresy, and the division which it caused between the East and the West, prevented the decree of Sardica from being put into execution; therefore the Emperor Theodosius the Great, after the re-establishment of peace in the Church, found himself obliged to take fresh steps for obtaining a complete uniformity in the manner of celebrating Easter. In 387, the Romans having kept Easter on March 21st, the Alexandrians did not do so for five weeks later--that is to say, till April 25th--because with the Alexandrians the equinox was not till March 21st. The Emperor Theodosius the Great then asked Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria for an explanation of the difference. The bishop responded to the Emperor's desire, and drew up a chronological table of the Easter festivals, based upon the principles acknowledged by the Church of Alexandria. Unfortunately, we now possess only the prologue of his work.

Upon an invitation from Rome, S. Ambrose also mentioned the period of this same Easter in 387, in his letter to the bishops of AEmilia, and he sides with the Alexandrian computation. Cyril of Alexandria abridged the paschal table of his uncle Theophilus, and fixed the time for the ninety-five following Easters--that is, from 436 to 531 after Christ. Besides this Cyril showed, in a letter to the Pope, what was defective in the Latin calculation; and this demonstration was taken up again, some time after, by order of the Emperor, by Paschasinus, Bishop of Lilybaeum and Proterius of Alexandria, in a letter written by them to Pope Leo I. In consequence of these communications, Pope Leo often gave the preference to the Alexandrian computation, instead of that of the Church of Rome. At the same time also was generally established, the opinion so little entertained by the ancient authorities of the Church--one might even say, so strongly in contradiction to their teaching--that Christ partook of the passover on the 14th Nisan, that he died on the 15th(not on the 14th, as the ancients considered), that he lay in the grave on the 16th, and rose again on the 17th. In the letter we have just mentioned, Proterius of Alexandria openly admitted all these different points.

Some years afterwards, in 457, Victor of Aquitane, by order of the Roman Archdeacon Hilary, endeavoured to make the Roman and the Alexandrian calculations agree together. It has been conjectured that subsequently Hilary, when Pope, brought Victor's calculation into use, in 456--that is, at the time when the cycle of eighty-four years came to an end. In the latter cycle the new moons were marked more accurately, and the chief differences existing between the Latin and Greek calculations disappeared; so that the Easter of the Latins generally coincided with that of Alexandria, or was only a very little removed from it. In cases when the id fell on a Saturday, Victor did not wish to decide whether Easter should be celebrated the next day, as the Alexandrians did, or should be postponed for a week. He indicates both dates in his table, and leaves the Pope to decide what was to be done in each separate case. Even after Victor's calculations, there still remained great differences in the manner of fixing the celebration of Easter; and it was Dionysius the Less who first completely overcame them, by giving to the Latins a paschal table having as its basis the cycle of nineteen years. This cycle perfectly corresponded to that of Alexandria, and thus established that harmony which had been so long

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sought in vain. He showed the advantages of his calculation so strongly, that it was admitted by Rome and by the whole of Italy; whilst almost the whole of Gaul remained faithful to Victor's canon, and Great Britain still held the 'cycle of eighty-four years, a little improved by Sulpicius Severus. When the Heptarchy was evangelized by the Roman missionaries, the new converts accepted the calculation of Dionysius, whilst the ancient Churches of Wales held fast their old tradition. From this arose the well-known British dissensions about the celebration of Easter, which were transplanted by Columban into Gaul. In 729, the majority of the ancient British Churches accepted the cycle of nineteen years. It had before been introduced into Spain, immediately after the conversion of Reccared. Finally, under Charles the Great, the cycle of nineteen years triumphed over all opposition; and thus the whole of Christendom was united, for the Quartodecimans had gradually disappeared.(1) *selected from Henry R. Percival, ed., The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church, Vol XIV of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, edd. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, (repr. Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988) , pp. 54-56*

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"COMMENTS"

During my out of the body experience Jesus told me about many things. In the spiritual sense I understood everything, but when I returned to my body there were some things which my brain did not understand, because it had no knowledge of former things. Even though my brain questioned everything, I continued to believe in my heart that the experience was REAL and there was no doubt in my mind whatsoever that everything Jesus said was TRUE. The experience was all the proof that I needed. But, when I wrote about my out of body experience I realized that my readers wouldn't have the EXPERIENCE, to rely on. My husband decided to take Jesus advice and search for the truth. I added quotes, not to convince anyone to believe what I've written, but in hopes of encouraging others to search for the TRUTH. I didn't know it at the time, but now realize that a lot of what I said had been said before. I just put it in a simpler form.

The more I have learned about man's history, the more my brain has been able to understand those things of which Jesus spoke. If we go as far back as possible according to the records that we have, we can see that long before Jesus was even born people already worshipped the Mother and Son. In Babylon it is "Madonna and her Child". In Asia as "Cybele and Deoius". In India as "Isi and Iswara". In Greece they were worshipped as "Ceres" the great mother with the babe at her breast, or as "Irene" the goddess of peace with the boy Plutus in her arms. In Pagan Rome as "Fortuna and Jupiter-puer", or Jupiter the boy. Even in Thibet, China and Japan the exact counterpart of the Madonna and Child are as devoutly worshipped as in papal Rome itself.

How did this all get started? Where is it's origin? What possible connection can there be between mythology and the Bible? Well, long before the time of Abraham, long before Jesus, and long before the Bible (as we have it) was written, there is a story in the Egyptian book of the dead (a copy of which is frequently found entombed with mummies) that explains it all. The story goes something like this.

The first King and Queen to rule the land was Nimrod and Semiramis. Nimrod and was the son as well as the husband of Semiramis. The name Nimrod means "The subduer of the leopard". He was given this name because he was a great hunter of leopards and often wore the leopards skin as clothing. The two reigned as queen and king though out the land. According to the ancient legend Nimrods death was violent. He was slain and his body was torn into 14 pieces which was scattered throughout the country. After Nimrod's death, Semiramis the mother and wife of Nimrod claimed that her dead son was none other than the promised "Seed of the woman".

Formerly her son had been honored as the mighty hunter and benefactor of the world; but though he was now dead she would declare that he had risen and had been deified, and thus had him worshipped as a god! She claimed she had been destined to bruise the serpent's head, and who, in doing so, was to have his own heel bruised! The legend goes that she went about the earth

Material found at: <http://www.users.mis.net/~jwyatt/comments.html>

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picking up the pieces of his body and threw them into the fire and he came back to life as a god. She told that he was revealed to the initiated, but hidden to all others. All who sought initiation into this system were compelled to drink a peculiar intoxicating beverage served in a golden cup. By getting men intoxicated with the drink and with fire and magic Semiramis was able to convince certain ones that Nimrod was indeed alive and had become a god. After his death the deified Nimrod was fabled to have been "Born from the fire," "The seed of the fire." And as such he was revered as the great sun god "Baal". It was claimed that the act of passing through the fire was for the purpose of purifying, and many parents sacrificed their children to "Molech". Nimrod was the first King and the word "Molech" means "King". After the death of Nimrod the secret "Mysteries" were set up by Semiramis and her followers. Thus the secret "Mysteries" of Babylon introduced by the help of magic was intended to glorify a dead man. Nimrod became the "Father of the gods," being said to be the first of deified mortals. The worship of "Baal" was even a more horrible religion than is implied by presenting children as burnt offerings to him. For just as it was required in the Mosaic Law that the priests should eat of part of the animals offered as sacrifice by the people, so the priests of Baal ate part of the human sacrifices offered to their god Molech! The Chaldean word for the priests is "Cahna", so that chana-bal, that is "Priest of Baal", became cannibal. The monuments of Egypt show that the worship of Osiris, who's origin is Nimrod, dates from the earliest times, and that he was regarded as the "god-man" who suffered, died, rose again, and reigned eternally in heaven. He was the King of eternity, Lord of the everlastingness, the Prince of gods and men, the God of gods, King of kings, Lord of lords, Prince of princes, the governor of the world, whose existence is everlasting. Just like Nimrod was regarded as the sun, and was given the title Baal, or Lord of heaven (The word Baal means Lord) so Semiramis, when she was likewise "Deified" received worship as the moon, the "Queen of heaven". Mythology reveals the fact that the god Baal, and the goddess, the queen of heaven, were universally worshipped under various names and titles.

This legend serves the purpose of showing Nimrod's death was the central theme of the whole idolatry in Egypt and has been carried though out the whole world. Even to this day these same deities are even now worshipped in our midst. This great godness is even now worshiped in the person of the Papal "Queen of Heaven", the so called Virgin Mary, whose image is set up every where! So also in "Babylon The Great", it is the Madonna who receives all the adoration, and to whom petitions are generally addressed. While in Babylon the principal subjects of devotion are the "Madonna and her child" (said to be the virgin Mary and Jesus), so in typical Babylon the popular worship was extended to a goddess mother and her son, who had their origin in Semiramis and her son Nimrod. Remembering the religious influence which proceeded from Babylon, we have here the explanation of the universal adoration of the "Mother and Son." The popular subjects of worship in every nation have been the "Mother and Son" images of whom were everywhere set up long before the birth of Jesus. In Egypt the "Mother and Son" were later worshipped as Isis and Osiris.

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The scriptures indicate Molech or Moloch to be the terrible "God of Fire". In Revelation "Babylon The Great" is called the "Mother of Harlots," the parent system, which made all nations drink of her golden cup full of Abominations, The Wine of False Doctrine." And there's Jeremiah's allusion to the golden cup which made all nations drunken; for every nation received it's idolatrous religion. (Jeremiah 32;35) "And they built the high places of Baal, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire of Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination." (Paul wrote in 2 Thess. 2:7,) "The mystery of iniquity doth already work", and afterwards attained so great dimensions that it has deceived the whole world. It grew and extended and latterly became so universal that all nations were made "Mad". (Jeremiah 7:17,19) "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women kneed their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and they pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger."

The figure of the Egyptian "Osiris" face and hands are jet black and he is clothed in a leopards skin. The mystical symbol of Osiris was the young Apis bull or calf. The bull was the express symbol of Nimrod which showed him as the "Mighty One" and Lord of the chase. In Assyria the word for Bull signifies also a "Ruler" or "Prince". The horn is the ancient symbol of power, these assyrian figure of bulls, though human-headed, neverless show horns curving round their headgear. Many of the ancient gods were "Two-horned god". It is from the name Kronos that the English word "Crown" is derived. The Romans looked upon "Kronos" as a subterranean and infernal god. It is curious that the popular representation of the Devil, with the horns, hoofs and tail, is exactly the appearance of the black Nimrod when he is depicted in the sculpture encountering the lion.

In Egypt above the doors of ancient temples and tombs there is usually a representation of the sun god, in the form of a round disc with wide spread wings. Along with the sun as the great fire god, the serpent was connected. In the mythology of the primitive world the serpent is universally the symbol of the sun. In Egypt the commonest sign for the sun god is a disc with a serpent around it. The original reason for the connection of the serpent with the sun was that the physical world receives it's light from the sun, so the serpent was held to have been the great enlightener of the spiritual world, by giving mankind the knowledge of good and evil. This serves to identify the sun god with Satan.

False gods can be found in all nations and all can be traced directly back to Nimrod and Semiramis. "The god Adonis" is identical to "Tammuz" and "Tammuz to "Osiris" etc. "Tam" means to perfect and "Muz" means to burn, (to make perfect by burning.) This is no doubt, is the origin of the imaginary place called Purgatory, the fire of which is supposed by the Papacy to be necessary to perfect men's souls. There is no mention of an eternal torment in the Old Testament.

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The Hebrew word "Sheol" was translated "hell". The word "Sheol" was used the name the grave or death-state in which the dead rest. The Hebrew word "Sheol" corresponds to the Greek word "Hades". (Job 14:13-15) "O that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol; that thou wouldest keep me secret". This would be a strange desire if Sheol was a place of eternal torment. (In Hosea 13:14) we are assured that the Sheol (hell, the death state) is to be destroyed. Therefore it cannot be an eternal place or condition of any kind whatsoever. (Acts 2:27-31) "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell." If Jesus himself went to hell it could not be a place of eternal torment, but the death-state.

In the Egyptian religious system "Sin" was regarded merely as a breach of the Law of the Community, and could be atoned for by certain payments, after which the Law breaker considered himself free from all obligation. The Papal church follows the lead of it's ancient type in disannulling the need for repentance from sin, and atonement by the blood, by instituting "Indulgences" and the sacrifice of the "mass".

Excavations at Nineveh discovered sculptured figures of a "Fish god", which is identified with "Dagon", the fish god of the Philistines, who borrowed it from the Babylonians. The fish god is described as it's body was that of a fish, but under the head of the fish was that of a man, and to it's tail were joined a woman's feet. The sculptured figure also had hands. The great apostate church of the Gospel Age, true to it's Babylonish origin, has actually adopted this fish god in it's ritual; For the Pope on certain occasions manifests by his head gear that he is the direct representative of "Dagon". As it was an indispensable rule in all idolatrous religion that the high priest should wear the insignia of the god he worshipped. At a later period the Pagan Priest dispensed with the body of the fish, and used the head alone like a cap. The gaping jaws of the fish's head, surmounting the head of the man, is the exact appearance of the high pointed head dress of the Pope, or of a Papal Bishop.

History proves that Papacy's adoration of images, dead saints and relics, it's holy candles, holy water, vain rituals, and so called miracles are borrowed from heathen sources. Papacy's excuse, and although it is admitted that such things are "The very instruments and appendages of Demon-Worship", they were, however, "Sanctified By Adoption Into The Church". The Babylon of old was full of these abominations. Babylon was the first nation or kingdom after the Deluge, and by it's idolatrous worship was inaugurated.

Easter and Christmas are Pagan festivals that were celebrated long before Jesus was here and have nothing whatsoever to do with him. Scholars agree that December 25th is not likely the date of Jesus birth. Easter was a celebration in honor of the "Queen of Heaven" Astarte. Christmas was a mid-winter solar and fertility celebration. It was originally observed in honor of "Baal".

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And it was in order to conciliate them and to swell the number of Adherents of Christianity that the same festive day was adopted by the Apostate Church, giving it only the name of Christ. The Christmas tree so common at this day, was equally common in Pagan Rome and Pagan Egypt.

The Pagan religion teaches that by putting the "Yule Log" into the fires on Christmas Eve and the appearance next morning of the Christmas tree laden with gifts, represented the consuming of the great god who, like the log, had been cut into pieces, and his after birth in newness of life as the "Branch of God" or "The tree that brings gifts to men". The Egyptians used the Palm for their Christmas tree, but the people of Pagan Rome used the Fir, because the Fir tree covertly symbolized the risen god of "Baal" of old Babylon. Lent was a 40 day fast for "Ostra" the spring Goddess of the East. Valentines Day was a Roman fertility celebration. Halloween was a demonic observance celebration. The Romans clearly did not convert to our God. Instead, they converted us to their RELIGION, teaching us to follow along with their customs and traditions. And in doing so, we blindly worship and honor their false Gods.

The great Papal system is well named Satan's masterpiece. With Satan's false Papal millennium the Popes have successively reigned as King of kings, Lord of Lords. Satan has taken advantage of the religious element in man and by his blinding lies has directed the world's worship to himself, becoming in very deed the "god" of this world. It is Satan who demands to be worshipped, not God. God gives us advice and warnings, but if God were to interfere, laying down laws and rules, do's and don'ts, then that interference would influence our thinking and the purpose of the "WILL" would be destroyed.

The Bible as we have it did not begin to be written until after the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Long before this date there was the false religion of Babylonia. Egypt, and other countries were fully set up, originating, with "Semiramis" and her followers. During "The Dark Ages" for 1260 years no one was allowed to have a Bible in their possession, or even allowed to read the Bible, except for the Pope and his Priest. The Papacy openly admits to changing a few things here and there to fit the purpose of religion. 1260 years is a long time and they probably changed a lot more than we know about.

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The Winter Festival

by Mark Abbotoy

Taken partly from Babylon Mystery Religion, by Ralph Woodrow
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Introduction

CHRISTMAS-DECEMBER 25 -- this is the day designated on our calendars and on our hearts as the day of Christ's birth. But is this really the day upon which Christ was born? Are today's customs during this season of Christian origin? Or is Christmas a result of a mixture between paganism and Christianity? This is a question that some will not even want to consider. Many have heard the rumor, many have thought through the question and justified the celebration of the holiday and many just plain don't want to hear about it. But please, give these facts some place in your mind so that you may know the truth and live accordingly.

The Wrong Date

The word "Christmas" is not found anywhere in the scriptures of course, and, as we shall see, December 25 is definitely not the date on which Christ was born. It is evident that Jesus was not born during the middle of winter, for at the time of his birth, the shepherds were living out in the fields with their flocks. As the bible says: "There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8). As is well known, the shepherds in Palestine do not "abide in the fields" during the winter season because of the extreme, cold temperatures. The shepherds always bring their flocks in from the mountain slopes and fields no later than October 15th!

Further proof of this conclusion may be seen from the fact that at the time Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary had gone to Bethlehem to be taxed (Luke 2:1-5). There are no records of this period whatsoever that would indicate that the middle of the winter was the time of taxing. Even Jesus said, when talking of the end times, "pray that your flight not be in the winter" (Matt. 24:20). And so the harshness of the winter season in Palestine, even though it is less harsh than what is experienced in much of the United States, it is harsh enough to stop people from traveling and certainly to stop the shepherds from tending their flock at night. And so we see that Christ could not have been born in the Winter. On the other hand, there is evidence that taxes were paid in the fall season of the year. This was the logical time for the taxes to be paid since this was at the end of their harvest. There is also evidence that when Joseph and Mary made this trip, it was the time of a great feast at Jerusalem. This is the most logical reason why Mary went

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with Joseph, to attend the feast, as they also did on later occasions (see Luke 2:41), for there was no law that required a woman's presence at a taxing.¹

We know that the time they went to pay taxes was also the time of one of the great feasts at Jerusalem because of the enormous crowd, so enormous in fact, "there was no room in the inn" at Bethlehem (Luke 2:7). Jerusalem was normally a city of only 120,000 inhabitants, but (according to the Jewish historian, Josephus) during the feasts, sometimes as many as two million Jews would gather there. With such vast throngs of people coming to the feast, not only would Jerusalem be filled, but the surrounding towns also, including Bethlehem, which was only five miles to the south. Mere taxation would not cause a crowd this big to be in Bethlehem, for each person returned to his own city to be taxed. Even most scholars, among them A.T. Robertson, a late professor of New Testament Greek at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, sets the time of Christ's birth in the summer or early fall. And so, taking all of these things into consideration, it seems evident that Joseph and Mary made the journey, not only to pay their taxes, but also to attend a great feast at Jerusalem. This was at the end of the harvest season that they were taxed and this was also the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. All of this, as well as the evidence already given would mark the birth of Christ not in the winter and therefore not December 25th!²

The Merging of Paganism with "Christianity"

Since Christ was not born on December 25th, then how did this particular day come to be a part of the church calendar? History has the answer. Instead of this day being the time of Christ's birth, it was the very day and season on which the pagans for centuries had celebrated the birth of the Sun-god! A study into history shows how far apostate church leaders went in their effort to merge Christianity and paganism into one apostate religion, even to placing the birth of Christ on a date to harmonize with the pagan birthday celebration of the sun-god!

There are four points in our calendar which are called "Solstice" or "Equinox" points, two of each. The equinox occurs when the sun crosses the equator of the earth and day and night are everywhere of equal length. The sun does not actually cross the equator but with the earth's natural tip on its natural axis as it orbits around the sun it seems to. Then either one part of earth gets the most sun or the other part does. But on these two occasions, the days are equal in length everywhere and this occurs about March 21st and September 23rd.

The Solstice is a little bit different. Earth orbits around the sun in an ellipse. When the earth is farthest from the sun, we have the two points that are known as Solstice. They occur when the sun is at its greatest distance from the celestial equator, about June 21st when the sun reaches its

¹ Mede's Works, 1679. Discourse xlvii.

² Ibid.

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northernmost point on the celestial sphere, and about December 22nd when it reaches its southernmost point. The solstice in December is the time when the days of the year, in our hemisphere, are the shortest.

Pagan man saw this and feared that the days would get shorter and shorter and finally cease to exist. When the day came for the sun to overcome the darkness, and for the sun to cause the days to be longer it meant that there was not going to be eternal night. The sun had won another fight and so pagan culture had festivals and feasts on this day. It was celebrated in China, in India, in South America, in Mexico, in Africa and in many other cultures. There were presents exchanged, green trees decorated in honor of the sun-god and great celebrating.

When Christianity gained influence in the fifth century they outlawed the pagan holiday with little success. Finally they adopted the holiday into the church and changed the words and meanings of the festivities to fit with "christianity". It took many years to effect this. It took much propaganda and it took many penalties and reprisals against those who continued with the old festival but eventually the "christian" community won the day. Then there was a change from the Gregorian calendar to the present day calendar, and with that change Christmas or the Solstice shifted a few days so that December 25th became officially recognized as a Christian day.

It was in the fifth century that the Roman Catholic Church commanded that the birth of Christ be observed forever on December 25th, the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, one of the names of the sun-god!³

In pagan days, this birth of the sun-god was especially popular among the branch of the "mysteries" known as Mithraism. Concerning this we read: "The largest pagan religious cult which fostered the celebration of December 25th as a holiday throughout the Roman and Greek worlds was the pagan sun worship, Mithraism. Their winter festival was called 'the Nativity', the "nativity of the SUN".⁴ And not only was Mithra, the sun-god of Mithraism, said to be born at this time of the year, but Osiris, Horus, Hercules, Bacchus, Adonis, Jupiter, Tammuz, and other sun-gods were also supposedly born at what is today called the "Christmas" season, the winter solstice!⁵

Says a noted write: the "winter solstice (was) the time at which all the sun-gods from Osiris to Jupiter and Mithra had celebrated their (birthdays), the celebration being adorned with the pine

³ Encyclopedia Americana, Vol.6, p.623.

⁴ The Golden Bough, p.471.

⁵ Doane, p.474; Hislop, p.93.

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tree of Adonis, the holly of Saturn, and the mistletoe.. ..tapers represented the kindling of the newborn sun-god's fire..."⁶

Now the fact that the various sun-gods that were worshipped in different countries were all born at the same season (in old fables), indicates that they were but different forms (under different names) of the original son of the sun-god, Tammuz, of Babylon, the land from which sun-worship originally spread.⁷ In Babylon, the birthday of Tammuz was celebrated at the time of the winter solstice with great feasts, revelry, and drunkenness, the same way most people celebrate it today! The ancient celebration spread and became so much an established custom that "in pagan Rome and Greece, in the days of the Teutonic barbarians, in the remote times of ancient Egyptian civilization, in the infancy of the race East and West and North and South, the period of the winter solstice was a period of great rejoicing and festivity."⁸

When this mid-winter festival came to Rome, it was known as the Saturnalia, Saturn being but another name for Nimrod or Tammuz as "the hidden god". This feast was the most vile, immoral feast that ever disgraced pagan Rome. It was a season of license, drunkenness, and debauchery when all restraints of law were laid aside. And it was from this very feast at Rome that the merry-making of this season passed into the Roman Catholic Church and on down to our present civilization! "It is a matter of common knowledge", says one writer, "that much of our association with the Christmas season, the holidays, the giving of presents and the general feeling of geniality, is but the inheritance from the Roman winter festival of the Saturnalia-survivals of paganism."⁹

Tertullian, one of the early church fathers, mentions that the practice of exchanging gifts at this season was a part of the pagan Roman Saturnalia. When this mid-winter festival was adopted into the Roman church, this custom was also adopted. As usual, however, apostate leaders tried to find some point of similarity between paganism and Christianity - to make the merger seem less obvious. In this case, reference was made to the fact that the wise men, when they came to see the Christ-child, presented to him gifts. Some suppose that this is where the custom of exchanging gifts at Christmas time came. But not so! The wisemen did not exchange gifts among themselves. They presented their gifts to JESUS who was born king of the Jews. (It was an Eastern custom to present gifts when coming into the presence of the King). But these gifts were not birthday gifts. When the wisemen arrived, it was some time after the day on which Jesus was born. By this time, he was no longer in a stable, but in a HOUSE (Matt. 2:9-11). Obviously, the gifts of the wisemen were not Christmas gifts.

⁶ Man and His Gods, p.201.

⁷ The Two Babylons, pg. 96-97.

⁸ Curiosities of Popular Customs, p.242.

⁹ The Legacy of Rome, p.242.

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Other pagan practices that are included in the holiday of Christmas are the use of the round wreath, the mistletoe, the use of the Yule log, the wassail bowl, holly, red berries, Santa Claus, the undue commercialism of the season, the use of candles during the holiday, etc. The wassailing bowl of Christmas had its precise counterpart in the "Drunken festival" of Babylon. The candles, in some parts of England, lighted on Christmas-eve, and used as long as the festive season lasts, were equally lighted by the Pagans on the eve of the festival of the Babylonian god, to do honor to him; for it was one of the distinguishing peculiarities of his worship to have lighted wax candles on his altars. For complete documentation on these and other pagan carry-overs see *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop.

The Tree

Finally, in connection with the customs of the "Christmas" season, we will mention the Christmas tree. An old Babylonish fable went like this: Semiramis, the mother of Tammuz, claimed that overnight an evergreen tree sprang up from a dead tree stump. The dead stump supposedly symbolized her dead husband Nimrod; the new evergreen tree was the symbol that Nimrod had come to life again in the person of Tammuz!

This idea spread and developed to such a degree that the various nations all have had their legends about sacred trees! Among the Druids, the oak was sacred; among the Egyptians, it was the palm; and in Rome, it was the fir, which was decorated with red berries during the Saturnalia!¹⁰ Among the Scandinavians, the fir tree was sacred to their god Odin. "The Scandinavian god Woden or Odin was believed to bestow special gifts at Yuletide to those who honored him by approaching his sacred FIR TREE."¹¹ And even as other rites of the Yuletide season were absorbed into "Christianity", so also is the wide-spread use of the tree at this season a carry over of an ancient practice! "The Christmas tree recapitulates the idea of tree worship, with the gilded nuts and balls symbolizing the sun. The festivities of the pagan winter solstice have been absorbed into the celebration of Christmas. The use of holly and mistletoe come from the pagan, Druidic ceremonies, the use of the Christmas tree from the worship paid to Odin's sacred fir."¹²

In at least ten Biblical references, the "green" tree is associated with idolatry and false worship.¹³ The "green" tree refers to trees that are green all year round, since, of course, all trees are green at one time or another. So the "green" trees that the scriptures are talking about are the evergreen trees or trees within that family! Taking all of this into consideration, it is interesting to notice the reading of Jeremiah 10:1-5 and compare it with today's custom of decorating a tree :

¹⁰ Curiosities of Popular Customs, p.242.

¹¹ Festivals, Holy Days, and Saints' Days, p.222.

¹² Ibid, p.238.

¹³ Dt.12:2; I Kings 14:23; II Kings 16:4,17:10; Ez. 6:13.

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"The customs of the people are vain: for one cuts a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe." "They fasten it with nails and hammers. They deck it with silver and with gold."

Now of course the people in the days of Jeremiah, as the context goes on to show, were actually making an idol out of the tree. We are not inferring that people today who put trees in their homes during the Christmas season are worshipping the tree, but that the use of the tree is plainly and totally a carry over from paganism. Whatever the difference may be between the ancient use of the tree as compared with present day customs, no one can deny that these things of which we have been speaking are customs of men. And God says: "The customs of the people are vain"(Jeremiah 10:3)-and "the temple of idols have nothing in common with the temple of God."(II Corinthians 6:16)

One Error Leads to Another

The Christmas celebration was adopted into the Roman church during the fifth century. In the sixth century, missionaries were sent through the northern part of Europe to gather pagans into the Roman fold. They found that the 24th of June was a very popular day among these people. In order to induce them into the "church", as was the usual custom after the falling away, apostate church leaders would allow them to continue celebrating their pagan holiday, only they would attempt to associate it with some Christian event. But what event could they associate with June 24th? They had already adopted a day to celebrate the birth of Christ-December 25th. And this error led to another error. They noticed that June 24th was approximately six months before Jesus, why not set June 24th as the day to celebrate John's birthday? And this is what they did.

To this day, June 24 is known on the papal calendar as St. John's Day or the Nativity of St. John! But obviously, such an idea is built on a false foundation, for John was not born on June 24; and mixing his name with this day was but a cover up, so the old pagan holiday could be continued-now within the "church".

In ancient times, this day was set aside for Baal worship. In Britain, before the entrance of Christianity there, the 24th of June was celebrated by the Druids with blazing FIRES in honor of Baal (the sun-god, Nimrod in deified form). The writings of such noted historians as Herodotus, Wilkinson, Layard, and others tell of these ceremonial fires in different countries. When June 24th was adopted into the "church" and renamed as St. John's day, so also were the sacred fires adopted and renamed as "St. John's Fires"! "I have seen the people running and leaping through the St. John's fires in Ireland..", says one writer of the past century, "proud of passing through unsinged, thinking themselves in a special manner blessed by the ceremony."¹⁴ In reading of such rites, we are reminded of similar practices into which the backslidden children of Israel fell

¹⁴ Toland's Druids, p.107.

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when they would "pass through the fire to Molech"(Jer. 32:35; Ezek. 20:31). Obviously, none of these practices had any connection with John the Baptist.

The Mixture

The mixture of Christianity and paganism is seen in the word "Christ-mass" itself. Though it includes the name of Christ, it also mentions the "mass". Now the mass, with its rituals, elaborate ceremony, pagan prayers for the dead, transubstantiation rites, etc. is most assuredly a continuation of paganism.¹⁵ Considering then that the name of these pagan rites, the Mass, is connected with the name of Christ in the word "Christ-mass", we immediately see an attempt to merge two conflicting systems together! Actually, to attach the name of Christ with the word "Mass", a pagan and hedonistic ritual (for conclusive proof of the pagan origin of the Mass see The Two Babylons)¹⁶ is but to pollute the Holy name of our God! And God says: "Pollute ye my holy name no more"! (Ezekiel(20:39)

Conclusion

The days and times we have mentioned were all adopted into the calendar of the Roman church from paganism. We wonder if the apostle Paul were to be raised up to preach to this generation, if he would not say to the professing church today, as he did the Galatians long ago: "You observe days, and months, and times, and years, I am afraid of you, lest I have labored in vain"(Gal. 4:9- 11). To what days did Paul give reference? The context shows that the Galatians had been converted from the pagan worship of the "gods"(Gal.4:8), and so it is evident that when some of them went back to their former worship, the days and times they were observing were those days and times that were set aside to honor these pagan gods! And yet, it was these very days that the fallen church merged into her worship, changing them slightly, disguising them with Christian sounding names, and their observance has continued to this day!

Comments and Remarks

The most common objections to separating oneself from the Christmas festival will now be answered. The objections that will be answered are:

1. Shouldn't we convey the "true" meaning of Christmas during this time of the year?
2. If our heart-attitude is right then what does the origin of Christmas matter?
3. Did not Paul say not to judge one another in regards to holy days and religious festivals?

¹⁵ The Two Babylons.

¹⁶ Ibid.

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4. If we stubbornly abstain from the festivities of Christmas, how shall we ever win our families and friends to Jesus (for they will surely call us fanatics)?
5. The Kingdom of God is not a matter of such trivial things so why waste our time in our concern over it?
6. I know that Christmas is pagan, but where do I draw the line in regards to abstinence from certain things?
1. Shouldn't we convey the true meaning of Christmas to everyone?

The above discussion establishes the true meaning of Christmas. Any meaning other than this meaning could not be called Christmas. Furthermore, to give any other meaning to the origin and meaning of Christmas other than the historical one would be deception. Also worth noting is that the early church had no record of celebrating the birth of Christ and there is no authority in scripture given to believers which allows them to celebrate His birth in this manner.

2. If our heart attitude is right, what does it matter if the origin is bad?

The scriptures such as II Corinthians 6:14-7:1 and I Corinthians 10:18-22 give evidence that we should not be involved in a mixture of anything that involves the mixture of truth with error. We are so quick to judge the cults for mixing truth with error, yet we allow ourselves to do the same thing. II Corinthians 6 exhorts us to keep away from that which is unclean and to separate ourselves from all forms of idolatry. The word of God demands purity in both our attitudes and actions, to walk in Spirit and in TRUTH. So you see that our heart attitude has got to be based upon truth or else it is the wrong attitude no matter how 'innocent' or 'good' it may feel to us.

3. Didn't the apostle Paul say not to judge one another in regards to holy days and religious festivals?

Yes, Paul did say this in the 2nd chapter of Colossians. In the context of this chapter, however, Paul was dealing with Jewish holidays and festivals, not pagan or idolatrous festivals. We have seen that Paul has much to say about idolatry and the believer's abstinence from it in all forms; therefore, in this context we see that this passage of scripture does not apply to our discussion. Paul does, of course, talk about eating meat sacrificed to idols and says that an idol is nothing and that we should not raise questions of conscience about the eating of such meat. The logic of comparing 'meat sacrificed to idols' to 'Christmas festivities' is faulty and cannot be done honestly. In I Corinthians chapter 10, starting at verse 20 Paul writes:

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"No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?"

So you see, that the sacrifices that unbelievers make during the Christmas season are offered to demons, not to God. Paul exhorts us to not partake in such things.

4. If we stubbornly abstain from the festivities of Christmas, how shall we ever win our families and friends to Jesus (they will call us fanatics)?

Whatever people may call us, fanatics, Jehovah Witnesses, etc. you will be known as Christians, and in the secret consciences of men you will be acknowledged as such. How was it with the early Christians? They lived so separate from the world and it made such an impression that even pagan writers say of them, "These men win the hearts of the mass of people, because they give themselves up to deeds of charity, and pour contempt on the world." If Christians would live like this today, the world would quickly be converted. To put the feelings of unbelieving relatives (they may be offended if we don't celebrate Christmas) before obedience and sincerity before God is putting them in a higher place of importance than God. And Jesus has said, "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me..." (Matt.10:37).

5. The kingdom of God is not a matter of such trivial things as these, so why waste our time discussing them?

A Christian who fears the Lord will pursue the subject until he is either cut off from conforming to the world or cut off from the church. It is not only Christmas, as such, but it is conformity to the world in general that is the great stumbling block in the way of sinners. How can the world be converted, while professing Christians are conformed to the world? The unbelievers may just as well ask, "What profit will it be to become Christians, when those who are Christians are pursuing the world with all the vigor that we are?" "Born again" Christians are the laughing stock of many cults and secularists because of their ignorance in matters such as these. Separation from the world is not a trivial matter. It is essential for engaging in powerful prayer, which will bring forth the power and blessing of the Holy Spirit to convert the world. So you see, this subject is not trivial.

6. I know that Christmas is pagan, but where does one draw the line regarding abstinence from certain things?

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This final objection is the hardest one to answer, but here some general guidelines that should be followed: The spirit of Christmas is a counterfeit spirit. It is a spirit of 'false' love and 'false' joy that the world enjoys during Christmas. This spirit is not the HOLY Spirit of God! For it does not lead the world to conviction of sin and repentance and it does not confess Jesus as Lord. It is a false spirit, a spirit that leads many to commit suicide during this season. Statistics show that the suicide rate is higher during the Christmas season than at any other time of the year. This is the spirit of the world, the spirit of the antichrist, who wishes death upon all men. The scripture refers to the devil as an angel of light and as the deceiver and counterfeiter. This spirit is prevalent in most evangelical churches during the Christmas season. It takes the form of Christmas parties, candlelight services, Christmas cantatas and the like. To be separate from this spirit is important

Final Comments

The facts that have been discussed should cause every true believer to doubt the godliness of the Christmas celebration. The scripture says: 'everything that is done with a doubting conscience is sin' (Romans 14:23).

Many things associated with Christmas require abstinence but the Spirit of God will lead as one asks for His guidance and His light. Why not try to help those who are being led into suicide by lying spirits during this season, to trust the Holy Spirit to lead you to such hurting people as these and to others who may be ripe for harvest. He will guide as one walks in the truth on this matter. Before ignoring this call of God to be separate from the world, heed His word to us...

"You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says without reason that the Spirit He caused to live in us tends toward envy?" (James 4:4-5)

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The Two Babylons

Owen Weber 1989

Book Review: The Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop

The following article is a book review of The Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop.

Mystery

Hislop examines the Roman Catholicism of today in the light of its similarities to the ancient mystery religions. Many Bible scholars believe that the The Mystery of Babylon the Great in Revelation 17:5 refers to the Catholic Church of the end times. Indeed Babylon was infamous for its mystery religions, and many of the traits of Catholicism, as well as Free Masonry, are founded on the same principles of mystery. The similarities of these mystery organizations include the well-kept secrets to which only a select few are exposed. This is the opposite of true Christianity, where we are encouraged to enter into the mind of God through His revealed Word. Catholicism has become infamous for its practice of ordaining members of the clergy, while prohibiting, or at least discouraging, the reading of the Bible in the common language of the people. Indeed, the Bible makes various references to such mystery religions. In Jeremiah 51:7 we see a mysterious Golden Cup, and in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 we read of a Mystery of iniquity, as well as the passage mentioned above in Revelation 17 concerning the Mystery of Babylon the Great. We will examine the origin of these mystery religions, then examine Roman Catholicism in light of its origin.

Ancient Mystery Religions

History tells us that the Nimrod we read of in Genesis was the first King of Babylon, where we believe the mystery religions originated. The Bible tells us in Genesis 10:9 that Nimrod was a mighty hunter and a great archer. He was a descendent of Cush, and he may have been a black man. History has attached many different names to him, such as Sogittarius, and the reading of the historical accounts of Nimrod is often complicated because of all his different names. He is sometimes called Bal, Bel, Belus, or Kronos, the horned one, or the scatterer abroad. Nimrod was deified and was said to have taken the form of a gigantic horned man-bull, where his horns were a symbol of power. Sometimes he was known as Baal-aberin, the winged one. He was celebrated as the elevator of the heavens, and the emancipator and deliverer of mankind.

Sometimes the leopard or the spotted fawn of the leopard skin was used to symbolize his deity.

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In classical literature, Nimrod is sometimes called Ninus, but Ninus was probably Nimrod's son, the builder of the city of Ninevah. Nimrod's wife was Semiramis, the Queen of Heaven, and sometimes her husband is called Ninus, while other times, Ninus is said to be her son. The confusion is related to the story of Nimrod's deification. The legend says that Nimrod was killed, but he was resurrected as his wife's son, a feat which could only have been orchestrated by a god. Thus began the mother/child cult religions. Semiramis, sometimes called Rhea, came to be known as the Great Mother of the Gods, while her son, Ninus (or Tammuz (Ezekiel 8:14) or Bacchus) was known as The Lamented One. Tammuz is sometimes called Adonis or Dionysus.

Other variations of the Babylonian gods of Rhea and Tammuz included Ceres (or Irene) and Plutus in Greece, Isis and Osiris in Egypt, Fortuna and Jupiter in Pagan Rome, Isi and Iswara in India, Cybele and Deoius in Asia, Shing Moo in China, and the Goddess mother and son in Tibet. All these boast similar stories of their gods, and it is easy to believe that all the legends were derived from Rhea and Tammuz. In some literature, it is believed that Tammuz was known as Hercules the Lamented, and he is sometimes confused with the Shem of the Bible, or at least with being his descendent. Some believe that the Krishna of the Hindus and the Buddha of Japan are also derivations of these same Babylonian gods.

It is not difficult to see how some of the traditions of these ancient gods carried over into Christian Rome. Even in the first century, poems confused the story of the divine father, mother, and son with the story of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. In Japan, Spain, and India, there were legends of three-headed gods which some confused with the trinity of the Godhead. In many lands, mother-worship prevailed and was supported by citing Genesis 3:15 as proof that the mother would bruise the heel of Satan, and that she indeed had power over him. The Messiah is sometimes seen as only a mediator between the goddess mankind, instead of as savior.

In the tradition of portraying Nimrod as a great horned man-bull, the Anglo-Saxons worshipped a god called Zernebogus, the seed of the prophet Cush, whose physical appearance has carried even into our day, as what many perceive as Satan. He was black and had horns and hooves. His horns were called his Corona, or Kronos, or crown, a symbol of his power and might. He was said to have been the first king after the great flood. Some stories call him Saturn, the first king to wear a crown. This may have even been the origin of the custom of the American Indians to wear buffalo horns on their heads.

The Church of Rome

Hislop then considers the Church of Rome during the start of Catholicism and into the Dark Ages. The symbol of the Church of Rome became the woman with a cross in her left hand, and a cup in her right. It was said that "the whole world is her seat." During the Dark Ages, the Bible was sealed and unknown to the common man. People were forced to believe like the church believed. The priests reserved the right of teaching the faith, and the clergy sold dispositions of

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the true faith of Christianity. They practiced celibacy and priestcraft, and held a mysterious power of dominion over the faith. Some did not even realize that they had simply adopted the pagan customs of the ancient mystery religions.

Even the confessional had its roots in Babylon. All the people were required to make secret confessions to the priest in a prescribed form, if they were to be admitted, or initiated, into the "mysteries" of their religion. They were commanded to keep secret about these mysteries. Later, the Church of Rome began requiring the same type of confession for admission to the sacraments. Even the symbol of the Halo of Madonna was originated in Babylon as a disk symbol of the sun god.

Christmas

Then Hislop considers to what extent we have carried some of these Pagan customs into our own lives. Have you ever asked yourself what time of year Jesus was born? December 25? It doesn't seem too likely that Jesus was born in the winter time. In that part of the world it is, and was, usually cold in the winter. It is unlikely that the Roman government would have demanded that the people make long trips during the winter time, like the trip that Mary and Joseph were just completing at the time of Jesus's birth. Also, due to the cold weather there, the sheep could usually be kept in the open fields only until October, and the shepherds would not have been watching their flocks by night, as the Bible tells us they were.

Actually, the practice of celebrating Jesus's birth on December 25 began in the third century, and it did not become common practice until the fourth century. The reason that this date was chosen was very likely due to the practice of observing ancient Pagan holidays. In ancient Babylon, the Pagans celebrated a festival honoring the birth of the son of the Queen of Heaven. This festival was sometimes called Yule Day, which is a Chaldean term for "infant." In that time, the sun was worshipped as a goddess, and the Lord Moon is said to have been born on December 25. This seems to be the origin of the celebration we now call Christmas.

New Year's

Furthermore, historians tell us that the Pagan celebration described in Isaiah 65:11 was an annual worship of the sun god by celebrating with food and wine on the last day of the last month of the year, or what we now call New Year's Eve. The sun was worshiped as God incarnate, and there was plenty of drunkenness and revelry at what is sometimes called the feast of Saturn or the festival of Bacchus. Could it be that our modern-day New Year's Eve parties are also a carryover from the ancient Pagans?

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Candles

Another custom of the ancient mystery religions was that of lighting candles on the eve of the festival of the Babylonian god, to do him honor. The pagans would light these candles on an altar. Is the Christian practice of lighting Advent candles also a carryover from Babylon? What about the altars? Are they a carryover from the altars of sacrifice to God in the Old Testament, or are they carried over from Babylon?

Christmas Tree

In Pagan Egypt, the palm tree was a symbol of victory. In Pagan Rome, the fir tree symbolized the Pagan Messiah Baal-Tamar, or Baal-Berith. The legend says that the mother of Adonis, the sun god, was supernaturally changed into a tree, and she then bore her divine son. The son was known as "the man," "the branch," or "yule." It was the custom of the pagans to place a Yule log into the fire on the evening of December 24, which would change into a new tree by the next morning. December 25th became the birthday of the unconquered sun god, and Nimrod was worshipped as the Babylonian Messiah, who had been killed by his enemies, then was deified as the sun god, and revived again as a god. The trick with the yule log sounds strikingly similar to our modern day Christmas tree and our welcomed surprises on Christmas morning.

Mistletoe

Have you ever wonder how kissing under the mistletoe got started? The Pagans used a branch of mistletoe to represent the messiah Nimrod. The kiss was a symbol of divine reconciliation and pardon.

Christmas Dinner

The Pagans believed that Tammuz, or Adonis, was killed by a boar, so their custom was to sacrifice a boar for their festival. It was popular to even display the head of the boar at the December 25th meal. Sometimes they served a holiday goose, and sometimes Yule cakes.

Lady Day

In Pagan Rome, March 25 was a holiday celebrating the annunciation of the virgin, in honor of Cybele, the mother of the Babylonian messiah. Consequently, on the Pope's calendar, March 25 is Lady Day, the day to observe the miraculous conception and annunciation of the virgin Mary. Since the birthdays of the two respective messiahs is the same, one might expect that the day of their conception might be celebrated exactly nine months before their birth.

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Easter

The name of the holiday we now call Easter was derived in ancient Babylon. It began as Beltis, the day honoring the Queen of Heaven, and was later called Ishtar, Astarte, or Easter. In the third or fourth centuries, a custom began of observing Pasch, or Passover, in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ. It was celebrated at the same time of year as was the Jewish Passover, around March 23, but with Pasch came the additional celebration of Lent. Lent began in Babylon, as forty days of abstinence commemorating the death and resurrection of Tammuz, and the custom spread to Egypt, in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god. The practice later spread to Pagan Mexico, and it was still practiced in Koordistan in the 20th century. In Pagan Palestine and Assyria, Easter was celebrated in June, the month of Tammuz. In Egypt it was celebrated in May, and in Britain, April.

Deception

It is interesting to note at this point that many of the stories of the Pagans coincide with the true story of Christ. They often refer to the birth of a divine son, a mediatorial messiah, and his death and supernatural resurrection. Satan has managed to confuse the truth with enough lies so that the unsuspecting worshippers can easily be deceived. For example, Hercules was known as the deliverer of the human race.

Infiltration into Christianity

How could Christians have been so deceived? Hislop, pp 105 says, "To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festival amalgamated, and by a complicated but skillful adjustment of the calendar, it was found no difficult matter, in general, to get Paganism and Christianity--now far sunk in idolatry--in this as in so many other things, to shake hands."

At the Council at Aurelia in about 519 AD, under the authority of Hormisdas, Bishop of Rome, a decree was granted that called for Lent to be solemnly observed before Easter. There had traditionally been fasting before the Nicene Council, but it had never lasted more than three weeks. Then Abbot Dionysius the Little set the Christian era as beginning four years from Christ's birth. This is why many scholars today believe that Christ was born in 4 BC according to today's calendar.

The tradition of Hot Cross buns for Good Friday was a carryover from the use of sacred bread in the worship of the Babylonian Queen of Heaven in 1500 BC. The tradition of dyed eggs on Easter Sunday came from the use of eggs for mystic purposes in Pagan Egypt and Greece. Their legend said that a giant egg had fallen from Heaven into the Euphrates River, some fish rolled it

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to the bank, it was hatched by doves, giving birth to Venus, the Syrian Goddess, Astarte! Also, the pomegranate had been the fruit which served as the symbol of the knowledge of good and evil, but later, in Rome, the symbol was changed to oranges because pomegranates weren't grown there.

The Feast of the Nativity of St. John

The next point of interest on the Papal Calendar is June 24, midsummer day, The Feast of the Nativity of St. John. In ancient Babylon, June 24 had commemorated the Festival of Tammuz, which celebrated the death and resurrection of Tammuz (during June, the month of Tammuz). Hisop writes, "When the papacy sent its emissaries over Europe, towards the end of the sixth century, to gather in the pagans into its fold, this festival was found in high favor in many countries. . . .the famous advice of Pope Gregory I, that by all means they should meet the Pagans half-way, and so bring them into the Roman Church." So, to appease the Pagans, this festival was adopted by the church, but they did not want to use the name Tammuz, and there was no event of Christ's life to commemorate in June. Therefore, they contrived the scheme to celebrate this holiday as the birth of John the Baptist, since it conveniently coincided with a date six months prior to the celebration of the birth of Christ. Also, the name the Babylonians used for Tammuz after he had been slain was Oannes. Conveniently, the name John, or Joannes, therefore satisfied both the Christians and the Pagans! In France and Ireland, this festival was celebrated with huge bonfires of purifying fire, across which children were thrown. This coincided with the Babylonian ritual in Jeremiah 32:35 which tells of the children being passed through the fire to the god Moloch.

The date of October 7 on the Popish calendar is set apart to be observed in honor of St. Bacchus the Martyr, the martyr of the fire worshippers.

October 9 is the festival of St. Dionysius (and St. Eleuther and St. Rustic). Dionysius was also known as St. Denys, the patron saint of Paris who was beheaded and is said to have carried his head in his hands to his grave. This festival was abolished in 1789, but somewhat revived in the 20th century. The origin of this Christian myth was also from Nimrod, who was said to have been beheaded and worshipped. This provoked the famous statues in Rome of the man holding his head in his hands.

The Feast of the Assumption is observed by the Catholic church on August 15 to honor the virgin Mary as the omnipotent goddess who was perfect on earth and now resides in Heaven. In Babylon, Bacchus rescued his mother in hell and took her to Heaven. The Chinese also celebrate a feast in August, in honor of a mother. The Holy Virgin in ancient times was the wife of Pluto, the god of Hell. She experienced the immaculate conception and was absolutely immaculate. In Rome, Madonna and her child are honored in the form of graven image statues.

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Bible Doctrine

Speaking of the Bible, Linacer, a physician during the reign of Henry VIII said, "Either this book is not true, or we are not Christians." Concerning baptismal regeneration, Catholicism holds that water baptism is an initiating ordinance and an absolute necessity for salvation. In Babylon, baptism was required before any instruction of the mysteries could be received. It provided the necessary washing and purifying. In Pagan Mexico, baptismal regeneration coincided with the worship of Wodan, the father of humanity, from whom evolved the name Wodans day (Wednesday). In Rome, a Pagan exorcism used water baptism with the use of salt, spittle, anointing oil, the sign of the cross, and holy water (consecrated salt water into which a burning torch was placed for purification). As part of excommunication, this phrase is used, "May the Holy Ghost who suffered for us in baptism curse him." Semaramis was known as a dove, a holy spirit incarnate, who passed through water when she was overcome by her enemies, and she took refuge in the water.

Another common doctrine shared by ancient Babylonians and Catholics is the doctrine of justification by works. Merits and demerits are measured in the balance of God's justice by Anubis, the god of the scales, in ancient Babylon, and by St. Michael, the Archangel, in Catholicism. The priests were the judges, and the people had to pay to compensate for their demerits. This led to the "fear of the scales" in the Catholic Church, as well as to the practice of absolution by paying indulgences.

Like Moloch, the god of barbaric blood, in ancient Babylon, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Assyria, and Phoenicia, Catholicism claimed that God was not satisfied without groans and sighs, lacerations of the flesh, tortures of the body, and penances including whippings and scourges. It was common practice for Catholics to crawl on their bare knees over sharp rocks in order to pay for their displeasing of God. This is one of the things that Martin Luther found so revolting about the Catholic Church. The Flagellants would even publicly scourge themselves. During Christianity from the first to the third centuries, this practice was recognized as purely Pagan.

The worship of Holy week with the sepulcher and the cross of fire coincide with the ancient festival of Saturn.

Catholicism sees Mary as the grand refuge of sinners.

In the Catholic Church, the Mass is heralded as the transubstantiation, or unbloody sacrifice, where small, thin, round wafers are eaten. The Babylonians worshipped Baal in the same way, using the small, thin, round wafers as a symbol of the sun god. The letters on the wafer, I.H.S., supposedly stand for Iesus Hominum Salvator, Jesus the savior of men, but in Babylon, they stood for Isis Horus, Seb, the mother, the child, and the father of the gods (the Egyptian trinity).

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The practice of extreme unction, when death is visibly at the very door, originated in Babylon as an anointing for the last journey into the mysteries.

Purgatory and prayers for the dead have served both ancient Babylon and Catholicism as a special cleansing with a payment which was extorted to protect the payer from the purgation of fire.

Mystery

Rome insures that the common man is studiously kept in the dark, as did Babylon.

Processions

Rome is famous for its long idol processions in which images are carried on men's shoulders, priests are adorned in gorgeous dresses, monks and nuns in various habits, flying banners are displayed, and instrumental music is played. The same was true for Babylon. Also, the clothing and crowning of images in Rome originated with ancient Egypt, Nimrod, and the Queen of Troy.

Relic Worship

Rome uses rags or bones of saints to commemorate their deified heroes, as did Babylon. Both also artificially multiplied many fake relics for profit.

The Rosary

The rosary and prayer bead of the Catholics are pagan practices used in Mexico, Tibet, China, and Greece, as well as by Hindus and Pagan Rome. This began as the Rosary of the Sacred Heart in Babylon and Egypt, where the heart was a sacred symbol of Osiris when he was reborn and appeared as Harpocrates, or the infant divinity, born in the arms of his mother Isis. The rosary still resembles a human heart. Also, Cupid originated in Pompeii as a boyish divinity. He was a fair, full, fleshy boy in fine and sportive action, using portrayed tossing back a heart. Thus the god of the heart, or the god of love was worshipped. The bow and arrows were used to identify him with his father, the mighty hunter Nimrod. Taking aim with his gold-tipped arrows at the hearts of mankind, he was immortalized. The ancients deified Venus and Cupid as the Catholics do Madonna and child.

Lamps

Lamps or wax candles of fire were used by the ancients in sun worship. Catholics use candles at mass and at Easter, even in the daylight, although this practice was not started until the fourth century.

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The Sign of the Cross

The Catholic sign of the cross originated in Babylon as a grand charm before prayer which drew the initial of the name Tammuz, Tau, or T. This same T can be found on the garments of Catholic priests. The Vestal Virgins of Pagan Rome and the nuns of Catholicism wore it on their necklaces. Bacchus wore a headband covered with crosses. The Buddhists wear them today. The cross was considered a divine tree, the tree of the gods, the tree of life and knowledge, and the product of whatever is good and desirable. In Catholicism, the cross is also called the tree of life, "hail, O cross, triumphant wood, true salvation of the world. . ." It is viewed as the only hope to increase righteousness and pardon offenses. Tammuz used the mistletoe tree to heal the sick. When Constantine came along, he declared popularized the X for christ instead of the T for the cross, so again both Christians and pagans were satisfied.

The College of Cardinals

Rome's College of Cardinals coincides with the Babylonian Council of Pontiffs and the Pagan College of Pontiffs.

The Sovereign Pontiff

Catholics view the Pope as the sovereign pontiff, the representative of divinity on earth, the infallible, who's laws cannot be revoked, as was the case with Esther during the times of the Medes and the Persians. The pope is addressed as "Your Holiness," and his slipper is often kissed. He holds the keys of Janus and Cybele (on his robe), Peter's keys to Heaven, although Peter was probably never in Rome. History has confused the Pagan statue of Jupiter with Peter. It is curious that the title of the high priest of Babylon was pronounced "Peter." He was the grand interpreter, Roma.

Cardinal comes from the word cardo which meant hinge. Janus, the god of doors and hinges, Patulcius and Clusius, was the opener and the shutter, controlling the door of Heaven. Peter's chair, similar to that of Hercules and Mohammad, is where the ancients were carried in pomp and state in Egypt. Janus was the incarnation of Noah, half man and half fish. The Pontifical crosier corresponds to the magic of Nimrod.

Celibacy

The celibacy of the catholic priesthood corresponds with the practice of Pagan Rome (Daniel 11:36).

The clerical tonsure, a circular haircut around the temples, used at ordination ceremonies was started by Peter of the Mystery Gods. Head shaving was a ritual in Egypt, India, and China.

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Monks and nuns maintain perpetual virginity, and are cut off from the outside world in convents and monasteries. The same was true in Tibet, Japan, Scandanavia, Pagan Rome, and even with the American Indians, although most modern confinement is only temporary, while in ancient times, it was permanent.

Revelation

The following analogies could be made from Revelation 12-13:

The Great Red Dragon is the slain and healed Nimrod (paganism revisted). The woman with the crown of 12 stars is the church. The Beast from the Sea produced a flood from his mouth, baptismal regeneration (Jesus--Ichthys--fish--Dagon!). The Beast from the earth (2 Thessalonians 2:8), is the Pope, as the lawless one, the head of the mystery religion. The image of the beast is the virgin mother, or Madonna. The Pope is Nimrod, or Saturn-- $STUR = 60+400+6+200 = 666$ in the city of seven hills, Rome. The number of a man, Janus, Eanus, = man. The Pope is the head of the beast. Transubstantiation.

The Roman fire god Vulcan was the leader of the Cyclops.

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Sun Worship

A study by *Timothy Youngblood*

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Page one

Sun worship is religious devotion paid to the sun either as a deity or as the symbol of a deity. Sun worship was practiced by the Iroquois, Plains, and Tsimshian peoples of North America and reached a high state of development among the Native Americans of Mexico and Peru. The sun was also a Hindu deity, regarded as maleficent by the Dravidians of southern India and as benevolent by the Munda of the central parts. The Babylonians were sun worshipers, and in ancient Persia worship of the sun was an integral part of the elaborate cult of Mithras. The ancient Egyptians worshiped the sun god Ra. In ancient Greece the deities of the sun were Helios and Apollo.

The worship of Helios was widespread; temples were built in Corinth, Argos, Troezen (no longer in existence), and many other cities, but the principal seat was on the island of Rhodes, in the Dodecanese, where four white horses were sacrificed annually to the god. A similar sacrifice was offered on the summit of Mount Hagios Elias, in the Taïyetos Mountains, in Laconia. In time virtually all the functions of Helios were transferred to the god Apollo, in his identity as Phoebus. Sun worship persisted in Europe even after the introduction of Christianity, as is evidenced by its disguised survival in such traditional Christian practices as the Easter bonfire and the Yule log on Christmas. "Sun Worship," Microsoft(R) Encarta(R) 97 Encyclopedia. (c) 1993-1996 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

The Eucharist

The development of Eucharistic doctrine centers on two ideas: presence and sacrifice. In the New Testament, no attempt is made to explain Christ's presence at the Eucharist. The theologians of the early church tended to accept Jesus' words "This is my body" and "This cup ... is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:19-20) as sufficient explanation of the miraculous transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, although some interpretations reflect the influence of Platonic philosophy on the early church. During the Middle Ages a more elaborate doctrine of the Eucharist was developed by Scholastic philosophers under the influence of Aristotle.

Material found at: <http://www.masters-table.org/pagan/sun1.htm>

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The above slides are of what is called a "HOST" and this host is the same thing as the old Egyptian sun god. That's why it's round and many times it's depicted with sun-rays coming from it as the one in the center. The I.H.S. stands for the Egyptian trinity; Isis, Horus, and Seb. Notice the medal on the extreme right has the round wafer host above the golden cup and the wafer is portrayed as the sun with rays coming from it.

When people eat this sun wafer they are eating "Baal the sun god. When we partake of the true body of Christ at the true Passover, the unleavened bread is broken as Jesus commanded.

Aristotle taught that earthly things possessed accidents (size, shape, color, texture) perceptible to the senses, and substance, their essential reality, known by the mind. According to Scholastic speculation, the substance of the Eucharistic bread is, by the power of God, wholly transformed into the body of Christ. This view of the presence of Christ, called transubstantiation, was most elaborately formulated by the 13th-century Italian theologian St. Thomas Aquinas. It has been the official teaching of the Roman Catholic church since the Middle Ages, although the Council of Trent, which reasserted the doctrine against the Protestant reformers in the 16th century, did not include any philosophical speculation in its statement, asserting simply that an actual change occurred in the bread and wine.

In the 16th century Protestant reformers offered several alternative interpretations of the Eucharist. Martin Luther taught that Christ is present "in, with, and under" the elements. The Swiss reformer Huldreich Zwingli denied any real connection between the bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ. He believed that at the celebration of the Supper, which recalls to worshippers the words and deeds of the Lord, Christ is with them by the power of the Holy Spirit. According to Zwingli, the bread and wine recall the Last Supper, but no metaphysical change takes place in them.

The Swiss Protestant theologian John Calvin argued that Christ is present both symbolically and by his spiritual power, which is imparted by his body in heaven to the souls of believers as they partake of the Eucharist. This position, which has been called "dynamic presence," occupies a middle ground between the doctrines of Luther and Zwingli. The Anglican doctrine affirms the real presence of Christ, without specifying its mode. "Eucharist," Microsoft(R) Encarta(R) 97 Encyclopedia. (c) 1993-1996 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration is the adoration of the Catholic's Jesus present in the Eucharist. In the many Catholic churches that have this adoration, the Eucharist is displayed in a special holder called a monstrance as you see above. The pope or priest holds up the monstrance with the host encased for the people to adore and venerate. When the monstrance is viewed by the congregation, they always kneel in submission to this sun god. A Catholic cannot walk past this sun symbol without acknowledging it and kneeling or making the sign of the pagan cross.

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Let's not forget the command of our God as recorded in Exod 20:1-6 "And God spoke all these words, saying: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. "You shall have no other gods before Me. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (NKJ)

Below and to the left you see a carving of two angels kneeling in idolatrous worship to the wafer sun god. The partial view of the coin on the right is a 100 Lire coin issued by the Vatican and it depicts a woman with a cup in her hand and the sun god is in the cup. Remember in Rev 17:4 "The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, **having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.**" (NKJ)

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Page two

In this second page we will see even more abominations of sun worship and how sun worship has crept into the Christian religion and has been blindly accepted by the masses.

Many Protestant churches that claim they have separated from the Church of Rome did not complete the separation. They brought with them the pagan sun god of Ra and Horus (below) as well as the pagan god Tammuz in the form of the cross. (See the page on the cross.)

Next we will look at the true alter of Baal the sun god that is set up in the Vatican, and just as all the other pagan gods they have given this alter a Christian name called St. Peter's chair. Also to the right we see a painting depicting those that are supposed divine with the sun about their heads and little sun gods dancing around. Also notice that the sun goddess is the main figure.

Next we see the sun disk used in it's true form. This picture on the left is looking up at the sun disk that's made as a dome in the ceiling and the sun rays come through the top and shine down into the room. Notice the picture of the sun in the very center of the dome where the real sun rays come through. Did you know that the name of the old Egyptian sun god Ra is the "Ray" of sun-ray's? You see, it's the ray's that's worshipped as well because they come to earth and give life.

Above and to the right you see the statue that is reported to actually be the pagan statue of Jupiter that was removed from the pagan temple called Pantheon in Rome. This statue has been renamed Peter to make it acceptable to the masses. Notice the sun wheel above his head and compare it with the pagan sun wheel on the left below. The sun wheel resembles a chariot wheel and we can find scripture that proves these wheels to belong to the chariots dedicated to the sun gods.

II Ki 23:10-11 10 "And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who was in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire." (NKJ)

La Verita

Next we will look at the sculpture by Gian Lorenzo Bernini decorating the tomb of pope Alexander VII. At the four corners surrounding the enthroned pope, are the four virtues, Charity, Prudence, Justice, and Truth. Charity is on the front left in the slide on the left. La Verita, which means "The Truth" is on the right front in the slide on the left. Notice that "Truth stands with her foot on a globe of the earth. This symbolizes her power over the earth. Now what is very interesting about this statue called truth is that when we look close at the slide of her to the right we see she is embracing the pagan sun god. What could it truly mean that the so called goddess

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of truth holds the sun god? What does it mean that these many sun gods are worshipped by the Catholic Church?

Pagan Rome and Babylon worshipped the sun god, and the Roman emperor (Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus) ("the Great") changed the worship day from Sabbath to Sunday or "The day of the sun because he worshipped the sun and many pagan sunburst images that are now being used by the Catholic Church.

Look at the sun god in her arms and the pagan Greek sun god Apollo carved on the temple of Apollo below and see the truth about what is being worshipped in the Catholic Church and those that follow her.

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Page three

In this page we will see even more abominations of sun worship and how the pagan worship of "EASTER" is nothing more than sun worship. Like we noted on page two, many Protestant churches that claim they have separated from the Church of Rome did not complete the separation. They brought with them the pagan sun god of Ra and Horus as well as the pagan god Tammuz in the form of the cross. They also brought with them the pagan goddess Ishtar or Easter.

Every Spring, thousands of professing Christians get up very early in the morning to attend special sunrise services in celebration of the resurrection on "Easter" morning. Do they truly understand where this practice came from? Have they studied into it for themselves to be sure they are worshipping the true God of heaven? Have they looked into the word "Easter" to see what it means and where it came from? Did you know it actually can be found in the King James Bible? Acts 12:4 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**" to bring him forth to the people.

If the word "**Easter**" is in the Bible then it must be a holy word right? What was the reaction of the Jews when Paul and Silas was sent to them to preach the gospel showing that it was true and from God by the scriptures of the Old Testament? Acts 17:10-11 10 "Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. (NKJ)

We need to study and prove all things brethren or we can be deceived. The word in the Greek translated as Easter is "pascha" which Strong's defines as the Passover (the meal, the day, the festival or the special sacrifices connected with it) 3957. pascha, pas'-khah. Pascha is translated as Passover and in the 29 times this word appears in the New Testament, only on this one occasion it was incorrectly translated as Easter.

Today Easter is the most commonly used term for the day of the resurrection in main-stream Christianity, but would the disciples have recognized the term and used it in connection with the resurrection of Christ? Just where does the word Easter originate?

The origin of Easter

The word Easter was used by pagans to designate the Feast of New Life in the spring. The same root is found in the name for the place where the sun rises no matter where we are in on the earth which is the East. The word Easter, then, originally meant the celebration of the spring sun,

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which had its birth in the East and brought new life upon the earth. Most people in the United States think Easter is biblical because the word can be found in Acts and misguided religious leaders have taught it without truly proving it. Well Easter worship is in the Bible, but not in the way you might think.

Ezk. 8:14-18 "So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD'S house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. (Remember Tammuz was worshipped long before Jesus came, and the symbol for this worship was, and is the CROSS.) Then He said to me, have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see GREATER ABOMINATIONS than these. So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the EAST and they were worshipping the sun toward the east."

This is a biblical description of ancient Easter worship and the Encyclopedia states that "Easter is a Christian festival, that embodies many pre-Christian traditions. (Notice **pre-Christian traditions**.) Scholars believe Easter came from Eastre, the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility, of which was dedicated a month corresponding to April. It's festival was celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox; traditions associated with the festival survive in the Easter rabbit, a symbol of fertility, and in colored Easter eggs, originally painted with bright colors to represent the sunlight of spring, and used in Easter-egg rolling contests or given as gifts.

How did these pre-Christian pagan religious traditions inter into the Church called the Christian Church?

Rulings of the Council of Nicaea on Easter Constantine the Great, Roman emperor, and sun worshipper, convoked the Council of Nicaea in 325. The council unanimously ruled that the Easter festival should be celebrated throughout the Christian world on the first Sunday (day of the Sun) after the full moon following the vernal equinox; and that if the full moon should occur on a Sunday and thereby coincide with the Passover festival, Easter should be commemorated on the Sunday following." This was a ruling by man not by God, and man received it from Satan the god of this world and of which the true God of heaven commands we flee.

This symbolism was "transferred" to the supernatural meaning of our Easter, to the new life of the risen Christ. The term Easter has often been explained as the name of the Assyrian and Babylonian goddess of love and war, identified with the Phoenician Astarte, the Semitic Ashtoreth, and the Sumerian Inanna, also called Mylitta. Remember what we covered in the page titled the Madonna? She is also called "**Mylitta**" by the Catholic Church, and means the mediatrix which means mediator or what really is the one that has taken the place of our true mediator Jesus the Christ.

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So we see that Easter is not even a Christian name. Easter is in reality Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Ninevah, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country **Easter**. That name, was found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments and it is "**Ishtar**".

The Catholic Encyclopedia, Revised and Updated, Copyright 1987, Robert C. Broderick, Editor, Thomas Nelson Publishers, page 177 states that the word "Easter", which comes from the Anglo-Saxon, is a term derived from the pagan goddess of the dawn.

So, there is no doubt that the word Easter is not Christian, but pagan in origin. Now as to the date itself, anyone who has studied the Bible knows that the crucifixion and resurrection happen during God's commanded festival of the Passover, which began on the 14th of Nisan. For millennia God's true people, the Hebrews, have observed this festival week of Passover and the commanded Feast of Unleavened Bread. (See Mini study God's plan of salvation.)

To celebrate the pagan day of Easter at this time of year instead of God's Passover would be celebrating the increasing of the Sun following the spring (vernal) equinox. That is the day on which the amount of darkness and daylight are the same in duration. Following that day the amount of daylight would steadily increase, a little each day. This increase of daylight in the spring brings summer and makes the crops thrive, thus the association with fertility, (eggs, rabbits, and chickens.) Hence the association to Sunday every Easter celebrating the increasing of the god of the sun on the day of the sun. Professing Christians today turn themselves East to the rising sun, on a pagan "Sun Day" that has no biblical foundation what-so-ever, except as described as pagan in Ezk. 8:14-18. of which you have read above.

The Blessing of the New Fire Easter Vigil. The Blessing of the New Fire Easter Vigil, called by St. Augustine the "Mother of All Vigils," occurs the night before Easter. Ceremonies include blessing of new fire, and a procession with the Easter Candle.

Source: A Concise Guide to the Catholic Church, by Felician A. Foy, O.F.M. and Rose M. Avato, Copyright 1984 and published by Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, Indiana, 46750.

The Service of Light

No lights are on in the Church; a fire is prepared outside the church or, if not possible, inside the vestibule. After greeting the congregation the priest blesses the new fire, symbolic of Christ's Resurrection, coming forth from the tomb and giving light to the world. On the Paschal Candle the priest traces a pagan cross and the numerals of the current year. Finally the priest lights the candle from the new fire and the deacon or, if there is no deacon, the priest lifts the Paschal candle and sings Christ is our Light.

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After walking halfway into the church, he sings the same acclamation, after which the people light their candles from the Easter Candle. Upon arriving at the altar, the acclamation is sung the third time and the lights in the church are put on. Immediately thereafter follows the Easter Proclamation, sung while all stand and hold lighted candles. It honors the night on which Christ redeemed us.

Source: The Dictionary of the Liturgy, by Rev. Jovian P. Lang, OFM, published by Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, copyright 1989, page 173.

Another type of Papal worship is the use of lamps and wax-candles. If the Madonna and child are set up in a niche, they must have a lamp to burn before them; if mass is to be celebrated, though in broad daylight, there must be wax-candles lighted on the altar; if a grand procession is to be formed, it cannot be thorough and complete without lighted tapers.

The use of these lamps and tapers comes from the same source as all the rest of the Papal superstition. That which caused the "Heart," when it became an emblem of the incarnate Son [Bel / Tammuz], to be represented as a heart on fire, required also that burning lamps and lighted candles should form a part of the worship of that Son; for so, according to the established rites of Zoroaster, was the sun-god worshipped. (See Zoroaster on page 81.)

When every Egyptian on the same night was required to light a lamp before his house in the open air, this was an act of homage to the sun, that had veiled its glory by enshrouding itself in a human form. When the Yezidis of Koordistan, at this day, once a year celebrate their festival of "burning lamps," that, too, is to the honor of Sheikh Shems, or the sun.

In Babylon, this practice had been exceedingly prevalent, as we learn from the Apocryphal writer of the Book of Baruch (Chapter 6, verse 18). "They (the Babylonians)," says he, "light up lamps to their gods, and that in greater numbers, too, than they do for themselves, although the gods cannot see one of them, and are senseless as the beams in their houses." In Pagan Rome, the same practice was observed.

Source: The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, published 1943 and 1959 in the U.S. by Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune New Jersey, page 191.

In the Catholic Bible, at the 6th Chapter of Baruch, you will find confirmation that the Pagan Babylonian practice was to light lamps or candles before the idols of their gods. If you enter virtually any Catholic Church, you will find statues of the so called Mary, and Jesus or various saints that have candles lit before them. This practice is not from the lighting of the Menorah as God had commanded the Hebrew people. The Catholic "blessing of the new fire" on the evening before Easter Sunday, where many candles are lit prove that it's from a pagan source.

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The origin of Easter is not in the celebration of the risen Messiah and our Savior, but rather idol worship and the pagan Babylonian god of fire, and the sun-god, whose emblem is a flaming heart, and whose name is Baal or Tammuz! Below you will see the pictures of their Mary and Jesus with the flaming heart on their chest proving again who they are.

The "blessing of the new fire" actually honors the new strength of the Sun as evidenced by the increasing daylight and lessening night after the Spring Equinox. It is clearly derived from a pagan celebration of the risen Sun, and not the risen Christ. The one thing the pagans did when they sacrificed children to the sun god was to cut out the heart and lay it on the alter and as it dried in the sun they believed that the sun god was consuming the heart.

"The Easter Fire is lit on the top of mountains from new fire, drawn from wood by friction; this is a custom of pagan origin in vogue all over Europe, signifying the victory of spring over winter. Many bishops issued severe edicts against the sacrilegious Easter fires, but did not succeed in abolishing them everywhere." So what happened? Notice this carefully. "The Church adopted the observance into the Easter ceremonies, referring to the fiery column in the desert and to the resurrection of Christ"! Were pagan customs adopted into the Church of Rome and given the appearance of Christianity! This is plainly admitted in many Catholic writings.

Source: The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol.5, page 227, article "Easter" as quoted in Babylon Mystery Religion, by Ralph Edward Woodrow, Copyright 1966, 1992 printing, page 137.

Hot Cross Buns

It's a tradition to eat hot cross buns on Easter morning among people of Western Europe. These small, sweet buns are usually decorated with equal armed, or solar crosses made of white icing; but the pagan Greeks also made offerings of cakes inscribed with the "solar cross" to several goddesses, and it's believed that Eos, the goddess of the sunrise, was among these. Anglo-Saxons too make offerings of cakes with solar crosses, and they were worn as amulets and hung in the homes for protection and prosperity. In Louisiana before lint the Catholics make what is called a "King Cake" with a little baby Jesus inside.

The hot cross buns of "Good Friday", and the dyed eggs of Easter Sunday, were a part of the Chaldean [Babylonian] rites hundreds of years before Christ just as they are in the professing Christian Church today. The "buns" known too by that identical name, were used in the worship of the **queen of heaven**, as we saw in the page titled "the Madonna" on this web site. The goddess Easter [Ishtar/Astarte], has been worshipped as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens and that is, 1500 years before the Christian era.

"One species of sacred bread," says Byrant, "which used to be offered to the gods was of great antiquity, and called the Boun." Diogenes Laerius, speaking of this offering being made by

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Empedocles, describes the chief ingredients of which it was composed, saying, "He offered one of the sacred cakes called Boun, which was made of fine flour and honey." The prophet Jeremiah takes notice of this kind of offering when he says, "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women kneed their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven." The hot cross buns are not now offered, but eaten, on the festival of Astarte; but this leaves no doubt as to whence they have been derived.

Source: The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, published 1943 and 1959 in the U.S. by Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune New Jersey, pages 107-108.

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Zoroaster, the Head of the Fire-Worshippers

This paper was written by an author unknown to me, but I would like to thank him or her for the effort to prove the truth of pagan sun worship.

(Web master of the Master's Table web sit...Timothy)

Zoroaster:

That Zoroaster was head of the fire-worshippers, the following, among other evidence, may prove. Not to mention that the name Zoroaster is almost a synonym for a fire-worshipper, the testimony of Plutarch is of weight: "Plutarchus agnoscit Zoroastrem apud Chaldaeos Magos instituisse, ad quorum imitationem Persae etiam sus habuerunt. Arabica quoque Historia (ab Erpenio edita) tradit Zaradussit non primum instituisse. sed reformasse religionem Persarum et Magorum, qui divisi erant in plures sectas" (Clericus, lib. i. De Chaldaeis, sect. i. cap. 2, vol. ii. p. 195); "Plutarch acknowledges that Zoroaster among the Chaldeans instituted the Magi, in imitation of whom the Persians also had their (Magi).

The Arabian History also (edited by Erpenius) relates that Zaradussit, or Zerdusht, did not for the first time institute, but (only) reform the religion of the Persians and Magi, who had been divided into many sects." The testimony of Agathias is to the same effect. He gives it as his opinion that the worship of fire came from the Chaldeans to the Persians, lib. ii. cap. 25, pp. 118, 119. That the Magi among the Persians were the guardians of "the sacred and eternal fire" may be assumed from Curtius (lib. iii. cap.3, pp. 41, 42), who says that fire was carried before them "on silver altars; from the statement of Strabo (Geograph., lib. xv. p. 696), that "the Magi kept upon the altar a quantity of ashes and an immortal fire," and of Herodotus (lib. i. p. 63), that "without them, no sacrifice could be offered."

The fire-worship was an essential part of the system of the Persian Magi (WILSON, Parsee Religion, pp. 228-235). This fire-worship the Persian Magi did not pretend to have invented; but their popular story carried the origin of it up to the days of Hoshang, the father of Tahmurs, who founded Babylon (WILSON, pp. 202, 203, and 579)---i.e., the time of Nimrod. In confirmation of this, we have seen that a fragment of Apollodorus (Muller, 68) makes Ninus the head of the fire-worshippers. Layard, quoting this fragment, supposes Ninus to be different from Zoroaster (Nineveh and its Remains, vol. ii. p. 443, Note); but it can be proved, that though many others bore the name of Zoroaster, the lines of evidence all converge, so as to demonstrate that Ninus and Nimrod and Zoroaster were one. The legends of Zoroaster show that he was known not only as a Magus, but as a Warrior (ARNOBIUS, lib. i. p. 327).

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Plato says that Eros Armenius (whom CLERICUS, *De Chaldaeis*, states, vol. ii. p. 195, to have been the same as the fourth Zoroaster) died and rose again after ten days, having been killed in battle; and that what he pretended to have learned in Hades, he communicated to men in his new life (PLATO, *De Republica*, lib. x. vol. ii. p. 614). We have seen the death of Nimrod, the original Zoroaster, was not that of a warrior slain in battle; but yet this legend of the warrior Zoroaster is entirely in favour of the supposition that the original Zoroaster, the original Head of the Magi, was not a priest merely, but a warrior-king. Everywhere are the Zoroastrians, or fire-worshippers, called Guebres or Gabrs. Now, Gen. x. 8 proves that Nimrod was the first of the "Gabrs."

As Zoroaster was head of the fire-worshippers, so Tammuz was evidently the same. We have seen evidence already that sufficiently proves the identity of Tammuz and Nimrod; but a few words may still more decisively prove it, and cast further light on the primitive fire-worship. 1. In the first place, Tammuz and Adonis are proved to be the same divinity. Jerome, who lived in Palestine when the rites of Tammuz were observed, up to the very time when he wrote, expressly identifies Tammuz and Adonis (vol. ii. p. 353), in his *Commentary on Ezekiel*, viii. 14, where the Jewish women are represented as weeping for Tammuz; and the testimony of Jerome on this subject is universally admitted. Then the mode in which the rites of Tammuz or Adonis were celebrated in Syria was essentially the same as the rites of Osiris.

The statement of Lucian (*De Dea Syria*, vol. iii. p. 454) strikingly shows this, and Bunsen (vol. i. p. 443) distinctly admits it. The identity of Osiris and Nimrod has been largely proved in the body of this work. When, therefore, Tammuz or Adonis is identified with Osiris, the identification of Tammuz with Nimrod follows of course. And then this entirely agrees with the language of Bion, in his *Lament for Adonis*, where he represents Venus as going in a frenzy of grief, like a Bacchant, after the death of Adonis, through the woods and valleys, and "calling upon her Assyrian husband" (BION, *Idyll*, Id. i. v. 214, in *Portae Minores Graeci*, p. 304). It equally agrees with statement of Maimonides, that when Tammuz was put to death, the grand scene of weeping for that death was in the temple of Babylon (see ante, p. 62). 2. Now, if Tammuz was Nimrod, the examination of the meaning of the name confirms the connection of Nimrod with the first fire-worship.

After what has already been advanced, there needs no argument to show that, as the Chaldeans were the first who introduced the name and power of kings (SYNCELLUS, vol. i. p. 169), and as Nimrod was unquestionably the first of these kings, and the first, consequently, that bore the title of Moloch, or king, so it was in honour of him that the "children were made to pass through the fire" was undoubtedly to purify. The name Tammuz has evidently reference to this, for it signifies "to perfect," that is, "to purify by fire;" and if Nimrod was, as the *Paschal Chronicle* (vol. i. pp. 50, 51), and the general voice of antiquity, represent him to have been, the originator of fire-worship, this name very exactly expresses his character in that respect. It is evident,

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however, from the Zoroastrian verse, elsewhere quoted (ante, p. 245), that fire itself was worshipped as Tammuz, for it is called the "Father that perfected all things."

In one respect this represented fire as the Creative god; but in another, there can be no doubt that it had reference to the "perfection" of men by "purifying" them. And especially it perfected those whom it consumed. This was the very idea that, from time immemorial until very recently, led so many widows in India to immolate themselves on the funeral piles of their husbands, the woman who thus burned herself being counted blessed, because she became Suttee --i.e., "Pure by burning." And this also, no doubt, reconciled the parents who actually sacrificed their children to Moloch, to the cruel sacrifice, the belief being cherished that the fire that consumed them also "perfected" them, and made them meet for eternal happiness. As both the passing through the fire, and the burning in the fire, were essential rites in the worship of Moloch or Nimrod, this is an argument that Nimrod was Tammuz. As the priest and representative of the perfection or purifying by fire, and so he was called by its name.

When we turn to the legends of India, find evidence to the very same effect as that which we have seen with regard to Zoroaster and Tammuz as head of the fire-worshippers. The fifth head of Brahma, that was cut off for inflicting distress on the three worlds, by "effulgence of its dazzling beams," referred to in the text of this work, identifies itself with Nimrod. The fact that that fifth head was represented as having read the Vedas, or sacred books produced by the other four heads, shows, I think, a succession. Now, coming down from Noah, what would that succession be? We have evidence from Berosus, that, in the days of Belus--that is, Nimrod--the custom of making representations like that of two-headed Janus, had begun.

Assume, then, that Noah, as having lived in two worlds, has his two heads. Ham is the third, Cush the fourth, and Nimrod is, of course, the fifth. And this fifth head was cut off for doing the very thing for which Nimrod actually was cut off. I suspect that this Indian myth is the key to open up the meaning of a statement of Plutarch, which, according to the terms of it, as it stands, is visibly absurd. It is as follows: Plutarch (in the fourth book of his *Symposiaca*, *Quaest.* 5, vol. ii. p. 570, B) says that "the Egyptians were of the opinion that darkness was prior to light, and that the latter [viz., light] was produced from mice, in the fifth generation, at the time of the new moon." In India, we find that "a new moon" was produced in a different sense from the ordinary meaning of that term, and that the production of that new moon was not only important in Indian mythology, but evidently agreed in time with the period when the fifth head of Brahma scorched the world with its insufferable splendor.

The account of its production runs thus: that the gods and mankind were entirely discontented with the moon which they had got, "because it gave no light," and besides the plants were poor and the fruits of no use, and that therefore they churned the White sea [or, as it is commonly expressed, "they churned the ocean"], when all things were mingled--i.e., were thrown into

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confusion, and that then a new moon, with a new regent, was appointed, which brought in an entirely new system of things (Asiatic Researches, vol. ix. p. 98).

From MAURICE'S Indian Antiquities (vol. ii. sect. 6, pp. 264-266), we learn that at this very time of the churning of the ocean, the earth was set on fire, and a great conflagration was the result. But the name of the moon in India is Soma, or Som (for the final a is only a breathing, and the word is found in the name of the famous temple of Somnaut, which name signifies "Lord of the Moon"), and the moon in India is male. As this transaction is symbolical, the question naturally arises, who could be meant by the moon, or regent of the moon, who was cast off in the fifth generation of the world? The name Some shows at once who he must have been. Some is just the name of Shem; for Shem's name comes from Shom, "to appoint," and is legitimately represented either by the name Som, or Sem, as it is in Greek; and it was precisely to get rid of Shem (either after his father's death, or when the infirmities of old age were coming upon him) as the great instructor of the world, that is, as the great diffuser of spiritual light, that in the fifth generation the world was thrown into confusion and the earth set on fire.

The propriety of Shem's being compared to the moon will appear if we consider the way in which his father Noah was evidently symbolized. The head of a family is divinely compared to the sun, as in the dream of Joseph (Genesis xxxvii.9), and it may be easily conceived how Noah would, by his posterity in general, be looked up to as occupying the paramount place as the Sun of the world; and accordingly Bryant, Davies, Faber, and others, have agreed in recognizing Noah as so symbolized by Paganism. When, however, his younger son--for Shem was younger than Japhet--(Genesis x. 21) was substituted for his father, to whom the world had looked up in comparison of the "greater light," Shem would naturally, especially by those who disliked him and rebelled against him, be compared to "the lesser light," or the moon.

Now, the production of light by mice at this period, comes in exactly to confirm this deduction. A mouse in Chaldee is "Aakbar"; and Gheber, or Kheber, in Arabic, Turkish, and some of the other eastern dialects, becomes "Akbar," as in the well-known Moslem saying, "Allar Akbar," "God is Great." So that the whole statement of Plutarch, when stripped of its nonsensical garb, just amounts to this, that light was produced by the nonsensical garb, just amounts to this, that light was produced by the Guebres or fire-worshippers, when Nimrod was set up in opposition to Shem, as the representative of Noah, and the great enlightener of the world. 2bab050.htm

NOTE O, p. 230. The Story of Phaethon.

The identity of Phaethon and Nimrod has much to support it besides the prima facie evidence arising from the statement that Phaethon was an Ethiopian or Cushite, and the resemblance of his fate, in being cast down from heaven while driving the chariot of the sun, as "the child of the Sun," to the casting down of Molk Gheber, whose very name, as the god of fire, identifies him with Nimrod. 1. Phaethon is said by Apollodorus (vol. i. p. 354) to have been the son of

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Tithonus; but if the meaning of the name Tithonus be examined, it will be evident that he was Tithonus himself. Tithonus was the husband of Aurora (DYMOCCK, sub voce).

In the physical sense, as we have already seen, Aur-ora signifies "The awakener of the light;" to correspond with this Tithonus signifies "The kindler of light," or "setter on fire." * Now "Phaethon, the son of Tithonus," is in Chaldee "Phaethon Bar Tithon." But this also signifies "Phaethon, the son that set on fire." Assuming, then, the identity of Phaethon and Tithonus, this goes far to identify Phaethon with Nimrod; for Homer, as we have seen (Odyssey, lib. v. 1. 121, p. 127), mentions the marriage of Aurora with Orion, the mighty Hunter, whose identity with Nimrod is established. Then the name of the celebrated son that sprang from the union between Aurora and Tithonus, shows that Tithonus, in his original character, must have been indeed the same as "the mighty hunter" of Scripture, for the name of that son was Memnon (MARTIAL, lib. viii., s. 21, p. 550, and OVID, Metam. lib. xiii. 1. 517, vol. ii. p. 467), which signifies "The son of the spotted one," thereby identifying the father with Nimrod, whose emblem was the spotted leopard's skin.

As Ninus or Nimrod, was worshipped as the son of his own wife, and that wife Aurora, the goddess of the dawn, we see how exact is the reference to Phaethon, when Isaiah, speaking of the King of Babylon, who was his representative, says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning" (Isa. xiv. 12). The marriage of Orion with Aurora; in other words, his setting up as "The kindler of light," or becoming the "author of fire-worship," is said by Homer to have been the cause of his death, he having in consequence perished under the wrath of the gods (Odys. lib. v. 1. 124, p. 127). 2.

That Phaethon was currently represented as the son of Aurora, the common story, as related by Ovid, sufficiently proves. While Phaethon claimed to be the son of Phoebus, or the sun, he was reproached with being only the son of Merops--i.e., of the mortal husband of his mother Clymene (OVID, Metam. lib. ii. ll. 179-184, and Note). The story implies that that mother gave herself out to be Aurora, not in the physical sense of that term, but in its mystical sense; as "The woman pregnant with light;" and, consequently, her son was held up as the great "Light-bringer" who was to enlighten the world,--"Lucifer, the son of the morning," who was the pretended enlightener of the souls of men. The name Lucifer, in Isaiah, is the very word from which Eleleus, one of the names of Bacchus, evidently comes. It comes from "Helel," which signifies "to irradiate" or "to bring light," and is equivalent to the name Tithon. Now we have evidence that Lucifer, the son of Aurora, or the morning, was worshipped in the very same character as Nimrod, when he appeared in his new character as a little child; for there is an inscription extant in these words:- "Bono Deo Puero Phosphoro." (See WILKINSON, vol. iv. p. 410.)

This Phaethon, or Lucifer, who was cast down is further proved to be Janus; for Janus is called "Pater Matutinus" (HORACE, Sat. ii. 6, 20, p. 674; and the meaning of this name will appear in one of its aspects when the meaning of the name of the Dea Matuta is ascertained. Dea Matuta

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signifies "The kindling or Light-bringing goddess," and accordingly, by Priscian, she is identified with Aurora: "Matuta, quoe significat Aurorame" (PRISCIAN, ii. p. 591, apud Sir WILLIAM BETHAM'S *Etruria*, vol. ii. p. 53). Matutinus is evidently just the correlate of Matuta, goddess of the morning; Janus, therefore, as Matutinus, is "Lucifer, son of the morning." But further, Matuta is identified with Ino, after she had plunged into the sea, and had, along with her son Melikerta, been changed into a sea-divinity (*Gradus ad Parnassum*, sub voce "Ino"). Consequently her son Melikerta, "king of the walled city," is the same as Janus Matutinus, or Lucifer, Phaethon, or Nimrod.

There is still another link by which Melikerta, the sea-divinity, or Janus Matutinus, is identified with the primitive god of the fire-worshippers. The most common name of Ino, or Matuta, after she had passed through the waters, was Leukothoe (OVID, *Metam.* lib. vi. ll. 541, 542). Now, Leukothoe or Leukothea has a double meaning, as it is derived either from "Lukhoth," which signifies "to light," or "set on fire," or from Lukoth "to glean." In the Maltese medal given (ante, p. 160), the reader will see both of these senses exemplified.

The ear of corn, at the side of the goddess, which is more commonly held in her hand, while really referring in its hidden meaning to her being the Mother of Bar, "the son," to the uninitiated exhibits her as Spicilega, or "The Gleaner,"--"the popular name," says Hyde (*De Religione, Vet. Pers.*, p. 392), "for the female with the ear of wheat represented in the constellation Virgo." In Bryant (vol. iii. p. 245), Cybele is represented with two or three ears of corn in her hand; for, as there were three peculiarly distinguished Bacchuses, there were consequently as many "Bars," and she might therefore be represented with one, two, or three ears in her hand. But to revert to the Maltese medal just referred to, the flames coming out of the head of Lukothea, the "Gleaner," show that, though she has passed through the waters, she is still Lukothea, "the Burner," or "Light-giver."

And the rays around the mitre of the god on the reverse entirely agree with the character of that god as Eleleus, or Phaethon--in other words, as "The Shining Bar." Now, this "Shining Bar," as Melikerta, "king of the walled city," occupies the very place of "Ala-Mahozim," whose representative the Poe is elsewhere (ante, p. 252) proved to be. But he is equally the Sea-divinity, who in that capacity wears the mitre of Dagon (compare woodcuts at "[Dagon](#)" on page 87 where different forms of the same Maltese divinity are given). The fish head mitre which the Pope wears shows that, in this character also, as the "Beast from the sea," he is the unquestionable representative of Melikerta.

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Dagon Worship

Dagon, god of fertility worshiped by the Philistines and throughout the ancient Middle East. His cult is known to have existed as early as 2500 BC, and a number of references to him are made in the Old Testament. The possible derivations of his name are numerous; from the Hebrew word for "grain"; from the Semitic word for "corn"; and from a Hebrew word for "fish." The last of these derivations gave rise to the common image of Dagon as a merman-half man, half fish. Dagon is also regarded as the legendary inventor of the plow.

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Ralph Edward Woodrow states in his book the Babylon Mystery Religion on page 75 and 76 that the expensive and highly decorated garments that the popes wear were patterned after those of the roman emperors. The historians have not let this fact go unnoticed, for indeed their testimony is that "the vestments of the clergy...were legacies from pagan Rome."

The tiara crown that the popes wear-though decorated in different ways at different times-is identical in shape to that worn by the "gods" or angles that are shown on ancient pagan Assyrian tablets. It is similar to that seen on Dagon, the fish god pictured below. Dagon was actually but a mystery form of the false Babylonian "savior." The name Dagon comes from dag (a word commonly translated "fish" in the Bible) and means "fish god." as we read above.

The fish symbol

The fish symbol has been used for millennia worldwide as a religious symbol associated with the Pagan great mother goddess. It is the outline of her vulva. The fish symbol was often drawn by overlapping two very thin crescent moons. One represented the crescent shortly before the new moon; the other shortly after, when the moon is just visible. The Moon is the heavenly body that has long been associated with the goddess, just as the sun is a symbol of the god. Below you will see a drawing of the pagan goddess Cybele and notice the fish head of Dagon on her head.

Cybele was worshipped in Rome and was called the great queen mother goddess. The Basilica of Saint Peter's, according to some, stands upon the former site of Cybele's main temple.

The link between the goddess and fish was found in various areas of the ancient world: In China, great mother Kwan-yin often portrayed in the shape of a fish In India, the goddess Kali was called the "fish-eyed one" In Egypt, Isis was called the Great Fish of the Abyss In Greece the Greek word "delphos" meant both fish and womb. The word is derived from the location of the ancient Oracle at Delphi who worshipped the original fish goddess, Themis. The later fish

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goddess, Aphrodite Salacia, was worshipped by her followers on her sacred day, Friday. They ate fish and engaging in orgies. From her name comes the English word "salacious" which means lustful or obscene.

Also from her name comes the name of our fourth month, April. In later centuries, the Catholic church adsorbed this tradition by requiring the faithful to eat fish on Friday. In ancient Rome Friday is called "**dies veneris**" or Day of Venus, the Pagan goddess of love. Throughout the Mediterranean, mystery religions used fish, wine and bread for their sacramental meal. In Scandinavia, the great goddess was named Freya, and fish were eaten in her honor. The 6th day of the week was named "Friday" after her and also mean to fool around. In the Middle East, the great goddess of Ephesus was portrayed as a woman with a fish amulet over her genitals.

The fish symbol "was so revered throughout the Roman empire that Catholic authorities insisted on taking it over, with extensive revision of myths to deny its earlier female-genital meanings. Sometimes the Christ child was portrayed inside the vesica, which was superimposed on their Mary's belly and obviously represented her womb, just as in the ancient symbolism of the goddess." Another author writes: "The fish headdress of the priests of Ea [a Sumero-Semitic god] later became the miter of the Catholic bishops and the pope. The symbol itself, the eating of fish on Friday and the association of the symbol with deity were all taken over by the early Catholic Church from Pagan sources and carried over in many other Churches. Only the sexual component was deleted.